

Four Motives for Community Involvement

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A conceptual analysis is offered that differentiates four types of motivation for community involvement: egoism, altruism, collectivism, and principlism. Differentiation is based on identification of a unique ultimate goal for each motive. For egoism, the ultimate goal is to increase one's own welfare; for altruism, it is to increase the welfare of another individual or individuals; for collectivism, to increase the welfare of a group; and for principlism, to uphold one or more moral principles. As sources of community involvement, each of these four forms of motivation has its strengths; each also has its weaknesses. More effective efforts to stimulate community involvement may come from strategies that orchestrate motives so that the strengths of one motive can overcome weaknesses of another. Among the various possibilities, strategies that combine appeals to either altruism or collectivism with appeals to principle may be especially promising.

In *The Prince*, Machiavelli (1513/1908) imagined himself offering counsel to a public official who wished to provide the best life for his people. The worldly wisdom that Machiavelli provided has stood the test of time. We have no illusions that we can give advice that is as wise or enduring, but we borrowed Machiavelli's literary device and tried to imagine ourselves in a similar situation. A local civic leader—the mayor, let us say—comes to us for help. The mayor is genuinely concerned about the quality of life in town. People seem too absorbed in meeting their own needs, in securing their share of the good life. The mayor worries about

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the level of concern for the welfare of other individuals in the community and of the community as a whole. Failures to act for the common good are conspicuous: trash-littered public parks, streets, and highways; polluted rivers and streams; dropping water tables and shrinking reservoirs; reduced social services and underfunded schools; undersubscribed organ donor and big brother/big sister programs; and insufficient funds for the local humane society, symphony, and public TV.

The mayor is well-aware that these failures are only half of the picture. There are times when people in town do act for the common good. They do at times pick up litter, recycle, carpool, and vote. Many who can, do contribute to public TV and the United Way. Many help their neighbors in need, and if able, serve as volunteers in hospitals, nursing homes, AIDS hospices, and fire departments. But not enough is being done. The mayor wants to know what can be done to increase the likelihood that people in town will act in ways that benefit others in the community and the community as a whole.

The mayor calls such action *community involvement* or *acting for the common good*; we will too. The mayor wants to know: Should there be a new school program? If so, what sort of program—a new civics class, character education, optional or required community service? And at what level—primary grades, secondary grades, or college? Should there be an inquiry and report to the town council? Should there first be a survey of the populace to identify perceived needs and possible solutions? Should there be an ad campaign (“Just say yes!” perhaps)? Should whatever is done emerge from self-identified communities of mutual interest within the larger community? The mayor is asking for our advice.

Initial panic on our part. Once we catch our breath and regain a little composure, some thoughts begin to form. First and foremost is the conviction that although we would love to be able to provide the direction the mayor is seeking, we cannot—at least not by ourselves. The puzzle is too big and complex. We can, we believe, provide a piece or two needed to solve the puzzle, but there are many other pieces that must come from others. The mayor—or someone else—will have to put all of these pieces together.

The pieces that we can provide concern motives that might lead a person to act for the common good. We can, and shall, offer the mayor a conceptual framework for thinking about these motives. First, however, we need to specify what we mean when we speak of motives.

Motives as Goal-Directed Forces to Obtain or Maintain Valued States

Relating motives to values and goals. Following Kurt Lewin (1951), we view *motives* as goal-directed forces induced by threats or opportunities related to one’s values. *Values* can be defined, most generally, as relative preferences; Mary values State A over State B if she would consistently choose State A over State B, with all other things being equal. If a negative discrepancy is perceived between a current

or anticipated state and a valued state, then obtaining or maintaining the valued state is likely to become a *goal*. If, for example, you value having bicycle paths on which to ride, then approval of a proposed plan to create them in your community is likely to be a goal, which will in turn induce motivation directed toward reaching this goal. This motivation may lead you to collect signatures in support of the plan.

