

INDIVIDUAL QUALITY OF LIFE

Ruut Veenhoven

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1 SYNONYMS

Personal well-being

2 DEFINITION

The term “individual quality of life” is used to denote how well a person lives. The individual quality of the lives of multiple persons can be aggregated to obtain a number that reflect the typical quality of life in a collectivity, such as a nation. Yet the concept does not apply to social systems. One cannot say that a society lives well, since societies do not “live.”

Individual quality of life is synonymous with individual well-being. Unlike “quality of life,” the term “well-being” can also be applied on social systems. One can say that a nation is well. In this case one must realize that the well-being of the social system does not necessarily concur with the well-being (individual quality of life) of the people who live in that system (Veenhoven, 2009).

3 DESCRIPTION

3.1 Subjective Appraisal

How well a person lives can be assessed by that person him/herself. In this case “individual quality of life” is synonymous with “subjective well-being.” Subjective evaluations of one’s own life can concern various aspects of one’s life, such as career success, or one’s life as a whole. In the latter case subjective individual quality of life is synonymous with “happiness.”

3.2 Objective Judgments

How well a person lives can also be assessed using explicit criteria of the good life and such judgments can be made by informed outsiders. There are many notions of the good life, which do not always concur. Consequently, a person’s quality of life might be judged as poor by one set of criteria and good using another set.

3.3 Mixed Appraisals

Much of the research in this field measures quality of life using indexes. Such indexes are often based on a questionnaire that involves questions on subjective evaluations of one's life (such as "do you feel respected?") and objective conditions (such as "what do you earn?"). This is common practice in studies on "health-related quality of life" (HRQOL) that combine questions on how healthy one feels with self-reports of actual fitness, such as one's ability to climb stairs.

Veenhoven (2000) argues that such indexes make little sense and that we should study the interrelationships between all these aspects of individual quality of life rather than put them in one hat.

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Cross-References in encyclopedia:

[Quality of life \(QOL\)](#)