A Civic Justice Corps:
Community Service as a Means of Reintegration

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Abstract

Rarely considered in re-entry programs is the role of community service as a means of reintegration. We argue for the creation of a "Civic Justice Corps"; a program for parolees to return to the community in the spirit of service. A CJC would benefit both offenders and communities by allowing for "earned redemption"—enabling offenders to repair the harm caused by their crimes and regain community trust. Service may foster positive identity change leading to reduced recidivism and civic commitment, while also providing an opportunity for parolees to reestablish community social ties, leading to permanent housing and employment. We make the case for a CJC as well as review the research on the correctional use of community service.

I. THE CIVIC JUSTICE CORPS AND THE PROMISE OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

Images of community service by criminal offenders are familiar and varied in American criminal justice. One unfortunate, popular image is of offenders in striped prison uniforms building roads while chained together (Amnesty International, 1996; Anderson et al., 2000). Chain gangs tragically conflate cruel and demeaning treatment with service to the community. Thus, offender community service is often perceived as a "ceremony of degradation" (Garfinkel, 1956), rather than an opportunity for "earned redemption" (Bazemore, 1998). In this article, we articulate a new and positive vision of corrections-based community service, hoping to shed this former, negative association, and offer a defensible basis for the widespread incorporation of service into the correctional system. We call for this vision to be realized as a Civic Justice Corps (CJC) and seek widespread support and implementation after a period of systematic evaluation of demonstration projects.

In essence, a CJC embraces three principles:

1. Community Service is a restorative practice that repairs harm caused by persons under criminal justice supervision to victims and communities and helps to meet basic community needs.

2. Persons under criminal justice supervision benefit from participating in community service, enhancing their ability to be law-abiding and productive citizens.

3. Service is a mechanism to rebuild severed prosocial relationships between lawbreakers and community members, and re-establish trust and positive status of offenders in the community.

A Civic Justice Corps could encourage participation of persons under supervision in any part of the criminal justice system, juveniles and adults, diversion programs, community

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corrections, and correctional facilities. Our focus in this article will be to identify a CJC model for reentry, but the principles we articulate are by no means limited to this particular population.

Any collective and individual activity by persons currently or formerly under correctional supervision that provides service to individuals in need, helps to rebuild communities, and rebuilds trust in these participants would seem to be defensible on its face. While such activity is generally supported by the public, the checkered history of community service as a correctional alternative requires that new service initiatives be both empirically and theoretically justified (Pease, 1985; Bazemore and Maloney, 1994; Blagg and Smith, 1989). Following this general introduction, we review the research on correctional community service programs, and develop a theory for why community service is an appropriate focus for re-entry efforts.

The first programmatic use of community service orders was created in the municipal courts of California's Alameda County in 1966 for people convicted of traffic offenses (McDonald, 1986). By 1995, 52% of state prisoners were engaged in public works activities (Stephan, 1997) and 26% of adult probationers were required to complete community service as a condition of their sentence (Bonczar, 1997). Even though community service has become a normative component of sentencing and correctional practice, it may be, "the most underused intermediate sanction" (Tonry, 1996, p. 121). Community service also is generally *under-conceptualized* as a sanction capable of achieving multiple, community, participant, and criminal justice objectives and it is likely that its growth and application has been both unsystematic and incoherent. Community service has too often been an intervention in search of a mission, and has suffered accordingly from attempts to be "all things to all people": a retributive punishment, an alternative to other punishments such as jail and prison, an effective form of treatment, a way of

structuring probation supervision, a means of meeting public needs, and a public relations device (Pease, 1982).

Two philosophical debates cloud the use of service in criminal justice settings. First, some argue that service should be a retributive tool, and focus on making service both degrading and humiliating to offenders (Kahan, 1999). It is argued that only in this way will community service communicate moral disapproval of the offending behavior and compete successfully as an alternative sanction. Instead, we argue that it should be restorative, focusing on uplifting offenders and fostering positive relations to the community (Bazemore and Maloney, 1994). Thus, service becomes a vehicle for restoration and reintegration. When coupled with other restorative practices, moral disapproval of criminal behavior need not be communicated by imposing "shameful service," but through such processes as victim-offender dialogue or community conferencing.

In a second debate, some argue that the focus on service should be on the benefits it provides to victims and the community, while others argue that the focus should be on how service may rehabilitate offenders (Karp, 2002). We argue that service is a win-win proposition, beneficial to all constituents, though we recognize that some trade-offs are inherent in implementation. For example, some projects may maximize benefits to community, while others may better serve offenders. The best projects do both; at worst, they may serve one better than another, but would undermine neither.

One of the most unfortunate distortions of the meaning and purpose of service in the 1980s was its characterization as a retributive sanction (Pease, 1982; Fogel et al., 1972; McAnany, 1988). As retributivists laid claim to community service as a kind of non-monetary fine payable to the state, courts and service programs were encouraged to give almost singular

focus to the uniformity of service orders and their "punitive bite" in order to enhance the validity of the claim that service would provide a fair, but also unpleasant obligation as part of a sentence. In doing so, just deserts oriented advocates of service de-emphasized other values and goals associated with community, victim and offender needs in the aftermath of crime. In a restorative frame of reference, for example, the imbalance that needs to be redressed when crime occurs can be best corrected via the currency of repairing the harm done rather than the proportionate infliction of pain (Van Ness and Strong, 1997; Bazemore and Walgrave, 1999; Toews-Shenk and Zehr, 2001).

