Community Psychology: Individuals and Interventions in Community Context

Edison J. Trickett

Community & Prevention Research Division, Department of Psychology, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, Illinois 60607; email: trickett@uic.edu

Key Words
ecology, culture, neighborhood, diversity, research relationship

Abstract
Community psychology has historically focused on understanding individual behavior in sociocultural context, assessing high-impact contexts, and working in and with communities to improve their resources and influence over their futures. This review adopts an ecological perspective on recent developments in the field, beginning with philosophy of science and progressing through a series of substantive research and intervention domains that characterize current work. These domains include research on the ecology of lives, the assessment of social settings and their impact on behavior, culture and diversity as expressed in the community research process, and community intervention.
INTRODUCTION

From its “official” origin in 1965 (Bennett et al. 1966), community psychology has been guided by the dual objectives of understanding people in context and attempting to change those aspects of the community that pollute the possibilities for local citizens to control their own lives and improve their community. An ecological perspective, directing attention to the social and cultural contexts of communities and the community life of individuals, has been central to both the research and action arms of this agenda (Kelly 1968).

Conceptually, the ecological perspective provides a framework for understanding people in community context and the community context itself. It adopts a coping and adaptation perspective on individual behavior in community context and assumes that people are agentic and not passive responders to their environments. As such, attention is directed to the transactions between individuals with varied cultural histories, skills, resources, and personal predicaments and the opportunities, resources, and constraints of the social contexts of relevance to them. The ecological perspective also explicitly asserts the adaptive value of diversity in the kinds of behaviors individuals select in their efforts to survive and indeed thrive. The adaptive value of individual behavior is thus assessed only in the context in which it arises as a means of coping. No one kind of adaptive behavior fits all.

With respect to the community context, an ecological perspective focuses attention on how to describe high-impact social settings, communities, and their effects on individuals. In so doing, it draws attention to how the community context may be viewed and assessed across multiple ecological levels, how culture is expressed across varied segments of the community, and the role of community traditions, resources, social structures, and norms in affecting individual and group life. It adopts an historical perspective (Kelly 1968) on the community context, emphasizing the formative role of cultural and community history in understanding current community functioning. Incorporating the traditional psychological concern with individual differences, an ecological perspective directs specific attention not only to main...
effects but also to the interactive effects of social contexts and individuals representing different cultural identifications, coping styles, genders, and social roles in those contexts.

The action agenda flows from an appreciation of knowledge about the ecology of the community and the lives of individuals in it. From an ecological perspective, knowledge about the local community is prerequisite and prelude to decisions about what kinds of actions serve community goals and interests, and what individuals, groups, and social settings are most central to the action goal. Further, action is predicated on the importance of developing collaborative and empowering relationships with community groups and organizations in the intervention process. Identifying local resources, definitions of problems or issues, and hopes for community change are central to this quest. The goal is to increase local resources in the service of increasing community capacity to improve community life. The specifics of such efforts may range widely, from the creation and sustained presence of a locally valued social program to the development of local skills and interorganizational networks to the creation of citizen participation mechanisms to advocate for needed community resources.

In both the research and action domains, an ecological perspective in community psychology places the notion of context front and center in its work. As Hess (2005) notes, while "the importance of context, of course, is hardly a novel idea to community psychology; it is arguably the dominant insight of the field" (p. 245).

The historical context of social turmoil and protest underlying the creation of the field in the 1960s is currently reflected in ongoing work and represents a continuity of commitment over time. Scholars such as Prilleltensky (e.g., Prilleltensky & Prilleltensky 2006) and Watts (e.g., Watts & Flanagan 2007) provide a sociopolitical perspective on local ecology and guidelines for community interventions aimed at the elimination of oppression and promotion of social justice. The ongoing salience of such concepts as empowerment (Rappaport 2005) as a value, process, and intended outcome of much community research and intervention further reflects this sociopolitical tradition. The historical concern with marginalized groups and diversity is reflected in the wide variety of community settings and populations with which community psychologists currently work, including domestic violence organizations (Townsend & Campbell 2007), refugee resettlement settings (Birman et al. 2008), organizations providing services related to HIV/AIDS (Miller 2008), Native American communities (Mohatt et al. 2006), lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) organizations and populations (D’Augelli 2006), rural African American families (Kohn-Wood & Wilson 2005), and individuals with disabilities (McDonald et al. 2007). In addition, the increasing international visibility of community psychology (Reich et al. 2007) is furthering an appreciation of community research and intervention across a wide range of cultural ecologies.

Previous reviews have addressed both the action-oriented commitments of the field and its concern with assessing high-impact social contexts and their effects on individuals. Reppucci et al. (1999) continued the long-standing tradition of reviewing social, community, and preventive interventions, emphasizing violence prevention and the promotion of competence across the life span. More recently, Shinn & Toohey (2003) reviewed research on the “community contexts of human welfare,” suggesting that psychologists have traditionally committed “context minimization error” by ignoring the enduring important influences of neighborhood and community contexts on human behavior.

The present review builds on these prior articles by providing a current portrait of the field that includes both community interventions and research on community contexts and people embedded in them. The review elaborates on the context minimization issue raised by Shinn & Toohey (2003) by adopting an ecological perspective that makes context a central organizing concept for both community...
research and intervention (Kelly 2006, Trickett 2005). Specific implications of an ecological perspective are illustrated in subsequent sections, beginning with recent discussions of philosophy of science and methods central to understanding people in context. Next, the review outlines work that portrays the ecology of lives lived in differing community contexts, followed by work on the assessment of contexts themselves and their effects on individuals. The role of culture in community research is then discussed, followed by the implications of an ecological perspective for community intervention, including a section on community response to such traumatic community events as natural disasters and terrorist attacks. A conclusion then provides a review and recommendations for future developments in the field. Each of these topics reflects the infusion of an ecological perspective throughout the field of community psychology.

PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE AND METHODOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Philosophy of Science

Consistent with an ecological perspective is the notion that theories of behavior and research findings are themselves reflections of culture and context. This underscores the possibility that much social science knowledge may be particular, not universal, and “that many psychological theories may not hold across the range of environments in which ordinary Americans live their lives” (Shinn & Toohey 2003, p. 428). From an ecological perspective, the research task is to ascertain the range of applicability of any specific set of findings and to frame the issue of generalization through the question, “in what contexts would one not expect this finding to be replicated?”

Underlying this perspective is a contextualist worldview and epistemology. Tébes’ (2005) paper on philosophy of science and the practice of community research provides an important recent statement refining earlier contextualist positions in the field (e.g., Kingry-Westergaard & Kelly 1990). Tébes asserts that although logical empiricism is no longer an appropriate framework for community psychology, it still dominates social and behavioral science. He suggests that contextualism is a potential advance over logical positivism, but one that runs the risk of devolving into utter relativism. Tébes recommends a modified contextualist perspective, which, after McGuire (1986), he calls “perspectivism.” He summarizes its assumptions: “(a) since knowledge is situated and contextual, community science should be grounded in a perspectivist epistemology; (b) since all knowledge is imperfect and yields only an approximation of the ‘truth’, community science should emphasize hypothesis generation along with hypothesis-testing as a means to advance knowledge; (c) since different methods yield different approximations of the ‘truth’, community science should adopt a methodology based on critical multidimensionality, in which multiple methods are used to obtain the best approximation of the truth; and (d) since it is essential for knowledge in community science to be applicable to a diverse array of people and settings, community science should balance its focus on internal validity with one that emphasizes external and ecological validity” (Tébes 2005, p. 214). Tébes’ portrayal of knowledge as a context-dependent and multimethod search for theory that attempts to account for diversity across settings and people represents a quintessential articulation of an ecological perspective in the field.

