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Chapter 4

Promoting Social Justice for Youth in Urban Communities: Contributions from Developmental and Community Psychology

Christine Siegel

Since the mid-1980s increasing public and research attention has been given to the relationships among neighborhood, lived experience, and youth outcomes (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2010). *Savage Inequalities*, Jonathan Kozol's (1991) firsthand account of educational systems in differing but geographically proximal neighborhoods, chronicled the prevailing assumption that children may be either advantaged or disadvantaged by their community of residence. This thesis has been supported by scholarly investigations, collectively described as neighborhood research, which demonstrate that neighborhood of residence can positively or negatively influence youth's (1) academic achievement, (2) behavioral and emotional development, and (3) teen sexuality (e.g., Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000, 2010; Luthar & Becker, 2002; Luthar & Landtendresse, 2010).

According to UNICEF (2012), nearly half of all children and adolescents worldwide reside in cities, more than ever before in human history. Although some urban communities afford youth greater access to services that support their standard of living, health, and educational attainment, millions of children around the world live in low-income, ethnically diverse urban settings where they are confronted with daily challenges and denied basic rights. UNICEF (2012, p. 13) maintains that regardless of their place of residence, all children have the right to "development to the fullest." Although many agree with this aspiration, efforts to promote such social justice for youth in urban communities are currently hampered by ambiguous constructs and methodological debates (Zjada, Majhanovich, & Rust, 2006).

Integrating developmental theory with community psychology can provide a framework to guide social justice efforts for youth in urban communities. Within this integrated framework, understanding social justice rests on several assumptions. First, youth reside in a wide variety of communities (i.e., neighborhoods) that are unequal in social organization (e.g., degree of order, lawfulness, and cleanliness). Second, social inequities in neighborhoods directly and indirectly influence children and adolescents' interactions with parents, siblings, peers, and other adults in their homes, schools, and communities. Third, these interactions with significant others in immediate contexts form the foundation of human development, as they support the attainment of competencies (i.e., trust, hope, self-efficacy, and social connectedness) that establish one's identity. Fourth, disruptions to identity formation during childhood and adolescence have both immediate (e.g., school failure) and long-term (e.g., unemployment) consequences for youth. Based on these assumptions, *social justice for youth in urban communities* can be defined as those psychosocial practices that enable urban children and adolescents to participate in their neighborhoods in ways that allow them to develop identities as healthy, functioning, contributing members of society.

This chapter explores this definition of social justice for youth in urban communities by explicating the assumptions on which it is based. It begins with a review of two prominent developmental theories, ecological systems theory and psychosocial theory, which provide a foundation for the influence of context on youth development and detail the importance of early life experiences on later outcomes. It then reviews relevant findings from community psychology that describe differences in neighborhoods and how those differences impact the adults and children residing in them. Last, it reviews the research on *positive youth development*, the umbrella term for a set of interventions that attempt to help urban youth overcome the negative influences of their neighborhood by supporting experiences that promote healthy development in their home communities.

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

Developmental psychologists recognize childhood and adolescence as periods qualitatively distinct from each other and from adulthood, yet connected to other

periods across the lifespan in meaningful ways. The physical, cognitive, social, and emotional growth that occurs during childhood and adolescence provides the foundation for a psychological identity that influences one's way of understanding and acting in the world throughout adulthood and into old age. Contemporary developmental theories recognize that development results from an interaction between the individual and his or her social contexts. Two well-known developmental theories, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory and Erikson's psychosocial theory, emphasize the importance of context in development and thus are particularly relevant to a discussion of social justice for youth in urban communities.

Bio-Ecological Systems Model

Bronfenbrenner's (2005) bio-ecological perspective explains how human development is influenced by the contexts in which it occurs. Initial formulations of his theory, termed Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979a, 1979b), posited that all humans require active participation in increasingly complex interactions with persons, objects, and symbols in their immediate environments in order to develop intellectually, emotionally, and socially. Termed *proximal processes*, these reciprocal interactions need to occur on a regular basis and over extended periods of time. Within this theory, proximal processes are understood as transactions between the developing individual and his or her immediate and remote environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1979b). Bronfenbrenner developed a multi-level systems model to explain how these transactions contribute to the structure and maintenance of proximal processes.

