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ISBN

9780323990769

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Publication Date

2022

DOI

10.1016/bs.acdb.2022.04.002

Peer reviewed

Kindness towards all: Prosocial behaviors to address U.S. Latinx youth social inequities

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Abstract

Latinx youth in the United States face structural barriers that contribute to inequities across multiple domains (e.g., education, juvenile justice, healthcare systems), as racial biases permeate social institutions. The systemic oppression resulting from racism can be seen in disparities across many indicators of health, including physical health, education, socioeconomic conditions, and the overrepresentation of ethnic and racial minority individuals, including Latinx individuals, incarcerated and exposed to violence. We present an approach to combat social inequities and injustices by promoting and fostering prosocial behaviors (i.e., actions that benefit others) between majority and minority members of our society. Existing theories and research on the factors that can promote such behaviors across youth from different backgrounds is summarized

though we highlight work in U.S. Latinx youth. Factors that enhance and undermine prosocial behaviors towards diverse others is also summarized. Finally, some recommendations for intervention and policy efforts are briefly presented.



1. Social injustices and inequities in Latinx youth populations

1.1 Structural and systemic challenges

Latinx youth in the United States face structural barriers that contribute to inequities across multiple domains (e.g., education, juvenile justice, healthcare systems), as racial biases permeate social institutions (see [Espinola, Zhen-Duan, Suarez-Cano, Mowry-Mora, & Schultz, 2019](#)). The systemic oppression resulting from racism can be seen in disparities across many indicators of health, including physical health, education, socioeconomic conditions, and the overrepresentation of ethnic and racial minority individuals, including Latinx individuals, incarcerated and exposed to violence (see [Espinola et al., 2019](#)). U.S. Latinx families often face institutions and societal policies that limit access to opportunities, such as economic opportunities and high quality education (see [Espinola et al., 2019](#)). For example, U.S. Latinx students experience higher “push-out” rates (students are often pushed out of the education system as opposed to simply dropping out; [Doll, Eslami, & Walters, 2013](#)) than their White, European American peers and are thus at risk for living in poverty because of restricted educational opportunities (see [Espinola et al., 2019](#)). Structural inequalities are pervasive, resulting in experiences of both chronic and acute stress that can impact family processes and youth adjustment ([Flores et al., 2008](#)).

Many U.S. Latinx families face chronic stress that results from living in poverty, as Latinx families are disproportionately at risk for living in poverty with limited access to financial and community resources ([Berlan & Harwood, 2018](#)). U.S. Latinx families also experience acute stressors associated with navigating U.S. culture and societal systems (e.g., immigration; [Berry, 2017](#)). Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated many of the existing stressors for Latinx families because of the financial strain caused by the economic downturn as well as increases in prejudice toward ethnic/racial minority and low-SES populations during this historical event ([FBI, 2020](#)). Because of the systemic barriers and stressors faced by

U.S. Latinx families, it is important to understand positive development factors that can promote health and social well-being under conditions of environmental risk.

1.2 Prosocial behaviors as a mechanism of social justice

To address the many social injustice and inequity challenges requires a multilevel approach aimed at changing structural systems, laws and policies, and communities at the broadest level but also implementing programs and policies that foster and promote positive social interactions and relationships among diverse groups. For decades, social and behavioral scholars have studied the development and correlates of prosocial behaviors. Prosocial behaviors are defined as actions intended to benefit others (Carlo & Randall, 2002; see Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinard, 2006). These actions are quite varied and include sharing, donating, volunteering, comforting others, helping, and defending or rescuing persons in danger. As can be inferred, some of these behaviors are purposeful and structured (e.g., volunteering for a charity organization) and might require planning whereas other behaviors might be impulsive (e.g., rescuing a person in immediate danger) and conducted without much planning. In addition, prosocial actions can be motivated by selfish or instrumental concerns but other prosocial actions might be personally costly (psychologically or physically) and motivated primarily by the concern for others. For example, a person might choose to help someone else as a means to gain someone's trust for practical reasons or to gain social approval or status. In contrast, some persons might help someone in need even at their own personal physical health risk or even if doing so is financially costly. This latter form of prosocial behaviors is referred to as altruistic behaviors. Although enactment of altruistic behaviors can sometimes result in a self-benefit (e.g., improve one's mood), the primary intention is sufficiently powerful to override concerns with one's personal cost of helping. Although there are varied motives and circumstances that move distinct forms of prosocial behaviors, we assert that prosocial behaviors towards diverse others are fundamental actions that mitigate social inequities (see Davis, Carlo, & Maiya, 2021).

