

A 10-YEAR RETROSPECTIVE OF ORGANIZATION STUDIES IN COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY: CONTENT, THEORY, AND IMPACT

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Organization Studies and Community Psychology

In recent years, a group of scholars appears to have fostered an increased level of attention to the intersection of organization studies and community psychology. Boyd and Angelique (2002) rekindled the discourse on this topic by noting that the two fields have much to share with each other in terms of application and theory development. Their meta-analytic work was developed to test if Keys and Frank's (1987) call for an increased focus on the intersection had been heeded by community psychology researchers. They found that only modest attention had been paid to the intersection in the 15 years after Keys and Frank's work.

Since the publication of Boyd and Angelique's (2002) study, a number of events have marked a renewed interest in the intersection between community psychology and organization studies. In 2007, a special issue on organization studies was published in the *Journal of Community Psychology* (Boyd & Angelique, 2007), and in 2011, a special issue was published in the *Journal of Prevention and Intervention in the Community*, which focused on organization development in community contexts (Boyd, 2011a). Moreover, a series of conference symposia and presentations were delivered at Society for Community Research and Action biennials (e.g., Boyd & Nowell, 2011; Boyd, 2009; Boyd, Bess, Evans, Bond, & Griffith, 2007), Academy of Management meetings (e.g., Tschirhart, Boyd, Nowell, Bies, & Gronbjerg, 2010; Boyd, Nowell, Bess, Evans, & Lardon, 2009), and the Southeastern

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Ecological and Community Psychology Conference (Nowell, Boyd, Hano, Izod, & Yang, 2012).

Further, an organization studies interest group was created in the Society for Community Action and Research, and a series of single article publications have appeared in community psychology journals focusing on organization studies topics such as appreciative inquiry and organization development (Boyd & Bright, 2007; Boyd, 2011b; Bess, Prilleltensky, Perkins, & Collins, 2009; Perkins et al., 2007), transorganizational networks (Nowell, 2009), and administrative evil (Griffith, Childs, Eng, & Jeffries, 2007).

At face value it seems that the topic of organization studies has significantly increased in the field of community psychology. However, a decade has passed since the last comprehensive review of organization studies content in the community psychology journals. The aim of the present article is to once again ask the questions that Keys and Frank (1987) first offered, and evaluate the effect of organization studies in the field of community psychology. Two research questions are explored: (a) What has the study of organizations contributed to community psychology? and (b) What has community psychology contributed to the study of organizations? To evaluate these questions, a review was conducted to evaluate the extent to which researchers have responded to Boyd and Angelique's (2002) call to increase the study of organizations within community psychology.

But some may ask, "Why is this important for our field?" The response to this question is fairly simple. First, organizational settings dominate our existence including places where we work, play, and volunteer. Most of us exist within multiple overlapping organizational systems. Our homes, neighborhoods, and communities may no longer be the places where we spend most of our time. Much of our daily interaction occurs within and in relation to organizations. Marginalized and oppressed individuals, who we often seek to help, are dependent on government organizations, nonprofits, and corporate social responsibility of for-profit firms. As Boyd and Angelique (2002) noted, we all may be living in *organizational communities*, where organizations are functioning as our professional neighborhoods.

Second, from a scholarly perspective, the collective works of Keys and Frank (1987), Boyd and Angelique (2002, 2007), and Boyd (2011a), have shown that organization studies and community psychology are complementary fields. Community psychologists have much to share with individuals in fields related to the study of organizations and to the organizational literature at large. Community scholars have knowledge, skills, and abilities in a variety of content areas including empowerment, sense of community, stress and coping, diversity, ecological analysis, and prevention. Content expertise, methodological skill, and a humanistic worldview are things that community scholars can share with organization researchers. Similarly, organization scholars can share concepts, skills, and abilities with community psychologists that can be fruitful for the development of the community literature. As Boyd and Angelique (2007) specifically noted, organization scholars can share both micro and macro approaches with community psychologists, and can help community researchers better understand systems dynamics that can help ameliorate the micro/macro gap that has existed in the field for a long time.

To this end, the present study was designed to evaluate the community psychology literature from 2001 to 2011 to determine if organization studies content had grown compared to Boyd and Angelique's (2002) findings between 1988 and 2000. Specifically, a meta-analysis was conducted to assess if community psychologists had increased their work in three areas: (a) organizational settings, (b) importing organization-related concepts, and (c) importing organization theory as explanatory frameworks. In addition, preliminary data are presented that show how community psychologists have recently created an

interface with organization researchers in other fields, and how community psychologists have directly affected organizational scholarship outside the journals of community psychology.

