

References

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Suggested Reading

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environmental psychology A branch of psychology that concerns itself with the interface between human behaviour and the natural and built environment; how people learn, process, store and act upon information relating to an environment. Unlike other areas of psychology which might be defined by their approach, such as cognitive or ecological psychology, environmental psychology is defined by its focus: how we understand the environment around us and REPRESENTATIONS of that environment (e.g. MAPS), and how we formulate and undertake actions within an environment. In this regard, there are strong links between the ideas and practice of environmental psychology and BEHAVIOURAL GEOGRAPHY (Kitchin et al., 1997). Both share a common history, focus of study, and techniques for collecting and analysing data.

Environmental psychology started to grow as a field enquiry in the late 1960s and by 1981 had its own specialist publication, *Journal of Environmental Psychology*. The focus of study relates to ENVIRONMENTAL PERCEPTION, spatial cognition of natural and built environments, and spatial behaviour. Techniques for generating and analysing data are generally POSITIVISTIC in nature, seeking to scientifically measure people's environmental attitudes, behaviours and cognition.

In both environmental psychology and behavioural geography people are seen as an integral part of every problem and the environment is defined and ordered through human actions (Gold, 1980). The most notable differences between the two concerns are: (1) the SCALE of analysis: environmental psychologists tend to use manageable, small-scale environments in their studies whereas behavioural geographers use environments ranging from the playground to the city-scale; (2) the exact focus: environmental psychologists are more likely to focus on identifying and understanding psychological processes whereas behavioural geographers are more interested in the

application of those processes; and (3) their relationship to their parent disciplines: environmental psychology is an attempt to extend traditional psychological practice to new contexts; behavioural geography, on the other hand, is defined by its philosophical approach and not just its focus (Kitchin et al., 1997).

The links between environmental psychologists and behavioural geographers diminished in the late 1970s and early 1980s after the behavioural geographers largely failed to address criticisms from MARXIST and HUMANISTIC geographers. However, a number of new links and collaborative projects have once again been forged in the 1990s. These links have largely focused around issues of spatial cognition and how people understand spatial relations such as distance, direction, and the layout of objects. It is anticipated that such knowledge will explain people's spatial behaviour, help design geographic representations and technologies (e.g. GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS) that are easier to comprehend, and provide information useful for planners and architects. These links are, however, limited in their scope and it remains to be seen whether links will be re-forged in relation to topics still popular within environmental psychology such as environmental perception, ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS, and spatial DECISION-MAKING. RMK

References

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environmentalism '[R]efers to a concern that the environment should be protected, particularly from the harmful effects of human activities' (Milton, 1996, p. 27). Thus focused on human impacts on the environment, environmentalism is often thought to be a recent phenomenon, one particularly associated with the post-1960s era in North America and western Europe. In both continents, the contradictions between environment and economic develop-