Importantly, however, there is ample evidence of individual differences in prosocial actions, and researchers have identified several core personal traits linked to these actions (Carlo, 2014). Individual differences in prosocial behaviors help us to understand the wide variability that exists in persons'

willingness to help diverse others even when social inequities and injustices are observed. For example, two strongly related characteristics: empathy and sympathy (Eisenberg, 1986; Staub, 2005) have been associated with multiple forms of prosocial behaviors. Scholars define empathy as feeling (positive or negative valence) the same as another and sympathy as feelings of sorrow, sadness, or concern for another. According to researchers, persons who are moved strongly to empathize or to sympathize with another who is in distress, are more likely to engage in prosocial behaviors behaviors (see Batson, 1998, for a review). Such persons are often primarily motivated to help others in need in order to reduce the needy others' distress.

A second set of characteristics that is closely tied to empathy, sympathy, and prosocial behaviors is strongly internalized or endorsed moral principles and values (Eisenberg, 1986). Principles that place high regard for reducing suffering in others, treating others humanely, caring for others, and belief in treating others equitably with respect, fairness, and justice, are all examples of values that can induce prosocial actions. Some values associated with prosocial actions might be more strongly endorsed in specific cultural groups such as familism (i.e., duty or obligation to, support to and from, and affinity to, the family unit; Knight & Carlo, 2012). Finally, these scholars assert that some altruistic and other prosocial behaviors are moved by both set of traits, empathy/sympathy and internalized principles. Indeed, Eisenberg and Fabes (1991) noted that empathy and sympathy can sometimes induce moral principles and values and vice versa—sometimes, moral principles and values can induce empathy and sympathy (see also Hoffman, 2000).

Given that minoritized groups, including U.S. Latinx youth, are the primary targets of social injustices and inequities and that such groups are often economically, politically, and educationally deprived as a result of a legacy of social and systemic oppression, we assert the critical need to foster and promote prosocial behaviors between majority and minority groups in order to facilitate harmonious intergroup relations that can break down social barriers. Multiple forms of prosocial behaviors have the potential to facilitate intergroup cooperation and positive development for marginalized youth (Taylor, 2020), and therefore, considering prosocial behaviors that occur in diverse situations and with different motivations is important. The present essay presents an overview of scholarship on prosocial development with a focus on the relevance of this work as an avenue towards addressing social injustices and inequities that affect minority youth.

1.3 Prosocial behaviors as a marker of social wellbeing and health

The research on prosocial behaviors in the past decade has revealed the fact that prosocial behaviors are much more than a marker of morality. There is accumulating evidence that prosocial behaviors are also linked to important markers of health including psychological adjustment (e.g., depression, anxiety, self esteem; Carlo, 2014; Davis et al., 2016), physical health (e.g., c-reactive proteins, Schreier, Schonert-Reichl, & Chen, 2013), health behaviors (e.g., exercise, sleep; Spitzer & Hollmann, 2013), academic performance (Carlo, White, Streit, Knight, & Zeiders, 2018), and externalizing behaviors (e.g., illegal substance use, delinquency, aggression, bullying; Carlo et al., 2014; Davis, Carlo, Hardy, Olthuis, & Zamboanga, 2017; Walters, 2020). Moreover, a number of sociocognitive and socioemotional traits, such as perspective taking, moral reasoning, empathy and sympathy, guilt, shame, and interpersonal trust, are related to prosocial behaviors (see Carlo, 2014). Finally, youth who exhibit high levels of prosocial behaviors also exhibit positive interpersonal relationships with parents and peers, and are less exposed to violent media (Carlo, McGinley, Hayes, & Martinez, 2012; see Carlo, 2014). As a whole, then, this body of work shows that prosocial behaviors are a marker of social and behavioral well-being and health.

