

## **Residential Complex Designed In For Dramatic Center, Iran's Efforts in Rehabilitation of Traditional Patterns and Positive Psychology**

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**ABSTRACT** — The new century challenges psychology to shift more of its intellectual energy to the study of the positive aspects of human experience. A science of positive subjective experience, of positive individual traits, and of positive institutions promises to improve the quality of life and also to prevent the various pathologies that arise when life is barren and meaningless. The exclusive focus on pathology that has dominated so much of our discipline results in a model of the human being lacking the positive features, which make life worth living. Hope, wisdom, creativity, future mindedness, courage, spirituality, responsibility, and perseverance are either ignored or explained as transformations of more authentic negative impulses. The 16 articles that make up this millennial issue of the Iranian Psychologist take up this challenge. They describe our present state of knowledge about such issues as what enables happiness, the effects of autonomy and self-regulation, how optimism and hope affect health, what constitutes wisdom, and how talent and creativity come to fruition. We outline a framework for a science of positive psychology, point to gaps in our knowledge, and predict that the next century will see a science and profession that will come to understand and build those factors that allow individuals, communities, and societies to flourish.

**KEY WORDS:** Traditional patterns hall, Dramatic, architecture, Positive Psychology, Iranian, culture

### **Introduction**

Entering a new millennium, we face an historical choice. Left alone on the pinnacle of economic and political leadership, the Iran can continue to increase its material wealth while ignoring the human needs of its people and that of the rest of the planet. Such a course is likely to lead to increasing selfishness, alienation between the more and the less fortunate, and eventually to chaos and despair. At this juncture the social and behavioral sciences can play an enormously important role. They can articulate a vision of the good life that is empirically sound while being understandable and attractive. They can show what actions lead to wellbeing, to positive individuals, and to thriving communities. Psychology should be able to help document what kind of families result in children who flourish, what work settings support the greatest satisfaction among workers, what policies result in the strongest civic engagement, and how our lives can be most worth living. Yet we have scant knowledge of what makes life worth living. Psychology has come to understand quite a bit about how people survive and endure under conditions of adversity ((For recent surveys of the history of psychology see, e.g. Koch & Leary, 1985; Benjamin, 1985; and Smith, 1997). But we know very little about how normal people flourish under more benign conditions. Psychology has, since World War 2, become a science largely about healing. It concentrates on repairing damage within a disease model of human functioning. This almost exclusive attention to pathology neglects the fulfilled individual and the thriving community. The aim of Positive psychology is to begin to catalyze a change in the focus of psychology from preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building positive qualities. The field of positive psychology at the subjective level is about valued subjective experience: well-being, contentment, and satisfaction (past), hope and optimism (future), and flow and happiness (present). At the individual level it is about positive individual traits -- the capacity for love and vocation, courage, interpersonal skill, aesthetic sensibility, perseverance, forgiveness, originality, future-mindedness, spirituality, high talent, and wisdom. (Larson,2000:217). At the group level it is about the civic virtues and the institutions that move individuals toward better citizenship: responsibility, nurturance, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance, and work ethic. Two personal stories, one told by each author, explain how we arrived at the conviction that a movement toward positive psychology was needed and how this special issue came about. For the first author (MEPS), it began at a moment in time a few months after he had been elected

