Marino Bonaiuto · Mirilia Bonnes
Anna Maria Nenci · Giuseppe Carrus (Eds.)

Urban Diversities – Environmental and Social Issues

Advances in People-Environment Studies
Volume 2
Advances in People-Environment Studies

Gabriel Moser; PhD, Prof., Paris, France, Past-President of the International Association for People-Environment Studies (IAPS).

David Uzzell; PhD, FBPsS, FRSA, Prof., Surrey, UK, Past-President of the International Association for People-Environment Studies (IAPS).

(Series Editors)

The new book series *Advances in People-Environment Studies*, published in collaboration with the International Association for People-Environment Studies (IAPS; www.iaps-association.org), is a timely initiative to provide researchers with up-to-date reviews and commentaries on the diverse areas of people-environment studies that are of current concern. The series focuses on significant and currently debated themes. The books are interdisciplinary, drawing on expert authors from the social, environmental, and design disciplines, especially those who are working at the interface between the design (e.g., architects, landscape planners, urban designers, urban planners) and the social sciences (e.g., environmental psychologists, sociologists, geographers). Each volume reports on the latest research and applications of research in the field. The series is meant to provide a bridge, not only between disciplines but also between cultures. The authors and contributors come from many different countries and are undertaking research and practicing in culturally diverse environments. Books in the series are therefore a precious source for those who want to know what is going on in a specific field elsewhere and to find ideas and inspiration for their own work.

This document is for personal use only. Reproduction or distribution is not permitted.

Advances in People-Environment Studies Vol. 2

Urban Diversities – Environmental and Social Issues

Marino Bonaiuto
Mirilia Bonnes
Anna Maria Nenci
Giuseppe Carrus
(Editors)
Table of Contents

Introduction ................................................................................................................... 1

Environmental and Social Diversities in the City: An Introduction
Mirilia Bonnes, Marino Bonaiuto, Anna Maria Nenci, and Giuseppe Carrus .... 3

I Diversity in Theoretical and Methodological Approaches .................................. 17

Analysing Urban Diversity: The Pertinence of Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary
Contributions
Roderick Lawrence .................................................................................................. 19

Regarding the Question of Evidence: Current Worldviews in Environmental Design
Research and Practice
Keith Diaz Moore and Lyn Geboy ........................................................................ 31

Time, Market Pressures, and Urban Regeneration: A Feasible Mix?
Ombretta Romice, Robert Rogerson, Kevin Thwaites, Mark Greaves,
Rolf Roscher, and David Hassan ........................................................................... 41

Regulating Augmented Public Spaces
Susan Drucker and Gary Gumpert ........................................................................... 51

II Diversity in Urban Landscapes and Perceptual Approaches ............................ 65

Visual Information in the Built Environment and its Effect on Wayfinding and
Explorative Behaviour
Ruth Conroy Dalton, Renato Troffa, John Zacharias,
and Christoph Hoelscher ....................................................................................... 67

Perceptual Constancy Between Users from Different Countries in Commercial
and Historic Streetscapes
Adriana Portella ...................................................................................................... 77

The Influence of Environmental Attributes on Social Interaction Between Different
Socioeconomic Groups
Paula Silva Gambim and Maria Cristina Dias Lay ................................................... 97

A Description of Incongruous Architectures and Related Observations
Paolo Bonaiuto, Valeria Biasi, Gabriele Bonaiuto,
and Anna Maria Giannini ....................................................................................... 109
# III Diversity in Urban Green Spaces and Well-Being

**Green Areas and Housing’s Habitability**  
A. Maritza Landázuri, Terence R. Lee, Alejandra Terán, and Serafín J. Mercado  
125

**Green Spaces, Vegetation, and Well-Being in the Housing Environment**  
Antônio Tarcísio da Luz Reis and Alexandra Barcelos  
137

**Soundscape Within Urban Parks: Their Restorative Value**  
Sarah R. Payne  
147

**Are “Attractive” Built Places as Restorative and Emotionally Positive as Natural Places in the Urban Environment?**  
Ferdinando Fornara  
159