Distinguishing ultimate goals from instrumental goals and unintended consequences. It is possible—and important—to distinguish among ultimate goals, instrumental goals, and unintended consequences (see Heider, 1958; Lewin, 1951). *Ultimate goals* are the valued states the individual is seeking to reach. “Ultimate” does not here mean “cosmic” or “most important”; it simply refers to the state or states a person is seeking at a given time (e.g., bike paths on which to ride). It is the ultimate goal that defines a motive; each different motive has a unique ultimate goal evoked by a unique value.

Instrumental goals are sought because they are stepping-stones to ultimate goals. When an ultimate goal can be reached more efficiently by other means, an instrumental goal is likely to be bypassed. A business executive may be motivated to support the bike paths as an instrumental means to enhance his or her public image. If so, he or she is likely to lose interest if a less expensive image-enhancing opportunity arises. (The distinction between instrumental and ultimate goals should not be confused with Rokeach’s [1973] distinction between instrumental and terminal values. All of the values named by Rokeach could induce either instrumental or ultimate goals, depending on whether the value—e.g., a world at peace—is sought as an end in itself or as a means to some other end—e.g., personal safety.)

Pursuit of a goal, whether instrumental or ultimate, may produce effects—sometimes dramatic—that are not themselves a goal. These are *unintended consequences*. It is possible to benefit others or the community as an unintended consequence of pursuing some other goal. A desire to have a safe, cheap, and pleasant route to work may lead me and others like me to volunteer to help build the bike path, resulting in reduced gasoline consumption and pollution and in preservation of a green space to the benefit of the larger community. Or consider a more charged example: A business executive, motivated to maximize profit, may move a factory into a depressed area to take advantage of the cheap labor. Quite unintentionally, this profit-driven action may enhance the quality of life in the community by providing those without work with jobs—even if poorly paid. It may also create not only some benefit but also dependence and exploitation. (For further discussion of the relations among values, goals, and motives, see Batson, 1991, 1994.)

Focusing on motives, not only behavior. A major implication that both Lewin (1951) and Heider (1958) wished to draw from the distinctions among ultimate goals, instrumental goals, and unintended consequences was the importance of

focusing one's attention on motives rather than on behavior, even if one's goal is to increase a type of behavior, such as community involvement. Behavior is highly variable. Whether a given behavior will occur in a given situation depends on the strength of some motive that might evoke that behavior as well as on (a) the strength of complementary and competing motives, if any, (b) how the behavior relates to each of these, and (c) the other behavioral options available in the situation at the time. As in the examples cited above, the more directly a given behavior promotes an ultimate goal, and the more uniquely it does so among the behavioral options available, the more likely it is to occur when the value underlying that motive is activated by threat or opportunity. In contrast, behavior that promotes an instrumental goal can easily change as the behavioral options to reach that goal change, or as the causal association between the instrumental and ultimate goals changes. Behavior that is an unintended consequence can easily change as the behavioral options change, unless this behavior is inextricably linked to some other behavior that directly and uniquely promotes the ultimate goal. Invariance—and explanatory stability—is found not in behavior but in the underlying link of a given motive to its ultimate goal (Lewin, 1951).

Motives can cooperate or conflict—and can change. An individual can have more than one ultimate goal and so, more than one motive at once. When this occurs, as it often does, these motives may cooperate or conflict. Moreover, a person's motives can change over time, often quickly. "Motive" and "motivation" as we are using these terms refer to states, not to dispositions. Which motives arise in a given situation are a function of the values of the individual and the nature of the situation. Some values are relatively durable and threats or opportunities related to them persist, producing an enduring motive. Other values may be more changeable; threats and opportunities related to these values may elicit motives only in certain situations.