On the one hand, community service projects have provided great benefits to community members, groups, and to participants, and have generally been positively evaluated. On the other hand, examples of punitive, as well as mundane, "make work" performed as community service have led to justifiable criticism and to a general conclusion that service in corrections system has not lived up to its potential. Without a coherent mission, service initiatives remain uncoordinated, unexamined, and without proponents and supporters. If it is to be meaningful and supported by communities, a CJC will first need to distance itself from past community service in criminal justice. At the same time, however, the CJC can also build on a strong undercurrent of voluntary, community building service that meets real individual and collective needs (Bazemore and Maloney, 1994; Karp and Clear, 2000; Pennsylvania Juvenile and Family Court Judges Commission, 1997; Minnesota Department of Corrections, 1998; Colorado Forum on Restorative Community Justice, 1999).

There are many examples of community service projects that not only repair harm and have obvious public benefit but also clearly develop and showcase assets of participants. For example, around the country in the inner cities, small towns, and wilderness areas of some states:

Probation and parole projects in which offenders visibly and directly produce things the larger community wants, such as gardens, graffiti-free neighborhoods, less dangerous alleys, habitable housing for the homeless…have also helped build stronger communities, and have carved channels into the labor market for the offenders engaged in them (Dickey and Smith, 1998, p. 35).

Such examples meet the theoretical, empirical and practical requirements for achieving multiple impacts, such as community building and changing the image of persons under correctional supervision. If these examples are the exception rather than the rule, it is also the case that some community service programs and even entire community corrections organizations are beginning to view such practices as the norm. Programs that feature model community service include, for example, Cleveland's "Redcoat Brigade" developed by a faith-based group that engages formerly incarcerated persons reentering the community in service to elderly persons and youth in the inner city. Regarding local corrections programs that prioritize community building service, the Deschutes County, Oregon Department of Community Justice engages formerly incarcerated persons and parolees in the winter months in cutting and delivering firewood to the elderly and working with community members on a variety of specialized community projects. Recent projects include building a domestic abuse center and shelter and raising funds and helping in the construction of a shelter for the homeless. Regarding corrections systems, Minnesota, through its Sentenced to Service Brigade, has for more than a decade employed community corrections clients, as well as incarcerated persons and parolees in meaningful public works and direct service projects, while the State of Ohio has recently made a commitment to maximize opportunities for incarcerated persons to participate in a range of service projects both within and outside prison walls (Wilkinson, 1998).

II. ASSESSING THE EVIDENCE: A REVIEW OF COMMUNITY SERVICE RESEARCH

Despite the strong normative commitment to community service as a valued commodity, for practical and scientific reasons it is necessary to make the case that service is unlikely to result in greater harm, justifies costs, and provides added value compared with other interventions. It is also important to specify the circumstances under which service is most likely to be successful with what many might view as one of the most challenging populations.

The most direct evidence is based on evaluation studies of community service with persons under criminal justice supervision—ranging from those in diversion or community corrections programs, to incarcerated and formerly incarcerated persons, and to those in programs that serve as an alternative to incarceration. Despite the limited scope and at times less than ideal quality of the service provided, the conditions of implementation, the lack of imagination, and the confused mission, findings from existing evaluation studies are generally positive.

The "big story" from this research is that no studies indicate that use of community service "makes things worse" either in terms of recidivism, system impact, or community impact. In general, evaluations of service in criminal justice have yielded surprisingly positive results, though programs have not done as well in achieving some goals given priority by some researchers and policymakers (e.g., reduction in incarceration).

a. Finding: The public is supportive of community service as a sentencing option.

Despite the increasing punitiveness of policymakers in the past decade, both state and national surveys suggest that there is strong public support for community service and other reparative sanctions. Several statewide surveys and focus groups conducted by John Doble and others find that reparative sanctions such as restitution and community service, as well as

victim-offender meetings, have been preferred over jail time for nonviolent offenders (Pranis and Umbreit, 1991; Pranis 2003). Indeed, Doble's study—used as the basis for Vermont's reparative probation initiative—found that Vermont citizens preferred that nonviolent offenders receive reparative sanctions from community reparative boards rather than terms of incarceration. In Doble's study of North Carolina public attitudes, 97% of the respondents favored greater use of community service (Doble, 2002). In a 1992 national survey conducted by the University of Michigan's Center for the Study of Youth Policy, restitution and reparative sanctions including community service, along with employment programs, were ranked at the top of citizen preferences for juvenile offenders (Schwartz, Guo, and Kerbs, 1992). Moon et al. (2000) also find restorative sanctions at the top of the list among citizen preferences that also included a variety of rehabilitative options for young offenders.

b. Finding: Agencies that host community service work by offenders are highly satisfied with the work completed.

