

The patterns of information available in the environment are often ignored in analyses of the fit or congruence between person and environment. By viewing such information patterns (in conjunction with the environmental constraints on behavior and the individual's purposes) as potential sources of incompatibility, it is possible to understand a substantially wider range of human-environment relationships. From this perspective, person-environment incompatibility turns out to be a problem that is widespread and that extracts high psychological costs. It might seem that the solution to such problems requires an increase in environmental controllability; such an assumption can, however, be questioned on a number of grounds. An alternative approach is proposed in terms of the concepts of supportive and restorative environments.

## **A MODEL OF PERSON-ENVIRONMENT COMPATIBILITY**

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**In recent years** considerable attention has been focused on the fit or congruence of individual and environment (French et al. 1974; Michelson, 1976; Pervin, 1968; Wicker, 1973). One might think that this extensive effort would provide insight into the sort of environments that are most suitable for people. In principle, environmental designers, planners, and managers should be able to enhance their effectiveness given this rich body of theory and data. To a great extent, however, this bright prospect has not been realized. For a variety of reasons, previous research on person-environment fit offers little guidance for those attempting either to understand or to modify the impact of the physical environment. The purpose of this article is to propose a somewhat different view of the relationship of people and environ-

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ment—a view intended to facilitate understanding and even creating environments that are suitable for people.

The approach presented here takes as its starting point the informational processes that underlie all human efforts to function in the world. By looking at the sorts of environments that support such basic processes as perception, attention, and planning, it is hoped that a better understanding of the human-environment interface will be achieved.

#### **THE "BASIC PROCESS" APPROACH**

Much of the research on person-environment fit has focused on individual differences, as opposed to basic processes. The work of French and his colleagues (French et al., 1974; Harrison, 1978), for example, looks at the individual's assessment of needs and the extent to which the environment supplies them. Comparably, it looks at the demands of the environment and the extent to which the individual is able to meet them. Thus, analyses are on an individual-by-individual basis. While fit defined in this way undoubtedly plays a significant role in human-environment relationships, Caplan (1983) noted in a recent review that most studies of this kind have been able to capture only 1% to 5% of the total variance under study. A complementary strategy would be to look at the common variance—at the environmental requirements that people in general share. This strategy requires not only a focus on basic processes, but also a level of abstraction from which such potential commonalities become meaningful. Different people have different plans. But at a higher level of abstraction it could be said that all people have some sort of plans. Thus it might be reasonable to attempt to discover if there are aspects of the environment that facilitate (or, for that matter, hinder) the carrying-out of plans in general.

## PLANS AND ACTIONS

Previous studies of environmental congruence have focused on either the action required by situational demands or the purposive action an individual is attempting to carry out in a given situation. While a model of the human-environment interface ideally would incorporate both of these concepts, their identification and description constitutes an important first step.

The analysis of the environment as a source of necessary action was begun by Barker (1968). The concept of "behavior-environment congruence" (Wicker, 1973) represents a further development of this approach. In general, the ecological psychologists have been particularly sensitive to the predictability of behavior in various settings and to the factors that underlie this predictability. It has been repeatedly found that behavior tends to be consistent with the norms established for particular situations. Thus, the behavior of an individual during a church service is likely to be quite predictable and quite different from the behavior of the same individual attending a baseball game. Wicker (1979) mentioned several psychological mechanisms that might account for this congruence—among them, operant learning, observational learning, environmental perception, and social exchange. There are, thus, multiple factors encouraging an individual to conform to the requirements of a given setting.

This perspective on the human-environment interface focuses on *necessary action*, that is, on behavior that is either required or actively discouraged in a particular setting. The emphasis here is on constraints in the settings that shape human patterns of action. While this is an essential facet of the interface, it is rather one sided, since it highlights the fit of person to environment without a comparable emphasis on the fit of the environment to the person. Surely individuals have purposes and inclinations

for which the environment provides a more or less satisfactory context. The fact that an individual behaves as expected cannot be considered an exhaustive analysis of the existing level of congruence.