METHOD

A content analysis was conducted of both the *Journal of Community Psychology* (JoCP) and the *American Journal of Community Psychology* (AJCP) from 2001 to 2011. For the 11-year period, the publication rate of organization studies in community psychology was analyzed, and a thorough content analysis was completed to determine the manifestation of organization studies in the literature. JoCP and AJCP were selected because these two journals are considered the primary journals of community psychology, and major trends of the field tend to be published in either of these outlets (Angelique & Culley, 2000; Bernal & Enchautegui-de-Jesus, 1994; Jason, Pokorny, Patka, Adams, & Morello, 2007; Lounsbury, Leader, Mearns, & Cook, 1980; Loo, Fong, & Iwamasa, 1988; Novaco & Monahan, 1980; Speer et al., 1992).

SAMPLE

Two coders manually searched the titles of all 1,209 articles published in the two journals from 2001 through 2011. These included 611 articles from JoCP and 598 articles from AJCP. Articles were selected as containing an organization studies focus when (a) the location of the study was in an organization context (*setting*), (b) the paper contained a focus on workplace, administrative, organization, or management variables (*content*), and (c) the paper used organizational theory as a central explanatory tool by the authors (*theory*). Any article deemed appropriate by the coders was selected. A total of 252 articles fit the criteria for inclusion in this study.

PROCEDURE

Three coders for all 252 articles used in this study conducted content analysis. A similar procedure was followed to other content analyses conducted in community psychology (i.e., Angelique & Culley, 2000; Bernal & Enchautegui-de-Jesus, 1994; Loo et al., 1988).

First, a coding strategy was created to identify studies that were conducted within organizational settings. Boyd and Angelique (2002) found that community psychologists most often evaluate traditional tenets of the field (i.e., empowerment, prevention, sense of community, support for diversity, theoretical orientation, ecological analysis, social support, and stress and coping) in organizational settings, and the present work was designed to test if this trend was still present in the literature.

Second, a coding strategy was created to identify studies that discussed or measured organization-related variables (e.g., job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job burnout, administrative overload). This strategy allowed for a comparison to Boyd and Angelique's (2002) findings, and permitted insight into articles that were focused at systems or macro-organizational levels from articles that employed units of analysis at the individual or small group level. Boyd and Angelique (2002) found that contrary to the aspirations of community psychologists who want to utilize macro-oriented concepts and methods, the organization studies literature mostly contained individual and small group

units of analysis that are the traditionally favored measures of industrial psychologists and organizational behaviorists.

Finally, a coding strategy was created to identify studies that utilized organization theory as a major explanatory tool. Boyd and Angelique (2002) found that community psychologists did not heavily utilize organization theory. However, the importation of organization theory to the field has the potential to make the greatest impact in the organization studies/community psychology intersection. As noted in their 2002 study, only 2 out of 41 studies used organization theory, and thus the present investigation was designed to test if the presence of organization theory had changed since the last measurement period.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As reported by Boyd and Angelique (2002), in the decade prior to the Keys and Frank's special issue on organizations in *AJCP*, the combined publishing rate for organization studies papers (both *AJCP* and *JoCP*) was 3.7% (34 articles out of a total 927). Specifically, *AJCP* had a 5.2% rate of organization-related publications (21 out of a total 404) and *JoCP* had a 2.3% rate (13 out of a total 523). Although *AJCP* had a higher percentage of articles compared to *JoCP*, both journals showed a small percentage of articles in relation to organization studies.

During the 13-year period between 1988 and 2000 less than 4% of the articles focused on organization or workplace issues. This finding showed that the rate of publishing organizational themes had slightly decreased following the 1987 special issue on organization studies in *AJCP*. Specifically, *AJCP* had a 4.7% rate of organization related publications (27 out of a total 576), and *JoCP* had a 3% rate (14 out of a total 469). Thirty-six of the 41 articles (87.8%) considered organizations as a context where key community psychology issues could be studied. Further, 30 (73.1%) focused on individual-level or small group constructs with most of the studies occurring within the boundary of an organizational context. By contrast, only seven (17.1%) concentrated on organization-level variables. Of the seven articles that focused on organization-level variables, only two (4.9%) used organization theory frameworks.

The Present Study (2001–2011)

In the present study, a combined publication rate of 21% (252 out of 1209) was found (see Table 1). Specifically, *AJCP* had a 26% rate of organization related publications (155 out of a total 598) and *JoCP* had a 16% rate (97 out of a total 611). *AJCP* had a higher percentage of articles compared to *JoCP*, but both journals showed a significant increase of articles in relation to organizations compared to both of the previous periods studied. The most striking feature of these data is that the total publication rate rose from 41 articles (between 1988–2000, a 13-year period) to 252 articles (between 2001–2011, an 11-year period). The average publication rate between the two periods was 3.15 (1988–2000) and 22.91 (2001–2011) articles per year. This represents a sevenfold increase in organization studies publications from the previous measurement period, and demonstrates that significantly more organization-related papers are being published in the field of community psychology.

