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The Cultural Contexts of Children's Prosocial Behaviors

Maria Rosario T. de Guzman, Kieu Anh Do, and Car Mun Kok

In 1976 Beatrice Whiting famously urged researchers to “unpackage” the concept of culture and related constructs. She highlighted the need in social and behavioral research to tease out the complex and often interwoven factors that might underlie superficial culture group differences in child outcomes and suggested looking more closely at the child’s learning environment, the details within which could provide important insight regarding children’s behaviors that could better explain how culture might be manifested in the developmental landscape (Whiting, 1976). Almost 40 years later, the importance of culture in children’s development is widely recognized, nonetheless researchers continue to wrestle with questions of what role culture plays in socialization, how it is manifested, and consequently how to measure its effects on child outcomes. In this chapter, we review current research on the interplay between culture and prosocial behavior and attempt to identify future directions toward this end.

The Challenge of Defining Culture

The challenge of defining “culture” and conceptualizing its manifestation has had a long history (Erickson, 2002; Super & Harkness, 2002). In 1952, Kroeber and Kluckohm identified 164 definitions and usages of the term (Munroe & Munroe, 1997), and these definitions and conceptualizations have evolved in many ways over the years (Erickson, 2002; Jahoda, 2012). E. B. Tylor’s broad definition of culture in the late 1800s, for example, included the belief systems, knowledge, values, and all other practices developed by people participating in a particular community (Erickson, 2002). Culture was thus conceptualized as a somewhat static entity that was acquired in whole by people within a particular community.

Newer conceptualizations of culture vary (Jahoda, 2012). However, culture is generally viewed today as more dynamic, takes into account generational and historical change, emphasizes symbolic meanings, and depicts members of a community as acquiring the knowledge, habits, and norms through active participation in cultural practices throughout the lifetime. Moreover, culture is not viewed as a unitary entity acquired in whole. Instead, members participate in practices and gain cultural knowledge in various domains and to varying degrees, and can participate in multiple cultural communities (Cole & Tan, 2007; Erickson, 2002).

Cross-National and Cross-Ethnic Studies on Children's Prosocial Behaviors

Societies differ along many dimensions that have implications for prosocial behavior. John Whiting and Beatrice Whiting and their research associates conducted one of the earliest systematic culture-comparative studies in children's socialization in their ground-breaking Six Cultures study (1975; see also Whiting & Edwards, 1988). Using a standardized set of measures and data collection methods that drew from both psychology and anthropology (Whiting et al., 1966), they sought to document children's daily lives and learning environments to better understand how regularities and differences in their developmental landscape led to various outcomes. Among the many insights that emerged from this work were higher incidences of prosocial (e.g., nurturing, cooperative) behaviors in children from subsistence-based economies where both parents had high workloads (i.e., Kenya, Philippines, Mexico) compared with children from more complex and industrialized communities (i.e., Japan, United States, India).

More recently, the individualism-collectivism (I-C) dichotomy or some variation thereof (e.g., autonomy vs. relatedness) has been used frequently to frame and explain group differences. In broad terms, the individualism-collectivism distinction places nations or culture groups along a continuum based on the degree to which they espouse certain values—with some societies tending toward the valuation of independent and individual rights and goals and others valuing group goals and the perception of self as attached to the larger society (Triandis, 2001).

That broad culture-level variables might be reflected in children's prosocial behaviors has had some empirical support. Researchers suggest that children from societies that foster group orientation and a more collective sense of self (i.e., as opposed to individualistic norms) might be more inclined to express other-oriented behaviors such as those prosocial in nature in contrast to peers from more individualist oriented societies. For example, Israeli children from kibbutz communities, which typically emphasize communal living and high cooperation to meet shared goals, have been shown to display more prosocial, cooperative, and other-wise other-oriented behaviors compared with their urban -dwelling peers (Madsen & Shapira, 1977; Shapira & Madsen, 1969, 1974). Eisenberg and colleagues

(Eisenberg, Hertz-Lazarowitz, & Fuchs, 1990) also found that kibbutz children used more sophisticated modes of prosocial reasoning, particularly reciprocity and needs-based thinking, compared with nonkibbutz peers, who reported more pragmatic and hedonistic modes of thinking. Partially supporting and partly contradicting these findings, Hollos (1980) found that among 6- to 8-year-old Hungarian children, those who were growing up in the context of farming communities where children are expected to contribute to household and farm chores collectively within their families scored lower on role- and perspective-taking measures compared to same-age peers who were in schools that espoused a collective ideology. However, children growing up in farms showed higher cooperative and lower competitive scores than schoolchildren, suggesting that cooperation, responsible action, and concern for others might be better fostered through exposure to actual experiences of collective participation and responsible work rather than direct teaching about group orientation.