Thus, purposive action (that is, what a person is trying to do) must also be a key element in an adequate analysis of the human-environment interface. This critical element is provided by the "behavior-environment optimization" concept (Stokols, 1977). A central theme in this concept is the "maximum fulfillment of needs and accomplishment of goals and plans." Here the fit of the environment to the requirements of the person becomes a central concern. Stokols (1979) has extended this analysis in his discussion of congruence and incongruence as factors in stress. He emphasizes factors in the environment that facilitate or thwart the meeting of motivationally significant needs. This perspective fits well with recent developments in psychology focusing on the individual as an active, coping organism rather than a passive recipient of stimulation. White (1974) has provided a powerful description of the coping model, which emphasizes the active, striving nature of human behavior. Recent work on control (e.g., Baum and Singer, 1980) and on helplessness (e.g., Garber and Seligman, 1980) also emphasizes the importance of goal-directed, purposive activity in the life of the individual.

In addition to the notion of individual purposes, one might also be tempted to add "inclination" to this portrait of an active, motivated individual. There are quite a variety of activities that people find fun and rewarding, but that may not enter into their goals and purposes. Children enjoy throwing things; many individuals of all ages enjoy high-speed locomotion in a great diversity of forms. If one thinks of purposive behavior as involving the carrying-out of instrumental activity in pursuit of some predetermined goal, then throwing things and locomotion could be purposive in certain situations. However, when there is no

premeditation involved and they are carried out for their own sakes, their roles are quite different. (Indeed, opportunities to exercise such inclinations may even function as distractions relative to ongoing purposive behavior.) Such activities depend upon the cooperation of the environment, just as purposes do, and may play an equal role in the experienced quality of fit. Thus the larger category under consideration here might best be called *purposive action and inclination*.

A theoretical approach emphasizing the importance of actions and plans was offered some time ago by Miller, Galanter, and Pribram (1960). Their concept of *plan* refers to considerably more than the items on one's list to do tomorrow. Any organized patterns of actions that an individual can think about fall into this category. Plans include the various alternative action patterns one has considered, not merely the particular one that is selected to be translated into behavior. Thus, plans are the cognitive component of action considered, as well as of action taken. This expanded notion of plan certainly would include the necessary action category as well as the purposive action and inclination category proposed here.

While both categories can be characterized as plans because of their shared action component, they differ in terms of the source of mental activity. For the necessary actions, the impetus for taking the action needed or required is the environment or setting itself. For the purposive actions and inclinations, by contrast, the action is more likely to have its origin from within the person.

## IMAGES

The quality of the interface between person and environment depends, of course, not only on the actions the individual is attempting to carry out, but also on the informational patterns that make up the environment. Here Miller et al.'s concept of *image* also proves useful. The term

Source of Mental Activity	Types of Mental Activity	
	Images	Plans/Actions
Environment (external)	1. Environmental perception and knowledge	2. Required or necessary action
Person (internal)	3. Reflection	4. Purposeful action and inclination

Figure 1: Sources and Types of Cognitive Processes that Affect Person-Environment Compatibility

“image,” as they used it, refers not to a literal image, but to the perception and knowledge one has about the portion of the world with which one is dealing. It refers, in other words, to one’s perception of the surrounding environment and to the set of cognitive maps that organize and support these perceptual processes.

As with plans, it is useful to distinguish between the sources of the mental activity corresponding to the images. As suggested in Figure 1, much of our environmental perception and knowledge derive from external information from the environment, just as is true of the required actions. Thus the durable theme of environmental cognition (cf. Downs and Stea, 1973; Moore and Golledge, 1976) also plays a central role in the study of person-environment compatibility.

The individual’s perceptual world is an important factor in the ease, and even the possibility, of carrying out one’s plans. An environment might be legible, with readily perceptible organization and distinctive elements. Such an environment might be a favorable one for carrying out all sorts of different plans. On the other hand, an environment might not only be illegible, but distracting as well, thus tending to undermine almost any plan one had in mind.

