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A Civic Engagement Model of Reentry: Involving Community Through Service and Restorative Justice [1]

Gordon Bazemore, Ph.D.
Jeanne Stinchcomb, Ph.D.
Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice Florida Atlantic University

IN THE REENTRY process, the community is, at the same time, both a major stumbling block and a major resource. On the one hand, overall decline in community involvement and civic commitment has been identified as a general problem facing democratic societies (Putnam, 2000; Barber, 1992). In that regard, prospects for sustaining safe, productive and economically-viable civic life in communities confronted with thousands of persons returning from prison appear to be even more greatly diminished (Rose and Clear, 1998). One primary reason for this is the structural obstacles to productive citizenship faced by persons currently or formerly under correctional supervision.

Although widespread restriction of voting rights (Uggen and Manza, 2003) has recently captured public attention, this barrier is but one component of a broader array of institutional roadblocks facing persons convicted of felony offenses in the communities to which they will return. As Uggen et al. (2002) point out, both inmates and those under community supervision are denied or inhibited access to a variety of roles that bind most citizens to conventional society. Specifically, post-release adjustment is inhibited by restrictions on occupational licensing and employment opportunities, loss of parental rights, and prohibition from holding elective office or serving on juries—as well as other forms of formal and informal social stigma. Because personal and civic identity is largely determined by the relative strength of our ties to various social institutions, such restrictions greatly diminish the reintegrative capacity of persons formerly under correctional supervision. In turn, having substantial proportions of such disconnected individuals concentrated in certain areas greatly diminishes both the human and social capital of these environments. As the informal network that sustains a meaningful commitment to the common good (Bellah et al., 1991; Putnam, 2001), the relevance of social capital for public safety is found in its capacity to mobilize informal social control (Clear and Karp, 1999; Bazemore, 2001) and social support (Cullen, 1994).

Unfortunately, traditional policy and practice governing parole and other forms of reentry have been woefully inadequate in working to overcome these obstacles. Moreover, reentry protocols have been characterized by a "disconnect" between research/theory and community-oriented intervention. While theorists have identified informal control and social support as naturally occurring phenomena (e.g., Bursik and Grasmick, 1992; Sampson et al., 1997), models of how to revitalize, mobilize, or regenerate these critical features of neighborhood safety are lacking.

The general purpose of this paper is therefore to demonstrate the need for a broadbased theoretical and policy-focused effort directed toward strengthening the role of civic and community commitments in the reentry process. Drawing on civic reintegration literature, we propose *a civic engagement* intervention model that can be used to develop and test the impact of strategies that seek to strengthen commitments in a variety of citizenship domains associated with effective reentry. Civic engagement practice and policy based on such a model would be expected to:

- Weaken barriers to the development of prosocial identities for persons who have been under correctional supervision;
- Alter the community's image of such persons; and
- Mobilize community capacity to provide informal support and assistance.

Such practices should thereby promote desistance and successful reentry, as well as enhance the democratic qualities, social justice, and safety of communities.

Policy based on civic engagement theory features three primary practice dimensions: 1) decisionmaking based on restorative justice principles, 2) civic community service, and 3) voting enfranchisement and democratic participation. Elsewhere, we describe how voting and democratic participation might increase the likelihood of offender desistance and reintegration (Bazemore and Stinchcomb, 2003; see also Uggen et al., 2002; Uggen, 2003; Flanagan and Faison, 2001). In this article, we focus on the first two dimensions, restorative justice decisionmaking and civic community service. Three general bodies of literature that we draw upon for theretical and empirical grounding are: interactionist/social psychological theories of identity transformation, life course research, and social disorganization/social capital perspectives on informal social control. These perspectives offer a logical basis for linking variables associated with each of the three practice dimensions to successful reentry, and suggest testable propositions focused on micro, middle-range, and community levels of analysis.

Envisioning a Community Role in Reentry

Traditionally, parole reentry practice has been characterized by an insular, highly individualized focus on the needs and risks of offenders, with an accompanying intervention emphasis on either sanctions and surveillance, and/ or treatment and service. The conceptual limits of treatment as well as punishment approaches are in part due to the fact that both lack broader policy visions that would include a role for the community. Indeed, the prevailing offender-focused paradigm seems incapable of moving beyond the unidimensional involvement of professionals as the sole providers of intervention. With few exceptions (Byrne, 1989; Clear, Rose & Ryder, 2001; Maruna et al., 2004; Farrall, 2004), the field has failed to address the role of community *social* capital (Putnam, 2000) in offender reintegration. [2]

 If community members and groups are to become involved in a productive way in the reentry process, they need to be effectively engaged and supported. Such community-focused intervention would seek to build first on naturally occurring processes by which the informal controls exercised through social relationships can be directed toward reform and desistance (Braithwaite, 1989; Bazemore, 2001). More formally, citizens and community groups could serve as primary agents of action in the community's response to returning offenders (McKnight, 1996; Maruna et al., 2004). As those most harmed by crime, victims in such a model would have a critical role in decisionmaking about reentry and would be viewed as resources in an effective

and just reentry process (Herman and Wasserman, 2001). Moreover, offenders would no longer be viewed as passive entities to be acted upon as the target of service and surveillance. They would instead be expected to become active in the reconstruction of their community image, hence, increasing the likelihood of reacceptance and reintegration (Maruna et al., 2002; Bazemore, 1998).

Generally, this new emphasis on reintegration draws the focus more explicitly on communities and their role in reentry. For example, Mears and Travis (2004) observe that criminal behavior is most effectively addressed by "tapping into the problem-solving capacities and resources" of the communities from which it emerges (p.14). Others have engaged community groups as a key factor in reentry and reintegration with specific reference to, for example, their role in human development and ethnic identity (Spencer and Jones-Walker, 2004). Moreover, while the traditional deficit focus on offender risks and needs remains dominant in much practice and policy discussion, a more strength-based perspective on offenders in the community context has begun to surface (see Saleebey, 2002; Maruna et al. 2001; Bazemore and Erbe, 2003).