To determine the focus of the organization studies literature, an analysis was conducted to determine how the articles were dispersed according to the inclusion of

Table 1. A Summary of Organization Articles From AJCP and JoCP Between 2001 and 2011

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Journal</i> | <i>N of org. articles</i> | <i>Total N</i> | <i>%</i> |
|-------------|----------------|---------------------------|----------------|------------|
| 2001 | AJCP | 17 | 47 | 36% |
| | JoCP | 5 | 44 | 11% |
| 2002 | AJCP | 8 | 38 | 21% |
| | JoCP | 6 | 43 | 14% |
| 2003 | AJCP | 13 | 58 | 22% |
| | JoCP | 5 | 41 | 12% |
| 2004 | AJCP | 5 | 35 | 14% |
| | JoCP | 9 | 44 | 20% |
| 2005 | AJCP | 6 | 44 | 14% |
| | JoCP | 11 | 48 | 23% |
| 2006 | AJCP | 13 | 60 | 22% |
| | JoCP | 10 | 49 | 20% |
| 2007 | AJCP | 20 | 53 | 38% |
| | JoCP | 18 | 68 | 26% |
| 2008 | AJCP | 22 | 59 | 37% |
| | JoCP | 7 | 70 | 10% |
| 2009 | AJCP | 13 | 62 | 21% |
| | JoCP | 14 | 68 | 21% |
| 2010 | AJCP | 23 | 72 | 32% |
| | JoCP | 7 | 65 | 11% |
| 2011 | AJCP | 15 | 70 | 21% |
| | JoCP | 5 | 71 | 7% |
| Total | AJCP | 155 | 598 | 26% |
| | JoCP | 97 | 611 | 16% |
| | | <u>252</u> | <u>1209</u> | <u>21%</u> |

organization settings, concepts, and theory. The data in Table 2 show that 205 articles (81.3%) were focused in organizational settings, 174 (69.05%) contained organization-related concepts, and 18 (7.14%) utilized organization theory as explanatory tools. Between 1988 and 2000, 87.8% ($n = 41$) of the articles were focused in organizational settings, 78.7% ($n = 37$) measured organization-related concepts, and 4.9% ($n = 2$) of the articles used organization theory as explanatory tools. In terms of percentage, the trends between the two periods are quite similar, yet there was a slight increase in articles that utilized organization theory.

This is a positive finding, but the use of organization theory remains relatively low in relation to the total output of organization studies articles. The data clearly show that the total output of organization-related articles in each specific subdomain increased significantly, yet in comparative terms, community psychologists are more likely to study organization-related concepts in organization settings as opposed to extensively using organization theory as guiding explanatory frameworks for their work.

Organization Settings

A broad range of organization settings was present in the organization studies literature. Over 80% of the articles were focused in community organizations or coalitions. The types of organization settings were widely dispersed, but some of the more popular locations

Table 2. Article Content With an Organizational Focus in AJCP and JoCP Between 2001 and 2011

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Journal</i> | <i>Setting</i> | <i>Concept</i> | <i>Theory</i> |
|-------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| 2001 | AJCP | 11 | 10 | 0 |
| | JoCP | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| 2002 | AJCP | 7 | 4 | 0 |
| | JoCP | 5 | 3 | 0 |
| 2003 | AJCP | 8 | 6 | 0 |
| | JoCP | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| 2004 | AJCP | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| | JoCP | 9 | 4 | 0 |
| 2005 | AJCP | 5 | 2 | 0 |
| | JoCP | 10 | 4 | 0 |
| 2006 | AJCP | 12 | 3 | 0 |
| | JoCP | 10 | 9 | 0 |
| 2007 | AJCP | 14 | 20 | 8 |
| | JoCP | 16 | 13 | 4 |
| 2008 | AJCP | 20 | 22 | 0 |
| | JoCP | 6 | 7 | 2 |
| 2009 | AJCP | 10 | 13 | 3 |
| | JoCP | 12 | 10 | 0 |
| 2010 | AJCP | 17 | 22 | 0 |
| | JoCP | 6 | 4 | 0 |
| 2011 | AJCP | 9 | 14 | 1 |
| | JoCP | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| Total | AJCP | 117 | 117 | 12 |
| | JoCP | 88 | 57 | 6 |
| | | <u>205</u> | <u>174</u> | <u>18</u> |

Note. Articles could contain multiple organization content components. A complete bibliography of all references in the organization studies literature can be obtained from the author.

were social service organizations, self-help groups, and a variety of nonprofit entities. The number of studies that focused on coalitions increased sharply from the 2002 study, and community and healthcare coalitions were common settings for research. Private sector and government settings were the least studied, but within each context, a variety of locations were notable (e.g., manufacturing and service firms, schools, and police and fire services).