Rappaport (2005) applies this contextualist/perspectivist philosophy to the development of science itself and how the social context in which it operates affects its methods, topics, and value assumptions. Asserting that “community psychology is (thank God) more than science,” Rappaport cautions that the increasing interdependence between science and state, as exemplified by the role of external funding for university-based research, represents a cause for concern about the topics studied and the independence of knowledge gained. His concern is less with the conventional methods of science.
than about the degree to which such methods are typically devoid of any social critique. He cites the community psychology concern about social justice as an example of what is too often missing as a criterion for assessing the value of community research, and suggests that “our unique contribution is a self conscious social and professional analysis and critique that is both added to and changes our conventional science” (Rappaport 2005, p. 236). Here, the community psychology goal of social transformation informs the spirit and content of the work conducted within a contextualist/perspectivist philosophy of science.

Hess (2005) affirms that Rappaport’s (2005) critique of science represents not a rejection of science per se but rather a sharpening of the question, “what kind of science should we do?” In support of the integration of ideology and research practice, Hess (2005) advocates the value of researcher openness to revising assumptions as one gets to know the world of the other; research that both embraces and examines ideology rather than research unilaterally driven by ideology; and, “by emphasizing the rich learning potential of any single encounter, a clearer epistemological justification for idiographic, narrative, and case-based research” (p. 247). Taken together, these papers suggest that community psychology is fully engaged in developing its epistemological perspectives and the ongoing task of making self-conscious the values underlying community research and practice. In this integration of epistemology and social values, the papers reinforce both the value of a contextualist/perspectivist philosophy of science and the assertion that the practice of community research and intervention is based on values reflected in method, content, and process.

**Methodological Contributions**

Complementing a contextualist/perspectivist philosophy of science are methodological advances that sharpen our ability to assess contexts and people in them. Luke (2005) suggests that the emphasis on traditional statistical methods, such as regression, may have contributed to “context minimization error” by masking or distorting the diversity in and contextual embeddedness of data. As testament to the longevity of this issue, he quotes John Dewey: “I should venture to assert that the most pervasive fallacy of philosophic thinking goes back to neglect of context” (Luke 2005, p. 188).

Luke highlights four methods that promote an ability to capture context: multilevel modeling, geographic information systems, social network analysis, and cluster analysis. Multilevel modeling addresses the levels of context in which individuals are embedded, whereas geographic information systems provide a quantitative information base from which to assess community assets and health assessments. Network analysis involves relational rather than individual attribute data and can be institutional as well as individual, and cluster analysis involves cases rather than variables and can be used to describe heterogeneity in the data relating contextual variation to diverse outcomes. Each provides a way of capturing community context and, in so doing, helps address such basic community psychology questions as how “groups have been affected in specific ways by the economic, social, cultural, and physical situations in which they are embedded” (Luke 2005, p. 185).

Various recent research examples illustrate the value of such methods in assessing contextual influences. Allen (2005) conducted a multilevel analysis of community coordinating councils to disaggregate individual and council-level contributors to the perception of achieving council goals. She found that the setting climate, including the presence of shared mission, shared decision-making, and efficient and inclusive leadership, accounted for 20% of the perceived effectiveness of the council. Reflecting on the potential value of clustering cases rather than selecting out specific variables in research on intimate partner violence (IPV), Bogat et al. (2005) suggest that “the main tenet of this agenda is that causes, processes, and effects of IPV are person and context specific: therefore, results that relate variables to each
other are of limited value if it can be shown that the processes that take place, the meaning of the variables, the profiles of the transgressors, and the women who experience IPV depend on time, environment and research design” (p. 49).

Although the approaches described above provide opportunities for advancing our knowledge about how to take context into account, they rest on a linear conception of cause-and-effect relationships. Such a conception is countered by a systems theory perspective described by Hirsh et al. (2007). Defining a system as “a functional whole, composed of a set of components, coupled together to function in a way that might not be apparent from the functioning of the separate component parts” (p. 240), Hirsh et al. (2007) starkly contrast the implicit linear world view underlying much psychological research with the assumptions necessitated by a systems perspective. “We continue to rely on methods that assume a very different kind of world than the one that is reflected in the settings in which we work. The unidirectional models we use to try to draw links between a set of variables and an outcome are not consistent with what we know about the complexity of the phenomena we hope to study. Rather than develop small scale models of what we believe actually happens over time, we willingly suspend our disbelief that an uncomplicated, linear, and unidirectional snapshot fairly represents those processes of interest as they actually seem to unfold” (Hirsh et al. 2007, p. 239). Developing such complex models and their appropriate analytic techniques represents a significant conceptual and methodological challenge.

An additional methodological advance involves an increasing appreciation that methods themselves are part of the ecology that influences the impact of community research. A graphic example is found in Foster-Fishman et al.’s (2005) use of Photovoice in a community development project. Photovoice is a participatory method whereby cameras and training are provided to individuals often neglected in decision-making processes who generate local photographs and dialogue about their significance. Semi-structured interviews with participants in a community-building project in Michigan found that the Photovoice process increased self-confidence, emergent critical awareness of their environment, cultivation of resources for social and political action such as enhanced relational networks and increased commitment to community, and emergent involvement as change agents.

Thus, on both quantitative and qualitative fronts, community psychology is furthering an appreciation of how to develop methods that respect and indeed illuminate the ways in which the ecological context affects the lives of individuals. Recent research provides evidence that methods themselves create phenomena in community research and intervention that need to be accounted for conceptually and pragmatically. However, recent work in this area also suggests that competing world views underlie the varied methodological contributions and that a critical next step involves the further elaboration of such perspectives as systems theory for research methods in the field.

**ECOLOGY OF LIVES**

The philosophy of science and method advances discussed above frame an ecological perspective on individuals in social context. Applied to individual lives, an ecological perspective draws attention to how individuals with diverse skills, resources, and worldviews cope with and adapt to their local community contexts. These contexts, in turn, consist of adaptive requirements for survival, local norms, cultural history, and environmental risk and protective factors such as poverty and accessible social supports.

To understand the ecology of lives, recent work in community psychology has followed at least two related paths. The first has been to embrace the descriptive value of qualitative research methods as ways of understanding how individuals in diverse ecologies make sense of their life circumstances. The second is to view the lives of individuals as composed of varied domain-specific contexts (Swindle & Moos 1992) and to assess the consistency and
variability of behavior across life domains that call for different kinds of adaptive behavior. An ecological perspective draws attention to the interdependence of life domains, such that behavior in any one domain, such as “acting white” in school (Fordham & Ogbu 1986), may both reflect and affect behavior in other life domains of importance to the individual.

**Qualitative Understanding**

A rich example of the coping and adaptation perspective on individual lives is provided by Kidd & Davidson’s (2007) qualitative study of the street lives of more than 200 multiracial homeless youth in urban centers. A moving portrait of strength and resilience is provided through the stories told by these youth, who tested, refined, adopted, or rejected the meaning systems made available to them in the challenges of life on the street. These systems, in turn, were dependent on the youths’ particular background, street context, and learning process. As a consequence, the street experience varied widely across respondents. For example, the change to street life was viewed positively by some but not others; for many, it affected their sense of identity and their view of world, yet in differing ways. The authors stress the power of context in asserting that these youth are “rewriting the life narrative” (Kidd & Davidson 2007, p. 234) and that these adaptations reflect far more than surface adjustments to transitory situations.