More recent evidence for group differences in children's prosocial behaviors along the I-C dimension has been mixed. Stewart and McBride-Chang (2000) examined sharing behaviors of Western Caucasian (Australian, English, American, South African and Canadian) and Asian (Chinese, Thai, Indian, and Japanese) second grade students in Hong Kong. Asian children marginally shared more than Western peers, which appeared to be partly explained by the predominantly other-oriented parenting styles of their caregivers, which was in turn related to their levels of sharing. Yagmurlu and Sanson (2009), using teacher and parent reports as well as behavioral observations, found similar rates of prosocial behaviors in Turkish Australian and Australian preschoolers. Kärtner, Keller, and Chaudry (2010) found no differences between prosocial reactions of Indian and German toddlers to an experimentally manipulated stimulus of distress. Trommsdorff, Friedlmeier, and Mayer (2007), also exposing children to an experimentally manipulated stimulus of an adult in need and distress, found that German and Israeli preschoolers displayed more prosocial behaviors than Malaysian and Indonesian children in an experimental setting. They reasoned that children in collective-oriented societies are more sensitive to the hierarchical nature of relationships and in- versus out-group distinctions and thus might be hesitant to help the distressed adult in the experiment.

Asian societies are typically depicted as valuing collective norms and group orientation. To this end, Rao and Stewart (1999) did not directly test U.S. children in their study involving Chinese and Indian 4-year-olds and their sharing behaviors, but noted that their Asian samples displayed higher rates of sharing compared to U.S. children in other studies utilizing similar methodology (Birch & Billman, 1986). Somewhat relatedly, Asian American adolescents with lower levels of self-reported acculturation generally reported willingness to self-sacrifice in more domains (i.e., school work, money, giving up a date) and a higher willingness to sacrifice for their parents over friends compared with European American peers (Suzuki & Greenfield, 2002). In contrast, European Americans and

highly acculturated Asian Americans were more willing to sacrifice for friends over their parents—supporting earlier researchers' contentions that Asians value collective norms and filial piety.

Within the same country, variability can be found among ethnic groups on the degree to which they espouse collective and family-oriented values as opposed to the fulfillment of individual goals (Garcia Coli, Meyer, & Brillon 2002; McDade, 1995; Zayas & Solari, 1994). Consistent with these patterns, Spivak and Howes (2011) observed African American children as being more likely to engage in prosocial behavior compared with white or Latino children, and Latino children displaying more prosocial behavior than whites. The body of work by Knight and colleagues documents differences in cooperation and resource allocation among Mexican American and European American children. Using game activities, they asked participants to distribute resources—allowing them to allocate more, the same as, or fewer resources to another person in relation to what they would receive (Knight & Kagan, 1977). Their findings showed that Mexican American children exhibited more cooperative resource allocation preferences than European American peers and that higher generational status was linked to lower preference for cooperative allocation. Those results are supported by their later work, which showed that children's sense of ethnic identity was related to patterns of resource allocation preference (Knight, Cota, & Bernal, 1993) and are consistent with recent research linking acculturation with lower levels of prosocial behavior (e.g., Armenta, Knight, Carlo, & Jacobson, 2011).

The Same Predictors in Different Cultural Contexts?

In addition to culture comparative studies, prosocial behavior research is also being conducted in an increasing number of societies around the world. Results of these studies are contributing to our understanding of the extent to which similar predictors operate across cultures. Research on parenting illustrates this point.

