

Role of local setting
characteristics in enhancing
sociopolitical development
among Latino youth

Mayra Estrella, MPH, PhD Candidate **Michele A. Kelley**, ScD, MSW, MA
Community Health Sciences Division, School of Public Health,
University of Illinois at Chicago

APHA: November 10, 2010; 12:30PM
5172.0 **Qualitative Methods in Maternal Child Health**

Presenter Disclosures

Mayra L. Estrella

- (1) The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:**

“No relationships to disclose”

Goals

- To highlight the value and role of the **characteristics of community setting(s)** as a distinctive and integrative focus of research in the public health field
- To discuss the role of community settings in promoting **sociopolitical development**, and implications for adolescent well-being, community building and social justice

Positive Youth Development (PYD)

- Youth development field has shifted: “deficit” to “asset” (Pittman, 2006; Zarret & Lerner, 2008)
- Focus on fostering PYD= prosocial, engaged activities with protective developmental outcomes (Forum for Youth Investment, 2010)
- Youth serving organizations (YSOs) can be venues for youth development
- Critical thinking as part of youth development: Analysis of power and social influences

Sociopolitical development (SPD)

- “Is the process by which individuals acquire the **knowledge, analytical skills, emotional faculties, & capacity for action** in political/social systems necessary to interpret and resist oppression” (Watts & William, & Jagers, 2003)
- SPD can be a protective factor at the individual level & transformative factor at the community level
- Emphasizes an understanding of the **cultural & political** forces that shape one’s status in society (Ginwright, Noguera, & Camarota, (Eds.) 2006)

Youth serving organizations as facilitators of SPD

- Field has recently begun to pay attention to the environments in which development occurs (Trickett, Barone, & Buchanan, 1996)
- Youth serving organizations (YSOs) can play an important role in the process of facilitating SPD (Prillettensky, 2003)
- There are different ways to characterize YSOs: Setting level characteristics
 - Model: Empowering Community Settings (ECS) (Maton, 2008)
- The following dimensions describe ingredients in a program that are hypothesized to **promote PYD, possibly SPD**

Setting level characteristics

- Six organizational dimensions of ECS: (Maton, 2008)
 - Group-based belief system,
 - Core activities,
 - Relational environment,
 - Opportunity role structure,
 - Leadership, &
 - Mechanisms for setting maintenance and change

Framework for examining YSOs characteristics

YSOs

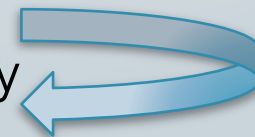
- Potential venues for the promotion of PYD and SPD

Setting level characteristics

- Group-based belief system
- Core activities
- Relational environment
- Opportunity role structure
- Leadership
- Mechanisms for setting maintenance and change

SPD

- Transformation
 - Youth → Community



Body of research

- An important task for research is to understand the characteristics of environments/settings that fosters SPD
(Wood, Larson, & Brown, 2009)
- Few empirical studies in this area:
 - How local context (e.g. YSOs) fosters SPD
 - Latino youth excluded
 - Most studies have been quantitative
 - Measurement does not capture SPD very well
 - SPD is rarely considered in programs that foster PYD
(http://www.findyouthinfo.gov/topic_pyd_principles.shtml, 2010)

Research objectives

- To examine how setting level characteristics of youth programs can promote SPD in a Latino youth-led program, & which characteristics are more important
- Secondary:
 - To explore if setting level characteristics are promoting other developmental outcomes, specifically PYD
 - To highlight the significance of setting level characteristics in promoting individual and community level change, and social justice

Public health significance: Social justice perspective

- Youth spend significant time outside of school
- Youth may turn to social action in order to speak out and effect change in relation to the issues touching their lives (Lerner, 2004)
- Youth action directly honors the **Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion's** (World Health Organization, 1986)
 - **Health promotion:** the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health
- Development and implementation of public health interventions, & involving youth as active agents in the change process

Setting: Batey Urbano

- Founded in 2003: Example of a program that promotes youth's well-being, PYD, & SPD
 - Located on the **Paseo Boricua** in Chicago's Humboldt Park community, Illinois
 - Voice their frustrations and transform them into community action for social justice (Flores-Gonzalez, Rodriguez, & Rodriguez-Muñiz, 2006)
 - A space created for youth and led by youth
 - Challenges negative stereotypes



Setting: Batey Urbano...

