Community Resilience: A Social Organization Theory of Action and Change

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Human beings are innately social. They organize themselves into social groups that range in size from dyads to large collectives of individuals that interact to accomplish individual and collective results. For the purposes of our discussion, we refer to these social groups as communities, which vary in their structure, function, and accomplishments over time. As systems, these communities are open and dynamic and must change and evolve to achieve their results and to remain viable to their citizens. Behavioral and social scientists have applied the concept of resilience to describe the ability to maintain, regain, or establish favorable outcomes in the face of adversity or challenge. Building the capacity of communities either to improve normative everyday life or to respond effectively to crisis events has emerged as a high priority among professionals across many disciplines, including family science, sociology, psychology, social work, and education.

Our primary interest is to identify the protective processes that buffer communities against risk exposure, support adaptive community functioning in the context of events or situations that threaten the well-being of the community and its members, and promote adaptive community functioning. The source of community risks can be either internal (e.g., rapid increase in the population) or external (e.g., natural disaster). In our approach, these protective processes are aspects of social organization, which communities can address and promote. We place high value on the potential merits of community networks for building the capacity of communities to effectively prepare for and respond to risks. Moreover, we place a premium on positive effects that can accrue from the intersection of formal and informal networks. An underlying assumption in community

support efforts is that the collective efforts of community members or of groups within the larger community increase the odds that communities can adapt and change in the face of hardship and challenge and generate order, safety, and material and social resources and opportunities for their members. We assume that communities already possess the raw material necessary for resilience in the form of people, groups, and organizations. Thus, our capacity building/social action approach is strengths-based and asset-oriented (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993).

Our efforts to understand community resilience began in earnest in the late 1990's, and were initially focused on the operation of formal and informal support systems in the United States military (Bowen & Martin, 1998). That multiple-year initiative continues to the present, and includes basic and applied research accessing qualitative and quantitative methods (e.g., Bowen, Martin, & Mancini, 1999; Bowen, Mancini, Martin, Ware, & Nelson, 2003), and applications to diverse community and social problems (e.g., Bowen, Bowen, Richman, & Woolley, 2002; Kiefer, Mancini, Morrow, Gladwin, & Stewart, 2008). Change, transformation, and contextual influences have always been part of our thinking; however, our indicators were most often tacit rather than intentional and explicit.

This chapter extracts and elevates dimensions of our thinking that are centered on change. We also reflect on contexts that must be accounted for in order to understand change. The concept of social organization is central to our understanding of community resilience. A first step in disentangling the many aspects of social organization is to discuss the nature of communities and the natural ways they frame individual and family life that have implications for prevention and intervention.

CONCEPTUALIZING COMMUNITIES AS CONTEXTS

Much of our work blends basic and applied social science, including translational dimensions. Consequently, we conduct research and provide consultation with direct relevance to prevention and intervention. Communities are *places*, *targets*, and *forces* for prevention (Mancini, Nelson, Bowen, & Martin, 2006). Taking this tripartite view on communities ultimately uncovers intervention or leverage points for change and transformation (a direct discussion of leverage points occurs later in this chapter).

First, communities are *places* for prevention. The term *place* suggests location in a physical and geographical sense, including boundaries and demarcations. Prevention efforts need to account for boundaries because they signify resources (e.g., agencies, organizations, and close-knit groups) and deficits. If we consider community in a variety of ways that speak to boundaries or ways collections of individuals and families are organized (e.g., geographic, geopolitical, and social/emotional), we open up the roadmap available to preventionists, program developers, and others, including community members themselves, who are committed to improving communities. An ecology of the community emerges that peels back the layers of the community and shows sources of influence on people and their situations. This ecology captures the range of relationships between individuals and their social and physical environment, most importantly including relationships, connections, and networks (discussed later in the chapter). The *place* approach to communities focuses attention on avenues into communities and pushes preventionists to explore the multitude of ways community members are organized within physical boundaries of interaction.