# IV Diversity in Lifestyles and Urban Sustainability

**A Room with a View**  
Nancy H. Blossom and Elizabeth L. Blossom  
173

**Consumption and Electric Power at Home: Its Relationship with the Socio-Demographic Level**  
Claudia García-Landa and María Montero  
185

**Collective Motivation for Managing Our Common Environment**  
Carmen Tabernero and Bernardo Hernández  
193

**The Ecological Concern in Consumer’s Choices of Organic and Genetically Modified Food Products**  
Pierluigi Caddeo  
203

# V Diversity in Social Groups and Inclusive Urban Environments

**Children in the Neighbourhood: Sense of Safety and Well-Being**  
Laura Migliorini and Paola Cardinali  
215

**Fencing in the Bay? Place Attachment, Social Representations of Energy Technologies, and the Protection of Restorative Environments**  
Patrick Devine-Wright  
227

**From Divided Space to Shared Space: How Might Environmental Psychology Help Us to Understand and Overcome the Tenacity of Racial Segregation?**  
John Dixon, Kevin Durrheim and Colin Tredoux  
237

## Authors

249

## Index

253
Introduction
Environmental and Social Diversities in the City

An Introduction

Mirilia Bonnes,1 Marino Bonaiuto,1 Anna Maria Nenci,2 and Giuseppe Carrus3

1Sapienza University of Rome, Italy
2LUMSA University, Rome, Italy
3University of Roma Tre, Italy

The title of the 20th biennial Conference of IAPS (International Association for People-Environment Studies), held in Rome in 2008, focused attention on the multiple diversities that characterize urban environments, and their impact on human well-being. The intention was to explore the need for a strategic and shared approach to designing and managing our urban environments in a sustainable way. This special focus on urban themes was partly a consequence of the location of the conference, since Rome, the so-called “eternal city”, or the Urbs in Latin, represents the city par excellence.

Coherent with the mission of IAPS, the Rome conference tried to provide a forum at which the different scientific disciplines interested in environmental issues could gather to engage in a dialogue between themselves and with professionals and decision makers responsible for designing and managing our environments.

The theme of urban diversity is addressed in this volume by explicitly focusing on the various diversities that characterize urban settings across different geographical and cultural contexts. For this reason, the reader will frequently find the term “diversities” in the plural form throughout this introductory chapter. The importance of diversity for the future of human affairs is also foremost in many United Nations’ programmes for sustainable development, such as the UNESCO-MAB Programme, and the related Convention for the Conservation of Biological Diversity. These initiatives have drawn attention to the relation between biological diversity, or biodiversity and other forms of diversity, in particular human-cultural diversity. This relation is crucial to understanding and addressing the interactions between the biosphere’s human and natural processes – from global
to local – which affect the quality of the environment and the quality of human life (e.g., Moser, 2009; Uzzell, 2000). Not by chance, the United Nations declared the year 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity.

A major objective of the conference was to draw attention to the challenges presented by different kinds of diversities within our cities: biological, technological, historical, cultural, ethnic, architectural, and finally social-psychological. Understanding the reciprocal links and interdependencies between these aspects provides the basis for promoting and preserving the well-being of all the components of each urban system (biological and socio-cultural) within the context of sustainability. In other words, managing diversities represents the key objective for more sustainable urban development and for promoting the well-being of people. Such a complex task needs collaboration among the natural and technological sciences (e.g., biology, natural science, engineering, and design) and the human and social sciences (e.g., psychology), and between these and the public and private sectors. Studying and understanding these processes is the necessary foundation of knowledge systems that are capable of fostering synergistic efforts to identify and promote innovation choices, not just in the short term, but also from a medium- and long-term perspective.

Diversities and Ecological Processes

A recent paper by Bonnes, Carrus, Corral-Verdugo, and Passafaro (2010) discussed the implications of the concept of diversity for the study of people-natural environment relations. Bio-ecological sciences assign a key role to biodiversity from genetic, functional and evolutionary points of view (e.g., Barbault, 1995; di Castri, 1995; Wilson, 1999). According to a recent definition put forward by the IUCN – International Union for Conservation of Nature, biodiversity is “the variability among living organisms from all sources including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems, and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species, and of ecosystems.” (International Union for Conservation of Nature – IUCN, 2010).