The implications of this perspective for community intervention are richly described by De Jesus (2007) in addressing the role of community advocates working on HIV/AIDS among immigrant Cape Verdean women in the Northeastern United States. Her interviews with these women provide a multilayered ecological perspective on contextual barriers “limiting the effectiveness of individual-level HIV/AIDS prevention and intervention models” (De Jesus 2007, p. 121). For example, community stigma attached to AIDS and religious prohibitions against condom use affected willingness to disclose HIV status and seek help, and traditional gender identities suggested that, for these women, use of condoms, or requesting men to use condoms, “signals distrust, disrespect, or infidelity” (De Jesus 2007, p. 128). This perspectivist approach, and the potential lack of ecological congruence or fit between program models and the ecology of lives, was echoed earlier by Riger (2001). Citing feminist standpoint theory as a frame for understanding lives from the inside out, she states, “We may find that our interventions are a small part of people’s lives and that multiple factors cause them to resist change . . . or that the program does not address people’s current needs or that people experience our programs in ways that are different than what we intend” (Riger 2001, p. 71).

**Life Domains Approach**

In addition to qualitative work describing the lives in context of varied groups, community psychology research has contributed to an appreciation of how individual lives are composed of different life domains that have different demand characteristics. An elegant example of this approach to the ecology of lives is Pederson et al.’s (2005) study of more than 560 urban adolescents representing multiple racial and cultural groups. These authors assessed patterns of involvement and performance in six adolescent “contexts of competence” and subsequently determined the relationship of these patterns to the developmental outcomes of self-esteem, depression, and self-reported delinquency seriousness. Pederson et al.’s (2005) “contexts of competence” included the peer, academic, athletic, employment, religious, and cultural contexts. Findings emphasize the setting dependence of competence and suggest three overarching conclusions: “First, we conclude that it is viable and fruitful to conceptualize adolescent competence as holistic, multidimensional, and contextually based. Second, our results demonstrate the existence of multiple profiles of contextual competence among low income urban adolescents, contrary to dominant stereotypes about these youth. Third,
high engagement in multiple contexts of adolescent development is associated with more adaptive psychological outcomes than engagement in one or fewer domains” (Pederson et al. 2005, p. 78). Their intervention recommendations include the value of engaging adolescents in multiple settings and fostering connections among those settings.

A life-domains perspective was also applied by Birman et al. (2002) and Coatsworth et al. (2005) to the acculturative tasks of immigrant adolescents. Birman et al. (2002) assessed the adaptive value of linguistic, behavioral, and identity acculturation of former Soviet adolescents’ self-reported adaptive functioning in varied life domains such as peer and family relationships and school performance. Differing acculturative styles were adaptive in different adolescent life domains. For example, American identity and behavioral acculturation were related to several school outcomes, including higher overall grade-point average and increased sense of involvement in school, whereas a greater sense of Russian identity was related to greater parental support but increased psychological distress overall. A similar set of domain-specific findings for Hispanic immigrant youth was reported by Coatsworth et al. (2005): Different acculturative styles were related to adaptation across individual, peer, family, and school domains. Importantly, no single style predicted poor adaptation across all domains involved.

The ecology of lives perspective, then, provides a window into the coping and adaptation process of individuals occupying varied ecological niches. In addition, it suggests that an appreciation of everyday lives is a conceptual precondition for designing interventions relevant to the circumstances faced by individuals in their community context. It further promotes an exploration of how both qualitative and quantitative methods can contribute to an appreciation of local ecology expressed in multiple ecological levels of the community context. The relative paucity of this work at present needs to be remedied in future research on diverse populations living in varied community contexts.

**ASSESSMENT OF CONTEXTS AND THEIR EFFECTS ON INDIVIDUALS**

In addition to the ecology of lives, an ecological perspective in community psychology draws attention to the community context itself and high-impact social settings within the community. Focal questions here involve how to characterize such contexts, as well as what effects, both main and interactive, they have on individuals. Three themes predominate in recent community psychology literature: (a) measures to assess social/community settings, (b) within-setting processes that both describe the setting environment and affect individual behavior in the setting, and (c) research linking varied aspects of communities, such as extent of social disorganization or resident fear of crime, to individual outcomes.

Shinn & Yoshikawa (2008) provide a useful ecological template for each of these topics in their edited book on the power of social settings to influence youth development. The book is organized to reflect multiple levels of ecological influence on community life, with descriptions of efforts to assess and change settings ranging across levels of analysis from the classroom to the school to the community. For example, Russell & McGuire (2008) discuss ways of assessing school social climate and its effects on sense of school connection for LGBT high school students. At a community level, Fagan et al. (2008) describe the use of local epidemiological data gathered by community organizations to make decisions about where to locate intervention efforts.

**Measurement of Social/Community Contexts**

Recent work reflects multiple levels of analyses ranging from classroom to neighborhood. At the school classroom level, Pianta & Allen (2008) report on an observational scheme for assessing three aspects of school classrooms that are theoretically related to important student outcomes: relationship supports,
询”，并提供了概述和干预的框架。

在学区层面，Mattison & Aber (2007) 报道了对高中种族气候的开发。种族气候被视为学校环境的一个关键方面，因为种族分层和种族歧视影响对机会结构的感知，从而影响学生对学校的投资。

在两个有非洲裔和白种学生组成的高中中，非洲裔学生认为他们的学校对非洲裔学生更不公平，并需要改变。

在学区层面，Vieno et al. (2005) 开发了一种民主学校气候的自我报告测量方法，定义为“社会气候的公平性、参与性和表达性” (p. 330)。他们使用了一个包含4000多名10到18岁学生的134所学校的数据，发现民主气候与社会认同感和社区感知度有关。

虽然定义和方法的选择是复杂的，特别是在学区层面，但McWayne et al. (2007) 使用多维度的社区数据，提出了一个“社会气候的公平性、参与性和表达性” (p. 330)。他们使用了一个包含4000多名10到18岁学生的134所学校的数据，发现民主气候与社会认同感和社区感知度有关。

McWayne et al. (2007) 使用多维度的社区数据，提出了一个“社会气候的公平性、参与性和表达性” (p. 330)。他们使用了一个包含4000多名10到18岁学生的134所学校的数据，发现民主气候与社会认同感和社区感知度有关。
Thus, efforts at environmental assessment have recently been reported at the classroom, school, and community or neighborhood levels of the ecological context. The contested nature of how to define key ecological levels, such as neighborhood, and the multiple ways in which neighborhood is currently being defined reinforce prior issues raised by Shinn & Toohey (2003) about the importance of defining boundaries in neighborhood research. Kruger's (2007) assertion that neighborhood boundaries may be defined differently for different constructs further complicates this issue and makes it a prime conceptual target for future work.

**Within-Setting Processes**

Processes within key social settings in the community represent an important set of proximal ecological influences on individual behavior (Weinstein 2006). A general framework for assessing social settings and their processes is provided by Tseng & Seidman (2007). Viewing settings through the lens of systems theory, they identify three aspects that both define setting ecology and provide targets for subsequent setting-level change: social processes (transaction between two or more groups of people), resources (human, economic, physical, temporal), and organization of resources (how they are arranged and allocated). Tseng & Seidman (2007) propose that the nature and degree of resources and how resources are organized structure the social processes in settings, which in turn affects setting outcomes. Consistent with a systems framework, they view social processes as ongoing transactions between two or more people, shaped by individual roles in the setting, which have a temporal quality wherein behaviors, recalibrated based on feedback, become patterned or regularized over time. Such social processes include norms, relationships, and participation in activities.