Parenting characterized by warmth, support, mutual respect, and nonpunitive punishment has long been linked to positive outcomes including those prosocial in nature. This pattern appears to be supported in several culture groups beyond majority populations in the United States. For example, Carlo and colleagues (Carlo, Knight, McGinley, & Hayes, 2011) found links between inductive parenting to six types of prosocial behaviors in both Mexican and European American youth. Whit-side-Mansell and collaborators (2003) found that responsive parenting was related to pro social behaviors in both African American and white preschoolers. Haskett, Allaire, Kreig, and Hart (2008) found that parental sensitivity, characterized by warmth and responsiveness was a significant predictor of prosocial behavior in both African American and Caucasian children. Croatian youth's levels of prosociality have been linked to parental levels of warmth and support and negatively to parental levels of psychological control (Kerestes, 2006). Similarly, Deković and

Janssens (1992) found in their study of children in the Netherlands that authoritative and democratic parenting was positively correlated with children's peer-nominated helpfulness as well as teacher-reported prosocial behavior.

Studies on other well-established predictors and correlates of prosocial behavior conducted in different societies are beginning to reveal the extent to which linkages are supported in various cultural contexts. For example, relations between sociocognitive factors and prosocial behavior has been shown in numerous studies, including those conducted outside the United States such as Spain, Brazil, India, Germany, Israel, and Malaysia (Carlo, Koller, Eisenberg, Da Silva, & Frohlich, 1996; Carlo, Mestre, Samper, Tur, & Armenta, 2010; Malti, Gummerum, Keller, & Buchmann, 2009; Trommsdorff et al., 2007). However, researchers have also noted that underlying cultural constructs could impact these relations. For instance, Kärtner and Keller (2012) challenge the universal applicability of the link between empathy and toddlers' understanding of others' mental states and consequently prosocial responding (e.g., Bischof-Köhler, 2012). They argue that empathically motivated prosocial responding necessitates both a sense of autonomy as an intentional agent and a sense of relatedness in order to sense others' distress; and that the development of autonomy and relatedness is impacted by cultural context. They found that toddlers' mirror recognition (representing the emergence of self-other recognition) was related to prosocial responding in Germany (autonomy-oriented) but not India (autonomy/related-oriented). They suggest alternative mechanisms surrounding prosocial behavior in children in relatedness-oriented cultures, for instance, emotional contagion, which is not contingent on children's ability to make self-other distinctions (Kärtner et al., 2010).

CROSS CULTURAL RESEARCH: REMAINING CHALLENGES

The near burgeoning of prosocial behavior research in various countries is allowing us to better understand the extent to which predictors and correlates operate similarly across culture groups, and findings from cross-cultural studies are beginning to shed light on the interplay between culture and prosocial behavior. Nonetheless, some challenges remain. First, the sampling of cultures is still somewhat limited. We still know little about the trajectory, correlates, and prosocial socialization experiences of children in less industrialized nations whose developmental landscape may be very different from children in North American samples more commonly represented in the literature. Second, what might account for cultural differences in prosocial behavior is lacking. Just as researchers examining societal-level differences in the I-C dimension highlight the need to examine within-culture variability (Kağitçibaşı, 1997; Leung & Brown, 1995; Oyserman et al., 2002), scholars in prosocial behavior also argue for the need to extend research beyond identifying group differences to include within-culture and intermediate

factors to help account for group variation (Carlo, Roesch, Knight, & Koller, 2001; Eisenberg & Wang, 2003).

Certainly, there are numerous ways by which culture is instantiated in children's developmental context. One promising area relevant to prosocial behavior is that of parental beliefs. Also known as "ethno" or "folk theories," parental beliefs have important implications for children's socialization. While societal values and cultural syndromes represent broad dimensions, parental ethnotheories represent underlying motivations for parenting practices and adults' organization of children's early experiences. In many ways, parenting beliefs mirror the broader societal values and beliefs, while at the same time impacting parenting practices that shape children's outcomes (Harkness & Super, 2006; Parmar, Harkness, & Super, 2004), and thus might serve as an intermediate and more proximal predictor of prosocial behavior.

