

## **Addressing Social Justice Implications of Climate Change: Barriers and Opportunities**

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### **Summary**

Social and environmental justice issues associated with global climate change are surveyed, in particular, those factors that tend to increase regional instability and contribute to or exacerbate the effects of intergroup conflict (e.g., Agyeman, Bullard, & Evans, 2003; Reuveny, 2008; American Psychological Association [APA] Task Force on the Interface Between Psychology and Global Climate Change, 2009.)

Barriers to addressing these issues are identified including the complex and multi-determined nature of the issues themselves (see Kazdin's 2009 discussion of climate change as a "wicked problem," p. 342) and disciplinary and epistemic factors within psychology (e.g., Kidner, 1994; Gifford, 2009; APA 2009).

Finally, examples of integrative or crosscutting frameworks that have the potential to synchronize research and practice within psychology to address these value-laden issues are identified. These include (1) Paavola & Adger's (2002) framework of justice regarding adaptation to climate change based on concepts of distributive and procedural justice; (2) Prilleltensky's (2007) psychopolitical validity framework that highlights the relationship between political and psychological factors that enhance or diminish wellness and justice and the extent to which research and practice takes these factors into account, and (3) an examination of ethical responsibilities relating to climate change and social justice that are embedded in the APA *Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct* (for a discussion, see APA, 2009)

The paper argues that issues of social and environmental justice are relevant to effective psychological theory, research and practice both for ameliorating the psychosocial impacts of global climate change and for peacemaking and the resolution of climate-change-related conflicts.

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