By incorporating physical and social “context” in the way aging-related research is framed, conceptualized, and analyzed, environmental gerontology has become an integral part of gerontology and geriatrics. The advancement of environmental gerontology cannot be discussed without acknowledging Lawton and colleagues’ work that laid a theoretical foundation for examining the critical role of person-environment (P-E) fit and interactions in understanding aging experiences and issues. This volume of the Annual Review of Gerontology and Geriatrics is devoted to reexamining the theoretical and empirical work related to environmental gerontology that has been largely influenced by Lawton and colleagues’ “competence-press model” or the general ecological model of aging.

Despite universal acknowledgement in the field of gerontology that environmental gerontological issues are essential parts of aging research, a plethora of tasks and challenges remain with respect to further refinement of theoretical models, advancement of empirical research, and application of environmental gerontology to practice. The editors of this volume endeavored to take a critical look at these challenges and pitfalls of further development and expansion of a unified and comprehensive environmental gerontological theory and its testing, research base, and practical application. In conjunction, they also discuss new possibilities and suggest promising new directions that need to be taken now and in the future with rapidly changing physical and social environments of aging.

Apparently, the editors invited both internationally renowned gerontological scholars whose research has been significantly influenced by Lawton and colleagues’ P-E conceptions, and those whose work may potentially become important new additions to continuing development of theory, empirical research, and practice, to contribute to this volume. In Chapter 1, one of the volume editors, Wahl, and his colleague, Lang, did a superb job illustrating many unresolved problems and challenges of environmental gerontology. They are right on target about the major challenge of fragmentation and disconnect between physical–spatial conditions/dimensions and social–interpersonal
environments in aging research, despite Lawton and his colleagues and many gerontological scholars' efforts to incorporate direct links between physical and social domains of environment. The chapter authors' conceptualization of a new concept of “Social-Physical Place over Time” (SPOT) is a promising one that may serve to bridge the identified fragmentation and disconnect.

The remaining chapters provide an interesting mix of focus on micro, mezzo, and macro levels of environments (e.g., interior living spaces, neighborhood, urban–rural context, and migration issues), traditional or conventional physical (e.g., housing characteristics) and social (e.g., kinship and social support and social relations) environments, objective and subjective or perceived (e.g., individual’s level of satisfaction with home and neighborhood conditions) environments, and emerging environmental gerontological issues (e.g., everyday competence, cultural influence on aging self, and technology). Most chapters are thoughtful and well-written scholarly treatises that applied the P-E fit, or lack thereof, as their conceptual frameworks. However, their focus is on a rather narrowly defined domain of environment; thus fragmentation and disconnect was inevitable. Each chapter ended up being a testament to what Wahl and Lang illustrated as the major challenge of environmental gerontology and to its probably inherent and insurmountable limitations to building bridges between physical and social environments in future development of theory, research, and practice. Given the vast layers and array of physical–spatial and social–interpersonal environments that affect older persons' lives, any grand theory that is comprehensive and encompassing of both physical–spatial and social environments may indeed have limited utility for testing and empirical research.

In the 30 years since Lawton and Nahemow (1973) first introduced the “competence-press” model, impressive strides in understanding P-E relations have been made in environmental gerontology. Continued accumulation of research articles and attempt at practical application are needed to provide ongoing impetus to reexamine and enhance this important field of gerontology. The editors of this volume are to be complimented for their fine job focusing on current and future progress in environmental gerontology, and each chapter in this volume significantly contributes to developing further theory, empirical research, and practice.

While reviewing the volume, however, I have noticed a couple of conspicuous holes that were not filled in any chapters. In order for the “E” in P-E relations to be truly reflective of the “context” of aging process and outcomes, we cannot ignore the sociopolitical and economic environments. To be more specific, in the United States and many other countries, racial/ethnic disparities in opportunity structures have posed powerful cumulative environmental press and constraints for racial/ethnic minorities throughout their life course, resulting in wide sociopolitical and economic gaps between the majority and the minority populations groups. The disparities in both physical–spatial and social–interpersonal environments between the majority white older persons and African American, Hispanic, and Native American older persons are in large part derived from the cumulative effects of the disparities in their sociopolitical and economic environments. Without building bridges between the sociopolitical and economic dimensions and the physical–social dimensions of the environment, environmental gerontology cannot meaningfully advance into the future. Nevertheless, not a single chapter in the volume made any significant direct reference to the sociopolitical environment. Especially with changing demographics in the United States in which the growth in racial/ethnic minority older persons is projected to outpace that of