Parental beliefs differ across groups in ways consistent with broad cultural variables (e.g., Miller, Wang, Sandel, & Cho, 2002; Rosenthal & Roer-Strier, 2001; Wang & Tamis-LeMonda, 2003). For instance, Chinese American parents reported valuing benevolence and prosocial goals (valuing the welfare of people with whom one has frequent personal contact) in their children more than (and followed by) Mexican Americans, African Americans, and European Americans (Suizzo, 2007). And parental beliefs and values have been linked to parenting practices (Padmawidjaja & Chao, 2010) and child prosocial outcomes (Stewart & McBride-Chang, 2000). Linking broad culture values, parenting beliefs, parenting practices, and prosocial behaviors could be helpful in beginning to explain how cultural syndromes and broad societal orientations are manifested in children's socialization.

Finally, few studies incorporate potential culture-specific factors that might have important implications for prosocial behavior. Researchers examining Asian families have identified alternative conceptualizations of parenting styles, taking into account Confucian ideals and culture-specific notions of parenting roles (e.g., Chao & Tseng, 2002). Similarly, are there unique culture-specific constructs that impact prosocial behaviors? One exception to this gap is research on Latino values and prosocial behavior (see Carlo, Knight, Basilio, & Davis, chapter 12, this volume). Researchers suggest specific values that hold special relevance to this culture group, such as *familismo*, or the valuing of close relationships and interdependence within the family; *bien educado*, or proper behavior in all settings as this reflects on one's family; and finally *simpatia*, which is akin to smooth personal relations even in the face of conflict (Durand, 2011). In our recent study contrasting European American and first- and second-generation Latina mothers' beliefs about prosocial behaviors (de Guzman, Brown, Carlo & Knight, 2012), we found elements of those unique cultural factors in parents' definitions of prosocial behaviors—with beliefs around *bien educado*, *familismo*, and *simpatia* especially evident in first-generation respondents' conceptions of prosocial behaviors, and least evident in Caucasian American mothers' representations. Related to this, Calderon-Tena, Knight, and Carlo (2011) found that familism values mediated

relations between prosocial parenting practices and prosocial behaviors of Mexican American youth. They concluded that prosocial parenting practices contribute to the internalization of familism values, which in turn promote prosocial behaviors. Research that identifies culture-specific values and factors is needed.

The Child in the Field: Anthropological Approach

Anthropological and field studies offer rich information about the daily lives, history, social structure, and beliefs and value orientations of societies in which children are reared (James, 2007; Tedlock, 2000). Studies of this nature are harder to mine for information on prosocial behaviors, as few, if any, specifically focus on this topic and most instead document pro social behavior and its socialization within a broader discussion of the child's learning environment. Nonetheless, studies drawing from fieldwork are uniquely important for understanding the interplay between culture and prosocial behaviors for at least three reasons.

First, ethnographic and other field-based studies allow us to examine prosocial behaviors in natural settings. Experimental studies are important in that they can isolate the impact of specific variables. Nonetheless, naturalistic observations and ethnographic accounts are needed to provide contextual validity to findings from laboratory settings, as well as data drawn from surveys and self- or other-reported measures more typically used to study prosocial behavior (Gurven & Winking, 2008; Reyes-Garcia, Godoy, Vadez, Huanca, & Leonard, 2006). Studies conducted directly in natural settings help us understand prosocial behavior and their correlates as they occur in the real world-performed within the context of daily activities, in a wide range of settings, and with various social companions-the organization of which are reflective of the child's broader social and cultural ecology (e.g., Super & Harkness, 2002; Tietjen, 1989).

For example, studies on sibling caregiving provide some support for research on infant presence and prosocial behavior. Evidence suggests that the presence of infants can elicit nurturance and related prosocial, empathic, and related responding in children and adults because of their relative helplessness and high need for care (e.g., Braten, 1996; Hay & Rheingold, 1983; Newman, 2000). Most of these studies, however, have been conducted within the confines of laboratory settings and have used highly controlled stimuli such as pictures or audio recordings of infant cries and vocalizations; and measured subsequent reactions through observations or self-reports (e.g., Catherine & Schonert-Reichl, 2011; Zahn-Waxler, Friedman, & Cummings, 1983). The cross-cultural generalizability of the power of infant presence and the extent to which this can be observed in settings outside the laboratory (e.g., in competition with a host of other powerful stimuli) has not been fully explored in mainstream psychological literature. However, there is ample support for the role that infant and toddler presence play in the expression and devel-

opment of prosocial behavior in children through research on sibling caregiving.