The most direct form of community impact, the perceived value of work provided in the views of service recipients, has not been measured systematically in most studies. Qualitatively, practitioners who have organized visible and helpful service to communities can present numerous testimonials by recipients, as well as civic and business leaders, who themselves often contribute time and monetary or material resources to such efforts (Maloney and Holcomb, 2001). Quantitatively, some studies have documented impressive numbers of hours completed, homes and shelters built, children and elderly assisted and so on (McIvor, 1992; Schneider, 1990; Wilkinson, 1998). In three New York city boroughs, for example, McDonald (1986) estimated that for fiscal year 1984, participants in the Vera Institute service program provided some 60,000 hours of labor at an estimated dollar value of as much as $270,300 (at $4.50 per

hour). In themselves, hours completed may be viewed as a weak if convenient indicator of the value of service projects.

One survey of agencies where Vermont Reparative Probationers were placed indicated high satisfaction with the program. In the program, 65% of the probationers were assigned community service as part of their restorative obligations. Of these, 91% completed the required hours, 94% of the agencies were satisfied with the quality of the probationers' service, and 100% of the agencies were interested in having more probationers complete service activities with them (Karp et al., 2002). McIvor (1992) reports similarly high levels of satisfaction in a study of probationer community service in Scotland, as does Liebrich et al.(1986) in New Zealand. In these studies, probationers completed a wide variety of tasks, from relatively menial labor to youth development and care giving. They also operated under varying levels of supervision and engagement with non-probationer staff and volunteers. In other words, satisfaction may be fairly robust, tolerating a wide variety of styles of implementation. In a Canadian juvenile offender service program, Doob and McFarland (1984) found that juveniles often maintained a relationship with supervising agencies, and a few of these juveniles were hired by their agencies after they had completed their required work hours. Finally, Caputo (1999), evaluating a Vera Institute community service program in New York City, found strong community agency approval despite the fact that some service sites experienced higher than expected rates of absenteeism and worked with a participant group that included many recidivists. Similarly, the Vermont and Scotland studies noted that probationers were not always perfect performers. Agencies did report occasional problems with absenteeism as well as interpersonal conflicts and lack of initiative.

c. Finding: To a limited extent, community service has been used as an alternative to incarceration, but it has by no means significantly reduced the use of incarceration in the United States.

Some have suggested that deployment of meaningful service in correctional settings should be expected to have dramatic, systemic impacts on these agencies (Maloney, Bazemore and Bell, 2002). While many forms of change—including shifts in organizational culture and resource allocation might be predicted based on a strategic commitment to service—generally, research on systemic impact has been focused on the extent to which community service is used as an alternative to jail or prison sentences (Pease, 1982; McDonald, 1986; Tonry, 1994).

Only a few studies provide clear evidence of substitution of service for a prison or jail sentence. It is more common to find community service as one component of a multi-dimensional sentence, as courts do not generally view service orders as an alternative to imprisonment (McIvor, 1992). These studies generally document how service and restitution programs have been used to enable early release of inmates as part of experimental studies (Fogel, Galoway and Hudson, 1972; Hudson and Galoway, 1977; Schneider, 1986). Quasi-experimental studies (McDonald, 1986) and some studies from Great Britain (Pease, 1982; McIvor, 1992) have also shown some reductions in the use of incarceration on a larger scale. A Home Office study in 1982 indicated that as many as half of those 30,000 offenders receiving community service sentences for serious crimes would have otherwise been incarcerated. More recently, an Israeli study described and evaluated a national experiment that diverted almost half of 907 offenders assigned six month prison sentences to community service (Nirel et al., 1997). A study completed in New York's Suffolk County Jail compared community service participants to a control group of parolees, finding that the community service program saved between 4,199

and 4,461 jail days over a 27 month period. In addition, the program was cost-effective, and was able to return approximately $230,828 to the community through jail costs saved and community service performed (Brownstein et al., 1984). Finally, a program in Multnomah County, Oregon, reduced crowding in prisons by ordering first offense misdemeanants directly into community service, thereby diverting jail time all together for the 80% of participants who completed the program (Clark, 1976).

Although there is some evidence to show that service programs can reduce the use of incarceration, there has been relatively little demand for such application of service in the U.S. in the past two decades. However, we should note that in 2000, 51% of the U.S. prison population was incarcerated for nonviolent offenses (Harrison and Beck, 2002). We believe the public may readily accept community correctional alternatives to incarceration for this enormous pool of offenders. Over 600,000 inmates were released in 2000 (Hughes et al., 2001), suggesting another large pool for which such approaches may be considered. The general success of these earlier experiments in providing a partial alternative to confinement with little evidence of risk to the public (see recidivism discussion below) provides a sound basis for new experimentation with service as a confinement alternative at various levels.

d. Finding: Agencies and correctional volunteers believe that service work positively benefits offenders; no studies indicate that service work increases recidivism, and a few report recidivism reductions.