Although these discussions have become increasingly sophisticated, for the most part, they have occurred in the absence of clear theoretical frameworks (for exceptions, see Maruna, 2002; Maruna et al., 2004). In addition, the disconnect with reentry policy can also be attributed in part to the absence of practice models grounded in such theories. Three bodies of literature provide a sound basis for a holistic policy focus on reentry and offer a way to conceptualize the community both as an agent of reintegration, and as a target of intervention. These are addressed below, along with two intervention approaches that operationalize these theoretical models.

Grounding Policy and Practice in Theory

First, at the micro (or social-psychological) level, interactionist theories have focused attention on the formation of deviant identities through labeling and related processes that create stigma (Erikson, 1964, Lofland 1969). More recently, *identity transformation* research has explored how self-images of offenders as law-abiding citizens are shaped in a similar way to their identities as deviants—through social interaction with others in new, prosocial rather than deviant roles (Maruna, 2001; see Uggens et al., 2003). Lawbreakers can change their *public* image from liability to asset through positive actions aimed at making amends for the harm their actions have caused to victims and communities. Specific strategies for changing their public image include efforts to make productive accomplishments visible to community members.

Second, at the mid-range level, *life course research* has documented the importance of informal social control and support, as well as conventional commitments to formal roles (family, work, etc.) in the transition from criminal activity to law-abiding lifestyles (Sampson and Laub, 1993; Elliott, 1994). Life course research underscores the dynamic—rather than fixed—nature of commitment to crime and delinquency (Piquero, et al., 2002; 2004; Warr, 1998; Sampson et al., 2004). Related literature on resilient youth who—despite exposure to adversity and risk and often independent of formal intervention —grow up to become productive, well-adjusted citizens similarly highlights the role of informal, sustained connections with positive adults (Werner, 1999; Rutter, 1996). Applications for reentry would include identifying and mobilizing informal controls and supports, as well as attending to work, family, education, civic experience, and competency development in order to promote commitment to conventional lifestyles.

The third body of literature relevant to reentry is the *community level* research that emphasizes the differential capacity of communities to develop shared norms and values, and build relationships of trust and reciprocity as *social capital* (Putnam, 2000). Such social capital provides the basis for *collective efficacy,* or the willingness and capacity of community members to intervene effectively in response to crime, conflict and disorder (Sampson, Roedenbush, and Earls, 1997; Morenoff et al., 2001). From this perspective, reintegration practice would strengthen or develop trusting relationships and networks of shared values, revitalizing the community's capacity for informal social control and support (Maruna et al., 2004; Farrall,

2004).

From Theory to Practice and Policy

Given the potential of these theoretical models for expanding and improving offender reintegration, the challenge becomes how to put them into operation most effectively. Two highly promising practices involve civic community service and restorative justice. Civic service embraces activities that strengthen bonds between ex-offenders and their community. Unlike traditional community service judicially ordered as punishment, civic service is more likely to be focused on projects designed to meet community needs, build community capacity, and repair the harm caused by crime to affected communities (Bazemore and Maloney, 1994; Bazemore et al., 2003).

Restorative justice practice encompasses a range of processes that likewise focus on repairing the damage caused by crime. Designed to engage victims, offenders and the community in nonadversarial responses to crime, such approaches can take many forms, including family group conferencing, peacemaking circles and neighborhood boards. These decisionmaking interventions have potential for enhancing the civic participation and prosocial behavior of those under criminal justice supervision by strengthening social ties, building democratic involvement (Pranis, 2001; Braithwaite, 1999), improving community capacity to mobilize social support and control networks (Bazemore, Karp and Schiff, 2003), and changing the image (public and personal) of those under correctional supervision (Braithwaite and Parker, 1999; Bazemore, 2001; see Uggens et al. 2003).

The goal is ultimately to repair harm and transform roles and relationships through a community-focused justice process in which professionals serve as facilitators (Van Ness and Strong, 1997). A restorative community justice model therefore explicitly considers crime as a collective problem whose solution requires maximum engagement of communities, victims, and offenders in its resolution (Bazemore and Schiff, 2001; Clear and Karp, 1999). Building toward the integration of theory with the practice of civic service and restorative justice, we next explore the three underlying theoretical frameworks in greater detail (i.e, identity transformation, life course research, and community social capital), with particular emphasis on their relevance to reintegration.

Identity Transformation and Reintegration

Identity transformation enables offenders to reconstruct prosocial identities through interaction with others. By taking on roles in the family, the workplace, and the community, ex-offenders can practice identities and positive behaviors consistent with these new images. This model also embraces the potential for changing one's *public image* by moving away from the principle of entitlement to the principle of social exchange (Levrant et al., 1999, p. 19). Through this interactionist perspective lawbreakers give back to those they have harmed as a form of "earned redemption" that is integral to their reacceptance by the community (Bazemore, 1998; Maruna, 2001). In addition to providing both concrete and symbolic repayment for damages, service may also promote a cognitive change in selfimage consistent with a pro-social identity, as well as an opportunity to demonstrate competency and trustworthiness.

Civic Service and Identity Transformation

Public Identity, Reciprocity and "Earned Redemption": Building Community Trust Through Service

A crucial element in successful reentry is the willingness of the community to accept the

releasee's return, and a key determinant of such willingness may be a sense that the offender has acknowledged the harm of his actions to others and has made appropriate amends.

