Urbanism And Child Mental Health Journal Review Essay, Research Paper

How much of an effect does your environment have on your mental health? Plenty. Does it mean you’re doomed if your environment is supposedly negative? Not necessarily. What can we attribute the high rate of social and psychological problems in cities to? And, are urban areas predestined to be a hub for high social and psychological problems. The latter two are questions David Quinton is attempting to answer in the annotation titled ” Urbanism and Child Mental Health “. In this commentary, Quinton reviews other researchers’ data and attempts to explain the phenomena. The research primarily includes subjects from London’s boroughs, as well as, urban areas from Oslo, Beijing and Kampala. Quinton notes a similar review by Freeman (1984) is in circulation, but it failed to consider the process of city rise and decay, the qualities of urban life and the impacts of the physical environment.

Quinton begins by commenting that there are few studies of early childhood disorders that compare children in urban and rural areas within the same culture using the same assessment measures. Instead, studies rely on ecological correlations in bureaucratically limited areas. This data produced an unsurprising casual connection between indicators such as housing features and deviance. However, the ecological fallacy – the inclination to draw conclusions from unrelated indicators – presents problems. Therefore, data related to area differences is deemed tainted because of certain influences. He reviewed Lavik’s 1977 study of disorder rates in Oslo with a rural sample, and surprise, behavior problems were more common in the city. Basically, Quinton found the urban areas to have higher instances of negative actions in all the studies he reviewed. He reviewed studies based on the following sub-topics: Intra-urban differences, migration, features of the area, housing characteristics, urban environment, urban malaise and social isolation and support. The author feels that it’s very difficult to ” compile data on the processes of producing the combinations of poor environments, low resources and personal vulnerabilities that generate pathogenic family environments “. The difficulty lies in the fact that the research encompasses so much and crosses discipline boundaries. A developmental study that includes factors like; the characteristics of migrating parents, the benefits and temptations of urban areas, social overload versus social isolation and urban malaise, is not feasible unless someone wants to spend a lot money for a question everyone claims to know the answer to. Quinton believes the answer to the research lies in two approaches he calls ” life history and life events research “. He thinks the history perspective is necessary to understand how families come to be in particular environments. He also believes ” the life events approach provides a means of linking life histories and current environments to the circumstances precipitating disorder, and thus perhaps to measures that might alleviate difficulties “.

I was mislead by the title of the article. I expected an article complete with interviews, statistics and personal highlights similar to an NBC Dateline program. At first, one is inclined to think Quinton is digging too deep in the subject, but in retrospect I believe he’s going in the right direction. Quinton’s research lets developmental studiers know the depth of the research needed to properly assess the urban situation. We all believe that there is some truth in the statement ‘ kids in the inner city have greater chance at experiencing social and psychological problems’. However, it’s difficult to come up with a study that includes all of the factors necessary to properly determine the answer. Common sense tells me that a study of this magnitude is impossible, because so many elements are included in the growth of a person’s personality. Nevertheless if such a study were completed, the results wouldn’t startle anyone. It’s true inhabitants of the concrete jungle will always have a higher percentage of social and psychological problems. The justification for this assumption lies within my personal experiences. I’ve lived in Illinois, New Jersey and several cities in Europe, and it’s about the same everywhere you go. Human nature is based upon basic needs, environment and learned behaviors. The key here is environment. Although the proximity to educational and social stimulus is near excellent, so are items promoting deviant behavior. One would assume, because of the vast amount of people available to them, persons born and bred in the within the inner city would have access to broader based thoughts. I believe that’s the way it used to be, but now certain people I know personally have narrow ways of thinking. The financial status of a human being plays a major role in the development of an individual. It’ll determine where a person lives, who they’ll interact with and what type of opportunities they’ll have available to them. Unfortunately, for urban area kids, a strong possibility exists that they’ll never know about many of the opportunities. For those who do, some will choose to ignore them.