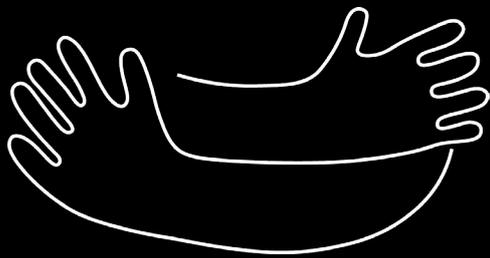


Beyond Concrete Boundaries: Embracing Belongingness in the Urban Fabric

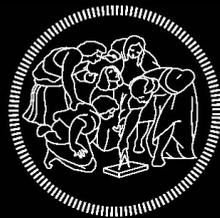


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Master's Degree Thesis

July, 2023

“Happiness is a house with many rooms, but at its core is a hearth around which we gather with family, friends, the community, and sometimes even strangers to find the best part of ourselves.”

Charles Montgomery, Happy City: Transforming Our Lives Through Urban Design

abstract

The current state of urban living has led to a diminishing sense of belonging and attachment to place due to overpopulation and political dynamics. This led to the realization in related fields that cities should be planned with consideration for the well-being of its inhabitants rather than just with efficiency in mind. Well-being of an inhabitant from an urban perspective covers various topics such as health, safety and comfort. And these are provided through the tools that we utilize as urban planners and landscape architects during the transformation of urban spaces.

Transforming a space into a place that fosters trust, connection, and a sense of belonging comes from placemaking strategies. That's why the connection between placemaking strategies and sense of belonging is important as the design of our cities since it has a significant impact on how we feel and interact with each other. These terms are the key to ultimately achieving spatial justice in the search for a just city, however, as the urbanization and the society advance, it becomes necessary to reconsider these terms in light of the current urban environment.

The thesis explores the relationship between a sense of belonging and spatial justice towards a creation of just and healed urban spaces through a survey analysis and ultimately presents the collective data within the current urban context in the pursuit for an equitable, inclusive and sustainable city.

Keywords: *Sense of Place, Sense of Belonging, Spatial Justice, Placemaking, Place Attachment, Social Space, Community, Just City, Inclusive Spaces.*

sintesi

Lo stato corrente della vita urbana ha portato a una diminuzione del senso di appartenenza e attaccamento al luogo a causa della sovrappopolazione e delle dinamiche politiche. Questo ci porta, tenendo conto di diversi aspetti, alla realizzazione di città che considerano unicamente l'efficienza senza tenere conto del benessere dei suoi abitanti. Il benessere di un abitante, da una prospettiva urbana, indaga vari aspetti come la salute, la sicurezza e il comfort. Tali fattori vengono forniti attraverso gli strumenti che noi urbanisti e architetti del paesaggio utilizziamo durante la trasformazione degli spazi urbani.

Le strategie di placemaking trasformano uno spazio in un luogo che favorisce la fiducia, la connessione e il senso di appartenenza, ecco perché la connessione tra queste strategie e la relazione con il luogo sono importanti quanto il design delle nostre città, avendo un impatto significativo sui sentimenti e sull'interazione che intercorre tra individui. Infine, questi aspetti sono la chiave per raggiungere la giustizia spaziale, ma con l'avanzare dell'urbanizzazione e della società diventa necessario riconsiderare questi termini alla luce dell'attuale ambiente urbano.

La tesi esplora la relazione tra il sentimento di appartenenza e la giustizia spaziale mirando alla creazione di spazi urbani giusti e sanati attraverso l'indagine. I dati sono stati raccolti all'interno dell'attuale contesto urbano, ricercando una città equa, inclusiva e sostenibile.

Parole chiave: *Senso di Appartenenza, Giustizia spaziale, Placemaking, Spazio Sociale, Comunità, Città Giusta, Sicurezza Urbana, Spazi Inclusivi.*

acknowledgement

This thesis, which is the result of a 7 month process, started with my curiosity about the feeling of belonging somewhere. When I moved from Istanbul to Milan, the questions plaguing my mind such as “What is home and where is it?”, “What does it mean to belong somewhere?” and “Where do I feel belong?” emerged as a vague idea that initiated this research. Completing this work also signifies the end of my two-year study at Polimi, a period that has been immensely valuable and a transformative experience. I am grateful to the talented individuals I met throughout my studies, as their support has influenced this project significantly.

First and foremost, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to my esteemed supervisor Matteo Umberto Poli. When I met him in the studio class in the first semester, I understood he was a great professor, a creative mind and a kind soul. I would like to thank him especially in the sense of him awakening the creativity in me. Your guidance, expertise and trust to me have been invaluable.

I extend heartfelt appreciation to my family, Nebahat, Reşat, and Emre, for their love and support. I am profoundly grateful for their belief in me and the sacrifices they made for my academic pursuits.

I am incredibly thankful for the enduring support of my special someone Ahmet Kadir Duman. Your love, patience, understanding and unwavering belief in my abilities have been the anchor that kept me grounded during the ups and downs of this thesis journey.

To my friends, thank you for always being there to offer a listening ear and injecting moments of laughter and joy into my life. I am genuinely grateful to my friend and colleague Bilge Kobak for her support and insightful knowledge, which have been instrumental in my success. Thank you for your guidance throughout this process.

I am sincerely grateful for Erdal Tansev’s invaluable support and guidance throughout my academic journey. His assistance helped me overcome significant challenges, and I am deeply appreciative.

Many thanks to everyone who offered their comments, engaged in conversations, provided inputs, and helped me in answering and disseminating my survey. Your invaluable contributions have shaped my thesis into what I envisioned.

Last but not least, I would like to thank me. There were moments when I questioned my ability to finish. However, I am immensely thankful to the resilience within me that refused to give up and persevered through it all.

Thank you all for your invaluable contributions and unwavering support. This achievement is as much yours as it is mine.

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Introduction

thesis statement

In order to create just and healing urban places, placemaking practices that encourage trust, connection, and belongingness among urban residents have grown in importance. Urban design must consider how placemaking techniques and sense of belonging are related since these factors greatly influence how people in cities feel and interact with one another.

This thesis examines the relationship between belongingness and spatial justice in current urban environments, with a focus on the role of placemaking strategies in creating equitable and healed urban environments that foster community while addressing everyone's well-being.

hypotheses

1

Spatial injustices, such as unequal access to public resources and services, will negatively impact residents' sense of belonging and attachment to urban spaces.

2

Since cities and urban design is dynamic and evolves through time, things that make the individuals feel a sense of belonging and attachment changes and evolves as well.

3

Placemaking strategies that prioritize community engagement and participation will have a positive impact on residents' sense of belonging and attachment to urban spaces thus protecting it over time and working for its well-being.

4

A greater sense of belonging and attachment to urban spaces will lead to improved well-being outcomes, such as increased physical and mental health, among residents.

5

Afterwards, people unite and form communities because they share a belongingness in the same location.

6

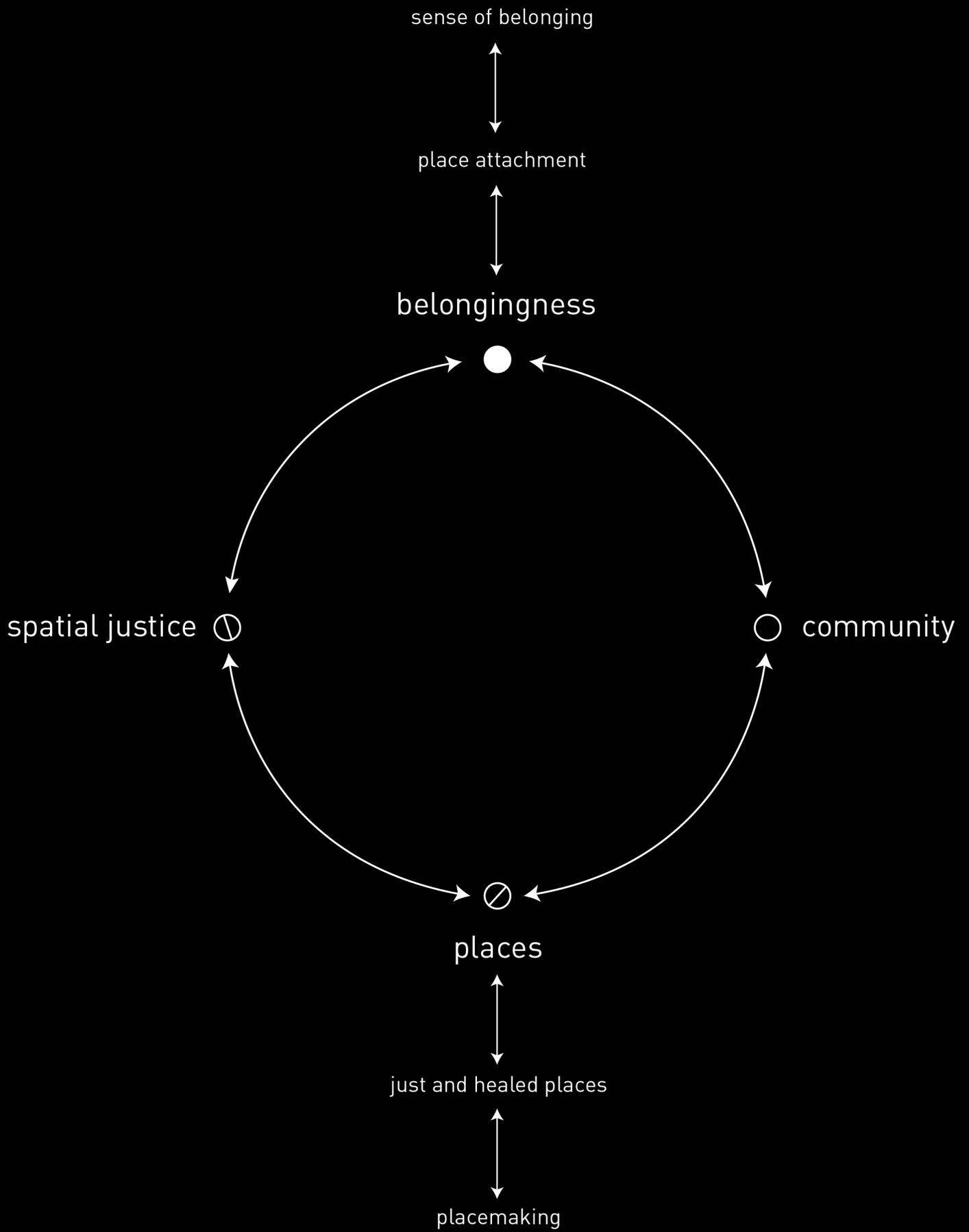
With community engagement and participation, new, vibrant, and inclusive places can be created and improved by prioritizing placemaking and new urbanism techniques that consider the needs of all community members.

7

Creating just and healed spaces can lead to the realization of spatial justice within urban environments.

8

The relationship between placemaking, spatial justice, and belongingness is bidirectional, as the creation of just and healed spaces can foster a greater sense of attachment and promote spatial justice, while the realization of spatial justice can reinforce a sense of belonging within urban communities.



thesis structure

The thesis is structured in six chapters: The general overview of the discussed terminologies in the thesis, the new approaches and notions, the factors that can foster belongingness with the tool of placemaking, the survey findings, the discussion, and the conclusion.

The first chapter is about the comprehensive summary of the existing literature, explanations of the terminologies and a creation of new framework about sense of place that have been widely discussed in the overall thesis.

The third chapter tries to answer the question of "What Fosters Belongingness?". It aims to identify the key elements that can foster belongingness in public places.

The second chapter makes an effort to highlight the importance of difference of identities. It tries to understand the perspective of those who have less advantages in the city from the point of view of belongingness, community building while searching for spatial justice.

Chapter four is focused on placemaking. It seeks to understand the key principles and aspects of placemaking and how their positive and negative aspects will serve for spatial justice and well-being.

Chapter fifth is dedicated to the survey that was conducted. By asking questions about their cities to people living in different countries and cities, the survey tried to determine the criteria that trigger people's belongingness and what are the criterias of living in an environment that encourages well-being, trust, and connection among residents.

In the last part, repetitive and new values were determined, a manifest was written and the order of importance of the criteria to be taken into account in determining when placemaking was established.

research aim & objectives

placemaking strategies in urban planning projects in order to enhance one's quality of life and make the city fair and livable for all.

The aim of this research is to investigate the relationship between placemaking, spatial justice, and a sense of belonging within urban environments, exploring the role of placemaking and identifying the key factors in creating just and healed spaces that promote well-being and attachment within urban communities.

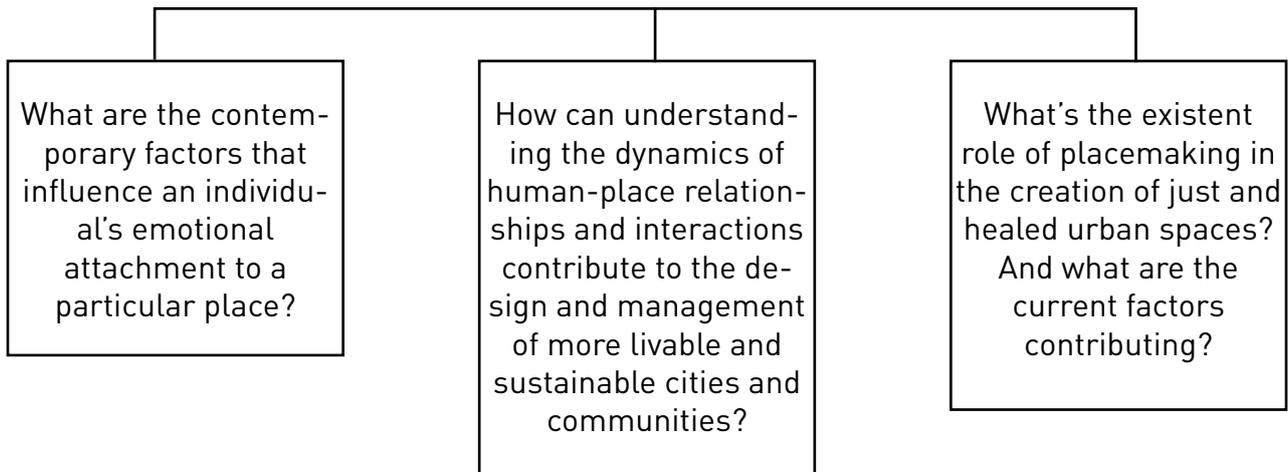
The objective of the research is to conduct a survey analysis to gather data on how urban residents perceive their belonging and attachment types, in order to provide an updated view of the topics mentioned above from the perspective of the current urban settings, assessing the effectiveness of placemaking strategies in promoting well-being and attachment within urban communities and proposing recommendations for enhancing belongingness and promoting spatial justice within urban communities.

Another objective of this research is to emphasize the significance of perception in urban planning, taking into account not only the physical space but also the way citizens perceive it in order to create better spaces that make citizens feel included and give them a sense of ownership. Since this leads to a stronger connection between citizens and their environment, it is important to understand how this is the key for a cohesive and harmonious community.

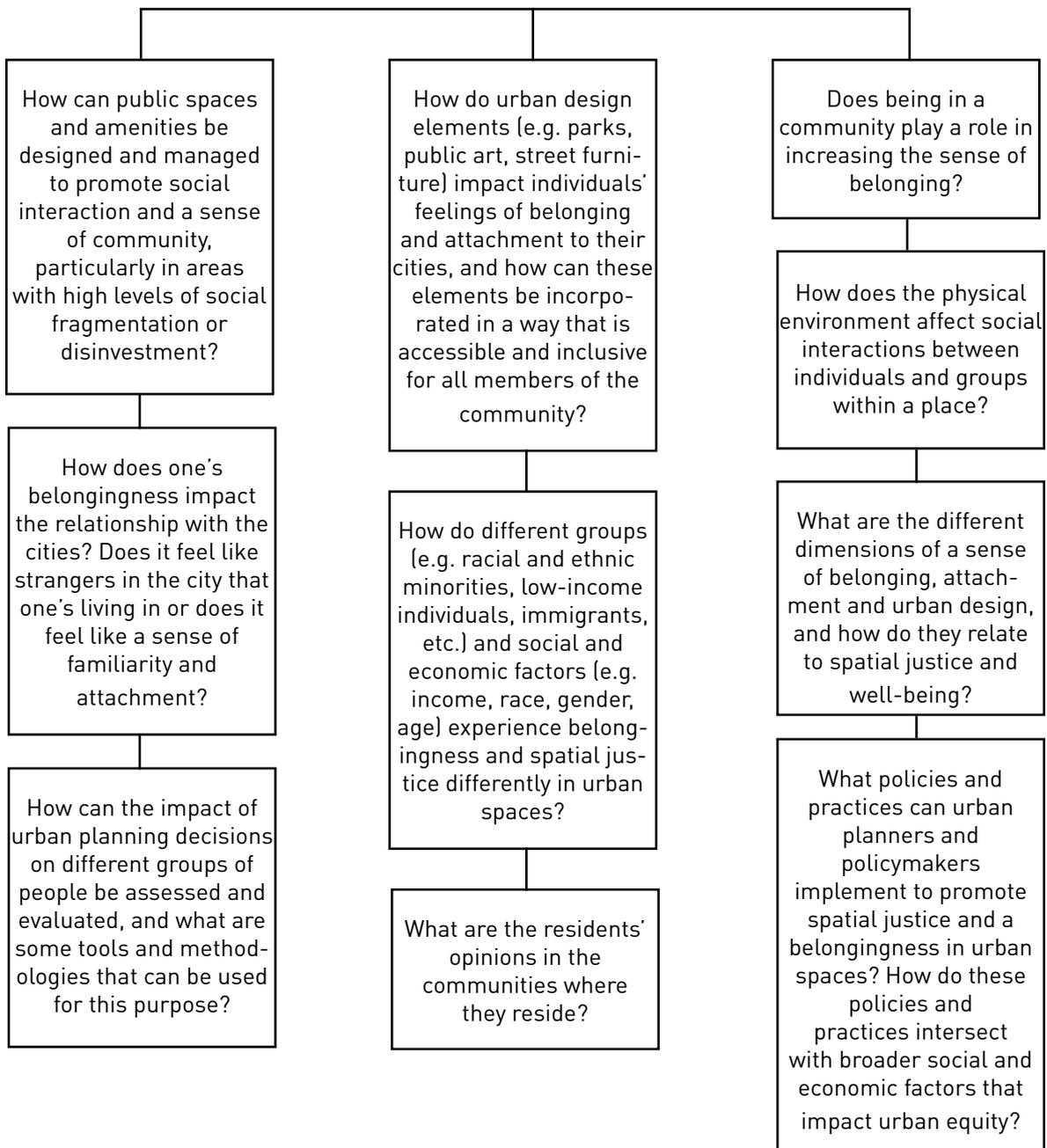
Conclusively, this research seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between people's interactions with places, how they form a relationship and consecutively being in harmony together and protecting one another. It tries to support the importance of a sense of belonging in building a sense of home and connection to place through the analysis of current settings and the research techniques stated.

research questions

The following primary research questions will be addressed in this thesis.



The following related questions were investigated to help answer these research questions:



methodology

Literature review: A comprehensive review of relevant literature on placemaking, spatial justice, sense of community, sense of belonging and place attachment conducts to identify key themes and findings from the literature, and to inform the development of research questions and hypotheses.

Survey research: A survey administered to urban residents to understand their sense of belongingness, perceptions of spatial justice, and attitudes towards placemaking strategies. The survey was conducted in both Turkish and English languages and was disseminated through social media. This quantitative data is then analyzed in SPSS to identify patterns and relationships between these variables.

Interviews: Conversations and photograph documentations of selected participants' daily life are used in the research in order to provide an in-depth understanding of everyday places as well as how they contribute to one's routine.

Wordwide examples: A selection of worlwide examples are given to highlight the impact of design on cities and its users.

research scope

The research scope was based on exploring the origins of the concept of belongingness, its use through time, and how it can be helpful in urban planning nowadays for spatial justice and well-being.