Though community service is thought to have a number of potential effects on participants under criminal justice supervision (Bazemore and Maloney, 1994), most studies have focused almost exclusively on recidivism. With a few exceptions noted below, evaluations that have examined intermediate impacts such as improvements in self-concept or other

outcomes have focused on juvenile offender populations (e.g., Schneider, 1990; Doob et al., 1982). In addition, this and other studies have found that offenders who take part in community service as part of their sentences have more positive attitudes in regard to the fairness and value of their sentences and toward the criminal justice system as a whole (Thorvaldson, 1978). In Karp et al.'s (2002) evaluation of Reparative Probation, 92% of service agency representatives believed the work was somewhat (57%) or highly (35%) beneficial to the offender, and in Karp et al.'s (2003) survey of Vermont reparative board volunteers, 88% of respondents believed that community service facilitated the probationers' reintegration process. However, we know of no studies that provide pre-test/post-test results to objectively analyze service impacts.

In general, studies comparing community service participation with alternative sentences document some reduction in recidivism, or at worst, *no increase* in recidivism. Pease (1982), for example, reports that early studies in Great Britain were inconclusive regarding reductions in re-offending, while McDonald (1986) indicates no significant reduction in recidivism when community service orders were compared to short jail sentences in the Vera Institute program. In a more recent study of Vera project participants, Caputo (1999) reports that the program has maintained the rate of recidivism reported by McDonald in the earlier study (about 25%). This rate was achieved despite the fact that the more recent findings were based on a population of higher risk participants (with on average, 10 prior offenses and including a greater number of offenders with prior felonies—69%). Finally, the finding that the program is maintaining relatively high completion rates (74%) despite serving a more high risk population, bodes well for future concerns with public safety given the strong negative correlation reported in other studies between completion of reparative sanctions and recidivism (Schneider and Schneider, 1984).

Another important recent study of recidivism for community service participants under correctional supervision was based on the previously mentioned Israeli experiment using service as an alternative to short-term sentences (Nirel et al., 1997). In this study researchers documented significantly lower rates of recidivism for the community service group (the incarcerated group re-offended at a rate 1.7 times higher than the service group). In a similar study in Switzerland in which approximately half of a group of convicted offenders who would have received short-term prison sentences of up to 14 days were randomly assigned to an experimental group that participated in community service, researchers found higher rates of re-arrest for the incarcerated group (Killias and Aebi, 2000). Another study which examined recidivism rates found that even though the members of the community service group had originally been incarcerated for more violent crimes than the parole group, the recidivism rate for the community service group was only 29% in comparison to 50% of the parole group (Jengeleski and Richwine, 1987). Perhaps the most important recent research in terms of its relevance for community service initiatives is Wilkinson's (1998) study of incarcerated men and women released from Ohio prisons during the last three months of 1994. Using comparison groups of individuals who had not performed community service (N=4,102) with a smaller group that had completed community service in the year prior to release (N=384), Wilkinson reported significant differences in recidivism in favor of the community service participants. While not an experimental study, these differences persisted when a variety of variables related to recidivism—including prior incarcerations, commitment offense, race, educational attainment, and so on—were controlled statistically.

In summary, while the research literature on community service with correctional populations is relatively positive, especially regarding concerns about recidivism and community

support, the fit of community service within criminal and juvenile justice systems as something other than a marginal add-on remains problematic. Regarding the empirical evidence, much remains to be learned about the quality dimensions of service, about how specific service efforts—and service participants and are actually perceived by community members, and about how correctional participants view service. Though there is some evidence that service "works" in terms of its influence on several outcomes, we know relatively little about the theory behind service's apparent positive impact, and there have been no studies of carefully designed service on its "highest plane."

III. WHY IT CAN WORK: RESEARCH-BASED THEORIES OF SERVICE IMPACT

The previous section indicates that service work can be beneficial to both offenders and communities, with little indication that it can be counter-productive. In this section, we explain *why* a Civic Justice Corps should be effective. In the case of the community service, we must articulate the theory, or theories, of intervention that define how the service will affect CJC participants as well as community members. Such a theory should guide practice to make sure that what appears on the surface to be "positive community service work" is consistent with core principles. The theory should (a) identify the problem addressed by the service, (b) explain why the intervention will ameliorate the problem, and (c) link the intervention to positive outcomes for participants, communities, and other stakeholders (Weiss, 1997). We propose three general theoretical approaches as most relevant and applicable to implementation of the CJC. The perspectives outlined below address how community service can affect positive outcomes in three areas: community trust, offender change, and community capacity.

a. Community Trust: Earned Redemption Through Service

Though intervention in the parole and reentry context has generally been offender-focused—emphasizing risk management along with some services—a crucial element in reentry is the willingness of the community to endorse the releasee's return. We argue that a necessary condition for community acceptance is "earned redemption" (Maloney, 1998; Bazemore, 1998). Exchange theorists argue that reciprocity is a trait virtually "hardwired" into the human psyche (Gouldner, 1960; Molm and Cook, 1995). Reciprocity in daily life is a core assumption of social interaction. When someone does something nice for us—for example, invites us to dinner—we will thank them, and in all likelihood attempt to "reciprocate" by asking them to dinner at a later date. This "I owe you one" logic applies as well when someone harms us in some way; we, at minimum, expect an apology, and will most likely want something else—compensation for our losses. When this something else is not offered, our attitude toward that person is at best one of distrust, and whatever relationship we might have had or thought about developing with that person in the future is challenged by the failure to reciprocate.

