

Syllabus

Goals

Community psychology and other ecologically-oriented psychologies strive to understand reciprocal relationships between individuals and their social contexts. But research is often hampered because we know less about assessing features of communities, organizations, and other extra-individual units than we do about assessing individuals. This course aims to challenge students to think rigorously and creatively about assessing contexts and transactions between people and contexts. Efforts at ecological assessment may include aggregating individual attitudes or characteristics (e.g., measures of the perceived environment, census data), measuring theoretically important features of ecological units directly, and assessing transactions between people and environments (e.g. social regularities, person-environment fit).

Overview

We begin by discussing theories about the relationship of people and contexts. Next we take a brief foray into psychometrics, examining reliability and validity of measurement for both quantitative and qualitative assessment methods. Psychometrics texts tend to be written from the perspective of individual assessment, but we will attempt to relate the techniques to ecological problems. Then we survey selected examples of ecological assessment at levels organized by Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, while students develop, pilot, and refine their own assessment strategies.

Prerequisites

Doctoral standing (or permission of the instructor) and previous courses in research methods and statistics.

Assignments and Grading

There are six written assignments for the course. The draft assessment strategies should also be presented orally in the class in which they are due. (Please make enough copies of appropriate handouts.) The ecological construct papers will not be graded. The last four assignments and class participation will be counted approximately equally in the final grade.

<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Assignment</u>
9/14, 9/21, 9/28	Ecological construct papers (choose 2 of 3 dates)
10/19	Psychometric test (take-home given 10/12)
10/26, 11/2, 11/9	Draft assessment project 1
11/16, 11/23, 11/30	Draft assessment project 2
12/15, by 5 p.m.	Final (revised) assessment project

Assignments

Ecological construct papers.

For two of the first three classes, use one or more of the readings to help you clarify an ecological construct in a research context that interests you. Discuss how the construct relates to the theory, and (very briefly) how you might measure it. For example, would you use questionnaires, observations, archival data, and/or manipulations? Please make copies for all class members and be prepared to present your thoughts briefly in class. Suggested length: 1 single-spaced page.

Psychometric Test. This will be done as a take-home.

Draft Assessment Project Parts I and II. (Pick the earlier due dates if you want earlier feedback.)

Choose any problem that involves the assessment of contexts or of transactions between people and contexts. It is fine to use an ecological assessment problem that you are dealing with for some other purpose, for example your MA thesis. If you have any question about the appropriateness of your topic, see me. Develop two different approaches to assessing the context or transactions. It is fine to use one approach that focuses on the context and another that focuses on transactions between people and the same context. Approaches may differ in the types of data used, the theoretical grounding for the approach, etc., but they should be recognizably different. See me if you have any doubts.

Write up the two approaches separately for the different due dates. (These are the two parts of the project.) Each report should briefly describe the theoretical/conceptual background and the constructs you are attempting to assess (one page), and describe your approach to assessment more thoroughly, e.g., describe the sampling strategy, describe the measures (include the interview schedule or data coding scheme as an appendix), discuss issues of reliability and validity, describe plans for analyzing the data. You do not need to carry out the assessment at this stage. Present your instrument in class (with copies of handouts for everyone), and hand in one report by each due date. Suggested length for each report: 4-8 double spaced pages plus instrument.

Final Assessment Project

Revise both of your draft assessment methods on the basis of feedback from the class and pilot test them. See me before using any method that involves human subjects -- you will need appropriate permissions. Collect only enough data to get a feel for your instruments. This may be a two-stage pilot in which you try an instrument, make revisions, and try again.

Hand in: a description of how you piloted your assessment methods and how you used results of the pilot test(s) to evaluate and further revise them. Are you satisfied with the methods in their current state of development? Why or why not? If you are not satisfied, what more would you need to do to make you happy with them? Compare and contrast the sorts of information that you can learn from each assessment approach. The appendix should include your draft assessment report, copies of the instruments or description of the assessment method as of the time when you started the pilot test, along with any subsequent revisions. Suggested length: 4-8 double-spaced pages, plus appendix.