At the primary level of this model, the *microsystem* consists of those immediate environments that serve as the child's main venues for learning about the world. Homes, schools, and communities constitute the microsystems in which children and adolescents interact with parents, siblings, peers, and significant adults. Research demonstrates that neighborhood of residence can directly impact interactions within these primary microsystems in ways that positively or negatively influence youth outcomes. In their study of approximately 1,400 urban minority adolescents, for example, Anderson, Sabatelli, and Koustic (2007) found that urban minority teens who maintained positive relationships with parents, friends, and adults at community centers and who regularly participated in community center programs had positive attitudes toward school, high levels of achievement motivation, high levels of social self-efficacy, and low levels of illegal substance use. In contrast, Luthar and Becker (2002) found that middle school students from affluent neighborhoods often experience isolation from parents, achievement pressure from teachers, and status pressure from peers resulting in higher than average rates of depression in girls and substance abuse in boys. Finally, DeCoster, Heimer, and Wittrock (2006) found that frequent interactions with delinquent peers increased the likelihood that youth in certain urban communities (i.e., those characterized by lawlessness and poverty) would engage in criminal behaviors.

Interactions (i.e., proximal processes) that occur within microsystems (i.e., immediate contexts) also are influenced by processes occurring in contexts that are removed from the developing child's immediate experience. Thus, *exosystems*, those environments that children experience vicariously through interactions with others in their microsystems, are also important to child development. One example of exosystem influence is the impact of neighborhood of residence on parenting practices and home environments. Compared to parents living in middle-class orderly neighborhoods, parents who live in urban, impoverished, crime-ridden neighborhoods are less likely to have support from other parents, are more likely to employ strict methods of behavior control to ensure children's safety, may be less available to their children due to their own mental or physical health needs, and are less likely to maintain regular household routines (Anderson et al., 2007; Evans, Gonnella, Marcynyszyn, Gentile, & Salpekar, 2005; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Luthar & Becker, 2002). Thus in addition to the direct effects of neighborhood on their everyday experience, children contend with indirect effects via the impact of their neighborhood on their parents.

Within Bronfenbrenner's model, youth also are indirectly affected by connections between two or more microsystems that serve to sustain, support, or undermine the interactions that occur within their immediate contexts. These interconnections between microsystems, termed *mesosystems*, have been demonstrated to influence children's participation in community and school programs. For example, support from community mentors who maintain active communication with their mentees' home and school was found to foster achievement motivation, school attendance, and school completion for adolescents in urban, low-income, minority neighborhoods (Boussard, Mosley-Howard, & Roychoudhury, 2006).

Furthest removed from the immediate experience of the child is the *macrosystem*, comprising cultural attitudes, normative practices, and political trends present in the society at large that indirectly influence a child's everyday experiences. Social scientists have proposed that federal and local housing policies restrict residential choices, thus increasing the likelihood that poor, female-headed, minority families will reside in urban, impoverished, crime-ridden neighborhoods (e.g., DeCoster et al., 2006). Others have suggested that certain juvenile justice policies, including zero tolerance and lowered age-limits for juvenile offender status, contribute to the likelihood that young African American and Latino males who reside in urban areas will be incarcerated (Ginwright, Cammarto, & Noguera, 2005).

A bio-ecological model can inform understanding of social justice for youth in urban communities by demonstrating that neighborhoods influence children's experiences both directly and indirectly. For youth in some urban neighborhoods (i.e., those characterized by poverty, crime, and disorder), breakdowns in social organization appear to lead to maladaptive interactions with parents, peers, and other adults, and poor parenting practices that disrupt home routines. Further, limited interactions between adults across contexts of youth development (i.e., home-community) and larger social policies appear to contribute to maintaining

the social alienation of urban youth. Proximal processes, interactions between children and others in their immediate contexts, influence youth development; and these processes are themselves influenced by interactions between children's immediate and remote contexts.

Psychosocial Theory

According to Erikson (1950, 1968), the interaction of people with their social contexts produces a series of eight identity conflicts that serve as developmental milestones across the lifespan. At each conflict, the developing person confronts a choice between two seemingly opposite psychosocial states of being, that is, *trust versus mistrust*, *autonomy versus shame*, *initiative versus guilt*, *industry versus inferiority*, *identity versus role confusion*, *intimacy versus isolation*, *generativity versus stagnation*, and *integrity versus despair*. Successful resolution occurs when the individual can reconcile the conflict in a way that gives rise to what Erikson called virtues (i.e., psychological competencies), including *hope*, *will*, *purpose*, *competence* (i.e., self-efficacy), *fidelity*, *love*, *care*, and *wisdom*. The collective acquisition of virtues across the lifespan provides the foundation for psychological well-being in the form of a stable identity or an integrated and consistent sense of self.

