Setting the Focus of Environmental Measurement

Barbara M. Altman

Three Part Presentation

- Identify the 3 approaches and recommendation for collecting data on the environment discussed in Bermuda.
- Identify the various types of approaches to environmental factors which may be possible to collect cross-culturally.
  - Discuss which areas best suit our purposes
- Identify next steps for the question development and testing process.
  - Discuss if this is a project we still want to pursue and define next steps.

Review

Ideas from Bermuda

Two Levels of Environment

- Societal level – reflects the structure and organization of various systems in the community that provide shelter, food, protection, transportation, etc. for the total population.
- Individual level – reflects the aspects of the larger environment with which the individual comes into contact.
- Collective use of individual response may give some clues as to some societal level policies which create barriers.

Major Approaches to Measuring Environment

- Frequency/Intensity of Environment Interaction Approach

- Social Structural/Descriptive Approach

- Participation Approach

What the Frequency/Intensity Approach Captures

- Frequency and size of problem experienced
- Identifies magnitude of problem created.
- Whether or not the environmental component is a barrier or facilitator.
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- The level of interaction difficulties a person experiences when acting in their environment?

- The nature of the environment that the person experiences within the boundaries of their location in the population?

- All/some the factors that support or limit a person in their choices to participate?

Recommendation to the Group

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- Identifying service and structural areas which have high rates of barriers in a particular country can focus the individual nations on improvements which will facilitate equalization of opportunity

An Examination of Measurement Alternatives

With Draft Examples

Which Approach is least Influenced by Cultural Norms?

- Cross cultural measurement is difficult
- Initial question development of short set focused on person – while person's behavior may be different cross-culturally, people are all the same.
- However, building styles, transportation, are all different cross culturally **but** they serve the same purposes, transporting, housing, providing access to merchandise, protection, etc.
- Comparisons can be made across common *facilities/locations* (housing); *common services* (transportation) and *common activities* (IADLs).
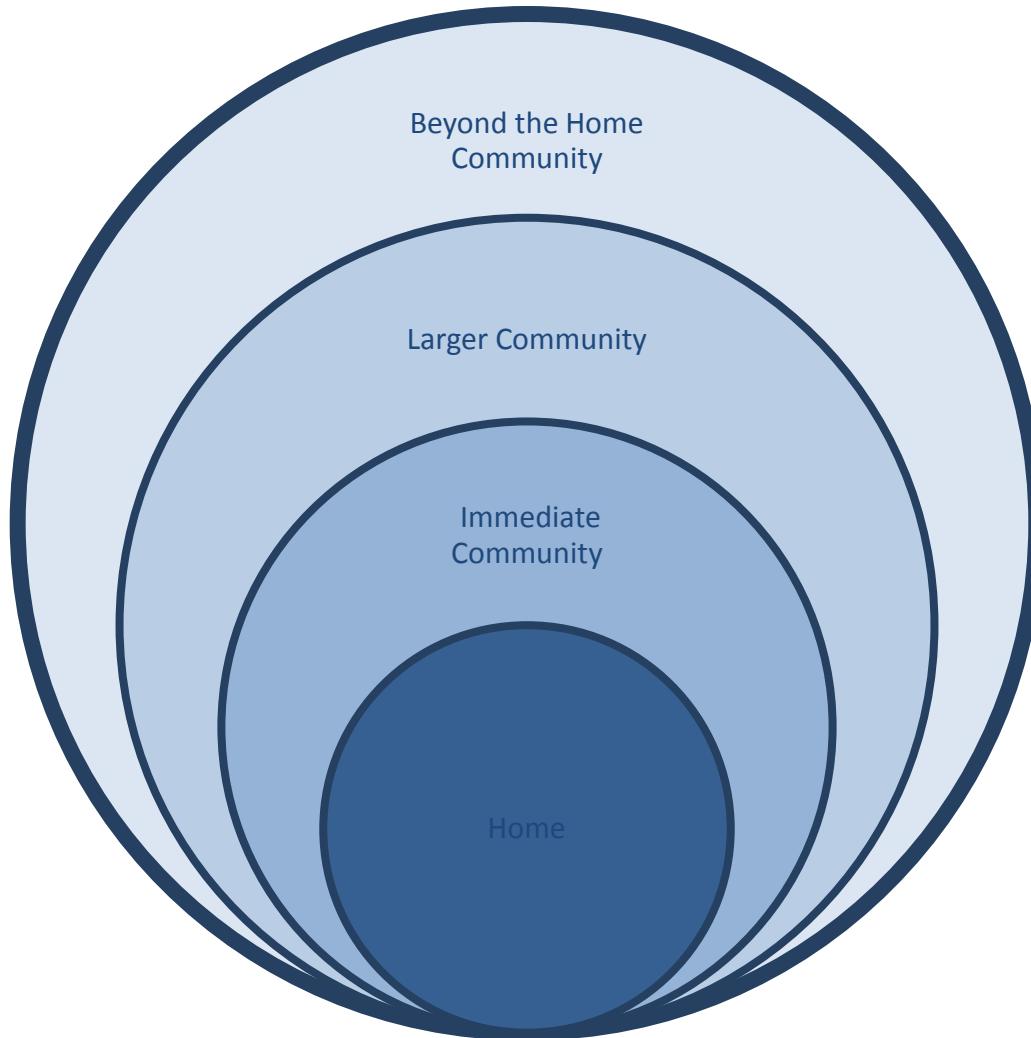
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- Comparisons can be made across
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  - Common Activities (routine activities) – specific activities themselves which may or may not have environmental barriers/supports