Motives as current goal-directed forces, not as dispositions or needs. The perspective on motivation that we have sketched owes much more to Kurt Lewin than to another pioneer in research on motivation, Henry Murray. Lewin (1951) treated *goals* as force fields within the current life space of the individual; he treated *motives* as goal-directed forces in these fields; and he treated *values* as power fields that could, under the appropriate circumstances, activate motivational forces. These motivational forces could, in turn, produce *behavior*, or movement within the life space. Murray (1938) and his followers treated motives as relatively stable dispositions or needs (e.g., achievement motivation), which are more nearly equivalent to values than to motives in Lewin's framework. As noted, Lewin emphasized the distinction among instrumental goals, ultimate goals, and unintended consequences (as did Heider, 1958); Murray gave little attention to these distinctions. For Lewin, the list of potential motives is endless; it is as rich and varied

as one's preferences or values. Murray and his followers attempted to identify a relatively small number of primary motives.

Much of the recent discussion in psychology about motives for community involvement has adopted a perspective on motivation that seems far more akin to Murray's than to Lewin's (e.g., Clary et al., 1998; Omoto & Snyder, 1995). Our perspective is quite different, as are the issues we shall highlight and the conclusions we shall draw.

Why Act for the Common Good? Four Answers

We would suggest that if one wishes to stimulate community involvement, or even to understand why it occurs, then it is crucial to know what motives might lead people to care about the welfare of others and of the community at large. These motives are a key resource—but of course only one of many—upon which a person can draw. To identify motives that might lead to community involvement, we shall consider the values that might be pursued by acting for the common good. We shall try to identify these values at as general a level as possible, in hope of enhancing the generality of our analysis.

So, what do people value? There is little doubt that most of us value our own welfare and are motivated to increase it when opportunities to do so arise. *Egoism*, motivation with the ultimate goal of increasing our own welfare, clearly exists. Indeed, it is the assumption of virtually every major account of human action in psychology, sociology, economics, and political science that all human action is always and inevitably directed toward the ultimate goal of self-benefit (Campbell, 1975; Mansbridge, 1990). According to this assumption, if someone acts for the welfare of others or for the good of the community, it is only because doing so is an instrumental means to promote one's own welfare or is an unintended consequence of promoting one's own welfare. Obviously, if this view of human motivation is correct, then anyone wishing to promote community involvement—including our imagined mayor—had best address all appeals to self-interest.

Recent theory and research suggests, however, that this view of human motivation is wrong (see Batson, 1991, for a partial review). Self-interest is a powerful and pervasive motive, but it now seems clear that the human capacity for caring is not limited to one's own interest. Three other broad classes of motives have been proposed that involve interests outside ourselves: *altruism*, motivation with the ultimate goal of increasing the welfare of one or more other individuals as individuals; *collectivism*, motivation with the ultimate goal of increasing the welfare of a group; and *principlism*, motivation with the ultimate goal of upholding some moral principle, such as justice (Batson, 1994).

We wish to suggest that all four of these motives are possible, even plausible, and that each has its own distinct promise and problems as a motive for community involvement. We believe that an adequate answer to the question of why people

Table 1. Four Motives for Community Involvement

Motive	Ultimate Goal	Strength(s)	Weakness(es)
Egoism	Increase one's own welfare.	Many forms; easily invoked; powerful.	Increased community involvement relates to the motive only as an instrumental means or unintended consequence.
Altruism	Increase the welfare of one or more other individuals.	Powerful; may generalize to group of which other is a member.	May be limited to individuals for whom empathy is felt; increased community involvement relates to the motive only as an instrumental means or unintended consequence.
Collectivism	Increase the welfare of a group or collective.	Powerful; directly focused on common good.	May be limited to ingroup.
Principlism	Uphold some moral principle (e.g., justice).	Directed toward universal and impartial good.	Often seems weak; vulnerable to rationalization.

act for the common good needs to consider all four. It needs to consider not only the existence of all four but also their interplay. For a given individual in a given situation, more than one of these motives may be present at once. When this is the case, the motives may either conflict or cooperate with one another. Before considering their interplay, however, let us say a little more about each of these motives as a basis for community involvement. Table 1 provides an overview of our analysis.