Course Schedule and Readings

9/7 Introduction: What is ecological assessment?

9/14 Concepts of Ecology and Ecological Assessment I

Altman, I. & Rogoff, B. (1987). World views in psychology: trait, interactional, organismic, and transactional perspectives. In D. Stokols & I. Altman (Eds.) *Handbook of Environmental Psychology* (pp. 7-40). New York: Wiley.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1986). Ecology of the family as a context for human development: Research perspectives. *Developmental Psychology*, 22, 723-742.

Moos, R. H. (1973). Conceptualizations of human environments. *American Psychologist*, 28, 652-665.

Moos, R. H. (2003). Social contexts: Transcending their power and their fragility. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 31, 1-13

Wicker, A. W. (1972). Processes which mediate behavior-environment congruence. *Behavioral Science*, 17, 265-277.

9/21 Concepts of Ecology and Ecological Assessment II

Kelly, J.G., Ryan, A.M., Altman, B. E., & Stelzner, S. P. (2000). Understanding and changing social systems: An ecological view. In J. Rappaport & E. Seidman (Eds.) *Handbook of community psychology* (pp. 133-159). New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

Moos, R., & Lemke, S. (1983). Assessing and improving social and ecological settings. In E. Seidman (Ed.), *Handbook of social intervention* (pp. 143-162). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Shinn, M., & Toohey, S. (2003). Community contexts of human welfare. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 54, 427-459.

Tebes, J. K. (in press). Community science, philosophy of science, and the practice of research. *American Journal of Community Psychology*.

Trickett, E. J. (1996). A future for community psychology: The contexts of diversity and the diversity of contexts. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 24, 209-234.

Wandersman, A., & Nation, M. (1998). Urban neighborhoods and mental health: Psychological contributions to understanding toxicity, resilience, and interventions. *American Psychologist*, 53, 647-656.

9/28 Concepts of Ecology and Ecological Assessment III

Hackman, J. R. (1992). Group influences on individuals in organizations. In M. D. Dunnette & L. M. Hough (Eds.). *Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology* (2nd ed., Vol 3, pp. 199-267). Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.

Linney, J. A. (2000). Assessing ecological constructs and community context. In J. Rappaport & E. Seidman (Eds.) *Handbook of community psychology* (pp. 647-668). New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

Magnusson, D. & Torestad, B. (1992). The individual as an interactive agent in the environment. In W. B. Walsh, K. H. Craik, & R. H. Price (Eds.) *Person-environment psychology: Models and perspectives* (pp. 89-126). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Seidman, E. (1988). Back to the future, community psychology: Unfolding a theory of social intervention. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 16, 3-24.

Shinn, M., & Rapkin, B. (2000). Cross-level research without cross-ups in community psychology. In J. Rappaport & E. Seidman (Eds.) *Handbook of community psychology* (pp. 669-695). New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

10/5 Reliability

Suen, H. K. (1990). *Principles of test theories*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. pp. 3-17, 27-50; pp. 157-165; 173-184. For last two sections, focus on calculation of kappa.

Raudenbush, S. W. & Sampson, R. J. (1999). Ecometrics: Toward a science of assessing ecological settings with application to the systematic social observation of neighborhoods. *Sociological Methodology*, 29, 1-41.

10/12 Validity (pick up psychometrics quiz)

Shadish, W. R., Cook, T. D., & Campbell, D. T. (2002). *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for generalized causal inference*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin. pp. 33-102, 462-478
Skim -- this should be review.)

Cronbach, L. J., & Meehl, P. E. (1955). Construct validity in psychological tests. *Psychological Bulletin*, 52, 281-302.

Suen, H. K. (1990). *Principles of test theories*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. pp. 133-154.

Webb, E. J., Campbell, D. T., Schwartz, R. D., Sechrest, L., & Grove, J. B. (1981). *Nonreactive Measures in the Social Sciences*, (2nd ed.) Boston: Houghton - Mifflin, pp. 34-77.