In the surveys, respondents from many countries and places are questioned about their perceptions of spatial fairness and sense of belonging. Data collection was done in order to be able to use people's impressions of various locations as instances of how different people experience a sense of belonging and attachment.

One of the main goals of this thesis is to show how a sense of belonging is essential for building a sense of home and attachment to place, despite the different cultural, social, and economic origins of people in a particular urban area.

The limitations in gathering direct data from remote locations due to distance led to the use of social media, surveys, and the participation of the general public in the implementation of the project.

significance

Although sense of belonging, place attachment, placemaking and spatial justice are widely discussed in the literature, the thesis will contribute by analyzing target groups and asking related questions in the changing and evolving society for a better understanding of the relationship between placemaking, spatial justice, and a sense of belonging within urban environments, how they are intertwined with each other and how they affect one another. It seeks to address how these elements may be used to build more sustainable, inclusive, and equitable cities.

Another important point of the research is to question the need for new interpretations of new notions brought by daily life due to the change in today's needs and priorities, and whether these needs/differences are adequately discussed in the world of urban design and architecture.

The research tries to look at these notions from today's perspective, trying to understand from the viewpoint of the disadvantaged and examines how belongingness is/could be constructed from these perspectives and how these will serve for communitization and then spatial justice.

The research's conclusions can guide judgements on urban planning and policy formation, provide an assesment of how effective the common methods are as well as what the expectation of current generation is, assisting in the creation of just and healing spaces that put well-being first and support spatial justice in urban areas.



how to read the book

places

people, communities

interactions

Sense of Place

“Places have stories to tell, and a sense of place is the ability to listen and engage with those narratives, allowing them to shape our understanding and relationship with the world.” - Rebecca Solnit

Rebecca Solnit, Savage Dreams: A Journey into the Landscape Wars of the American West.

prologue

Although researchers, philosophers, and designers have studied the concepts of space, place and the sense of place for centuries, their meanings nonetheless change throughout time in response to shifting social and cultural settings. These words serve as a framework for comprehending the connection between physical environments and human experiences while examining the intricate interplay between space and place.

For this thesis, it is essential to delve into the meanings and understand the complex interplay between space and place is essential for creating environments that not only meet functional needs, but also evoke emotions, memories, and a sense of connection to the surrounding context.

What is a place? What gives a place its identity, its aura?

These questions occurred to the physicists Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg when they visited Kronborg Castle in Denmark. Bohr said to Heisenberg: Isn't it strange how this castle changes as soon as one imagines that Hamlet lived here? As scientists we believe that a castle consists only of stones, and admire the way the architect put them together.

The stones, the green roof with its patina, the wood carvings in the church, constitute the whole castle. None of this should be changed by the fact that Hamlet lived here, and yet it is changed completely. Suddenly the walls and the ramparts speak a quite different language. The courtyard becomes an entire world, a dark corner reminds us of the darkness in the human soul, we hear Hamlet's "To be or not to be." Yet all we really know about Hamlet is that his name appears in a thirteenth-century chronicle. No one can prove that he really lived, let alone that he lived here. But everyone knows the questions Shakespeare had him ask, the human depth he was made to reveal, and so he, too, had to be found a place on earth, here in Kronborg. And once we know that, Kronborg becomes quite a different castle for us." [1] [2].



Kronborg Castle, Denmark
Figure 2

The relationship between space and place is complex and multifaceted. While space refers to the physical and measurable aspects of our environment, place is more about the subjective experiences, meanings and feelings that we attach to a particular space.

As Edward Relph argues, “space and place are not separate entities, but rather different aspects of the same reality” [3].

In other words, space and place are intertwined and inseparable, and our experience of one is influenced by our perception and understanding of the other.

Tuan suggests that space is a void that separates objects, while place is a concentration of meaning. In other words, space is an empty container without any social connections, whereas place is a location created by human experiences, and is filled with meanings. Thus, a place is not just a physical location, but it is also a site of emotional attachment and significance and is shaped by people and their sense of meaning. The experience of a place differs from that of space, where places are derived from physical or spatial experiences, whereas *fairy* places are derived from mental, hypothetical, spiritual, and emotional experiences [4].

Together, space and place shape our understanding of the world and influence how we interact with it, not just as a physical entity but also as an emotional and psychological one.

“Place is the physical embodiment of identity, memory, and imagination” [5].

fairy

Tuan distinguishes between physical or spatial experiences that give rise to places and mental, hypothetical, spiritual, and emotional experiences that create what he calls “*fairy places*.” Fairy places are not physical locations but rather are derived from subjective experiences and are imbued with cultural, spiritual, or emotional significance. For example, a person may feel a sense of attachment and belonging to a particular forest or mountain that has no physical or geographical significance.

“Space is a necessary condition for place, but place is a human product” [6].

so why does this distinction matter?

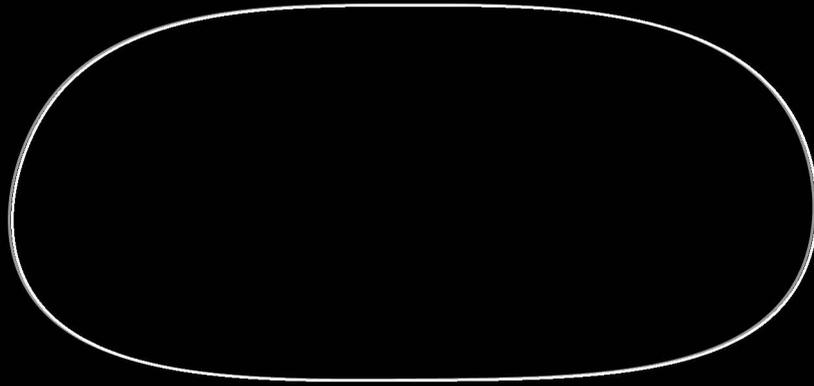
For one thing, it helps designers to think more deeply about the needs and desires of the people who will be using a space. By understanding the social and cultural context of a place more meaningful and resonant places can be created. Thus, design can be used to help shape the way people experience a space, creating different moods, emotions, and atmospheres.

But there's another reason why the relationship between space and place is so important: it serves as a constant reminder that design is never neutral. Every choice we make in terms of design has the ability to influence how people use a space and the meanings they ascribe to it.

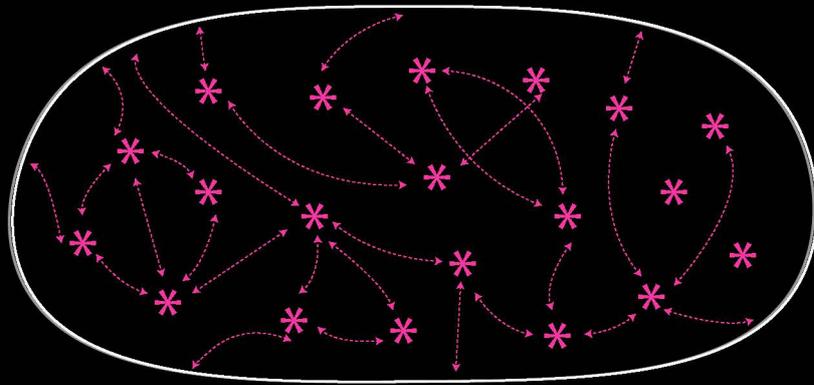
This matter will be discussed later in following chapters.

what makes a space
into a **place?**

“the spaces where life occurs are places...A place is a space which has a distinct character” [7].

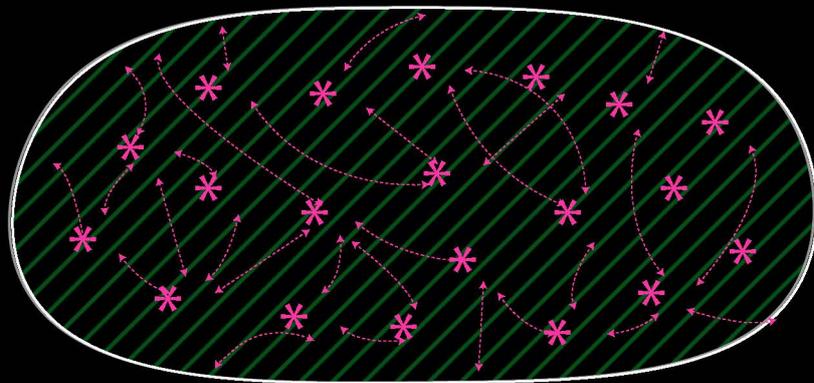


space



interaction*

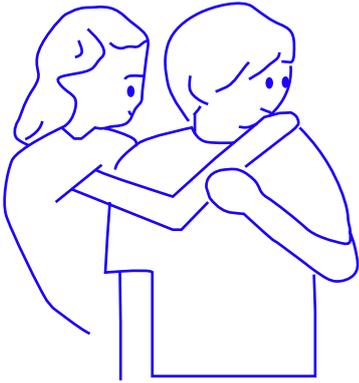
interaction can be activities, memories,
experiences and meaning.



place

human interaction

How individuals engaging with a location and one another can contribute to a sense of place. A public park can become a destination if regular gatherings of families, friends, and neighbors take place there for picnics, sporting events, and other social activities.



personal experience and memory

Personal experiences and memories associated with a space can also turn it into a place. A friendly glance, or an angry face can shape our overall feelings about the area we associate them with. For example, a childhood home or a favorite vacation spot can hold a special meaning for an individual and become a place in their mind.



place

A place has a unique identity or character, whereas a space is only an area or volume. It is the human experience of a space that transforms it into a place. There are several factors that can contribute to this transformation.

feeling of belonging

A space can become a place for people when they have a sense of belonging there. People may experience this when they connect with the locals, culture, or environment of a specific area.



cultural and historical relevance

Places can take on a cultural or historical significance due to the emotional and symbolic ties individuals have with them. For instance, the items, tales, and events connected to a museum or historic site can make it a place.



In short, a place is more than just a physical location; it is a space that has been given meaning, emotional attachments through human experience, interaction, and memory. It is either given by us, or given by others but discovered by us.



A street corner is only a physical location, for the individuals who congregate there every weekend, it serves as a hub of connection and community.

Freyberg Square by Isthmus

Auckland, New Zealand

Figure 5, 6



At first glance, the square and city plazas can only be seen as a meeting point but to the local community it becomes a hub of culture, recreation, and civic engagement. It acts as a location for occasions including musical concerts, cultural celebrations, and public meetings. Also, it might be a location to unwind, with seats and trees for shade offering a tranquil haven in the middle of a busy city. The square is a focal point for social interaction and civic discourse as the neighborhood values it as a gathering place, inspiring residents to get along, exchange ideas, and work toward shared objectives.

or if we were to describe Istanbul as a space we would say:

Istanbul is the largest city in the northwest of Turkey, serving as the country's economic, cultural and historic hub. The city straddles the Bosphorus strait, lying in both Europe and Asia, between the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea and has a population of over 15 million residents. Istanbul is the most populous European city, and the world's 15th-largest city. Istanbul's climate is temperate, and is often described as transitional between the Mediterranean climate typical of the western and southern coasts of Turkey, and the oceanic climate of the northwestern coasts of the country. The city's summers are warm to hot and moderately dry, with an average daytime temperature of about 27 °C, and less than 7 days of precipitation per month.



Istanbul, Türkiye
Figure 7

but, if we were describing Istanbul with notions of place, we might say:

Istanbul is a city of contrasts, where East meets West, and ancient history blends with modernity. It has been a melting pot of civilizations for centuries, and its culture and architecture reflect this rich heritage. Its skyline is dotted with majestic domes and minarets, while its streets buzz with the sounds of honking cars and street vendors. The city's cuisine is a delicious blend of Ottoman, Byzantine, and Mediterranean flavors, and its coffeehouses are famous for their strong Turkish coffee and lively conversations. It is also home to vibrant nightlife, lively streets, and bustling markets. The people of Istanbul are known for their hospitality, and their love for tea and conversation. Whether you're wandering through the Grand Bazaar or watching the sunset over the Golden Horn, Istanbul is a city that will enchant and inspire you.



Istanbul, Türkiye
Figure 8

**so now we understand
what makes spaces
into places,
how we perceive,
conceive
and
understand
the places?
are they the same for
everyone?
what about our feelings
towards a place?**

sense(s) of place

Sense of place refers to the subjective and emotive bonds and experiences that an individual or group has to a particular place or environment, ranging from the home to the nation. This concept involves how people perceive, experience, interpret, and react to the physical and cultural features of a place, as well as how they derive meaning and value from it. A sense of place is an experienced and expressive manner of knowing, picturing, yearning for, holding, remembering, articulating, living, contesting, and contending with locations, according to anthropologists Steven Feld and Keith Basso [9].

emotive

Emotives describe the process by which emotions are managed and shaped, not only by society and its expectations but also by individuals themselves as they seek to express the inexpressible, namely how they “feel” [8].

Sense of place is a significant aspect of an individual’s relationship with their environment, reflecting the emotional and psychological connections that can form between people and the places they inhabit or visit. It is a subjective experience that varies among people, history, and over the course of one’s lifetime. In respect to its ecological, social, economic, cultural, aesthetic, historical, or other features, people may ascribe different meanings to the same location. Through individual experiences, a sense of place develops and influences how people see, comprehend, and engage with their surroundings [10]. John Brinckerhoff Jackson highlights that sense of place is something that we create over time and is reinforced by a sense of recurring events. It is a unique perception and interpretation of a place that may be influenced by personal experiences, cultural background, and social context [11].

spirit of place

“Spirit of Place” refers to the unique atmosphere, energy, or character of a particular place. It is the intangible essence that is associated with a location and is often influenced by the cultural and historical context of the place.

For example, New Orleans is often characterized as having a unique spirit, or “joie de vivre,” that is captured in the writings of authors such as Tennessee Williams and Anne Rice. Williams’ play “A Streetcar Named Desire” is set in New Orleans and features characters who are deeply connected to the city’s culture and history. Similarly, Rice’s “Interview with the Vampire” is set in New Orleans and draws on the city’s supernatural folklore and Gothic architecture to create a haunting and atmospheric setting.

In addition to referring to specific places and regions that promote a genuine sense of human attachment and belonging, the term “sense of place” is also used to define the distinctiveness or singular nature of certain locations [12]. Along with the negative emotions of anxiety, dysphoria, and placelessness, a sense of place can also refer to the connections that are made by a place, home, or habitation and that foster feelings of comfort, safety, and wellbeing.

The physical characteristics of a place (such as its architecture, landscape, and natural features), the social and cultural context of the place (such as its history, traditions, and community norms), and the personal experiences, memories, feelings associated with the place (such as significant life events or routines or personal values) are just a few examples of the factors that can affect one’s sense of place.



*St. Louis Cathedral
Auckland, New Zealand
Figure 9*

setting

1. A person's immediate surroundings, including both physical and social elements [13].

2. The place where something is or where something happens, and the general environment [14].

topophilia

Topophilia (From Greek topos "place" and -philia, "love of") [15], is the affective bond between people and place or setting. The term is used to describe the emotional connection or attachment that people have to a particular place or environment.

It is a strong sense of place that suggests that people can develop a strong sense of place identity and a positive emotional relationship with certain physical landscapes, such as cities, regions, countries, or natural environments.

Topophilia can manifest in different ways, including a sense of pride, belonging, familiarity, comfort, or nostalgia towards a place. It can also be influenced by cultural, historical, social, and personal factors, such as one's upbringing, memories, experiences, or beliefs.

Without a critical analysis of cities as socially built environments that people both inherit and create, understanding the sense of place in the urban setting would be insufficient. Cities' sense of place is influenced by migration, global mobility, and the blending of the natural and constructed environments. Additionally, it reflects the points where politics, history, the environment, and the economy converge. Both Gruenewald and Haymes have used critical geography to show how cities are social creations infused with contested race, class, and gender social interactions that enable greatly disparate feelings of place among its citizens [16]. This is consistent with the idea that different people may assign various meanings to the same location. Urban settings have a complex web of meanings, and our perceptions of these contested meanings provide a rich context for individual inquiry and group learning. Therefore, a strong sense of place can have a positive impact on an individual's well-being, promoting feelings of security, belonging, and identity. It can also contribute to a sense of social cohesion and community pride, fostering a shared sense of ownership and responsibility for the well-being of a particular place.



placelessness

Placelessness is the feeling of being disconnected from one's surroundings, of being in a space that lacks a sense of place, sense of identity or character. These locations are referred to as "non-places" by anthropologist Marc Augé [17].

Edward Relph argues that the modern world is becoming increasingly placeless due to the standardization and homogenization of built environments where buildings, roads, and public spaces all look and feel the same because architectural designs are not in line with the local character of a place [18].

Since this phenomenon is often linked to globalization and the spread of consumer culture, a sense of uniqueness and authenticity is sacrificed for convenience and familiarity. Examples of placelessness can be found in many urban environments around the world, where large chain stores and restaurants dominate the landscape, often replacing locally-owned businesses that once gave the area a distinct character. They could be found anywhere; examples of placeless landscape elements include roadside strip malls, gas/petrol stations and convenience stores, fast food franchises, and chain department stores. It is said that certain historic locations or neighborhoods have lost their sense of place because they have been highly marketed for tourism and new housing developments. This might cause disorientation because the experience can occur anywhere, regardless of location or municipality. A similar sensation of alienation and disconnection from the local community might result from the construction of major office complexes and shopping centers.

Las Vegas Strip, USA
Figure 10



One example of a placeless environment is the Las Vegas Strip. The iconic stretch of road is home to numerous casinos, hotels, and other entertainment venues that all share a similar aesthetic, often imitating famous landmarks from around the world.

Mc Donalds, USA
Figure 11



Mc Donalds, Italy
Figure 12



Another example is the proliferation of fast-food chains around the world. While convenient and affordable, these restaurants often have the same design and menu, regardless of their location. This can create a sense of placelessness, as the experience of dining at a McDonald's or KFC is the same whether one is in USA or Italy.

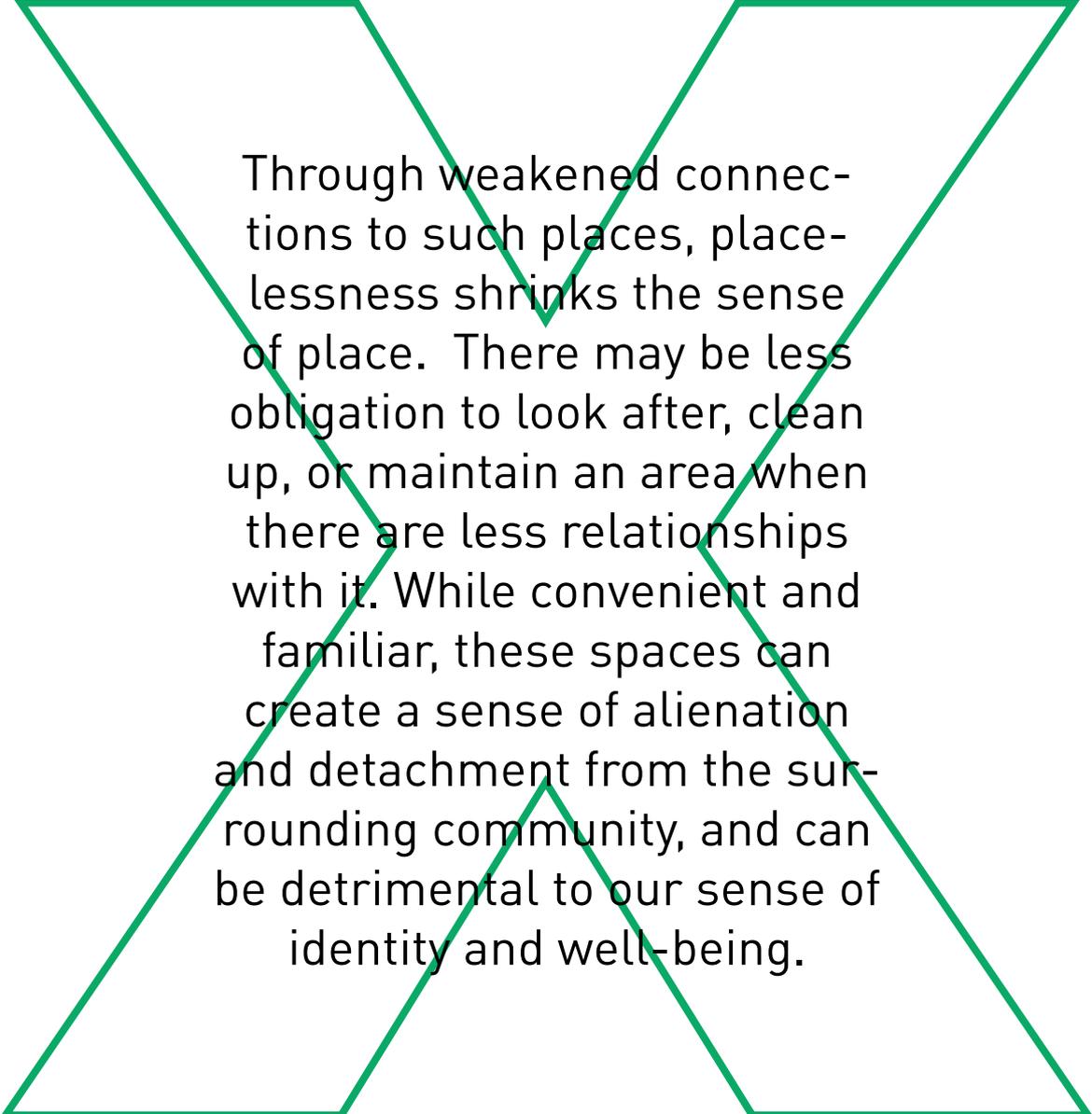
strip mall

The term “strip mall,” “strip center,” or “strip plaza” refers to a style of retail center that is popular in the USA and features a sidewalk in front of the rows of stores. In most cases, strip malls are constructed as a single structure with sizable parking spaces in front.