The existing work thus suggests that prosocial behaviors can enhance personal and social health and well-being. This is important because the challenges of addressing social injustice and inequities require attention to the personal health and social well-being of minority group members. Enhancing minority group members' personal health and social well-being empowers such persons to successfully integrate into their communities. Moreover, the negative link between prosocial behaviors and antisocial behaviors provides an avenue to foster intergroup harmony and cooperation and to simultaneously mitigate selfishly motivated and harmful actions toward outgroup members. This approach, in general, presents a holistic, strengths-based approach to redress social inequities that might affect often-marginalized and vulnerable minority groups. Thus, the development of a prosocial orientation may impact social inequities and disparities over time. Furthermore, the socialization of such prosocial behaviors and orientation may be an essential pathway for addressing social inequities and disparities.



2. Traditional approaches to the study of prosocial development

2.1 Cognitive developmental theories and research

Cognitive developmental theorists (e.g., Piaget, Kohlberg), who highlighted the role of sociocognitive skills such as perspective taking and moral reasoning, guided early developmental studies of prosocial development. Perspective taking refers to understanding the thoughts, feelings, and social circumstances of others and is deemed to develop with age across childhood and adolescence (see Carlo, 2014). Moral reasoning, on the other hand, is how children and adolescents resolve dilemma scenarios where one's needs are in conflict with another's (see Carlo, 2014). In prohibitive dilemma scenarios, the protagonist must decide between violating a law or formal social rule and meeting one's own needs or desires, and sometimes such dilemmas can have serious life-threatening consequences (see Carlo, 2014). In prosocial dilemma scenarios, the tension is between helping someone who is in distress or need and meeting one's own needs or desires (see Carlo, 2014). Importantly, however, in prosocial moral reasoning scenarios, the situation is serious but not life threatening. This element creates dilemmas that are personal decisions and not subject to influence from formal laws or rules. In general, substantive evidence reliably demonstrates that both perspective taking and moral reasoning (especially prosocial moral reasoning) are positively related to prosocial behaviors, including altruistic behaviors (Carlo et al., 2014; Carlo, Knight, McGinley, Zamboanga, & Jarvis, 2010; Eisenberg, Eggum-Wilkens, & Spinrad, 2015).

2.2 Traditional socialization theories and research

A distinct line of research has focused on the roles of socialization agents (e.g., parents, peers, media) and socioemotive traits such as empathy and sympathy (Eisenberg, 1986; Hoffman, 2000; Staub, 1978). Although there is increasing work on the study of various socialization agents (see Carlo, 2014; Eisenberg et al., 2015), the bulk of the research has focused on the influence of parents. Moral socialization scholars have identified several parental practices that are associated with prosocial and moral development. For example, harsh and authoritarian parenting practices, that might include the use of corporal punishment and power assertion, has been linked to low levels of prosocial behaviors (Carlo, Knight, McGinley, & Hayes, 2011). In contrast, supportive and authoritative parenting styles, that often includes

inductive (child-centered and the use of explanations) disciplining practices, is related to high levels of prosocial behaviors (Krevans & Gibbs, 1996). Other research has examined the role of helicopter parenting (i.e., McGinley, 2018), proactive parenting (Padilla-Walker, Fraser, & Harper, 2012), prosocial parenting practices (e.g., use of social and material rewards, moral conversations) and their links to prosocial behaviors (Davis & Carlo, 2018). Moreover, these scholars have focused on the central role of empathy and sympathy (see Carlo, 2014) as important predictors of prosocial behaviors, and there is ample supportive evidence for this assertion (Eisenberg et al., 2015).