10/19 Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research (Quiz due)

Agar, M. H. (1986). *Speaking of Ethnography*. Sage University Paper Series on Qualitative

Methods, Volume 1. Newbury Park, CA: Sage. (whole book = pp. 11-78)

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1989). *Fourth generation evaluation*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, pp. 233-251.

Shadish, W. R., Cook, T. D., & Campbell, D. T. (2002). *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for generalized causal inference*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin. pp. 478-484.

10/26 Microsystems: Schools and child care (draft assessment project I)

Chesir-Teran, D. (2003). Conceptualizing and assessing heterosexism in high school: A setting-level approach. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 31*, 267-279.

Henry, D. B., Cartland, J., Ruchcross, H. & Monahan, K. (2004). A return potential measure of setting norms for aggression. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 33*, 131-149.

Kaufman, K., Gregory, W. L., & Stephan, W. G. (1990). Maladjustment in statistical minorities within ethnically unbalanced classrooms. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 18*, 757-765.

Kontos, S., Howes, C., Shinn, M., & Galinsky, E. (1995). *Quality in family child care and relative care*. New York: Teachers College Press. (pp. 62-84).

Langhout, R. D. (2003). Reconceptualizing quantitative and qualitative methods: A case study dealing with place as an exemplar. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 32*, 229-244.

Rizzo, T. A., & Corsaro, W. A. (1995). Social support processes in early childhood friendship: A comparative study of ecological congruences in enacted support. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 23*, 389-418.

11/2 This is election day. Vote!

Microsystems: neighborhoods (draft assessment project I)

Buckner, J. C. (1988). The development of an instrument to measure neighborhood cohesion. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 16*, 771-791.

Coulton, C. J., Korbin, J. E. & Su, M. (1996). Measuring neighborhood context for young children in an urban area. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 24*, 5-32.

Coulton, C. J., Korbin, J. E. Chan, T. & Su, M. (2001). Mapping residents' perceptions on neighborhood boundaries: A methodological note. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 29*, 371-383.

Earls, F. & Buka, S. (2000). Measurement of community characteristics. In J. P. Shonkoff & S. J.

Meisels (Eds.) *Handbook of early childhood intervention* (2nd ed.). (pp. 309-324). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Leventhal, T. & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2000). The neighborhoods they live in: The effects of neighborhood residence on child and adolescent outcomes? *Psychological Bulletin*, *126*, 309-337.

Roosa, M.E., Jones, S., Tein, J-Y., & Cree, W. (2003). Prevention science and neighborhood influences on child development. Theoretical and methodological issues. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *31*, 55-72.

11/9 Microsystems: Neighborhoods, Workplaces (draft assessment project II)

Foster-Fishman, P. G. & Keys, C. B. (1997). The person/environment dynamics of employee empowerment: An organizational culture analysis. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *25*, 345-369.

Hughes, D., & Dodge, M. A. (1997). African-American women in the workplace: Relationships between job conditions, racial bias at work, and perceived job quality. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *25*, 581-599.

Morris, A., Shinn, M., & Dumont, K. (1999). Contextual factors affecting the organizational commitment of diverse police officers: A levels of analysis perspective. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *27*, 75-105.

Perkins, D.D. & Taylor, R.B. (1996). Ecological assessments of community disorder: Their relationship to fear of crime and theoretical implications. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *24*, 63-108.

Warren, R. B., & Warren, D. I. (1977). *The neighborhood organizer's handbook*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 7-32, 93-124.

11/16 Helping microsystems (draft assessment project II)

Allen, J. P., Kuperminc, G., Philliber, S., & Herre, K. (1994). Programmatic prevention of adolescent problem behaviors: The role of autonomy, relatedness, and volunteer service in the Teen Outreach Program. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *22*, 617-638.

Kingree, J.B. & Thompson, M. (2000). Mutual help groups, perceived status benefits, and well-being: A test with adult children of alcoholics with personal substance abuse problems. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *28*, 325-342.