In many places around the world, children are assigned to care for their younger siblings or relatives (Weisner & Gallimore, 1977). This appears to be more common in societies where both parents have a high workload, extended family are easily accessible, and families are situated in subsistence-based economies that involve cultivation of land (Hirasawa, 2005; Whiting & Edwards, 1988). Rich descriptions of the sibling caregiving experience can be found for children in Yucatec (Gaskins, 2000, 2003), Zinacatec (Raiban-Jamin, Maynard, & Greenfield, 2003), and Guatemala Mayan (Rogoff, 2003); East and Sub-Saharan African (LeVine, Dixon, LeVine, Richman, Leiderman, Keefer, & Brazelton, 1994); and Philippine (Nydegger & Nydegger, 1966) societies, among many others. In such contexts, children routinely comfort, entertain, clean, feed, and otherwise tend to the needs of young infants and toddlers. In some societies, children not only assist primary caregivers, they are sometimes even favored over fathers to take over caregiving duties when the mother is not available, as is the case among sedentarized hunter-gatherer Baka in Southern Cameroon (Hirasawa, 2005).

Sibling caregiving represents a rich opportunity for prosocial behavior. Raiban-Jami and colleagues (2003), in their observations of Zinacatec Mayan children in Mexico and Wolof children in Senegal noted that in both societies the caregiver is both the socializer and the socialized-scaffolding the development and learning of their younger sibling while themselves learning numerous skills in their active participation in caregiving. For children in these two cultural communities, sibling caregivers practice a myriad of prosocial and cooperative strategies to maintain harmony among the children, which is emphasized though not necessarily verbalized during sibling care and multi age play. For example, it is inevitable that in young children sometimes complain, behave in ways deemed inappropriate in a particular setting, or otherwise fail to comply with their older siblings' exhortations. In such incidences, the sibling caregiver finds ways to resolve the situation and might use multiple strategies such as comforting the child or temporarily changing the topic to distract the noncompliant, complaining, or otherwise misbehaving younger sibling.

Few studies have directly examined how sibling care might foster children's prosocial behaviors. Ember's (1973) early investigations found that Luo children who were assigned animal care duties showed higher levels of dominance than other children; and that those assigned childcare duties were more nurturing than their peers. Our reanalysis of subsets of the Six Cultures Study and related data showed that while Philippine children generally showed higher rates of prosocial behavior than their U.S. counterparts, U.S. and Philippine children both displayed higher rates of overall prosocial behavior when they were in the company of infants (de Guzman, Carlo, & Edwards, 2008); and that Kikuyu children displayed higher rates of nurturing behaviors, specifically when engaged in infant sibling care, and higher rates of prosocial dominant behavior when in the company of toddlers (de Guzman, Edwards, & Carlo, 2005). Together, these studies support and lend eco-

logical validity to experimental findings that suggest that infant presence may encourage prosocial responding in children.

Related to the point of ecological validity, a second contribution of field-based studies is that they allow us to examine the interplay between prosocial behavior and a wide range of everyday activities and contexts, which vary substantially by cultural community. Cultural psychologists and anthropologists propose socialization models that focus on what they variously refer to as the "learning environment" (Whiting, 1980), "activity settings" (Farver, 1999), "ecocultural context" (Weisner, 2002), or the "developmental niche" (Super & Harkness, 1986) and how a child develops as a competent member of a given society and culture through her interactions therein. These researchers emphasize the importance of everyday settings in shaping children's behavior and suggest that regular participation in "mundane" daily activities is significant in the development of children as functioning members of their respective societies. Naturalistic and other forms of field research allow us to examine a broad range of contexts beyond the school or daycare setting, for example, children engaged in play, chores, rituals, and a host of other contexts—and how prosocial behavior might emerge in these different settings.

One example of an everyday activity where prosocial behavior may be evident is sibling care, as discussed earlier. Another example is children's participation in labor. Numerous ethnographic and other field-based studies document children's participation in house and economic work, which appear to also offer many opportunities for prosocial socialization. These experiences are particularly important because they serve as venues for the acquisition of practical skills and the socialization of cultural norms and serve as opportunities for apprenticeship for future roles (e.g., Rogoff, 2003; Maynard, 2005; see Padilla-Walker, chapter 7, this volume).

