

WHAT ARE THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INDICATORS OF NURTURING NEIGHBOURHOODS?

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The Social Care Thesis

Child development is not just a reflection of biology, parenting patterns, and resources that families invest in offspring. It also reflects broader social dynamics and institutions through which the entire citizenry is organized economically, culturally, and socially. EDI data provide a unique opportunity to research this thesis from diverse perspectives. This poster explores the following question: **What social and economic characteristics in neighbourhoods 'make the difference' in ECD?**

Methodology

All analyses were conducted at the level of 469 neighborhoods (subsets of the 60 school districts) in British Columbia. A preliminary correlational analysis was conducted using nearly 1,000 variables from the 2001 Census, and the developmental vulnerability rates determined by the EDI. This resulted in roughly 100 variables that had the potential to be significant predictors of vulnerability rates. Regression analyses were then conducted to create explanatory models of EDI vulnerability in BC neighborhoods for each of the five subscales.

Results

The variance explained across the five models ranged from 21% for Social Competence to 47% for Communication and General Knowledge. Nineteen different variables were significant predictors in one or more models. The following tables show the predictors for three of the subscales, ranked by their importance scores (the percentage of the explained variance that can be attributed to each predictor).

Data Sources: Early Development Instrument 2000 - 2004, Human Early Learning Partnership, UBC. Socio-economic data adapted from Statistics Canada, 2001 Census of Population, Semi-custom Area Profile. Statistics Canada information is used with the permission of Statistics Canada. Information on the availability of the wide range of data from Statistics Canada can be obtained from Statistics Canada's Regional Offices, its World Wide Web site at <http://www.statcan.ca>, and its toll-free access

| Variable ($r^2 = 0.338$) | Influence on Vulnerability as SES Variable Increases | Importance Score |
|--|--|------------------|
| % Aboriginal Percentage reporting any Aboriginal Status | ↑ | 31.8 |
| % Low Income Percentage living below the low-income cut-off (LICO) | ↑ | 30.0 |
| % No Unpaid Child Care, Males Percentage of males performing no unpaid child care | ↑ | 16.6 |
| % Manufacturing, Females Percentage of females employed in manufacturing positions | ↑ | 10.8 |
| % Management, Males Percentage of males employed in management positions | ↓ | 10.7 |

