

Conceptualizing community in the context of work and family

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ABSTRACT *In recent years, many work–family scholars and practitioners have called for expanding the analysis of work and family to include community. This paper uses the ecological systems approach as a framework for selecting and reviewing community concepts thought to be relevant to the analysis of work, community, and family. Based on the work–family literature and the review of community concepts, the paper creates a set of common categories of characteristics for the analysis of relationships among community, work, and family. The development of such categories is a first step in understanding work, community, and family as interrelated domains. Hopefully, they will be useful for developing and testing hypotheses regarding interrelationships among work, community, and family and the effects of work, community, and family characteristics on domain quality and individual well-being.*

KEY WORDS *Community; ecological systems approach; work and family*

RÉSUMÉ *On a vu, au cours de ces dernières années, de nombreux professeurs et praticiens demander que soit étendue l'analyse du travail et de la famille pour inclure la communauté. Cet article utilise l'approche des systèmes écologiques comme base de sélection et d'étude des principes de communauté considérés pertinents dans l'analyse du travail, de la communauté et de la famille. Ensuite, en s'appuyant sur la littérature visant le travail et la famille, ainsi que sur l'étude des principes de communauté, l'article établit un jeu de catégories communes des caractéristiques permettant l'analyse de rapports entre communauté, travail et famille. L'établissement de telles catégories constitue un premier pas envers une meilleure compréhension de l'interrelation entre les domaines du travail, de la communauté et de la famille. Il est à espérer que cela sera utile envers le développement et l'évaluation des hypothèses visant à établir une relation entre le travail, la communauté et la famille, ainsi que l'influence qu'auraient les caractéristiques du travail, de la communauté et de la famille sur la qualité du domaine et la qualité de la vie.*

MOTS CLEFS *La communautaire; l'approche des systemes ecologiques; le travail et la famille*

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Introduction

Recently, work–family scholars and practitioners have called for the expansion of the analysis of work and family to include community. An early conceptual framework for work, community, and family in relation to changing patterns of work included government policies, workplace policies and practices, community institutions, the family system, and child outcomes. However, a review of the literature revealed a lack of conceptualization and relevant data regarding adaptations of community institutions to changes in patterns of work (Kammerman & Hayes, 1982). More recently, Rayman and Bookman (1999) pointed to the need for an integrated research and public policy agenda on work, community, and family, and this journal, *Community, Work & Family*, was created to increase understanding of the interconnections among work, community, and family (Kagan & Lewis, 1998). The first two volumes address a range of issues associated with work–community–family linkages such as local and global social change; gender, life cycle, and cultural differences; and the role of time and commitment (Kagan *et al.*, 2000). In the context of demonstrating the social value of informal public life, Oldenburg (1989) used the metaphor of a tripod to articulate three realms of experience: the home, the workplace, and ‘third places’ in which people gather informally.

Some have suggested that the community has a role to play along with work organizations in meeting family needs. For example, Googins (1997) writes that in the USA work–family issues such as child care are not corporate issues but rather public policy issues that have been adopted by the corporate arena because of the minimalist role of the US government. Corporations cannot be expected to accept sole or major responsibility for such a broad-based issue. Others need to be more involved, including the government, informal community supports, and formal community organizations in the nonprofit sector. He also suggests that one of the benefits of a community-focused work–family approach is that the needs of the working poor and those leaving welfare would be addressed through community efforts. (See also, Edgar, 1997, and Galinsky *et al.*, 1991). Others have suggested that research on the consequences of work needs to include effects on community life as well as on families (Brannen & Moss, 1998; Carré & Rayman, 1999).

In discussions of work *vs* nonwork, aspects of community are considered as elements of nonwork. Nonwork generally includes domains such as family, friendship, health, growth activities, hobbies and leisure, recreational activities, and community, social, and religious involvements (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1987; Hart, 1999; Kirchmeyer, 1992; Sekeran, 1986). Barnett’s approach is similar although she uses the term work/social system rather than work/non-work. She states that workers’ social systems include ‘the workers’ immediate and extended families, friends, and other people or organizations to which they have responsibilities’ (Barnett, 1998, p. 164). Thus, nonwork may be comparable to family and community or may be defined more broadly.

Despite this interest in integrating work, community, and family, little has

been done to develop a conceptualization of work, community, and family as a set of interrelated domains. This large-scale task needs to be undertaken in stages. The first step requires a conceptualization of community that is relevant to work and family. This paper addresses this issue first by using ecological systems theory as the basis for a review of the broad concept of community to determine the elements that are relevant to relationships among work, community, and family. It draws on a multi-disciplinary literature that addresses theoretical concepts such as community social organization, social networks, social capital, formal volunteering and informal helping, sense of community, and community satisfaction. Second, based on the work–family literature and the review of community concepts, the paper creates a set of common categories of characteristics for the analysis of relationships among work, community, and family. Hopefully, the use of these categories will facilitate further understanding of work, community, and family as interrelated domains.

The next two sections present an ecological framework for the analysis of work, community, and family and review diverse definitions of community. This is followed by a discussion of community concepts and the presentation of common categories of characteristics for the examination of relationships among work, community, and family. The last section provides conclusions and suggestions for further work.