Lawbreakers returning to their home communities are perceived by most residents as having engaged in violations that would require significant compensatory effort to counterbalance. The norm of reciprocity dictates that they repair the damage caused and restore the community trust that has been violated. Despite the perception that serving a sentence "pays a debt to society," doing time does nothing to address the damage caused to others or the need to establish trustworthy relations. Hence, while the retributive model of accountability requires that harm be done to the offender in order to balance the harm caused to others (Von Hirsch, 1976), the exchange theory concept of reciprocity (see Molm and Cook, 1995; Gouldner, 1960) suggests that only by taking responsibility for making things right with victims and victimized communities can offenders change either the *community's image* of them or their perceptions of themselves.

According to the theory of "earned redemption" (Maloney, 1998; Bazemore, 1998), community acceptance requires a concrete demonstration that the individual acknowledges the damage caused and is doing something to make things right. This positive affirmation of responsibility and the willingness to make amends to the community through visible, voluntary civic service can be a fundamental step in changing one's public image from liability to asset, thereby earning one's way back into the "good graces" of the community.

Personal Identity: Changing Self-Image Through Civic Service

Theories of reciprocity such as earned redemption may help to account for a change in the service participant's *public* image. But they do not address how persons currently or formerly under correctional supervision may undergo a change in *self-image*. In that regard, research indicates that it is constructing a new identity as a person with something to contribute that distinguishes those who "go straight" from those who do not (Maruna, 2001). A key aspect of this new identity is a sense of oneself as someone who helps others through service, demonstrating an unselfish 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). Helping others becomes a vehicle for both ensuring one's own recovery and recasting one's identity as a person who "makes good" by *doing good*. As one incarcerated person who later made a successful transition to community life described his experience helping the less fortunate: "We took so much out of the community, [but] now we're putting something back in" (Maruna, 2001, p.122).

Some inmates express skepticism or distaste for the idea of "giving back" to the community that cast them out. But others find the service experience a meaningful avenue for personal growth (Uggen et al., 2003). Because they also promote self-esteem and dignity in ways that are generally not feasible through either treatment or punishment, such civic service projects may also lead to a change in self-image and related behavior, regardless of the community response.

Like peer involvement in AA or NA, the general premise is that it is better to *give* help than to receive it (Pearl and Riessman, 1965; see Maruna et al., 2003). This is especially true when such assistance enables the service provider to empathize with others in need or to understand how their actions contribute to public well-being (Batson, 1994; Schneider, 1991; Bazemore and Erbe, 2003). Research indicates (Uggen and Janikula 1999) that voluntary service as a young person is negatively related to future crime, and is also *positively* related to employment, family formation, and other indicators of stability. In addition, service may create the opportunity for mentoring and apprenticeships, which provide social support and a bond to conventional groups. Thus, interactionist theory provides the basis for an experiential model of identity transformation.

This model views active involvement in meaningful civic roles as fundamental to both cognitive change in the service provider *and* change in community attitudes about such individuals. It is based on the logic that lawbreakers are more inclined to move away from criminal activity when they can practice new identities in productive roles (Uggen et al., 2003), exhibiting both

competency and trustworthiness during interaction with other community members—who, in turn, form a more favorable impression of them in their new pro-social role (Trice and Roman, 1970), thereby enhancing the likelihood of successful reintegration.

Restorative Justice Decisionmaking Practice and Interactionist Intervention

The assumption behind civic service and other reparative obligations is that lawbreakers who credibly attempt to make amends to the satisfaction of victims and community members essentially "earn their redemption." Thus, they are more likely to gain support and acceptance than those who do not, and will therefore be less likely to reoffend (see Schneider, 1986; 2002; Butts and Snyder, 1990). On the other hand, restorative justice conferencing provides a means to ensure that community members (including crime victims and the families and supporters of both victim and offender) play a key role in determining the nature of reentry plans and activities.

In order to best assure such positive outcomes, restorative justice conferencing is explicitly designed to provide for community, victim, and family input into a workable agreement to repair harm to victims and victimized communities. To the extent that the process accomplishes this, it is more likely to result in a complete and meaningful reparative activity that promotes change in the image of current or former correctional clients. Such direct engagement between victim and offender also reinforces the salience of social exchange and the meaning of earned redemption. Research thus far suggests that the face-to-face dialogue typical of restorative conferencing is an effective way to develop reparative agreements, and may actually increase the likelihood of compliance with these agreements (Umbreit, 2002).

Public Image, Conferencing, and Social Support

Seeing the offender in person in a restorative encounter is often the key to increasing victim and community support, or at least reducing resistance to reintegration. Restorative conferences also provide an opportunity for community members to hear apologies, as well as suggestions from the offender about ways to make amends (Braithwaite and Mugford, 1994; Bazemore and Umbreit, 2001). Finally, to the extent that conferences give the community primary input into reparation agreements, support for reintegration is enhanced. In contrast to court procedures, the conferencing process encourages offenders to accept responsibility for the crime. This therefore increases the likelihood that they will fulfill obligations to make amends. To the extent that such processes increase offender empathy for the victim, they also have important positive implications for future offender behavior. In fact, research on restorative justice conferencing has isolated empathy and remorse as key variables in the prediction of re-offending (Hennessey and Daly, 2003; Maxwell and Morris, 1999; 2001). Hence, the ability of restorative conferencing to enhance empathy is the key to its capacity to create a new identity for offenders.

Being willing to assume a new role as someone who takes responsibility for his/her actions begins a shift in the public identity of the lawbreaker. This "active accountability" (Braithwaite and Roche, 2001) is enhanced in the conference setting when offenders are asked what should be done to meet their obligation to the victim and the community. The experience of contributing to behavioral and reparative agreements and making shared commitments is itself viewed as important in identity change for persons who have been viewed as unreliable and less than trustworthy (Claussen, 1999). Moreover, this "strengthsbased" perspective (rather than deficit assumption) implies that the offender is capable of helping others. Such implications subsequently create a set of expectations that the offender is capable of meeting those obligations, actively making amends, and ultimately making positive contributions to the community.

