

## Book review

*The Role of Place Identity in the Perception, Understanding, and Design of Built Environments*  
Casakin, H., and Bernardo, F. (Eds.)

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In recent decades, the concept of place identity has been central to a wide range of fields of study that have been interested in the loss of individuality and the homogeneous and repetitive nature of many places, as a result of the globalization of consumption and culture. Although the place identity remains a major issue for debate, more research is needed to understand the relationship of place with personal meanings, symbols and the sense that these are for residents and users. The book, built collectively by authors from various disciplines and from different countries of the world, goes through some of the most important topics related to the place identity today and, above all, the identity of habitable environments in a multifaceted and multicultural society. Moreover, the volume provides stimulating information regarding the design of places, based on the need to have a deep understanding that transcends fickle, ephemeral and fashionable trends. As a contribution, it offers a comprehensive view about the role of place identity in the bonds that people make with places. This book examines, from a multidisciplinary perspective, the importance this concept has not only for daily life but for perception, understanding, use and urban and architectural design. It is aimed at a wide audience of researchers, educators and

professionals including environmental psychologists and sociologists, architects, urban designers, geographers, ecologists, semioticians, folklorists and philosophers with an interest in the city and architecture. The authors show how space and identity can help close gaps and build connections between this wide range of disciplines.

The chapters are organized into five sections. The first one focuses on theoretical positions and debates about the place identity. Seamon presents a phenomenological perspective, from which he examines the place as a multivalent sophisticated and complex structure in its existential constitution. His study is based on the theoretical “systematic” approach developed by Bennett. Noormohammadi focuses on the place identity and its relationship with nature. The author begins with theories of Bachelard and Louis Khan and analyzes the importance of natural human needs and desires in the architectural space. In their study of intergroup relations, Bernardo and Palma-Oliveira emphasize the importance of place identity in the urban context and in the sense of belonging to a place. The work provides a better understanding of the city and its political space as a mosaic of interrelated identities.

The second section of the book refers to place identity, associated with issues of revitalization, restoration and transformation. Belanger, Cameron and De la Mora explore the opposing mental representations built by neighborhood residents of Pointe-Saint-Charles (Montreal, Canada) and present the revitalization of the Lachine Canal and remodeling projects that occurred along the banks of this canal. Akkurt investigates old and new representations of residents, through the collection and comparison of drawings, maps and

interviews that probe the environment in which they live. The author discusses the role of renewal and transformation projects in her study of the destruction of historic urban factories, the annihilation of place identity and reconstruction of cultural memory in Turkey. In the work of Vidal, Troffa, Valera and Fornara, they address the strengths and weaknesses of place identity by analyzing the changes in today's globalized society. Their approach focuses on aspects of urban life, such as transportation routes and mobility patterns, alteration of historic areas in cities and landscape transformation.

The third section of the book is devoted to place identity and experience of public space, with emphasis on attachment, ownership and perception. Hernández García explores the social construction of open spaces in working-class neighborhoods of Bogotá, arguing that these spaces have a strong relationship with people-users, due in large part to have been self-managed and transformed by them and in the same sense; the physical-spatial production which is observed corresponds to that relationship understood in terms of ownership and identity. Golicnik and Niksic investigate the perceptual dimensions of public space in Ljubljana (Slovenia), Casakin and Neikrug examine place identity and its relationship with the dependence, the quality and place attachment, as perceived by older adults living in neighborhoods with different degrees of consolidation.

The fourth section addresses issues related to place identity, culture and religion. Mazumdar and Mazumdar investigate how religion influences the place identity in Indian immigrants in their new place of residence in the United States. Casakin and Abbam Elliot review place identity in the cultural context of the Mexican community living in Pilsen (Chicago), and the importance of cultural metaphors in the preservation

and development of identity processes. In another study, conducted in two suburban communities located in Pennsylvania and Virginia, Lattanzi Shutika explores how latin-American immigration affects the sense of place and local identity.

The fifth and final section of the book has to do with the place identity, architecture and urbanism from the perspective of globalization. Adam examines in depth the role of architectural identity in a globalized world and poses the most significant challenges the architectural profession must face in the emerging global society. The following section with Spencer and Seabra, focuses on the work of Álvaro Siza in Portugal and explores local and global contexts and their potential implications for the process of architectural design. Finally, regarding interconnectivity and homogenization of culture, Morel Ednie Brown investigates the sense of place, authenticity and urban identity in the city of Perth (Australia).

The large and diverse collection of articles in this book is a step in the discussion about the importance of place identity in a globalized society, and in the exploration of important topics and critical approaches to the understanding and design of habitable environments that take into account the needs and desires of people and not just economic and cultural fluctuations. Similarly, it seeks to contribute to the passionate and controversial discussion on the concept of place identity that has emerged from different disciplines in recent years.

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