An ecological systems approach to work, community, and family

This paper uses an ecological systems approach as a general framework to begin the conceptual integration of work, community, and family. This approach suggests that aspects of work, community, and family occur at multiple ecological levels. The ecological model of human development articulated by Bronfenbrenner (1989) focuses on four ecological levels, each nested within the next according to their immediacy to the developing person. The most immediate level, the microsystem, consists of a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced in a network of face-to-face relationships. The mesosystem is the interlinked system of microsystems in which a person participates—for example, linkages between family and school. The external environments in which a person does not participate but which exert indirect influence on the person are referred to as exosystems. An example is the work setting of a family member. Finally, the macrosystem is an overarching pattern of micro-, meso-, and exosystems consisting of the broad belief systems and institutional patterns that provide the context for human development.

From the perspective of ecological systems theory, work, community, and family are microsystems consisting of networks of face-to-face relationships (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). The linkages and processes occurring between two or more of these microsystems comprise a mesosystem. These mesosystems are of two types. The first consists of direct relationships in which characteristics of one or more microsystems are related to characteristics of another microsystem. These relationships include positive or negative spillover and compensation;

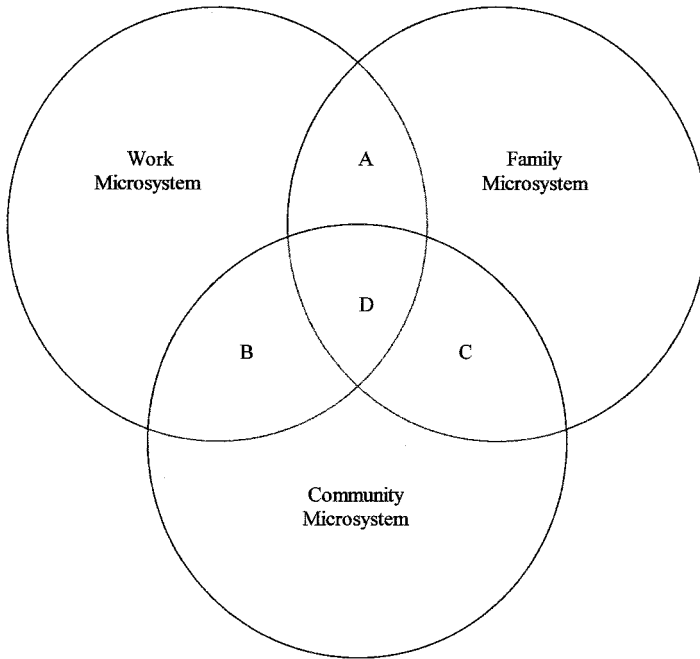


FIGURE 1. Relationships among the work, community, and family microsystems. Note: A = work–family mesosystem; B = work–community mesosystem; C = community–family mesosystem; D = work–community–family mesosystem.

they may be unidirectional or reciprocal. The work, community, and family microsystems and their interconnections are illustrated in Fig. 1.

The second type of mesosystem consists of the combined effects of two or more microsystems on individual, family, community, and work outcomes. These connections form the interfaces between work and family, work and community, community and family, and work, community, and family. The relationships making up the interfaces are of three forms: (1) independent and additive, (2) mediating in which characteristics of one domain mediate relationships between characteristics of another domain and an outcome, or (3) interactive in which characteristics of one domain moderate relationships between another domain and an outcome. These relationships are illustrated in Fig. 2 for the work–community interface. Studies of the positive and negative effects of performing multiple roles on individual well-being are based on these mesosystem relationships.

Both types of mesosystem operate within a larger social context. According to ecological systems theory, mesosystems and microsystems are influenced by the larger macrosystem in which they are embedded. The macrosystem includes shared belief systems, social and economic resources, opportunity structures, hazards, and patterns of social interaction. Thus, trends in employment patterns, social welfare policies, family demographics, gender ideologies, and

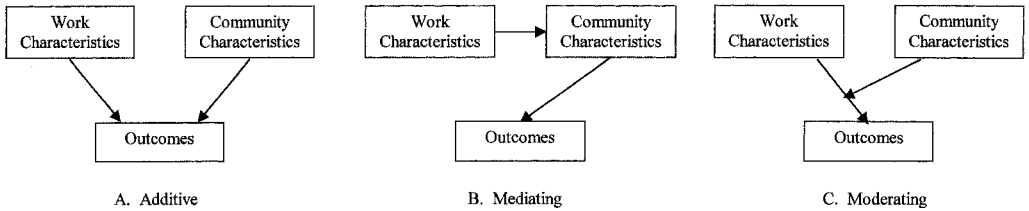


FIGURE 2. Relationships between the work–community interface and outcomes: (A) additive; (B) mediating; (C) moderating. Note: In parts B and C, work characteristics could serve as the mediating or moderating variables and community characteristics could be the predictors.

community identity and resources are relevant to work, community, and family interrelationships (Haas, 1999; Thorne, 1999). These trends are most evident in the realm of work where dramatic changes have occurred, for example, globalization, downsizing and restructuring, increased job insecurity, changes in the psychological contract between workers and employers, and the development of information technologies, a contingent workforce, and a long-hours culture (Lewis & Cooper, 1999).

Dimensions of the macrosystem can be incorporated into analyses of work, community, and family relationships through the use of contextual variables, for example, rates of unemployment, divorce, and female employment; organizational size and composition; community norms regarding gender roles; and the supply of child care in a community. In addition to these global variables, contextual variables are developed by aggregating individual-level variables, for example, social environment at work, community socioeconomic status, and neighborhood ties and cohesion. The use of these contextual variables is based on the assumption that individuals evaluate the demands and benefits of their work, community, and family roles in terms of these broader contexts.