Second, communities are *targets* for prevention and intervention activities. We will later discuss the community capacity concept, comprised of shared responsibility and collective competence. Community capacity aspects of social organization focus on the development of informal social networks to enhance community life and move communities closer to achieving their desired results, including community resilience. This approach leads toward identifying and targeting community norms, beliefs, and expectations as they apply to specific issues (e.g., prevention of intimate partner violence, improving neighborhood safety, or promoting school success), which is a primary consideration in furthering change. The idea of target also brings an image of concentric circles and layers, and suggests a roadmap for further understanding communities and their many facets, including their socio-demographic features. Some community-level socio-demographic features, like the proportion of community members mired in poverty, are risk markers for community hardship and challenge.

Third, communities are *forces* for prevention. This third way of framing communities from a prevention and intervention viewpoint attaches force, power, and influence to community members and their families in a collective way. Communities can be mobilized, that is, enabled to shift

conditions that influence community members. Our social organization approach aims to facilitate the mobilization of community members to enact change, and to be in the lead on change rather than to be led toward change or, for that matter, mired in the status quo. Conceptualizing communities as *places*, *targets*, and *forces* for prevention takes them from being viewed as passive and impersonal locations that only have descriptive value to a conceptualization that provides resources for articulating a roadmap for transformation and change. In our framework, we position dimensions of communities to point toward resilience; such positioning opens up a focus on an important, strengths-oriented view of communities and aligns with a capacity-building agenda.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Our theorizing to date has always located the discussion of communities within a results framework (Orthner & Bowen, 2004). Though theorizing about results per se is not our current focus, in brief, the idea is to place high value on pinpointing desired results at a community level that are measureable and aligned with prevention and intervention activities. We discovered through working with communities that keeping the focus on desired results (e.g., high school graduation rates) provided a much clearer roadmap than approaches centered primarily on particular activities (e.g., school assignment policies). We are taking the opportunity in this chapter to pivot the discussion on community resilience specifically as a desired result.

Communities, like the members and families that inhabit them, are dynamic rather than static. As living systems, they face opportunities, as well as challenges—some expected and some unexpected. At any one point in time, communities face a unique combination of situations and events, demands and hardships, and resources and opportunities in the context of contemporary circumstances, historical events and actions, and an unfolding future.

Community resilience is the ability of communities to cope and adapt in the context of challenge and adversity in ways that promote the successful achievement of desired community results. This definition of community resilience aligns with the widely accepted definition of resilience articulated by Luthar, Cicchetti, and Becker (2000, p. 543): "a dynamic process

encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity." At any one time, communities may face any number of hardships and challenges that require collective attention and management.

It is important to add several caveats to our discussion of community resilience. First, the determination of resilience requires attention to at least three time points: baseline, that is, gauging the status quo of community results before the adversity or challenge (time 1), post adversity or challenge, that is, capturing the consequences of challenge or adversity on the community (time 2), and assessing the results of community actions in response to the challenge or adversity (time 3 or follow-up). Because community resilience is fluid, formal and systematic approaches to understanding it must allow that fluidity to be captured. Resilient communities are able to maintain, regain, or establish an expected or satisfactory range of functioning over time in the context of adversity or challenge. Importantly, communities can use adversity and challenge to achieve resilience. Second, what constitutes a successful level of community functioning varies across place, time, and circumstance. In other words, resilience has upper and lower limits; however, the line of demarcation between resilience and non-resilience is not fixed and what constitutes resilience is considered within a narrow or broad band of functioning. Third, community resilience is assessed indirectly by examining the degree to which the community achieves results consistent with the ability of the community to maintain order and stability and to address the needs of its members. Communities that achieve a satisfactory level of performance at any one time are resilient.

The examination of community resilience requires attention to the protective processes that account for the ability of communities to demonstrate resilience in the context of challenge and adversity. Some years ago, we began considering social organization as an umbrella framework that provides guidance for understanding these protective processes, and that suggests leverage points for prevention and intervention to strengthen communities and to promote their resilience.