These same considerations apply to the environment that is known but not present at the moment. One's plans and purposes must meet the requirements of the world as we know it. While the distinctions between perception and cognition are theoretically interesting, the individual's decision to emphasize certain goals and to abandon others is based on a complex composite of prior experience and present input. Problems of illegibility, of distraction, and of confusion apply just as much to the environment remembered or anticipated as to the environment perceived.

Figure 1 suggests an additional category of mental activity that has not yet been mentioned. It involves the generation and manipulation of person-originated perception and knowledge. While this category of mental activity may not have received much attention in the psychological literature, it is not rare or unfamiliar. Examples might include sitting and thinking, ruminating, or "getting one's head together." Such activities might appropriately be classed as instances of *reflection* or contemplation.

On first glance such a component might seem substantially less significant than the other three. It is reasonable to assume, however, that contemplative processes are more central than might first appear to be the case. If cognitive clarity is, in fact, so central a factor in human motivation, then reflective moments that permit one to organize thoughts and feelings might play a substantially important role (cf. Kaplan, 1978).

Viewed from a broad evolutionary perspective, reflection can be seen as having considerable importance in human adaptation. Anthropological evidence points to the central role in human evolution of functioning effectively under pressure. The requisite speed would have precluded the use of much of the knowledge potentially available to the individual—unless priorities and strategies had been established ahead of time. Reflection is a means of extracting information from the past and anticipating possibilities in the future. It is a way to apply the considerable cognitive

capacity of the human brain at times when other activities are not more pressing. Admittedly, it could be dangerous to function in a way that is inward oriented and speculative rather than outward oriented and vigilant. On the other hand, if safe places and safe times could be found for cognitive activities of this kind, one could be far more effective when emergency action is required.

A related argument has been put forward by the philosopher Mary Midgley (1978). Within her framework, "integration" becomes a central function of intelligence. She has pointed out that it does not require intelligence to know what we want; we have a plentiful supply of needs and preferences. The difficult issue is organizing these needs and preferences, integrating them into a larger whole so that behavior is not diffuse, disorganized, and counter-productive. Since lacking integration is both maladaptive and uncomfortable, Midgley suggests that integration is not optional, but a basic human need. She does not speak to the issue of reflection or contemplation directly, but if it is essential that integration occurs, it is in the process of reflection that it would be most likely to happen.

The analysis thus far has focused on images and plans as they arise out of environmental circumstances or out of concerns within the individual. It must be emphasized that in each of these instances the image or plan in question is a mental state, not a physical reality. In other words, the actions and inclinations are contemplated or possible plans. Likewise the perception and knowledge, with their attendant clarity or confusion, are in the mind rather than in the world. They are, however, based on events in the world. The translation of the physical reality to the mental state is, of course, not by magic; the process studied under the heading of "environmental cognition" (and before that by students of the psychology of perception) provides their basis.

It should be noted that the existence of plans and images in the mind, rather than in the world, introduces a powerful



element of temporal flexibility. One can incorporate experiences of the past and possibilities in the future. Decisions can thus take into account a far larger perspective because they are based on processes not directly tied to the present environment. Caplan's (1983) analysis of the importance of the past and the future in the context of person-environment fit shows the pervasive influence of these nonpresent environments on the cognitive process.

### CONCERNING INCOMPATIBILITY

Under favorable circumstances these four types of mental activity (required action, purposive action, environmental perception, and reflection) will occur essentially in parallel. It is possible, however, for certain patterns of activity in one of these categories to be incompatible with activity in one or more of the others.

