

## Publication

### Protecting Quality of Life: Protected Needs as a Point of Reference for Perceived Ethical Obligation

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Quality of life is normatively ingrained in the concept of sustainability. The starting point of this chapter is the assumption that the concept of sustainability grounds an ethical obligation of providing the conditions that are crucial for achieving wellbeing for present and future generations. This ethical obligation in turn sets a specific stage for how to discuss quality of life: it makes it necessary to provide a thick theory of the 'good life' that is suitable to ground individual and shared obligations on a global scale. Proceeding from the theory of Protected Needs, a theory of the 'good life' that has been developed for the context of sustainability, it is discussed to what extent this theoretically posited ethical obligation does mirror in peoples' perceptions. Based on the results of a representative national survey in Switzerland (N = 1059; fielded in 2016), a country being representative for countries with a consensual policy discourse climate, the chapter argues that the ethical obligation of warranting need satisfaction for present and future generations does empirically correspond to perceptions of obligation. It is shown that the possibility of satisfying Protected Needs has, on the one hand, the potential of serving as a normative criterion of ethical obligation, and that it has this potential across segments of society built by gender, age, income, education and political attitude, but that, on the other hand, this potential is limited if a territorial or even national perspective is adopted.

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