This ecological framework is helpful not only in understanding relationships among work, community, and family domains but also in developing an ecological model of community. For example, Small and Supple (2001) view communities as systems of interrelated parts with processes operating at three levels. First-order community effects are the combined influences of community settings in which persons participate, i.e. the microsystem level. For children and adolescents these include schools, peer groups, youth programs, health care facilities, religious institutions, and child care settings. The processes occurring in these settings, for example, socialization, peer influences, and modeling, can promote or hinder development and well-being. Second-order effects occurring at the mesosystem level derive from the relationships and linkages among settings in a community, for example, social networks of families and children. These cross-setting linkages vary according to their consistency, presence of adults, quality of communication and exchange, the availability of appropriate and supportive settings, complementarity and fit, and accessibility. Third-order effects are contextual factors with collective properties such as social cohesion,

community identity, collective efficacy, and superordinate values, goals, and norms.

Ecological systems theory makes explicit how microsystems are connected with each other through the formation of mesosystems. It also demonstrates that multiple levels of analysis are appropriate for the analysis of microsystems. Thus, some concepts are useful at the structural or group level, whereas others operate at the individual level of analysis. This paper uses this ecological framework to determine the dimensions of community that will be useful in integrating community into the analysis of work and family. Before doing this, however, it is necessary to discuss the general concept of community.

Community as a contested concept

As with other concepts in general use, a precise definition of community has proved elusive. Kagan and Lewis' (1998) and Fowler's (1991) view of community as a contested concept reflects the controversy involved in defining community. The major issue is whether a community needs a territorial basis. For example:

A community is a group of people who live in a common territory, have a common history and shared values, participate together in various activities, and have a high degree of solidarity. (Phillips, 1993, p. 14, emphasis in original)

Despite the broad scope afforded the concept, three major ingredients are widely seen as being necessary elements ... These are common locale, solidary or normative sentiments and activities, and social interaction. (Leighton, 1988, p. 356)

Others allow that a common territory is not a necessary criterion to define community. Communities may be based only on relational criteria. Some examples:

A community is a group of people who are socially interdependent, who participate together in discussion and decision making, and who share certain *practices*. (Bellah *et al.*, 1985, p. 333, emphasis in original)

Adapting Aristotle, I think of community as a sharing association involving two or more human beings. (Galston, 1998, p. 5)

Community ... refers to social relationships that individuals have based on group consensus, shared norms and values, common goals, and feelings of identification, belonging and trust. (Small & Supple, 2001, p. 3)

Still others suggest that a community can be based on either territorial or relational criteria. For example:

Community as a locality refers to the territorial or geographic notion of

community—the neighborhood, town, or city. The second meaning of community, the relational community, refers to qualities of human interaction and social ties that draw people together ... To these two attributes of community, I add a third: community as collective political power. (Heller, 1989, p. 3)

Other definitions are less comprehensive, but always include one or more of the three key elements ...: (1) residence within a delimited area; (2) a set of interlocking economic and social systems serving the needs of the resident populations; and (3) some feeling of common identity and fate. (Bronfenbrenner *et al.*, 1984, p. 284)

Since both territorial and relational communities are important in relation to work and family, each is incorporated in the discussion of community concepts. However, since territorial criteria for community are too limiting for integrating community with work and family, relational criteria are emphasized in the selection of community concepts.

Community concepts

The definitions of community presented above are too broad and varied to be useful for conceptualizing community in the context of work and family. Therefore, this section presents six relatively specific concepts that reflect diverse aspects of the community microsystem. These concepts have been drawn from the broad and diverse literature on community. They encompass the multiple levels of analysis needed to formulate comparable categories for work, community, and family that are a prerequisite for integrative analyses of work, community, and family. They include community social organization, social networks, social capital, formal volunteering and informal helping, sense of community, and community satisfaction.

The linkages among these concepts are illustrated in Fig. 3. The figure shows a network of reciprocal relationships that occur on multiple levels of analysis. Two reciprocally related structural concepts, community social organization and social networks, are reciprocally related to social capital, which represents cultural resources and processes. Community social organization, social networks, and social capital are community-level concepts. Social capital is reciprocally related to formal volunteering and informal helping, a social and interpersonal process, and sense of community, a psychological concept. These two concepts are reciprocally related to each other and to community satisfaction. Formal volunteering and informal helping, sense of community, and community satisfaction are individual-level concepts. The model suggests that social capital, formal volunteering and informal helping, and sense of community mediate the effects of community social organization and social networks on community satisfaction.

This model is compatible with others found in the community literature. For example, Aber and his associates (Aber *et al.*, 1997; Connell & Halpern-