Luke, D. A., Rappaport, J., & Seidman, E. (1991). Setting phenotypes in a mutual help organization: Expanding behavior setting theory. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *19*, 147-167.

- Maton, K. I. (1989). Community settings as buffers of life stress? Highly supportive churches, mutual help groups, and senior centers. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 17*, 203-232.
- Miller, R. L., Klotz, D., & Eckholdt, H. M. (1998). HIV prevention with male prostitutes and patrons of hustler bars: Replication of an HIV preventive intervention. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 26*, 97-131.
- Moos, R. H. (1997). *Evaluating treatment environments: The quality of psychiatric and substance abuse programs* (2nd ed.). New Brunswick: Transaction. (pp. 91-108; Appendix B).
- 11/23 Peer microsystems and exosystems (draft assessment project II)
- Greenberger, E., O'Neil, R., & Nagel, S. K. (1994). Linking workplace and homeplace: Relations between the nature of adults' work and their parenting behaviors. *Developmental Psychology, 30*, 990-1002.
- Hughes, D., & Chen, L. (1997). When and what parents tell children about race: An examination of race-related socialization among African-American families. *Applied Developmental Science, 1*, 200-214.
- McLoyd, V. C., Jayaratne, T. E., Ceballo, R., & Borquez, J. (1994). Unemployment and work interruption among African American single mothers: Effects on parenting and adolescent socioemotional functioning. *Child Development, 65*, 562-589.
- Sapolsky, R. M., & Share, L. J. (2004) A pacific culture among wild baboons: Its emergence and transmission. *PLoS Biology, 2*, 534-541.
- Seidman, E., Chesir-Teran, D., Friedman, J. L., Yoshikawa, H, Allen, L., Roberts, A., & Aber, J. L. (1999). The risk and protective functions of perceived family and peer microsystems among urban adolescents in poverty. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 27*, 211-237.
- Whitbeck, L. B., Adams, G. W., Hoyt, D. R., & Chen, X. (2004). Conceptualizing and measuring historical trauma among American Indian people. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 33*, 119-130.
- 11/30 Mesosystems (plus some mediators and moderators) (draft assessment project II)
- Beyers, J. M., Bates, J. E., Petit, G. S., & Dodge, K. A. (2003). Neighborhood structure, parenting processes, and the development of youths' externalizing behaviors: A multilevel analysis. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 31*, 35-53.
- Campbell, R. & Aherns, C.E. (1998). Innovative community services for rape victims: An application of multiple case study methodology. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 26*, 537-571.

Gonzales, N., Cauce, A. M., Friedman, R. J., & Mason, C. A. (1996). Family, peer, and neighborhood influences on academic achievement among African-American adolescents: One-year prospective effects. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 24*, 365-387.

Simons, R.L., Johnson, C., Beaman, J., Conger, R.D. & Whitbeck, L.B. (1996). Parents and peer group as mediators of the effects of community structure on adolescent problem behavior. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 24*, 145-171.

Tausig, M. (1987). Detecting "cracks" in mental health service systems: Application of network analytic techniques. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 15*, 337-351.

12/7 Macrosystems

Jason, L. A., Berk, M., Schnopp-Wyatt, D. L., & Talbot, B. (1999). Effects of enforcement of youth access laws on smoking prevalence. . *American Journal of Community Psychology, 27*, 143-160.

Phillips, D. A., Howes, C., & Whitebook, M. (1992). The social policy context of child care: Effects on quality. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 20*, 25-52.

Salazar, L. F., Baker, C. K., Price, A. W., & Carlin, K. (2003). Moving beyond the individual: Examining the effects of domestic violence policies on social norms. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 32* 253-264.

Yoshikawa, H. (1999). Welfare dynamics, support services, mothers' earnings, and child cognitive development: Implications for contemporary welfare reform. *Child Development, 70*, 779-801.

12/15 Final assessment project due by 5 p.m.