Egoism: Serving the Community to Benefit Oneself

Egoism is the most obvious motive for acting for the common good. Action that serves the common good can be egoistically motivated if this action either is instrumental to reaching the ultimate goal of self-benefit, or is an unintended consequence of reaching this goal. For example, a philanthropist may endow a hospital or university to gain recognition and a form of immortality; a capitalist, nudged by Adam Smith's (1776/1976) Invisible Hand, may create jobs and enhance the standard of living of the community while motivated by a relentless pursuit of personal fortune; a student may volunteer at a local nursing home to add community service to her résumé. All three are egoistically motivated; yet the action of each may benefit the community. Reflecting on what motives might induce people to act for the common good, ecologist and social-policy analyst Garrett Hardin (1977) concluded that egoism is not simply the most obvious. He concluded that it is the only motive sufficiently pervasive and powerful to do the job. Hence, Hardin proposed his Cardinal Rule of Policy: "Never ask a person to act against his own self-interest" (p. 27).

Varieties of egoistic motivation. A number of self-benefits can be the ultimate goal of acting for the common good. One can act to gain material, social, or self-rewards (e.g., pay or prizes, recognition, praise, esteem enhancement), or to avoid material, social, or self-punishments (e.g., fines, avoidance of censure, guilt, shame). When one looks beyond the immediate situation to consider long-term consequences and intangible benefits for oneself, self-interest becomes “enlightened” (Dawes, van de Kragt, & Orbell, 1990). From an enlightened perspective, one may see that headlong pursuit of self-interest will lead to less long-term personal gain than will acting for the common good, so one may decide to act for the common good as an instrumental means to reach the ultimate goal of maximizing self-benefit. Appeals to enlightened self-interest are often used by politicians and social activists trying to encourage action for the common good. They warn us of the eventual consequences for ourselves and our children of pollution or of under-funded schools; they remind us that an unchecked epidemic may, in time, reach into our home; or that if the plight of the poor becomes too severe, we may face revolution. The motivation they seek to arouse is egoistic; they threaten our enlightened self-interest.

Non-tangible self-benefits of acting for the common good have sometimes been called *side payments* (Dawes et al., 1990). One may, for example, act for the common good as a means to reach the ultimate goal of avoiding social censure or guilt. As John Stuart Mill (1861/1987) put it in his defense of Utilitarianism: “Why am I bound to promote the general happiness? If my own happiness lies in something else, why may I not give that the preference?” (p. 299). Mill’s answer was that we will give our own happiness preference until, through education, we learn the sanctions for doing so. These include external sanctions stemming from social censure (including divine censure) and internal sanctions stemming from conscience. Freud (1930/1961) presented a similar view, as have most social-learning and norm theorists since. The side payments need not be negative; there are also non-tangible self-rewards of community service. People may get involved to see themselves—or be seen by others—as caring, concerned, responsible, good people. Pursuit of such side payments may provide great benefit to the community; still, the underlying motivation is egoistic.

Promise and problems of egoism as a source of action for the common good. Egoistic motives offer promise for promoting the common good because they are easily aroused and are potent. They offer problems because they are fickle. If the egoistically motivated individual finds that self-interest can be served as well or better without enhancing the common good, then the common good be damned. For example, the student whose ultimate goal in volunteering at a local nursing home is to add community service to her résumé is not likely to last. Her goal has been reached the first time she enters the building.

Altruism: Serving the Community to Benefit One or More Other Individuals

Altruism is motivation with the ultimate goal of increasing the welfare of one or more individuals other than oneself. Altruism should not be confused with helping behavior, which is one way to act for the common good. Helping may or may not be altruistically motivated. Nor should altruism be confused with self-sacrifice, which concerns cost to self not benefit to the other (see Batson, 1991, for a discussion of conceptions and definitions of altruism).

The most commonly proposed source of altruistic motivation is empathic emotion. By *empathy* we mean other-oriented feelings congruent with the perceived welfare of another person (again, see Batson, 1991, for a discussion). If the other is perceived to be in need, then empathy includes feelings of sympathy, compassion, tenderness, and the like. These feelings appear to be a product not only of perceiving the other as in need but also of valuing the other's welfare as an ultimate goal (Batson, Turk, Shaw, & Klein, 1995). It has been suggested that empathic feelings, in turn, amplify motivation directed toward the ultimate goal of relieving the need of the person for whom empathy is felt—altruistic motivation (Batson, 1987, 1991; Hoffman, 1976).