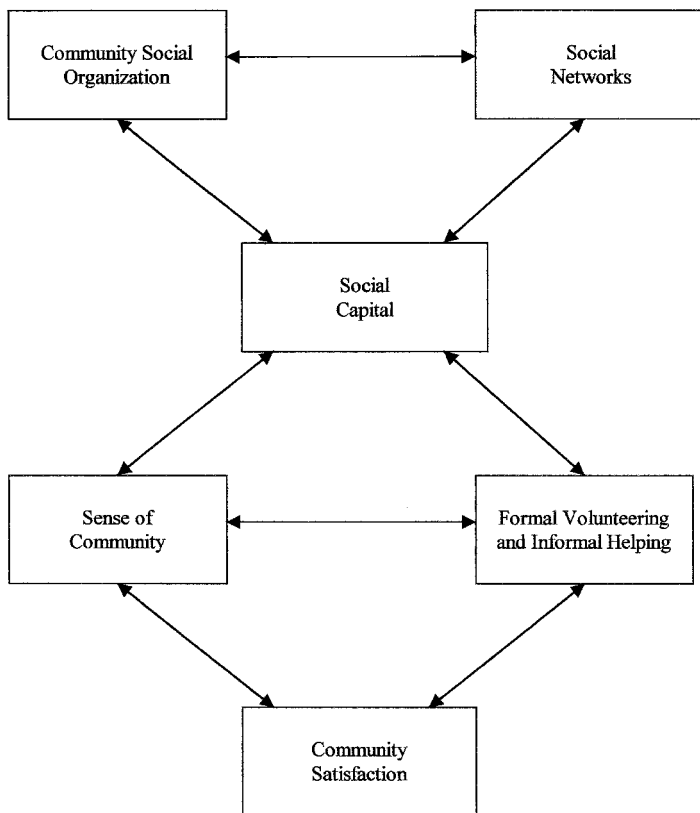


FIGURE 3. A conceptual model of the community microsystem.

Felsher, 1997) propose that macrolevel forces—globalization, economic restructuring, migration, and public policy—influence the structural and compositional characteristics of communities. These contextual variables in turn influence community social organization and cultural processes. Finally, community social organization and cultural processes facilitate or inhibit individual and family well-being. Implicit in this model is the expectation that community social organization and cultural processes mediate relationships between structural and compositional characteristics and well-being. Models of social support also have commonalities with the proposed model. For example, Lin *et al.* (1999) find that support functions such as instrumental and expressive support mediate relationships between support structures (community participation, network relations, and intimate ties) and mental health.

Similar models appear in studies of work. Repetti (1987) finds that an individual's perception of the social environment at work mediates the effects of an aggregate indicator of social environment on psychological well-being. In addition, social support at work mediates the relationship between aggregate management support and fairness and organizational commitment (Morris *et*

al., 1999). In these four models, social process and psychological variables comparable to formal volunteering and informal helping and sense of community mediate relationships between structural and contextual variables and various outcomes.

The remainder of this section develops the concepts presented in Fig. 3 and shows how they are comparable to concepts in the work and family domains.

Community social organization

Community social organization generally refers to local geographical communities, most commonly neighborhoods. As defined by Sampson (1999, p. 253), community social organization refers to 'the ability of a community structure to realize the common values of its residents and maintain effective social controls'. This requires the application of a community's pooled resources to realize collective goals through the activities of an interlocking set of formal and informal networks, institutions, and organizations in a locale.

Sampson and his associates look at the ways in which community social organization mediates relationships between macrolevel or contextual aspects of communities and outcomes such as crime, juvenile delinquency, interpersonal violence, social cohesion, and community attachment. Contextual community factors include community socioeconomic status, population size and density, and levels of residential mobility, ethnic heterogeneity, urbanization, and family disruption. The intervening dimensions of social organization focus on the ability of a community to supervise and control teenage peer groups, informal local friendship networks, and local participation in formal and voluntary organizations (Sampson & Groves, 1989). Several processes are seen as underlying these effects; however, they generally are inferred rather than documented empirically. They include contagion, socialization, institutional processes, social comparison, monitoring, and personal network ties (Sampson, 1999).

Individual-level studies reveal that the effects of length of residence on community attachment are mediated by friendships, acquaintanceships, kinship bonds, and formal and informal associational ties in the local community (Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974; Sampson, 1991). Results using community-level measures indicate that local friendship and acquaintanceship networks, control of teenage peer groups, collective efficacy, and the prevalence of organizational participation mediate the effects of low socioeconomic status, ethnic heterogeneity, residential mobility, family disruption, and urbanization on social cohesion and rates of interpersonal violence, crime, and delinquency (Sampson, 1991; Sampson & Groves, 1989; Sampson *et al.*, 1997).

The conceptualization and usage of community social organization is comparable to that for social organization in work and family. Social organization refers to patterns and functions of interaction among individuals and groups and structural connections among individuals and groups in different positions. These characteristics appear in the demands and resources associated with job positions, formal and informal community groups and relationships, and the

division of labor in families. The mesosystem connections between community social organization and family are particularly strong because families and children are embedded in the social networks of local communities, some informal associational ties are rooted in kinship networks, and one important function of community social organization is to monitor and regulate the behavior of children and adolescents.

Social networks

The concept of social networks is closely tied to community social organization. Sampson and Groves (1989) consider informal local friendship networks as one of three components of social organization along with a community's ability to control teenage peer groups and local participation in formal and voluntary organizations. Freudenberg's (1986) conceptualization of density of acquaintanceship at the community level, while developed in a community social organization framework, is similar to network density as formulated in social network theory. However, in this paper the concepts are considered separately because the concept of social network places an emphasis on structural elements, whereas community social organization focuses on collective processes such as community value attainment and social control. In addition, a network approach to community uses relational criteria, whereas community social organization uses a territorial frame of reference.

When community is considered in network terms, it is defined as 'a unit of social organization consisting of overlapping personal network communities represented by relatively enduring social ties that routinely exhibit a high level of social interaction characterized by flows of resources' (Leighton, 1988, p. 359). A network is a specific set of linkages among a defined set of persons. Social network analysis starts with a set of network members and the ties that connect the members to one another. Social structure is seen as the patterned organization of network members and their relationships (Wellman, 1999). In this way, network analysis can examine how networks are linked to large-scale institutions and how the large-scale division of labor affects the organization and content of interpersonal ties (Wellman *et al.*, 1997).