ELEMENTS OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The organizing term we have used for several years to encapsulate our approach to community resilience and change is *social organization*
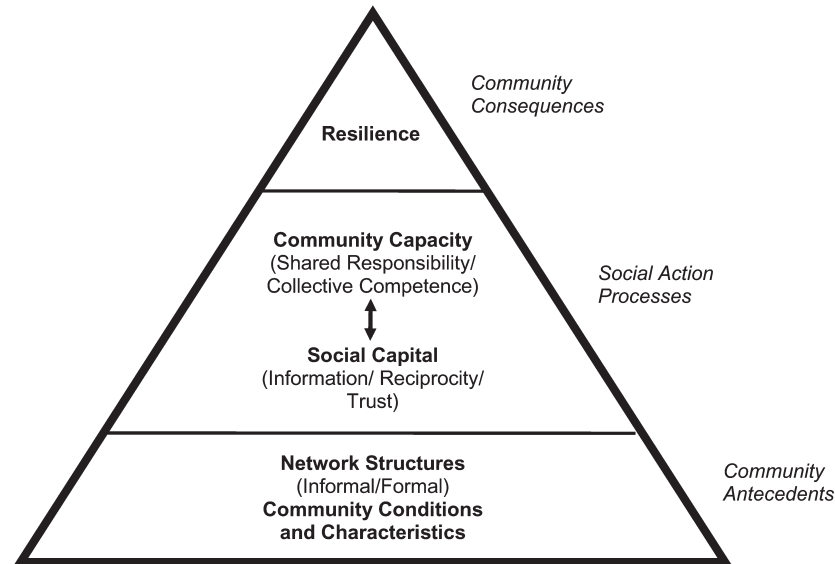
Figure 14.1. *Social Organization and Change*

(Bowen, Martin, Mancini, & Nelson, 2000; Mancini, Martin, & Bowen, 2003; Bowen, Mancini, & Martin, 2005). Previously, we used the term community capacity as the broad rubric for our theorizing on change and community contexts, however, it became apparent that community capacity is one component of social organization. Social organization is a broader and more encompassing concept that captures a broader array of protective processes that are associated with community resilience. In figure 14.1 we have placed the elements of our social organization model into a pyramid, with the base containing antecedent network structures and broad-based community conditions and characteristics (e.g., community as place, target, and force for prevention activities), the mid-section identifying primary social action processes of community capacity and social capital, and the top section including the community results associated with resilience.

Social organization describes the "collection of values, norms, processes, and behavior patterns within a community that organize, facilitate, and constrain interactions among community members" (Mancini, Martin, & Bowen, 2003, p. 319). According to Mancini, Bowen, and Martin (2005), social organization is the:

process by which communities achieve their desired results . . . Social or-
ganization includes networks of people, the exchanges and reciprocity that
transpire in relationships, accepted standards and norms of social support,
and social controls that regulate behavior and interaction (p. 572).

Our work is greatly influenced by our colleagues who have also been
working with social organization theorizing (Cantillon, Davidson, &
Schweitzer, 2003; Chaskin, Brown, Venkatesh, & Vidal, 2001; Furstenberg
& Hughes, 1997; Janowitz, 1991; Sampson, 1991; Sampson, Morenoff, &
Gannon-Rowley, 2002; Small, 2002). However, as we have noted else-
where (Mancini, Bowen, & Martin, 2005), unlike most of our colleagues,
we seek to emancipate social organization thinking from studies of dis-
organization, crime, and delinquency. Very often in the literature social
organization and social disorganization are positioned at opposite ends of
a continuum. Typically theorists and researchers begin by invoking social
organization as a concept and then quickly replace it with social disorgani-
zation and investigations of individual problem behavior and community
disadvantage. It seems to us that by keeping the lens on social organization
several advantages emerge. First, how communities are framed does not
quickly slide into a social problems mindset but rather helps with being in-
tentional about capacity-building and resilience (Kretzmann & McKnight,
1993). Second, from a research perspective, the investigation of communi-
ties is less about "good" and "bad" and more about degrees of community
preparedness for addressing adversity and challenge.

In our theorizing we mainly discuss networks, social capital, and commu-
nity capacity, although we are aware that there are other potentially relevant
dimensions of social organization, including explicit attention to shared and
diverse community leadership (The Harwood Group, 1999). We postulate
that these main elements in our thinking are interrelated and reciprocal,
but we have only conducted partial tests of our model (Bowen, Mancini,
Martin, Ware, & Nelson, 2003; Bowen, Martin, Mancini, & Nelson, 2001;
Mancini, Bowen, Ware, & Martin, 2007). We begin with a discussion of
networks because in many respects the work of building community capac-
ity and moving toward resilience mainly occurs within networks.