An alternative theoretical framework, behavior setting theory, was employed by Brown et al. (2007) to assess setting dynamics in consumer-run organizations such as drop-in centers, support groups, advocacy groups, and other nonprofits. They found that increased organizational size negatively affected member participation and involvement in organizational decision making, thus decreasing the empowerment possibilities of the setting for members. They emphasize the importance of organizational roles as an aspect of setting dynamics underplayed in behavior setting theory, and suggest that within the same organization some roles may be overpopulated and others underpopulated.

Felton (2005) used narrative theory to describe the tone and spirit of an agency staffed and run entirely by mental health system consumers. Their agency narrative represents “a collective identity shared by members . . . that embodies the group’s core beliefs and values . . . and affects the functioning of the community . . . by defining community membership, securing commitment to community goals, and creating group cohesion” (Felton 2005, p. 374). Narrative themes, such as “mental illness can happen to anyone,” and “recovery is possible,” help staff define a coherent sense of mission, affect agency social climate, and provide a framework for clients’ understanding of their situation (e.g., “I’m in recovery from my treatment”) (Felton 2005, p. 383).

Ozer et al. (2008) and Way et al. (2007) described research on school processes. Ozer et al. (2008) assessed processes, events, and experiences that affected perceived sense of school connection among a group of ethnically diverse immigrant adolescents in high school. Overall, interactions indicating that students were cared about as people rather than only learners positively influenced their sense of school connection. This was manifested in teacher behaviors large and small, ranging from a clear and ongoing commitment to student learning to such seemingly simple acts as knowing students’ names and following up on promises made at an earlier time. Temporal changes in middle school processes were documented by Way et al. (2007), who found that the perceived social climate of middle school became less positive over time for the same cohort of students, and
that positive peer relationships declined more for boys than girls.

Within-setting processes related to race have also been recently addressed. Griffith et al. (2007) describe a “Dismantling Racism” project in a Southern public health department. Their framework focuses on institutional racism, expressed in such processes as hiring and promotion, organizational climate, and harmful individual acts by administrators who are unaware of how their behavior affects others. In his description of “race talk,” Pollock (2008) found that the everyday inadvertent acts of educators can harm students of color in a public school. Pollock (2008) invokes the concept of “color-muteness,” or inability to talk about race, as one that can negatively affect teachers and students alike, and he outlines various school processes that reflect it and that can be confronted to address race in more authentic and respectful ways.

Thus, community psychology has directed explicit attention to specific processes in high-impact social settings that are relevant to both individual well-being and organizational mission. The wide variety of processes outlined in recent research suggests that setting processes may be variable both across different types of settings and within the same settings over time. They may involve not only local issues but also larger national topics such as race. The assessment of such processes has been approached from multiple theoretical perspectives, such as systems theory and narrative theory. Together, they suggest that future work may benefit from multimethod and longitudinal assessments of how diverse types of settings in diverse communities function and change over time as a function of internal and external forces.

The Relationship of Community Contexts to Outcomes

In addition to describing important processes within social settings, community psychology has devoted considerable attention to assessing the effects of community contexts on individuals. Recent research adds to Shinn & Toohey’s (2003) earlier integrative review of this literature.

Dupere & Perkins (2007), for example, reported neighborhood differences in how patterns of environmental stressors and social resources combined to affect the mental health of adults. Employing multilevel models for nested data (residents within blocks), they found that “in environments facing average levels of environmental stressors, higher levels of formal citizen participation are associated with better mental health outcomes, whereas in environments facing relatively high levels of stressors, low informal ties with neighbors are associated with better mental health outcomes” (Dupere & Perkins 2007, p. 117). Furthermore, the influence of neighborhood social ties differed across community settings such that “the positive impact of informal social ties found in advantaged predominantly white communities is not necessarily found in minority communities, and the protective effects of informal ties may even be reversed in those communities” (Dupere & Perkins 2007, p. 117).

Birman et al. (2005) studied the effects of community ethnic density on adolescent acculturation in a sample of demographically comparable former Soviet adolescents living in two communities: one ethnically dense, the other more multicultural and ethnically dispersed. Adolescents in the ethnically diverse community became more American over time than did those in the ethnically dense community, who were more likely to retain aspects of their Russian culture. In addition, a community-by-discrimination interaction showed that perceived discrimination at school was related to heightened Russian identity and lowered American identity only in the ethnically dense community, where the adolescents constituted 15% of the high school population. In the community where the adolescents were dispersed across several culturally diverse schools, there was no relationship between perceived discrimination and either Russian or American identity. The pattern of findings in the ethnically dense community is consistent with the “reactive identity” hypothesis, suggesting that
identity is heightened as a reaction to discrimination that threatens identity. However, this pattern is community specific.

Two other studies provide complex and rich accounts of the effects of neighborhood ethnic composition on black and white adolescents. Wickrama (2005) conducted secondary analyses of approximately 16,000 adolescents participating in the National Study of Adolescent Health to assess the differential effects of family and community variables on black and white adolescent distress. Although being black was related to increased distress over and above family and community characteristics and their interactions, the role of the community ethnic composition was race specific. “Community composition (percentage of minorities) had a meager detrimental influence on the mental health of white adolescents, but it had a significant beneficial influence on the mental health of black adolescents after controlling for community poverty. In general, living in white-dominant neighborhoods is an important risk factor for depressive symptoms among black youth” (Wickrama 2005, p. 276).

One possible interpretation of the meager ethnic community effects for whites in Wickrama’s study is the likelihood that few if any whites lived in black-dominated neighborhoods. However, Bolland et al. (2007) assessed the relationship of hopelessness to multiple adolescent risk behaviors in their study of African American, Caucasian, and mixed-race adolescents living in 13 high-poverty neighborhoods in Mobile, Alabama. In neighborhoods with a minority Caucasian population, African Americans had the lowest level of risk behaviors, with Caucasians reporting the highest substance use and mixed-race participants reporting the highest levels of violence. Furthermore, hopelessness was not a moderator of risk for African Americans but was a strong moderator for Caucasian youth for alcohol use and sexual intercourse, and with mixed-race youth for weapon carrying, weapon use, and sexual intercourse. Bolland et al. (2007) suggest that minority status per se in specific community contexts may create a negative person-environment fit, and that Caucasians living in these contexts do not experience much protection by being part of a larger majority in general. Taken together, these two studies suggest the value of separating minority status as a contextual characteristic from minority status as an identity.

Finally, two studies (McWayne et al. 2007, Szapocznik et al. 2006) addressed the role of the physical environment of neighborhoods on child school outcomes. McWayne et al. (2007) found that kindergarten children living in neighborhoods composed primarily of semi-detached or single-family homes had higher performance ratings in mathematics and language arts than did children from neighborhoods composed primarily of row homes. Szapocznik et al. (2006), assessing the diversity of use of city blocks in Little Havana, Miami, found that children, particularly males, from mixed-use blocks (blocks whose buildings serve multiple purposes, such as businesses located in proximity to residential housing), had the most optimal outcomes in school.

The emerging community psychology literature on the relationship of community contexts to outcomes thus continues to advance our understanding of how person-environment transactions in diverse communities have both main effects and interactive effects on a wide variety of outcomes. Effects on both children and adults have been found with respect to community physical characteristics, overall level of disadvantage, ethnic density, and level of community violence. Communities range from urban to rural and populations include multiple races and ethnicities, including immigrants. Outcomes range from mental health to acculturation processes to school performance. In particular, Bolland et al.’s (2007) finding that minority status in the local community predicts outcomes is of particular importance in affirming the power of local context to affect behavior.