Psychosocial theory further proposes that although specific conflicts are dominant during specific age periods, individuals contend with all eight throughout their lives. Typically accomplished within the first year of life, for example, the resolution of trust versus mistrust is not fixed by age one (Erikson, 1950; 1968). Early damage to trust can be repaired in later years by subsequent interactions within a particularly trustworthy environment. Conversely, an initial basic sense of trust can be undermined during childhood or adolescence by repeated experiences with undependable people or unpredictable environments. Exposure to chronic violence in one's community, for example, undermines children's beliefs that the world is a safe place, resulting in mistrust and lack of hope altering identity development (Maschi, Perez, & Tyson, 2010).

As children proceed to school age, they practice and master culturally important skills. School-age children are driven by a desire to be productive and gain satisfaction through task completion (i.e., *industry*), resulting in a sense of competence or self-efficacy (Erikson, 1950). Research demonstrates that the impact of urban disadvantaged neighborhoods in the form of disrupted routines in the home and limited opportunities in the community can interfere with a child's skill attainment and developing sense of competence (Coulton & Korbin, 2007; Evans et al., 2005; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000, 2010).

During adolescence, people's growing sense of self, based on competencies attained during younger years, is integrated with their perceptions of how others see them and societal norms, to achieve what Erikson (1968) termed *ego-identity*. Although the majority of research on the developmental impact of the neighborhood is correlational, a number of quasi-experimental and experimental studies

provide strong support for the contention that neighborhoods set social norms that influence adolescent behavior and developing identity (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). These studies demonstrated that compared to youth who remained in urban, impoverished, crime-ridden neighborhoods, adolescents of families randomly assigned to middle-income or affluent suburban neighborhoods were less likely to be arrested for violent or nonviolent crime, engage in excessive drinking, or use marijuana. Furthermore, these adolescents were more likely to complete high school, go to college, and attain professional or managerial employment thus establishing an identity as a healthy contributing member of society.

In early adulthood, individuals transition from the search for identity to the establishment of intimate relationships (Erikson, 1950, 1968). Failure to achieve *intimacy* results in *isolation*. Successful resolution of the conflict of early adulthood is often defined as the establishment of a healthy monogamous relationship with an adult partner. Less well-known, but also important to forming intimate relationships, is Erikson's (1959) concept of *distantiation*, the readiness to defend an established identity and personal rights against attackers. In the face of "forces and people whose essence seem dangerous to one's own," an imbalance toward isolation over intimacy may constitute successful resolution of this conflict (Erikson, 1959, p. 95). However, if distantiation is generalized beyond those who truly present a threat to one's identity, an imbalance toward isolation can lead to feelings of loneliness and alienation. Distantiation helps explain how, in urban crime-ridden communities where threats of physical harm are present, distancing oneself from others serves a self-protective function. Although distancing can be protective, research suggests that generalized and sustained alienation from others in fact leads to psychological distress, physical illness, and maladaptive problem solving (Autry & Anderson, 2007; DeCoster et al., 2006; Hill, Ross, & Angel, 2005; Maschi et al., 2010; Ross & Mirowsky, 2009).

Psychosocial theory can inform one's understanding of social justice for youth from certain urban neighborhoods (i.e., those characterized by poverty, crime, and disorder). In such neighborhoods, unpredictable events, untrustworthy people, limited power, and lack of group norms may interfere with the successful resolution of psychosocial conflicts. Youth in these communities are thus disadvantaged by their circumstances and are unable to establish an ego-identity that is based on trust in others, a belief in one's own capacity to accomplish things, a continuous sense of self, and important connections to others that provide the foundation for success in life.