Following an evolutionary paradigm of bio-ecological sciences, biodiversity is conceived as a mechanism of pre-adaptation of any living system for facing ecological changes, and thus a fundamental resource for the long-term continuity of life (di Castri & Balayi, 2002; Wilson, 1999). Diversity should then be considered as “the foremost adaptive and evolutionary strategy to face unpredictable changes and to ensure options for the future in all biological, cultural and economic systems” (di Castri & Balayi, 2002, p. 15).

Diversity, in fact, is not only of a biological nature. Several leading scientists have proposed to broaden the concept of biodiversity to include cultural diversity (i.e., biodiversity and socio-diversity), so to consider both as parts of a broader diversity concept (e.g., Alfsen-Norodom & Lane, 2002; Dansereau, 1997; di Castri & Balayi, 2002; Guillitte, 2005). According to this perspective, the human dimension, in its social, economic, and cultural aspects, can act as a major driving force within any ecosystem.
In sum, socio-ecological systems need variety in their constituting elements, in order to survive and develop through the time. This principle applies to both biological and human ecology (Capra & Pauli, 1995).

Despite this widely acknowledged importance, human affairs are having an increasingly negative impact upon biological and cultural diversity over the last decades (Starke, 2008). This impact can seriously affect the quality of life of human and non-human beings. Ecosystems are composed of a large number of species, mutually interdependent in obtaining nutrients and other components of the life cycle: If the biological diversity within an ecosystem is seriously threatened, the entire system might collapse because of the negative consequences on the nutrients cycle (Tonn, 2007). The loss of biodiversity is indeed identified as one of the most serious global environmental changes threatening the biosphere in present time (Wilson, 1999). Not by chance, the specific UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was available to be signed by all the member countries since the first world summit devoted to launch the UN programme for Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. As a consequence, the issue of sustainable use and recovery of biodiversity has been increasingly in the focus of scientific research and political action at the international and intergovernmental level across the last two decades (see the proceedings of a Conference on “Biodiversity, Science and Governance” organized in Paris by UNESCO and the French Government; Le Duc, 2005; see also UNESCO, 2006). Biodiversity is thus recognized at the intergovernmental level as an inalienable good, despite being an increasingly threatened resource.

The loss of plants and animal species is a more tangible manifestation of biodiversity loss. The rate of species extinction caused by human beings in the last decades is 1,000 times more rapid compared to the “normal” rate throughout the history of the planet (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005). This phenomenon could be even more extreme: The natural extinction rate has ranged between 10 and 100 species per year. In the second half of the 20th century, it was calculated the extinction of about 27,000 species per year only in the tropical forests (Elewa, 2008). In terms of plant biodiversity, the IUCN (2008) reports that 70% of plant species are at risk of extinction, including important species that are used for pharmaceutical production (Hawkins, 2008). A similar situation characterizes animal and marine biodiversity, which are increasingly threatened by global environmental changes, such as global warming (Boyle & Grow, 2008; Elewa, 2008), and by direct human activities such as industrial fishing (Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations – FAO, 2007).

In parallel to the loss of biological diversity in the biosphere, a further trend can be found with respect to socio-diversity within human societies (Jimeno, Sotomayor, & Valderrama, 1995). Socio-diversity is related to the variety in languages, religions, customs, and traditions, as well as to diversity in political, economic, generational, and
sexual orientations within and across human societies (O’Hara, 1995). The extinction of spoken languages around the world seems to parallel the extinction of non-human species in ecosystems. According to recent estimates, the 90% of languages will be extinguished by the next 100 years (Nettle & Romaine, 2000).