Youth-led activities: Aimed at older high school and college age youth

- Internet Radio
- Theater (social commentary and analysis)
- Poetry with a Purpose
- Prosocial Hip Hop
- Participatory Democracy & La Voz community news
- Tutoring

Youth participation in meaningful and pro-social activities with others



Methods: Data collection

- Case study, qualitative methods
- Eight semi-structured face-to-face interviews with Batey Urbano Latino youth leaders
- Purposive sample of experienced youth leadership with a history of involvement, including founding members
- 18-28 yrs old, 4 F & 4 M
- Interviewers a MPH student & M. Kelley
- Audio recorded and transcribed

Methods: Analysis

- Codebook was developed to identify:
 - Dimensions of ECS- coded first,
 - Accounts of SPD- coded separately
 - Other: PYD- results not presented here
- Authors coded every transcript independently, discussed each coded passage, arrived at agreement
- Atlas.ti: Coding, frequencies and codes co-occurrences
- Member checking: Poster with preliminary findings was displayed in the Batey for several weeks

Results: SPD

- Quotations: SPD= 99
- Only 9 SPD quotations co-occurred with ECS codes
 - Out of those: Only 3 of the 6 ECS dimensions co-occurred with SPD
 - **Group based belief system** had the most content, followed by **leadership & staff**, and **relational environment**
- In additional analysis PYD dimensions (5) had more content relating to setting characteristics
- SPD quotations occurred more frequently in the narratives, but co-occurred less frequently with dimensions of setting characteristics

ECS with PYD & SPD

ECS	<u>Positive Youth Development Indicators</u>					SPD
	Character	Competence	Confidence	Connection	Contribution	
Group-based belief system	2	1	1	1	2	6
Core activities	..	..	..	1	1	..
Relational environment	6	..	1	1	2	2
Leadership	1	..	..	..	2	1
Setting maintenance & change	..	..	..	1	3	..

Results: SPD alone

*The **media** represents Humboldt Park as this horrible place to be, you know, with a lot of criminals and gang members and violence and drugs and while that's all real that's not what encompasses this community. That is not the definition or defining pieces of our community, those are just characters in our community, personalities in our community, our **community is much more than that.***

SPD: Group-based belief system

- *The other thing that was important ...was the Batey's ... statement **against no sexist, racist, homophobic** language which ...distinguished the Batey from most other youth spaces unfortunately which are sort like of whatever sort of come from a very populist position that whatever youth want to do let them do if they want to dehumanize somebody you know its youth run so let whatever happens ...*
- *...we wanted to have the **space to mean something** ...as a community space ...of sharing and healing...I think that [statement] was a transformative part because that in itself led to a lot of discussions and debates and topics about sexism about homophobia in particular um there were discussions that we wouldn't have had otherwise or as candidly as those moments.*

SPD: Leadership

*...the [Puerto Rican] Cultural Center and sort of the emphasis on decolonization ...that's sort of the way that the cultural center has developed its vision, its mission, and ...Batey is a very tough endeavor you know um and there's a lot of difficulties in developing something like Batey. But the fact that you have something like Batey speaks to a really profound **commitment** that, that people have to see it because its just necessary I mean we need it.*

SPD: Relational environment

*Right there on the spot we started talking about it [**young man selling drugs**] and the young people just sort of gathered around this discussion, **not-heated, non-judgmental** but a wonderful sort of circle dialogue um emerged um about the complexities of being Puerto Rican and living in Humboldt Park and and just the overall sort of colonial life that we lead and...*

*so I remember um telling him that I understood sort of the **social circumstances that place**- that give us that as an option um that I was also clear with him that I couldn't condone it and that I knew that that was costing us a lot in terms of families and impacting a lot of people and he respected that and but he already knew that he didn't want to sell drugs to his own people.*

Conclusions

- This qualitative study aimed to better understand the role of the characteristics of YSOs in promoting SPD among Latino youth
- Most PYD programs target individual level change, but not critical awareness or action for social justice (Watts, Prilleltensky)
- Youth described and discussed an increased sense of SPD
 - Demonstrates that programs can be context for the promotion of SPD
- After examining the relationship of ECS & SPD
 - Accounts suggested that there may be other underlying characteristics not explained by Maton's framework (ECS)
- Other aspects of positive youth development were apparently associated with setting characteristics