Networks

We speak of informal networks, formal networks, and network effect
levels (how networks coalesce and interface). These networks and their

effect level are structural elements in our conceptualization of social organization. Consequently, they are included in Figure 14.1 as community antecedents. However, we do not see them as static and fixed. We do see them as capable of change and transformation, structural elements which can be developed, aligned, and strengthened through systematic attention and effort. Though networks provide a framework, they remain malleable. Consequently, networks appear under the larger social organization umbrella. Change in communities does not occur in the absence of networks because networks represent the "upper limit" for potential support and mobilization. Consequently, these networks are necessary but not sufficient for social action.

Informal networks are those relationships with extended family members, friends, neighbors, work colleagues, and informal support groups, which are, in effect, mainly voluntary relationships characterized by mutual exchanges and reciprocal responsibility. On average, individuals have a great deal of choice in the development and maintenance of their informal networks, and network linkages may be maintained in face-to-face interactions and by electronic means (e.g., telephone, e-mail). Formal networks are associated with agencies and organizations, in which there is an element of obligation (e.g., job descriptions and associated expectations). In a community, social service agencies, hospitals, schools, employers and the like are principal formal organization networks of social care. Networks are primary community entities through which much of community life is enacted. Interaction occurs through networks, and may be between friends and neighbors or between community members and service providers. We assume that most individuals in communities are part of multiple networks, and that a minority of community members are entirely isolated from network participation or effects.

In many respects community resilience is all about relationships, and relationships are all about connections, and connections are all about networks. From a prevention and intervention perspective, focusing on the relationships that community members have, and the connections they have with one another as a result, as well as the larger and broader interface of relationships and connections, establishes the foundation of community strengths and change. Ultimately, informal networks are what changes communities, that is, people themselves are the drivers and enactors of change. Consequently, we have argued in earlier work (Mancini,

Bowen, & Martin, 2005) that a primary function of formal networks is to enhance informal networks.

A substantial literature exists on social support that is beyond the scope of this discussion. However, it is worth briefly mentioning primary functions of informal network relationships and connections. Their primary functions include (Cohen, Underwood, & Gottlieb, 2000, p. 89): *emotional* (to assist individuals and families in dealing with despair and worry), *instrumental* (to assist in accomplishing practical tasks), *informational* (to facilitate achieving better decisions), *companionate* (to spend time together, in effect, developing a context for support), and *validation* (to support individuals and families to feel more worthwhile, competent, and hopeful). An examination of these network functions supports discussions of how informal networks can be strengthened by formal networks, which is a foundational argument we have long promulgated. Because we contend that meaningful changes in communities depend on informal networks, marshaling resources and systems to build those relationships, connections, and networks becomes a primary element of our social action approach, including the development and encouragement of community responsibility and leadership.

Formal networks are significant in forwarding change because of their mission of providing support programs and services; they provide an expertise that complements the energy found in informal networks. From our perspective, formal networks are stronger when they are diverse and comprehensive, when outreach becomes a primary activity, and when particular entities in a community formal system collaborate, thereby avoiding "silo" approaches to community support. Leverage points for change are opened wider under these conditions. Of particular importance in our thinking about formal networks is their role in supporting informal networks. In our consultation activities we emphasize the idea that formal systems should, in part, gauge their success by how well they establish a community network of support and how well informal networks are functioning in their community as a result of their efforts. In terms of positioning communities to make positive changes, informal networks contribute the power of interpersonal relationships to the mix, and formal organizations contribute specialized expertise (e.g., educators, community organizers, and health care professionals). Formal networks must be careful not to overfunction—to assume responsibility

for tasks that informal networks can perform. When this happens, formal networks may grow at the expense of informal networks and actually constrain the kinds of exchanges that provide the basis for forming and maintaining informal networks.

A final and most significant note about networks involves their intersections. Though we do not formally discuss methods of partnership and collaboration within and between organizations, the idea of nexus and intersection at a conceptual level is prominent. Small and Supple (2001) have discussed levels of network effects. First-order effects occur within a homogeneous network, such as in a single agency or among friends. Efforts to deal with an issue or problem are contained within the single network. Putnam (2000) discusses the idea of "bonding" that occurs within a network, and its importance for enacting change. Organizations that are of many minds may have difficulty galvanizing themselves to meaningful action. Second-order effects occur among similar networks, such as between a family service agency and a community health center, or among contiguous neighborhoods. While the assets to enact change are expanded, they still are homogeneous, according to our split of formal and informal networks. Third-order effects are derived from dissimilar networks, such as partnerships between community agencies and neighborhood groups, which expand Putnam's idea of "bridging" from the individual to the community level. When there is agreement across disparate groups about desired community change, the resource base for mobilizing a community dramatically increases, as well as the probability for buffering challenge or adversity and for achieving desired community results.