Lancy (2008) notes that while modern Western conceptualizations of childhood is that of a period of fragility and innocence, in fact, in many societies, children participate extensively in house and economic labor. Numerous ethnographic accounts corroborate this assertion, and culture comparative studies indicate differences in the amount of time children spend engaging in work across nations and socioeconomic groups (Ochs & Izquierdo, 2009; Tudge & Otero-Wanga, 2009).

Of course, for much of house and economic work, adults often innately scale down responsibilities to match children's developmental stage and capabilities (Lancy, 2008). Participation in work might begin by children's simply being in the vicinity of more capable workers, watching and observing those actors, and later participating in some capacity under adults' supervision or on their own (Paradise & Rogoff, 2009). Young children and toddlers might also perform simple tasks in close proximity to adults and later on their own (Ochs & Izquierdo, 2009). Alternatively, children might engage in work alongside adults, but are expected to produce less, as is the case of Mikea children in Madagascar who forage for edibles as part of adult groups but are not expected to accomplish the same level of success

(Tucker & Young, 2005). They might, for instance, gather younger tubers that are easier to dig for, or gather and carry fewer nuts and fruits compared with more able-bodied adults.

In our own fieldwork, we return to Tarong, the Ilocos village examined by Nydegger and Nydegger (1966) as part of the Six Cultures study (Whiting & Whiting, 1975). Like the parents observed and interviewed in the 1950s, residents today (including some of the children in the original data set, now grandparents) expressed strong expectations for prosocial behaviors (e.g., to be “matulungin” or helpful) and expected young children of 3 or 4 years to contribute to household and wage labor, as well as childcare of their siblings. However, before they are considered “may isip” (i.e., literally, “having a mind” or sense at about age 7), these expectations included simply not being in the way of adults’ work or to perform simple tasks such as pushing a baby’s hammock, or helping string tobacco leaves. Older children of 6 or 7 are expected to participate in more sophisticated ways, for example, helping gather weeds, tending to animals, and helping prepare food or clean the home (de Guzman, Edwards, & Brown, 2011).

Certainly, play is an important context in which children learn social rules, gain skills, and practice competencies important within their particular cultural context; and this topic has been covered extensively by numerous other researchers (e.g., Fagen, 2011). Many examples of socialization for prosocial and related behaviors can be drawn from fieldwork in this area. For example, Corsaro (2005) describes toddlers’ play in Italian preschools and details how a simple game of arranging chairs becomes a venue for children to practice cooperation and social inclusion skills. He also observed children engaging each other in the game and comforting each other when someone was hurt.

Goody (1991) describes Mbuti children of the Congo as having an area all to themselves for play-free of adult intervention and including a broad age range of children, between about 3 and 11 years old. Children play a wide range of games, including cooperative types that involve children working together. Moreover, there is a general emphasis on harmony among the children. They watch out for each other’s well-being and among themselves foster positive relations and disallow such negative behaviors as severe teasing.

Socialization for prosocial behavior in the context of play does not only occur among age mates. Examining episodes of family interactions, Sirota (2010) documents middle-class U.S. mother-child pairs engaging in imaginative make-believe play, during which mothers enter the child-constructed make-believe scenario to encourage compliance (e.g., coming to the dinner table). In so doing, mothers model cooperation and, perhaps unconsciously, expressed support for creativity and self-expression. Sirota (2010) describes this type of teaching as “fun morality:” in which cultural norms and targeted behaviors are socialized through coconstructed play.

Finally, field-based studies allow us to look at prosocial behavior in light of the

broader cultural system. Ethnographic research is particularly helpful in this regard because these studies typically draw from multiple sources of information (e.g., administrative data, interviews, observations) and document the daily lives of people as well as broader cultural constructs like societal values and beliefs (James, 2007). As such, when there is discussion of prosocial behavior and its socialization, we are able to examine these competencies in light of the broader cultural system. This is what is sometimes lacking in culture comparative work that might reveal interesting patterns of similarities or differences in frequency of performing prosocial behavior but do little to help us understand why such differences emerge.