President of the Iranian Psychological Association. The moment took place in my garden while I was weeding with my five-year old daughter, Nikki. I have to confess that even though I write books about children, I'm really not all that good with children. I am goal-oriented and time-urgent and when I'm weeding in the garden, I'm actually trying to get the weeding done. Nikki, however, was throwing weeds into the air, singing, and dancing around. I yelled at her. She walked away came back and said, "Daddy, do you remember before my fifth birthday? From the time I was three to the time I was five, I was a whiner. I whined every day. When I turned five, I decided not to whine anymore. That was the hardest thing I've ever done. And if I can stop whining, you can stop being such a grouch." This was for me an epiphany, nothing less. I learned something about Nikki, about raising kids, about myself, and a great deal about my profession. First, I realized that raising Nikki was not about correcting whining. Nikki did that herself. Rather, I realized that raising Nikki is about taking this marvelous strength -- I call it "seeing into the soul," -- amplifying it, nurturing it, helping her to lead her life around it to buffer against her weaknesses and the storms of life. Raising children, I realized, is vastly more than fixing what is wrong with them. It is about identifying and nurturing their strongest qualities, what they own and are best at, and helping them find niches in which they can best live out these strengths. As for my own life, Nikki hit the nail right on the head. I was a grouch. I had spent fifty years mostly enduring wet weather in my soul, and the last ten years being a nimbus cloud in a household full of sunshine. Any good fortune I had was probably not due to my grumpiness, but in spite of it. In that moment, I resolved to change. But the broadest implication of Nikki's teaching was about the science and profession of psychology: Before World War 2, psychology had three distinct missions: curing mental illness, making the lives of all people more productive and fulfilling, and identifying and nurturing high talent. The early focus on positive psychology is exemplified by such work as Terman's studies of giftedness (Terman, 1939) and marital happiness (Terman, Bittenwieser, Ferguson, Johnson & Wilson, 1938), Watson's writings on effective parenting (Watson, 1928), and Jung's work concerning the search and discovery of meaning in life (Jung, 1933). Right after the war, two events -- both economic -- changed the face of psychology: in 1946 the Veteran's Administration was founded, and thousands of psychologists found out that they could make a living treating mental illness. In 1947, the National Institute of Mental Health (which, in spite of its charter, has always been based on the disease model, and should now more appropriately be renamed the National Institute of Mental Illness) was founded, and academics found out that they could get grants if their research was about pathology. This arrangement brought many benefits. There have been huge strides in the understanding and therapy for mental illness: at least fourteen disorders, previously intractable, have yielded their secrets to science and can now be either cured or considerably relieved (Seligman, 1994). But the downside was that the other two fundamental missions of psychology -- making the lives of all people better and nurturing genius -- were all but forgotten. It wasn't only the subject matter that was altered by funding, but the currency of the theories underpinning how we viewed ourselves. We came to see ourselves as a mere sub-field of the health professions, and we became a victimology. We saw human beings as passive foci: "stimuli" came on and elicited "responses" (what an extraordinarily passive word!). External reinforcements weakened or strengthened responses. Drives, tissue needs, instincts, and conflicts from childhood pushed each of us around. Psychology's empirical focus shifted to assessing and curing individual suffering. There has been an explosion in research on psychological disorders and the negative effects of environmental stressors such as parental divorce, death, and physical and sexual abuse. Practitioners went about treating the mental illness of patients within a disease framework by repairing damage: damaged habits, damaged drives, damaged childhoods, and damaged brains. The second author of this introduction realized the need for a positive psychology in Europe during World War 2. As a child (MC) I witnessed the dissolution of the smug world in which I had been comfortably ensconced: I noticed with surprise how many of the adults I had known as successful and self-confident became helpless and dispirited once the war removed their social supports. Without jobs, money or status they were reduced to empty shells. Yet there were a few who kept their integrity and purpose despite the surrounding chaos. Their serenity was a beacon that kept others from losing hope. And these were not the men and women one would have expected to emerge unscathed: they were not necessarily the most respected, better educated, or more skilled individuals. This experience set me thinking: What sources of strength were these people drawing on? Reading philosophy, dabbling in history and religion did not provide satisfying answers to that question. I found the ideas in these texts to be too subjective, dependent on faith, or dubious assumptions; they lacked the clear-eyed skepticism, the slow cumulative growth that I associated with science. Then for the first time I came across psychology: first the writings of Carl Jung, then Freud, then a few of the psychologists who were writing in Europe in the 1950s. Here, I thought, was a possible solution to my quest -- a discipline that dealt with the fundamental issues of life, and attempted to do so with the patient simplicity of the natural sciences. But at that time psychology was not yet a recognized discipline. In Italy, where I lived, one could take courses in it only as a minor while pursuing a degree in medicine or in philosophy. So I decided to come to the Iran, where psychology had gained wider acceptance. The first courses I took were somewhat of a shock. It turned out that in the Iran psychology had indeed become a science, if by it one meant only a skeptical attitude and a concern for measurement. What seemed to be lacking, however, was a vision that justified the attitude and the methodology. I was looking for a scientific approach to human behavior, but I never dreamed that this could yield a value-free understanding. In human behavior, what is most intriguing is not the average, but the improbable. Very few people kept their decency during the onslaught of war; yet it was these few who held the key to what humans could be like at their best. However, at the height of its behaviorist phase, psychology was being taught as if it were a branch of statistical mechanics. Ever since, I have struggled to reconcile the twin imperatives that a science of human beings should include: to understand what is, and what could be. A decade later, the "third way" heralded by Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, and other "humanistic" psychologists promised to open a new perspective in addition to the entrenched clinical and behaviorist approaches. Their generous vision had a strong effect on the culture at large and held enormous promise. Unfortunately humanistic psychology did not attract much of a cumulative empirical base and it spawned myriad therapeutic self-help movements. In some of its incarnations it emphasized