In order for functioning to be possible despite these potential incompatibilities, it is likely that there is a built-in bias that would resolve them. In terms of survival, the payoff of mental activity must be effective action. Even the most sophisticated information processing mechanism is of no adaptive value if it has no consequences. Thus, there must be a bias that tends to favor plans over images.<sup>1</sup> A second bias likely to operate in resolving incompatibilities is that the environment is favored as a source of mental activity. It is essential that an individual stay in touch with what is going on in the world. Without pressure to heed the environmentally determined realities, survival may be difficult.<sup>2</sup>

Thus these two rules of priority—the favoring of environment and the favoring of plan—are proposed. Through their joint operation, contact with the environment will be maintained and inaction will be avoided. By this scheme the demanded or required actions (cell 2) will have the highest priority (i.e., one will do what one has to do), and reflection or contemplation (cell 3) will have the lowest priority.

Because of these priorities, environmental demands will have the greatest likelihood of being coercive and interfering with other mental activities. Reflection, by contrast, will be least likely to interfere and most likely to be interfered with. It will, in other words, be most likely to be scarce and deficient in the lives of many people.

Let us look then, at the sorts of person-environment incompatibility that can arise. Activities in each of the cells in Figure 1 can impinge upon the other cells. The next three sections deal in turn with three of these cells. In each case, incompatibility may prevent activity in the other domains from occurring. Alternatively, it may mean that the other activities can occur only at a high cost in both effort and stress. (The fourth cell, reflection, is subordinate to all others; thus it is unlikely to interfere with the operation of the other three.)

#### **INADEQUATE OR INAPPROPRIATE PERCEPTUAL INFORMATION**

Let us begin by looking at incompatibility generated by cell 1. Lack of adequate information can frustrate any sort of action. It creates difficulties for action made necessary by environmental pressures (cell 2), as when weather conditions make it difficult to see what we need to see in order to negotiate a dangerous intersection. Comparably it makes it difficult to carry out one's purposes (cell 4). Way-finding in an environment that fails to provide suitable landmarks and trying to communicate over a bad telephone connection are examples of this sort of incompatibility.

Another way in which one's perception and knowledge of the environment can give rise to incompatibility is through coming to think of the environment as systematically unresponsive. If none of one's purposes (cell 4) appears to have a chance given what one knows about the environment, then that particularly corrosive incompatibility known as "helplessness" (Seligman, 1975) can result.

These kinds of incompatibilities arise largely out of a lack of what one requires in the environment. At other times, however, the difficulty lies not in what is absent, but in what is present. Incompatibility can be caused by stimulation, whose very interest value creates distraction. Distraction, in other words, involves the presence of stimulation in the perceived environment (cell 1) that is not helpful to the action in question and, at the same time, is hard to ignore.

Distraction constitutes a particularly costly sort of incompatibility, since overcoming it does not provide one with the needed information; it only frees one to begin searching for it. Distraction can have a disruptive influence on each of the other three domains. It can undermine action, whether necessary (cell 2) or purposive (cell 4). Noise, obtrusive advertising, clutter, and confusion are elements of the urban environment that are likely to contribute to such incompatibility. A large number of salient stimuli (such as people) can also have this effect. In other words, what has been called "overload" (Milgram, 1970) might more appropriately be conceptualized as a form of distraction.

Contemplation (cell 3) is particularly susceptible to this sort of incompatibility. Since there is already a priority on environmental information, the presence of stimulation that coerces attention can readily preclude contemplation. When people seek an environment favorable to contemplation, the avoidance of distraction is probably the most central requirement.

#### **THE ENVIRONMENT AS A SOURCE OF NECESSARY ACTIONS**

Situations in which the environment is coercive with respect to plan and action (cell 2) can create several types of person-environment incompatibility. Sometimes one cannot do what one wants to because it is not permitted or not "appropriate" in a given setting. At other times, what one would like to do is precluded by what one has to do. The setting may require that one make pleasant, inconsequential

utterances, or that one say nothing. Either could interfere with one's purposes or inclinations (cell 4). But such incompatibility need not be socially based. One might intend to build a fire, but have to spend one's time instead fending off bears—or mosquitoes.