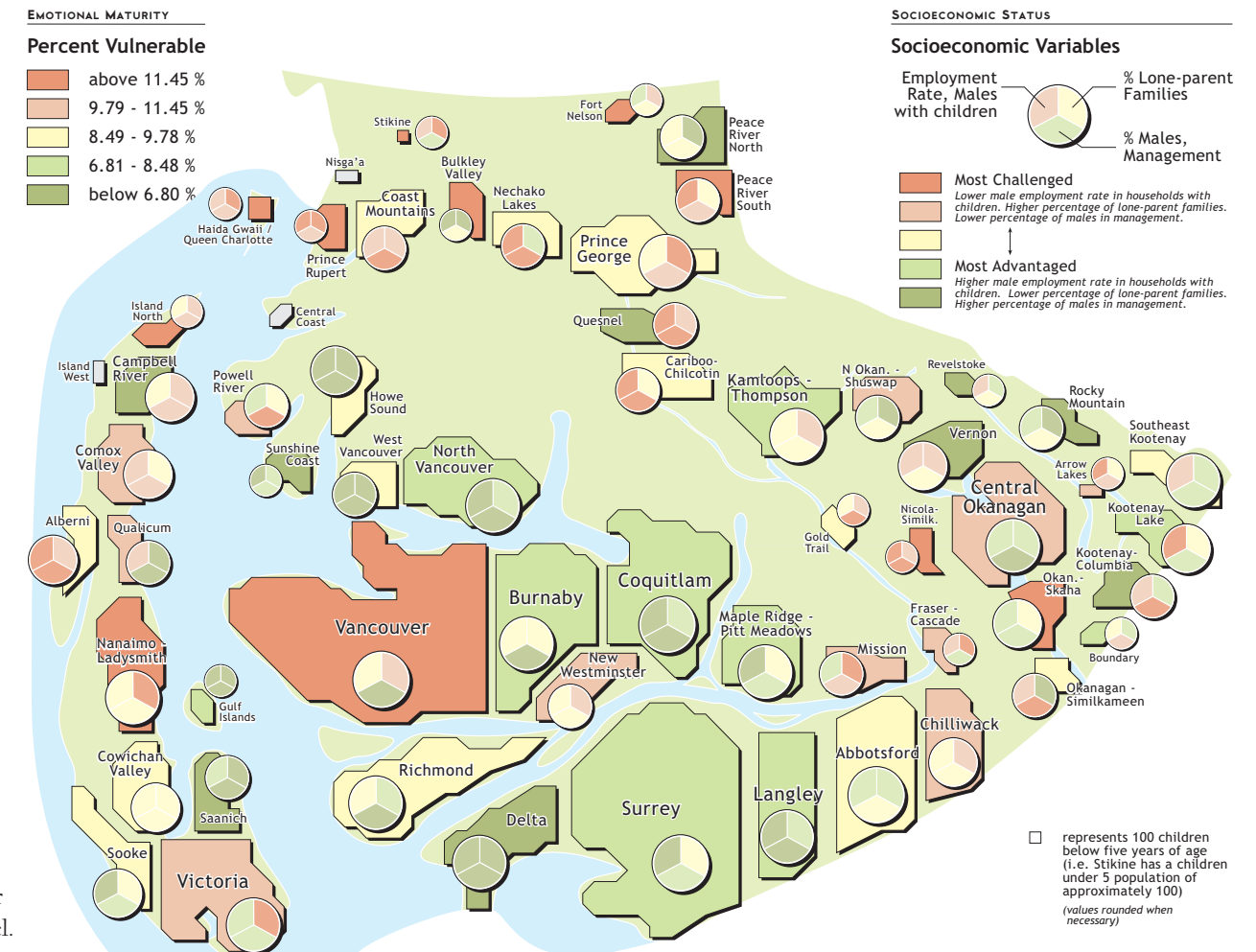
| Variable ($r^2 = 0.469$) | Influence on Vulnerability as SES Variable Increases | Importance Score |
|--|--|------------------|
| % Foreign Home Language Percentage using a language within the home that is neither English nor French | ↑ | 55.8 |
| Homeownership Rate Percentage of occupied dwellings that are owner-occupied | ↓ | 23.1 |
| % Aboriginal Percentage of population reporting any Aboriginal status | ↑ | 10.2 |
| Gender Income Disparity Ratio of average female income to average male income | ↑ | 6.5 |
| % Males, Management Percentage of males employed in management positions | ↓ | 4.5 |

| Variable ($r^2 = 0.234$) | Influence on Vulnerability as SES Variable Increases | Importance Score |
|--|--|------------------|
| Employment Rate, Males w/Children Male employment rate in families with children under six | ↓ | 30.0 |
| % Lone-parent Families Percentage of families headed by a single parent | ↑ | 27.3 |
| % Males, Management Percentage of males employed in management positions | ↓ | 25.3 |
| % Males, No Unpaid Child Care Percentage of males performing no unpaid child care | ↑ | 17.5 |

Mapping the Results

Vulnerability in Emotional Maturity and Socioeconomic Status in British Columbia

The example map to the right shows the school districts in British Columbia, each assigned a background colour to indicate level of vulnerability on the Emotional Maturity subscale. Each district also shows a pie chart using the same colour scheme for the three most important SES predictors of emotional vulnerability according to the model. Communities with matching vulnerability and predictor colours are called Chameleon communities, and range from low challenge (green) to high challenge (red). Communities with mismatching vulnerability and predictor colours are called Janus communities, and again reflect two extremes - vulnerability much higher or much lower than predicted by the model.



Discussion

The SES variables that were significant predictors of vulnerability may be interpreted in terms of how child development at the community level may be influenced by the continued confluence of sexism, racism, and classism in British Columbia society.

Janus communities by definition are those most different than predicted by the models, and so deserve in-depth research attention to determine why their children's developmental vulnerability rates are so much better (or worse) than predicted.