Economic globalization and cultural homogenization are also impacting other forms of socio-diversity, such as food and eating practices (Lacy, 1994). The estimates of the UN suggest that this situation could worsen in the future. Based on predictions about population growth, it is estimated that human societies will require the 50% more food production compared to current requirements. This increase could be achieved only by substituting current wild lands with land that can be brought into production for agriculture and animal farming purposes. Likewise, cereal production will require an 80% increase by the year 2030 in order to satisfy increasing human demands.

Interestingly, the causes of this phenomenon have been attributed to the same factors that might underlie environmental degradation in human societies. For example, economic globalization and increasing urbanization are pushing human societies towards the homogenization of cultural systems. This leads to a loss of socio-cultural diversity, which in turn, is a fundamental condition for human evolution (Tonn, 2007). The loss of socio-diversity could then also bring serious consequences to human health and well-being, just as for biological diversity, because the evolutionary basis driving human development requires a sufficient amount of socio-diversity. The same logic applied to biodiversity as a basis for ecosystem sustainability can be applied to socio-diversity: the higher the variety of cultural forms, the higher the potential sustainability of human development. Understanding and investigating the common factors which are the basis of the simultaneous loss of biological and cultural diversity is a crucial step to define strategies aimed at guaranteeing biodiversity within ecosystems and maintaining socio-diversity among human cultures.

A significant growth in population is a key issue in this sense and represents an apparent paradox: To sustain an increasing number of people in the planet, we need to exploit natural resources at an increasingly higher rate, and this might contribute to the loss of both biological and cultural diversity at the same time. All these considerations demonstrate the importance of paying specific attention to the individual and psychological factors that are involved in the simultaneous loss of biological and cultural diversity. A better understanding of these factors might also help in preserving and restoring the existing diversities.

**Structure and Contents of the Volume**

The present volume is organized around major research issues that are the focus of current investigations on urban diversities in the field of people-environment studies. These research themes are representative of the diversities which are relevant for understanding current and future developments in people-environment relationships and for designing and managing future changes to our common living environments (see also Uzzell & Moser, 2009).
The contributions in this volume are also representative of a plurality of disciplinary backgrounds, which are deemed as necessary to understand human psychological processes and behaviour in relation to the environment. The volume is organized around different research themes, relevant for understanding current trends and future developments in the study of people-urban environment relations with an emphasis on the key concept of diversity in relation to:

- theoretical and methodological approaches;
- urban landscapes and perceptual approaches;
- urban green spaces and well-being;
- lifestyles and urban sustainability;
- social groups and inclusive urban environments.

Section 1: Diversity in Theoretical and Methodological Approaches

The need for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary collaboration is commonly accepted as a key requirement for the advancement of people-environment studies (e.g., Lawrence & Despré's, 2004). However, bridging together different disciplinary backgrounds is not always straightforward, especially when it concerns the question of how empirical evidence can be reconciled across neighbouring disciplines and then translated into actual environmental design and management practices. These aspects are also related to the more general implications of people-environment studies for policy-making: In relation to this issue, the identification of communication strategies and inclusive governance practices appears particularly crucial for the pursuit of more sustainable urban management. This section groups together four chapters that address the main theoretical assumptions at the basis of people-environment studies and some of the related methodological implications.

The chapter by Lawrence addresses the issues of how interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches can contribute to urban development in a broad environmental, economic, social, and political context, through the cross-fertilization of ideas and knowledge from different fields. In doing so, Lawrence illustrates how human ecology can achieve this aim by providing an integrated framework for interdisciplinary contributions and common applications that can be extended to implement transdisciplinary contributions.

The chapter by Diaz Moore and Geboy reviews current worldviews in environmental design research and practice, focusing in particular on the development of the concept of evidence-based design. The authors provide critical insights into the strengths and weaknesses of this concept, illustrating its increasing popularity in a number of urban domains ranging from healthcare environments, to long-term care settings, housing, workplaces, and facilities management.

In their chapter, Romice and her co-authors discuss the issue of sustainable communities as a key component of urban design and regeneration, with specific reference to the...
possible strategies to achieve it. The debate between centralized and state-based planning strategies on the one hand and deregulated and laissez-faire planning procedures on the other hand is critically presented, together with insight and reflections about the relations between markets, time constraints and sustainable urban regeneration.

