

Prosocial behavior among children and adolescents

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ABSTRACT

Over 420 million youngsters are affected by political unrest. Understanding the emergence of prosocial behaviours directed at outgroups in such situations can provide prospects for peacebuilding. We focus on Over 42 outgroup prosocial behaviour directed at conflict opponents, based on studies on intergroup rivalry and structural inequality. Children are politically socialised from an early age and exhibit intergroup biases that decrease assisting

behaviours toward conflict competitors, which persist throughout adulthood. Across group boundaries, we examine factors that impact youth's interpersonal aiding and broader types of prosociality, such as civic participation. Outgroup prosocial behaviour is conceptualised as a continuum, extending from interpersonal acts to broader structural and cultural transformation. Finally, we offer suggestions for future research.

KeyWords: *Prosocial behaviour; Children; Adolescents; Protracted conflict; intergroup relations*

INTRODUCTION

More than 420 million children live in areas where there is conflict. Understanding how to encourage prosocial behavior directed at outgroups in such situations has ramifications for fostering intergroup goodwill and peacebuilding. Children's prosocial behavior, defined as voluntary activities to assist another individual, is higher towards ingroup members than outgroup members from a young age (e.g. research described by Abrams et al. However, in the aetiology of prosocial behavior in general and outgroup prosocial behavior in particular, contextual elements such as the target, motive, culture, and setting are key considerations. Based on research on intergroup rivalry and structural inequality, this review focuses on children's and teenagers' outgroup prosocial behavior toward conflict opponents (e.g. systemic racism, separate education systems) [1]. Childhood and adolescence are critical periods for prosocial development, and children are politically socialised from an early age in conflict situations. Although fostering outgroup prosocial behavior in conflict situations is difficult, it can have significant interpersonal and systemic consequences. Such acts of kindness may help to foster more favourable intergroup relations or, more broadly, structural and cultural reforms that address conflict's core causes. Recent empirical research is covered after a brief discussion of two theoretical foundations. We examine various forms of outgroup prosociality, such as resource distribution and assistance. Then we dissect how threat, power, and group standing could influence these many forms of prosocial behavior [2]. We also distinguish between interpersonal (e.g., directed at a single outgroup member) and collective degrees of

outgroup prosocial behavior (e.g. aiming to help the outgroup as a whole). We propose that interpersonal and collective outgroup prosocial behavior are distinct yet connected, and that they can be characterised as a continuum. We hypothesised that outgroup prosociality is a continuum that extends from assisting a single outgroup member to collective action for structural change that addresses previous intergroup inequalities. Finally, we suggest processes and methods for studying and promoting children's and teenagers' prosocial behavior toward conflict rivals [3]. This review is based on two theoretical underpinnings. To begin, the empathy-attitudes-action paradigm describes adult outgroup prosocial behavior. According to this concept, eliciting sympathetic concern and perspective taking for an individual predicts more positive outgroup attitudes and boosts two types of prosocial behavior: toward the outgroup individual and collective outgroup. The EAA model has been included into the developmental peacebuilding model and tested in the setting of intergroup danger among conflict adversaries, extending this to children and adolescents [4]. Second, in a situation of hierarchical, intergroup conflict, the intergroup helping as status relations model (IHSR; [14]) critically explores the motivations driving giving, receiving, or refusing support. Instead of viewing assisting as intrinsically prosocial, the IHSR model contends that it can be strategically employed to support or challenge a group's power and status. The EAA and IHSR models, taken together, emphasise the importance of investigating the types (individual, collective) and targets (outgroup, conflict rival) of prosocial behavior across development. These theoretical foundations also emphasise the importance of doing research in a variety of social circumstances, with