As the body of work that validated the assertions of both cognitive developmental and moral socialization theorists accumulated, some scholars posited integrative approaches such as social cognitive theories (Bandura, 1986; Eisenberg, 1986; Staub, 1978). These latter theories postulated socialization mechanisms that foster sociocognitive and socioemotive traits that were subsequently linked to prosocial and moral development. Much of the existing research on these traditional socialization approaches, for example, provides general support that parenting predicts children's development of empathy, sympathy, perspective taking, and moral reasoning (see Carlo, 2014; Davis & Carlo, 2018), which in turn, predict prosocial behaviors (Davis & Carlo, 2018; Gülseven & Carlo, 2021).

2.3 Cultural socialization theories and research

Theoretical approaches that acknowledged sociocognitive, socioemotive and social influences were an important advance in prosocial development work. However, given the accumulating evidence of culture group differences in prosocial and altruistic behaviors (see de Guzman, Do, & Kok, 2014; Kumru, Carlo, Mestre, & Samper, 2012), there was a need to also incorporate culture-related mechanisms to account for such differences.

Cultural developmental scholars had noted the impact of culture-related practices, beliefs, and physical settings that were posited to influence child development (Super & Harkness, 1997; Whiting & Whiting, 1975). García-Coll et al. (1996) had also presented an integrative model of ethnic minority youth that outlined systemic and social oppressive forces and culture-related mechanisms that impacted ethnic and racial minority children's development (García-Coll et al., 1996). Importantly, within the field of prosocial development, Knight and his associates (Knight, Bernal, Garza, & Cota, 1993; Knight, Carlo, Mahrer, & Davis, 2016) had

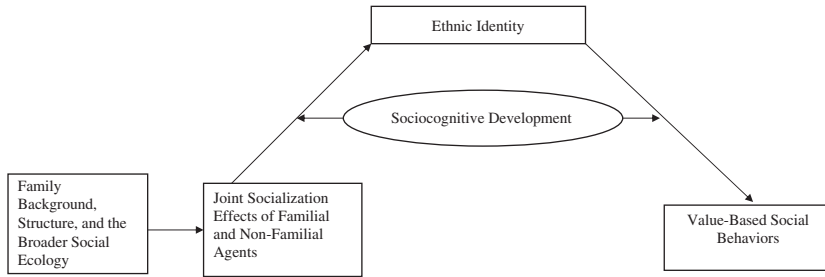


Fig. 1 A cultural socialization model of cooperative and competitive behaviors. Adapted from Knight, G. P., Bernal, M. E., Garza, C. A., & Cota, M. K. (1993). A social cognitive model of ethnic identity and ethnically-based behaviors. In M. E. Bernal, G. P. Knight (Eds.), *Ethnic identity: Formation and transmission among Hispanics and other minorities* (pp. 213–234). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

demonstrated the central role of ethnic socialization practices, ethnic identity (as a mediator), and sociocognitive skills (as a moderator) in accounting for U.S. Mexican children’s cooperative behaviors (see Fig. 1).

Extending these and other (e.g., Laosa & Henderson, 1991) prior theories and models, Carlo and his colleagues (Carlo & Conejo, 2019; Raffaelli, Carlo, Carranza, & Gonzales-Kruger, 2005) proposed an *Ecocultural Model of U.S. Latinx Youth Development* (see Fig. 2) that delineated distal (e.g., school and receiving community context characteristics, major life events, history and origin context of immigration, family and non-familial socialization agents) and specific proximal (e.g., ethnic identity, child discrimination experiences, stress appraisals, perspective taking, moral reasoning, cultural values, empathy, self regulation) influences that impact subsequent U.S. Latinx youth adjustment (including prosocial behaviors).