CULTURE AND COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

The issue of culture and cultural diversity is so deeply embedded in the spirit and history of
Community psychology that O’Donnell (2006) recently advocated the adoption of a cultural community psychology focusing explicitly on cultural diversity in community context. An ecological perspective on cultural diversity includes its expression across multiple levels of the community context, ranging from individuals to social settings to community norms and tradition. Snowden (2005) underscores the importance of understanding culture in local community context: “We need to further develop theoretically informed, empirically grounded bodies of knowledge on how community structures, norms, and processes operate in local communities and how they affect human well-being, especially in culturally diverse and ethnic minority communities” (p. 1).

Bond & Harrell (2006) outline three diversity principles that reflect the main themes recently reported in the broader community psychology literature: (a) that every community has multilayered cultural characteristics and diversity dynamics whose composition, characteristics, functioning, and interactions need to be understood; (b) that such understanding is contextualized understanding, reflecting historical events, patterns of change over time, the sociopolitical context, and the local setting; and (c) that in community research and intervention in varied sociocultural contexts, what we do has to reflect who we are culturally as well as professionally.

Community Psychology in Cross-Cultural Context

Although community psychology shares with other disciplines, such as cross-cultural psychology, a concern with how culture affects behavior, the cross-cultural work of community psychologists tends to represent the field’s distinctive emphasis on social problems and issues. Shinn (2007), for example, provides a broad perspective on international homelessness, showing how the definition and rates of homelessness vary across countries, with homeless families much more prevalent in the United States than in Europe. She links these differential rates to European social policies that provide more generous resources and reflect a more empathic attitude toward social responsibility for homelessness than is present in the United States.

The broad international perspective outlined by Shinn (2007) provides a road map for investigating more specific cross-cultural comparisons that illuminate both consistency and variability in the expression of social problems across cultural contexts. For example, Munoz et al. (2005) identified three groups of homeless people in Madrid characterized by (a) economic problems, (b) health problems, abuse problems, and death of parent, and (c) accumulation of stressful life events in childhood and alcohol abuse. They found these subgroups similar to subgroups of homeless identified in the United States, suggesting both cross-cultural consistency and the need for differentiated interventions depending on subgroup. Milburn et al. (2006), on the other hand, reported different behavioral profiles of homeless youth in Australia and the United States, “reflecting differences in the effectiveness of service systems in the two countries in keeping youth with fewer problems out of homelessness” (p. 63).

Although such a cross-cultural emphasis is only now emerging in community psychology literature, it signals an opportunity to learn about how culture is reflected not only in the identification of social issues but also in social policies present in varied countries. How these issues and policies at the country level are reflected in diverse communities in these varied countries represents an important emerging research agenda for the field.

Cultural History and Community Research

One aspect of ecological theory involves the ecological principle of succession (Kelly 1968), or how historical changes in the community context over time shape the current context and provide a trajectory for future community change. The specific implications of cultural history for community research and
intervention are underscored by several recent papers. Messinger (2006) finds “history at the table” in a case study of problems that emerged during the planning of an antipoverty program in a rural Southern community and argues that understanding “local history is a vital component in planning and implementing social programs” (p. 283). Gone (2007) describes the current upsurge in Native American commitment to cultural preservation and revitalization as a response to the “shattering legacy of Euro-American colonialism... on the cultural practices of indigenous societies” (p. 291). He outlines multiple implications of this history for both the creation and resolution of health disparities in Native American communities and suggests that “underutilization” of health clinics by Native Americans cannot be understood or altered in the absence of an appreciation of this history.

Mohatt et al. (2006) provide a rich example of the implications of Gone’s perspective in research among Alaskan Native communities. Their emic investigation of factors that offer Alaskan Native youth protection from substance abuse in remote, rural, face-to-face kinship communities yielded a model that includes local cultural factors at multiple levels of the ecological context: community, family, and individual. Central to the model is the role of communal and historical trauma in disrupting cultural meaning systems and its intergenerational transmission. They emphasize that this broad cultural history has affected different Native American communities in different ways, calling for community-specific knowledge of how it is manifested in everyday life.

Another specific example of the power of cultural history is found in Rivera & Tharp’s (2006) description of a Zuni Pueblo community’s involvement in restructuring their children’s school setting to better reflect culturally meaningful educational practices. The school focus is culturally compelling because of the historical role of government schools as a mechanism for obliterating Native American culture. Community surveys and focus groups were part of a community empowerment process designed to build consensus about the importance of meaningful instructional practices in Zuni pedagogy and Zuni culture. In a very different cultural context, Goodkind (2006) describes the development of a Learning Circles and Advocacy program for Hmong refugees founded on ecological and empowerment principles that provided a setting to validate Hmong identity and cultural knowledge as well as mutual learning between Hmong participants and college students. Each of the research projects outlined above reinforces the importance not only of understanding the role of cultural history as part of community ecology but the value of supporting its retention as an intervention objective.

**Diversity Challenges and the Process of Community Research**

Within an ecological perspective, the nature of the research relationship between researcher and community is part of the ecology. Because of this, attention is paid to such process issues as the development of trust, selection of relevant community collaborators, and discussions about how varied stakeholders should be included across varied aspects of the research process. This process emphasis is nowhere more prominent than in projects involving interactions between cultural groups and researchers from diverse cultural backgrounds. Many of these “diversity challenges” are found in Bond & Harrell’s (2006) edited group of papers designed to redress the “scarcity of work that explores the subtleties, contradictions, and dilemmas that emerge as professionals attempt to put the valuing of diversity into action” (p. 157).

The stories in the papers range widely across groups, topics, and diversity issues. D’Augelli (2006) provides a moving description of the personal and professional challenges involved in being a gay community psychologist working in rural areas. Indeed, the very issue of how open to be about one’s sexual orientation provides a diversity challenge to LGBT professionals. D’Augelli’s (2006) description of his many
efforts to develop a supportive community for LGBT students and faculty at his university clarifies the intimate connection between the personal and the professional, particularly when sociopolitical diversity issues are at stake. Furthermore, it underscores the role of courage and risk taking in such professional work.

Another predominant theme involves insider-outsider dynamics that arise when the researchers are themselves from the cultural community where the work is occurring. For example, Gone (2006) reports on the complexities of conducting work in an American Indian community of which he was a tribal member. The agenda was to develop a culturally appropriate intervention involving mental health services, work that required considerable cultural knowledge of such concepts as the cultural construal of self, wellness, healing, and spirituality. Even as a cultural insider who understood the importance of such concepts, Gone had to deal with his “outside” intervention role as one that fed into a history of colonization. Here, mental health services were seen as another effort to inflict assimilationist assumptions, this time of mental health and well-being, on Native Americans. In this complex insider-outsider situation, he was asked by an elder, “How does it feel to be an Apple Indian?” (red outside, white inside). Many other intercultural intricacies of community research and intervention are found in this compelling account of the complexities and communicative blunders of working across insider-outsider roles, even within a presumably shared cultural background.

The different twist to the insider-outsider issue was addressed by Brodsky & Faryal (2006) in their account of “qualitative, community-based research carried out by a U.S. researcher in Pakistan and Afghanistan with an underground Afghan women’s humanitarian and political organization” (p. 311). Here, one author was an organization and cultural insider and the other an outside researcher from another culture. Both the underground nature of the organization and Afghan culture more generally promoted a norm of secrecy around organizational or personal information, severely constraining the outside researcher’s ability to gather triangulated qualitative data and necessitating the development of clear need-to-know guidelines around the disclosing of information to the researcher. The joint but differential contributions of both authors to the project led them to conclude that “collaboration does not imply equal contribution to each component of a project, but rather recognition that diverse skills of both parties are necessary to the final product” (Brodsky & Faryal 2006, p. 318).