Problems. Although there is now strong evidence that empathy-induced altruistic motivation exists (see Batson, 1991, for a review), is it a plausible source of motivation to act for the common good? Altruism, especially empathy-induced altruism, appears to be directed toward the interest of specific other individuals. It may not be possible to feel empathy for an abstract social category like *the community, people with AIDS, the elderly, or the homeless*. Further, the likelihood that needs of different individuals will evoke empathic feelings is not equal; these feelings are more likely to be felt for those: (a) who are friends, kin, or similar to us, (b) to whom we are emotionally attached, (c) for whom we feel responsible, or (d) whose perspective we adopt (Batson, 1991; Stotland, 1969). And, like any emotion, empathic feelings are likely to diminish over time (Batson, 1987, 1991).

These observations suggest that many of our most pressing social problems may evoke little empathy. The people in need are too remote; the problems are too abstract and long-term. For this reason Hardin (1977) dismissed altruism as a potential solution to large-scale problems such as poverty, homelessness, population control, or pollution:

Is pure altruism possible? Yes, of course it is—on a small scale, over the short term, in certain circumstances, and within small, intimate groups. . . . But only the most naive hope to adhere to a noncalculating policy in a group that numbers in the thousands (or millions!), and in which many preexisting antagonisms are known and many more suspected. (Hardin, 1977, p. 26)

Hardin quickly returned to his Cardinal Rule: Never ask a person to act against self-interest.

As a source of motivation for community involvement, altruism may be limited in much the same way as egoism. If benefiting the person or persons for whom empathy is felt leads to increased common good, fine. But if it does not, then altruism will not increase the common good; it may even diminish it. A father may volunteer to organize a Little League team because he cares about his daughter, who wants to play. If so, what is likely to happen to his motivation when her interest shifts to tennis?

Consistent with this reasoning, research has demonstrated that inducing empathy for one of the other individuals in a group increased allocation of scarce resources to this individual to the detriment of the group as a whole, much as increased egoistic motivation might (Batson, Batson, et al., 1995). Indeed, when allocation decisions are under public scrutiny, empathy-induced altruism may pose a more serious threat to the common good than does egoism (Batson et al., 1999). This is because there are clear societal sanctions against egoism, but not against altruism.

Promise. Still, in certain circumstances empathy-induced altruism may be a surprisingly powerful motive for promoting the common good. Recent research has shown that inducing empathy for a member of a stigmatized group can lead to more positive attitudes toward the group as a whole. This strategy has been used to improve attitudes toward people with AIDS, the homeless, and even convicted murderers (Batson, Polycarpou, et al., 1997).

The strategy of inducing empathy for an individual who is an exemplar of a disadvantaged group is employed in many fund-raising ads, whether for children with disabilities, for those needing a big brother or sister, or for the homeless. Even the needs of the physical environment may not lie beyond the reach of empathy. Think of attempts to personalize these needs by invoking metaphors such as Mother Earth, the rape of the landscape, or dying rivers. Could it be that these personalizing metaphors are used in order to evoke empathy—and, so, altruistic motivation—to address these important needs?

Collectivism: Serving the Community to Benefit a Group

Collectivism is motivation with the ultimate goal of increasing the welfare of a group or collective (Batson, 1994). The collective may be small or large, from two to over two billion. It may be a marriage or a family; it may be a neighborhood, a city, a nation; it may be all humanity. The collective may be one's race, religion, sex, political party, or social class. One need not even be a member of the collective. One may, for example, act to increase the welfare of a racial or ethnic minority, of the homeless, of gays and lesbians, without being a member of these groups. If one values a group's welfare and this welfare is threatened or can be enhanced in some way, then collectivist motivation should be aroused, promoting action to

benefit the group. This action may, in turn, benefit the community as a whole (for further discussion, see Batson, 1994).