The approach is founded on the notion that there are culture-related assets and risks that affect U.S. Latinx youth development. Indeed, identification of culture-related mechanisms are necessary to unpack the influence of culture on youth development. Moreover, the approach assumes that there are individual differences in how youth process exposure to the various distal and proximal influences. For example, several traditional Latinx ethnocentric beliefs and concepts, such as familism, *respeto* (i.e., respect), *bien educado* (i.e., good manners and moral character), ethnic identity, and humility, are deemed protective and enhancing factors (Bridges et al., 2012; Knight et al., 2010). In fact, these culture-associated values inherently orient Latinx youth towards prosociality because they guide the youth in being considerate of others and the broader group, and less about themselves.

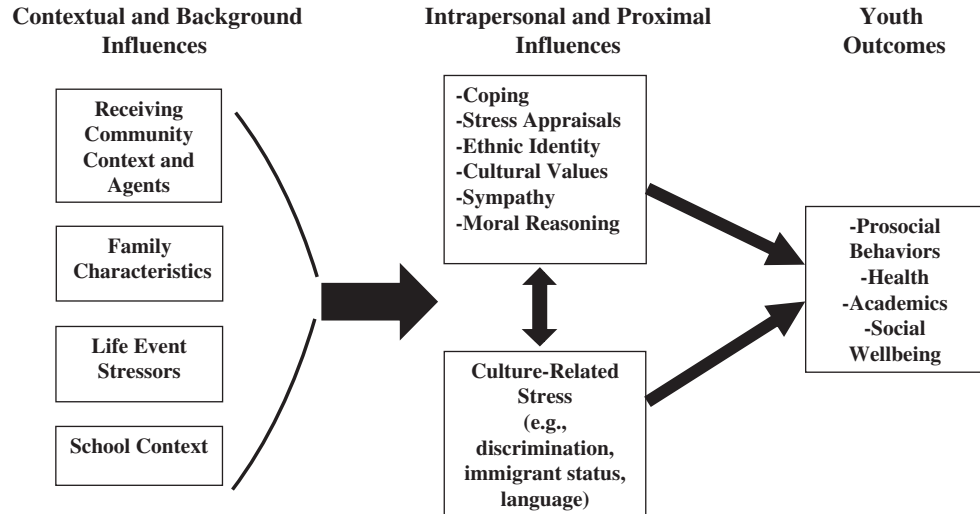


Fig. 2 An ecocultural model of U.S. Latinx Youth Development. Adapted from Carlo, G., & Conejo, L. D. (2019). *Traditional and culture-specific parenting of prosociality in U.S. Latinx youth*. In D. Laible, L. Padilla-Walker, & G. Carlo (Eds.), *Oxford handbook of parenting and moral development*. New York: Oxford University Press.

In addition, because these concepts are highly valued in most Latinx families, there are familial culture-based socialization practices that are designed to transmit these values and notions to their youth.

Of the various culture-related resiliency factors, perhaps the two most studied are familism and ethnic identity. Several studies show positive relations between familism and care-based, other-oriented prosocial behaviors in U.S. Latinx youth (Knight, Carlo, Basilio, & Jacobson, 2015; Streit, Carlo, Killoren, & Alfaro, 2018). Knight, Mazza, and Carlo (2018) show empirical relations of developmental trajectories of familism (presumably being developed through ethnic socialization experiences) to prosocial behaviors. Interestingly, familism has been linked to prosocial behaviors via its effects on perspective taking and prosocial moral reasoning (Knight et al., 2015). Such findings suggest that cultural values can sometimes enhance prosocial and moral tendencies associated with prosocial behaviors in U.S. Latinx youth. There is also substantive support for positive links between ethnic identity (and bicultural identity) and U.S. Latinx youth prosocial behaviors (e.g., McGinley et al., 2020; Streit et al., 2018). This latter work suggests that U.S. Latinx youth who strongly adopt a strong ethnic or bicultural identity may be particularly motivated to engage in prosocial behaviors and that ethnic identity might encumber the traditional Latinx value of *bien educado*.