Strip Mall in Los Angeles, USA
Figure 13



For instance, while strip malls host amenities and services people need, they don't evoke engagement with the space or represent the values of the community. We may feel less inspired and more detached as a result.



Through weakened connections to such places, placelessness shrinks the sense of place. There may be less obligation to look after, clean up, or maintain an area when there are less relationships with it. While convenient and familiar, these spaces can create a sense of alienation and detachment from the surrounding community, and can be detrimental to our sense of identity and well-being.

everyday places

Everyday places are locations that people frequently visit or interact with on a daily basis as part of their regular routines. These places are often familiar, mundane, and taken for granted, but they play an important role in people's lives.

According to Lefebvre, the only setting where the subject's spatial practices and experiences can be found is daily life. This setting includes the city itself, its physical and social interactions, and its processes. He underlined the significance of regular life and regular locales in forming social ties and the development of space in his book "The Production of Space." He maintained that common places like streets, parks, and neighborhoods are actively experienced, formed, and reproduced by social relations rather than being neutral or inert locations. By shaping, this production process is maintained in daily life [19].

Everyday places are important because they shape people's experiences and contribute to their overall quality of life. These places also provide opportunities for social interaction and community building.

what's Jane Doe's
everyday places?
and how she
perceives them?
how does she feel
towards them?
and how do us?

Let us use a simple
examination to demonstrate
feelings and perceptions.



Ibrahim Kılıç and his Everyday Places and Perceptions

24 years old
From Ankara, Türkiye
Student of Politecnico di Milano
Living in Milan, Lambrate since September 2023



*in school
he has mixed feelings about here*



*he travels with his bike mostly
he feels free when he rides it*



*he uses metro when he doesn't have his bike
he feels tense in the metro because of the risk of robbery*



*one of his favorite things of Milan: the
fountains*



*in the cafe in front of the school
he feels relaxed here*



*in the market he goes everyday
he likes the market because of the variety*



*his favourite ice-cream shop
he loves here*



*the park in front of his home
he likes here but sometimes feels scared*



*at his home
he feels comfortable here*



Ceren Yeşilbaş and her Everyday Places and Perceptions

23 years old
From Istanbul, Türkiye
Student of Politecnico di Milano
Living in Milan, Lima since September 2022



*in school
she likes working here*



*in the bar
she loves engaging with people here*



*she travels with tram mostly
she feels fussy here because tram is so slow for her*



*other than tram, she uses trains often
she doesn't feel comfortable here*



*where she trains (she is a national swimmer)
where she feels free the most*



*her favourite ice-cream shop
she goes there after her trainings*



*the park in front of her house
she loves resting here*



*in the market she goes everyday
she likes here but sometimes feels frustrated
because it's so small*



*at her home
she feels cozy here*

Perceptual, cognitive, affective, and behavioral interactions are the four basic forms of interactions with locations and people, according to Bitner. All of these interactions are interconnected, reinforce one another, and have a big impact on how people perceive their physical surroundings [20]. Cognitive interaction refers to the thought processes involved in interacting with one's environment, whereas perceptual interaction deals with how people perceive and understand the sensory elements of their surroundings. While behavioral interaction refers to activities and behaviors in response to the environment, affective interaction deals with emotional reactions to it. Positive thoughts, feelings, and actions are linked to greater social contact, physical activity, and cognitive function as well as better mental health and performance.

Another point of view is, in her paper "What is Sense of Place?" Jennifer E. Cross explores the concept of sense of place and its different dimensions [21]. She identifies six types of relationships: biographical, spiritual, ideological, narrative, commodified, and dependent. A single location may be the subject of multiple relationships between people, each of which is subject to change throughout time. Relationships can be categorized into six types: biographical, spiritual, ideological, narrative, commodified, and dependent. Biographical relationships are based on personal history, spiritual relationships are emotional connections, ideological relationships are fixed on moral beliefs, narrative relationships are based on stories, commodified relationships are based on desirable traits, and dependent relationships comes from necessity.

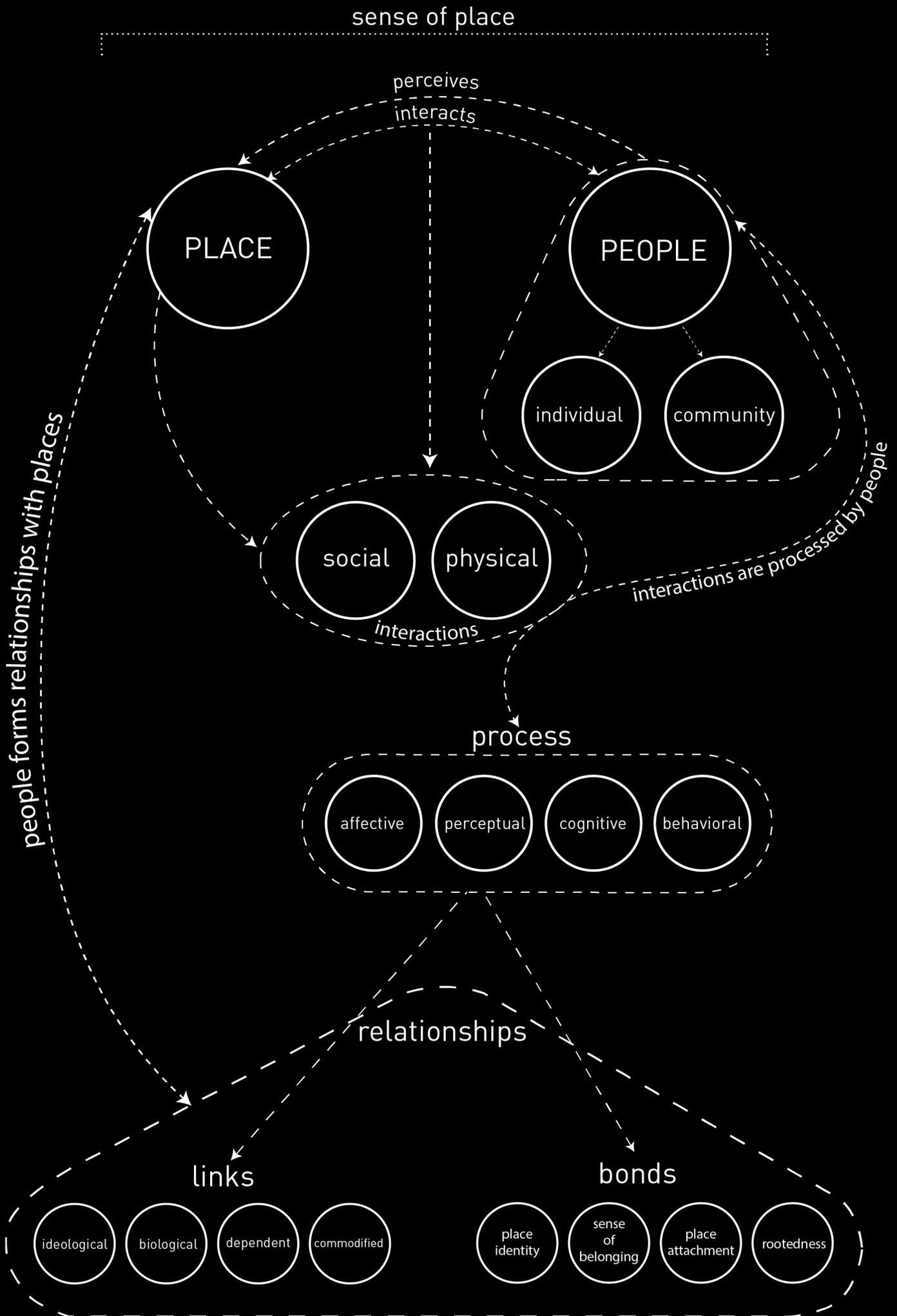
The classification of ties to place by Cross offers a thorough understanding of the various ways in which people relate to a location. Every relationship has its own characteristics and is affected by individual circumstances, experiences, and beliefs.

After taking into account both of these categorizations and valuable points of view, a new framework for comprehending how people interact with their environments was created as seen in

Figure 16.

By examining the various types of interactions and relationships, we can gain a more nuanced understanding of the role that places play in shaping people's lives and identities.

Let's break down the new framework.



It all starts
with the
interaction.*



* the action or influence of
people, groups, or things on
one another [22].

What place does this interaction occur in?

Different types of places can affect social and physical interactions in various ways.



*Piss Alley
Shinjuku, Japan
Figure 17*



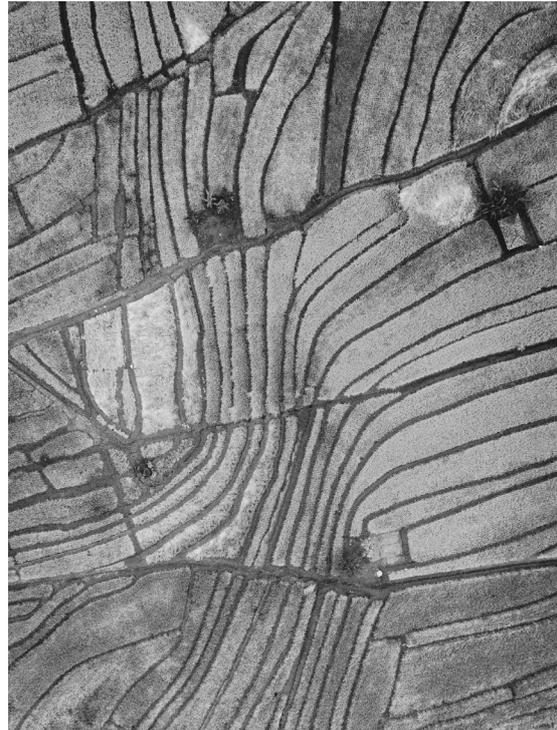
*Cala Mezzaluna
Isola San Pietro, Italy
Figure 18*

For example, a crowded city street may encourage more social interactions between people due to the close proximity and shared public spaces, while a remote natural area may encourage more physical interactions with the environment.

Different types of places can also impact the processes of cognitive, affective, behavioral, and perceptual interactions.



Aerial Photography of Road with Cars
Figure 19



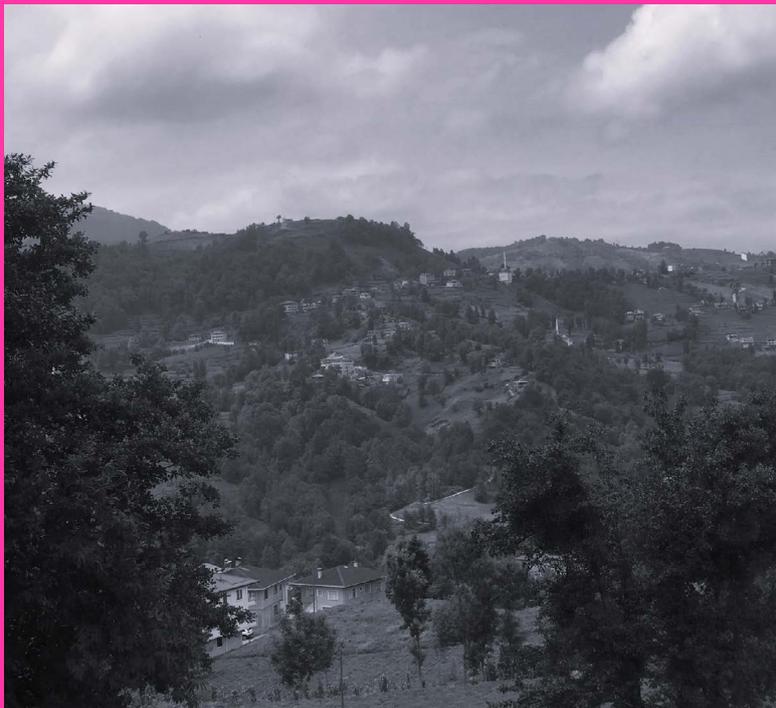
Aerial Photography of Rice Field
Figure 20

For instance, a bustling urban environment may stimulate cognitive interactions by providing a multitude of sensory inputs such as the sounds and sights of traffic, while a quiet rural setting may encourage more contemplative and introspective cognitive processes.

The types of relationships that people form with places may also be influenced by the type of place.



Uzungöl, Trabzon, Türkiye
Figure 21



Çalek, Of, Trabzon, Türkiye
Figure 22

The author's hometown of Trabzon is here as a vacation destination and sense of attachment for hometown.

For example, a person may develop a strong sense of place attachment and identity with their hometown, while their relationship with a vacation destination may be more commodified and based on their desire for relaxation and entertainment.

Who is performing this **interaction**? One person or multiple **people**?



Pacific Plaza by SWA Group

Dallas, USA

Figure 23, 24

Interactions with places can involve one person or many people. When multiple people are involved, the social dynamics and context can have an impact on the interaction.

People may experience distinct emotions in public settings depending on whether they are with company or not. A person may feel alone and insecure in the same public setting, yet when they are with a friend or friends, they may feel pleased and happy. Or vice versa occasionally. This also influences an individual's perceptual experience of the place, as well as their behavioral choices (e.g. deciding to stay or leave).

How is this interaction done?

Physical and social interactions both refer to how individuals engage with one another whereas social interactions refer to the physical characteristics of a location, such as its topography, climate, and built environment.



*Little Island by MNLA
New York, USA
Figure 25*

Participating in a community event or festival and engaging with fellow residents.



*Trinity Square by re-form landscape architecture
Hull City, UK
Figure 26*

Visiting historical sites or landmarks and learning about the cultural significance of a place.

how are these interactions processed?

These types are the ways of being processed and transformed into interactions.

Cognitive interaction refers to the mental processes which people think about and understand a place. This type of interaction includes people's attention, memory, and reasoning processes when they are navigating their surroundings. Cognitive interaction also includes people's spatial knowledge and mental maps of their environment.



*Eiffel Tower
Paris, France
Figure 27*

One of the most famous landmarks on earth.

Creating a mental map of a new city and memorizing street names and landmarks for navigation and making a list of must-see tourist attractions before visiting a new place.

Perceptual interaction describes how people interact with their surroundings through their senses. People's perceptions and interpretations of the physical characteristics of their environment, such as the colors, textures, and shapes of buildings, landscapes, and streetscapes, are the focus of this kind of interaction. People's awareness of the noises, smells, and temperatures in their surroundings is also a part of perceptual contact.



*Mellemrummet by BOGL
Copenhagen, Denmark
Figure 28*

Forming impressions of a place based on sensory experiences like sight, sound, smell, and touch and noticing and interpreting the physical features of a place, such as landscape.



*Dreieich, Germany
Figure 29*

Judging the safety and cleanliness of a place based on visual cues like graffiti or litter.

Affective interaction refers to people's emotional responses to their environment. This type of interaction includes people's positive or negative feelings when they are in different environments influenced by a range of factors, including the physical features of the environment, people's expectations of the environment, and their past experiences.



*Grand Canyon
Arizona, USA
Figure 30*

Feeling a sense of awe and wonder when visiting a natural wonder like the Grand Canyon or Niagara Falls

Behavioral interaction refers to people's actions and behaviors in response to their environment. This type of interaction includes people's use of different spaces and their movement patterns.



*Running of the Bulls Festival
Pamplona, Spain
Figure 31*

Participating in local traditions and customs, such as attending Mardi Gras in New Orleans or the Running of the Bulls in Pamplona.

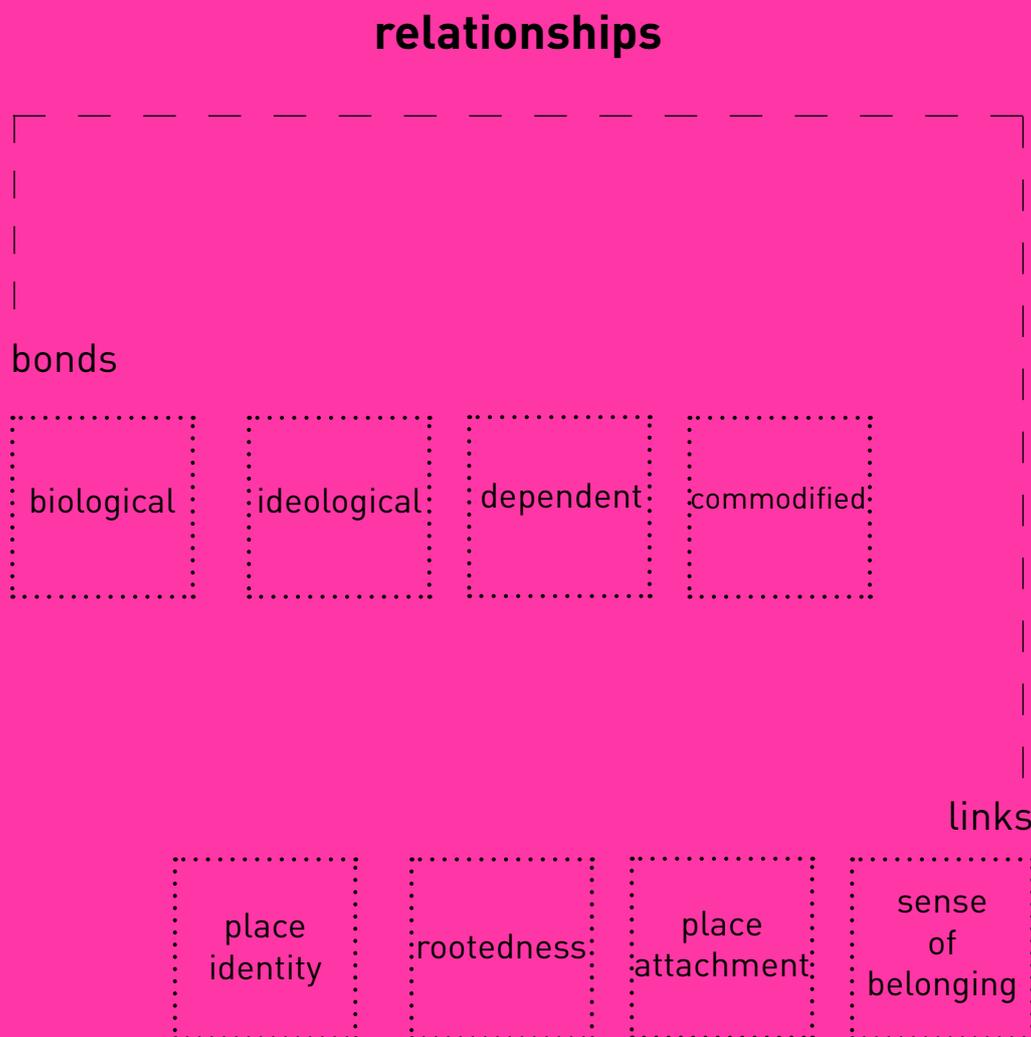
How are
relationships
formed?