Self Image, Conferencing and Reintegrative Shame: Respectful Disapproval

Like civic service, the conferencing process may change the outlook of the offender from that of an outcast to a person of worth who has something positive to contribute to others (Maruna, 2002). Restorative encounters also reinforce this new role and self-image when they allow for an affirmation of support for the offender within the context of a respectful disapproval of the

offensive behavior (Braithwaite Mugford, 1994).

Most offenders have already been subjected to the practice of "shaming" associated with retributive justice (Kahan, 1996). While such shaming is not an ingredient of restorative justice, from a "reintegrative" perspective (Braithwaite, 1989; Braithwaite and Mugford, 1994), shame is a natural, healthy emotion that may motivate us to either positive or negative actions (Nathanson, 1992). Expressing respectful disapproval through denunciation of *behavior* (not the offender) by friends and family (rather than judges or other justice officials) can decrease the likelihood of recidivism—to the extent that the offender is concerned about loss of status and affection, rather than the threat of punishment (McDonald and Moore 2001). In essence, the identity of the lawbreaker as an individual and a valued member of the community is separated from disapproval of his or her illicit actions.

A number of restorative justice advocates have expressed concerns about the negative implications of "shaming" (Toews-Shenk and Zehr, 2001) and have given more emphasis to the role of social support (see Cullen, 1994) and the importance of a firm presentation of how the offender's behavior has affected others. For example, Braithwaite and Roche (2001) observe:

> The testimony of the victims and the apologies (when they occur, as they often do) are sufficient to accomplish the necessary shaming of the evil of violence. But there can *never be enough* citizens active in the *reintegration* part of reintegrative shaming (p.72, emphasis ours).

Unlike retributive shaming, the purpose of reintegrative shaming is not to cast out, but rather, to encircle within. Intervention theory based on empathetic engagement, provides a source of the "collective resolve" to support offenders in the difficult task of stopping or reducing the harmful behavior (Braithwaite, 2001, p. 230). The experience of reintegrative shame, when it occurs through the essential act of denouncing the offense and confronting the offender, actually begins with empathy and "the experience of love as a key ingredient" (Braithwaite, 2001, p.228).

Reintegration and Life Course Intervention

Findings in the life course literature confirm the vital role of informal social controls that create a "social bond" to conventional community. Informal social controls are distinguished by the *source* of controls, as well as the *nature of their impact* on individuals at risk of involvement in crime. Hunter (1985), for example, suggests that close family and extended family are the sources of "private controls," whereas neighborhood groups are the source of more "parochial controls." Additionally, the impact of such controls may be experienced in different ways at different points in an individual's life course.

Regarding the impact of informal controls, prosocial roles in work, education, family, and civic involvement that promote commitments to conformity (Hirschi, 1969) first provide a major source of "instrumental controls." Such instrumental connections provide practical sources of resistance against involvement in crime, to the extent that such involvement is viewed as placing job, family, and future career prospects at risk. Second, "affective controls" and related supportive systems are based on emotional attachments to family, peers, faith communities and similar foundations. Such affective sources of resistance to deviance are less practical in nature, but nevertheless quite significant. Indeed, the dominant variable in predicting successful transitions to adulthood (and by implication, criminal desistance) is the continued presence of strongly supportive pro-social adults in the lives of these otherwise at-risk youths (Benson, 1997; Werner, 1986).

Civic Service and Life Course Theor

Life course research would also suggest that these social controls and supportive networks (Cullen, 1994) may play an important role at subsequent points in the life cycle (Piquero et al., 2002). Such affective connections may be viewed as a form of *individual social capital,*

essentially those informal relationships that protect persons from harm even under adverse circumstances (Hagan et al., 2002).

From the life course perspective, intervention for reentry is also strength-based and relationship-focused (Saleeby, 1997; Bazemore, Nissen & Dooley, 1998), rather than risk-based (control-oriented) or need-focused (Maruna et al., 2002). Hence, a civic engagement model should benefit from opportunities for formerly incarcerated persons to "demonstrate their value and potential, as well as experience success in supportive and leadership roles" (Maruna et al., 2002).

To the extent that civic service may provide these same connections, controls, and/or pathways to other commitments (e.g., to family, work, faith communities), the life course perspective could also promote successful adjustment and greater likelihood of desisting from criminal behavior for former correctional clients. As described earlier, civic service experience may accomplish this in two ways: 1) by developing participants' public image through increasing skills as human capital, and 2) by creating opportunities for the development of more affective connections associated with social support.

Restorative Justice Conferencing, Reentry and Life Course Intervention

Reentry practice has been based on the assumption that enough treatment and remediation inside, coupled with follow-up services and opportunities for education and employment outside, will be sufficient for effective reintegration. A historical disregard for the "community variable" in the reentry equation has, as previously suggested, limited creative input into reentry planning, provided little or no information to citizens about what the offender has done to prepare for return, and failed to build upon what could be strong sources of guidance or support for the offender's sustainable reintegration.

Reentry conferences, known in some jurisdictions as citizen circles (Rhine et al., 2001), provide an opportunity for essential communication between returning residents and the various home communities that will ultimately facilitate their reintegration. The root causes contributing to the releasee's involvement in crime are addressed, offender accountability is affirmed, and linkages are established with those in the community who have a direct stake in the outcome:

> The process itself is based on negotiation and consensus-building between the offender and circle members. The circles embrace local citizens, support systems, community agencies, the corrections department and the offender in decision-making and case management related to rehabilitation and reentry. Circle members offer a powerful forum for citizens to communicate their expectations for successful reentry. They also help offenders recognize the harm their behavior has caused·and develop a viable plan of action to promote responsible citizenship· Most importantly, the circle helps offenders understand that acceptance back into the community requires the fulfillment of certain obligations and commitments (Rhine et al., 2003, pp. 53ö54).