Finally, Drucker and Gumpert discuss the issue of regulation on public spaces in current societies, with a particular emphasis on the impact of mediated communication upon the experiences, functions and design of public space. The authors stress how both media spaces and physical infrastructures have different regulatory implications affecting social interaction (e.g., manifest vs. latent, indirect vs. accidental, intentional vs. unintended). The basic aspects relating to this regulation of communication are illustrated through an examination of the laws governing public spaces of New York City.

Section 2: Diversity in Urban Landscapes and Perceptual Approaches

The investigation of the visual aspects of the relationship between the city and its inhabitants can be traced back to the beginnings of people-environment studies, with the seminal works of authors such as Lee (1969), Lynch (1960), and Milgram (1970). Following this specific research tradition, the chapters in this section focus in particular on the perceptual processes at the basis of visual experience in urban settings. The research presented in these chapters puts the emphasis, in turn, on a variety of behavioural and psychological outcomes (e.g., wayfinding, environmental preference, social interaction), and cover a range of cultural and geographical contexts.

The chapter of Conroy Dalton and co-authors shows how spatial decisions made by pedestrians when executing a task, exploring novel environments or re-enacting daily habits in familiar environments involve complex thinking processes. The chapter focuses in particular on the dynamic and experiential aspects of this thinking, as well as on the overall methodological approaches within this line of empirical research.

In the paper by Portella, the influence of commercial signs, shopfronts and window displays in the appearance of commercial and historical streetscapes for users from different countries is analysed, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. The aim is to identify the physical characteristics for developing commercial signage in different urban contexts. Findings show how visual preferences in commercial and historical streetscapes can be based on perception (perceptual constancy) more than on cognition processes.

Silva Gambim and Dias Lay address the effects of particular urban spatial attributes, such as visual appearance, on social interaction between different socio-economic groups in Brazil. The authors discuss the implications of increasing spatial fragmentation and population heterogeneity in large urban contexts in relation to the issues of urban violence and segregation.

Finally, in their chapter on incongruous architecture, Bonaiuto and colleagues analyse how, using an experimental approach, various kinds of architectural incongruities (e.g., position, shape, composition, size, colour) can be found in a variety of different
Section 3: Diversity in Urban Green Spaces and Well-Being

The study of people-nature relations in the city, and its implications for urban sustainability, is receiving more attention within environmental psychological research (e.g., Van den Berg, Hartig, & Staats, 2007; see also Giuliani & Scopelliti, 2009, for an analysis of the more general trends). Urban diversity might frequently become a source of cognitive overload and psychological distress (Milgram, 1970; Moser, 1988, 1992). However, the presence of green spaces in the city might serve as a buffer to citizen’s stress. Research on restorative environments has typically highlighted the beneficial outcomes of contact with nature for “stressed” or mentally fatigued urban dwellers (Hartig, 2004). This aspect relates to the specific and different functions that contribute to define the diversity of green spaces from the rest of the urban landscape. Furthermore, providing more possibilities of contact with nature for urban inhabitants is likely to positively affect the quality of urban environment itself. In fact, frequent and positive experience with nature might, in the long run, promote the adoption of more “sustainable lifestyles” among urban dwellers. The contributions included in this section deal with these issues, adopting different approaches and methods.

The chapter by Landa´zuri and co-authors addresses the relations between the presence of green areas in residential contexts and housing habitability in Mexico. Starting from previous research in environmental psychology about the positive effects of contact with nearby residential nature, the authors provide results that support the view that the presence of greenery within and surrounding the dwelling has pleasant and relaxing effects over inhabitants’ perception of their house.

In a similar vein, the chapter by da Luz Reis and Barcelos refers to the relations between green spaces, vegetation, and well-being in the housing environment, with particular reference to low-income residents in southern Brazil. Their study, based on a combination of individual interviews and Geographical Information System (GIS) techniques, assesses variables such as inhabitants’ perceived importance and adequacy of, and satisfaction with, residential vegetation. Reported findings confirm the importance of vegetation in planning for health promotion and people well-being in urban areas.