What type of
relationships
can be formed?



Various interactions can then lead to the formation of relationships between people and places. These relationships can be categorized into links and bonds.

Links, on the other hand, refer to the more practical connections people have with a place, such as their biological, ideological, dependent, or commodified relationships with it.



Biological

This kind of connection refers to the genetic and physical relationships that exist between people and their places of origin, such as their places of birth or long-term residence. It's a relationship that grows through time and is founded on individual experiences.

"My name is Leonardo and I live in Livorno on the seaside of the Toscana region. I have lived there for 26 years and all the time I spent there brings me a variety of emotions and experiences.

On one hand it provides me with a sense of stability, familiarity , what we can call nowadays "a comfort zone" , helped from the fact that it is not a big town, just 158.000 inhabitants and from the unique charm of a seaside town especially in summer.

I tied myself with various places and quarters of my town, I grow up near the stadium, just 50 meters, and this fact help me to grow up with my passion for football , just back of my house there's a big garden, like a long green tongue of grass where we went nearly every day with the friends of the neighborhood to spend time just talking or playing, free from any phone or device who can distract us from a sense of pure enjoyment that I never felt after that times, and I can admit that now all this memories look so clear but at the same time old in my mind like they belong to another era.

On the other hand growing up , especially if your curiosity is big like mine , a comfort zone somehow can be dangerous, dangerous for learning how's the life out of a small oasi like Livorno, out of that there are many way of living and think not only one , from my experiences traveling or living outside I understand that what really makes me feel alive is a mix of cultures and a town who can change through the seasons and through the years.

This situation has provided me with a deep connection to the place, but It has allowed me to appreciate the unique qualities of my hometown and also to value the diversity and differences of other places and cultures. Ultimately, it has shaped me into the person I am today and given me a greater understanding and appreciation for the world around me."



Leonardo Sireno

Biological

This kind of connection refers to the genetic and physical relationships that exist between people and their places of origin, such as their places of birth or long-term residence. It's a relationship that grows through time and is founded on individual experiences.



Ecem Karakavuk

"I'm Ecem. I am 25 years old. I was born in Istanbul and still reside here. When I think of Istanbul, I feel both a very strong love and a very strong lovelessness at the same time. Istanbul is a city that hosts many ethnic origins, languages and races and with its historical richness. It is not possible for someone who really lives in Istanbul to stay away from this layered city history. No doubt that some streets of Istanbul make me feel both in the past and in the present. It leads to the feeling of research and discovery, like I would like to know its story. Despite these, while walking on some streets, it creates a fear that something will happen to me on the next street. Istanbul is a grave of crooked buildings that overlap with the increasing population due to inevitable migration and birth. If you live here, you have to calculate the traffic time when you go to a place, otherwise Istanbul will steal a significant part of your day and you just see that crowd swallowed you up. Such as, It feels like you're an ant and you can get crushed in the chaos. In spite of, sometimes it is good to get lost in that crowd and you will get lost in the busy flow of Istanbul. As it hosts two continents, if you know Istanbul well, you know what to do in which continent is more enjoyable, and the pleasure that Istanbul adds varies according to the continents. There are so many places in Istanbul that I think I cannot explore all of them even if I eat and drink out for the rest of my life. Living here often feels lucky. Reaching most of the service I could ask for 24 hours a day is a great luxury. Not to mention that it increases my level of culture and most importantly trains me to be a good driver :) For example, they say across the country, "She/he who drives in Istanbul can drive anywhere". Since I live in a big city like Istanbul, I feel more sociable and confident. At the same time, I turn into an impatient, tired and bored person as I get older because the noises, smells and lights around me are so much that sometimes I wish myself a simpler and smaller life elsewhere. But if you ask my most sincere opinion, wherever I go, I can't imagine a place where I'd be happier than being here at my core. I was born and raised in Istanbul and my one of the biggest desire is to be able to be blended the lands of this city when I die."

Ideological

This connection is founded on a person's moral and ethical principles on their duty to a certain area. Its foundations may be political, philosophical, religious, or secular, but its main focus is on upholding moral standards for one's duty to one's environment.

"I was born and raised here (he is talking about Trabzon). When I had a job opportunity, I migrated to Heidelberg, Germany. I worked there for 3-4 years. Then my grandfather called me to look after the land in Trabzon and take over the business and I returned to Trabzon, Turkey. But livestock, which was once valuable, started not to pay that much later on. So I decided to immigrate to Istanbul to continue my livelihood. I made a life in Istanbul, found a job, had a home, had a family. Years passed. My grandfather died, my father died. I always wanted to go back to Trabzon and take care of the house, garden and tea left to us (they produce tea in Trabzon). I came back here when I got old and raised the kids. It is my duty to take care of the lands inherited from our grandfather and father. It's my responsibility and I'm happy to do it. Now I am very happy to live here, I deal with the garden and tea production every day. I hope one day my children will take over the family business like me and take care of family values and traditions."



Cengiz Çakiroğlu (on the right, sitting) with his brothers in his house Of, Trabzon, Türkiye

Ideological

This connection is founded on a person's moral and ethical principles on their duty to a certain area. Its foundations may be political, philosophical, religious, or secular, but its main focus is on upholding moral standards for one's duty to one's environment.



Emriye Çakır

“My name is Emriye and I live in Gölcük. Gölcük is not just a place for me; it holds immense significance in my life and evokes a deep sense of moral responsibility. My connection to this town goes beyond its physical boundaries and breathtaking scenery. It is rooted in my family relationships and the preservation of cherished traditions, such as knitting.

Living according to moral guidelines for human responsibility to a place means recognizing that our actions have consequences beyond ourselves. It means valuing and nurturing the relationships that tie us to a particular location, understanding the interconnectedness of past, present, and future.

For me, this responsibility extends beyond personal satisfaction or convenience. It encompasses a commitment to my family, their heritage, and the community that has shaped me. In Gölcük, I find purpose and fulfillment by living in harmony with the moral guidelines that guide my actions, fostering connections and honoring the traditions that have woven together generations of lives.”

Dependent

This relationship is based on a person's lack of choice and dependency on a place. It may be due to economic opportunities or being constrained by lack of choice. This relationship is material and based on necessity.

"I'm Çidem. I was born and raised in Kocaeli but now I live in Istanbul. I love Kocaeli, I used to love living there and I feel like I belong there. It's a very peaceful place for me and all my family lives there. But I don't have a career-oriented option to improve myself or sustain my life there.

On the contrary, Istanbul offers opportunities that I can improve myself. Also another reasons like job opportunities, living standards, experiences and prestige. At the same time this affects our earnings. I had to move to Istanbul because of these reasons. Now I live here but I am dreaming of returning to home and build a new life there everyday."



*Çidem's Home and Her Favorite Place
Gölcük, Kocaeli, Türkiye
Figure 33*



Çidem Çakır



One of his favourite places
 Stone Mountain, Atlanta, GA, United States
 Figure 34

Dependent

This relationship is based on a person's lack of choice and dependency on a place. It may be due to economic opportunities or being constrained by lack of choice. This relationship is material and based on necessity.

"I'm Ibrahim. I was born in Ankara and raised in different cities throughout my life. I have lived in Istanbul, Stockholm, Atlanta, New York, and currently settling down in Milan. All these cities influenced my perspective on life. However, among these cities, Istanbul has had the most impact on my life. The city made me who I am today. Wherever I live, I feel like I'm connected to Istanbul all the time. I have a world of good rememberings there (the worst ones too)."

For the time being, I live in Milan. Last year, I made a substantial choice about the city that I will call "home" in the new chapter of my life. I had three options Toronto, Stockholm, and Milan. At long last, I decided on Milan. Among the other two cities, Milan is the closest alternative to the city where my parents live. For a master's student who lives in abroad, Milan is the most affordable option when compared to the other two cities. I have a love-and-hate relationship with the city. I really appreciate that Milan is a low-key mix of the other cities I've lived in as yet."



Ibrahim Kılıç



Bilge Kobak

Commodified

This relationship is based on choosing a place based on market value and a list of desirable traits and lifestyle preferences and opportunities. It is a relationship that is cognitive and based on the comparison of actual places with an ideal.

“My name is Bilge, and I was born in Bursa, Turkey. Growing up in a multicultural country surrounded by people from diverse backgrounds allowed me to experience different cultures simply by changing cities. This made me realize that there is so much to see out there and that I need to continue experiencing local life over cities, countries, and even continents, as life is not limited to where I live.

After completing my bachelor’s degree, I decided to move to Italy for my master’s degree for two years. The experience was amazing, and I fell in love with the country’s culture and people. However, after graduating, I had to make a tough decision about where to go next. I ended up moving to Germany for a job opportunity in search of a better work-life balance. This was the first time I had moved somewhere without knowing how long I would be staying.

As an expat in Germany, I realized that it was more important than ever to find a sense of belonging. Despite improvements in employee rights, I noticed significant cultural differences in society that affected the working environment. In my experience, people were more reserved compared to where I grew up and even compared to Italy. It was also challenging to connect with people who didn’t have the same struggles as I did. I didn’t feel this way in Italy because I found our cultures similar, but in Germany, the cultural differences were very apparent.

Furthermore, now that I have been away from where I grew up for a couple of years, I feel like I don’t entirely belong there either. As an expat, I certainly lack a sense of home. However, I found a solution by finding a sense of home in the people around me. I have made new friends, both expats and locals, who share similar interests and values, and these connections have given me a sense of belonging and comfort. While the feeling of homesickness can still be present, building relationships with others has helped me feel more at home, even in a foreign country.”

"I'm Halit. I was born in Ankara, the capital of Turkiye but I grew up and still live in Istanbul, the largest metropol city of our country. I had lived in different districts of Istanbul since I moved here with my family when I was 9. For the first 8 years, I lived in a district called Başakşehir, a place where the majority of population are conservative Turks who lived a somewhat suburban lifestyle quite far away from the city centre.

When I got into a university at 17 years old, I moved to live in the campus of my university, which is located in Maslak, a district of Istanbul that is very close to the city centre. Experiences I had throughout my university life made me realize I like being close to urban areas for cultural activities etc.

After staying two years in the dorms of the campus, I moved to Mecidiyeköy, a district that may as well be called the city centre. However, living in Mecidiyeköy where green areas are little to none, all the streets are narrow and too crowded became stressful when you also take into account the high rent I had to pay for my small apartment in an old building.

As a result of this frustration and because I no longer needed to be physically close to the campus due to pandemic, I moved to Maltepe. Maltepe is on the Anatolian side of Istanbul, contrary to Mecidiyeköy, Maslak and Başakşehir. My apartment was close to public transportation options despite being a little far from the city centre, to a beautiful green waterfront, and also to my brother's house. Also, the rent was not too high and the neighbourhood was peaceful. It was near perfect during the time I stayed there.

Finally, my then landlord sold the house and the new owners wanted to move in. Therefore, I had to move out. Around the time, there was a high increase in rents all over the city so I also had to move from Maltepe, and I decided to move to Ümraniye. The main reason was it being affordable and was also where my sister lived because I realized it was important for me to be physically close to my family. Out of all the rental options in Ümraniye, I chose the one that I thought was the most optimal in terms of being close to public transportation and also a green area, reliability against an earthquake, size, and price."



Halit Erdoğan

Commodified

This relationship is based on choosing a place based on market value and a list of desirable traits and lifestyle preferences and opportunities. It is a relationship that is cognitive and based on the comparison of actual places with an ideal.

Bonds refer to the emotional connections people have with a place, including their place identity, rootedness, place attachment and sense of belonging.



Micaela De Carlo

"I was born and grew up in Milan, a city that I love in all its forms and to which I am strongly attached. No city outside of Milan makes me feel at home, and since I grew up here, I feel proud to be able to define myself as "Milanese", and happy when people from other areas of Italy immediately understand that I am "the typical girl of Milan". I love both the pros and the cons of this city, like the fact that it is chaotic, and I identify myself insomuch that as soon as I find myself just outside Milan, I perceive as a sense of emptiness, of lack of the bustling life of my city."

Place Identity

Place identity refers to the cognitive and symbolic dimensions of a person's relationship with a place. It concerns how people identify with a location, how they give it significance and meaning, and how they convey their attachment to or affiliation with it. This process takes place in a complex pattern of conscious and unconscious ideas, beliefs, preferences, memories, ideas, feelings, values, goals and behavioral tendencies and skills relevant to this environment [23].

Wider geographic areas like a nation or region can also be tied to place identity. People who come from the same location, can share a common understanding of the culture, language, and history that is associated with that region.

*Micaela's Perspective of Milan
Via Broletto
Figure 35*



Place Identity

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Can Uzer
In Istanbul Technical University
Taşkışla Campus, Taksim

"Hello, it is Can. I live in Istanbul and I like to spend time in Taksim Square and around. Besides, I had my university campus just behind it, I always feel that this is a safe zone to be. I believe that the square has a living soul that stems from being a site of protests and demonstrations, representing the freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly. People from many backgrounds have gathered in the square to express their ideas and defend their rights. I feel deeply emotional when the spirit of activism and the collective pursuit of social change hit me while I am there. Also, most of the marginalized people of society have been finding their place in Taksim. Everyone has access to Taksim Square, which is a public area. There are no membership, affiliation, or financial requirements to take part in the activities going on there. Sometimes I am facing barriers elsewhere to freely express myself and this accessibility allows me to participate in social and political events there to raise my voice. This square's inclusivity fosters a sense of empowerment inside of me and I personally do not feel any judgment from others to be myself. Therefore following my graduation, I found a job here and settled."

Rootedness

Rootedness is the idea of having a strong bond to a certain place or group of people, which represents one's sense of identity and belonging. It entails an unconscious attachment to a location brought on by familiarity carried upon by a sense of continuity, habitation, and stability [24].



Isra Wasfi Hassan Sreihin

“Although I spent more than a decade in India; so many of my cultural and social values are deeply connected to where I grew up initially in Jordan and where my family was settled, but I didn’t know we were so rooted in a place until my family moved back to Jordan and I stayed alone in a huge city surrounded by multiple international social circles where I would definitely adjust with but not easily belong to. I realized that while my experience of growing up in that space might have been anomalous, it only made me more nostalgic for home and more attached to it.”

familiarity

1. The quality or state of being familiar and a state of close relationship [25].



Alexander Rapp

Rootedness

Rootedness is the idea of having a strong bond to a certain place or group of people, which represents one's sense of identity and belonging. It entails an unconscious attachment to a location brought on by familiarity carried upon by a sense of continuity, habitation, and stability [24].

"I grew up in Moscow having German-Russian parents and always felt not fully being a part of either culture. Most of my friends were German speaking and went to the same German high school as I did, but half my family and a whole country around me was Russian. In every interaction with Russians, I was the German. When I moved to Hamburg for university, I was the guy who came from Russia. As a German native speaker, I didn't have a hard time socializing though, but still I noticed that I didn't get some references or jokes that Germans were used to.

This feeling of being in-between cultures used to be a bit annoying, of course one wants to be a part of something instead of always feeling a bit on the outside. In the last years I found myself feeling rather positive about it though. Identity is not defined by nationality and belonging is more than just speaking the same language and knowing all its traditions. I realized that being in-between cultures enables you to always learn and see things from a different, maybe more interesting perspective.

This thinking really shaped my whole lifestyle, and I can see myself living anywhere, regardless of it being a place I have some sort of family relation with. I moved a lot the last years and found reasons for my heart to stay and feel at home there every time. Moscow will always be some sort of emotional harbor, even if one day I might not have any relatives left there. Every time I'm there, it feels like the calm feeling of belonging I felt while living there. Which doesn't mean that it's the only place I can feel that."

Place attachment

Place attachment refers to the emotional bond that individuals form with a particular place or environment. It involves a deep, emotional connection to the physical and social aspects of a place, including memories, experiences, and relationships [20]. Place attachment is often driven by positive experiences and associations and often characterized by feelings of comfort, familiarity, and a sense of identity that is tied to the place but can also be shaped by negative experiences or traumatic events.

“Place attachment provides the basis for the individual’s and group’s understanding of and relation to the environment. Thus, place attachment is more than an emotional and cognitive experience, and includes cultural beliefs and practices that link people to place [21]”.



Zhuoyu Li

“It is a place that I visited numerous times during my undergraduate years. I feel a place attachment here because not only does this place carry my precious memories, but I always feel comfortable walking through it. I strolled along the ancient city walls, sketched at lakesides and did course design projects here with my colleagues from my freshman year to my senior year. It’s a growing process for me because I gradually learned how to look at architecture, cities and landscapes. Besides, whenever I felt anxious or upset, it is always a nice place to turn to.”

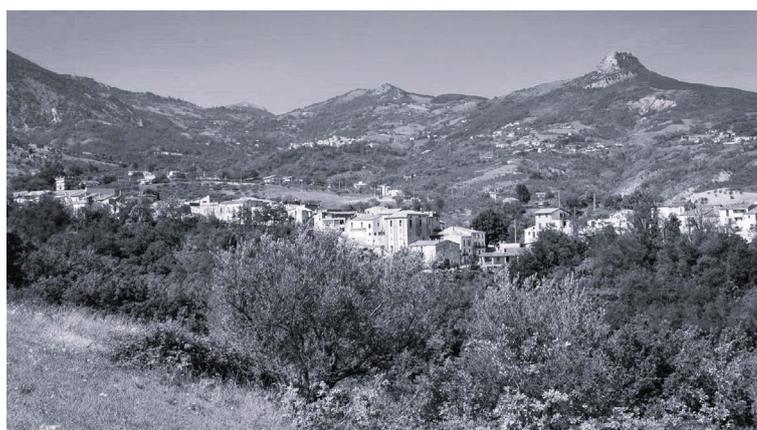


Xuanwu Lake
Nanjing city, Jiangsu Province, China
Figure 36

Place attachment

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“Place attachment provides the basis for the individual’s and group’s understanding of and relation to the environment. Thus, place attachment is more than an emotional and cognitive experience, and includes cultural beliefs and practices that link people to place [21]”.



Civitella Casanova, Abruzzo

Figure 37



Cecilia Ferrante

“Choosing a single place that is representative of who I am is really difficult, some times it is easy to become attached to places especially if the tendency is to live away from the “nest” at a young age. Traveling and discovering new places excites and frighten us at the same time but then we realize which places we are really attached to. In my case the place par excellence is definitely my small town in Abruzzo, Civitella Casanova, it is a small town of 2000 inhabitants under the province of Pescara in central Italy. It is a small town not far from the mountains but not far from the sea either. One breathes a quiet and relaxing air when I rarely get to escape from Milan and return home. This place brings back all kinds of memories, from the most exciting to the most negative, I have lived many years in my life dreaming of escaping from here but once I escaped I immediately missed it. I think I realized the attachment to this place when I left, thinking also of all those I was leaving behind to have a new life, family and friends in particular. Currently I recognize that the bond that unites me to this place is indescribable and above all indissoluble, every time I look forward to returning and even if for a few days I feel like I am living on a happy island, what was the family home has now become almost a vacation home, capable of bringing back to my memory every memory and every experience that led me to become the person I am now.”

Sense of Belonging

Sense of belonging refers to the feeling of being accepted, included, and valued by a particular group or community and connected to a particular place [28]. It is the feeling that being accepted, valued, respected and the feeling of having a place in a group. Sense of belonging is a strong drive for people looking to establish and preserve relationships within a community with social support, and shared identity.

