



The University of New Mexico  
Prevention Research Center

## PREVENTION RESEARCH CENTER

### Rio Grande Institute's *Journal Club Series*

*From "Water Boiling in a Peruvian Town" to "Letting them Die": Culture, Community Intervention, and the Metabolic Balance Between Patience and Zeal"*

Edison J. Trickett

**American Journal of Community Psychology (2011) 47:58-68**

**ABSTRACT:** While the concept of culture has long been central to community psychology research and intervention, it has most frequently referred to the communities in which such work occurs. The purpose of the paper is to reframe this discussion by viewing community interventions as instances of intercultural contact between the culture of science, reflected in community intervention research, and the culture of the communities in which those interventions occurs. Following a brief discussion of the complexities of culture as a concept, two illustrative stories of failed community interventions are provided to highlight the centrality of cultural and contextual understanding as prelude to community intervention. These stories, set 50 years apart, reflect the depth and pervasive influence of both the culture of science and the culture of communities. Next, a series of propositions about the culture of social science as a partial reflection of the broader culture of the United States are offered, and their implications for the conduct of community interventions drawn. The paper concludes with a series of recommendations which, together, provide an ecological mind-set for taking culture seriously in community interventions. Central to this mind set are the importance of focusing on communities rather than programs and emphasizing the intervention goal of choice over change.

**When:** Tuesday, February 15, 2011

**Time:** 12:00 noon to 1:00 pm

**Where:** Research Incubator Building (RIB) Commons  
UNM Campus, 2703 Frontier NE, Albuquerque, NM 87131

**Presenter:** Jessica Goodkind, Ph.D.  
University of New Mexico Prevention Research Center

*For more information please contact Shiraz Mishra at 505-272-4462 or by email at [SMishra@salud.unm.edu](mailto:SMishra@salud.unm.edu)*

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