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

Community psychologists apply psychological theory, including developmental science, to study and intervene in the relationships among individuals, their communities, and society at large. Community psychology is rooted in the belief that "people affect and are affected by their environments, and that many human

problems can be prevented" by an understanding of these mutual influences between people and their immediate and distal milieus (Shinn & Thaden, 2010, p. 2). Within the field of community psychology, *neighborhood research* examines the specific relationships between neighborhood of residence and developmental outcomes and thus has particular relevance to an exploration of social justice for youth in urban communities.

Research on Disordered Neighborhoods

Social scientists use the construct of *neighborhood* to describe the collection of socio-demographic characteristics that comprise specific communities of residence and the people who inhabit them (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2010). Location (e.g., urban, suburban, rural), economy, and ethnicity/race are among those characteristics most frequently used to describe neighborhoods, which are often delineated by census tracts (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). In community psychology research, for example, neighborhoods have been described as urban, impoverished, African American (e.g., DeCoster et al., 2006); rural, poor, White (e.g., Evans et al., 2005); and suburban, affluent, and primarily European descendant (Luthar & Becker, 2002).

Within the field of neighborhood research, a prominent line of inquiry has been the study of *neighborhood disorder*, which examines communities characterized by conditions of extreme disadvantage. According to neighborhood researchers, order in neighborhoods exists on a continuum from orderly, those clean, safe, quiet communities where buildings are in good condition, crime is low, and vandalism is rare, to disordered neighborhoods where poverty, dilapidated buildings, violent crime, and drug use are common (Ross & Mirowsky, 2009). Social scientists place neighborhoods along this continuum of order based on reported incidents of disorder by residents.

Although the majority of neighborhoods in the United States are orderly, some inner-city neighborhoods are disordered. Inhabitants of disordered neighborhoods are likely to be racial minorities, live in female-headed households, exist below the federal poverty line, and be welfare-dependent (DeCoster et al., 2006). Repeatedly, disordered neighborhoods are associated with negative experiences and outcomes for people who live in them, including but not limited to acute and chronic illness (e.g., Hill et al., 2005); psychological distress in the form of anger, depression, and anxiety (Ross & Mirowsky, 2009); exposure to crime and violence (DeCoster et al., 2000); academic failure (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000); maladaptive problem solving (Maschi et al., 2010); and juvenile delinquency (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). Furthermore, these effects are not mediated by individual or family demographic characteristics alone, suggesting that other mechanisms moderate the relationships between neighborhood disorder and negative outcomes (DeCoster et al., 2006; Hill et al., 2005; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn 2000, 2010).

Critical Mechanisms of Neighborhood Disorder

Neighborhood researchers have attempted to identify the critical mechanisms by which disorder in neighborhoods results in negative outcomes for individuals. Historically, these mechanisms have been examined in terms of five empirical models, including (1) limited availability of neighborhood resources, (2) competition among residents for scarce resources, (3) contagion of negative behaviors across peers in a neighborhood, (4) relative deprivation, and (5) breakdowns in social organization (Jencks & Mayer, 1990). Contemporary perspectives group these five models into three larger categories, and propose that, for children and adolescents, neighborhood influence on individual outcomes may be moderated by (1) availability and competition for resources, (2) neighborhood impact on parent-child relationships, and (3) disruptions to social organization (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). Among these factors, the strongest research evidence exists for those that relate limited social organization to negative outcomes (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000).

Central to models of social organization is the construct of *social alienation*, feelings of being disconnected from the larger community, forgotten, and uncared for, which stem, in part, from the visible signs of social disorder (e.g., abandoned buildings, vandalism, noise, crime, violence). One set of neighborhood researchers, Ross and Mirowsky (2009), hypothesized that this breakdown in social organization leads to feelings of mistrust, powerlessness, normlessness, and social isolation that comprise the larger construct of social alienation. In addition to the findings of Ross and Mirowsky, results from other studies of disordered neighborhoods support this hypothesis.

Mistrust

Mistrust is the generalized belief that the intentions and behaviors of others are suspect. In neighborhoods where there are frequent fights between residents, crime is common, and threats of harm prevail, adolescents and adults are less likely to have confidence in the integrity of others (Ross & Mirowsky, 2009).

Perceived Powerlessness

Perceived *powerlessness* is the general expectation that one has little control over the meaningful circumstances in one's life (Ross & Mirowsky, 2009). Feelings of powerlessness have been attributed to adolescents and adults living in disordered neighborhoods. Adolescents growing up exposed to violence, feel powerless, anticipate harm to come their way, and subsequently engage in excessive risk-taking behavior (DeCoster et al., 2006; Ginwright et al., 2005; Maschi et al., 2010). Although residents may not want to live in a disordered neighborhood, individuals in these communities feel powerless about their ability to change their living circumstances (DeCoster et al., 2006).