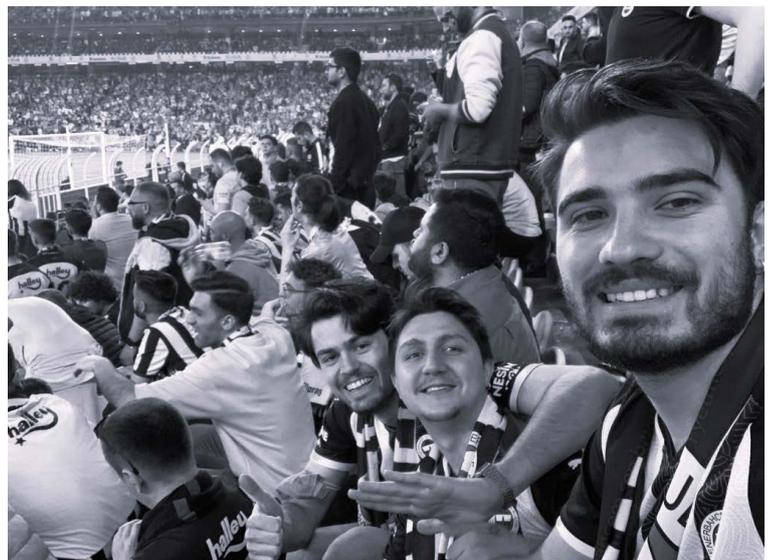
Environmental psychologist David Canter asserts that a place's ability to meet a person's needs for comfort, familiarity, and recognition is correlated with that person's sense of belonging [29].

Meaning that people have a sense of belonging when they feel at home and recognized in a certain environment.

"I am Ahmet Kadir from Istanbul, Turkey. I have been a Fenerbahçe fan for as long as my memory stretches back. Being a Fenerbahçe fan is more than just supporting a football team for me - it is a way of life, an identity that gives me a sense of belonging.

I was born and raised in Kadıköy, the district where the heart of Fenerbahçe first began to beat in 1907. The district has ever since cradled the club, serving as its spiritual and physical home, the 'mabet'. The birthright of being a Fenerbahçe supporter, however, is more than a product of my upbringing; it's an emblematic generational legacy passed down to me by my father. It is a heritage that shaped who I am and one that will also be passed on to my children. Growing up, I never felt as attached to any other community as I was attached to this club. The sense of belonging that I felt towards this club was unparalleled. No other place felt like home other than Kadıköy and the ecstasy of celebrating a goal in the atmosphere of Şükrü Saraçoğlu Stadium is an emotion I could find nowhere else. One way I experience this connection with my club is by attending matches there. Whether while chanting with fellow supporters or while facing the collective disappointment of a conceded goal, I feel connected to something far bigger than myself. The sense of belonging and unity goes beyond the roof when I am there with all these other people that share the same love and enthusiasm.

To me, being a Fenerbahçe fan isn't just supporting a club but it is a symbol of my cultural identity. Fenerbahçe is more than just a sports club - it represents a way of life, a culture, and a history that is deeply rooted in Turkish society. Supporting Fenerbahçe is a way for me to connect with my Turkish roots and embrace my heritage."



Ahmet Kadir Duman
First from the left

"I'm Özge, an architecture student at Politecnico di Milano. I've been living in Italy for over two years now, and during this time, I've developed a strong sense of belonging to this beautiful city.

But what truly makes me feel at home is the amazing social group I'm lucky to be a part of. The friendships I've formed with my classmates have turned this place into a real home for me.

Our social group goes beyond just being classmates. We engage with the local community and embrace Italian culture, which has helped us understand and appreciate this incredible country's traditions, customs, and values. Whether it's joining in the festivities of local festivals or enjoying delicious, authentic Italian food together, these shared experiences have made me feel even more connected to the city and its people.

One memorable experience with my social group was exploring Milan's Navigli district. We enjoyed the lively atmosphere, charming canals, and bustling nightlife. We settled at a vibrant bar, savoring aperitivos and engaging in conversations. The evening was filled with music, laughter, and a strong sense of belonging. It was a cherished memory that highlighted the feeling that we share and made Milan feel at home.

My social group has played a big role to make me feel like I belong to this place. We explore the city together, immerse ourselves in its culture, and support each other through thick and thin. Thanks to these friendships and shared experiences, Milan has become my home."

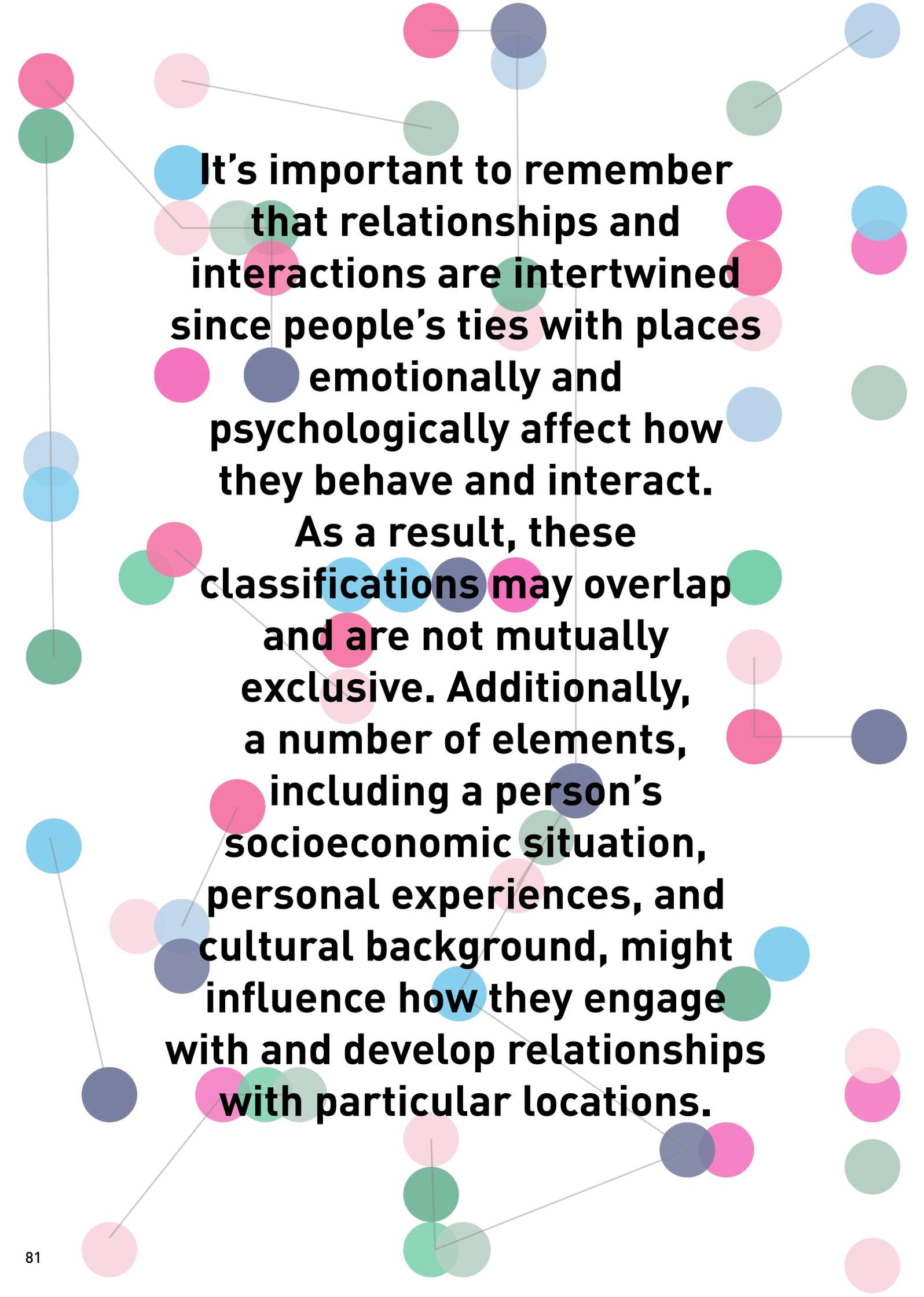


Özge Tuncay

Sense of Belonging

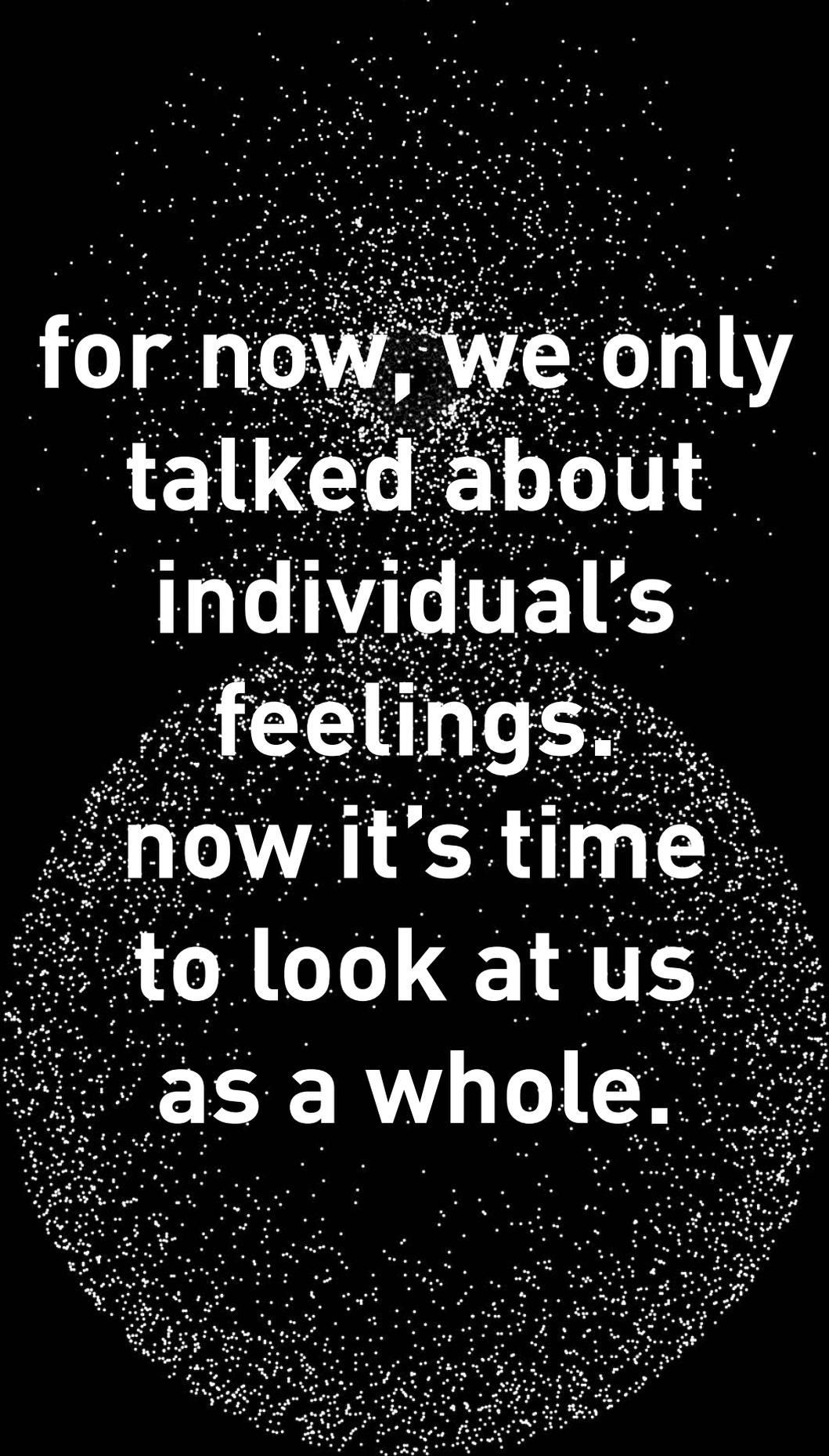
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Environmental psychologist David Canter asserts that a place's ability to meet a person's needs for comfort, familiarity, and recognition is correlated with that person's sense of belonging [29]. Meaning that people have a sense of belonging when they feel at home and recognized in a certain environment.



It's important to remember that relationships and interactions are intertwined since people's ties with places emotionally and psychologically affect how they behave and interact.

As a result, these classifications may overlap and are not mutually exclusive. Additionally, a number of elements, including a person's socioeconomic situation, personal experiences, and cultural background, might influence how they engage with and develop relationships with particular locations.



**for now, we only
talked about
individual's
feelings.
now it's time
to look at us
as a whole.**

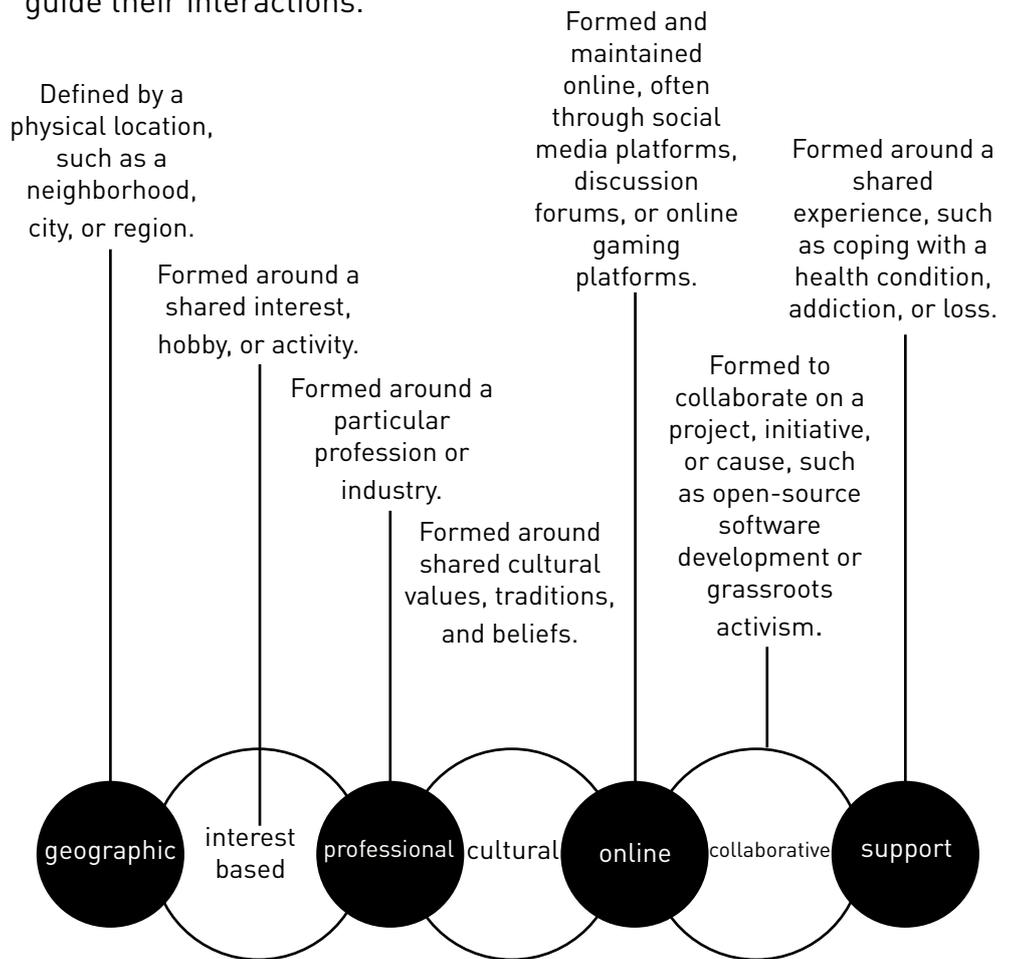
What It Means to be A Community?

sense of community

Sense of community refers to the feeling of belonging and connection that individuals have with a particular group or community. It encompasses a sense of shared identity, shared values, and a sense of responsibility and mutual support among community members. McMillan and Chavis identify four elements of "sense of community":

- 1. membership:** feeling of belonging or of sharing a sense of personal relatedness,
- 2. influence:** mattering, making a difference to a group and of the group mattering to its members
- 3. reinforcement:** integration and fulfillment of needs, shared emotional connection [30].

Communities are made up of people who engage with one another in a particular area and who have similar interests, beliefs, and values. The characterization of social construct with particular expectations as well as a set of relationships, meanings, and human behaviors from its members might be in rural or urban, small or big, and can be as big as entire cities or only a few neighborhoods. Communities have common identities that are connected to their geographic location as well as social and cultural conventions that guide their interactions.



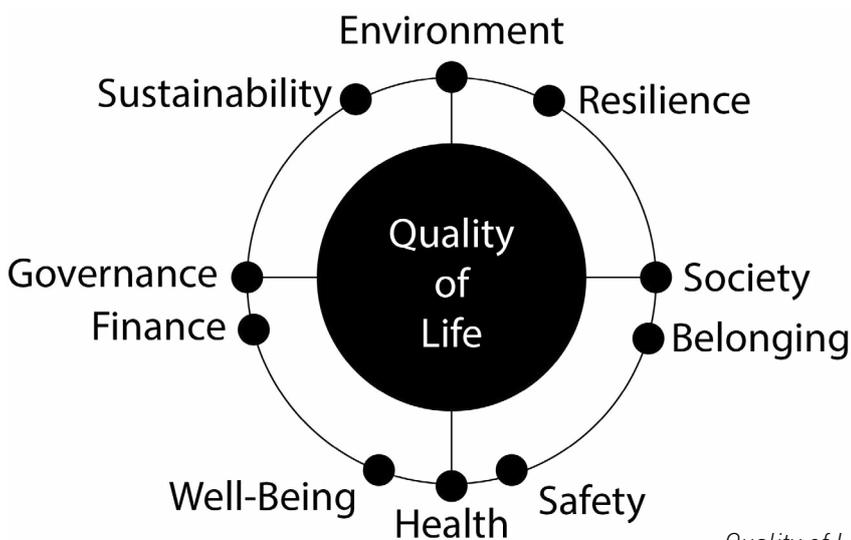
Community
Figure 38

Community Attachment

The term "community attachment" describes the psychological and emotional ties that people have to their local area. The sense of identification, engagement, and belonging that people feel toward the community forms the foundation of attachment. Numerous elements, including the standard of living, the accessibility of resources, the feeling of security, and the degree of social support, have an impact on community attachment. People work together in communities to accomplish shared objectives including raising the standard of living and fostering a sense of belonging for positive outcomes including greater civic participation, community involvement, and social capital can result from strong community attachment [31].

Quality of Life

Quality of life is defined by the World Health Organization as an individual's viewpoint of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns [32]. It is influenced by many factors, including wealth, employment, the environment, physical and mental health, education, recreation and leisure time, religious beliefs, safety, security and freedom and the availability of social and cultural opportunities. It is an essential asset in order to attract and retain residents, to create a sense of pride and identity, and to foster a positive environment for social and economic growth.



*Quality of Life
Figure 39*

Spatial Justice

Spatial justice refers to the fair and equitable distribution of resources, opportunities, and services within a geographic area. It is based on the idea that everyone needs to access the same opportunities, regardless of their geographical position, or socio-economic status. Spatial justice in communities is crucial to ensure that all citizens have access to the opportunities and resources (for example, access to education, health care, transportation, and other essential services) they require to thrive.

Why Do We Need It?

The purpose of the search for spatial justice in communities is to create a more equitable and just society. This involves identifying and addressing the spatial disparities that exist within communities, such as uneven access to services, resources, and opportunities. By promoting spatial justice, communities can create a more inclusive and sustainable environment that supports the well-being of all residents. This can lead to increased civic engagement, social cohesion, and economic growth.

“Intersectionality is about acknowledging the ways in which our identities intersect and interact with one another, and how this intersection shapes our experiences in the world. It’s about recognizing that our struggles are connected, and that we must work together to create a more just and equitable society.”