Persons under correctional supervision and especially those who have been incarcerated are perceived as having done harm that would require significant effort to ameliorate. The norm of reciprocity dictates that they repair damage caused and restore trust that has been broken. "Trust" in this sense may be viewed as a commodity that is stolen from community members when a crime occurs—and this trust goes beyond individual victims of crime to include others (families of incarcerated persons for example). Thus, serving a sentence does not suffice despite the misnomer that it "pays a debt to society." Doing time does nothing to address the harm caused to others by these persons and the need to restore the trust that others had in them. The exchange theory of "earned redemption" addresses the need to restore balance by addressing the

community and victim side of the reentry equation. Individual victims and various communities are viewed as entities that must be *acted upon* by the offender who "gives back" as an important step on the road to reacceptance (Maruna, 2001). According to this theory, community acceptance will require a concrete demonstration that the offender acknowledges harm caused and is doing something to make things right. It is a positive affirmation of responsibility for harm and of capacity and willingness to make amends in a way that, when visible to the community, can be a fundamental step in public image change from liability to resource or asset.

From a human capital perspective, one might theorize that demonstrating *competency* and *trustworthiness* is also crucial to community reacceptance. While this demonstration could compliment the process of earned redemption, the human capital perspective emphasizes the value of service work based on its ability to allow persons under correctional supervision to actively practice vital skills and responsible behavior that may lead to the more instrumental goal of securing regular employment.

Community service that allows for earned redemption through reparation of harm and restored trust will therefore have certain characteristics. These are reflected in the propositions and practice principles below.

Proposition 1: Community service that is visible, voluntary, viewed as "giving back" what was taken from victims and communities, and linked to the harm of one's crime or crimes will be more likely to change the image of the formerly incarcerated person as someone who honors obligations and has earned his or her way back into the "good graces" of the community.

Practice Principles: Based on the theory of earned redemption and the relevant research cited above, the following principles should be considered as guidelines to ensure the integrity of practice aimed at maximizing community reacceptance of CJC participants:

1. Community members and victims should have maximum input into the selection of the service project through participation in a restorative reentry conference or other non-adversarial restorative decision-making process.

2. Service should be voluntary on the part of the participant, rather than required by a court or criminal justice agency. This may be achieved by always offering an alternative sanction to the offender or by ensuring their active participation in the decision-making process.

3. Service should be visible to communities of concern.

4. Service aimed at addressing victim needs should, whenever possible, assist the victim directly, be based on input from the victim, or address the needs of other victims in the community.

5. Offenders, victims, and community members should have the opportunity to collectively reflect on the link between the criminal harm and the service conducted, as well as on the value of the service to the personal growth of the offender after it has been performed.

Proposition 2: Service that is visible and useful to individuals and communities and allows the participant to practice and demonstrate competency and reliability will change the image of the person under correctional supervision from liability to asset.

Practice Principles: Service of this type could be performed on a voluntary or court-ordered basis with the same impact. Unlike service to achieve earned redemption, such work could be performed for pay or stipend, or as a volunteer for altruistic reasons.

1. The activity should bring service participants together with community members (especially business persons and other potential employers) and the service activity and its outcome should be visible and known throughout the community;

2. The service program should involve participants and community members in planning and executing projects.

3. The service program should celebrate accomplishments and provide for community recognition.

4. Service projects should involve multiple tasks and maximize opportunities to demonstrate a variety of skills.

5. According to the research on service learning cited above, this experiential effect on participants may also be enhanced by combining it with classroom learning, building in time for reflection about the value of the work, skills, and competencies participants are developing.

b. Offender Change: Identity Transformation, Restorying, and the Theory of Generativity

While theories of exchange such as earned redemption and human capital perspectives may help to account for a change in the service corps participant's *public* image, they may not explain how offenders may undergo a change in *self-image*. Although we see earned redemption as, perhaps, the central component to community acceptance, it not sufficient alone. Concurrently, persons under criminal justice supervision need to demonstrate competencies that will allow them to succeed in conventional living, and convey to victims and community members that they do not possess a "deviant identity"—that they embrace the values and standards of the community and will strive to be upstanding and productive citizens.

Not only are skills needed to ensure successful reintegration, but recent evidence and theorizing points to the transformation of offender identities and criminal thinking (Maruna, 2001). This research focuses on how the development of offender identities as law abiding citizens are shaped in a similar way to their identities as a deviants—in social interaction with others (Erikson, 1964; Lofland 1969).

All individuals define themselves, in part, by how they imagine others see them. Individuals take on various identities, presenting them to others in everyday situations, and gauge the social reaction. Sometimes behavior and self-presentation will result in a deviant label—such as criminal offender. But, such labels are only removed through prosocial behavior and presentation of positive identities. The corresponding positive social reaction then solidifies a new, prosocial conception of self. In doing so, stigmatized individuals undergo what Maruna (2001) calls a cognitive "restorying," or reinterpretation of one's past in a way that allows this past life to become a useful part of one's current identity. Maruna's (2001) study of formerly incarcerated persons in Great Britain finds that it is this construction of a new identity as a person with something to contribute that distinguishes those who "go straight" from those who do not. Most relevant is that a key aspect of the new identity is taking on the role of helping others through service.