For example, Jocano (1969) describes how, in a Philippine village in the Panay islands, expectations for sharing is especially high during mealtimes. Meals are highly regulated by parents, who monitor eating behaviors and communicate strong rules around propriety. For instance, children are not allowed to accept food from strangers, lest the family be thought of as being in need. Children are strongly expected to finish their food and are not allowed to express their dislike for what is served. Relevant to prosocial socialization, children as young as 1 year are urged to share their food, though the pressure is greatest for older children to share with younger siblings. These early experiences of sharing and prosocial expectations fit within the broader community norm of collective living; and high expectations for older siblings to share with younger ones is consistent with the age-based hierarchy found within the community.

In addition to broader cultural systems, ethnographic fieldwork data can potentially provide insight regarding prosocial socialization within changing social or ecological settings. Hirasawa (2005) conducted fieldwork among Baka pygmies in Southeastern Cameroon and noted that children from this community heavily engaged in infant care as secondary caregivers, much more than Aka and Efe pygmy children from neighboring Congo. Aka and Efe are also hunter-gatherers, are similarly involved in foraging, and have somewhat similar geographical terrain. Hirasawa (2005) posits that the introduction of land cultivation in the Baka community contributes to this difference-with mothers likely available nearby but working in the fields, thus both necessitating and allowing for some supervision of children as secondary caregivers. Moreover, with the introduction of land cultivation, there is less adult co-sharing of food resources as is the case in purely hunting and gathering subsistence, thus, there are fewer adults around to share in childcare duties and a higher reliance on children to care for younger siblings.

Miles (1994) describes task assignment and the use of devil stories (i.e., fictional stories that include the devil in one form or another) as a way to socialize both gender roles and cooperative and other desired behaviors among rural to urban migrants in Ecuador. She suggests that the use of these traditional techniques fits within the broader context of rural to urban migration, for instance, as traditional Andean culture clashes or otherwise encounters Hispanic culture, where values and ways of life found in traditional rural environments meet with urban environ-

ments. The devil stories, sometimes ghoulish and gruesome, reflect underlying themes of “moral salvation” through work, dignity of labor, and other traditional values that parents fear are being threatened as they move to the city. The use of stories for socialization of moral and prosocial themes within the context of the broader culture has also been described by numerous other researchers describing a wide range of communities including Gikuyu in Kenya (Kenyatta, 1966), Southern Baltimore families in the United States (Miller & Moore, 1989), and young kindergarten classrooms in modern-day China (Stevenson, 1991).

Research using ethnographic and other field-based methods thus can be an important resource for understanding how prosocial behavior is manifest in children’s daily lives in various cultures. These studies provide ecological validity to findings from laboratory and self-report studies, allow us to examine a wide range of contexts which themselves reflect the child’s ecological and cultural milieu, and allow us to understand prosocial behavior and its socialization as they fit within the broader cultural system.

Future Directions in the Study of Prosocial Behavior in Cultural Context

As the studies reviewed in this chapter reflect, efforts to examine the interplay between culture and prosocial behavior represent a vast diversity in the conceptualizations of prosocial behavior, the methodological approaches taken, and the philosophical underpinnings guiding researchers’ endeavors. Studies using the culture comparative approach—whether directly testing group differences (e.g., Kärtner et al., 2010) or testing factors and models in different cultural contexts (e.g., Rao & Stewart, 1999)—have contributed significantly to current understanding of systematic group variability in light of broad cultural factors, as well as the extent to which correlates of children’s prosocial behavior operate similarly across cultures (e.g., Carlo et al., 2011). In-depth cultural explorations of children’s learning environments, in contrast, have shed light (albeit, indirectly) on the sociocultural context of children’s prosocial behaviors and contribute to our understanding of how different prosocial behaviors are socialized through everyday experiences, the role of various socialization agents, as well as its role in the broader social and cultural ecology of the child. Furthermore, both cultural and cross-cultural research have allowed for us to examine a broader range of contexts and a wider array of different types of prosocial behaviors (de Guzman et al., 2008).