The paper by Payne analyses the restorative value of soundscapes within urban parks. Starting from classical theories on psychological restoration in the environment, such as Attention Restoration Theory (Kaplan, 1995), this work demonstrates how people’s experiences of urban natural environments are not just visually based, but are multi-sensorial. The study explores the relationship between sounds perceived, described, and categorized by users of urban parks, and measures of restorative qualities of the soundscape. As expected, findings show how the sonic environment could be an important component of the restorative experiences within urban parks.
Finally, the chapter by Fornara analyses the perceived restorative properties of attractive built places compared to natural places in the urban environment. The study presented in this chapter, different from most research on restorative environments where participants are asked to rate places represented in images, focuses on the restorative properties and affective qualities of actual places as experienced by people in the place itself. Results show that built places including historic-panoramic properties can be perceived as restorative as urban natural places, as well as being more restorative than other urban attractions, such as shopping malls. However, urban natural places are perceived as more pleasant and relaxing compared to the other two urban contexts considered, thus confirming the generalized preference for nature spots, particularly for relaxation experiences.

**Section 4: Diversity in Lifestyles and Urban Sustainability**

Changes in the natural environment occurring at a global level have received increasing scientific, political, economic, and social attention over the last two decades. As a consequence, social and behavioural sciences have increasingly focused on the impact of human action and lifestyles upon the quality of our living environments and of the natural resources therein. Facing global environmental issues for the pursuit of sustainable development implies the study of the individual and social determinants of localized environmentally friendly human actions, and their impact on the well-being of human beings and non-human species (e.g., Uzzell, 2000). As a consequence, the performance of pro-ecological behaviours is currently the focus of environmental and social-psychological investigation, in various behavioural domains, such as bioclimatic architecture and “green” housing, energy production and consumption, household recycling, green consumerism, and biodiversity conservation (e.g., Steg & Vlek, 2009; see also Bamberg & Möser, 2007): lifestyle diversity therefore matters for urban sustainability. The contribution of people-environment studies for the prediction of environmentally friendly behaviour in these domains is illustrated and discussed in this section through a variety of theoretical reflections and empirical approaches.

The chapter by Blossom and Blossom explores the collective symbols, patterns, ideals, and ideas of social living represented in the interior of Tibetan homes. The authors critically consider contemporary views of “green” architecture and sustainability, as well as the relation of historic vernacular building approaches to the natural environment. In their analysis, Blossom and Blossom show how vernacular Tibetan tradition strategies are employed to both exploit and mitigate sunlight, and argue that these strategies might influence tangible as well as intangible aspects of the interior. The chapter also discusses the implications for setting up sustainable solar design interventions strategies, both interior and exterior, in relation to features such as layered volumes and light qualities.

The theme of domestic energy consumption is addressed more directly in the chapter by García-Landa and Montero, who examine the relationship between domestic electric consumption and socio-demographic factors. The authors apply the concept of austere consumer lifestyle, characterized by moderation in the acquisition and use of economic...
goods and services, to energy consumption. A scale of “Rational Electric Power Consumption” was developed covering aspects such as survival, comfort, luxury, and squander, and administered to housewives living in Mexico City. Results showing a negative association between electricity consumption and family income are discussed in relation to the issue of consumers’ life satisfaction.

Tabernero and Hernandez analyse the role of collective motivation in environmentally responsible behaviour, with the purpose of exploring the internal motivation leading communities to adopt pro-environmental lifestyle and behaviours. In their study conducted in the city of Cordoba in Southern Spain, the authors set up a measure of observed collective recycling behaviour. The findings show how this variable is linked to motivational factors, such as intrinsic satisfaction and collective efficacy, and how communities sharing reasons for recycling tend to carry out more environmentally responsible actions.