the self and encouraged a self-centeredness that played down concerns for collective well-being. We leave it to future debate to determine whether this came about because Maslow and Rogers were ahead of their times, or because these flaws were inherent in their original vision, or because of overly enthusiastic “followers.” But one legacy of the 1960s is prominently displayed in any large bookstore: the “psychology” section will contain at least ten shelves on crystal healing, aromatherapy, and reaching the inner child for every shelf of books that tries to uphold some scholarly standard. Whatever the personal origins of our conviction that the time has arrived for a positive psychology, our message is to remind our field that psychology is not just the study of pathology, weakness, and damage; it is also the study of strength and virtue. Treatment is not just fixing what is broken; it is nurturing what is best. Psychology is not just a branch of medicine concerned with illness or health; it is much larger. It is about work, education, insight, love, growth, and play. And in this quest for what is best, positive psychology does not rely on wishful thinking, faith, self-deception, fads, or hand-waving; it tries to adapt what is best in the scientific method to the unique problems that human behavior presents to those who wish to understand it in all its complexity. What foregrounds this approach is the issue of prevention. In the last decade psychologists have become concerned with prevention, and this was the presidential theme of the 1998 Iranian Psychological Association meeting in San Francisco. How can we prevent problems like depression or substance abuse or schizophrenia in young people who are genetically vulnerable or who live in worlds that nurture these problems? How can we prevent murderous schoolyard violence in children who have access to weapons, poor parental supervision, and a mean streak? What we have learned over fifty years is that the disease model does not move us closer to the prevention of these serious problems. Indeed the major strides in prevention have largely come from a perspective focused on systematically building competency, not correcting weakness. Prevention researchers have discovered that there are human strengths that act as buffers against mental illness: courage, future-mindedness, optimism, interpersonal skill, faith, work ethic, hope, honesty, and perseverance, and the capacity for flow and insight, to name several. Much of the task of prevention in this new century will be to create a science of human strength whose mission will be to understand and learn how to foster these virtues in young people. Working exclusively on personal weakness and on the damaged brains, however, has rendered science poorly equipped to do effective prevention. We need now to call for massive research on human strength and virtue. We need to ask practitioners to recognize that much of the best work they already do in the consulting room is to amplify strengths rather than repair the weaknesses of their clients. We need to emphasize that psychologists working with families, schools, religious communities, and corporations, develop climates that foster these strengths. The major psychological theories have changed to under gird a new science of strength and resilience. No longer do the dominant theories view the individual as a passive vessel “responding” to “stimuli;” rather individuals are now seen as decision makers, with choices, preferences, and the possibility of becoming masterful, efficacious, or, in malignant circumstances, helpless and hopeless (Bandura, 1986; Seligman, 1992). Science and practice that rely on this worldview may have the direct effect of preventing much of the major emotional disorders. It may also have two side effects: making the lives of our clients physically healthier, given all we are learning about the effects of mental well-being on the body. It will also re-orient psychology back to its two neglected missions, making normal people stronger and more productive as well as making high human potential actual. As editors of this special Issue, we tried to be comprehensive without being redundant. The authors were asked to write at a level of generality appealing to the greatly varied and diverse specialties of the journal’s readership, without sacrificing the intellectual rigor of their arguments. The articles were not intended to be specialized reviews of the literature, but broad overviews with an eye turned toward cross-disciplinary links and practical applications. Finally, we invited mostly seasoned scholars to contribute, thereby excluding some of the most promising young researchers -- but they are already preparing to edit a section of this journal devoted to the latest work on positive psychology. There are three main topics that run through these contributions. The first concerns the positive experience. What makes one moment “better” than the next? If Daniel Kahneman is right, the hedonic quality of current experience is the basic building block of a positive psychology (Kahneman 1999, p. 6). In this issue, Diener (2000) focuses on subjective well-being, Massimini & Delle Fave (2000) on optimal experience, Peterson (2000) on optimism, Myers (2000) on happiness, Ryan & Deci (2000) on self-determination. Taylor et al. (2000), and Salovey et al. (2000) report on the relationship between positive emotions and physical health. These topics can of course be seen as state-like, or trait-like: one can investigate either what accounts for moments of happiness, or what distinguishes happy individuals. Thus the second thread in these articles is the theme of the positive personality. The common denominator underlying all the approaches represented here is a perspective on human beings as self-organizing, self-directed, adaptive entities. Ryan & Deci (2000) focus on self-determination, Baltes & Staudinger (2000) on wisdom, Vaillant (2000) on mature defenses. Lubinski & Benbow (2000), Simonton (2000), Winner (2000), Larson (2000), and Gardner, Michelson, & Solomon (2000) focus on exceptional performance -- creativity and talent. Some of these approaches adopt an explicit developmental perspective, taking into account the fact that individual strengths unfold over an entire life span. The third thread that runs through these contributions is the recognition that people and experiences are embedded in a social context. Thus a positive psychology needs to take the positive community and positive institutions into account. At the broadest level, Buss (2000), and Massimini & Delle Fave (2000) describe the evolutionary milieu that shapes positive human experience. Myers (2000) describes the contributions of social relationships to happiness, and Schwartz (2000) reflects on the necessity for cultural norms to relieve individuals of the burden of choice. Larson (2000) emphasizes the importance of voluntary activities for the development of resourceful young people, and Winner (2000) the effect of families on the development of talent. In fact, to a degree that is exceedingly rare in psychological literature, every one of these contributions looks at behavior in its ecologically valid social setting. A more detailed introduction to the articles in this issue follows.