The college student who volunteers to help Habitat for Humanity build houses and whose ultimate goal is easing the plight of the poor is displaying collectivist motivation. So is the gay man who, in order to serve the gay community, volunteers to serve as buddy for someone dying of AIDS. If the person's ultimate goal is to benefit some group, whether large or small, inclusive or exclusive, the motive is collectivism.

Problems. Collectivist motives are not problem-free as a source of action for the common good. Typically, we care about collectives of which we are members, an *us*. Identifying with a group or collective usually involves recognition of an outgroup, a *them*, who is not us. Indeed, some have suggested that a them-us comparison is necessary to define a collective (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The problem is that concern to meet *our* needs may lead to callous indifference to *their* needs. For example, when AIDS was initially labeled as a gay disease, many outside the gay community felt little inclination to help. It was *their* problem.

Promise. In addition to this very real limitation, collectivist motivation has some virtues that egoism and altruism do not. As noted, egoism and altruism are both directed toward the welfare of individuals. Yet many community needs are far removed from our self-interest, even enlightened self-interest, and from the interest of those for whom we especially care. Egoism and altruism may be of limited use in encouraging action to meet these needs. Think, for example, of the plight of the homeless, of energy conservation, or of public services that do not directly benefit us or our loved ones.

Such community needs are particularly difficult to address because they often come in the form of what have been called *social dilemmas*. A social dilemma arises when: (a) individuals in a group or collective have a choice about how to allocate personally held, scarce resources (e.g., money, time, energy), and (b) allocation to the group provides more benefit for the group as a whole than does allocation to oneself, but allocation to oneself provides more self-benefit than does allocation to the group (Dawes, 1980). Examples include recycling, energy and water conservation, contributing to public TV, and supporting charities. In such situations, the action that is best for oneself is to allocate resources to meet one's own needs, ignoring the needs of the group as a whole. But if everyone tries thus to maximize their own welfare, the attempt will backfire. Everyone, including oneself, is worse off. If our imagined mayor relies on straightforward egoistic—or altruistic—motivation to address the pressing social dilemmas the community faces, the prognosis looks bleak.

But the situation is rarely this grim. There is considerable evidence that when faced with a social dilemma, whether in a research laboratory or in real life, many

people do not seek to maximize only their own welfare. They seek also to enhance the group welfare (Alfano & Marwell, 1980; Brewer & Kramer, 1986; Dawes, McTavish, & Shaklee, 1977; Kramer & Brewer, 1984; Orbell, van de Kragt, & Dawes, 1988; Yamagishi & Sato, 1986). The most common explanation for this attention to group welfare is in terms of collectivist motivation. It is claimed that under conditions of group identity, individuals can and do act with an ultimate goal of increasing the welfare of their group (e.g., Brewer & Kramer, 1986; Dawes et al., 1990). Whether it is possible to induce such a motive in someone who is not a member of the group is, however, less clear.

Principlism: Serving the Community to Uphold Moral Principles

Principlism is motivation with the ultimate goal of upholding some moral principle, such as justice (Batson, 1994). It is not surprising that most moral philosophers have argued for the importance of a motive to act for common good other than egoism. But most since Kant (1785/1898) have also argued for a motive other than altruism and collectivism. Moral philosophers reject appeals to altruism based on feelings of empathy, sympathy, and compassion because they find these emotions too fickle and circumscribed; they reject appeals to collectivism because it is bounded by the limits of the collective. These philosophers typically call for motivation with a goal of upholding some universal and impartial moral principle.

For example, philosopher John Rawls (1971) has argued for a principle of justice based on the allocation of goods to the members of society from an initial position behind the Veil of Ignorance, where no one knows his or her place in society—prince or pauper, laborer or lawyer, male or female, Black or White. Why does Rawls require such a stance? Because it eliminates partiality and seduction by special interest.