In his chapter, Caddeo investigates the role of ecological concern in consumer’s choices of organic and genetically modified (GM) food products. The author argues that personal health and preservation of natural environment are both related to beliefs about responsible food consumption behaviours, including considerations about the difference between organic and GM products. The study assessed consumer evaluations of organic and GM food products in Italy, to ascertain whether ecological motives, such as the natural and healthy food’s content and the ecological concern, play a role in consumers’ evaluations of these food products. Results confirmed how the health hazard related to GM food products affects consumers’ choice, especially consumers with high ecological motivations, while consumers with low ecological motives are more confident towards both organic and GM food.

Section 5: Diversity in Social Groups and Inclusive Urban Environments

A commonly accepted assumption in the field of people-environment studies is the need for inclusive and participatory approaches in the design and management of current urban environments. Promoting social inclusion in the urban environment is indeed a major political aim for global and intergovernmental institutions, such as the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). This idea has also been followed by planners and architects at different spatial scales, ranging from building interiors to neighbourhoods and residential contexts, to larger urban and peri-urban spaces (e.g., Goltsman & Iacofano, 2007). Social and environmental psychological research has also often highlighted how the physical space can be used for regulating interpersonal relations between individuals and within small groups (e.g., Festinger, Schachter, & Back, 1950). At a collective level, it has been used as a strategic means for maintaining and reproducing existing societal conditions and intergroup relations (e.g., Dixon, Reicher, & Foster, 1997; see also Uzzell & Räthzel, 2009).

The final section of the book groups together three contributions, which, in different ways and with different approaches, investigate how diversities among individuals, within and between groups of age, residential experience (such as place attachment), and ethnicity, are reflected in the different perceptions, evaluations, and use of the urban physical space. All these three chapters share a common background in their reliance on specific
theories, constructs, and processes that have traditionally been employed in social, environmental, and community psychology: the ecological approaches of Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Lewin (1936) for the chapter by Migliorini and Cardinali, the processes of place attachment for the chapter by Devine-Wright and the processes of social identity for the chapter by Dixon, Durrheim, and Tredoux.

The chapter by Migliorini and Cardinali explores children’s sense of safety and well-being towards the neighbourhood in the city of Genoa, Italy. They argue that children’s experience of the environment is connected with the perception of safety and with the feelings of fear, and that safety is an essential resource for everyday life, needed by individuals and communities to fulfil their aspirations. The chapter presents the results of a research project carried out in neighbourhoods differing in structural and social features. The chapter concludes with further research questions on the links between children’s sense of safety and self-esteem, and children’s sense of safety and parents’ socio-demographic factors. These issues have important implications for the promotion of more inclusive urban environments, such as children-friendly neighbourhoods.

The chapter by Devine-Wright addresses local opposition to development projects of energy supply from renewable sources, such as wind farms. The work critically examines the ‘NIMBY’ (Not In My Back Yard) concept, commonly used to explain public opposition to land use changes. The author applies a conceptual approach that investigates the social representations of the place in relation to place experience. Empirical data from a case study in the UK show how strong place attachment might predict resident’s opposition, enhancing feelings of threat to their place-related identities. The policy implications are also discussed, as these results seem to challenge the commonly held assumption that offshore wind farms might be less controversial than onshore ones.

Finally, the chapter by Dixon, Durrheim, and Tredoux analyses the potential contribution of environmental psychology to understanding and overcoming the persistence and the negative effects of racial segregation. In their study of the consequence of South African racial segregation during the second half of the 20th century, Dixon and colleagues suggest that if the ideal city promotes diversity, interaction, and social justice, then the apartheid city stands as the antithesis of this ideal. The amplification of intergroup divisions, prejudices, and social injustice deriving from environmental racial segregation is illustrated through the example of the use of sea beaches in the city of Cape Town, adopting a discursive analytical approach.

Concluding Remarks

Following the cross-cutting theme of diversity, it is important to underline the plurality of the scientific backgrounds and methods that form the basis for the present book, a key issue for people-environment studies. This volume covers a range of disciplinary and theoretical perspectives, approaches, and research methods. The theoretical background of the papers refers to various domains of psychological research (e.g., environmental psychology, but also cognitive, developmental, social, and community psychology), as well as