When dissimilar networks focus on common issues, the odds increase of making positive differences in communities. It is within these networks that social capital develops and that community capacity evolves. In other words, networks provide the framework for social action because it is through networks that community members develop relationships and feel connected to one another. The optimal configuration and intersection of networks for achieving community resilience likely vary depending on the combination of adversities and challenges that the community faces. In some cases, formal networks may need to assume greater leadership and involvement than at other times, such as the case with the current economic crisis that communities are facing across the United States. In other cases, informal networks may need to be mobilized and activated,

such as reaching out in rural communities to the families of members of the National Guard and Reserve who are deployed to war zones.

Social Capital: Information, Reciprocity, and Trust

We include social capital in our conceptualization of community social organization because of its contribution to understanding, in part, what occurs within and between networks. We recognize that social capital has its champions (Putnam, 2000) and its detractors. For example, Arneil's (2006) critique centers on historical perspectives on the development of social capital, and the trajectory of change in American civil society; she argues for a more diverse perspective. Edwards (2009) argues convincingly that social capital thinking is insufficient for fully understanding situations faced by collectivities.

We define social capital as the aggregate of resources that arise from reciprocal social relationships in formal and informal networks. The resources fuel the community's ability to achieve desired results through collective action. This definition is consistent with what Woolcock and Narayan (2000) labeled the "networks view" of social capital. Information and its exchange between network members are at the core of social capital, as are the reciprocity (transaction) that occurs via interaction and the trust that emanates from successful exchanges. Social capital is seen in the actions and results of civic and social advocacy groups, local faith communities, and other community-based membership groups. Yet, social capital is not fully fungible—forms and types of social capital may vary in their implications for building community capacity and achieving community resilience in the face of specific types of adversity or positive challenge. For example, the successful reintegration of war veterans back into their civilian communities after service or discharge may depend more on the availability of mental health resources and services from the Veterans Health Administration than the operation of the local police and fire department. However, the local police and fire department are likely to be far more instrumental in helping the community deal with wild fires that are sweeping through the local community. In agreement with Putnam (1993), because it both emerges from and supports actions and interactions within and between formal and informal networks, we contend that the supply of social capital in a community increases with its use.

Community Capacity: Shared Responsibility
and Collective Competence

The degree to which people in the community demonstrate a sense of *shared responsibility* for the general welfare of the community and its individual members, and demonstrate *collective competence* by taking advantage of opportunities for addressing community needs and confronting situations that threaten the safety and well-being of community members, are the two elements of community capacity. As noted above, social capital provides the *social energy* for community capacity, which is generated from the actions and interactions within and between formal and informal networks. In return, the demonstration of community capacity fuels the development of social capital—a reciprocal relationship.

Our definition of community capacity differs from that of Chaskin and colleagues (2001) who associate capacity with available resources (e.g., human capital, organizational resources, and social capital). It is closer to Sampson's (2003) concept of collective efficacy, which focuses attention on community members' shared beliefs that result in action to meet a community goal, although our view of community capacity is considered a generalized group orientation that arises over time rather than a belief relative to specific adversities or challenges.

Several nuances of our definition of community capacity require further specification. First, there is concern (sentiment) expressed both for the community in general and for parts of the community. That is, individuals as well as collections of individuals within communities value and are invested in the well-being of others. Second, capacity occurs in degrees, rather than being present or not. If lined up along a continuum of preparedness to effectively deal with adversity or challenge, communities' abilities would vary rather than be purely present or absent. Third, capacity is derived more from the accumulated experiences of community members as a collective than from conformity to external authority. In other words, capacity does not result from a mandate but develops over time by people's responses to challenges. Finally, we view collective competence as bespeaking action. Action clearly goes beyond the expression of positive sentiments; it is the implementation of those sentiments. Communities described as collectively competent seize opportunities for improvement or recovery rather than only being reactive to risks. These actions occur in terms of normative everyday life situations in addition to situations of threat or crisis.