Calls to act for the common good often appeal to principle. We are told that it is our duty to vote, that it is not right to leave our litter in the park for someone else to clean up, that we should give our “fair share” to the United Way, that we ought to improve the community in which we live.

Problems. The major problem with principlism as a source of motivation to act for the common good is knowing when and how a given principle applies. It may seem that moral principles, at least universal ones, always apply. But it is not that simple.

Most of us are adept at rationalization, at justifying to ourselves—if not to others—why a situation that benefits us or those we care about does not violate our moral principles. Why, for example, the inequalities in the public school systems of rich and poor communities in the U.S. are not really unjust (Kozol, 1991). Why storing our nuclear waste in someone else’s backyard is fair. Why it is acceptable to watch public TV without contributing. Why foregoing the extra effort to recycle

is not wrong. The abstractness of most moral principles, and their multiplicity, makes rationalization easy (Bandura, 1991; Tsang, in press). Skill in dodging the thrust of the moral principles we espouse may explain the weak empirical relation between principled morality and social action (Blasi, 1980). Perhaps moral principles serve more to censure or extol others' actions than to motivate our own. Perhaps adherence to moral principles is only an instrumental goal on the way to the egoistic ultimate goal of benefiting ourselves by avoiding social and self-censure or gaining social- and self-esteem.

It is not that we lack moral sensibility; most of us consider ourselves to be highly moral (Sedikides & Strube, 1997; Van Lange, 1991). Yet when our own interest is best served by violating avowed moral principles, we may find this relatively easy to do. We find ways to see ourselves as fair—or at least not unfair—while avoiding the cost to self of actually being fair. Moral principles are affirmed, but the motivation to uphold these principles seems spotty and weak.

A number of psychological processes may contribute to this weakness of moral motivation. First, people may conveniently forget to think about their moral principles if such an omission serves their own interests (Bersoff, 1999). Second, people may actively rationalize (Tsang, in press), convincing themselves that their moral principles do not apply either to the specific others whose interests conflict with their own (*moral exclusion*—Staub, 1990) or to the specific situation (*moral disengagement*—Bandura, 1991). Third, people may deceive themselves into believing that they have acted morally even when they have not if there is sufficient ambiguity to allow them to appear moral without having to be moral (*moral hypocrisy*—Batson, Kobrynowicz, Dinnerstein, Kampf, & Wilson, 1997).

Promise. More positively, if upholding moral principles can serve as an ultimate goal, defining a form of motivation independent of egoism, then perhaps these principles can provide a rational basis for acting for the common good that transcends reliance on self-interest or on vested interest in and feeling for the welfare of certain other individuals or groups. Quite an “if,” but it seems a possibility well worth exploring.

Conflict

In sum, we can offer both good news and bad to our imaginary mayor. The good news is the existence of motives for community involvement other than self-interest, making available new resources. The bad news is that recognizing a multiplicity of motives complicates matters. The different motives for acting for the common good do not always work in harmony. As long as the welfare of self, others, and the community are perceived to be distinct, motives to promote the welfare of each can undercut or compete with one another.

Well-intentioned appeals to egoistic motives, even to enlightened self-interest, can backfire by undermining other forms of motivation. Providing people with money or other extrinsic inducements for community service may lead them to interpret their motivation as egoistic even when it is not (Batson, Coke, Jasnoski, & Hanson, 1978). And when the inducements are removed, the behavior may vanish (Stukas, Snyder, & Clary, 1999). In this way, the assumption that there is only one answer to the question of why we act for the common good—egoism—may become a self-fulfilling prophecy (Batson, Fultz, Schoenrade, & Paduano, 1987; Miller & Ratner, 1998).

Nor do the other three motives always work in harmony; they can conflict with one another. For example, altruism can—and often does—conflict with collectivism or principlism. We may ignore the welfare of the group, we may compromise our principles, not only to benefit ourselves but also to benefit those individuals for whom we especially care. A father may resist contributing to public TV not to buy himself a new shirt, but because he considers the desires of his daughter, who wants new shoes. A volunteer coordinator may retain an ineffective volunteer, for whom he or she feels compassion, to the detriment of those served. Farmers overwork the land, loggers clear-cut, fishermen deplete stocks not out of personal greed but to meet the needs of their families. (See Batson, Ahmad, et al., 1999; Batson, Batson, et al., 1995, and Batson, Klein, Highberger, & Shaw, 1995, for relevant research.)