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a focus on the function of threat, power, and status in intergroup relations. The parts that follow go over the most recent empirical research on these topics [5]. Experiments using competitive group norms and group status can reveal how these factors influence resource distribution. These influences were revealed in two investigations undertaken in the United Kingdom. Competitive group norms were altered in the first study. A competitive group norm influenced children (but not adolescents or adults); youngsters gave more to the ingroup than to the outgroup and reasoned less about fairness than adolescents and adults. The second study used a competitive scenario to modify group status (i.e. higher vs lesser resources). In contrast to the previous study, children and adolescents allocated to the higher status group gave equally to the ingroup and outgroup, regardless of their experimental group status [6]. To make up for the disparity, adolescents randomly allocated to the lower status group gave more to the ingroup than to the outgroup. In conclusion, participants, with the exception of adolescents in the lower status group, maintained the status quo by giving equally to both groups, perpetuating resource inequity. To pull out developmental changes in how such characteristics influence resource distribution in childhood and adolescence, more research with real-life groups is needed. Children's outgroup prosocial behavior is also influenced by structural or systemic inequalities (i.e., if groups have uneven status, opportunities, or advantages codified by law or custom). Children in the United States gain a better knowledge of resource inequality based on race and gender as they get older. In the context of African-American and European-American interactions in the United States, for example, older children (aged 10-11) exhibited greater worry over racial inequities than younger children (aged 5-6). When the historically lower status group, African Americans, was also disadvantaged in the experimental paradigm, older children were more inclined to correct injustice. In general, these studies show how youngsters distribute prosocial resources to lower-status or disadvantaged groups in the context of real-life structural inequality. Prosociality may also include outgroup helping, which adds to the resource distribution literature. In the Netherlands, children aged 10-13 who agreed with negative outgroup stereotypes helped ethnic outgroup members more than ingroup members on an intellectual task, specifically by supplying them with the answer. In emerging adulthood, broader sorts of prosociality, such as group action, are often explored. Children and teenagers, on the other hand, can engage in collective action behaviors such as civic participation, volunteering, and signing petitions. Intergroup contact was linked to increased support for peacebuilding and social and political civic participation among adolescents from both majority and minority groups in a conflict situation, according to one study. However, more intergroup contact has been shown to have a 'sedative effect' on minority groups, lowering motivation to engage in social change that benefits the ingroup. Intergroup contact, on the other hand, was associated to a greater readiness to work in solidarity among both majority and minority group members, according to a recent study conducted in 69 nations [7]. Second, the goal of prosocial behaviors should be defined, with a distinction made between outgroups in general and conflict rivals in particular. The identification of the target in measures of prosocial tendencies is vague in the developmental psychological literature, which often asks about total prosociality. However, considerable advancements in comparing several outgroup have been made in the social psychology literature. Syrian Sunni Arab adult refugees, for example, gave less to a 'neutral' outgroup (i.e. Yazidi) and much less to a conflict competitor outgroup within the refugee camp than they did to an ingroup target [8].

Third, including a developmental approach into the literature on collective action could give light on the long-term antecedents or determinants of why people engage in activism. Adolescents who received family support after experiencing perceived conflict, for example, had higher levels of civic participation over time. A longitudinal study demonstrated the intergenerational transmission of communal engagement and political activism through family norms in Chile, suggesting this is a promising route. Finally, there is a need for more integration and synthesis in the sector. Cross-cultural research could be one step toward understanding the ubiquity and distinctiveness of outgroup prosociality directed against conflict adversaries. In conclusion, contemporary research on children's outgroup prosocial behavior emphasizes the need of defining the kind and target, as well as investigating the impact of threat, power, and group status in various circumstances. Outgroup prosocial behavior toward conflict opponents, particularly in conflict circumstances, has ramifications not only for children's personal development but also for wider structural and cultural change [9].

CONCLUSION

This review of recent literature offers four essential study topics for the future. Outgroup prosocial behavior; for starters, can be thought of as a continuum ranging from interpersonal to structural to cultural prosocial change. Sharing with a single outgroup member, for example, could be the first step toward structural reforms that more fairly share social resources. In conflict environments typified by protracted danger, the promise of interpersonal methods and interventions to promote prosociality across group lines, such as changing attitudes, is required but not sufficient..

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