The telling of such diversity stories serves as a heuristic for theory development about the role of culture in community research and intervention. Stories such as those reported above portray a complex set of issues for community researchers of varied cultural backgrounds and serve as reminders that community research and intervention are affected by who the researchers are culturally as well as professionally. The stories further emphasize the importance of studying the process issues in community research as it is conducted in contrasting ecological contexts and by researchers from varied sociocultural backgrounds.

More generally, community psychology has paid particular attention not only to the role of culture as a deep and enduring worldview that shapes the meaning of events, interpersonal interactions, and relationships, but also to the complex and nuanced dynamics of intercultural contact between outside researchers/interventionists and the cultural practices of varied communities. The illustrative topics of cross-cultural community work, the shaping role of cultural history, and insider-outsider dynamics all move us toward a richer understanding of how cultural diversity is infused throughout all aspects of community research and intervention. Gathering additional stories from previously unheard sources represents an important next step in amplifying the experiential database on which community psychology can contribute to an understanding of cultural diversity.
COMMUNITY INTERVENTION: SYSTEMS THEORY, COMMUNITY CAPACITY, AND CONTEXT

One of the characteristics of community psychology is its dual emphasis on community research and community intervention. Prior Annual Review chapters written by community psychologists have summarized social, community, and preventive interventions (e.g., Reppucci et al. 1999). The ecological perspective of the field, however, focuses less on specific programs and more sharply on how interventions are coupled with community contexts. Here, attention is drawn to such questions as how the social and cultural context can affect the definition and implementation of community interventions, how community organizations assess the relevance of outside evidence-based interventions for their particular setting and organizational mission, and how community organizations might be mobilized and coordinated to achieve a communitywide goal. In short, emphasis here is placed on contextual issues related to developing, implementing, and assessing community interventions that (a) emphasize intervention-community interdependence and/or (b) emphasize community-level outcomes and processes related to achieving those outcomes. Each of these contextual issues is well represented in recent community psychology literature.

The Ecological Context as a System: Systems Theory and Community Intervention

Because the intervention goal in community psychology addresses changes in the community contexts of individual behavior (Shinn & Toohey 2003), attention has recently been drawn to systems theory as a conceptual framework guiding community change. The rationale for this perspective is outlined by Foster-Fishman (2007b), who defines systems change as “an intentional process designed to alter the status quo by shifting and realigning the form and function of a targeted system” (p. 197). Foster-Fishman (2007) nominates several definitional properties of systems, including systems norms (attitudes, values, and beliefs), systems resources (human, social, economic, opportunity, and programmatic/organizational resources), systems regulations (policies, procedures, and routines), and systems operations (power and decision making). System assessment is viewed as a prelude to system intervention because it is necessary to understand how systemic conditions affect both intervention processes and goals.

Parsons (2007) provides an example of how system conditions affect both the possible and the desirable in terms of systemic change efforts. Where internal agreement and certainty are high among system components, the system is stable, organized, and predictable. Here, the change process is likely to be slow and incremental. At the other end, however, the system is operating at a state of “far from equilibrium.” In this ecological context, small occurrences may have large and unanticipated consequences, and “if a system is to make a significant change from its status quo, the changes are likely to come from creative self-organizing rather than from planned change” (Parsons 2007, p. 407). Thus, system conditions suggest not only what needs intervention but also from where the impetus for change should come.

Several recent studies apply a systems perspective to the development of community collaboratives “hypothesized to effect systems change through their ability to simultaneously engage and mobilize multiple constituents and sectors of the system to work in a coordinated and value-added manner” (Kreger et al. 2007, p. 306). For example, Emshoff et al. (2007) employ systems thinking to describe community collaboratives working to improve health and reduce health disparities. Systems thinking was also used to capture systems-level activities and impacts of mental health consumer organizations (Jansen et al. 2007) as well as promoting systems change in the response of health care organizations to domestic violence (Allen et al. 2007).
A compelling example of how systems theory can be integrated with the empowerment agenda of the field is found in Hirsh et al.’s (2007) work in the area of school reform. After describing key systems theory concepts, they outline a participatory process to develop a model of the system in which reform will occur. The model building includes both scientists and local stakeholders who occupy different roles and thus bring local as well as scientific knowledge to the model-building process. Both the process of model development and the model itself promote collaborative anticipatory thinking about the systemic consequences of varied potential social change efforts while simultaneously identifying underlying causal structures amenable to intervention.

The emergence of systems thinking applied to community collaborations and setting level change represents a promising conceptual direction in illuminating how interventions may be designed as events in systems (Hawe et al. 2008). Such an emphasis reinforces the importance of understanding the community as prelude to any effort to affect it.

Building Community Capacity/Resources

From an ecological perspective, community capacity building is defined in terms of efforts to increase local resources for current and future problem solving or community betterment. Capacity may be expressed in multiple ways and at varied ecological levels of the community context. Illustrative examples in recent community psychology literature include (a) efforts to increase the capacity of community organizations, and (b) increasing capacity at the community level.

Organizational capacity. At the organizational level, recent research has addressed both local indigenous efforts undertaken by organizations to improve their functioning as well as efforts to improve capacity through the introduction of externally developed programs.

Indigenous efforts to increase capacity. Several specific strategies to enhance capacity of local service organizations and universities have been recently reported. With respect to changes in organizational mission and climate, Uttal (2006) describes how a social service agency serving a large number of Latino immigrants engaged in an action research project to transform its organizational culture from a philosophy of individual treatment to one emphasizing community involvement and attitude change about local responsibility for child rearing. This philosophy was operationalized not only in the development of culturally appropriate training for community members but also in addressing structural issues such as local racism and a critical analysis of how cultural values and traditions could be reflected in the new mission of community involvement. Cauce (2007) describes an action research initiative at the University of Washington to build capacity in the work environment through a collaborative process addressing four aspects of campus ecology: leadership and empowerment, support and resources, climate for diversity, and senses of community and satisfaction. Diverse task forces gathered, analyzed, and fed back information to the University community, and subsequent data-driven action steps were taken. Each of these efforts reflects a definition of capacity that includes an appreciation of organizational mission and improving the quality of life through change at multiple organization levels.

Capacity building through the implementation of externally developed programs. An additional series of papers reflect on the notion that capacity building can be fostered through the introduction of externally developed programs into existing community organizations. The evidence-based practice movement represents one example of this approach. As previously described, an ecological perspective views interventions as events in systems (Hawe et al. 2008). How organizations as systems respond to the introduction of externally developed interventions is a question that has received considerable recent attention in the field. For example,
Gregory et al. (2007) show how school climate affected the level and rate of change in implementation of a multisite violence-prevention program. They found that teacher-reported support between staff and among teachers and students predicted higher average levels of implementation, whereas teacher-reported administrative leadership predicted greater growth in implementation. These differentiated findings lead Gregory et al. (2007) to call for “an ecological perspective on program implementation in school settings—a perspective that can be missed by interventionists who stay within the classroom walls” (p. 258).