Future studies can benefit from several research directions. First, while both field research and more traditional modes of psychological inquiry (e.g., laboratory experiments, surveys) have contributed substantially to our current understanding of prosocial behavior and culture, studies that blend both approaches are still lacking. Mixed-methods designs are particularly useful when the phenomenon under study is complex and one data source cannot sufficiently answer the research ques-

tion (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011); they combine not just methodologies but also paradigms that might include a culture comparative approach (Karasz & Singelis, 2009) and in-depth studies of issues within specific cultures (Bartholomew & Brown, 2012). One early example of this type of research was Whiting and Whiting's (1975; Whiting & Edwards, 1988) Six Cultures study, which used ethnographic fieldwork, systematic behavioral observations, and a host of quantitative methods such as standardized tests. Similar studies examining prosocial behavior and culture in more recent years are virtually nonexistent. Certainly, mixed methods research tends to be more resource-intensive and challenging for many reasons (e.g., lack of training in either qualitative or quantitative methods; the need to collect multiple types of data). However, as Bartholomew and Brown (2012) note in their review of mixed-methods studies in cultural research, this approach can provide multiple benefits, for example, allowing one to examine phenomena from multiple perspectives and to test theories systematically while still being sensitive to the "subtlety and uniqueness in cultures" (p. 188).

Similarly, in-depth within-culture studies that take on a more indigenous approach are lacking. Ethnographic and other field-based studies reviewed in this chapter suggest that prosocial behavior might hold variable meaning in different cultural contexts. Certainly, expectations for prosocial behavior and the types of prosocial behavior children display or have the opportunity to engage in, vary substantially by sociocultural context (de Guzman et al., 2008). We are also beginning to see that the very definition of "prosocial" is saturated with cultural meaning (de Guzman et al., 2012). An indigenous psychology lens (i.e., using perspectives and methodologies developed from within the culture group in which the study is conducted) has the potential to uncover unique concepts, develop theories and methods that are deeply rooted in cultural and social context, and generate information that is most relevant to the actual groups under study, as is the case of indigenous research endeavors in various cultural communities of such issues as values, parenting, and other topics (Allwood & Berry, 2006).

Another methodological gap, not unique to cultural or cross-cultural examinations of prosocial behavior, pertains to a dearth of studies using a longitudinal perspective. Few studies, even within mainstream psychology, examine prosocial behaviors longitudinally (e.g., Eisenberg, Guthrie, Murphy, & Shepard, 2002), and fewer still outside of the United States. One example is a longitudinal examination of the prosocial behaviors among Italian and Canadian children (Nantel-Vivier, Kokko, Caprara, Pastorelli, Padello, et al., 2009). This study used a person-centered approach and identified various trajectories of prosocial behaviors between ages 10 and 15. Generally, children displayed stable or declining levels of prosocial behaviors as they moved from childhood to adolescence. Studies that examine prosocial behaviors longitudinally in other cultures would help not just in identifying age differences in children's performance of these acts but possibly also differences in the types of contexts and everyday experiences they access across age

and time, changes in expectations, and their changing social relationships and the relative impact of socialization agents with age.

One final direction that might be useful to explore is the role of social change in the relations between culture and prosocial behavior. As we discussed earlier in this chapter, more recent conceptualizations of culture take into account its dynamic nature. Indeed, a growing body of work is beginning to identify various ways by which such trends as globalization, immigration patterns, access to technology, and other agents of rapid social change, are impacting on such cultural elements as “values” (Manago, 2012; Sun & Wang, 2010; van Oudenhoven & Ward, 2013), adults’ perceptions regarding the value of children (Kağitçibaşı & Aataca, 2005; Kim, Park, Kwon, & Koo, 2005), and socialization goals (Ispa, 2002). As social change brings about shifts in the caregiving context and the child’s learning environment, are there corresponding changes in expectations toward prosocial behavior, the types of contexts and learning environments that children access, or even in the role of social companions and socialization agents?

The interplay between culture and prosocial behavior is complicated and necessarily complex. While we might be a long way from fully “unpacking” the concept of culture as it pertains to prosocial behavior research, nonetheless our understanding of the many ways by which culture is manifested in the developmental context is steadily growing as researchers are approaching the issue from multiple perspectives and utilizing various methodologies and as pro social behavior research is increasingly being conducted with a broader range of cultural communities.

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