Organization-Related Concepts

Boyd and Angelique (2002) found that the organization studies literature was most concerned with questions pertaining to contextual factors and or issues of diversity as they related to individual-level constructs such as employee satisfaction, service innovation, organization commitment, and work family conflicts. In addition, the literature contained articles that focused on creating a sense of community at work, employee empowerment, coping under stress, and role conflict overload. In general, the literature contained research questions that were directed at creating settings to enhance human well-being. In addition, the literature was extensively focused on the micro/individual-level.

Although there are some similarities to the previous measurement period, the organization studies literature has changed in relation to organization concepts and the focus of studies. The greatest change is related to unit of analysis. Over 50% of the articles focused on macro-level analyses with a systems-level orientation. Many studies attempted to determine organizational and external system characteristics that promoted change, effectiveness, or other positive organizational or systems outcomes. In addition, a large number of studies attempted to determine the features of coalition systems that led to effective outcomes. Interestingly, a few studies used “ecological” terminology to describe the analysis framework (which was noted as a common theme by Boyd & Angelique, 2002), but overwhelmingly the term “system” dominated the literature. This latter point appears to show that scholars are using open systems theory approaches from the organization studies literature when developing construct measures for their studies.

Beyond the obvious presence of systems-oriented articles, several studies focused on social-network analysis, organizational culture and climate, characteristics of effective change interventions (and change concepts), employee attitudes and perceptions, and administrative leadership issues. Less present, but still fairly manifest, were articles that focused on organization-related concepts like work stress and burnout, oppression, capacity building, quality management, human resource issues (e.g., hiring and training), workplace violence, and strategic planning. Finally, traditional community psychology topics like empowerment, sense of community, prevention, and social support were definitely present in the organization studies literature, but they did not dominate the landscape like they did in previous measurement periods.

Organization Theory

Boyd and Angelique (2002) noted that organization theory was essentially nonexistent in the community psychology literature between 1988 and 2000. The present analysis showed that the use of organization theory by community psychologists increased from 4.9% to 7.14% (from 2 to 18 studies). Moreover, the analysis revealed that organization theory remained dormant until 2007 (see Table 2). Between 2007 and 2011, each publication year (except 2010) contained a few articles that used organization theory as explanatory frameworks. The mode in the data occurred in 2007 when 12 total articles were published. The uptick can be attributed to a JoCP special issue on organization studies, which was edited by Neil Boyd and Holly Angelique, and an AJCP special issue on systems change, which was edited by Pennie Foster-Fishman and Teresa Behrens.

The most prominent issue in the organization theory literature was organization change (over 70% of the articles). Of all the organization theories used, open systems theory was a landslide winner, and was most often employed in an attempt to analyze macro-level features of a change initiative. Other theories included organizational learning, institutional isomorphism, behavior setting, job demand-control, organizational empowerment, chaos, sociotechnical systems, organizational culture, and appreciative inquiry (see Table 3). The analysis showed that a number of organization theories have trickled in to the community psychology literature, but without the impetus of two special issues, the use of organization theory is marginal at best. If one excludes the publications contained in the special issues, only seven articles would be present.