Angela Davis

prologue

Each person's unique background, experiences, values, and beliefs shape their individual perspective and preferences. As a result, everyone has various standards, needs, priorities, desires, goals and different types of perceptions for their ideal city and spatial justice. Individuals with different cultural backgrounds, ethnicities or socioeconomic statuses may have different ideas about what constitutes a "livable" or "just" city. Understanding, describing, constructing, questioning the landscape today and diverse perspectives is important in creating equitable and inclusive urban environments.

This chapter will reflect on care and on the perspectives of gender, intergenerationality, diversity etc. in the practice of urbanism, in the interest of guaranteeing equality, social cohesion, and the wellbeing of the entire community.

Imagine that urban planning and design could be used to solve the problems of racial, economic, educational, and employment disparity as well as the segregation, isolation, and fear they cause.

If we prioritized the values of inclusiveness, equity, and equality, would our designs be better?

What innovative notions might we create to live out our ideals and fight injustice?

How can you combine your values with those of others to develop an integrated communal vision?

Would communities have a better chance of developing healthy and thriving environments if they clearly stated what they stood for, what they believed in, and what they desired to be?

But in the first place...

How does fairness or injustice manifest itself in the community in which we live or grew up? [1]

There has been a lot of talk over the past decade about the 'livable city', the 'green city', the 'sustainable city' and the 'resilient city'. At the same time, the news of today highlights the importance of necessity for an open discussion about the systems and procedures that have an impact on the standard of living and means of subsistence of urban inhabitants (at least in some places).

As the issues of affordability, climate change adaptation, and resilience are being addressed, many communities around the world still continue to struggle with issues of equality, inclusion, race, and ownership. The continuance of injustice in urban areas around the world demands an ongoing and redoubled search for concepts and answers.

Therefore, in the pursuit of creating more sustainable, livable, resilient cities, the issues of justice and equity in urban areas cannot be overlooked. The unique combination of factors that shape each person's worldview and preferences also means that individuals may have different ideas about what constitutes "good" urban planning and design. Factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and ability can have a significant impact on people's relationships with the built environment and affect the individual's sense of safety, comfort, and belonging in public spaces, as well as their access to resources and opportunities.

Additionally, individuals may have different priorities based on their stage of life. For instance, young adults may prioritize affordable housing and vibrant nightlife, while families with young children may prioritize safe streets and access to parks and schools. Similarly, older adults may prioritize accessibility and proximity to healthcare services.

ownership

Ownership refers to the legal or rightful possession and control of something, typically an asset, property, or item. It implies having the exclusive right to use, enjoy, and dispose of the item in question. Ownership grants individuals or entities certain rights and responsibilities related to the property they own.

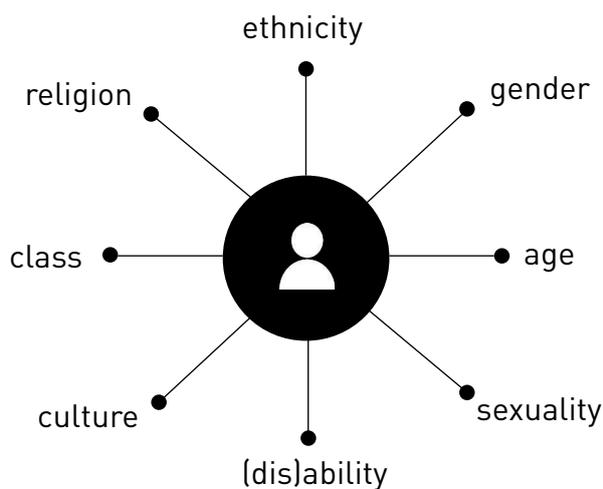
inclusion

1. the action or state of including or of being included within a group or structure.
2. the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those who have physical or intellectual disabilities and members of other minority groups [2].

adaptation

The action or process of changing something, or of being changed, to suit a new purpose or situation [3].

Intersectional Design is a method that considers how factors of identity interact with one another. By examining these intersections, designers can gain a deeper understanding of the user's context and priorities and address the complexity of social inequality and discrimination in a more comprehensive and inclusive way. Ultimately, intersectional design has the potential to create more effective, respectful, equitable and just built environments, contributing to a more inclusive and compassionate society.



*Intersectionality
Figure 40*

injustice

A quality connected to unfairness or undeserving results is called injustice. A situation or behavior that is unfair, immoral, or that goes against the concepts of fairness and equality is generally referred to as being unjust. Denying individuals or groups rights, freedoms, opportunities, or fairness is a part of it. Injustice can take many different forms, including systematic prejudices, uneven access to opportunity, oppression, exploitation, and social inequity [4].

equality vs equity

Equality means each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities. Equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome. However, neither "equality" nor "equity" guarantee equality of outcomes [5].

discrimination

Discrimination is when someone is treated differently from another person because of a disadvantageous group, class, or other category to which they belong or are thought to belong [6]. Discrimination against individuals may be based on a person's race, gender identity, sex, age, religion, handicap, or sexual orientation, among other factors [7].

**we have different
beliefs and
that's ok.
we have different
values and
priorities, and
that's okay.
we need different
things and
that's okay.
we are all
different and
that's okay.**



**getting to know the
users of the city**

In this part of the thesis, these distinctive identities will be addressed one by one.

How can urban planning and design better account for the diverse needs and preferences of different user types?

How are we living together?

In the city we share?

Children, young adults, middle-aged individuals, and older adults.

Each of these groups has different needs and preferences.

What are their expectations?

What do they want?

generations and intergenerationality

Generations refer to groups of individuals who share similar characteristics and experiences based on their age, such as Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. These groups are typically defined by a birth range of around 15 to 20 years and are shaped by the historical, economic, and cultural contexts of their time.

On the other hand, intergenerationality focuses on the ties and relationships that exist between people of various generations as well as the advantages that can result from their interactions. It includes the cross-generational sharing of knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and viewpoints and can take place in settings like families, communities, businesses, and other social gathering places. Intergenerationality emphasizes the value of developing relationships between people of all ages and encouraging respect and understanding amongst generations.



children

We were all once children;
What sort of livable city living
would appeal to children?
What should a livable urban
childhood look like?
What are the main problems with
creating public places that are
welcoming to children in
cities that planners can work on?
How does the practice of urban
design take children's needs
into account?



Children are one of the most vulnerable user types in urban environments. They need safe and accessible spaces to play, learn, and socialize. Parks, playgrounds and public spaces are important places for children, as they offer opportunities for physical activity, exploration, social interaction and making friends especially as it offers a non-screen time in this digital era.

Beyond playgrounds, cities are also largely the domain of children. However, too often, urban planning is done by adults with little consideration for the perspectives of children. In the architecture and development of the city beyond the playground, “play,” which is an essential component of children’s lives, is not given the appropriate representation and potential.

Arup’s 2017 report predicts that by 2030, almost 60% of people living in cities will be under 18 years old, highlighting the urgency of creating safe, sustainable, and inclusive urban spaces for young people [8]. However, children face significant obstacles in their communities, including safety concerns, lack of accessibility, and inadequate play spaces. Children with disabilities, in particular, may encounter difficulties in accessing and enjoying public areas.

For instance, ChildSafe South Africa’s 2018 research found that 70% of kids walk to school. 4% of them drive more than an hour each day to and from school. Are those paths safe? How might the experience of public transportation be improved? Getting to school and back is just one aspect of a child’s experience on the street. Safety and security, sports and leisure areas, street safety instruction, exposure to and engagement with the arts and culture are other factors that raise problems of a similar nature [9].

“I remain convinced that a city can only truly say it is succeeding if children are active, visible, and engaged users of its parks, playgrounds, streets and civic space [10]”.

how children plays

What do we actually understand about the viewpoint of children and how might we use it in city planning?

The games that newborns play change as their bodies do. Babies initially play by themselves or with the assistance of their caretakers. As babies get older, they begin observing the kids nearby and joining in on their autonomous play. Children begin to socialize later in life, play games with simple rules with one another, and eventually progress to games with more sophisticated, often self-invented rules centered on rivalry or cooperation.

Arroyo suggests that children's uses of urban space are often spontaneous and intuitive, rather than predetermined or planned [11]. They tend to make use of the "crevices" or gaps in the adult-led strategies that shape urban space, and are highly attuned to the opportunities and constraints presented by the built environment. They may repurpose objects or features of the built environment in unexpected ways and find creative ways to use other areas of the city for play, such as abandoned lots or underpasses. This kind of tactical movement by children is a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus, playing on and with a terrain imposed on them and organized by the law of a foreign power.



**‘If you could experience the city
from an elevation of 95 cm
–the height of a 3 year old–
what would you do differently?’ ^[12]***



*Urban95 asks this of managers, planners, designers, and other urban professionals. The Urban95 initiative of the Bernard van Leer Foundation aims to alter urban environments and possibilities permanently in order to improve the vital first five years of a child’s life.

Children’s emotional, cognitive, physical, and social development depend on public spaces, yet their space is often limited to the playground. This neglects the majority of the urban fabric and infrastructure as an everyday place for youth. This not only eliminates the chance for personal growth, but also for understanding the value of public space and being capable of accepting responsibility and claiming civic space. Therefore, it is crucial to prepare children to become engaged urban dwellers who can anticipate external threats and challenges. In essence, this is taught in a public setting. For example, safe walking and biking routes to schools and other destinations can help children develop independence and a sense of responsibility.

Children’s and their caregivers’ perspectives on the city often result in new angles on the built environment, including tempo and visual sight as well as methods to play, learn, reach, and access. Since children are very observant and using their perspective in open-space observations can help adults understand the relation between spaces and buildings.

The report “Cities alive: Designing for Urban Childhood” published by Arup suggests that designing a city that is friendly towards children can have a positive impact on various aspects such as health, well-being, local economy, safety, community strength, nature, sustainability, and resilience [8]. The report emphasizes the importance of planning for future generations, especially in the current era of rapid urbanization, environmental degradation, and high-density urban development.



Intercity Transit’s Walk N Roll Program
Figure 42

The “Walk ‘n’ Roll” program in Portland, Oregon was a specific Safe Routes to School project aimed at promoting active transportation options for students. The project included infrastructure improvements, such as crosswalks and bike lane enhancements, to create safer routes to schools. It also involved educational initiatives to raise awareness about pedestrian and bicycle safety and organized events to encourage walking and biking to school. The program was a collaborative effort between the City of Portland, Portland Public Schools, and community partners.

young adults



According to UN-Habitat, despite the increasing size of cities, the population within them has become younger. Nearly four billion people under the age of 30 are living in urban areas, and by 2030, it is estimated that 60% of urban populations will be under the age of 18. Therefore, it is crucial to involve young people in discussions about urban planning and the future of cities [13].

Young adults, who are typically in their late teens to early thirties, are often focused on education, career development, and socializing. They may prioritize affordable housing, job opportunities, and a vibrant nightlife. Alongside with regard to finding inexpensive housing and employment prospects, young individuals may experience challenges, particularly in urban locations with high cost of living. This may result in unstable housing situations, financial strain, and poor employment chances. According to a Eurostat survey, more than two-thirds of young adults in Europe still reside with their parents for financial reasons. Since 1997, the percentage of 25 to 34-year-olds who own their homes has been declining, going from 55% to 35% [14].

Access to public transportation, bike lanes and walkable neighborhoods are important, as it allows them to explore the city and connect with different communities. In addition, community centers, libraries, and other public spaces that offer resources and support for young adults can help them develop their skills, knowledge, and networks.

Urban environments can occasionally feel stressful and lonely, especially for teenagers who may find it difficult to make friends. Young adults should therefore have access to public areas that are both safe and welcoming so that they can interact, meet up with friends, and engage in physical activity.

Violence (from bullying and physical altercations to sexual and physical assaults) is another significant issue that young people must deal with. A WHO research estimates that each year, 200 000 killings involve people between the ages of 10 and 29. This is a result of unsupervised areas, easy access to drugs, alcohol, and weapons, economic inequality, and/or the strength of a city's protection and safety legislation [15].

Combined with the fear and anxiety of conflicts between a politically conscious generation and imprudent governments, these factors have left young people even more vulnerable, which in turn is slowly changing cities. Combined with the fear and anxiety of conflicts between a politically conscious generation and imprudent governments, these factors have left young people even more vulnerable, which in turn is slowly changing cities.

middle-aged adults

Middle-aged individuals could also desire items that fall under the young and old categories depending on their age range. Whether they are single or with families, they may struggle with balancing work and family responsibilities, and finding affordable and safe housing options as well as accessing quality healthcare, especially if they have limited financial resources or live in areas with limited medical facilities. Family-friendly amenities such as parks, playgrounds, and community centers can also be important for this user type. In addition, accessible public transportation and walkable neighborhoods can be helpful for busy parents juggling work and family responsibilities.



elderly

Older adults, typically aged 65 and over, often prioritize accessibility and safety. They may require accessible housing and transportation options, as well as proximity to healthcare services. In addition, social connections and opportunities for engagement can be important for this user type, as it can help prevent social isolation and maintain cognitive health.

Aging is the long process of learning to live with reliance, whether it be physical, social, or spatial, and it is influenced by heredity, way of life, geography, and socioeconomic status. As a result, this extremely varied process differs depending on each person, their unique interests, abilities, and lifestyle preferences.

In 2050, 32.5% of the population would be 65 or older, according to UN predictions [16]. To accommodate this expanding user profile, it is crucial to comprehend architecture as a tool. Through various methodologies, several research and interventions of both a social and spatial character have been developed.

Spaces that promote active aging with quality of life, independence, and sociability can be used to characterize the function of architecture in this issue; these are surroundings that integrate older people with one another and with society, free from isolation and stigmatization. The adaptation of existing structures and the creation of brand-new projects with particular characteristics are two viable avenues of activity within architectural disciplines as a tool, when taking this environment into account.

aging in place

Regardless of age, money, or level of ability, it is the capacity to live in one's own house and neighborhood safely, independently, and comfortably. allows homes to generally incorporate technologies that make daily life easier, without improvisation or adaption, and also without appearing clinical [17].



Spaces that promote active aging with quality of life, independence, and sociability can be used to characterize the function of architecture in this issue; these are surroundings that integrate older people with one another and with society, free from isolation and stigmatization. The adaptation of existing structures and the creation of brand-new projects with particular characteristics are two viable avenues of activity within architecture, when taking this environment into account.



*Ommoord, Rotterdam
Residential Districts by Hans van der Heijden Architects
Figure 43*

The case of the apartment blocks in Ommoord, Rotterdam, shows how existing buildings can be updated to meet changing demographic needs.

The Hans van der Heijden Architect was commissioned to update the buildings' technical performance and find architectural solutions to accommodate different resident profiles, which could include features like ramps, elevators, and wider doorways. This proactive approach reflects where aging populations and changing demographics necessitate modifications to existing infrastructure to ensure it remains functional and supportive.

Malmö Housing 50+ is a collaborative effort between the city of Malmö, architects, and housing companies. The project aims to adapt existing housing to better suit the needs of older adults, providing features such as universal design elements, improved accessibility, and social spaces to foster a sense of community.



*Bo01 by Atelier GROENBLAUW
Malmö, Sweden
Figure 44, 45*

gender: feminism, patriarchy and sexism

Urban life presents a range of challenges for people of all genders, but women and other marginalized groups often face unique forms of discrimination and inequality in urban environments. These challenges are rooted in historical inequalities and are perpetuated by systems that prioritize the needs of privileged groups and research suggests that women often experience and perceive cities differently than men, due to a range of factors including gender-based discrimination, safety concerns, and differences in mobility patterns [20].

feminism

Feminism advocates for equal rights and opportunities for people of all genders. It involves valuing the different experiences, identities, skills, and strengths of women and working to ensure that every woman has the opportunity to exercise all of her legal rights [18].

One of the most significant differences is in terms of safety because women are more likely than men to experience sexual harassment, assault, and violence in public spaces. Therefore, this can lead to a sense of fear and vulnerability when moving around the city, and can also limit women's access to certain areas or activities. Research shows that women who experience street harassment are more likely to limit their mobility and avoid certain public spaces altogether [21].

In addition, women and marginalized genders in urban areas also face challenges related to access to certain spaces or services. This includes limitations in healthcare and reproductive rights as in access to contraception and abortion services or facing longer wait times, being dismissed, as well as being disbelieved when seeking medical care. Furthermore they may be excluded and/or discriminated against in certain types of jobs, industries and even in shelters or other housing options.

patriarchy

A patriarchal social structure is one in which men predominately hold authority and privilege positions. Patriarchy is described as "a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women" by sociologist Sylvia Walby [19].



sexism

Sexism is the term used to describe bias or discrimination towards women that is based on gender or sex. It may also involve the conviction that one sex or gender is fundamentally superior to another. It has been linked to gender roles and stereotypes [22].

Women in urban areas face multiple challenges, including the gender pay gap and unpaid domestic work. Women are often concentrated in low-wage service jobs and are underrepresented in high-paying industries such as finance and technology, perpetuating the gender pay gap. This gap is compounded by other factors such as race and ethnicity, with women of color facing even greater disparities in wages [23]. Meanwhile, women's and girls' unpaid work in the home, such as domestic and care work, is often ignored in urban planning and design, particularly with respect to poor women and girls contributing to a lack of inclusivity and equity in urban environments [24].

For instance, women of color may face particular difficulties because of both their gender and race. Additionally, they might be disproportionately impacted by problems like environmental racism and police brutality. They might also experience marginalization and prejudice within the feminist and racial justice movements.

Unfortunately, there are a lot of examples in which gender, feminism, patriarchy, and sexism intersect with urban life to create inequalities and challenges for individuals. These experiences are the cause of why women perceive cities differently than men.

“Cities are often not designed for the diverse ways that women use public space. Instead, they’re designed for people who work in offices and have lives that are much more segmented.”

Janette Sadik-Khan, former Commissioner of the New York City Department of Transportation

“A feminist city is one where diversity is celebrated, public spaces are safe and accessible to all, and the city actively works to address the needs of marginalized communities.”
Feminist City Manifesto



A feminist city is a city that prioritizes the needs and perspectives of women and marginalized groups in urban planning and design. The concept is grounded in the understanding that cities have historically been designed primarily for the benefit of men, and that this has led to inequities and injustices for women and other marginalized groups.

There are many organizations and initiatives working to promote the concept of a feminist city. One example is the “Feminist City Manifesto,” which was developed by a group of feminist activists and urban planners in Canada in 2019. The manifesto outlines ten key principles for creating a feminist city, including prioritizing care, promoting diversity and inclusion, and valuing the contributions of all members of society [25].



gender is a spectrum of identities

Gender is not limited to the traditional male and female binary norm. Instead, gender encompasses a wide range of identities, including trans, genderqueer, and other gender identities and expressions. Individuals who challenge traditional gender norms may face discrimination as they stand out and draw attention to their differences. Breaking gender norms means challenging gender roles as well as gender expression rules. Strict adherence to gender binary standards can result in a lack of equality in how men and women are perceived.

LGBT people in urban areas may face numerous challenges that impact their ability to access essential resources, participate in public life, and lead fulfilling lives. Housing discrimination is a common issue, with transgender and non-binary individuals facing discrimination and violence from landlords and neighbors. Employment discrimination can also be a significant problem, with LGBT individuals often facing barriers to being hired, promotion, and pay, as well as fearing discrimination and harassment at work [26].

Accessing healthcare and public restrooms is also a challenge particularly for transgender and non-binary individuals who may face discrimination and a lack of understanding. Furthermore, limited access to supportive services and mobility, education, a lack of visibility and representation, social stigma and discrimination, homelessness, and police violence are additional issues that impact the lives of LGBT individuals in urban areas. These challenges can lead to negative health outcomes, economic and social isolation, and difficulties accessing essential resources. It is crucial to recognize and address these issues to create more inclusive and supportive urban environments for LGBT individuals [27].

Queer spaces



Queer spaces are physical and cultural spaces that are created and maintained by LGBTQ+ people and communities and are places for everyone but especially for LGBTQ+ to unapologetically exist behind closed doors and act freely. Queer spaces are created with the idea that one's body should be, defining the desire to express one's actual sexuality, identity, and need to connect, whether that be physically or through the possibility of community. These spaces can be bars, clubs, cafes, community centers, bookstores, and more that are specifically designed to be safe and welcoming for queer people.