Maruna (2001) utilizes Erik Erikson's theory of "generativity" to account for differences in identity transformation between desisting and non-desisting former prisoners. Essentially, the theory—and Maruna's research—suggests that the critical variable is "a (broader) concern for and commitment to promoting the next generation, manifested through parenting, teaching, mentoring, and generating benefits for others" (McAdams and de St. Aubin, 1998, cited in Maruna, 2001, p.99). In other words, concern for others and the community includes the core

idea of helping others as a way of ensuring one's own recovery and one's identity as a person who "makes good" by *doing good*. Such a process is also incorporated into well-known recovery programs such as the 12-Step model (Trice and Roman, 1970).

While the psychological process of forging a new identity through a "restorying process" may occur independently of service work, interactionist researchers suggest that identity change may be facilitated by amends making activity—especially when the work enables the person to empathize with others in need or to understand how their actions are contribute to the public good (Batson, 1994; Schneider, 1990; Bazemore and Erbe, 2003). To the extent that service provides a vehicle to repair harm to the community, it is a step toward achieving graceful earned redemption. Whether in the concrete or symbolic sense, such action may redress the imbalance felt by community members and groups toward persons who have harmed community members. When such actions change the *public image* of the person under correctional supervision, they may promote reconciliation that preserves the dignity of ex-offenders in a respectful way that is generally not possible through participation in treatment or punishment interventions. By changing the community's view of the service participant, such activity may also promote sustainable reentry when it leads to social support for the participant, including access to positive roles in work, civic and family life.

Overall, this body of research provides the basis for a dynamic, strength-based, *experiential* model of identity change. This model views productive activity in new, meaningful civic roles as fundamental to both cognitive change in those who have been involved in criminal activity or other harmful behavior, *and* change in community attitudes about such individuals. The theoretical logic of this model is based on the assumption that lawbreakers move toward desistance from crime when they are able to practice or "try out" new identities in pro-social

roles (Uggen et al., 2002). Moreover, as they "act their way into better thinking," they demonstrate both competency and trustworthiness in view of, and in interaction with, other community members who in turn form a new impression of them in this new pro-social role (Trice and Roman, 1970).

We have one caveat about identity change. Service is sometimes conceived as a tool of punishment, such as the chain gangs mentioned at the beginning of the paper. Participants may easily perceive service work as obligatory or coerced. Rather than eliciting identity change, such work is likely to elicit defiance and resentment.

Proposition 3: Community service activity that is clearly directed toward meeting the needs of the less fortunate or young people will be more likely to change the role and self image of the formerly incarcerated person than work which is perceived as irrelevant or punitive.

Practice Principles:

1. Service of this type should place participants in situations where their impact on disadvantaged groups is direct and visible;

2. Such work should be performed generally on a voluntary basis rather than ordered or assigned.

3. Reflection time should be devoted to the choice of service regarding participant-specific interests in providing assistance to specific populations and to processing the service experience with participants as a means of making the connection between the service and the participant's cognitive and emotional experiences in response to work that provides direct assistance to other individuals.

4. Service work should be rewarding to participants; it should not be painful or humiliating.

c. Community Capacity: Informal Control, Social Support, and Social Capital

In addition to community acceptance and offender change, a third general area that must be considered is the capacity of the community to assist those returning from prison. In this section, we examine how a service initiative can build community capacity in three crucial ways: (1) enhancing the ability of the community to supervise ex-offenders and intervene if risky behaviors emerge; (2) increasing social support by building relationships to role models and offering concrete opportunities for housing, employment, etc.; and (3) strengthening the social capital of the community by reinforcing community institutions and networks and providing a pool of volunteers capable of addressing community needs.

Drawing on the work of sociologist Robert Sampson and his colleagues (Sampson and Laub, 1992; 1993; Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls, 1997), we believe that successful reintegration cannot simply be a function of the attitude or behavior of ex-offenders, or even to the criminal justice system, e.g., a parole agency. Reintegration is predicated on community capacity. In general, life course theories view involvement in crime as a temporary rather than permanent state (Sampson and Laub, 1993; Piquero et al., 2002). Notably, this research has confirmed the vital role of informal social controls associated with the formation of families and marital bonds, stable employment, civic engagement, and other factors that create a "social bond" to conventional community that provides a stake in conformity and thereby promotes a law-abiding lifestyle (Sampson and Laub, 1993; Elliott, 1994; Piquero, et al., 2002).

Life course researchers argue that transitions to new roles and relationships in family, work, and community and civic life provide sources of informal control, commitments to conventional lines of action, and sources of support that make involvement in crime less attractive even for formerly chronic and violent offenders (Sampson and Laub, 1992; Elliot,

1994). To the extent that community service work provides these same connections and controls and/or reinforces or provides pathways to other commitments (e.g., to family, work, faith communities), the life course perspective would predict that this experience might alter pathways to criminal careers in the transition to early adulthood (Uggen and Janikula, 1999). By extension, it might also promote successful adjustment and a greater likelihood of desistance for formerly incarcerated persons. Of most relevance to the role of service, Werner and Smith (1992) in their study of resiliency in the life course in populations of high risk youth found that "acts of required helpfulness" (p. 205), such as caring for younger siblings or managing a household when a parent was incapacitated were associated with positive developmental outcomes. They conclude that programmatic approaches that provide opportunities to "give back to one's community" have also led to positive outcomes in diverse, "high risk" populations (see also Melichor, 1997; Slavin, 1990).