A point that distinguishes our approach is the emphasis on *demonstrating* capacity rather than only discussing capacity-related sentiments or resources. In our scheme, community capacity is anchored in taking action that produces observable results associated with community resilience. Rather than being fixed, the capacity that a community possesses is fluid. Consequently, intentional actions within and between formal and informal networks can enhance the level of community capacity.

We have recently discussed the descriptive and heuristic value of moving from a two-dimensional model of community capacity to a two-dimensional model with typological features. Of course, the logical typology is the simplest way to capture this expansion of the model. First, we dichotomize both shared responsibility and collective competence into low and high levels with high having more positive connotation. Then, we cross the two dimensions, which results in four community capacity types (see figure 14.2). We label these types for descriptive purposes only.

From a community capacity point of view, communities with both high shared responsibility and high collective competence would be communities more likely to demonstrate community resilience. We would consider these communities as *synergetic communities*. On the opposite side of the functioning continuum, we would place communities with low shared responsibility and low collective competence, which we would consider *disengaged communities*.

The last two community capacity types are high on one dimension and low on the second dimension. *Relational communities* would be high on shared responsibility but low on collective competence. In essence, these are communities with good intentions but which experience difficulty in making things happen. In some cases, these communities may lack the necessary leadership to be able to leverage positive sentiments into action. Last, *able communities* are those with low shared responsibility but high collective competence. These communities may have the ability to pull together and respond to crises but lack the sense of common identity, shared experiences, and relationships necessary for handling the more common and day-to-day challenges of community living.

The relative proportion of communities that would fit into these four cells is unknown, although we imagine a smaller proportion of communities would fit the *able* designation. We believe that a sense of shared responsibility is a necessary and prerequisite condition for demonstrating collective competence. Of course, the question of threshold points of
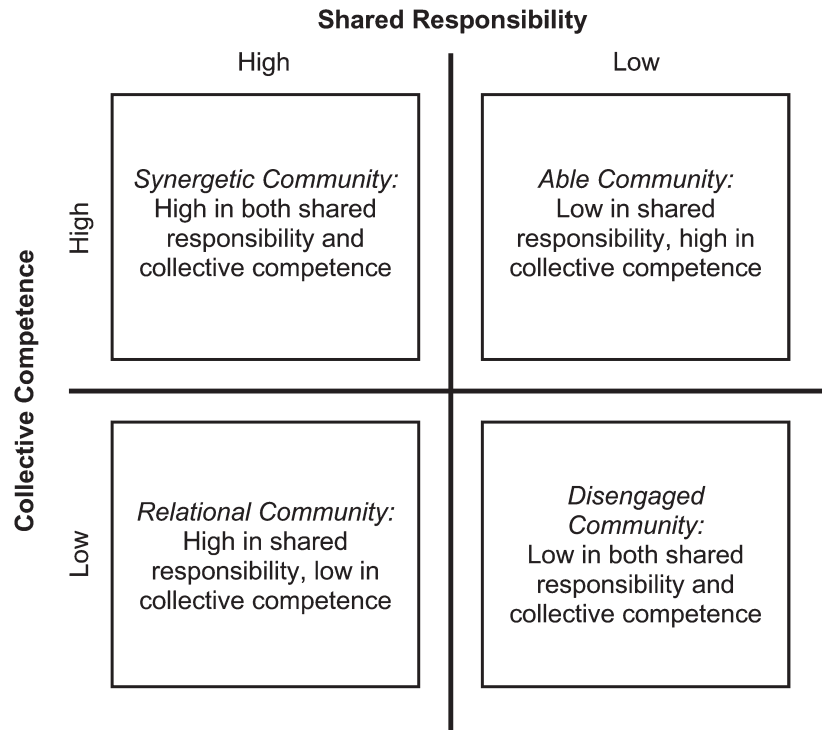
Shared Responsibility

	High	Low
High	*Synergetic Community:* High in both shared responsibility and collective competence	*Able Community:* Low in shared responsibility, high in collective competence
Low	*Relational Community:* High in shared responsibility, low in collective competence	*Disengaged Community:* Low in both shared responsibility and collective competence

(Collective Competence — vertical axis label)

Figure 14.2.   *Community Capacity Typology*

shared responsibility looms large, as well as the context of different situations and combinations of adversity and challenge (see figure 14.1). We think that each of these community types have different implications for intervention and prevention activities. These activities lie in the nature and operation of formal and informal networks in the community, and the specific types and levels of community leadership within these networks that may be necessary for guiding each of these communities in the context of adversity and challenge.