Normlessness

Unlike powerlessness, in which individuals feel they have no control over their circumstances, *normlessness* refers to the condition in which people perceive there is no socially acceptable means to achieve their goals and instead resort to employing maladaptive behaviors (e.g., exploitation, victimization) for personal gain. In neighborhoods with high levels of disorder, the local culture does not promote respect for other people or their property (Ross & Mirowsky, 2009). Youth in disordered neighborhoods come to view robbery and violence as behavior that is acceptable in the community to solve problems and resolve conflicts (DeCoster et al., 2006; Maschi et al., 2010). Thus, children and adolescents who grow up in normless disorganized neighborhoods are more likely to become adults with maladaptive coping strategies, who often continue to live in the same neighborhood, contributing to its perpetual disorder (Shinn & Thaden, 2010).

Social Isolation

Social isolation is the lack of personal relationships that provide love, support, and care in ways that contribute to self-esteem (Ross & Mirowsky, 2009). In some disordered neighborhoods, the threat of harm and lawlessness contribute to strong social networks among long-term residents (e.g., Schieman, 2005). More often, however, the absence of trust, power, and social norms undermine an individual's capacity to connect, as neighborhood disorder has consistently been associated with high rates of social isolation (Autry & Anderson, 2007; DeCoster et al., 2006; Hill et al., 2005; Maschi et al., 2010; Ross & Mirowsky, 2009).

Integrated Perspectives on Social Justice for Youth in Urban Disordered Communities

Within the field of neighborhood research, specific attention has been given to the study of disordered neighborhoods, urban, impoverished, ethnic minority neighborhoods where the presence of crime, violence, structural disrepair, and drug use signals a breakdown in social organization. Compared to residents who live in orderly, peaceful neighborhoods, residents of disordered neighborhoods are more likely to experience a number of negative effects that cannot be explained by individual or family demographic characteristics alone. Neighborhood researchers have identified breakdowns in social organization and subsequent feelings of social alienation as the mechanism most likely to moderate the relationship between neighborhood disorder and poor psychosocial outcomes (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). One promising model explaining this mechanism further identifies mistrust, powerlessness, normlessness, and social isolation as essential components of social alienation (Ross & Mirowsky, 2006).

Applications of social organization models to promote social justice for youth in urban communities, however, are currently limited. Based on an extensive

review of neighborhood research, Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn (2000) conclude that greater attention to theoretical explanations is needed in order to interpret research findings in ways that can guide community-based interventions for youth. Neighborhood research studies do not provide theoretical explanations that relate the experiences of growing up in disordered neighborhoods to the accomplishment of developmental tasks and subsequent long-term outcomes. Theories from developmental psychology, specifically Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological perspective and Erikson's psychosocial theory, can be utilized to establish a conceptual link between disordered neighborhoods, limited social organization, and individual outcomes for children and adolescents in ways that can inform social justice interventions for youth in these communities.

Integration of these theories with neighborhood research findings suggests that disorder in neighborhoods negatively influences children's and adolescents' interactions with significant others via normlessness and social isolation in ways that undermine their development of psychosocial competencies, instead leading to feelings of mistrust and powerlessness. Failure to develop trust and a sense of efficacy in childhood can disrupt identity development during adolescence, leading to difficulties connecting with others, being productive, and having a sense of integrity during adulthood. Interventions to combat the negative effects of neighborhood disorder for urban youth, therefore, need to provide structures that foster feelings of trust in others and self-efficacy through the establishment of social connectedness and socially appropriate norms. Given the multilayered influence of context on the development of these competencies, those interventions that target homes, schools, communities, and the interactions between them are likely to have the greatest influence on urban youth.