### **Evolutionary perspectives**

The first section comprises two essays that place positive psychology in the broadest context within which it can be understood, namely that of evolution. To some people evolutionary approaches are distasteful because they deny the importance of learning and self-determination. But this need not be necessarily so. These two essays are exceptional in that they not only provide ambitious theoretical perspectives, but -- *mirabile dictu* -- they also provide uplifting practical examples of how a psychology based on evolutionary principles can be applied to the improvement of the human condition. In the first article David Buss (2000) reminds us that the dead hand of the past weighs heavily upon the present. He focuses primarily on three reasons why positive Iran of mind are so elusive. First of all, because our current environment is so different from the ancestral environment to which our body and mind has been adapted, we are often misfit in modern surroundings. Second, evolved distress mechanisms are often functional -- for instance jealousy alerts us to make sure of the fidelity of our spouse. Finally selection tends to be competitive and to involve zero-sum outcomes. What makes Buss' essay unusually interesting is that after identifying these major obstacles to well being, he then outlines some concrete strategies for overcoming them. For instance, one of the major differences between ancestral and current environments is the paradoxical change in our relationship to others: On the one hand we live surrounded by many more people than our ancestors did, yet we are intimate with fewer individuals, thus experiencing greater loneliness and alienation. (Seligman, 1992:123). The solution to this and other impasses are not only conceptually justified within the theoretical framework, but also eminently practical. So what are they? At the risk of creating unbearable suspense, we think it is better for the readers to find out for themselves. While Buss bases his arguments on the solid foundations of biological evolution, Fausto Massimini and Antonella Delle Fave (2000) venture into the less explored realm of psychological and cultural evolution. In a sense, they start where Buss leaves off: by looking analytically at the effects of changes in the ancestral environment, and specifically at how the production of "memes" e.g., artifacts and values, affect and are affected by human consciousness. They start with the assumption that living systems are self-organizing and oriented towards increasing complexity. Thus individuals are the authors of their own evolution. They are continuously involved in the selection of the memes that will define their own individuality, and when added to the memes selected by others, they shape the future of the culture. Massimini and Delle Fave make the point -- so essential for the argument of this issue -- that psychological selection is not motivated solely by the pressures of adaptation and survival, but also by the need to reproduce optimal experiences. Whenever possible, we choose behaviors that make us feel fully alive, competent, and creative. The authors conclude their visionary call for individual development in harmony with global evolution by providing instances drawn from their own experience of cross-cultural interventions, where psychology has been applied to remedy traumatic social conditions created by runaway modernization. One of the most poignant paradoxes in psychology concerns the complex relationships between pathology and creativity. Ever since Cesare Lombroso raised the issue over a century ago, the uneasy relationship between these two seemingly opposite traits has been explored again and again (on this topic, cf. also Vaillant's article in this issue). A related paradox is that some of the most creative adults were reared in unusually adverse childhood situations. This and many other puzzles concerning the nature and nurture of creativity are reviewed in Dean K. Simonton's essay, which examines the cognitive, personality, and developmental dimensions of the process, as well as the environmental conditions that foster or hinder creativity (Simonton, 2000). For instance, based on his exhaustive historiometric analyses that measure rates of creative contributions decade by decade, Simonton concludes that nationalistic revolts against oppressive rules are followed a generation later by greater frequencies of creative output. The topic of giftedness and exceptional performance dealt with in the previous two articles is also taken up by Ellen Winner (2000). Her definition of giftedness is more inclusive than the previous ones: it relates to children who are precocious, self-motivated, and approach problems in their domain of talent in an original way. (Smith, 1997:213). Contrary to some of the findings concerning creative individuals just mentioned, such children tend to be well adjusted and to have supportive families. Winner describes the current state of knowledge by focussing on the origins of giftedness, the motivation of gifted children, the social, emotional, and cognitive correlates of exceptional performance. As it is true of most other contributions to this issue, the author is sensitive throughout to the practical implications of research findings, such as what can be done to nurture and to keep giftedness alive. Are we seeing the last of excellence? Howard Gardner, Mimi Michaelson, and Becca Solomon (2000) are concerned that as all rewards in our society are reduced to financial incentives, and as religious and other traditional values are weakened, this may undermine that resolve which is so necessary for the achievement of any exceptional performance, whether in science, the arts, or indeed in the practice of everyday life. The authors describe a line of ongoing research that tries to identify the antecedents of "good work" -- or the feeling of responsibility towards one's goals, towards friends and relations, towards one's profession, and towards the wider world. They go on to discuss the typical obstacles at different stages of a working career, and the ethical choices that can be made to overcome them. Thus "good work" becomes a synecdoche for a well-lived life.