While the potential incompatibility between necessary (cell 2) and purposive (cell 4) action might be the most obvious, the acquisition of desired environmental information (cell 1) can also be hindered by environmental demands. One may not have had a chance to view the roadside scenery because of the demands of dealing with rush-hour traffic. Or one may not have gotten a good look at the new member of the congregation because it is considered inappropriate to stare in church. By having to behave as one is expected to behave and to do what one has to do, there may be neither the opportunity nor the mental capacity for taking account of potentially interesting environmental events.

The incompatibility revolving around perception covers such issues as distraction and overload. Comparably, the incompatibility arising out of necessary action has its parallel in the psychological construct of "reactance" (Brehm, 1966). Being forced to do something, having one's range of options limited, and ultimately having one's freedom restricted understandably lead to negative reaction. On the other hand, having choices must be strongly valued (Cantril, 1978; Kaplan, 1973; Wortz and Nowlis, 1975).

#### **POTENTIAL CONFLICTS BASED ON INTERNALLY GENERATED ACTIONS**

A third type of person-environment incompatibility (i.e., that generated by cell 4) originates within the person rather than in the environment. It primarily concerns intrapsychic events. Dedication to one's purposes and inclinations (cell 4) can become so powerful as to reduce one's sensitivity to what is happening around one and to what one ought to be

doing (cell 2). More commonly, however, such dedication interferes primarily with self-examination—with reflecting on the larger picture (cell 3). Frequently the focus is on short-range inclinations; the loss is in terms of integrating one's everyday behavior with one's long-range goals.

Perhaps one of the most vivid examples of this pattern is found in the study by Mindick and Oskamp (1975). The women in this study sought contraceptive information but became pregnant anyway. Unlike their cohorts who successfully utilized the contraceptive information they received, these individuals were characterized by their very low scores on a measure of future perspective. In these individuals there seems to have been a lack of the reflective behavior that allows one to order and relate one's goals and inclinations. Here the absence of contemplation—for whatever reason—seems to have had a major impact on the individual's life pattern.

#### **SUPPORTIVE, CONTROLLABLE AND RESTORATIVE ENVIRONMENTS**

A practical ramification of the preceding analysis lies in its potential for helping to understand what is required for an environment to be supportive of people and their concerns. While supportiveness is not simple to define, as a first approximation consider the implications of an environment that is high in compatibility. Such an environment would not necessarily grant the individual complete control over important outcomes, but it would make it possible for an individual to strive toward such outcomes or goals. This perspective focuses on eliminating the barriers that currently make it hard for people to help themselves. It takes seriously the concept of human choice and human purpose; further, it views distraction (see cell 1) and coercion (cell 2) as two of the properties most likely to undermine choice and purpose (cell 4). Further, it acknowledges the importance to people of opportunities for reflection (cell 3).

Thus, a supportive environment is one in which choice and information necessary for making choices are readily available (Carr and Lynch, 1978; Wurman, 1978). It is an environment high in legibility (Lynch, 1960), so that orientation and way-finding are not ever-present, interfering activities. It is an environment in which distraction—whether through auditory or visual noise—is a matter of civic concern.

This description may make the supportive environment sound identical to the environment wherein one can exercise control. This possibility seems particularly attractive given the recent enthusiasm in social psychology and environmental psychology for the concept of control (Perlmutter and Monty, 1979; Barnes, 1981). The ecological psychologists' view of congruence as the impact of environmental constraints on behavior further underscores the apparent significance of the control concept. It turns out, however, that the state of affairs people care so deeply about may be much more a matter of "things being under control" rather than a personal sense of "having control." There seems to have been insufficient sensitivity to this important distinction.

Civil disorder, an earthquake, or runaway inflation are all examples of things being out of control. In none of these cases does one believe that one personally controls these forces, or that when they are under control that they are under one's own control. One can, in fact, simultaneously recognize one's own capacity for control as being puny in the face of such forces and still be relieved and appreciative that they are, at least for the moment, under control.

