

## Ecological Variables and Mental Health

A comparative study of two communities in different cultural contexts, Mexican and Puerto Rican.

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This is a two-year research project of limited scope. It will comprise the study of Manuel A. Pérez, a low cost housing center of the Puerto Rican Urban Renewal and Housing Corporation (a government agency) of 1700 families and Capultitlán, a Mexican village of about 1500 families.

The research will be carried out by three paid part-time researchers, i.e., the principal investigator and two associates, one in México and one in Puerto Rico.

The main variables investigated will be: average family income, average family size, cost of living, schooling opportunities for children, educational opportunities for adults, proximity to urban centers, transportation and communication, employment opportunities, public health facilities, recreation facilities and nutrition.

Norms for mental health: (1) Capacity for productive work, (2) Normal sexual activity and (3) Absence of symptoms like neuroses, drug addition, alcoholism, bedwetting, sexual deviations, irrational fears, promiscuity, prostitution, delinquency, and crime.



Analysis of the cultural context. Culture is defined as man-made material, social, and intellectual environment. For the purpose of this research, emotional patterns produced by intellectual convictions are considered a part of the cultural context as well as attitudes toward education, social norms, government, politics, sex life, family relations, church, religion, beauty, welfare, national pride, and work. Main works by leading authorities in this field will be considered for the two cultures.

Research tools: The interview will be used as the main tool, also the Rorschach Psychodiagnostic, the Wechster-Bellvue Intelligence Scale for children and the Wechster-Bellvue Intelligence Scale for Adults.

Objective: to find out whether the same ecological variables will account for mental health or illness, disregarding the cultural context of two communities comparable in the ecological variables investigated.