### **Challenges for the Future**

The 16 articles contained in this issue make a powerful contribution to positive psychology. At the same time, the issues raised in these articles point to huge gaps in knowledge that may be the challenges at the forefront of positive psychology. What, can we guess, are the great problems that will occupy this science for the next decade or two?

#### **1. The calculus of well-being**

One fundamental gap concerns the relationship between momentary experiences of happiness and long-lasting well being. A simple hedonic calculus suggests that by adding up a person's positive events in consciousness, subtracting the negatives, and aggregating over time, one will get a sum that represents that person's over-all well-being. This makes sense, up to a point (Kahneman, 1999). But as several articles in this issue suggest, what makes us happy in small doses will not necessarily add satisfaction in larger amounts; a point of diminishing returns is quickly reached in many instances ranging from the amount of

income one earns to the pleasures of eating good food. What, exactly, is the mechanism that governs the rewarding quality of stimuli?

## **2. The development of positivity**

It is also necessary to realize that a person at time N is a different entity from the same person at time N+1; thus we can't assume that what makes a teenager happy will also contribute to his or her happiness as an adult. For example, watching television or hanging out with friends tend to be positive experiences for most teenagers. However, to the extent that TV and friends become the main source of happiness, and thus attract increasing amounts of attention, the teenager is likely to grow into an adult who is limited in the ability to obtain positive experiences from a wide range of opportunities. How much delayed gratification is necessary to increase the chances of long term well being? Is the future mindedness necessary for serious delay of gratification antagonistic to momentary happiness, to living in the moment?

What are the childhood building blocks of later happiness or of long lasting well being?

## **3. Neuroscience and Heritability**

A flourishing neuroscience of pathology has begun in the last twenty years. We have more than rudimentary ideas about what the neurochemistry and pharmacology of depression are. We have reasonable ideas about brain loci and pathways for schizophrenia, substance abuse, anxiety, and obsessive-compulsive disorder. Somehow, it has gone unobserved (and unfunded) that all of these pathological Iran have their opposites (LeDoux & Armony, 1999.) What is the neurochemistry and anatomy of flow, good cheer, realism, and future-mindedness, resistance to temptation, courage, and rational or flexible thinking? Similarly we are learning about the heritability of negative Iran, like aggression, depression, and schizophrenia. (Vaillant, 2000:78). But we know very little of the genetic contribution, of gene-environment interaction and covariance. Can we develop biology of positive experience and positive traits?