The dialogue generated by this process makes community members aware of the offender's prior and current efforts to make amends, and of his reentry intentions. Such conferences ideally begin upon the offender's admission to confinement, and will likely include primarily family and close supporters along with key institutional staff members, and crime victims, if possible. Later meetings with other members of the offender's home community may begin within a month or more of release. Reentry conferencing at this transition stage seeks to mobilize both the emotional and practical support, as well as the informal control, that offenders will require *from persons other than paid professionals* if they are to make the successful transition to prosocial community lifestyles.

As part of a restorative justice pilot program at the Minnesota Department of Corrections' Redwing facility for juvenile offenders, for example, residents already comfortable with restorative dialogue inside the facility were accompanied by staff members to their home community to begin the challenging experience of meeting with victims, families, and others in a

conference setting. In addition to allowing for apologies and dialogue, a primary goal was to develop a reparative behavioral agreement and a support group that included roles for community members and encouraged follow-up meetings as needed. Beyond the specifics related to individual offenders, the broader mission pursued by this pilot program was micro-level community building (Bazemore and Schiff, forthcoming).

Conferencing and Relationship-Building in the Lifecourse

Restorative justice conferencing, viewed in terms of life course theories, can develop new roles for incarcerated individuals as persons of value who are able to establish competencies and trustworthiness as human capital. These individuals must also accrue "personal social capital" (Hagan and McArthy, 2002) that provides affective social support and guardianship. Consistent with life course theories, restorative justice conferencing addresses compatible social support and social control objectives through a focus on building and/or rebuilding relationships.

In fact, it could be argued that rebuilding relationships, or building stronger prosocial relationships, should be a primary goal of *any* criminal justice intervention (Pranis and Bazemore, 2001). Frequently discussed in restorative justice literature as an important objective of the restorative conferencing process (Braithwaite and Mugford, 1994; Toews-Shenk and Zehr, 2001; Bazemore, 2001), relationshipbuilding can occur in the conferencing setting simply by a participant initiating an informal connection between an offender or victim and another conference participant. In addition, others who may *need to be* connected as resource persons are strategically identified and brought to the table.

The task of rebuilding or building new relationships in the conferencing process and its aftermath requires critical examination of the extent to which the process can mobilize social support and make necessary connections between offenders, victims, and their supporters (Braithwaite and Mugford, 1994; see Bazemore, 2001). Community members may function as natural helpers, and the groups they represent may also provide both affective and instrumental informal support, as well as guardianship and reinforcement of law-abiding behavior (Bazemore, Nissen and Dooley, 2001). As "community guides" (Mcknight, 1995), they act as bridge and buffer between the offender and the community by smoothing the way for the development of additional connections between the offender, law-abiding citizens, and legitimate institutions (Sullivan, 1989; Maruna, 2001). Such connections may provide them with a legitimate identity and a "link" to conventional community-based commitments and opportunities (Polk and Kobrin, 1972; Bazemore, Nissen & Dooley, 2000), as well as responsibilities and obligations (Cullen, 1994, 543).

Community Conferencing, Human Capital, Personal Social Capital and Prosocial Lifestyles

It is increasingly common in some correctional facilities to offer opportunities for victim-offender dialogue at the request of crime victims when the offender is willing (Umbreit, 2001; Wilkinson, 2000). Regardless of whether such dialogue is a component of the offender's reintegration plan, restorative conferencing focused on reentry generally goes beyond the victim-offender relationship. Participants in circles and conferencing not only include the victim, the offender, their families and other intimates, but also neighbors and community members.

While some advocates of traditional models of family group conferencing (e.g., McDonald et al., 1996) have objected that including those without a direct connection to the victim and offender may dilute the emotional quality of the conference, others offer their own reintegrative rationales for expanding membership to include community members. As the director of a community conferencing program explains:

> We are hoping for one outcome—that the offender will recognize them
> [neighborhood participants in a conference whom they may not know] as offering
> a broader connection to the community· they get a certain (different) kind of
> feedback from this: "look how many people care about me." In the beginning, [in
> choosing participants] we stuck to those impacted directly, but learned how

valuable it was to include who have some distance from the offender and bring a different perspective (Bazemore & Erbe, 2003).

Prosocial adult community members working as volunteers or unpaid staff members represent the "voice of the larger community." If they are willing to engage with offenders and families in a supportive way, they can help build trust, mutual respect, growth and commitment. Relationships developed or strengthened in conferences can also offer emotional support and guidance and can have an important impact on the offender and victim. Moreover, while the family, extended family, and other intimate acquaintances bring certain emotional and other affective resources (Morris and Maxwell, 2001), community members may bring job connections, educational support, and other forms of practical assistance (see Karp, 1999). In some community conferences or circles, for example, it is not uncommon for facilitators to invite employers, educators, directors of support groups, and other resource persons who can offer concrete assistance.

Relationship-building for both affective and instrumental support may occur organically. Such cases are common when bonds are formed between young offenders and victims, as in the case of a victim-offender dialogue program, where an agreement for restitution was altered at the request of the victim:

> The victim offered to hire the offender if [the agreement was] completed. Afterward, he said if the offender pays him back $800 and goes to college, he would pay that money to the college for his books. [We] see the victim and the offender sharing phone numbers to stay in touch·.We had a case in which the victim and offender developed such a close relationship that· the victim would say come over and have a cup of coffee and tell us how things are going. (Schiff & Bazemore, 2003)

This example is not uncommon in juvenile justice conferences in which an adult victim develops some empathy and, as in this case, affection for a juvenile offender. In addition to the implicit bonding, there is the potential for an instrumental relationship based on the opportunity for employment.