Orchestrating Cooperation

Each of the four motives for community involvement that we have identified has its strengths. Each also has its weaknesses. The potential for the greatest good may come from strategies that orchestrate motives so that the strengths of one can overcome weaknesses of another. Strategies that combine appeals to either altruism or collectivism with appeals to principle seem especially promising. Upholding a moral principle like justice may be a motive with broad relevance, but it is vulnerable to rationalization. Empathy-induced altruism and collectivism are potentially powerful other-oriented motives, but are limited in scope; they produce partiality, special concern for a particular person or persons or for a particular group. Perhaps if we can lead people to feel empathy for the victims of injustice, or to perceive themselves in a common group with them, then we can get these motives working together rather than at odds. Desire for justice may provide perspective and reason; empathy-induced altruism or collectivism may provide emotional fire and a push toward seeing the victims' suffering end, preventing rationalization.

Something of this sort occurred, we believe, in a number of rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe. A careful look at data collected by Samuel and Pearl Oliner and their colleagues (Oliner & Oliner, 1988) suggests that involvement in rescue activity frequently began with concern for a specific individual or individuals, or

members of a specific group, for whom compassion was felt—often individuals known previously. This initial involvement subsequently led to further contacts and rescue activity and to a concern for justice that extended well beyond the bounds of the initial empathic concern. In several cases, such as in the French village of Le Chambon, the result was a dramatic form of community involvement.

Something of this sort also seems to lie at the heart of the forms of nonviolent protest in the face of entrenched injustice practiced by Mahatma Gandhi and by Martin Luther King, Jr. Sometimes, sadly, history itself does the orchestration. At the time of the bus boycott in Birmingham, Alabama, the horrific sight on the TV news of a small Black child being literally rolled down the street by water from a fire hose under the direction of Police Chief Bull Connor—and the emotions this sight evoked—seemed to do more to arouse a concern for justice than hours of reasoned argument and appeals for equal rights.

Something of the sort can also be found in the writing of Jonathan Kozol. Deeply concerned about the “savage inequalities” in public education between rich and poor communities in the U.S., Kozol (1991) clearly documents the inequality, but he does far more. He takes us into the lives of individual children. We come to care for them and, as a result, to care deeply about the injustice depicted. Kozol’s goal is not to get us simply to feel; he wants to get us involved in action to improve funding for schools in poor communities. He pursues this goal by orchestrating the motives of empathy-induced altruism and principlism.

Orchestrating motives is, we believe, an important piece in the puzzle of stimulating community involvement. It appears capable of producing dramatic results. Yet it is a strategy rarely recommended. Could this be because an assumption that all human motivation is self-interested has prevented us from even conceiving the possibility of such a strategy?

Conclusion

We encourage our imagined mayor—and others seeking to stimulate community involvement—to shift focus from exclusive attention to the behavior sought to consider, also, motives that might encourage or discourage this behavior. Whether a given behavior will occur in a given situation depends on the strength of motives that might evoke that behavior as well as on: (a) the strength of complementary and competitive motives if any, (b) how the behavior relates to each of these, and (c) the other behavioral options available in the situation at the time. We also encourage consideration of the range of possible motives that may promote community involvement by different individuals and in different situations. Further, we encourage serious attention to the problems as well as the promise associated with each type of motivation. Finally, rather than an indiscriminate appeal to any and all possible motives, we encourage careful orchestration so that rather than one motive undercutting another, the strengths of one can overcome the weaknesses

of another. Strategies that combine appeals to either altruism or collectivism with appeals to principle are, we believe, especially promising. Readers may think of other promising combinations. If our conceptual analysis provides a framework for such thought, then it will have done its job.

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