There is also evidence on the enhancing effects of ethnic socialization practices (see Carlo & Conejo, 2019). For example, Knight et al. (2016) demonstrated longitudinal empirical links between ethnic socialization practices and prosocial tendencies via youth endorsements of familism and ethnic identity. Similarly, in a recent study, Streit, Carlo, and Killoren (2020) showed evidence that parental ethnic socialization practices indirectly predicted prosocial behaviors through ethnic identity. These, and other studies (see Carlo & Conejo, 2019), support existing theories (Carlo & Conejo, 2019; Knight et al., 2015) of prosocial behaviors that assert the intervening role of ethnic identity in U.S. Latinx youth.

However, as ethnic/racial minorities in the U.S., there are also culture-related factors that enhance risk and can undermine U.S. Latinx youth adjustment (including prosocial behaviors). For example, discrimination experiences, including immigration status and language-based experiences, have been linked to lower levels of prosocial and altruistic behaviors (Brittian et al., 2013; Davis et al., 2016). In addition, acculturative stress, family conflict, and economic stress seem to have similar effects on U.S. Latinx youth prosocial behaviors (Davis, Carlo, Streit, & Crockett, 2018; McGinley et al., 2010; Streit, Carlo, Ispa, & Palermo, 2021).

2.4 Integration of traditional and cultural socialization theory and research

There is some research that has integrated traditional models of socialization and culture-specific socialization models in order to better understand parents' impact on prosocial development. For example, Streit and colleagues (2021) examined traditional parenting practices (i.e., acceptance and harsh parenting) and culture-group specific parenting practices (i.e., ethnic socialization) as predictors of multiple forms of prosocial behaviors via ethnic identity and familism values. In general, ethnic socialization practices predicted multiple forms of prosocial behaviors, including altruistic prosocial behaviors, via ethnic identity and familism (Streit, Carlo, Ispa, & Palermo, 2021; Streit, Carlo, Knight, White, & Maiya, 2021). In contrast, acceptance and harsh parenting directly predicted multiple forms of prosocial behaviors (Streit, Carlo, Ispa, & Palermo, 2021; Streit, Carlo, Knight, et al., 2021). This study illustrates the distinct predictive mechanisms of traditional parenting practices and culture-group specific parenting practices on U.S. Latinx youth prosocial behaviors over time.

Taken together, socialization experiences, especially parenting and family influences, are intricately linked to prosocial development (see Carlo, 2014; Eisenberg et al., 2015) among both majority and minority groups. Therefore, such experiences are important to understand as they have the potential to combat the transmission of racism and prejudice across generations via the promotion of social justice orientations and prosocial actions towards diverse others.



3. Application of prosocial behaviors to address social injustice and inequities

3.1 A strengths-based approach to address social inequities and injustices

A recently posited model, *A U.S. Latinx Youth Model of Social Inequities*, highlighted prosocial behaviors as a key factor that might mitigate social inequities because of the impacts of prosocial behaviors on individuals and broader societal patterns (Davis et al., 2021). Overall, the evidence suggests that prosocial behaviors can be an avenue for promoting social well-being; intergroup harmony and cooperation among diverse populations and can reduce inequities by placing U.S. Latinx youth on a trajectory of social connection and integration. Prosocial behaviors can contribute to social integration, including deeper connections to community among

youth as well as social engagement among U.S. Latinx youth (Frisco, Muller, & Dodson, 2004; Perez, Espinoza, Ramos, Coronado, & Cortes, 2010). Community connection, in turn, predicts indicators of social engagement and connection, including voting and connection to school (Frisco et al., 2004; Watson, Battistich, & Solomon, 1997). Moreover, promoting prosocial engagement can promote better health outcomes and reduces health inequities, including mental and physical health outcomes (Davis et al., 2016; Memmott-Elison, Holmgren, Padilla-Walker, & Hawkins, 2020; Schreier et al., 2013). In addition, researchers have demonstrated that prosocial behaviors can also buffer the negative effects of stress on physical health by elevating levels of neurotransmitters, such as oxytocin, that can promote physical health (Brown & Brown, 2015; Poulin & Holman, 2013).