For better or worse, formerly incarcerated persons will impact their communities. In a reciprocal relationship between released inmates and the community, persons formerly incarcerated may enhance community welfare through service as productive citizens, while the community provides support, guidance, and guardianship, strengthening social ties and facilitating successful reintegration. In fact, it has been this very lack of postrelease "aftercare" that has been targeted as a primary cause of the generally dismal results of boot camp evaluations. Of course, communities differ significantly in their capacity to mobilize informal social control and provide the necessary social support to make community members successful (Sampson, 1999; Sampson, Raudenbush and Earls, 1997). The apparent absence of communal attachments in some neighborhoods and the decline in informal control suggests the need for a community-building agenda.

Reintegration and Community Capacity Building

Civic Service and Community Building

If "community building" means enhancing the quality of life and common good, then appropriate service should include work that promotes repair and redemption, changes personal and public identities of participants, provides assistance to those in need, or improves either physical structure or the natural environment. While *all* service may in some way contribute to the common good, *community building service* uniquely seeks to impact the collective capacity for self-sufficiency and self-governance. As Figure 1 suggests, such an impact is in part dependent upon the level of stakeholder input and involvement in such projects.

The highest level of service that might be achieved would therefore be service in which former offenders work side by-side in key leadership roles with other community members to plan and execute tasks that build collective efficacy. Examples of such tasks include building safer parks; redesigning neighborhood common areas to reduce fear and victimization; teaching conflict resolution and peacemaking skills in schools; 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; leading anti-drug initiatives; facilitating community discussion groups about drugs, guns, or police profiling; and organizing victim support groups through churches or other local groups (Bazemore & Maloney, 1994; Maruna et al., 2002; Bazemore et al., 2003).

There is nothing particularly new about these ideas. What is different, however, is the vision of collective efficacy directed toward the community empowerment essential for developing a better quality of life. Specifically, service to build community should be designed to strengthen or build new relationships, break down social distance, connect those currently or previously under correctional supervision with supportive persons, and develop interactive networks and collective capacity for informal social control. Essentially, if those released from correctional facilities are consistently involved in community-building service, community organization is more likely to be enhanced. To the extent that volunteer work produces a public good, it benefits participants and non-participants alike (Coleman, 1990). The crimereductive potential of civic service is therefore even greater in the aggregate than in the sum of the individual effects on participants. (Uggen and Janikula, 1999, p. 356)

Developing Social Control and Support Networks Through Restorative Justice Conferencing

Defining informal social control and support as capacity to prevent and control crime, reentry intervention must be targeted toward developing or strengthening trust, a sense of shared values (Putnam, 2001), and collective efficacy (Rose and Clear, 1998). Here restorative justice seeks to build informal social control at the community level by strengthening *networks* of relationships, and specifically developing the capacity of community groups and "mediating institutions" (Bellah et al., 1993) such as schools, workplaces, and churches to exercise such control (Bazemore, Karp and Schiff, 1993).

While restorative decisionmaking processes arguably offer the greatest benefits to individual victim and offender (Zehr, 1991; Umbreit, 1999), some advocates have noted that these practices also provide forums for dialogue around community norms and values that can strengthen trust, reciprocity, and informal support. These forums also have a great deal of potential for building citizen and neighborhood capacity for effective action (Hudson, et al., 1996; Braithwaite, 1989; 2002). Participants in these processes and members of communities where these practices are common thus have opportunities to *practice* and master skills of conflict resolution, apology, community guardianship, and mutual support.

The restorative principle of maximizing victim, offender and community input into decisions related to the response to crime ultimately promotes collective ownership of responsibility for conflict resolution, public safety and peacemaking through self-regulatory practices. As a result, communitybuilding often begins at the micro level with relationship-building, and then extends outward to networks, instrumental communities and mediating institutions (Bellah et al., 1993) such as schools, neighborhood organizations, residential facilities, and at the most macro level, entire neighborhoods (Bazemore, Karp and Schiff, 2004).

Restorative Conferencing: Building Relationships and Community Capacity

Often restorative practitioners use the conference dialogue process to repair or rebuild relationships between victim, offender and the community that have been weakened by crime, or to strengthen, or develop new, prosocial relationships (Bazemore, 1999). At the collective level, *relationship building* is often a prerequisite to identifying and clarifying shared norms and values, developing trust, defining collective responsibilities, setting tolerance limits for behavior,

and establishing informal social control (Rose and Clear, 1998; Sampson, 2001). Two primary ways in which relationships are fostered and/or strengthened by participation in restorative decisionmaking forums are: 1) a reduction in social distance; and 2) norm affirmation and values clarification.

Restorative practices are distinct from traditional court processing because they do not promote separation of parties or adversarial relations. Thus, ideally, victims, offenders, their supporters, and community volunteers are brought together to collectively resolve the situation in a way that both satisfies and meets the needs of these stakeholders. Establishing a common ground of community membership helps to create trust among strangers and between offenders and victims. As a police lieutenant who coordinates restorative conferences puts it: "on a case-by-case basis, lots of people come in here who live close by, but do not know each other. In the conference, [they] get to know each other well" (Bazemore, Karp & Schiff, 2004, p 15). Stereotyping is often diminished as parties come face to face, and a leveling effect and blurring of roles (Pranis, 2001) may also bring about a transformation in social relationships from oppositional to cooperative.

Breaking down social distance in this way will not always be sufficient to create community support for offenders and their families. But when it does, it may also provide a context for informal social control and support (Cullen, 1994), as offenders appreciate the act that concern is being offered by persons not paid to care about them (Pranis, 2001). The process may also build additional connections as social capital that links the private controls of families with the parochial control of neighborhood groups (Hunter, 1985; see Bazemore, 2001).