Conclusions

- More qualitative work: to identify setting characteristics that foster SPD and consequent youth action
 - Concept of place attachment in narratives: Future study (Dissertation)
- The strength of our qualitative approach is that it provides an account of the processes underlying SPD, as they are experienced by **Latino youth**.
 - A useful and perhaps under valued place for understanding the nature of environmental effects on youth development is to ask youth to detail their own experience of the change process. (Wood, Larson, & Brown 2009)
- SPD promotes social justice
 - Youth action and participation can be a tool for health promotion, in highly promising and relevant ways (WHO)
 - Social justice as a foundation of public health practice in the fight against health inequity (Marmont, 2005)

Acknowledgements



Thanks....

Dr. Michele Kelley
Jose Lopez, Director Puerto Rican Cultural Center, HP, Chicago
Batey Urbano's youth leaders

References

- Zarret and Lerner, (2008). Ways to promote the positive development of children and youth. *Child Trends*. Publication 2008-11.
- Pittman, K. Martin, S. and Yohalem, N. (2006). Youth development as a “big picture” public health strategy. *Journal of Public Management Practice*, Suppl (23-25).
- Forum for Youth Investment: <http://www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/2010>
- Watts, R.J., Williams, N.C., & Jagers, R.J. (2003) Sociopolitical development. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 31(1), 185-194.
- Ginwright, Noguera, & Camarota, (Eds.) (2006) *Beyond Resistance! Youth activism and community change*. New York, New York: Routledge.
- Trickett E., Barone C., & Buchanan R. (1996). Elaborating developmental contextualism in adolescent research and intervention: Paradigm contributions from community psychology. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 6, 245.
- Prilleltensky, I. (2003). Understanding, Resisting, and Overcoming Oppression: Toward Psychopolitical Validity. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 31(1), 195-201.
- Maton, K.I. (2008). Empowering community settings: Agents of individual development, community betterment, and positive social change. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 41(1-2), 4-21.
- Wood, Larson, & Brown, (2009) .How adolescents come to see themselves as more responsible through participation in youth programs. *Child Development*, 80(1), 295-309.
- Lerner, R. M. (2004). *Liberty: Thriving and civic engagement among America's youth*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- World Health Organization, 1986. *Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion*, http://www.who.int/hpr/NPH/docs/ottawa_charter_hp.pdf
- Flores-Gonzalez, Rodriguez, & Rodriguez-Muñiz, (2006). From hip hop to humanization: Café teatro batey Urbano, youth culture and community in action. In Ginwright, Noguera, & Camarota (Eds. *Beyond Resistance! Youth Activism and community change*. New York, New York: Routledge.
- Marmont, (2005). Social determinants of health inequalities. *Lancet*, 365, 1099-104.

Local Setting Characteristics

Group-based belief system	Core activities	Relational environment	Opportunity role structure	Leadership (& staff)	Setting maintenance & change
Inspires change	Engaging	Support system	Pervasive	Inspirational	Learning-focused
Salient goals	Meaningful	Multiple domains	Many roles	Vision	Responsive
Clear Means	Congruent	Multiple sources	Multiple levels	Role model	Adaptive
Strengths-based	Active learning	Caring relationships	Highly accessible	Talented	Bridging mechanisms
All have capability	Feedback	Peers	Varying demands	Interpersonally	Diversity
Member-as-resource	Reflection	Mentors	Encouraged	Organizationally	Conflict
Beyond self	Quality	Sense of community	Multi-functional	Shared	External linkages
Shared Vision	Content	Within setting	Use, develop skills	Multiple leaders	Resources
Larger purpose	Relationships	Beyond setting	Voice, influence	Open to expansion	Partners
				Committed	
				To setting	
				To members	
				Empowered	
				Autonomy	
				Resources	

Maton, K. (2008). Empowering community settings: Agents of individual development, community betterment, and positive social change. *Amer J of Comm Psych*, 41, 4-21.

SPD & PYD

	Character	Competence	Confidence	Connection	Contribution
SPD	19	3	8	7	8