Table 3. Organization Theory Applications in the Community Psychology Literature

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Article Title/Authors</i> | <i>Journal, Vol/Iss</i> | <i>Theory</i> |
|-------------|---|-------------------------|---|
| 2007 | Applying Organizational Theories to Action Research in Community Settings: A Case Study in Urban Schools <i>Keli S. Bryan, Dena A. Klein, & Maurice J. Elias</i> | JoCP 35(3) | Open Systems Chaos Socio-Technical Systems Design Appreciative Inquiry |
| | Racism in Organizations: The Case of a County Public Health Department <i>Derek M. Griffith, Erica L. Childs, Eugenia Eng & Vanessa Jeffries</i> | JoCP 35(3) | Open Systems Administrative Evil |
| | A systems framework for understanding social settings <i>Vivian Tseng & Edward Seidman</i> | AJCP 39(3/4) | Open Systems |
| | Building capability throughout a change effort: leading the transformation of a police agency to community policing <i>J. Kevin Ford</i> | AJCP 39(3/4) | Open Systems |
| | Developing operating principles for systems change <i>Teresa R. Behrens & Pennie G. Foster-Fishman</i> | AJCP 39(3/4) | Open Systems |
| | Putting the system back into systems change: a framework for understanding and changing organizational and community systems <i>Pennie G. Foster-Fishman, Branda Nowell, & Huilan Yang</i> | AJCP 39(3/4) | Open Systems |
| | Blending Ameliorative and Transformative Approaches in Human Service Organizations: A Case Study <i>Scot D. Evans, Carrie E. Hanlin, & Isaac Prilleltensky</i> | JoCP 35(3) | Organization Change (<i>Org. Transformation</i>) |
| | Community Readiness as a Multidimensional Construct <i>Sarah M. Chilenski, Mark T. Greenberg, & Mark E. Feinberg</i> | JoCP 35(3) | Organization Change (<i>Readiness for Change</i>) |
| | Community Organizational Learning: Case Studies Illustrating a Three-Dimensional Model of Levels and Orders of Change <i>Douglas D. Perkins, Kimberly D. Bess, Daniel G. Cooper, Diana L. Jones, Theresa Armstead, & Paul W. Speer</i> | JoCP 35(3) | Organizational Learning |
| | Homogeneity in Community-Based Rape Prevention Programs: Empirical Evidence of Institutional Isomorphism <i>Stephanie M. Townsend & Rebecca Campbell</i> | JoCP 35(3) | Institutional Isomorphism |

Table 3. Continued

| Year | Article Title/Authors | Journal, Vol/Iss | Theory |
|------|--|------------------|---|
| | How Settings Change People: Applying Behavior Setting Theory to Consumer-Run Organizations <i>Louis D. Brown, Matthew D. Shepherd, Scott A. Wituk, & Greg Meissen</i> | JoCP 35(3) | Behavior Setting Organizational Empowerment |
| | Appreciative inquiry as a mode of action research in Community psychology <i>Neil M. Boyd & David D. Bright</i> | JoCP 35(8) | Appreciative Inquiry |
| 2008 | The Effects of Job Demands and Low Job Control on Work–Family Conflict: The Role of Fairness in Decision Making and Management <i>Tarja Heponiemi, Marko Elovainio, Laura Pekkarinen, Timo Sinervo, & Anne Kouvonen</i> | JoCP 36(3) | Job demand-control |
| | The Relationship Between Members' Perceptions of their Neighborhood Organization and their Involvement and Perceived Benefits from Participation <i>Mary L. Ohmer</i> | JoCP 36(7) | Organizational Empowerment |
| 2009 | Profiling Capacity for Coordination and Systems Change: The Relative Contribution of Stakeholder Relationships in Interorganizational Collaboratives <i>Branda Nowell</i> | AJCP 44(3/4) | Open Systems |
| | Participatory Organizational Change in Community-Based Health and Human Services: From Tokenism to Political Engagement <i>Kimberly D. Bess, Isaac Prilleltensky, Douglas D. Perkins, & Leslie V. Collins</i> | AJCP 43(1/2) | Organization Change (<i>Org. Transformation</i>) |
| | How People Can Benefit from Mental Health Consumer-Run Organizations <i>Louis D. Brown</i> | AJCP 43(3/4) | Organizational Empowerment |
| 2011 | A Heuristic Framework for Understanding the Role of Participatory Decision Making in Community-Based Non-Profits <i>Kimberly D. Bess, Douglas D. Perkins, Daniel G. Cooper, & Diana L. Jones</i> | AJCP 47(3/4) | Organizational Learning |

Implications of the Organization Studies Literature for Community Psychology

A greater focus. The findings of the present study show that the total number (and percentage) of organization studies articles has significantly increased in the last decade. Community psychologists continue to predominantly study phenomena in community-based settings, yet all organization types were represented in the literature. This is a welcome change because community psychologists have the ability to affect all organizational domains. As community psychologists continue to conduct their work in community organizations, they can help organizations deliver better services for clients, help organizations manage their internal administrative affairs, and help workers live better lives

within organizational communities (Boyd & Angelique, 2002). The frontier for community psychologists continues to be government and especially private-sector settings.

In addition to the goals noted above for community organizations in government, community psychologists have the ability to affect service provision for large numbers of citizens, the ability to help administrations engage in appropriate fiscal stewardship, and the capacity to help change the culture of agencies to include key tenets of the field like empowerment, prevention, and social justice. And finally, in the private sector, community psychologists have the ability to do all of these things within the rubric of triple bottom-line management (Savitz & Weber, 2006).