Townsend & Campbell (2007) adopt an alternative perspective on organizational forces affecting program implementation. Their qualitative study of 16 organizations offering rape prevention programs assessed why these programs tended to adopt homogeneous practices over time regardless of their effectiveness. They suggest that the push for organizational homogeneity reflects a survival response to the uncertainty of the organizational field. When there is uncertainty over whether organizations can get the resources they need to survive, the tendency is to adopt practices that provide legitimacy without necessarily improving performance.

These specific examples are complemented by Miller & Shinn’s (2005) broad perspective on why the program development–program dissemination model of increasing organizational capacity has had, thus far, limited success. They note that the development–dissemination model often leads to a mismatch of what scientists develop and what organizations can implement and that, ecologically speaking, it ignores the degree of congruence among community, organizational, and program values that can facilitate or undermine program success. Furthermore, they suggest that a “pro-innovation bias” minimizes the potential value of ongoing indigenous practices that may already be working, and that the development–dissemination model assumes a naive and simplistic model of organizational decision making that lacks appreciation of organizational ecology. In their paper, Miller & Shinn (2005) highlight the costs to capacity building of not adopting an “events in systems” perspective on the introduction of externally developed programs into ongoing organizations.

As one alternative, Miller & Shinn (2005) propose that community psychologists should learn from communities by locating and studying successful indigenous programs. This call is reflected in a recent study by Birman et al. (2008). Rather than beginning with evidence-based practice, Birman et al. (2008) gathered “practice-based evidence” from an existing comprehensive, community-based mental health program for refugees. Through a collaborative assessment process of program structure and philosophy, measures of client progress were developed to assess the effectiveness of services provided to 97 children who spoke 26 different primary languages. The extensive description of the flexible service model titrated to specific client situations and the evidence on overall client improvement serve as an example of studying indigenous practices that have some demonstrated effects and are, by definition, sustainable.

Community capacity. At the community level, the meaning of capacity building has taken multiple forms. Two recent examples include efforts to understand conditions affecting community mobilization and the creation of supportive community contexts that enable successful behavior change.

Community capacity as community mobilization potential. Foster-Fishman et al. (2007a) assess the conditions under which local residents become involved in individual activism and neighborhood collective action in a community-building initiative in Battle Creek, Michigan. They define community capacity as the degree to which a context has structures and processes in place to help mobilize residents for action—the interaction of human, organization, and social capital. Results from a random-digit-dial phone survey suggest that “resident perceptions of neighborhood readiness (i.e., hope for the future and collective
efficacy) and capacity for change (i.e., social ties and neighborhood leadership), and the level of neighborhood problems were strongly related to whether and how much residents were involved. Moreover, different elements of these neighborhood conditions were more or less important depending on the type and level of resident involvement" (Forster-Fishman et al. 2007, p. 91). Their data suggest that the definition and level of community capacity shift depending on the community intervention goals for which capacity development is needed. Community capacity building as creating a supportive community context. Another pathway to community capacity building is through mobilizing varied sectors of the community relevant to specific community issues. Campbell et al. (2007) provide an elegant example of this approach in their report of an HIV/AIDS community building project in South Africa. The work is predicated on the “growing recognition that the implementation of discrete programs aimed at delivering services to vulnerable groupings is likely either to fail, or not be sustained in the long run, if the surrounding context and supporting systems do not shift in ways that support the goals of program efforts” (p. 348). This project focuses on promoting collaborative and supportive relationships among community members to achieve sexual behavior change, reducing stigma associated with HIV/AIDS, supporting those living with AIDS and their caregivers, enlisting the cooperation of local agencies and volunteers, and increasing access to health services and welfare grants. Capacity is reflected in how these targeted change efforts affect the development of six psychosocial resources needed to develop an AIDS-competent community: (a) knowledge and skills, (b) safe social spaces, (c) ownership of and responsibility for dealing with the problem, (d) confidence in local strengths and identifying them, (e) solidarity or “bonding social capital,” viewing social capital as shaped by economic political factors such as poverty and gender, and (f) bridging partnerships with networks and agencies outside the community. These measurable goals are approached through an empowerment and community-based participatory research perspective. In both studies community capacity is reflected in the creation or development of structures, processes, and networks of relationships that promote organized action with respect to community issues.

An ecological community psychology perspective on community intervention, then, focuses on how interventions are coupled with the host settings, how factors in the community or setting context affect the relevance, fidelity, and impact of such interventions, and how, through collaborative relationships, local practices can be better understood and built upon as a community resource. In so doing, the concept of intervention is broadened from a focus on specific programs or activities to a more systemic perspective that views any specific intervention as an “event in system” inclusive of both the requirements of the intervention and the culture, resources, and hopes of the organizations or communities involved.

COMMUNITY INTERVENTION AND DISASTERS
A particularly salient community psychology concern involves a community-level perspective on understanding and responding to the multiple effects of both natural and human-made disasters. One sweeping multilevel framework is provided by Hobfoll et al. (2007), whose communitywide response framework is designed to address five essential intervention goals: sense of safety, calming, sense of self- and community-efficacy, connectedness, and hope. The intent is not to promote specific intervention models because of the heterogeneity of traumatic events and their effects in varied community contexts; rather, the authors provide principles to be flexibly applied depending on the particular ecology of the disaster. Across ecological levels of the community context, interventions are designed to counter the predictable loss of personal, social, and economic resources related both to the immediate reaction to traumatic
events as well as recovery in the aftermath. As Hobfoll et al. (2007) state, “The advantage of a community model over the individual...is that the group (e.g., mosque, school, business organization, chamber of commerce, Rotary Club) can develop hope-building interventions such as helping others clean up and rebuild, making home visits, organizing blood drives, and involving members of the community who feel that they cannot act individually because of the magnitude of the problem” (p. 300).

Norris et al. (2005) provide a vivid example of the relevance of a community-level analysis in their report on the effects of a natural disaster, Mexico’s 1999 flood, on social support and social embeddedness (quantity and types of relationships with others). Following these processes through repeated assessments of flood victims across a 24-month period in two Mexican communities, they test the hypothesis that although the typical post-trauma coping strategy involves the mobilization of supports, over time support deterioration occurs because need exceeds supply. Although support mobilization and deterioration patterns differed depending on the degree of personal and community-wide collective trauma, deterioration of support was far greater in one community than the other and the difference increased over time. Norris et al. (2005) suggest the concept of “community resilience” in assessing community capacity to mobilize local resources that can affect individual response to traumatic events. The careful approach to developing culturally relevant instruments, the large sample size, and the thorough analytic strategy make this study an exemplar of a community-level approach to the study of natural disasters.

Other studies report on community factors influencing response to terrorism. Hausman et al. (2007) employed a random-digit-dialing procedure to assess neighborhood social capital as a mediating factor in individual preparedness and concerns about terrorism. Social capital was measured in terms of community participation and involvement, extent of local social networks, and trust and reciprocity in the neighborhood. Here, the greater the perceived neighborhood social capital, the greater the preparedness and the greater the concerns about terrorism. Evan-Chen et al. (2007), drawing on Hobfoll’s (1998) conservation-of-resources theory, found that although adolescent exposure to terrorism in Israel increased violent behavior, these effects were buffered in the presence of environmental resources.

Thus, community-level factors have become increasingly prominent in work on responses to natural and human disasters. This work supports the value of adopting a communitywide and community-specific perspective in both an assessment of factors influencing individual and community-level responses to disasters and in designing community interventions that assess, draw on, and, where necessary, augment community resources to ameliorate individual difficulties.