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT: POTENTIAL INTERVENTION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

There is growing awareness among policymakers that promoting positive development through programmed intervention can help youth overcome community disadvantage and avoid negative outcomes (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, & Hawkins, 2004). Consistent with this perspective, Positive Youth Development (PYD) programs funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services have been implemented nationwide to prevent youth maladjustment. These programs are designed to accomplish one or more of the following objectives: (1) provide opportunities for prosocial interactions with adults and peers; (2) foster feelings of resilience, self-determination, and self-efficacy; (3) promote social, emotional, cognitive, and moral competence; (4) foster the establishment of prosocial group norms and positive individual identities; and (5) foster spirituality and belief in the future (Catalano et al., 2004).

The authors of a recent review of 161 PYD programs identified 25 as incorporating adequate evaluation methods (i.e., quasi-experimental design with comparison

groups) with results (e.g., acceptable standard of statistical proof) that were deemed effective (Catalano et al., 2004). Examples of effective PYD programs from this review include Big Brothers-Big Sisters, Seattle Social Development Project, Success for All, and Midwestern Prevention Project. Effective programs were found to (1) incorporate multiple PYD objectives; (2) have a standard curriculum or structured activities to achieve their objectives; (3) implement the structured program for a period of nine months or longer; and (4) have methods to ensure fidelity to the program structure during implementation. Eight of the effective programs operated within one of the participants' immediate contexts (e.g., school or community); the remaining 17 implemented multicontext programs with activities in family, school, and community settings.

PYD Implementation

Successful implementation of PYD programs to promote social justice for youth in communities depends on both their effectiveness (i.e., ability to yield anticipated positive outcomes) and their sustainability (i.e., ability to be maintained over time). PYD research has consistently demonstrated that effectiveness depends, in part, on the use of a structured program and methods to ensure fidelity to program components during implementation. This line of research further demonstrates that sustainability depends on connections between members of the immediate contexts (e.g., family, school, and neighborhood) in which programs are implemented. In some studies, community mobilization efforts have been found to contribute to both intervention fidelity and inter-context connections in ways that support effectiveness of programs.

In their review of PYD programs, Catalano and colleagues (2004) identified adherence to a structured program protocol as an essential feature of effectiveness. Other research suggests, however, that similar types of prevention programs are often implemented without fidelity (Fagan, Hanson, Hawkins, & Arthur, 2008). In response to this weakness, methods have been developed to ensure program fidelity. The Communities That Care (CTC) framework, for example, is a prevention support system designed to increase the capacity of communities to implement evidence-based prevention programs. CTC includes the establishment of a planning board to assess community needs and select programs to meet those needs, as well as the use of multiple methods (e.g., fidelity checklists, program observations, participant surveys, staff training, and technical support) to ensure adherence to the selected programs during implementation. Use of the CTC framework has been demonstrated to yield high rates of adherence to PYD programs (Fagan et al., 2008).

Community mobilization has been defined as efforts that facilitate the engagement and explicit action of community members to address a specific community problem (Allison, Edmonds, Wilson, Pope, & Farrell, 2011). Community mobilization efforts have been shown to be effective in implementing and sustaining

PYD (Allison et al., 2011; Greenberg, Feinberg, Meyer-Chilenski, Spoth, & Redmond, 2007).

Given that members of disordered neighborhoods often feel powerless to change their situation, community mobilization for PYD programs may require supports from external partners. Indeed, two community mobilization projects designed to facilitate the implementation, effectiveness, and sustainability of PYD programs involved university partners for external support. The PROSPER (*PROMoting School-university Partnerships to Enhance Resilience*) project, a partnership between University of Pennsylvania and local communities, aims to mobilize communities in rural and small towns to implement evidence-based interventions to support positive youth development and reduce early substance abuse (Greenberg et al., 2007). PROSPER includes the establishment of strategic teams to select, implement, supervise, and sustain prevention programs. Results from a recent evaluation of PROSPER teams indicated that community demographics contributed significantly to team functioning six months after being established. Authors of this study conclude that in highly stressed, lower-resource, impoverished communities, external supports in terms of time and resources for team development may be necessary prior to program implementation. Similarly, results from a review of the multiple community mobilization projects, supported by the Clark Hill Institute at Virginia Commonwealth University, reveal that university support in the form of information about evidence-based programs, program evaluation methods, attention to treatment fidelity, and technical assistance are of benefit (Allison et al., 2011).