Popularized in recent years, triple bottom-line management is part of the organizational sustainability movement in which firms attempt to coterminously manage three bottom lines: *profit, environment, and social*. When firms effectively do this, they become excellent stewards of money, the physical world around them, and all internal and external stakeholders to their organizations. Considering that community psychologists have extensive expertise in social and environmental justice, the timing is right for expanding their capacity in the private sector. Community psychologists have the ability to help private firms understand and implement strategies that will help multiple levels of ecologies around firms. Moreover, community psychologists have collective expertise to help organizations promote social justice, organizational citizenship, genuinely empowered workforces, reductions in hierarchical structures, and an ability to help develop a sense of community and community-building interventions, in firms that have historically only been concerned with single bottom-line management (i.e., profit only goals).

Macrolevel focus. The most significant change in the organization studies literature occurred in relation to units of analysis which were analyzed. Boyd and Angelique (2002) noted that when community psychologists conducted studies with organization-related constructs, there was a strong micro/individual-level focus. A micro-level focus is more consistent with the approach of industrial/organizational psychologists and organizational behaviorists (in the field of management), who study individual- and group-level factors associated with issues like personnel selection, performance appraisal, training and development, benefits and pay, ergonomics, and job design. Also, a great deal of this work is conducted in an attempt to maximize worker productivity and organizational profitability, and thus is not particularly aligned with the values and tenets of community psychologists. This situation is what Keys and Frank (1987) referred to as the micro/macro paradox that has pervaded the field of community psychology in many of our content areas. Community psychologists continue to study concepts like work stress and burnout, organizational oppression, empowerment, and sense of community; however, the presence of these micro-level concepts was not as pervasive in the past measurement periods.

The present findings indicate that organization studies are now primarily focused at the macro-level and are commonly centered on systems-level issues and wide-scale organizational (or multiorganizational) change. Researchers have extensively used open systems theory to measure factors at multiple levels of analysis (macro, mid, micro), study alignments or consistencies between different subsystems, and help identify and eliminate dysfunctional interrelations. The publication of the 2007 special issue on systems change in *AJCP* provides additional evidence that systems-level approaches are growing in the field.

An excellent example of an organization systems-level theoretical analysis was published by Bryan, Klein, and Elias (2007). They used Socio-Technical Systems Design (STSD; Pasmore, 2001), which is based within a systems theory framework, to highlight an aspect of an action research process with the Plainfield School District in New Jersey. STSD is

an approach that attempts to optimize both the social and the technical subsystems of an organization to increase efficiency and effectiveness. Within STSD, the technical aspects of completing work need to be consistent with the culture that surrounds a job or task. When this happens, the result is a better person–environment fit, which ultimately leads to improved individual, group, and organizational outcomes (Boyd & Angelique, 2002).

As part of a paper which utilized several organization theories, Bryan, Klein, and Elias noted that the action research process “paralleled the steps fundamental to *STSD theory*; that is, [they] elicited as many perspectives as possible (e.g., administrators, principals, and teachers) to improve the fit of new technology with the social setting of Plainfield’s schools and classrooms” (p. 391). Their work showed that organizational theories have become part of community action research and that building explicit knowledge of organizational theory brings important perspectives and tools to action research in community settings. The application of STSD was the first time it had ever been explored in the community psychology literature.

Another excellent example of systems-level scholarship is a study by Perkin’s et al. (2007) that used a series of case studies to describe both first- and second-order change at individual, organizational, and community levels. Their paper made several contributions to the literature including: (a) importing the concept of “organizational learning” to community psychology (Argyris, 1993; Pawlowsky, 2001); (b) showing that nonprofits which implemented organizational learning strategies had greater organizational capacity and weathered changes in the external environment much more easily; (c) by studying organizational learning through an empowerment lens, they illuminated an issue that has received less attention in the management literature that has been of central concern in community psychology; and (d) their study employed a systems-level framework, which allowed them to address the need to understand the complex role that organizations play as mediators of community change.

Organization theory is needed. Although great strides have been made in relation to importing a plethora of organization-related concepts and macro-level frameworks, organization theory remains significantly underrepresented in the field. Of the 18 organization theory papers in the past decade, most focused on organization change and open systems theory. The remaining theories of organizational learning, institutional isomorphism, behavior setting, job demand control, organizational empowerment, chaos, sociotechnical systems, organizational culture, and appreciative inquiry appeared a couple of times or just once in the literature.

It is a positive development to see a greater number of open systems theory applications because as Boyd and Angelique noted (2002), community psychologists can use open systems theory to help conceptualize the key subsystems of community and organizational systems, and their interrelations, and at the same time study the effects on groups and people within communities. Further, these theories can help community change agents as they work on community and organizational change initiatives.