Another area of conceptual muddiness in the use of the concept of control revolves around the distinction between control and participation. Participation implies the possibility of meaningful activity and potential influence on an outcome without implying that the outcome is under the individual's own control. For example, the care of house

plants by residents in a home for the elderly has been called control by investigators studying the beneficial effects of such opportunities (Langer, 1981). Those intimately involved with gardening methods, however, are quite clear that while participation is important, it falls far short of control (e.g., Seymour, 1979). In looking at the importance of being able to take meaningful action with respect to human health, Antonovsky (1979) also stressed that such participation should not be confused with control. He showed how extraneous factors such as uncertainty and confusion seriously confounded the analysis of the role of control. In his own data, he found that by far the most powerful predictors of health were a coherent world view and some means of participating in what is going on around one. For a further discussion of these and related conceptual and terminological issues, see Kaplan and Kaplan (1982).

Contrary to expectation of the proponents of control, it turns out that people do not necessarily experience higher self-esteem when they have control. Having control when one has little information on which to base a decision can actually reduce self-esteem (Rodin et al., 1980). Beyond these theoretical and empirical difficulties, there are overwhelming practical problems. Making it possible for all individuals to have control (in any usual sense of the word) in a crowded, finite world filled with constraints and limitations would be unrealizable even if it were desirable.

#### **THE RESTORATIVE ENVIRONMENT**

Given these conceptual and practical limitations, a supportive environment may be a more useful and perhaps a more humane goal than a controllable one. As a matter of fact, for the foreseeable future, even this rather modest goal is unlikely to be achieved. While the environment can be made far more supportive without great expense, a people-rich and resource-poor world will necessarily be limited in

its supportiveness. For this reason it is of particular importance that people have access to restorative environments—the kinds of settings in which they can recover their capacity to fend off distraction and coercion. There must be many different types of environments of this kind, since there are many sorts of environments people seek when in need of restorative experience. Such environments must be exceptionally high in compatibility for the necessary rest and recovery to take place.

At an intuitive level people have long had a sense for the value of spending some time in a restorative environment. Vacations, retreats, even the cottage in the country, constitute familiar examples. One such environment that has been studied fairly extensively and that has intermittently served such a function at least since biblical times is wilderness. It was in a study of the psychological impacts of a two-week wilderness experience that the concept of compatibility first arose (Kaplan and Talbot, 1983). While the wilderness is undoubtedly foreboding for many, a surprising range of individuals have, according to the literature in this area, found it to be restorative. The participants in our study found it to be strikingly different from the usual environment; it held much fascination, and it was coherent in many ways. In addition, it provided remarkable compatibility. It was a setting in which what people wanted to do, needed to do, and were interested in observing, converged. All these factors supported each other, making functioning in this environment striking for its comfort and ease. (Since the participants were largely novices in terms of wilderness experience, familiarity does not account for this pattern.)

A fascinating outcome, which appears to be a result of this high level of compatibility, is the degree of contemplation that occurred. Many of the participants found room in their heads for reflection and integration. They further reported both a high level of tranquility and a determination not to lose touch with a setting that had brought them such profound benefits.



Clearly, while the wilderness is an important kind of restorative environment, it is by no means the only kind. Restorative environments, in general, will be ones that facilitate the pursuit of one's inclinations—not just of one's purposes. Such environments, in other words, will foster activities that are intrinsically enjoyable. In fact, one's purposes in such settings are likely to be quite distinct from the purposes that guide everyday behavior. Sometimes the figural purposes pursued in a restorative environment are the rather basic ones of securing and maintaining adequate food and shelter. In other instances, one's purposes—while less survival oriented—would tend to be simple and environmentally appropriate, such as taking photographs of scenery or getting a suntan or collecting seashells.

In addition to the way compatibility is achieved, there are a number of dimensions on which restorative and supportive environments differ. At the very least, a restorative environment must give one a sense of *being away*, both in the sense of change of scenery and also in the absence of the pressures, constraints, and distractions of the everyday environment.