The analysis of ego-centered social networks or personal communities focuses on several network attributes. Network size is the number of individuals with whom a network member has ties. Network composition refers to the proportion of individuals in the network who have specific relationships with an individual, for example, immediate or extended kin, neighbors, friends, or co-workers. Diversity or heterogeneity is the extent to which the network focuses on one type of relationship, for example, kin, or includes other relationships such as friends, neighbors, and co-workers. The multiplexity of ties consists of the number and range of tie contents or resources flowing in each link, that is, the degree of specialization regarding companionship, emotional aid, or services provided within the network. Relative duration refers to the duration of ties and reflects the age of the network and extent of turnover. Network density is the

extent to which network members know one another. The contexts in which network activities occur refer to the form of interaction, for example, face-to-face or telephone contact. Accessibility includes the distance or spatial dispersion of members and frequency of contact (Leighton, 1988; Wellman *et al.*, 1997; Wellman & Potter, 1999).

Using criteria such as these, Wellman (1999) describes contemporary community networks as narrow specialized relationships rather than broadly supportive ties; as sparsely knit, loosely bounded, and frequently changing; as continuing to be supportive and sociable although spatially dispersed rather than neighborhood-based; as operating in private homes rather than in public milieus; and as oriented to the marital couple in which women tend to maintain social relationships.

The conceptualization and analysis of social networks has important connections with work and family because kin and co-workers are important members of many social networks. Social networks also provide important mesosystem connections between kin and co-workers and ties in the community such as friends, neighbors, and organizations. Community networks are tied to other social systems, such as the household, work, voluntary organizations, and large bureaucratic institutions.

Social capital

A third community-level concept that is related to community social organization and social networks is social capital. As with the general concept of community, various scholars define social capital somewhat differently. For example:

Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition—or in other words, to membership in a group. (Bourdieu, 1986, pp. 248–249)

Social capital [is] the information, trust, and norms of reciprocity inhering in one's social network. (Woolcock, 1998, p. 153)

Social capital refers to features of social organization such as networks, norms, and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. (Putnam, 1995, p. 67)

Social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities having two characteristics in common: They all consist of some aspect of social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure. (Coleman, 1990, p. 302)

Social capital brings together the basic elements of community social

organization and social networks. The resources inherent in networks are combined with the realization of collective goals associated with community social organization. Social capital also adds a subjective element, cultural processes such as trust and norms of reciprocity that facilitate social action. These distinctions suggest reciprocal relationships among social capital, community social organization, and social networks. Social networks and community social organization provide resources that can be used to facilitate action. Social capital in turn may generate further resources that contribute to community social organization and social network resources. In this paper, the subjective aspects of social capital are emphasized, that is, norms and trust.

In addition to its use in studies of neighborhoods, communities, and civic participation, social capital is an important concept in studies of families and work. For example, Coleman's (1990) work on resources associated with family social capital is the basis for research on the effects of family structure, residential stability, parent-child and parent-school interaction, and intergenerational network closure on educational attainment. (See for example, Sandefur *et al.*, 1999, and Teachman *et al.*, 1996.) Social capital also is seen as an important resource in studies of access to employment, occupational mobility, and immigrant and ethnic entrepreneurial success. (See Portes, 1998, for a review. Also, see Woolcock, 1998, for a listing of studies in diverse areas of social capital research.) In addition, the trust and norms of reciprocity associated with social capital are important elements in the conceptualization of work culture and intergenerational solidarity among families (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991; Thompson *et al.*, 1999).

Formal volunteering and informal helping

The previously discussed concepts—community social organization, social networks, and social capital—are community-level concepts that reflect community structures and processes. The remaining three concepts—formal volunteering and informal helping, sense of community, and community satisfaction—are individual-level concepts except when aggregate measures are used.

Volunteer work is time and effort devoted to helping others without remuneration or coercion (Wilson & Musick, 1998). This general definition encompasses two major types of activity—formal volunteering and informal helping (Wilson & Musick, 1997). Formal volunteering is assistance provided through organizations and associations. It can be provided through self-oriented or mutual-benefit associations in which the beneficiary is the membership (e.g. professional and union groups) or through community-oriented service organizations that benefit clients or others outside the organization (e.g. church-related or fraternal organizations) (Janoski & Wilson, 1995). Informal volunteer work or helping is assistance given to friends, neighbors, and extended kin. Informal helping is comparable to social support, that is, the provision of instrumental aid such as money, goods, and services; emotional support; companionship; and information such as advice and feedback.

In her discussion of social capital, Paxton (1999) refers to volunteering as a specific type of behavior that is facilitated by social capital. Wilson and Musick (1997, 1998) also consider volunteering as a consequence of social capital. Social capital provides the resources needed to engage in volunteer work, for example, information, trust, and norms of generalized reciprocity. Once again, however, the relationships may be reciprocal. Informal helping or social support also has been tied to social networks and social capital. For example, Boisjoly *et al.* (1995) consider social capital as access to time or monetary assistance from friends or relatives in an emergency, whereas social support is the actual transfer of goods or services. Lin and Westcott (1991) consider social networks and ties as the vehicle through which social support is provided. Studies reveal that individuals may perceive a network or group, e.g. a church group or senior center, as a source of social support as well as individuals within such networks or groups (Felton & Berry, 1992; Maton, 1989). High levels of formal volunteering and informal helping can be expected to increase social capital in a community.