LEVERAGE POINTS, TRANSFORMATION, AND CHANGE

The social organization, community capacity-building approach is a social action and change framework. It is undergirded by applied research and program development work in building community capacity in support of military families (Bowen, Orthner, Martin, & Mancini, 2001; Heubner,

Mancini, Bowen, & Orthner, 2009). Leverage points are associated with all parts of the social organization framework—spots where prevention and intervention activities are aligned well with the framework. The assumption is that collective activities increase the potential for changing the status quo in a community, the usual way of doing business or the common state of affairs. Particular leverage points become clearer as communities identify desired results and take stock of their limitations and assets that have to be accounted for in considering community change.

As mentioned earlier, the most likely leverage points in communities are associated with networks, both formal and informal. This is so because networks are visible, vibrant, and where most people connect with each other and with formal systems. In particular, the discussion of network effects levels draws out how multiple networks become agents of community change. Preparing vulnerable populations to exhibit greater resilience during a time of natural or man-made disaster is an example (Kiefer et al., 2008). Disaster preparedness requires an extensive set of advance activities for communities to respond well when a disaster is actually experienced. Support systems must a priori be established so that, for example, faith-based community organizations know how to best contact their more vulnerable members. Community residents must know their neighbors well enough to look after them when a crisis is looming (for example, in the case of an anticipated hurricane, to encourage community members to take advantage of shelters or listen to evacuation orders, rather than remain in their dwellings). Governmental and emergency management organizations must know where higher proportions of vulnerable community members live, so that evacuation resources can be targeted. Throughout the disaster preparedness and recovery process shared responsibility and collective competence processes are important, the former mobilizing community member's recognition of the well-being of others in the community, and the latter mobilizing actions that make life-saving differences in communities.

In this social organization framework the information aspect of social capital is highlighted, and identified as exchanges within social relationships, especially as individuals coalesce around common and desired results. Information becomes a powerful element in the process of community members connecting, especially if its companion, reciprocity, becomes the norm.

Change is also associated with community capacity itself, if capacity is seen as requisite to community members coming together around shared goals and making decisions to take action. Consequently, as a leverage point, building community capacity becomes a focus on assessing levels of shared responsibility and collective competence among community members (research on sense of community in effect does this exactly). If people are in contiguity by virtue of being part of the same networks, and if interaction and transaction occurs in those networks that builds trust and bonds of reciprocal obligation, then odds of shared responsibility increase, which increase the odds of demonstrating collective competence also increase.

Although we present the four-fold typology of community capacity (figure 14.2) as a preliminary and untested heuristic, each type has implications for social action. For example, strong and diverse leadership as discussed by The Harwood Group (1999) may be most important to jump start *relational* communities. In that case, the desired result is to harness positive sentiments (i.e., sense of shared responsibility) with community resources that previously have not been mobilized to action around a community need. Conversely, with both high shared responsibility and high collective competence, *synergetic* communities may need community leadership to delegate more than direct. *Able* communities may need leaders capable of building a sense of community among community members through creating opportunities for interaction and shared experiences. The most difficult challenge is among *disengaged* communities, where shared responsibility and collective competence are low. In such cases, the primary challenge is to develop opportunities for community members to be less isolated from one another, which is a task for formal networks, according to our approach. These communities may require community leadership to play a combination of roles, including supporting, coaching, and directing (cf., Blanchard, Zigarmi, & Zigarmi, 1985, for a discussion of situational leadership).

IMPLICATIONS OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATION THEORY FOR THEORIZING

Ultimately, this social organization and community capacity-building framework is presented as a roadmap for supporting prevention and intervention efforts on behalf of communities. Its origins were in the field

laboratory of building support programs for vulnerable families. Thus far, it appears that using a social organization approach stimulates thought and action on any number of significant community-level issues and problems, including community health and community response to disasters.