However, there are several theories that rarely appeared in the literature that were promoted by Boyd and Angelique (2002) as helpful additions to the field. One is chaos theory, and it has the potential to explain many facets of organizational life (Gleick, 1987). Chaos theory predicts that change in a system can occur rapidly, in contrast to Newtonian thinking, which would hold that systems evolve in a slow, orderly, predictable sense. It opens up new possibilities for change agents who are interested in short-term, large-scale organizational change (Bartunek & Louis, 1988; Cummings & Worley, 2009; Nutt & Backoff, 1997). Community psychologists could use chaos theory with the hope

that social change can occur rapidly, and that the plight of many marginalized people can significantly change in meaningful ways. As Boyd and Angelique (2002) noted, chaos theory helps to affirm the notion that the environment is important. But beyond that, it helps us to conceptualize that both subtle and salient environmental variables play key roles in systems change.

In addition, the findings of the study showed that government settings have largely been ignored by community psychologists in the organization studies literature. In this arena, there are public-sector approaches that hold promise for community psychologists in relation to public policy processes and the delivery of human service programs. Specifically, the literature in the field of public administration regarding public service reinvention and administrative reform (i.e., the New Public Management Movement) that is focused on “innovative management” can be useful to community psychologists. This literature contains theory and techniques for decentralizing decision making in organizations by empowering workers, focusing on the recipient of public services, the privatization of public services, reorganization, using technology to improve services, and cutting back the red tape in administration (Boyd & Angelique, 2002). Several streams of literature in this area are present via *Total Quality Management* (Deming, 1986; Milakovich, 1991; Swiss, 1992), *Government Reinvention* (Brudney, Hebert, & Wright, 1999; Kearney, Feldman, & Scavo, 2000; Osborne & Gaebler, 1992; Rainey, 1998; Thompson, 2000), and *New Public Management* (Carroll & Steane, 2000; Lynn, 1998; Terry, 1998). These approaches tend to be consistent with community psychology tenets and methods because they consider multiple units of analysis (individual, group, organization, and citizens) and are focused on promoting better and more equitable services to citizens.

There are too many organization studies theories to articulate here, but it is clear that community psychologists have an opportunity to import organization theory into the field. For those who are interested in exploring organizational theory, there are a variety of excellent sources. Some of the better ones include *Classics of Organization Theory* (Shafritz, Ott, & Jang, 2011), *The Sage Handbook of Organization Studies* (Clegg, 2006), *The Handbook of Organization Studies* (Clegg, Hardy, & Nord, 1996), *Space, Organizations and Management Theory* (Clegg & Kornberger, 2006), and *Theories of Public Organizations* (Denhart, 2011). This is not an exhaustive list by any measure, but scholars are encouraged to investigate the large range of theory sources at all levels of organizations (e.g., *macro-level*: chaos, institutional, stakeholder, theories of strategic management; *mid- and micro-level*: human resource management, training and development, motivation, leadership, teams, and job design).

How Has Community Psychology Contributed to Organizational Scholarship?

In 1987, when Keys and Frank asked the question, “What does community psychology contribute to the study of organizations?” there were endless possibilities for community psychologists to explore issues like empowerment, diversity, sense of community, stress and coping, prevention, and ecological analysis within organizations. Inside the community psychology literature, the findings of the present study show that many of the possibilities have been achieved, and a solid foundation has been established for future explorations in this domain. However, what about the exportation of community psychology tenets and methods into fields that comprise organization studies? This is an important question for at least three reasons.

First, the organization studies research that has been reviewed so far is contained in the journals of community psychology. In these locations, we may be having conversations with ourselves that would limit the overall effect of our work. Second, community psychologists

have extensive and unique sets of knowledge, methodologies, and practices that are largely unknown to scholars in fields of organization studies, which could significantly improve discoveries in the praxis of organization science. Third, we might have a stronger voice and political clout in relation to our organization studies work if we are able to take our knowledge, skills, and abilities to locations where mainstream organization studies scholars congregate (i.e., organization studies conferences and academic journals).

In relation to these issues, a preliminary analysis was conducted to investigate how community psychologists have directly interfaced with organizational scholars. Two methods were used in the analysis: (a) direct knowledge of the author regarding organization-related scholarly interfacing, and (b) in May 2013, the Society for Community Action and Research membership listserv was utilized as a call for community psychologists to share all organization-related publications and conference presentations from 2001 to the present.

The findings of the investigation showed that a relatively small number of community scholars are sharing their work in organizational domains, and that they have primarily presented and published their work in the fields of industrial/organizational psychology, public/nonprofit administration, and management. The potential domain of organization studies is much larger than these three fields, and includes many additional areas like finance, accounting, economics, and marketing (among many others). Yet, at this point, community psychologists appear to be focusing their efforts in these three academic domains. This seems reasonable because community scholarship has a strong synergy with each of the three fields due to shared content areas like organizational behavior (e.g., organizational justice, commitment, leadership, and team issues), strategic management (e.g., systems evaluation, effective product/service delivery, and corporate social responsibility), and organization development and change (e.g., readiness for change, action research, organizational learning).