Despite the growing acceptance for queer communities in most recent years, some may still find it a struggle to accept a narrative (especially in some geographical areas and communities). This is why queer spaces play an important role in LGBTQ+ communities, providing a sense of belonging, sense of community, and safety for people who may not feel accepted in the society while serving as an important cultural and political hub, providing a platform for activism, art, and social change.

However, gentrification, rising prices, and other issues are posing problems for many LGBTQ spaces. Rising property values and development pressures in some urban areas have forced the closure of numerous queer places and the eviction of LGBTQ+ residents from traditionally LGBTQ+ communities. This has raised worries about the disappearance of significant cultural and historical sites as well as the extermination of LGBTQ+ individuals and communities from urban areas.

The Stonewall Inn in New York City, which played a pivotal role in the Stonewall riots and is now a national historic landmark.



*Stonewall Inn
New York, USA
Figure 47*

Porta Venezia is a neighborhood in Milan that has a long history of being a gathering place and has become a symbol of LGBTQ+ visibility and activism in Italy, hosting events such as the Milano Pride parade and the Queer Film Festival. Today, it is still a vibrant hub of LGBTQ+ life in Milan, with many bars, clubs, and other venues that cater to LGBTQ+ people.



*Via Lecco, Porta Venezia
Milan Italy
Figure 48*

racial and ethnic identities

Racial and ethnic identities are a fundamental aspect of human experience and play a significant role in shaping individual and collective identities and linking them to shared cultural and historical experiences, language, and traditions, and are deeply embedded in the social, economic, and political structures of societies.

However, racial and ethnic identities are not fixed or static, and can evolve over time and in response to changing social and cultural contexts. For example, individuals may identify with multiple racial or ethnic groups, or they may experience shifts in their identity based on changes in their environment or life experiences.

Racial and ethnic identities in urban life encounter a multitude of challenges, spanning from discrimination and prejudice to inadequate representation and limited resources. Discrimination and prejudice manifest in various areas, including housing, employment, healthcare, and public spaces. In the realm of housing, individuals of color often encounter difficulties in securing affordable and safe accommodations due to discriminatory practices employed by people. Similarly, within the job market, they face hurdles such as unequal pay, restricted job opportunities, and discrimination during the hiring process. The healthcare sector poses its own set of challenges, as people of color may struggle to access quality care and frequently encounter bias and discrimination from healthcare providers. Public spaces also present risks, with individuals experiencing harassment and violence, especially in areas with high levels of police presence. Frequently, racial and ethnic minorities find themselves denied access to particular spaces and services, subject to harmful stereotypes and unrealistic media representation, excluded from decision-making processes, rendered invisible, or subjected to bullying.



racial justice

Racial justice is the pursuit of equal treatment, opportunities, and outcomes for all people, regardless of their race or ethnicity. It is a fundamental principle that recognizes that racism, both individual and systemic, has historically disadvantaged certain groups and created inequalities that persist today. Achieving racial justice requires acknowledging these injustices and taking active steps to address them [28].

Understanding the root causes of such prejudice and its expressions both generally and particularly is necessary in order to be able to oppose institutional, social, and political forms of racial and ethnic oppression. Therefore, promoting racial justice also entails making an effort to build an inclusive and respectful culture where everyone feels respected and heard, regardless of their color or ethnicity.



Black Lives Matter Rally
Figure 49

segregation

The act by which a (natural or legal) person separates other persons on the basis of race, color, language, religion, nationality or national or ethnic origin without an objective and reasonable justification [29].



(Dis)abilities

A physical, sensory, cognitive, or mental disability that significantly restricts one or more major living activities of an individual is referred to as a (dis)ability. This impairment may be present from birth, acquired through disease or accident, or manifest through time. It can impact a person's ability to move around, their vision, hearing, speaking, learning, memory, or even their mental health, among other things. The concept of (dis)ability is complex, and different people are affected by it in different ways. From minor to severe, disabilities can be either obvious or invisible. All ages, genders, races, and socioeconomic levels can be impacted.

An estimated 1.3 billion people experience significant (dis)ability. This represents 16% of the world's population, or 1 in 6 of us [30]. Since (dis)abilities have varying degrees of impact on people's lives, each person with one has unique identities and support needs, neither of which should be taken for granted. The severity of punishments and discrimination increases when a person's (dis)ability deviates from ideas of what is normal in society.





other identities

Even if some of the key identities and intersections that organizations should take into account have been highlighted in the sections above, there are a wide variety of others that should also be kept in mind. Although not intended to be exhaustive, the list that follows does include some of these:

- Socioeconomic Status
- Immigration status
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Religion and belief
- Educational attainment
- Body size
- Drug/alcohol addiction
- Marital status
- Parental status
- State of having a home (Homelessness)



animal rights



In contemporary discussions on urban design and intersectionality, it is crucial to acknowledge the often neglected voices of animals within our cities. While urban planning and design have made significant strides in recognizing and accommodating diverse human identities, the needs and preferences of non-human beings are frequently overlooked.



Animals, whether they be companion animals, wildlife, or livestock, play an integral role in our urban ecosystems and our shared spaces. However, urban development often prioritizes human-centric needs, leading to the displacement and marginalization of animals. This neglect can manifest in various ways, such as limited access to natural habitats, inadequate consideration of animal movement patterns, and a lack of provisions for their physical and psychological well-being.



To create more inclusive and equitable urban environments, it is essential to integrate animals into the discourse of intersectional design. This entails recognizing animals as stakeholders in the city and considering their specific needs alongside those of humans. By doing so, we can work towards a more harmonious coexistence that benefits both animals and humans.



For instance, urban planning can incorporate green spaces and wildlife corridors that allow animals to move freely through the city, connecting fragmented habitats. Providing designated areas for companion animals to play, exercise, and socialize can enhance their well-being and promote responsible pet ownership. Moreover, incorporating wildlife-friendly design elements, such as bird friendly building facades or pollinator-friendly gardens, can support the presence of diverse animal species in urban areas.

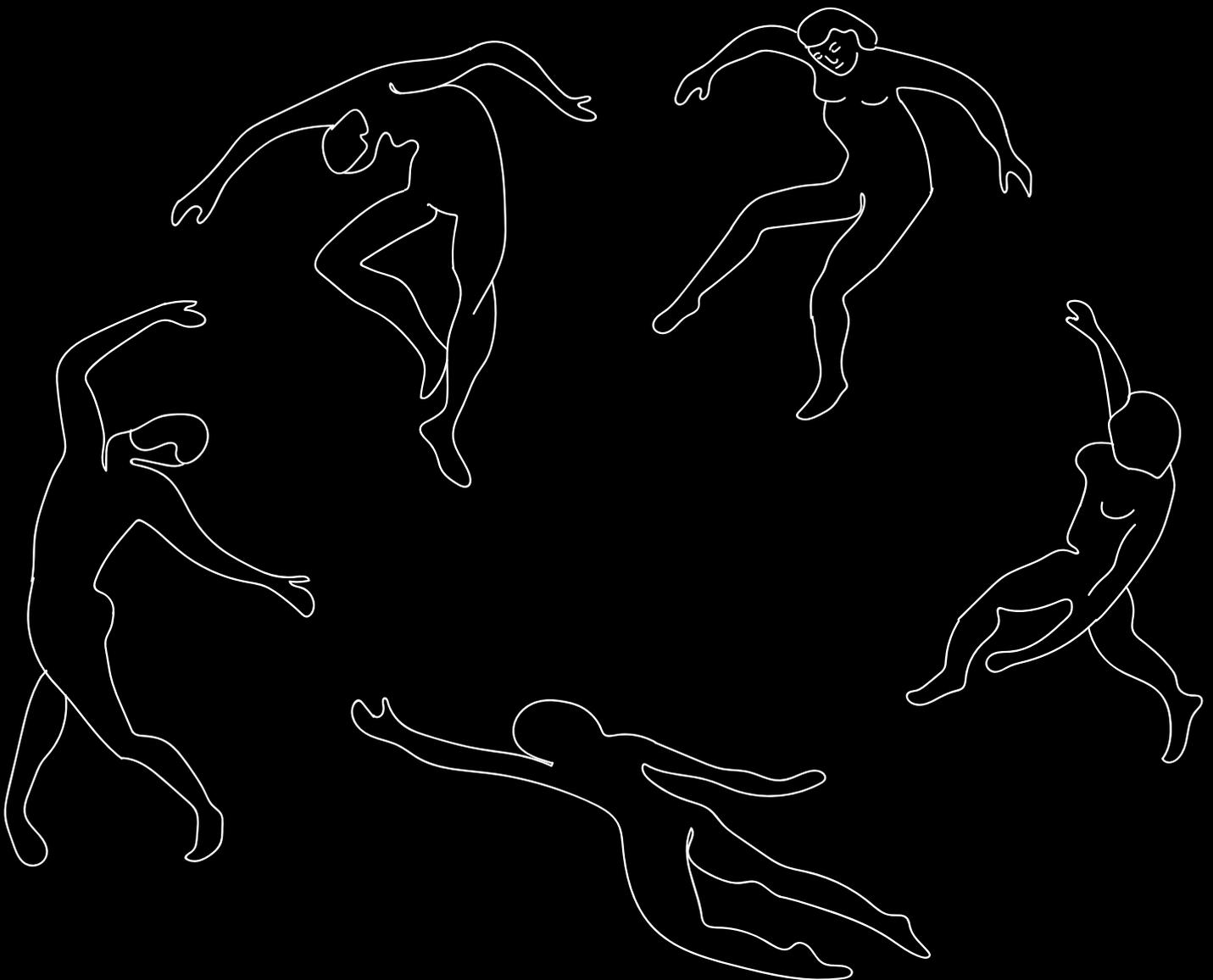


Ultimately, fostering a more inclusive urban environment necessitates recognizing animals as integral members of our communities. By incorporating their needs and preferences into urban planning and design, we can create cities that embrace the diverse identities and shared spaces of both humans and animals, facilitating a more harmonious and sustainable coexistence for all.

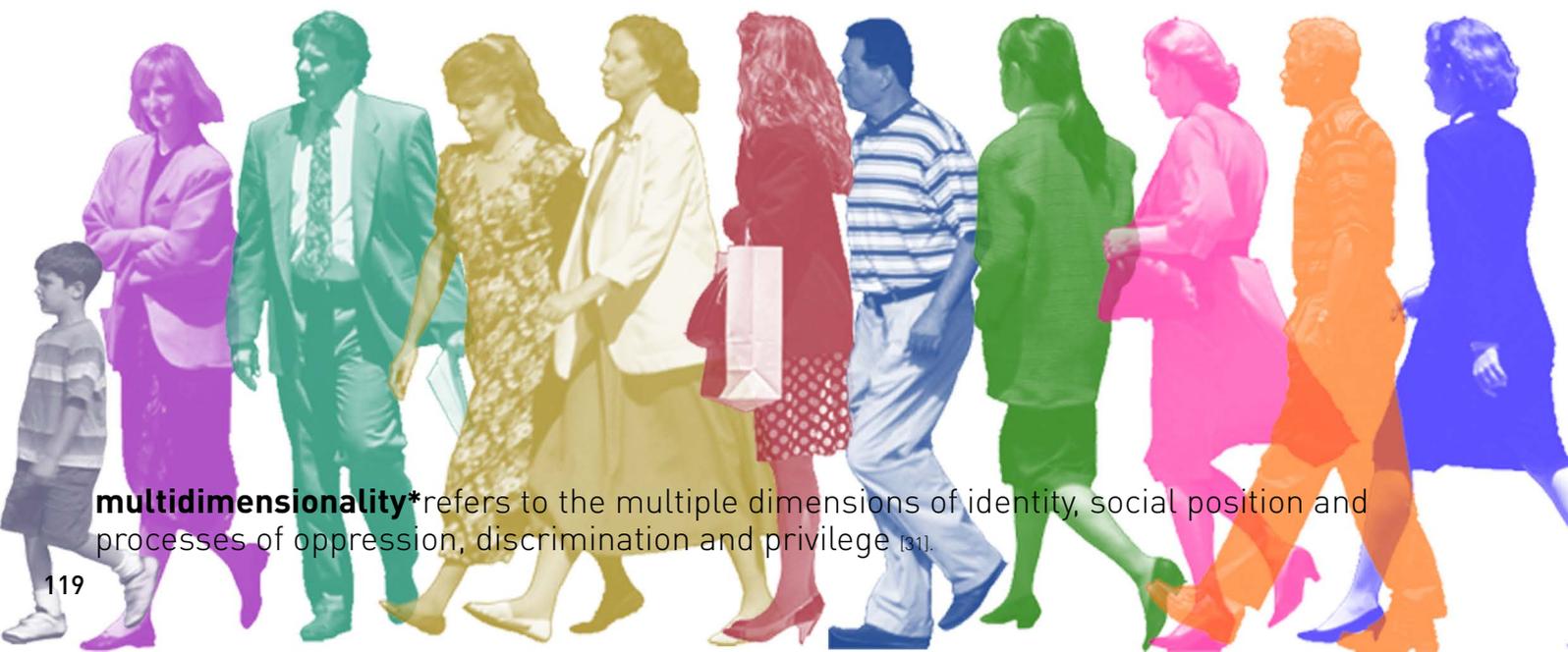


common problems that everyone faces

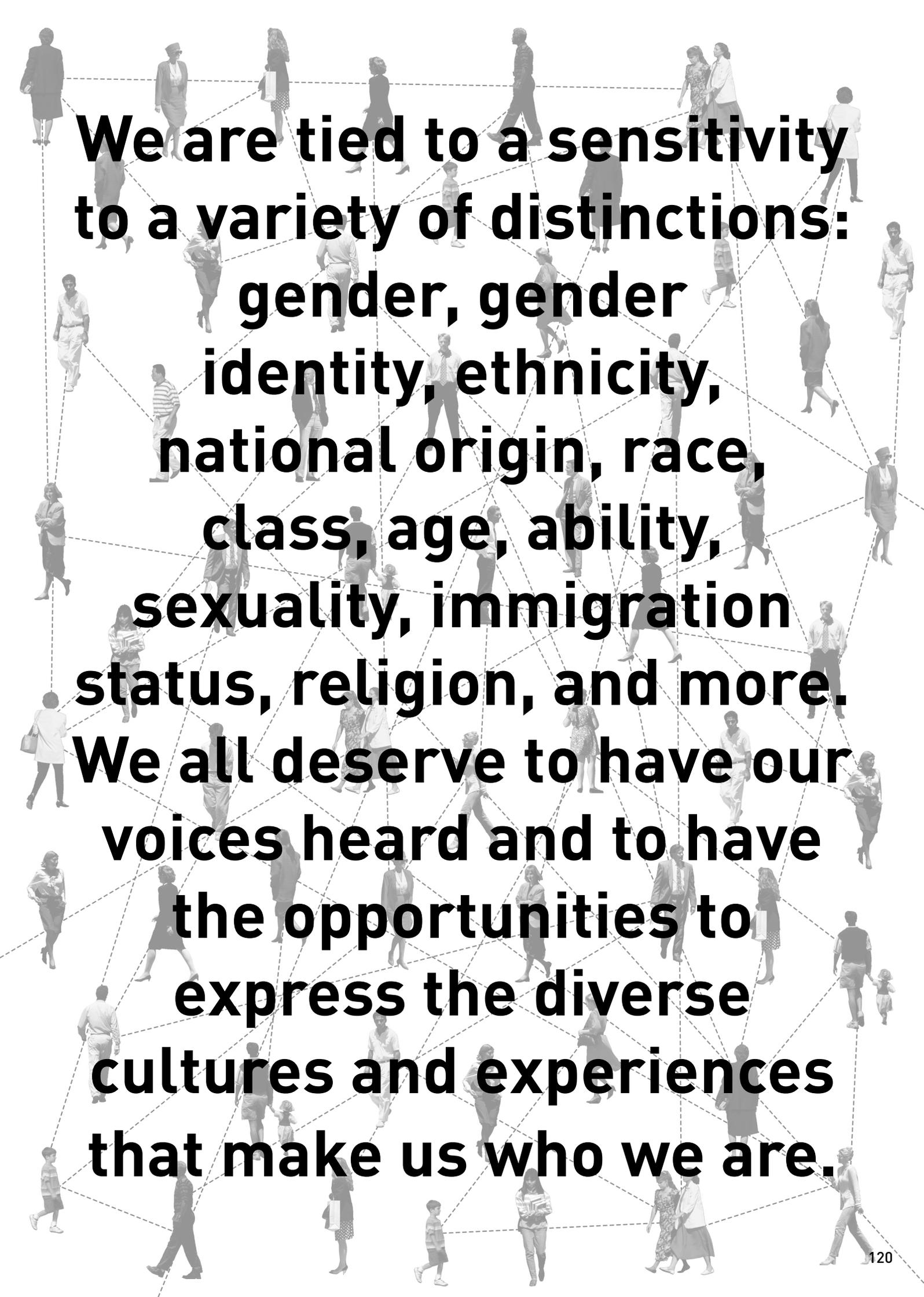
social stigma and discrimination
housing discrimination
employment discrimination
harrasment and violence
limited access
lack of legal procetions and
supportive services



**Individuals
frequently possess
numerous
identities that
cross over and
overlap with one
another because
identities are
complex and
multidimensional.**



multidimensionality* refers to the multiple dimensions of identity, social position and processes of oppression, discrimination and privilege [31].



**We are tied to a sensitivity
to a variety of distinctions:
gender, gender
identity, ethnicity,
national origin, race,
class, age, ability,
sexuality, immigration
status, religion, and more.
We all deserve to have our
voices heard and to have
the opportunities to
express the diverse
cultures and experiences
that make us who we are.**

why does design matter?

Design plays a crucial role in addressing inequalities in urban life and meeting the needs of diverse communities. Intersectional design, which considers the needs of all users, regardless of their abilities, age, race, gender, or socioeconomic status, is essential to creating equitable urban environments. These various realities should influence how a designer responds. Designing using the intersectional approach involves considering how various facets of identity, such as gender, color, sexual orientation, class, and others, interact with one another. Design can tackle the systemic disparities that exist in urban environments by designing spaces that are equitable and just by comprehending how these factors interact and the context of use and a specific user's priorities.

Given the diversity of people's needs, priorities, and experiences, creating truly equitable and just cities requires engaging with a broad range of stakeholders and incorporating diverse perspectives into urban planning and design processes. This can involve community engagement, fosters a sense of ownership and pride, participatory design methods, and ongoing dialogue and feedback between residents, policymakers, and other stakeholders.



**How can our different
ideas and characteristics
influence our
belongingness?**

**What are the motivations
for people to feel
belongingness to a place?
and**

**Why do we need to
belong?**



These questions will be addressed in chapter III.

What Fosters Belongingness?

“Our sense of belonging is deeply rooted in the connections we forge with the places we inhabit and the communities we become a part of.”

Elizabeth Gilbert

prologue

We all have a profound yearning deep, a great passion within us, a strong desire to find our place, where we can truly belong in the world. It is a fundamental requirement that determines our relationships, shapes our identities, and affects how we see ourselves and how we see other people. Our sense of belongingness is intimately woven into the fabric of our life, influencing our emotions, our choices, our behaviors, and even our very existence.

This search for a sense of place spans borders of space, cultural distinctions, and individual experiences. It is a common yearning that permeates people's lives over time and location, motivating us to look for connections, form communities, and create enduring friendships. But what precisely drives people to experience this strong feeling of belongingness to a place? Why do we feel such a strong need for it, as if it were a fundamental component of who we are? Why does this want for rootedness and connection matter so much to our happiness, mental health, and general sense of fulfillment?

In this chapter, it is aimed to deepen our understanding of the human relationship of belongingness and connection to places, to communities, and to one another. It seeks to understand the complex web of motivations that drive people to seek belongingness, from the need for security and identity to the social relationships created through shared experiences.