There are a range of implications for prevention science, all of which reflect social organization as a theory of change (Mancini, Huebner, McCollum, & Marek, 2005; Weiss, 1995). A theory of change framework is perhaps the foundation to fully articulating the elements that bring about change in a community. Prevention science as a discipline focuses on expectations of change, and the trail that change and transformation follow. Social organization is a change framework, and capacity-building is its keystone. What people know, with whom they interact, who they ultimately trust, their level of regard for others, and collaboration with others around important community matters are at the core of social organization, and all of these elements reflect leverage points for community resilience. Consequently, social organization provides leads on change linkages (theory of change). However, further empirical work is required to specify those linkages. For example, what are the mechanisms that link networks with community capacity (shared responsibility and collective competence)? Does social capital mediate the relationship between networks and community, as we proposed earlier? Although in several places we discuss the issue of community leadership, this component has not yet formally entered the model. We believe that we are on the cusp in proposing community leadership as a social action process. As work continues, our framework questions centered on linkages will be prominent because an essential requirement of a theory of change is the specification of linkages.

A core proposition in our theory of change framework is the relationship between formal and informal networks. An important program function of formal networks is to build informal networks. That is, to intentionally develop programs that provide opportunity for community members to build connections that can thrive well beyond the bounds of a formal program. But how are informal network functions enhanced by activities of formal networks? In program development circles there are concerns about aligning activities with results, a goal being that professionals can discern exactly the relationship between causes and effects, as well as what moderates and mediates them.

In a theory of change there needs to be clarity about what the force is that pushes change. Very often, vagary exists around understanding the exact

nature of an intervention or prevention effort. It is an ongoing challenge to know the elements of the intervention that make a difference. Because of its identification of networks as prime movers in community change and resilience, social organization provides direction on what makes a difference in change (e.g., the interface between networks and social capital regarding information, reciprocity, and trust). Yet in this mix, we recognize there are moderators and mediators that we have not yet identified. For example, how do the relationships between networks, social capital, and community capacity vary depending on the socio-demographic and physical structure of the community? Several years ago, our empirical work accounted for certain mediators and moderators affecting family adaptation among military families (Bowen, Mancini, Martin, Ware, & Nelson, 2003), so we are attuned to needing to further explore them.

A related element to understanding the intervention—what it is that pushes change—concerns understanding how the structure of an intervention or prevention effort differs from its processes. Confusing configurations with functions may lead to misspecification of what works to influence community change. For example, within a particular program, is change furthered by a curriculum, program delivery mode, community readiness, program leader attributes, interaction among program participants, severity of community problems, or assets already in the community? A theory of change approach has a complete taxonomy of the elements from A to Z, and elevates the many assumptions that are behind them.

In our theory of change there is a definable end point we generically term a *result*. In this chapter, we have identified community resilience as a primary desired result. Because the social organization framework includes a *results* element, and is tied into a results management approach to program planning, it potentially facilitates communities identifying exactly what should change. What should change is anchored by two questions. The first is, "Are you satisfied with the status quo?" The status quo question is the gateway for beginning the discussion of desired changes to promote community resilience. In our consulting work, we ask this question after reviewing community-level information with community members. The related question is, "What do you want to see at the end of the day?" The end of the day question moves the discussion toward considering desired results, differences, and changes. This theory highlights the importance of clearly articulated results, in effect providing guidance for indicators of positive change as well. From a program perspective, there is

a tendency to provide programs that on the surface seem that they should make some positive difference (or at the least not make anything worse) but fail to align those program efforts with desired results. In the light of day, very often program efforts are misaligned with what communities want changed or transformed to promote community resilience.

We present social organization as a framework for partitioning aspects of community life, as an umbrella for showing the relationship between those elements, and as a social action approach that directly relates to prevention and intervention programs. It is a framework to elevate the significance of networks in communities, and to make community capacity building as a pivot point. A community that maintains, regains, or establishes favorable community results over time despite adversity (clear crises) or positive challenges (more normative, everyday life events) is considered resilient. In sum, building community capacity is building protective processes that can come into play as needed by a community in its efforts to maintain, regain, or establish resilience. Value systems are part of a social organization approach, and include prevailing values about what is important in community life (therefore what related goals should be established), and the norms that accompany those values. While resilience itself may be difficult to translate into a specific desired result, focusing on elements of community capacity-building processes provides relatively more concrete touch points.

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