Based on this research we would predict that community service would influence successful desistance when it in some way provides for informal social control or in fact leads to new connections in the community that provide such control and a bond to conventional groups. While service is not likely to lead to marriage or impact family stability, it may provide a context for training and create connections and networks that lead to employment opportunities. Uggen and Janikula's (1999) research suggests for example that while voluntary service is independently and negatively related to future crime, it is also positively related to employment, family formation, and other indicators of stability. In addition, service may also create the opportunity for mentoring and apprenticeships, which provide social support for participants. Such mentors may also provide guardianship and/or support for sober and straight living and

avoidance of criminogenic environments, as well as advocacy that may protect the participant from being targeted by criminal justice authorities.

Proposition 4: Community service activity that provides for guardianship, mentoring, advocacy, and social support will be more likely to sustain support for law-abiding behavior and sustainable reintegration.

Practice Principles:

1. Service of this type should not be isolated in an "offender-only crew" but collaborations with other community members whenever possible.

2. The greater the variety of service volunteers involved the better.

3. Community members should be encouraged to participate in service and to act as advocates for core members when appropriate.

4. Reflection time might be devoted to values and norms of conduct as these relate to the service role as a means of reinforcing the positive work and relational behavior in the service context.

If "community building" means adding to the quality of life in communities as a common good, then work that allows for repair and redemption, changes in individual and public identities of incarcerated persons, provides assistance to those in need, builds or repairs physical structures, or improves the natural environment, would appear to fit the definition of "community building service." While we would not disagree with this view and would hope that *all* service efforts contribute to the common good, we suggest that "community building" service may aspire to a qualitatively different level of impact. Specifically, *community building service* includes those projects that seek to impact the capacity of community entities for self-sufficiency and self-governance. We would broadly define "collective efficacy" to include the production of

safe, peaceful, living environments in which members are capable of resolving most conflicts, socializing neighborhood children, mobilizing government and other resources when needed, and promoting democratic participation in community life.

The highest level of service that might be achieved in a CJC would therefore be service in which formerly incarcerated persons and those under correctional supervision work side by side in key leadership roles with other community members to plan and execute tasks that build collective efficacy. Such tasks might include: building safer parks and redesigning other neighborhood common areas to reduce fear and victimization; teaching conflict resolution and peacemaking skills in schools, including restorative conferencing as alternatives to suspension and other forms of discipline; mediating interracial conflicts; planning and implementing voter registration drives; building domestic violence "safe houses"; organizing support groups for victims and perpetrators of family violence; mentoring and providing positive guardianship for youth at risk; promoting and participating in informal neighborhood restorative processes as a response to neighborhood youth crime; leading anti-drug initiatives; facilitating community discussion groups about drug sales, gun sales, or police profiling and harassment in the community; and organizing and participating in victim support groups through churches and other community groups.

There is nothing particularly new about these ideas and some may seem to differ only in subtle ways from work involved in projects that fit well with other theoretical models of service discussed previously. What is different, however, is the vision of improving local capacity to take care of community members and community problems and for developing a better quality of life. What is also new is service that may invite or spark *community dialogue* about shared norms and values, about mutual responsibility for socialization of young people and social control, and

about the value of persons—who have the experience of both harming the community through participation in crime and the experience of being harmed *by* the criminal justice system—helping others to avoid this harming and being harmed. Finally, what is new is the goal of building relationships and networks of trust and support, most notably led by community coalitions that include persons once viewed as part of the problem in communities, now being viewed as a necessary part of a solution in producing peace, justice and a better quality of life in these communities.

Service initiatives might also enhance collective efficacy by encouraging community members and groups to participate along with ex-offenders. In doing so, these communities may increase their own skills in promoting pro-social behavior and reinforcing behavioral norms while also lending support to returning formerly incarcerated persons. While ex-offenders will no doubt need assistance from the communities they return to, through service they may also demonstrate their leadership skills and serve as positive examples to young people. Community service to build community would be grounded then in a clear vision about the capacity of citizens to mobilize to improve community life and in doing so increase their own level of competency as citizens.

Proposition 5: Community service activity that seeks to build community will be based on a vision of collective learning and skill building for the future that promotes community ownership and leadership in resolving problems and developing solutions.

Practice Principles:

1. Service to build community should identify collective benefits for the community.

2. Service to build community should be strategic and based on discussions about collective skills to be developed from such service.

3. Service to build community would engage community leadership and maximize participation of "out" groups as well as "in" groups.

4. Service to build community would be explicitly focused on social justice while not neglecting the needs of individuals and families harmed by crime and the need for collaboration and partnerships.