Simply being away is often not enough, however. One of the costs of purposive activity, particularly in less supportive environments, is the fatigue of voluntary attention (James, 1982)—the capacity to direct one's attention at will. To be restorative, it is necessary that the environment hold one's attention, that it foster interest without requiring struggle and effort. *Fascination* thus plays a vital role through aiding in the recovery of voluntary attention (Kaplan, 1978).

Another essential property of a restorative environment is that it have a high level of *coherence* (Kaplan and Talbot, 1983). The presence of strong fascination requires this; without order and relatedness, a multitude of inherently interesting stimuli would be more likely to be confusing than restorative.

### **SOME CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

The analysis presented here is sketchy and incomplete; nonetheless it suggests a range of questions that merit further study. A research program oriented toward enhancing our understanding of restorative environments might look at the sorts of environments people seek in attempting to recover from the pressures and constraints of their day-to-day routines, as well as at the degree to which different environments promote such recovery. The question of compensation is also worthy of exploration. To what extent can one compensate for a lack of supportiveness in one's everyday environment by frequent forays into a restorative environment?

Supportiveness in an environment can be studied in terms of people's assessments of the extent to which they can act meaningfully on their plans and inclinations. A useful tool in such a study would be the "personal project" approach developed by Little (this issue). The perceived supportiveness of an environment might be measured by the extent to which those personal projects identified as most salient are also those which the individual feels can be pursued effectively. A valuable next step would be to attempt to identify the properties of the physical environment that are associated with higher and lower levels of perceived supportiveness.

In all such studies, there are numerous possible candidates for dependent variables. While this might at first seem to add a new source of confusion, it is, in fact, a most desirable state of affairs. In dealing with a broad set of constructs of this kind, alternative measures and multiple measures should be the rule rather than the exception (see Kaplan and Kaplan, 1982, chap. 9). Thus self-report (e.g., Kaplan and Talbot, 1983), health status (e.g., Stokols and Shumaker, 1982), and recovery from illness (e.g., Ulrich, 1983; Verderber, 1982) may all serve as indicators of possible benefits of person-environment compatibility.

Many environments we experience everyday—schools, hospitals, workplaces, transportation systems—are notoriously illegible and frequently fraught with distraction. They also are likely to create many constraints on behavior, not all of which are essential to their functioning. These various factors, taken singly, might seem to be little more than petty annoyances; but they are persistent and often pervasive, and their cumulative impact is not necessarily trivial. Further, they fall upon individuals who are not idly waiting for the opportunity to cope with environmental pressures. Rather, they intervene in the lives of individuals actively striving to pursue plans and goals of their own.

The impact of all this, from the perspective of the proposed model, is that many people much of the time do not experience the environment as supportive. Further, there will necessarily be costs. There will certainly be lowered sensitivity and flexibility; there may also be reduced effectiveness; and over the long run there will inevitably be a more serious toll. In time resilience will decline, irritability will increase, and ultimately impacts on health and well-being are unavoidable.

By using the concepts of compatibility and incompatibility it may be possible to at least begin to define what constitutes supportive and restorative environments. Since helping people too readily can undermine their adaptive functioning, creating environments that encourage people to develop and rely upon their own coping resources may in the long run be a more humane, as well as more cost-effective, strategy.

## NOTES

1. While "making plans" may seem to be more difficult than imagining and, hence, more likely to be avoided than favored, it must be remembered that the use of "plans" here refers to any and all action-related mental activity. While "planning" in a formal, organized sense might not be everyone's favorite activity, deciding what to do next or thinking about how to spend the weekend is likely to be reasonably popular.

2. It should be noted that biases are tendencies rather than absolute rules. Given a situation in which competing activities would be of potentially equal strength, such biases would be expected to hold. It is interesting that activities that go against these biases (such as daydreaming) tend to occur in particular kinds of environments. Such environments are usually low in opportunity for action and comparably lacking in environmental patterns that are perceived as carrying potentially useful information. However, even in such limiting, protected situations in which daydreaming is more likely to occur, a strong signal in the environment is likely to break through and displace other mental activity. Indeed, when it does not do so the individual in question may be thought to suffer from a serious pathology.

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