A Word about Work Environments

- Work is one of the areas that can differ substantially cross-culturally.

- Not only are there numerous different occupations/jobs that are developed based on cultural need, but even jobs that are more commonly found across nations may be carried out in a different way or different setting.

- Work is a very important participation activity, but measurement of environmental factors are too complex at this time.

Hierarchy of Where We Spend Our Time?

Beyond the Home Community

Larger Community

Immediate Community

Home

Where to Focus Questions Based on Common Activities

- The figure depicting where we spend our time is one way to organize the approach to where to focus the questions.

- However, in order to encompass the full variety of possible activity we may want to cover the range of locations or the types of services.

Draft Sample Questions Focusing on Common Activities

- What are aspects of a movie theater make it difficult for you to go to a movie?
  - No transportation to movie theatre.
  - Distances from transportation drop off to movie theatre is too great.
  - Attitudes of employees.
  - Hard to get into the building or use facilities.
  - Seating is difficult to access.
  - Lighting
  - Movie theatre is too crowded
  - Movie theatre is too noisy
  - Other customers are rude
  - Other

Common Issues Across Areas of Activity

- Another way to make the examination of environmental factors more manageable for survey use is to try to focus on environmental aspects of services or locations that have a commonality across various activities and cultures.

- Two aspects come to mind: building structures associated with accessibility and usability and transportation, which is essential to get individuals to other places outside their homes.

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  - Hotels
  - Concert halls
  - Government offices
  - Museums
  - Sports venues
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  - Grocery stores or markets
  - Shopping malls
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  - Banks
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  - Crowds
  - Lighting (too much/not enough)
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- Do you need transportation to get to (check all that apply)
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- Does your community have a public transportation system?
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- Thinking of that public transportation system, such as buses, railways or subways, taxis;(**list transportation types appropriate to culture**)or other types of vehicles, can you use this system for your transportation needs on a regular basis?
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Discussion and Next Steps

Decisions Required

Discussion Questions

- Which orientation to participation seems to provide the best approach to capturing environment issues:
  - a. Common facilities or locations?
  - b. Common service use?
  - c. Common activities associated with environment?
  - d. Some combination?
- If we select "c" do we want to ask about **all** the factors that support or limit a person from their choices to participate? If so, that is another project.