5. Service to build community should have as its goals: strengthening or building new relationships, strengthening or building networks, and strengthening or building collective capacity for informal social control, social support and socialization of community members

6. Reflection time for community building service is of the utmost importance in encouraging participants to share feelings and learning's, make revisions in strategies, reinforce collective resolve, discuss civic and social justice implications of their work, and develop advocacy strategies.

In summary, several research-based theories relevant to reentry provide the basis for specific intervention theories that suggest different ways in which community service of the type envisioned in the CJC may impact community, offenders, victims and others who will be instrumental in achieving program goals. Each intervention theory makes somewhat different, though not necessarily mutually exclusive, assumptions about the nature and focus of service most likely to provide intermediate outcomes that lead to long term goals, most importantly, successful reentry and measurable strengthening of community capacity.

III. CONCLUSION

The idea of service as an American tradition is of course generally thought of as applicable only to citizens who have experienced little or no contact with the criminal justice

system. Many would ask, in addition, how anything in the cultural or spiritual appeal of service could resonate with those who have, in the view of most citizens, taken much *away* from communities rather than serving them. What kind of personal benefit or coercive stimulus would motivate individuals, arguably angry at their fellow citizens and communities for their perceived role in banishing them to prisons, to participate in projects designed to help others? Those who have committed crimes and especially those known to have done so by virtue of conviction and sentencing to correctional supervision, are thought by some to be very different from the general population of citizens in many ways. Among these supposed differences, so this thinking goes, would certainly be a lack of empathy and awareness of others' needs that would underlie a desire to help their communities and fellow community members.

It is interesting then that the tradition of voluntary service by persons incarcerated and formerly incarcerated seems to turn this stereotype on its head. The record of voluntary service performed by incarcerated persons is indeed one of the most important untold stories of prison life, so impressive that is has caused some criminologists and other observers to rethink theories that view these persons as incapable of change (Maruna, 2001). In fact, about 90% of persons under correctional supervision choose to take part in community service when this option is offered as an alternative to incarceration (Clark, 1976). Such projects are conceived and carried out on a daily basis in the prisons of this country by incarcerated persons and in communities by those formerly incarcerated. For example, in a partnership program with Habitat for Humanity, incarcerated persons in 75 prisons (working alongside volunteers from the community) built over 250 homes for low-income Americans in 1999 (Ta, 2000; cited in Maruna and LeBel, 2003). As Maruna et al (2002) document, New York State prisoners, for example, have been involved in Toys for Tots campaigns, helping in a recent year to repair a total of 20,229 toys with a total

value of $285,724 (New York State Department of Correctional Services, 2001). Incarcerated persons have also volunteered as fire-fighters in many states, especially in those with large national parks. In fact, one in six of the crewmembers (over 2,000 individuals) fighting fires by hand in the year 2000 was incarcerated or recently paroled. Prisoners in many states have been involved in the crucial work of providing care to fellow prisoners dying of AIDS and other illnesses within prison settings.

It can be argued that some of these service efforts by incarcerated persons are either required or motivated by self-interest, such as by a desire to gain "good time" or parole. However, individual narrative accounts suggest the motivation for many is indeed altruistic. Consider the perspective of one individual, interviewed by Howard Zehr (1996, pp.44-45):

> Three or four years ago there was a story in a local newspaper about a school that needed volunteers to make Braille for blind students. Through my wife, I submitted a proposal that eventually was approved. I sat down first with a mechanical Brailler and learned the Braille language. Later I had a computer. I entered textbooks for school kids. My goal is to make something useful out of my life… A thinking man wants each day to matter. Maybe that's one of the dilemmas. Too many of us think in here. So you face each day, not by saying, "How do I just struggle through?" but "What can I do to make something of this day?"

Perhaps most impressive are the recent examples of inmates who raised money to support 9/11 relief efforts. In the State of New York, for example, incarcerated persons raised $75,000 from donations from fellow prisoners earning thirty-five cents per day (Ellis, 2003). What such efforts illustrate is a common desire to help others within a population whose own personal and family needs would overwhelm most average Americans. Hence, while meaningful, helpful,

community building service may not be the norm in correctional systems, such service is apparently a part of what a number of incarcerated persons *do,* typically without the encouragement of corrections officials. While there is no evidence to suggest that incarcerated persons are *more* inclined toward helping others in need, the record of extensive voluntary efforts by inmates under adverse conditions suggests that for some at least, the motivation for service to others emerges naturally.

The lesson to be learned from these examples is that community service, at least service of a voluntary nature in which participants have some input into the type and targets of the service provided*,* may not be such a "hard sell" to correctional clients. Indeed, some of the most creative service projects will most likely be those generated by incarcerated persons themselves. The CJC, if wisely structured can build on what may be a natural tendency to help and serve others that characterizes a significant portion of the incarcerated population. Even more, the corps could also take advantage of the remarkable creativity in conceptualizing, planning and carrying out projects in the confines of U.S. prisons.

For better or for worse, returning prisoners will impact their communities. They will almost inevitably influence community members, and this impact can manifest itself both positively or negatively. We conceive a reciprocal relationship between released inmates and the community. Persons formerly incarcerated enhance community welfare through service, while the community provides support and supervision, strengthening social ties and facilitating successful reintegration.

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