

International Handbooks of Quality-of-Life

Ghozlane Fleury-Bahi

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Oscar Navarro *Editors*

Handbook of Environmental Psychology and Quality of Life Research

 Springer

International Handbooks of Quality-of-Life

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The International Handbooks of Quality-of-Life Research offer extensive bibliographic resources. They present literature reviews of the many sub-disciplines and areas of study within the growing field of quality of life research. Handbooks in the series focus on capturing and reviewing the quality of life research literature in specific life domains, on specific populations, or in relation to specific disciplines or sectors of industry. In addition, the Handbooks cover measures of quality of life and well-being, providing annotated bibliographies of well-established measures, methods, and scales.

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Editors

Handbook of
Environmental
Psychology and Quality
of Life Research

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Preface

Although what we now call environmental psychology had a number of important precursors and prophets in other countries before it had a name, in Germany (Willy Hellpach), Japan (Tetsuro Watsuji), and Canada (Robert Sommer), among others, it was formally founded as a discipline in the United States in the late 1960s. For quite a number of years, most research and writing emanated from that country. However, slowly but surely, that “pebble tossed in the pond” has rippled outward, so much so that one might argue that more research in environmental psychology is now conducted in other countries.

This handbook is a significant and very welcome sign of the internationalization of environmental psychology. Consider that the first handbook of environmental psychology, edited by Daniel Stokols and Irwin Altman in 1987, drew upon the expertise of 66 authors from 11 countries, and 43 of the authors were in the United States. In comparison, the present handbook’s editors called upon the expertise of 73 authors from 14 countries, and 71 of the authors are from countries other than the United States. This is one clear indication of the healthy expansion of environmental psychology on the global stage. One might note that this expansion will be complete when some future handbook includes the growing and valuable contributions of authors from the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. However, for now, we can celebrate the progress to date in this comprehensive volume.

This volume is a part of a handbook series centered on quality of life. Its unique contribution is to focus on how environmental psychology understands the notion of quality of life and contributes to its definition. Indeed, quality of life has been a major theme for environmental psychology at many, although certainly not all, points in its history. The challenge for this volume was to review and to rethink the various dominant themes at this moment in history, given that the QoL approach serves as the broad palette of this volume. I infer that “quality of life” was meant in this project to mean life in the neighbourhood, the city, the society, and the planet. These “ripples in the pond” do indeed represent, in general, a widening circle compared to the typical (but certainly not universal) focus of environmental psychology during its early days on more proximate settings, such as the interiors of buildings. Indeed, one mid-1960s name for the field was “architectural psychology.”

The widening of the metaphorical ripples on the pond also symbolizes the increased scope of the articles in the handbook to include greater links

with neighboring subdisciplines, such as social and health psychology, as well as with other disciplines, including sociology, geography, architecture, anthropology, urban studies, and engineering.

Another value of this handbook lies in its combination of traditional and innovative topics. The reader will find chapters on such core original topics as environmental and urban design, schools, children, workplaces, residential satisfaction, hospitals, risk, and stress, as well as on newer but now well-established topics such as sustainability, nature, restoration, and place attachment. But the reader will also find chapters that have had little space, to my knowledge, in reviews of the field and handbooks: green exercise, global challenges, micropolitics, identity dynamics, cultural practices, and spatial and social inequality.

Overall, the editors have provided you, the reader, with a truly innovative mix of traditional and cutting-edge chapters, crafted by the most international group of authors ever seen in survey of the field. Savor it!

University of Victoria, Victoria, BC, Canada
March 1, 2016

Robert Gifford

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About the Editors

Ghozlane Fleury-Bahi After gaining a PhD in Psychology at the University Paris Descartes, Ghozlane Fleury-Bahi became a Lecturer at the University of Nantes in 2000. Since 2010, she is Full Professor of Social and Environmental Psychology at the University of Nantes. Her research is based on the study of the psychosocial processes involved in the relationship to the environment, and more precisely on the evaluation of environmental risks, environmental health and the environmental determinants of quality of life.

Enric Pol received his PhD in Psychology from the University of Barcelona in 1986. In 1987, he was promoted to “Profesor Titular” position and since 2003, he is Full Professor on Social and Environmental Psychology at the University of Barcelona in 2003. Since 1987 he has been teaching Applied Social Psychology, with special emphasis on Quality of Life and wellbeing. Since 1988 he is running a professional oriented Master Program on “Environmental Intervention and Management: People and Society”. As Director of the Department of Social Psychology (2008–2012) and director of Research Group on Environmental Psychology first (since 1987), and on Social, Environmental and Organizational Psychology (since 2005), he has conducted research on Quality of Life in Barcelona and in Catalonia, and he published a large number of papers on peer-reviewed journals, and books and chapters.

Oscar Navarro is Associate Professor in Social Psychology at University of Nantes in France. He is member of Psychology Laboratory of Pays de la Loire (LPPL) and is currently working on analysis of psychosocial and environmental factors, which can influence the evaluation and management of risks. He is Principal Investigator for the project CLIMATRisk (sense of vulnerability and adaptation to face effects of climate change strategies: the case of perception of coastal risks), which is funded by the ANR (the French national agency for research).

Introduction: Environmental Psychology and Quality of Life

1

Ghozlane Fleury-Bahi, Enric Pol, and Oscar Navarro

When examining human quality of life, it is essential to take into account the intrinsic quality of different living spaces, for example, housing, neighborhoods, schools, workplaces or, on a larger scale, the planet. This issue of the links between quality of life and the environment is becoming increasingly significant with, at a local level, problems resulting from different types of annoyances, such as pollution and noise, while, at a global level, there is the central question of climate change with its harmful consequences for humans and the planet. The problems caused by pollution are extremely important; however, the lack of basic human needs, such as water, food, shelter and safety, is of greater concern, in that it has an even more drastic impact on the quality of life.

Quality of life is an integrative concept, situated at the intersection of human and social sciences and health; it combines the notion of happiness, philosophical in origin, with that of subjective well-being originating in psychology, and those of physical and mental health emanat-

ing from the medical sciences. As Sirgy (2012 p. 5–9) summarizes, we need to distinguish two main approaches of philosophers, which have significant implications for the psychology of quality of life. On one hand, in the tradition of Hobbes, Locke, Bentham, Mill and Rousseau, there is the Hedonic vision that considers people are motivated to enhance their personal freedom, self-preservation, and self-enhancement. This approach focuses on the integrity of the individual and his/her own judgment about what makes him/her happy. This is mainly “contentment”, an emotional dimension of well-being. On the other hand, there is the Eudaimonic tradition, which some authors translate as flourishing, well-being, success, or the opportunity to lead a purposeful and meaningful life. This approach is rooted in the Aristotelian concept of a good life, prudence, reason, and justice. People wish to fulfill their potential, contribute to society, and achieve the highest standards of morality. It is congruent with the Christian tradition, as represented by St Thomas Aquinas, with Confucianism, and other religious visions. This approach thus focuses on personal, social, organizational, and societal outcomes, like health, achievement and work, together with social relationships, prosocial behavior, trust, and future happiness. This distinction provides important clarification for scientific research and the decisions of policy makers. As Sirgy concludes, “*happiness maximization is not enough. We need to broaden our happiness*

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