In the field of industrial/organizational psychology, Pennie Foster-Fishman (Ford & Foster-Fishman, 2012), published a chapter in the *Oxford Handbook of Organizational Psychology* that reviewed the organizational psychology, community psychology, and organizational behavior literatures to explore the factors that affect change initiatives in organizations. Of particular note in this work was the integration of community readiness for change and multilevel systems approaches in organizational change efforts.

Cary Cherniss published at least a dozen articles and book chapters, and a book, in the area of emotional intelligence and leadership. Some of this work has been published in industrial/organizational psychology outlets (Cherniss, 2010a,b), but his work has also appeared in such venues as the *Journal of Management Development*, the *Journal of Organizational Excellence*, and the *Handbook of Mentoring* (Cherniss, Grimm, & Liautaud, 2010; Cherniss, 2007; Cherniss & Caplan, 2001). *The Emotionally Intelligent Workplace* (coauthored with Daniel Goleman, 2001) is a highly regarded book that explores how employee emotional intelligence competency can help groups and entire organizations create system-wide productive outcomes.

In the field of management, Neil Boyd, Branda Nowell, Kimberly Bess, and Cecile Lardon presented papers in a 2008 panel at the Academy of Management Conference (AOM) in Anaheim, California titled, "Bringing community action and research to the Academy of Management." This was followed-up by a second panel in 2009 at AOM, when Boyd, Nowell, Bess, Lardon, and Scot Evans (2008) presented a session in Chicago, Illinois titled "Seeing Organizations as Communities: Community Perspectives on Public/nonprofit Management." At the same conference, Boyd introduced the concept of sense of community to organization development scholars in a session on organization

change, and in 2010, Boyd and Nowell presented a paper at AOM in Montreal, Canada titled "Sense of Community in Organizational Settings: A New Construct for the Field of Management." This paper has subsequently been accepted for publication in the *Journal of Management Inquiry* (In press, 2014), and is the first application of the sense of community construct in the management literature.

In addition, Boyd published several pieces in public administration and management outlets that focused on oppression in public management settings (Boyd, 2010) and oppression in human resource management performance metrics (Boyd & Gessner, 2013). Nowell has also published extensively in public administration outlets. Her work has primarily focused on social network analysis and disaster management (Jenkins & Nowell, 2010; Steelman, Nowell, & Bayoumi, in press), community collaboratives (Nowell, 2010), and program evaluation (Nowell, 2008).

Finally, Lindsey McGowen (McGowen, 2013; Gray, Sundstrom, Tornatzky, & McGowen, 2011) have been working on innovative research collaborations between universities and industry. Her published work has appeared in *Industry & Higher Education*, and she has presented her research on ecological systems theory, program sustainability, and action research at the American Evaluation Association, the Technology Transfer Society, and the Triple Helix Association.

In sum, this collection of work demonstrates that although community psychology scholars are marching forward to share their work in mainstream outlets where organizational researchers congregate, the number of scholars who have explored this frontier remains relatively small.

Conclusions

The present study showed that the organization studies literature has significantly changed in the past decade. Community psychologists have increased their presence in organizational settings, applied a greater number of organization concepts in their work, and have used organization theory as explanatory frameworks in their studies. In addition, community psychologists have attempted to bridge the gap with organization scholars through conference presentations and publications in organization studies venues.

However, some issues remain significantly underexplored at this point. First, there is substantial room for organization theory to be imported into the field of community psychology. Theory in the organization studies literature focuses on multiple levels of analysis (micro, mid, and macro), and this can aid community psychologists as they work with those who are dependent on, and work within, organizational systems. As Boyd and Angelique (2007) noted, this effort can lead to new theoretical developments for community scholars and practically assist those who work with, and in, the organizations where they "live."

Also, community researchers have only begun to directly engage organization scholars in collaborative discourse, yet the possibilities seem endless for fruitful interaction. This engagement is important in a world where managers and organizations consider humans as "resources" for profit accumulation and for the achievement of goals, which may deflect attention away from supporting and helping people in their quest to live satisfying and enriching lives (Boyd & Angelique, 2007).

The intersection between organization studies and community psychology seems promising and vibrant, and the present study shows that continued interaction can be a powerful instrument for the advancement of both fields. A great deal of scholarship has occurred over the past decade to advance the intersection, and perhaps the next decade

will see an even greater level of exploration between the disciplines. As the old adage says, “Only time will tell.”

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