While there is evidence that prosocial behaviors generally increase over the course of adolescents (Van der Graaff, Carlo, Crocetti, Koot, & Branje, 2018), there are also individual differences in prosocial behaviors that are important to consider. Understanding factors that foster prosocial behaviors is important, as there are a number of factors that can undermine these behaviors. For youth of color, there is evidence that discrimination and cultural stress experiences might inhibit altruistic behaviors (Brittian et al., 2013; Davis et al., 2016). Other forms of stress (e.g., economic stress and relational variables (e.g., family conflict, parental psychological control) have also been linked to lower levels of prosocial behaviors, including altruistic behaviors (Davis et al., 2018; Mouratidis, Sayil, Kumru, Selcuk, & Soenens, 2019). There are also sociocognitive and socioemotive variables that explain individual differences for diverse youth (e.g., moral reasoning, empathy; see Carlo, 2014; Taylor, O'Driscoll, Dautel, & McKeown, 2020) and these factors are particularly important to consider among majority youth as they help explain individual differences.

3.2 Predictors of prosociality between majority and minority groups

It is particularly important to promote prosocial behaviors toward social out-group members in order to promote group harmony and integration. The bulk of the research on prosocial behaviors has focused on types of helping, differentiated by helping in specific contexts and with differing motivations (see Carlo, 2014). However, helping behaviors also differ depending on target (Padilla-Walker & Christensen, 2011). It is critical to understand factors that promote prosocial behaviors toward cultural outgroup members in order to break down barriers and reduce “othering” processes that

contribute to prejudice and discrimination. While evidence on the development of prosocial behaviors toward out-group members is scarce, there is some evidence that empathy and prosocial behaviors might differ depending on the characteristics of the target (Fabi & Leuthold, 2018; Yi, Todd, & Mekawi, 2020). Specifically, there is evidence that persons perceive light-skinned individuals as feeling more pain and also report more empathy toward light skinned individuals than dark-skinned individuals (Fabi & Leuthold, 2018), which suggests that racial bias is a driver of reduced empathic concern toward darker skinned individuals. Other work shows that color-blind racial attitudes were directly, negatively associated with intergroup empathy (Yi et al., 2020).

Discrimination experiences can also undermine prosocial behaviors, particularly altruistic prosocial behaviors (Brittian et al., 2013; Davis et al., 2016). U.S. Latinx adolescents who are experiencing discrimination may be drained of the cognitive and emotional resources that are necessary to engage in prosocial behaviors (see Batson & Powell, 2003; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). These processes may lead to reduced levels of prosocial behaviors toward others, especially forms of helping primarily intended to benefit others with no expected benefit to the self (i.e., altruistic behaviors). There is evidence with Latinx youth, including recent immigrant youth, that discrimination experiences are negatively associated with altruistic prosocial behaviors (Brittian et al., 2013; Davis et al., 2016). Similarly, in a cross-sectional study of U.S. Mexican college students, McGinley et al. (2010) found that acculturative stress (which can include discrimination experiences and social stress associated with adapting to a new culture; Kulis, Marsiglia, & Nieri, 2009) was positively associated with multiple forms of prosocial behaviors but was negatively associated with altruistic prosocial behaviors. Discrimination and culture-related stressors, then, are a threat to undermine selflessly-motivated prosocial behaviors, which might be particularly important for majority-minority group members to cooperate and share resources more equitably.