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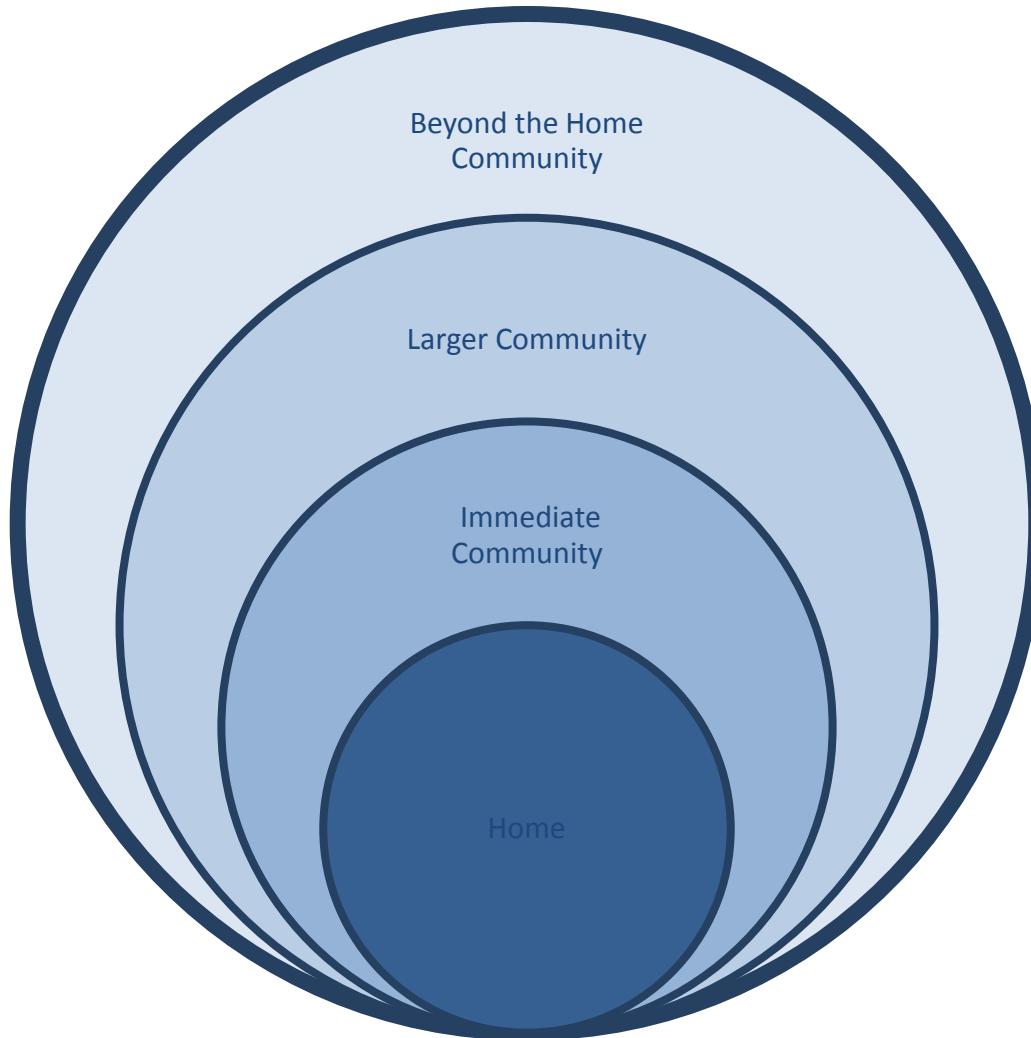
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Hierarchy of Where We Spend Our Time?

Where to Focus Questions Based on Common Activities

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    - Other customers are rude
    - Other

Common Issues Across Areas of Activity

- Another way to make the examination of environmental factors more manageable for survey use is to try to focus on environmental aspects of services or locations that have a commonality across various activities and cultures.

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What the Participation Approach Captures

- Represents the environment encountered when individual participates in various activities of their choice.

- In the sample measures examined from EHSIS the answers provided a combination of *environmental factors,* personal characteristics, financial and psychological barriers .

- From our perspective answer categories should be focused only on environmental characteristics since that would simplify questions and simplify analysis.

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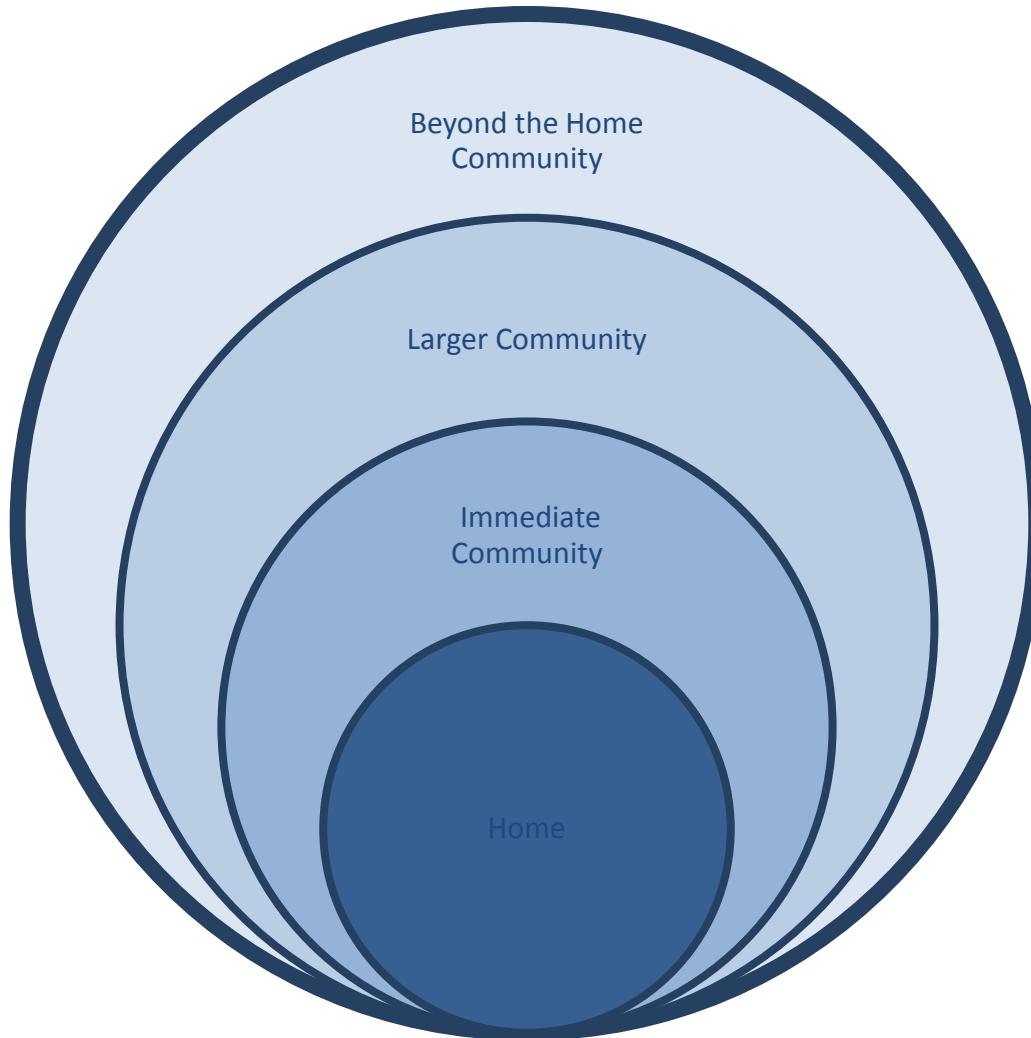
Organizing Choices for Environmental Measurement Focus – Common Activities