Conferences may also build or strengthen relationships, and eventually *networks* of relationships, by helping participants develop a collective understanding about what behaviors are "off limits." Norm affirmation in conferences may also lead to a more general values clarification, when groups identify and reinforce commitments to a core of shared beliefs, while also noting important diversity of opinion (Pranis, 2001).

Conferencing as an intervention may therefore provide a window for values clarification that facilitates relationship building by increasing trust and group support. These relationships then, in turn, become the social capital that provides the basis for later efficacious action around a common cause.

Restorative Practice, Skill Building, and Collective Efficacy

Collective efficacy can be broadly defined as the expected *behavioral* outcome associated with social capital, i.e., the extent to which citizens are willing and able to intervene to prevent and/or respond effectively to harmful behavior. Neighborhoods high in collective efficacy are characterized as living environments in which members feel capable of resolving most conflicts, socializing neighborhood children, mobilizing government and other resources when needed, and promoting democratic participation in community life (Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls, 1977).

This *skill development* dimension of community building is defined as creating citizen competence in presenting and controlling crime. Collective efficacy is increased when community members and groups gain skills in: exercising 1) informal social and 2) collective action.

Conferences create a space in which community members may feel more comfortable expressing disapproval of harmful behavior in a respectful way (Bazemore, 2000), commending prosocial behavior, and providing support. Community building occurs in the program context through expanding networks of relationships to offer social support and provide guardianship and control. Thus, participants begin to realize that other people are concerned about them.

In the micro setting of the restorative conference, the capacity for collective action becomes apparent when community members take shared responsibility for the process and outcomes. As one conferencing facilitator put it:

·if they are treating me like I'm another community person, then that is really good·.Everyone (then) has a direct role in the process. It is really happening when the offender acts like any other community member. Then the process has been a success·. (Bazemore, Karp & Schiff 2004)

Competency in collective action also becomes apparent when community volunteers in restorative conferences and followup discussions begin to analyze underlying causes of community level problems. When they address these through social action, they may then engage untapped public resources and services on behalf of underserved populations, or even foster changes in institutional practices or public policy. As one volunteer described the experience, such advocacy is "primarily about getting beyond the cases to recognize some broader patterns going on in the way the community is dealing with its young people." It is also about developing what Putman called "bridging social capital," for example, leveraging government resources to support community members as well as to provide a link between families, their neighborhood institutions, public control and supportive resources (Putman, 2000).

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Summary

In this article, we have outlined a civic engagement model of reentry practice grounded in three bodies of research and theoretical literature. Each is concerned respectively with a different level of analysis—from social-psychological, to middle-range, to the social-ecological level. Yet, identity transformation, life course and social disorganization/social capital perspectives share a common focus on the role of communities and community members in the reintegration process. Moreover, each body of research and theory emphasizes informal rather than system-based influences on reentry. Patterns in reintegration processes revealed by these studies place the reentry debate into perspective by drawing attention to the role of naturalistic supports and controls, opportunities for transforming role identities, and the general role of community entities in the reintegration process. Each perspective also has clear implications for criminal justice intervention aimed at moving beyond a narrow focus on the risks and needs of individual offenders.

Two practice and policy dimensions were presented as examples of interventions that operationalize theoretical principles drawn from each of the three theoretical literatures. First, civic community service was discussed, based on the idea of lawbreakers giving back to their communities in ways that help others, strengthen community, and build commitment to the common good. The practice has implications for changing self and public identity, developing relationships of social control and support that encourage prosocial behavior, and building social capital and collective efficacy. Second, restorative justice conferencing practice was discussed as an intervention focus with similar possibilities for achieving an impact on identity, on informal support and control, and on community capacity.

Civic engagement as a theory of intervention is by no means limited to civic service and restorative justice. However, these practices in particular suggest compatible and mutually enhancing protocols for reentry planning that would seek to coordinate both service and restorative justice intervention dimensions at each of the three theoretical levels of analysis considered in this paper as part of a holistic policy guiding intervention.

Confronting Challenges to Effective Reentry

The greatest obstacles to implementing such an approach, however, may not come under the categories of empirical, theoretical, or practical viability but rather concern broader issues of the dominant normative theory of justice that continues to place limits on effective policy development. The most formidable challenges to effective reentry are indeed the many restrictions on employment, parental rights, voting rights and other forms of exclusion and social stigma faced by returning offenders. Given their lack of crime control value (and possible criminogenic impact), such restrictions can be justified only by the view that they represent

additional punishments that are somehow "deserved"—though such a retributive justice policy and philosophy appears to have reached even beyond the bounds of what some might label "just punishment" (von Hirsch, 1976).

We suggest that a critique of current retributive policy and practice may well be a starting point for the development of more just and more effective approaches to reentry. Based on a different normative theory of justice that acknowledges that the debt owed by offenders to their victims and victimized communities is not best met by inflicting harm on the offender, restorative justice principles are therefore highly compatible with both civic service and removal of voting and other restrictions on those who have served their time. Moreover, restorative practices encourage lawbreakers to "make good by doing good" (Maruna et al., 2001) as a means of earning their redemption in a way that helps others and builds community (Bazemore et al., 2003). Consistent with the causal theories relevant to reentry presented in this paper, restorative practice focuses on changing public identity through repairing harm as well as personal identity changes that may result from a restorative community service experience. Additionally, the restorative justice focus on rebuilding relationships through conferences has important implications for informal social control and social support, as well as for building social capital at the community level by strengthening relationships and networks of relationships (Bazemore, 2001).