In sum, PYD programs aim to prevent negative outcomes for at-risk youth, including those from disadvantaged communities, by supporting the prosocial development of children and adolescents. Although PYD programs exist in many forms, those that are designed to promote multiple competencies through structured activities in more than one setting, and those that include methods to ensure adherence to program structure, have been shown to be the most effective. PYD implementation studies further demonstrate that, when implemented for social justice in disordered neighborhoods, effective and sustainable programs are those that also incorporate methods for community mobilization through the use of external partners.

SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR YOUTH IN URBAN DISORDERED COMMUNITIES: LESSONS FROM GLENVIEW PARK

Glenview is not unlike other inner-city neighborhoods in the United States where advocates for social justice attempt to organize community efforts to improve circumstances for youth in disordered communities. According to researchers Autry and Anderson (2007), Glenview (a pseudonym) consists of a federally funded housing complex, adjacent to several blocks of low-income housing and a neighborhood park. The housing complex, including 18 buildings each with

16 apartments, is designated for single mothers on welfare. It is surrounded by a nine-foot wrought-iron fence which itself is enclosed in an eight-foot cement block wall. Pedestrians, including children and adolescents, can access the outer neighborhood via a side gate that opens onto an alley leading to several streets of low-income housing. Many houses in this area have bars on the windows; other houses serve as places for drug sale and use. The side street off the alley also leads to Glenview Park, a recreation facility containing a track, basketball courts, playgrounds, and a sheltered picnic area. Although the park includes public restrooms, they are permanently locked to prevent use for drug and sexual activity by adolescents and adults. Adolescents who live in Glenview evidence high rates of truancy, drug use, violence, and teen pregnancy.

Due to concerns about the social condition of the Glenview neighborhood and the behavior problems of its youth, an advocacy group was formed to develop and implement a youth recreation program based on the assumption that structured recreation could combat neighborhood disadvantage (see Autry & Anderson, 2007, for full description). This group included members of several community and city agencies, who worked collaboratively throughout the course of one year, to plan, fund, and advertise the program prior to its implementation. Although initial interest was high, the program closed after one summer due to lack of participation by the youth. Paradoxically, failure of the program to remain open served to confirm beliefs about social disorder and contribute to feelings of hopelessness on the part of Glenview's children.

Following the closure of the Glenview recreation program, a qualitative study was undertaken to explore community member perceptions about the program specifically, and Glenview in general. Although the primary method of data collection for this study was interview, Autry and Anderson (2007) also employed participant observations and review of artifacts to triangulate their findings. Emergent themes from this inquiry centered around issues of social alienation related to (1) the physical and psychological separation between residents of the housing project and the surrounding community, (2) a lack of hope and trust between members of the community, which spread to members of the advisory board, and (3) the lack of parental involvement in the recreational program, which was viewed by many as the primary reason for its closure.

The failure of the Glenview Park recreation project serves to illustrate that there are multiple complexities to consider when promoting social justice for youth in urban communities with neighborhood disorder. Consistent with Ross and Mirowsky's (2009) hypothesis, the residents (adults and children alike) of Glenview experienced feelings of mistrust, powerlessness, normlessness, and social isolation related to living in a disordered neighborhood. Although it attempted to provide a forum for prosocial interactions between children and adults, the Glenview Park summer program failed to directly promote psychosocial competencies (e.g., self-efficacy), a characteristic of effective PYD programs.

Additionally, lack of attention to mesosystemic (i.e. home-community interaction) effects in the form of a community mobilization effort may have contributed to parental apathy toward the recreation program, which undermined youth attendance. Unfortunately, the subsequent closure of the program may have reinforced feelings of social alienation among the children and adolescents who reside in Glenview.

CONCLUSION

Contributions from developmental and community psychology, can aid psychologists in their attempts to promote social justice for youth in disordered urban communities. Developmental psychology demonstrates that interactions with significant others in immediate contexts support children and adolescent's attainment of psychosocial competencies (most importantly, trust, hope, self-efficacy, and social connectedness) that establish their identities. Within the field of community psychology, results of neighborhood research suggest that youth residing in poor, crime-ridden, inner-city neighborhoods may be at risk for failure to develop these competencies, as disorder in their communities directly and indirectly interferes with their interactions with others. Thus, interventions for inner-city youth (such as those known as Positive Youth Development programs) that promote positive interactions to explicitly foster psychosocial competencies across multiple contexts of child development can help children and adolescents achieve UNICEF's goal of development to the fullest potential regardless of their community of residence.

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