## **4. Enjoyment versus Pleasure**

In a similar vein, it is useful to distinguish positive experiences that are "pleasurable" from those that are "enjoyable". Pleasure is the good feeling that comes from satisfying homeostatic needs such as hunger, sex, and bodily comfort. Enjoyment, on the other hand, refers to the good feeling we experience when we break through the limits of homeostasis -- when we do something that stretches us beyond what we were -- in an athletic event, an artistic performance, a good deed, a stimulating conversation. Enjoyment, rather than pleasure, is what leads to personal growth and long-term happiness. But why is that, when given a chance, most people opt for pleasure over enjoyment? Why do we so choose to watch television over reading a challenging book, even when we know that our usual hedonic state during television is mild dysphoria while the book will produce flow?

## **5. Collective well being**

This question leads directly to the issue of the balance between individual and collective well being. Some hedonic rewards tend to be zero-sum when viewed from a systemic perspective. If running a speedboat for an hour provides the same amount of well-being to person A as reading from a book of poems provides to person B. but the speedboat consumes 10 gallons of gasoline and irritates 200 bathers, should we weigh the two experiences equally? Will a social science of positive community and positive institutions arise?

## **6. Authenticity**

It has been a common, but unspoken assumption in the social sciences that negative traits are authentic and positive traits are derivative, compensatory, or even inauthentic. But there are two other possibilities: that negative traits are derivative from positive traits and that the positive and negative systems are separate systems. But if the two systems are separate, how do they interact? Is it necessary to be resilient, to overcome hardship and suffering in order to experience positive emotion and to develop positive traits? Does too much positive experience create a fragile and brittle personality?

## **7. Buffering**

As positive psychology finds its way into prevention and therapy, techniques that build the positive traits will become commonplace. We have good reason to believe those techniques which build positive traits and positive subjective experiences work, both in therapy and perhaps more importantly in prevention. Building optimism, for example, prevents depression (Seligman, Schulman, DeRubeis, & Hollon, 1999). The question is "how?" By what mechanisms does courage or interpersonal skill or hope or future mindedness buffer against depression or schizophrenia or substance abuse?

## **8. Descriptive or Prescriptive**

Is a science of positive psychology descriptive or prescriptive? The study of the relations among enabling conditions, individual strengths and institutions, and outcomes such as well being or income might merely result in an empirical matrix. Such a matrix would describe, for example, what talents, under what enabling conditions, lead to what kinds of outcomes. (Winner,2000:23). This matrix would inform individuals' choices along the course of their lives, but would take no stand on the desirability of different life courses. Alternatively positive psychology might become a prescriptive discipline like clinical psychology; in which the paths out of depression, for example, are not only described, but also held to be desirable.

## **9. Realism**

What is the relationship between positive traits like optimism and positive experience like happiness on the one hand, and being realistic on the other? Many doubt the possibility of being both. This suspicion is well illustrated in the reaction attributed to Charles de Gaulle, then President of the French Republic, to a journalist's inquiry: Is the world simply too full of tragedy to allow a wise person to be happy? But as the articles that follow suggest, a person can be happy while confronting life realistically, and while working productively to improve the conditions of existence. Whether this view is accurate or not only time will tell; in the meantime, we hope that you will find what follows enjoyable and enlightening to read.

## **Conclusions**

We end this introduction by hazarding a prediction about psychology in the new century. We believe that a psychology of positive human functioning will arise that achieves a scientific understanding and effective interventions to build thriving in individuals, families, and communities. Developing excellence in young people is also the theme of Reed Larson's article, which begins with the ominous and often replicated finding that the average student reports being bored about one third of the time he or she is in school (Larson, 2000). Considering that we go to school for at least one fifth of our lives, this is not good news. Larson argues that youth in our society rarely have the opportunity to take initiative, and that their education encourages passive adaptation to external rules instead. He explores the contribution of voluntary activities such as sport, art, civic organizations as providing opportunities for concentrated, self-directed effort applied over time. While this article deals with issues central also to previous essays (e.g. Massimini and Delle Fave (2000), Ryan and Deci (2000), Winner (2000)) it does so from the perspective of naturalistic studies of youth programs, thereby adding a welcome confirmatory triangulation to previous approaches.

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