- Participation seems to be a promising orientation for an environmental focus if we base our questions on common everyday activities such as –
  - Maintaining a home and family
  - Purchasing or providing food, clothing and other essentials
  - Interacting with extended family, neighbors or friends
  - Taking care of health needs
  - Fulfilling community obligations
  - *Working*

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- Do you have any difficulty doing the following activities because of where the activity takes place or problems getting there.
  - Shopping for groceries
  - Visiting the Doctor
  - Getting together with friends
  - Going to a movie
  - Attending religious services
  - Voting in elections
  - Other – suggestions welcome

Draft Sample Questions Focusing on Common Activities

- What aspects of the store environment make it difficult for you to shop for groceries?
  - No transportation to store/market.
  - Distances in store/market are too great.
  - Attitudes of employees.
  - Hard to get into the building or use facilities.
  - Baskets or carts used to gather groceries are difficult to use.
  - Store/market is too crowded.
  - Shop/market is too noisy
  - Other customers are rude
  - Other

Draft Sample Questions Focusing on Common Activities

- What aspects of the store environment help you shop for groceries?
  - Transportation to store/market is easy to use.
  - Store/market provides equipment that you can drive through the shopping area.
  - Employees are helpful.
  - Building doors and isles are wide enough to negotiate.
  - Lighting makes it easy to see information and prices.
  - Store/market is not crowded.
  - Other customers are helpful
  - Other

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    - Nonworking escalators
    - Crowds
    - Lighting (too much/not enough)
    - Lack of information about locations of shops
    - Noise level
    - Attitudes of other customers

Draft Sample Questions Focusing on Buildings Associated with Common Activities

- What characteristics of the shopping mall (or any of the other buildings mentioned) make it easy for you to use it?
    - Transportation regular and stops close by.
    - Helpful attitudes of staff
    - Bathroom facilities (location, size)
    - Working Elevators and/or escalators
    - Mobility equipment provided to borrow to get from place to place
    - Not crowded
    - Lighting
    - Information about locations of shops
    - Not Noisy
    - Pleasant attitudes of other customers

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- Do you need transportation to get to (check all that apply)
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Input Needed

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- Responses needed no later than January 31, 2013

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- What characteristics of the public transportation system make it easy for you to use? Mark all that apply.
  - Low Cost
  - Schedule frequency (regular schedule)
  - No Steps
  - Lighting
  - Quiet
  - Not too Crowded
  - Types of Seating /special seating
  - Little Difficulty getting to station or pick up point
  - Other transportation related characteristics: Specify_____
- What characteristics of the public transportation system make it difficult to use? Mark all that apply.
  - High Cost
  - Schedule frequency (infrequent or irregular schedule)
  - Steps
  - Lighting
  - Sounds/noise
  - Too Crowded
  - Types of Seating/special seating
  - Difficulty getting to station or pick up point
  - Other transportation related characteristics: Specify_____

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