Volunteering and informal helping also are closely tied to nonprofit organizations such as health and human services that provide professional assistance to children, adults, and the elderly with varying levels of need. Wuthnow (1998) suggests that the assistance of the organization man, the club woman, and the good neighbor of the 1950s has been replaced by that provided by the nonprofit professional, the volunteer, and the close friend. The nonprofit professional and the volunteer are closely linked, however, because organizations staffed by nonprofit professionals both provide opportunities for and depend on unpaid volunteer work. For example, schools rely extensively on the volunteer activities of parents.

Volunteering and informal helping in the community have mesosystem connections with work and family. Community volunteering often is organized through work organizations. Volunteering also has ties to family life since a substantial amount of volunteering involves parental assistance to child-based organizations such as schools. In addition, informal helping also is important in work and family life. Much informal helping takes place among family members, both immediate and secondary kin, and social support frequently is included in studies of work stress. (See Viswesvaran *et al.*, 1999, for a review of research on work stress and social support.)

Sense of community

As with volunteering and informal helping, a sense of community has been considered a reflection of strong social networks (Sonn *et al.*, 1999). More specifically, relationships and structures that provide social support and self-efficacy are thought to enhance a sense of community (Lambert & Hopkins, 1995; Pretty *et al.*, 1996). It also is plausible to assume that a sense of community would be reciprocally related to social capital in terms of trust and norms of reciprocity. Formal volunteering and informal helping are expected to

be reciprocally related to sense of community. Sense of community may engender volunteering and helping, whereas volunteering and helping also may increase a sense of community among those involved. For example, Chavis and Wandersman (1990) report a positive association between neighborhood sense of community and participation in a neighborhood organization.

Sense of community is a multidimensional concept. For example, according to Sarason (1974, p. 157) it has the following characteristics:

The perception of similarity to others, an acknowledged interdependence with others, a willingness to maintain this interdependence by giving to or doing for others what one expects from them, the feeling that one is part of a larger dependable and stable structure.

The definition proposed by McMillan and Chavis (1986) includes four interrelated elements: feeling of belonging, the sense that the individual and the group matter to each other, the feeling that members' needs will be met through group resources, and shared history, places, time together, and experiences. The concept is applicable to both territorial and relational communities. Although most research has investigated sense of community from the perspective of individual members, it also is important to consider it as an aggregate variable operating on the community level (Sonn *et al.*, 1999).

Several structural and relational factors are associated with an individual's sense of community in varying community contexts. In a study of neighborhoods, Chavis and Wandersman (1990) document reciprocal relationships between neighboring relations and sense of community. A study of a university residence community reveals that involvement, academic achievement, and social support are associated with sense of community (Pretty, 1990). A study of adolescents reports that social support is correlated with neighborhood and school sense of community (Pretty *et al.*, 1994). Membership in learning communities within schools is related to sense of community for teachers and students (Royal & Rossi, 1996).

Concepts comparable to sense of community are appropriate for the study of work and family. Studies reveal that job characteristics, workplace relationships, supportive work policies, and job satisfaction are correlated with a sense of community at work (Burroughs & Eby, 1998; Lambert & Hopkins, 1995; Pretty & McCarthy, 1991). Family cohesion is used in studies of family life to assess the extent to which individuals perceive closeness and mutuality within their families.

Community satisfaction

Community satisfaction reflects the subjective evaluation of a community as a whole or the evaluation of specific aspects of a community. Most indicators of community satisfaction assess satisfaction with territorial communities such as neighborhoods or cities. Several are oriented toward aspects of community social organization, for example, satisfaction with a community's ability to

provide services and respond to member's concerns, safety from crime, and the attractiveness and upkeep of the physical environment. In addition, indicators of community satisfaction often include relational aspects of territorial communities associated with social networks and formal volunteering and informal helping such as satisfaction with community participation, social relationships, and social support. Indicators that address relational communities without a territorial base are more limited. Examples include aspects of satisfaction with social networks and social capital such as satisfaction with friendships and trust in others.

The range of factors studied in relation to community satisfaction is broad. They include community size, problems with crime or deterioration, school quality, duration of residence, home ownership, social participation, and individual or aggregate measures of race, social class, and age (Austin & Baba, 1990; Byun *et al.*, 1990; Harris, 1995). In addition, some studies find positive relationships between community satisfaction and sense of community or community attachment (Austin & Baba, 1990; Chavis & Wandersman, 1990; Davidson & Cotter, 1991). These studies differ as to whether the independent variable is sense of community or community satisfaction. The relationships are most likely reciprocal. Others have found that community dissatisfaction is an impetus for volunteer activities such as participation in neighborhood organizations. (See Chavis & Wandersman, 1990, for a review.) However, one type of volunteering, participation in a neighborhood organization, is positively influenced by block satisfaction and neighboring relations (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990). Thus, these relationships also are expected to be reciprocal.

Community satisfaction is comparable conceptually to job satisfaction and marital and family satisfaction. Extensive measures have been developed to assess subjective evaluations of multiple dimensions in all three domains as well as measures of overall satisfaction with each domain.