Conclusion

Ultimately, in a theoretically grounded restorative justice framework, democratic participation, civic service, and informal social control and support should be mutually reinforcing elements. For example, enfranchisement and democratic participation would make possible a variety of gateways to prosocial connections. Civic service, along with restorative processes that engage communities in decisionmaking, social control, and support may, in turn, increase prospects for public acceptance of felon enfranchisement and an overall change in the public image of persons under correctional supervision. In that regard, that successful reintegration is not just a matter of whether the offender is prepared to return to the community. It is also a matter of whether the community is prepared to meet the returning offender.
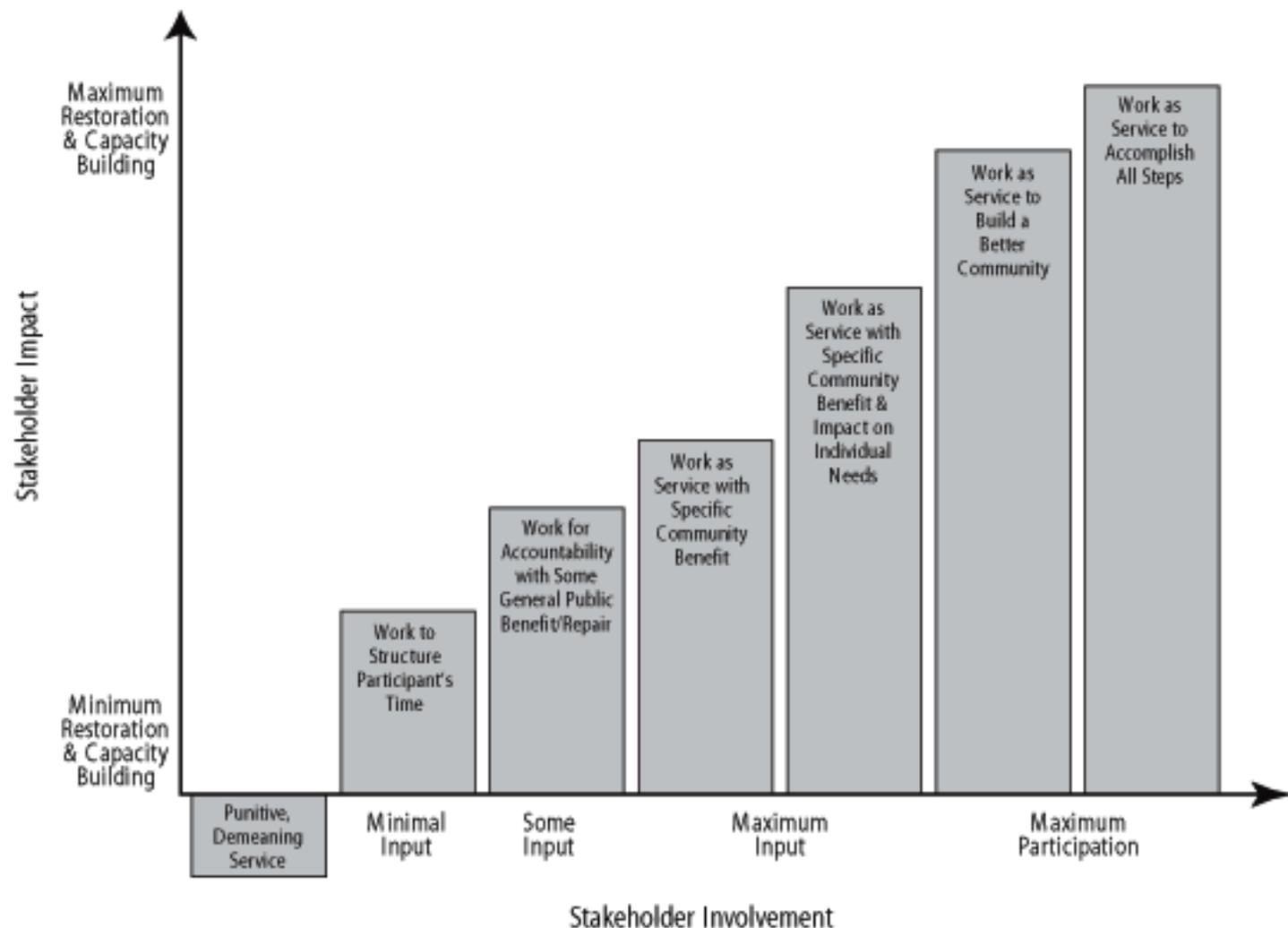
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Figure 1:

A Continuum of Community Work Service Based on Differential Levels of Stakeholder Involvement and Impact

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Endnotes

A Civic Engagement Model of Reentry: Involving Community Through Service and Restorative Justice

[1] Some of the concepts discussed in this article served as the basis of a paper (Bazemore and Stinchcomb, 2003) presented at the symposium on "Race, Crime, and Voting: Social, Political and Philosophical Perspectives on Felony Disenfranchisement in America," Brennan Center for Justice, New York University School of Law, September, 2003.

[2] The voting and democratic participation dimension is broadly defined to include civic literacy, democratic skill development, civic attachment, and political activism—as well as voting and electoral politics (Flanagan and Faison, 2001). Civic literacy is defined as "knowledge about community affairs, political issues and processes whereby citizens effect change." Civic skills include "competencies in achieving group goals" as well as leadership, public speaking, and organizational skills (Flanagan and Faison, 2001). Civic attachment refers to an affective bond to one's community or polity, and social trust, or the "belief that Îmost people' are generally fair and helpful rather than out for their own gain" (Flanagan and Fasion, 2001, p. 3; see Putnam, 2000).

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[1] General Accounting Office. "Federal Offenders: Trends in Community Supervision" (August 1997).

[2] Mumola, Christopher. "Substance Abuse and Treatment, State and Federal Prisoners, 1997" Bureau of Justice Statistics, Washington, D.C. (January 1999).

[3] AOUSC Monograph 109 Executive Summary Page 1. (March 2003).

[4] Petersilia, Joan. *When Prisoners Come Home: Parole and Prisoner Reentry,* Oxford University Press, New York (2003) p. 53.