While discrimination experiences might mitigate prosocial behaviors, sociocognitive and emotional characteristics can promote such behaviors. Specifically, prosocial moral reasoning and empathy are two characteristics that are salient predictors of multiple forms of prosocial behaviors (Fabes, Carlo, Kupanoff, & Laible, 1999). Empathic concern (i.e., feeling negative emotions consistent with the experience of another person; Hoffman, 2000) and prosocial moral reasoning may serve as indicators of moral internalization and intrinsic moral motivation and may be positively linked to multiple

forms of prosocial behaviors. Perspective taking (i.e., cognitive component that reflects understanding the condition of another), on the other hand, is thought to be an important precursor to both empathic concern and prosocial moral reasoning (see Eisenberg & Fabes, 1990; Parker & Axtell, 2001). Research has consistently demonstrated links between prosocial moral reasoning and empathy, and multiple forms of prosocial behaviors (Carlo, Knight, et al., 2010; Carlo, Mestre, Samper, Tur, & Armenta, 2010; Eisenberg, 2002; see Carlo & de Guzman, 2009). Taken together, this work suggests avenues for fostering greater prosociality and altruistic tendencies, which can promote positive intergroup relationships.

3.3 Implications for interventions aimed at addressing social injustices

Prosocial behaviors include micro-level actions (helping specific persons) and also broader, community-focused actions (e.g., civic engagement). Civic engagement includes behaviors such as volunteering, voting, community activism, and involvement in groups that work to better the community (Keeter, Zukin, Andolina, & Jenkins, 2002). Understanding factors that promote prosocial behaviors aimed at broader social change are important because such actions can result in structural and systemic changes necessary to modify the legacy of bias and prejudice towards minorities. However, such change is founded on agency in persons who are willing to act prosocially towards out-group members. Majority group members must commit themselves to engage in prosocial actions towards minority group members to reduce social injustice. At the same time, however, minority group members must be willing to reciprocally engage in prosocial actions with majority group members to reduce social marginalization and isolation. Thus, the need for interventions that foster prosociality among both majority and minority group members is necessary for successful intergroup harmony and integration for minoritized youth, including U.S. Latinx youth.

Although there is great need for further developmental research on ingroup/outgroup prosocial behaviors, there is promising evidence for intervention approaches that could address social inequities. For example, the work on sociocognitive and socioemotive mechanisms (e.g., prosocial moral reasoning, sympathy) suggests intervention points to develop programs that increase prosocial tendencies, including altruistic prosocial behaviors. Other scholarly work on parenting shows promise for parenting education programs that could encourage the use of authoritative and inductive parenting practices, prosocial parenting practices (especially the use of

social rewards), and proactive parenting practices to foster youth prosocial behaviors. Researchers have also identified factors that can mitigate prosocial behaviors including stress (e.g., economic stress), family conflict, deviant peer affiliation, and harsh parenting practices. Among U.S. Latinx youth, programs that strengthen and support ethnic socialization practices, cultural values (e.g., familism), and ethnic identity could facilitate prosocial actions, which could result in greater social integration and cooperation. In contrast, efforts that teach youth to manage or avoid exposure to discrimination and cultural stress could also enhance prosocial tendencies.

The challenges of addressing the long-standing and enduring social injustices and inequities in our systems are great. The research on prosocial development provides promise in identifying foundational mechanisms of positive change at the individual level that can translate into positive change at the interpersonal, group, and societal levels. Creating reciprocated prosocial actions between majority and minority group members is a daunting task. Successful intervention likely requires prevention and intervention efforts that can disrupt the pattern of selfishly motivated and harmful attitudes, and actions towards outgroup members that can be acquired early in life. Although interventions are needed to redress antisocial attitudes and behaviors, intervention programs in early childhood will be of utmost importance to foster early prosocial tendencies towards diverse others and to mitigate antisocial development. These comprehensive efforts that are designed to promote prosocial behaviors towards all are much needed to help redress the historical systemic biases and inequities that plague our societies.

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