Work, community, and family characteristics

The review of community concepts indicates parallels with concepts in the areas of work and family. Research on work and on relationships between work and family draws upon several major categories of work characteristics: extrinsic characteristics, structural characteristics, psychosocial job demands and content, workplace culture and support, orientations to work, and role quality (Haas, 1999; Perry-Jenkins *et al.*, 2000; Voydanoff, 1987). Family and work-family research also includes a broad range of family characteristics such as family structure, family social organization, orientations to family life, and role quality (Ihinger-Tallman & Pasley, 1987; Rothausen, 1999). Generally, these work and family characteristics are formulated independently of each other in a given study. However, Galinsky (1999) has used four general categories under which specific work and family characteristics are located. These include demands, focus, quality, and supportiveness. Job demands include characteristics such as

TABLE 1. Categories and characteristics for the analysis of work, community, and family

Category	Work characteristics	Community characteristics	Family characteristics
Structure	Organizational characteristics Extrinsic characteristics Timing Spatial location	Social network characteristics	Marital status Number and ages of children Former spouse Children outside the household Extended kin
Social organization	Job demands Job content	Formal and voluntary organizations Friendship networks Social control	Division of labor
Norms and expectations	Job descriptions Employment policies Work culture	Social capital	Roles and expected behavior Sanctions Gender ideology
Support	Supervisor support Co-worker support	Formal volunteering Informal helping	Exchange of informal social support
Orientations	Involvement Sense of community	Involvement Sense of community	Involvement Family cohesion
Quality	Satisfaction with specific referents Overall satisfaction Absenteeism and turnover Job performance and productivity	Satisfaction with specific referents Overall satisfaction	Satisfaction with specific referents Overall satisfaction Child development outcomes

work hours, location, and schedule, whereas family demands focus on the number and ages of children and activities with children.

This section draws upon the work and family characteristics used in previous research and the community concepts discussed above to develop categories of characteristics relevant to work, community, and family. Such a conceptualization provides a basis for research that integrates community into the analysis of work and family. It includes six categories of characteristics used in studies of work, community, and family: structure, social organization, norms and expectations, support, orientations, and quality. As with the community concepts, these categories represent multiple levels of analysis. Structure, social organization, and norms and expectations operate at the structural, organizational, or group level, whereas support, orientations, and quality are individual-level categories. The characteristics subsumed under each category for work, community, and family are discussed below and summarized in Table 1.

Structure

Structure describes the basic organization and boundaries of a given domain. Structure in paid work includes organizational characteristics, extrinsic characteristics, timing, and spatial location. Organizational characteristics include size, composition, and complexity. Extrinsic characteristics refer to pay, benefits, job security, economic strain, and opportunities for advancement. Timing includes number of work hours and work schedule. Spatial location covers job-related moves and transfers, work-related travel, and home-based employment and telecommuting.

Structure in the context of community refers to attributes of the networks making up a community, that is, size, composition, heterogeneity, multiplexity, duration, density, forms of interaction, and accessibility. These networks occur within community service organizations, formal supports, churches, schools, neighborhoods, and informal networks.

Family structure refers to the age and gender composition of the family. Usually, it consists of the number and marital status of adults and the number and ages of children in the household. However, sometimes extended kin, former spouses, and children living outside the household are included.

Social organization

The characteristics included in social organization are more diverse than those in the other categories. The social organization of work encompasses the demands and content of a job. Job demands place limits on an individual's work behavior that must be accommodated such as heavy work loads, role ambiguity and conflict, underutilization of abilities, lack of participation in decision making, health and safety hazards, tight deadlines, and responsibility for the safety and well-being of others. Job content includes intrinsic characteristics such as extent of challenge, autonomy, and self-direction.

Social organization in communities includes the different ways in which participation is organized, that is, through formal and voluntary organizations, friendship networks, and social control. These activities vary in the extent of formality and in the focus of activity, for example, activities for public or member benefit, expressive or instrumental activities, and self-help groups or formal social service assistance.

Family social organization consists of the ways in which family members interact with one another in their daily activities, that is, the family division of labor. This division of labor incorporates the time spent in and the scope of activities involved with paid work and its associated earnings; household chores; personal, spousal, and parental activities; care for dependents such as children and the ill and elderly; and community involvement.

Norms and expectations

Norms and expectations include the explicit and implicit rules and guidelines

that govern behavior in a domain. Norms and expectations associated with paid work are incorporated in formal job descriptions and duties, employment policies, and workplace culture. This culture includes climate and informal norms as well as the amount of flexibility in implementing employment policies. Norms and expectations in the community consist of the subjective component of social capital, namely norms, trust, obligations, and reciprocity. Family norms and expectations are the roles and expected behaviors assigned to each family member, the sanctions that guide the behavior of family members, and the power held by various family members. These norms generally are based on a gender ideology that addresses the relative importance and normative expectations associated with roles, that is, beliefs regarding appropriate roles for men and women.

Support

The application of the concept of support to work, community, and family varies regarding whether it refers to the provision or receipt of informal social support. Studies of workplace support generally focus on support received from supervisors and co-workers. Community support includes formal volunteering and informal help exchanged among members of a network or provided to a community member in need. Family support refers to the exchange of various types of support among relatives, for example, financial aid, services such as transportation or child care, and advice. A substantial literature also examines support provided to ill and elderly family members.

Orientations

Orientations include an individual's sense of involvement in a domain as well as the perception of cohesion associated with a given domain or referent. Orientations considered across domains include salience, involvement, commitment, attachment, and aspirations as well as a sense of community or cohesion.

