

Nazarea, V., R. Rhoades, E. Bontoyan, and G. Flora. 1998. Defining Indicators Which Make Sense to Local People: Intracultural Variation in Perceptions of Natural Resources. *Human Organization* 57(2): 159-170.

The development of culturally relevant indicators of sustainability and quality of life is a need frequently cited but rarely addressed in the social science literature. This article presents a method and a case study based on an applied ethnoecology approach and utilizing an adaptation of the Thematic Apperception Test. Pictures of scenes around the Manupali watershed in Bukidnon, Philippines, were used to elicit 51 informants' perceptions and assessments of different environmental features and agricultural practices. Informants' stories were scored based on dominant themes to identify indicators of sustainability and quality of life that are relevant for different ethnic, gender and age groups. These contextually sensitive indicators, the authors conclude, differ significantly from externally defined indicators and vary systematically as a function of socioeconomic and sociodemographic parameters. Taking culturally relevant indicators into consideration can help shape development trajectories that local people can identify with and benefit from in the short-and long-term.