**CONCLUSION**

Community psychology has historically represented one effort to move from a psychology of the individual to a psychology of the individual in community context. The present review examines recent developments within this broad agenda. The evolution of contextualist/perspectivist philosophies of science represents one aspect of the broader movement in the field. The commitment to viewing science and practice as value laden has been represented in its assessment of community psychology as “more than science” and in its efforts to promote social justice and citizen empowerment in varied sociocultural community contexts. Throughout the literature is the repeated affirmation of the interdependence of research and practice, with each informing the other.

The ecological perspective underlying the present review represents one conceptual framework for directing and organizing this community psychology agenda. The shift to an ecological perspective has, over time, led to investigations illuminating the ecology of lives; it is reflected in efforts to characterize both the community context and the high-impact
settings it includes, such as schools; it has led to an appreciation of how deeply cultural history and current traditions are reflected in community life, and it has been reflected in activities designed to increase the quality and quantity of community resources through such activities as capacity building and other collaborative approaches to working with rather than in communities. As such, it represents an integration of social values, appreciation of levels of analysis of local ecology on behavior, and a commitment to process and relationship building as prelude to and participation in community change efforts across multiple cultural communities.

**Future Directions**

The work reviewed above represents not only significant intellectual progress in furthering work in community psychology; it also provides a framework for much-needed future developments. Advances in multilevel statistical and methodological approaches to studying the complexities of community life need to be complemented with additional efforts to unravel methods for studying social systems that reflect a nonlinear understanding of behavior. Designs for conducting research and intervention with small samples such as specific refugee groups (Birman et al. 2008) and Alaska Native communities (Mohatt et al. 2006), or under circumstances such as natural disasters that preclude the possibility of highly controlled intervention trials (Hobfoll et al. 2007), need further exploration. The various definitions of key concepts such as collaboration (Trickett & Espino 2004) and neighborhood (Dupere & Perkins 2007, Kruger et al. 2007) have sharpened the need to deconstruct such commonly used, though not consensually defined, terms. Reports of conducting community research and interventions in varied sociocultural communities has brought to the fore the need to develop better process models for approaching and documenting the relationship between outsiders and insiders in community research (Brody et al. 2006) as well as the effects of that relationship on the validity of knowledge gained and the social impact of the work itself. Finally, though only modestly represented in the current review, there is an increasing international movement in community psychology (Reich et al. 2007). The emergence of research from other countries can only increase the field’s appreciation for how culture, context, and community shape our behavior and provide the reference point for our efforts to learn about and be useful to communities. Together, these areas of future work provide a road map for furthering an ecological understanding of individuals and intervention in community context.

**DISCLOSURE STATEMENT**

The author is not aware of any biases that might be perceived as affecting the objectivity of this review.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The author thanks Susan Fiske, Dina Birman, Robin Lin Miller, and James Kelly for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this review.

**LITERATURE CITED**


Kidd SA, Davidson L. 2007. “You have to adapt because you have no other choice”: stories of strength and resilience of 208 homeless youth in New York City and Toronto. *J. Community Psychol.* 35(2):219–38


# Contents

## Prefatory

**Emotion Theory and Research: Highlights, Unanswered Questions, and Emerging Issues**
*Carroll E. Izard*  
1

## Concepts and Categories

**Concepts and Categories: A Cognitive Neuropsychological Perspective**
*Bradford Z. Mahon and Alfonso Caramazza*  
27

## Judgment and Decision Making

**Mindful Judgment and Decision Making**
*Elke U. Weber and Eric J. Johnson*  
53

## Comparative Psychology

**Comparative Social Cognition**
*Nathan J. Emery and Nicola S. Clayton*  
87

## Development: Learning, Cognition, and Perception

**Learning from Others: Children’s Construction of Concepts**
*Susan A. Gelman*  
115

## Early and Middle Childhood

**Social Withdrawal in Childhood**
*Kenneth H. Rubin, Robert J. Coplan, and Julie C. Bowker*  
141

## Adulthood and Aging

**The Adaptive Brain: Aging and Neurocognitive Scaffolding**
*Denise C. Park and Patricia Reuter-Lorenz*  
173

## Substance Abuse Disorders

**A Tale of Two Systems: Co-Occurring Mental Health and Substance Abuse Disorders’ Treatment for Adolescents**
*Elizabeth H. Hawkins*  
197
Therapy for Specific Problems

Therapy for Specific Problems: Youth Tobacco Cessation
Susan J. Curry, Robin J. Mermelstein, and Amy K. Sporer ........................................... 229

Adult Clinical Neuropsychology

Neuropsychological Assessment of Dementia
David P. Salmon and Mark W. Bondi ................................................................. 257

Child Clinical Neuropsychology

Relations Among Speech, Language, and Reading Disorders
Bruce F. Pennington and Dorothy V. M. Bishop ......................................................... 283

Attitude Structure

Political Ideology: Its Structure, Functions, and Elective Affinities
John T. Jost, Christopher M. Federico, and Jaime L. Napier ........................................ 307

Intergroup relations, stigma, stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination

Prejudice Reduction: What Works? A Review and Assessment of Research and Practice
Elizabeth Levy Paluck and Donald P. Green ............................................................. 339

Cultural Influences

Personality: The Universal and the Culturally Specific
Steven J. Heine and Emma E. Buchtel ................................................................. 369

Community Psychology

Community Psychology: Individuals and Interventions in Community Context
Edison J. Trickett ......................................................................................................... 395

Leadership

Leadership: Current Theories, Research, and Future Directions
Bruce J. Avolio, Fred O. Walumbwa, and Todd J. Weber ........................................ 421

Training and Development

Benefits of Training and Development for Individuals and Teams, Organizations, and Society
Herman Aguinis and Kurt Kraiger ............................................................................. 451

Marketing and Consumer Behavior

Conceptual Consumption
Dan Ariely and Michael I. Norton ................................................................................ 475
Psychobiological Mechanisms

Health Psychology: Developing Biologically Plausible Models Linking the Social World and Physical Health
  *Gregory E. Miller, Edith Chen, and Steve Cole* .................................................. 501

Health and Social Systems

The Case for Cultural Competency in Psychotherapeutic Interventions
  *Stanley Sue, Nolan Zane, Gordon C. Nagayama Hall, and Lauren K. Berger* .......... 525

Research Methodology

Missing Data Analysis: Making It Work in the Real World
  *John W. Graham* ........................................................................................................ 549

Psychometrics: Analysis of Latent Variables and Hypothetical Constructs

Latent Variable Modeling of Differences and Changes with Longitudinal Data
  *John J. McArdle* ....................................................................................................... 577

Evaluation

The Renaissance of Field Experimentation in Evaluating Interventions
  *William R. Shadish and Thomas D. Cook* ............................................................ 607

Timely Topics

Adolescent Romantic Relationships
  *W. Andrew Collins, Deborah P. Welsh, and Wyndol Furman* ................................. 631

Imitation, Empathy, and Mirror Neurons
  *Marco Iacoboni* ....................................................................................................... 653

Predicting Workplace Aggression and Violence
  *Julian Barling, Kathryne E. Dupré, and E. Kevin Kelloway* .................................... 671

The Social Brain: Neural Basis of Social Knowledge
  *Ralph Adolphs* ......................................................................................................... 693

Workplace Victimization: Aggression from the Target’s Perspective
  *Karl Aquino and Stefan Thau* ................................................................................ 717

Indexes

Cumulative Index of Contributing Authors, Volumes 50–60 ...................................... 743
Cumulative Index of Chapter Titles, Volumes 50–60 ................................................... 748

Errata

An online log of corrections to *Annual Review of Psychology* articles may be found at http://psych.annualreviews.org/errata.shtml