Quality

Quality is an affective component that includes subjective evaluations of and satisfaction with multidimensional aspects of role domains. Work role quality includes satisfaction with various job referents such as aspects of the work itself, co-workers, and the work organization as well as overall job satisfaction. Behavioral indicators such as absenteeism, turnover, job performance, and productivity are sometimes included. Community satisfaction represents the evaluation of various aspects of a community, for example, community services, safety, and attractiveness, and overall community satisfaction. Quality of family life includes child development outcomes and satisfaction with marital and parental roles and family life, for example, marital satisfaction, marital conflict,

perceived equity, satisfaction with the parent–child relationship, and satisfaction with family life.

Conclusion

This paper has taken an initial step in the effort to incorporate community into the analysis of work and family. Ecological systems theory provides a framework for the formulation of common categories of characteristics across the work, community, and family domains. According to this ecological approach, the work, community, and family domains are microsystems of face-to-face relationships. Connections among the three domains occur at the mesosystem level. Macrosystem characteristics are contextual factors comprising the opportunity structure and serving as referents for the evaluation of work, community, and family experiences. This multilevel approach suggests that social processes mediate the effects of structural and compositional factors on domain quality and individual well-being.

Several interrelated community concepts were combined with characteristics used in work and family research to develop a set of common categories of characteristics that can be used for cross-domain analysis of work, community, and family. These community concepts include community social organization, social networks, social capital, formal volunteering and informal helping, sense of community, and community satisfaction. Community social organization, social networks, and social capital are community-level concepts, whereas formal volunteering and informal helping, sense of community, and community satisfaction are individual-level concepts.

The resulting categories of work, community, and family characteristics are structure, social organization, norms and expectations, support, orientations, and quality. Structure consists of organizational and structural job characteristics, attributes of community social networks, and family structure. Community social organization is combined with job demands and content and family division of labor into the general category of social organization. The norms and expectations category consists of the subjective component of social capital, family role expectations and ideology, and job descriptions, policies, and culture. Formal volunteering and informal helping along with workplace support and exchanges of family support comprise the support category. Orientations include extent of involvement, sense of community, and cohesion. Quality incorporates perceived satisfaction with aspects of the three domains as well as overall satisfaction with each domain.

This paper represents a beginning stage in a long-term agenda to integrate community into the analysis of work and family. It provides a theoretically grounded approach to the development of common categories of work, community, and family characteristics that will broaden the framework within which work and family are examined. It moves beyond the call to include community in the analysis of work and family to the development of concepts needed for this broader analysis.

A next step in the integration of community into work and family is to map out and investigate mesosystem linkages among work, community, and family. Figure 1 reveals three mesosystems that include community: work–community, community–family, and work–community–family. Most previous research on these mesosystems, as well as the work–family mesosystem, is based on the assumption of positive and negative spillover. Thus, resources in one domain provide resources and benefits to another domain, whereas demands and pressures in a domain are related to pressures and stress in another domain. (See Voydanoff, in press for a review.)

Using this framework, several issues can be raised for future research. Since research on the work–community–family mesosystem is so undeveloped, this discussion addresses only the work–community and community–family mesosystems. For the work–community mesosystem, one can ask which categories and characteristics of work have the greatest positive and negative consequences for communities. Previous research suggests that structural aspects of work such as organizational sector, work hours and schedules, and job-related migration have both positive and negative influences on formal volunteering and social participation. However, few studies have investigated other characteristics, for example, spillover of the social organization of work (stressful job demands and resources associated with challenging jobs) on community resources and participation. Another important issue is how community resources and demands affect work organizations. Existing research focuses on the use of social capital obtained through social networks for job-seeking and entrepreneurial success. Other possible factors include the transfer of skills gained in community participation and the ability of community resources such as child care, recreational activities, and schools to facilitate effective participation in work.

Similar issues can be raised about the community–family mesosystem. Most studies of the effects of communities on families address the consequences of neighborhood structure and social organization for children’s developmental outcomes. However, it also is important to understand more about the impact of informal support networks and sense of community on family relationships and children’s development. Studies of the effects of families on communities are limited to family structure, that is, relationships between being married and community participation and between being raised in a single parent or stepfamily and problems with peers and school. However, other aspects of family life such as family division of labor and gender ideology can be expected to have implications for community participation.

The relationships presented in Fig. 2 illustrate the combined effects of two microsystems on outcomes. Studies of the work–community and community–family interfaces are much more limited than those for the spillover from one microsystem to another. Research on the work–community interface addresses the mediating role of social support on relationships between economic strain and children’s developmental outcomes and psychological well-being. However, community support also could be expected to alleviate the effects of other

work-related problems such as frequent job transfers and stressful job demands on the quality of family life. Community problems and lack of community resources also may exacerbate the effects of job pressures on family life. Another issue requiring more study is the development and role of workplace communities. Some believe that these communities are replacing other types of communities such as neighborhoods and reducing the time and commitment given to family life (Hochschild, 1997). Studies of the community–family interface focus on the intersection of family and community support to the elderly, ill, and disabled. However, more research is needed on how the combined resources and demands associated with family and community life enhance or restrict participation in and commitment to work.

Future research addressing these issues and the documentation of specific interrelationships among work, family, and community will enrich our understanding of the work, community, and family domains and facilitate the creation of workplace, community, and government policies and programs that enhance rather than hinder the integration of work, community, and family life among working families. Hopefully, the development of common categories of characteristics associated with work, community, and family will be helpful in this larger endeavor.

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