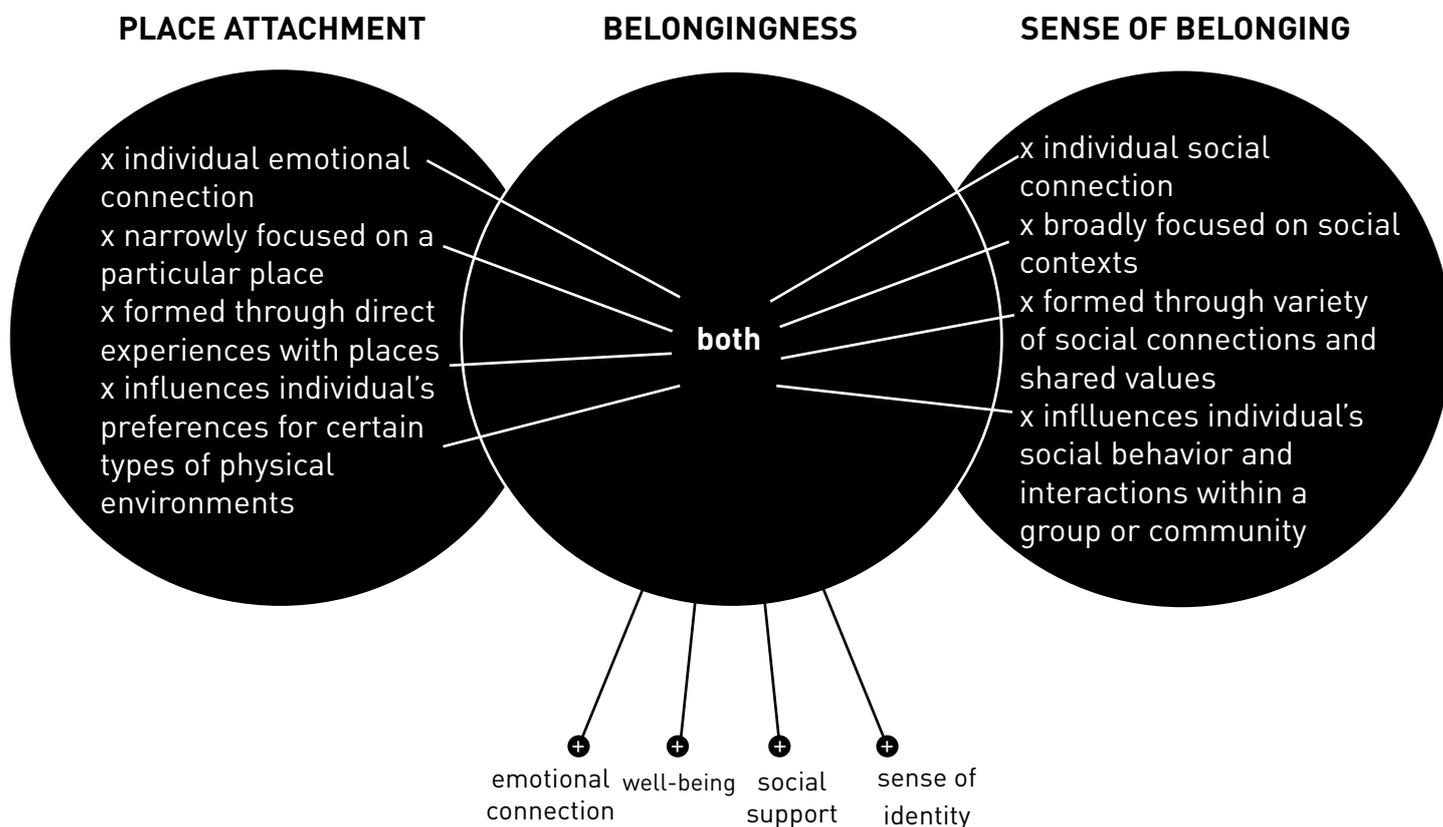
Modern urban processes have reshaped and altered cities, as well as the built environment and social structures at the local level. Neighborhoods were viewed as points of contact between individual residents and greater society, and urban districts were expected to reflect the socioeconomic diversity of the general population. In this sense, neighborhoods should act as a “home” for residents, a place where they may connect to both their individual and collective identities [1].

Belongingness

In this part of the thesis it is decided that the term “*Belongingness*” will be utilized to combine the concepts of “place attachment” and “sense of belonging” into a unified framework to capture the essence of the research objective and enhance understanding. By merging these terminologies, this choice aims to provide a more comprehensive and cohesive perspective for the study.

The idea and the feeling of belonging, which is the main component of the thesis, does not have an exact equivalent in both terminologies (sense of belonging and place attachment), or because no other terminology to meet this feeling couldn’t be found therefore it has been tried to give a new meaning by taking the important features seen in both terminologies.

The definitions of the terminologies were summarized in the first chapter. It will be discussed what characteristics of existing terminologies were included into the new terminology due to this.



Belongingness Discourse
Figure 53

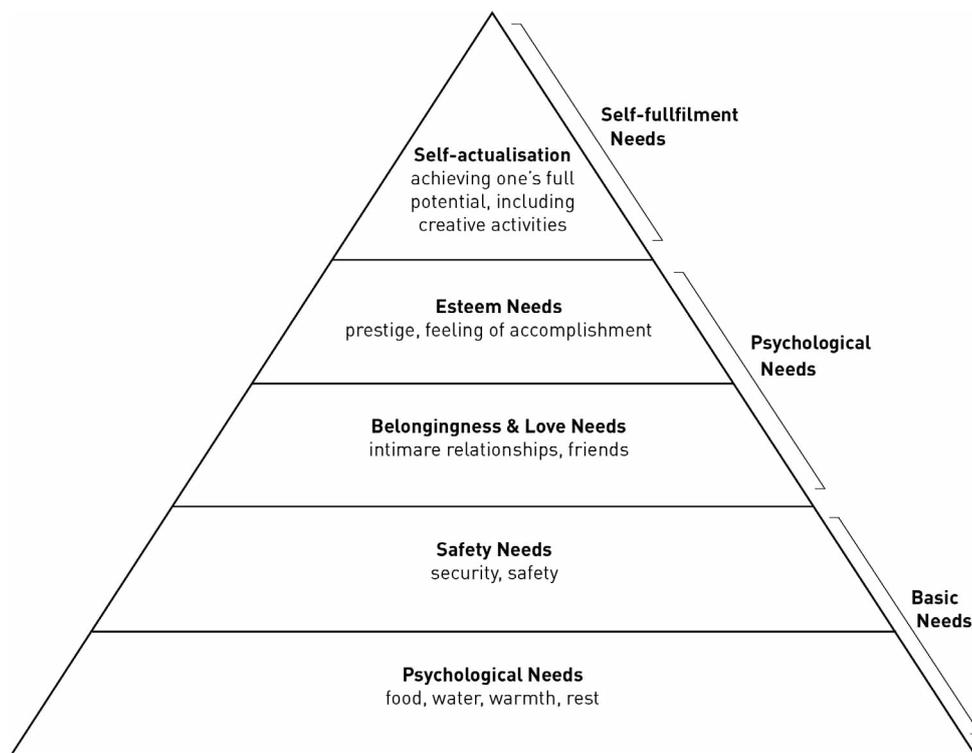
Within the scope of common and different features, sense of belonging has been proposed to be a basic human need [2] and it as the experience of connecting with an environment or system extending to the degree that a person feels as an indispensable and complementary part of a system [3] is also found in the word belongingness.

As a result, the definition that will be mentioned in this thesis while using the word **belongingness**:

Belongingness refers to the deep emotional connection and sense of acceptance that individuals experience both towards a specific place and within a particular social or cultural group. **Belongingness** recognizes the intertwined nature of our attachments to physical places and encompasses emotional sensitivity to the needs of others and social connections while containing the sensations of being safe, happy, and healthy in that place. To put it in a more emotional and romantic way, it's the feeling of being at home.

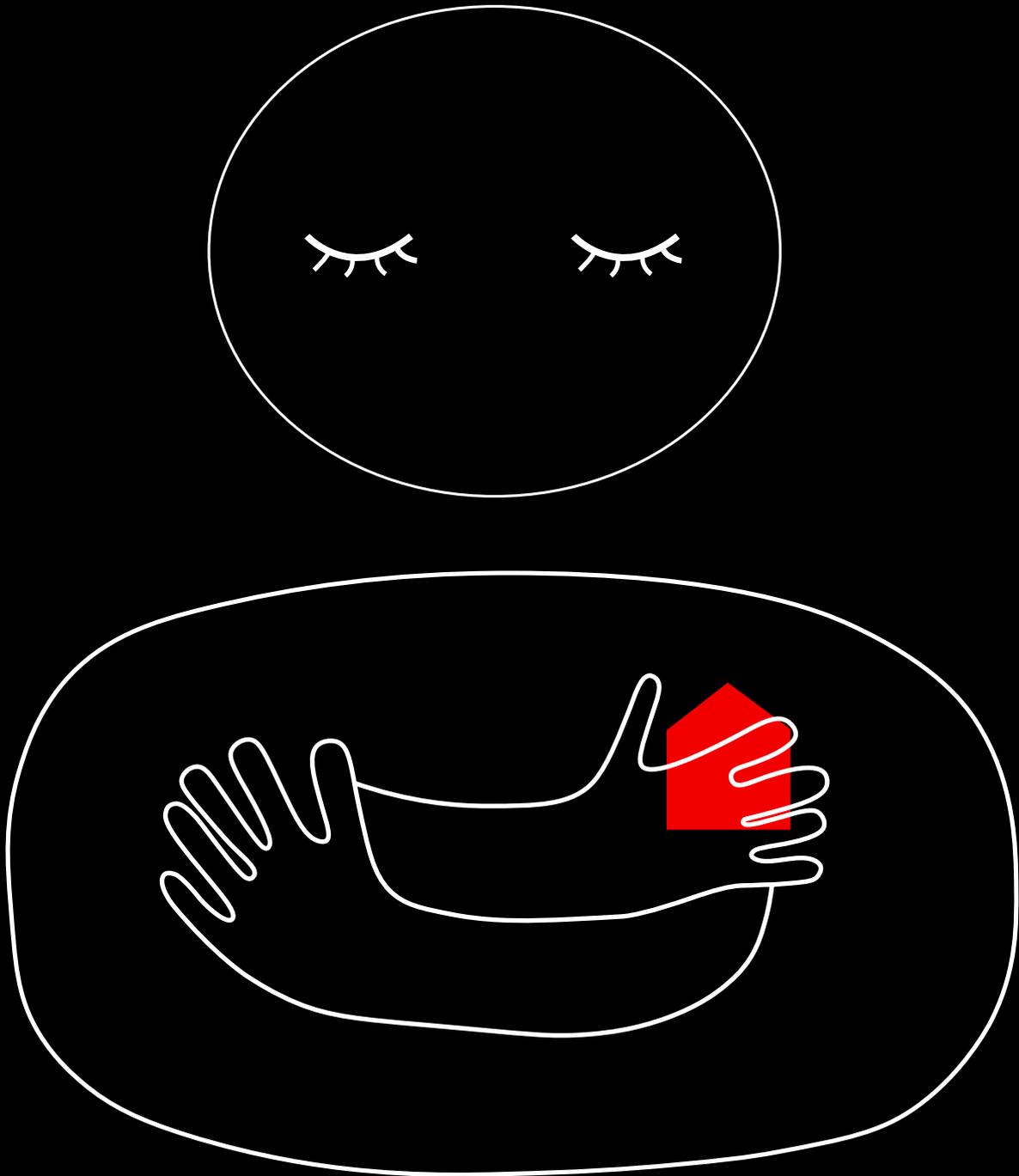
maslow needs

Abraham Maslow, a psychologist, put forth the notion of Maslow's hierarchy of requirements, which contends that people have a set of basic needs that must be satisfied in a particular sequence. These needs, in accordance with Maslow, are arranged in a hierarchical framework, with more complex psychological needs at the top and fundamental physiological needs at the bottom.



Maslow's Hierarchy
Figure 54

**There is no place like home. What is home?
home is a feeling
not a location**

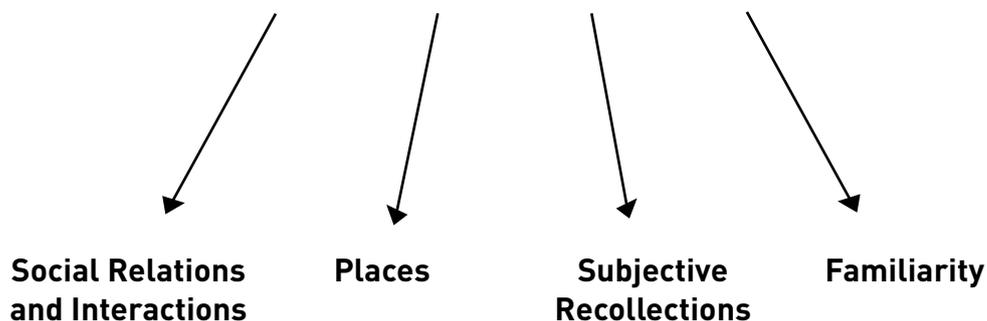


People have a positive emotional connection to places that make them feel “at home.” A unique meaning is created by the collection of data produced by the cognition of memories and knowledge about the location, including how the operating system functions and how people interact with one another and the location. This perceived meaning is so important to people that they want to maintain it and, if necessary, to reconstruct it [4].

What makes a place feel like home is different for everyone. What fosters belongingness? What are the dimensions of belonging?

While searching for this question, it should be kept in mind that every dimension that will be mentioned intersects with each other, and belongingness cannot be realized without one and without intersecting with the other.

Since everyone has distinct needs, worldviews, experiences, feelings, and thoughts, as described in “Chapter II: Living Together with Intersectionality,” each person’s belongingness is certain to take on different dimensions. The dimensions that will be talked about in this part of the thesis contain values that we think will be common to everyone. These values can be added and should be added without a doubt, but they cannot be subtracted.



Social Relations and Interactions

Strong social connections and positive interactions with others play a vital role in fostering a belongingness. People are social beings, thus they cannot live in isolation and require further interactions with others. Along with, according to numerous theories, developing and maintaining those connections is essential for survival [5].

According to numerous theories, humans have an inbuilt desire for social connections, and the ability to develop and maintain those connections is essential for survival.

In accordance with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the desire for love and belonging comes after the need for psychological requirements and safety. This means that individuals strive for social connection, love, and belongingness. These interactions involve relationships, friendship, intimacy, and a sense of being part of a community or group. And this encompasses the relationships individuals develop with others in a place, the shared history and experiences, the feeling of being part of a community or social network and consequently belongingness.

In the continuation of Maslow's theory, he mentions that another need is esteem needs and desires and result of these social interactions. This includes both self-esteem (self-confidence, achievement etc.) and the esteem and respect from others (status, reputation etc.). This is a summarization of a result that arises as communication with others improves, defining people's roles in society and the harmony of their relationships. The next and last stop of the pyramid is self-actualization needs. At the highest level of the hierarchy, individuals strive for self-actualization, which refers to the realization of one's full potential and personal growth. This involves pursuing meaningful goals, developing talents and abilities, and experiencing personal fulfillment. From a belongingness standpoint, self-actualization involves individuals' ability to express their true selves within a particular place. It includes pursuing activities, interests, and goals that align with their authentic identity and values within the context of the place they feel belong to. When individuals have the opportunity to engage in self-expression and personal growth within a place, it strengthens their belongingness and connection.

As mentioned, strong social connections and positive interactions with others play a vital role in fostering belongingness. This includes having supportive relationships, feeling accepted and valued, and engaging in meaningful interactions and in shared experiences such as participating in activities, hobbies, or events where individuals can connect and bond over shared interests. In these activities and interactions, when individuals are embraced for who they are, without judgment or prejudice, and experience empathy, understanding, and encouragement from their social connection they are more likely to feel belongingness. In some cases, the circumstances are reversed. For example, according to findings, neighbors who have a similar sense of place attachment engage in more interpersonal interactions, which help to facilitate social relationships and the formation of group identities [6] [7]. These connections can be with family members, friends, colleagues, or members of a community or social group.

Belongingness is often tied to a sense of community. When individuals feel connected to a larger collective, whether it's a neighborhood, organization, or cultural group, they experience a support network, shared values, and a belongingness to something greater than oneself.

The idea of community typically connotes a shared bond, set of interests, or sense of self. It is a broad notion in this sense, driven by the idea of social capital and characterized by a sense of togetherness among particular groups of individuals. Social capital is a resource that is created through interactions between individuals who have forged relationships based on shared values and conventions and are used to achieve both individual and group gains [8]. According to Foucault, the society itself, not the states, creates the spatial fiction of the cities. The first requirement for having a healthy urban structure is the awareness that cities increase in value in the eyes of society, not the state. In fact, it is said that society should be mindful of the fact that urban space users should also be the ones who create the space [9]. Foucault's discourse; it can be said that when societies take care of cities and shape their own spaces, the bridge between city and society is established. This bridge can be defined as the belongingness* that occurs when societies collectively shape their own spaces.

belongingness changed here from sense of belonging*



What is the effect of shaping a community's own space on the formation of a sense of spatial belonging?

According to research, people's behaviors and attitudes about certain places, including their willingness to devote time and money to preserving or upgrading them, can be significantly influenced by their emotive connections with such locations.

Communities made up of highly attached individuals are more likely to cooperate in order to achieve a desired result, such as protecting the environment [10] as well as preserving the social and physical features that define their neighborhoods [11]. People with higher belongingness* report being more socially and politically engaged in their communities [11].

belongingness changed here from place attachment*

Another viewpoint that is similar to this one asserts that institutional strategies that prioritize users have a higher degree of success in modern society. This can also be taken into account when designing goods and services for both public and private use in cities [12]. This demonstrates that people wish to maintain public spaces when they are made available to the public and when the needs of the community are considered throughout the project phase [13].

Since the making of the city is intertwined with the making of a public sphere, including people in design and planning processes contributes to making better democracies as well, as citizens feel their demands are being heard and their trust in institutions grows.

Places

In the “Chapter I: Sense of Place”, places and the contribution of places to people’s relationship with each other were mentioned a lot. It is obvious that spaces have an important place in the formation of the belonging factor, as they direct people and direct their behaviors and thoughts. So much so that the main idea of this thesis is to emphasize the importance of the bond of belonging that people establish with places.

The physical environment and setting of a place can significantly impact how it feels like home. Factors such as the aesthetics, design, architecture, and overall atmosphere of a place contribute and the familiarity and comfort derived from the physical surroundings, such as a cozy living space or a welcoming neighborhood, can evoke a feeling of being at home and enhance one’s belongingness.

Additionally from time to time, people may not even need to visit certain locations in order to experience a sense of connection, belonging or feeling of home, as is the case with how Americans feel about the Grand Canyon and Yellowstone National Park or how Turks feel about Anıtkabir.



Yellowstone National Park, USA

Figure 55



Anıtkabir, Türkiye

Figure 56

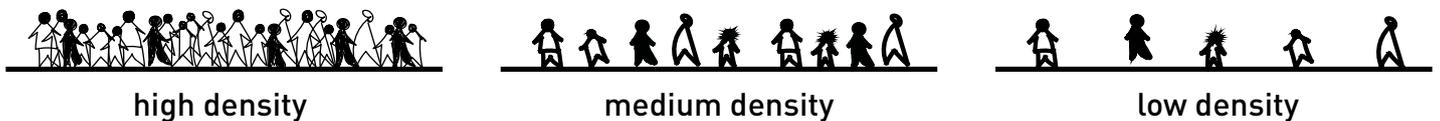
how do we feel where we live?

exploring the concept of “new urbanism”

The concept of New Urbanism explores the influences of the built environment on social interactions and community life. The goal of New Urbanism was to define the elements of the built environment that would either prevent or promote neighborly interaction and a stronger sense of community and belonging*.

belongingness changed here from sense of belonging*

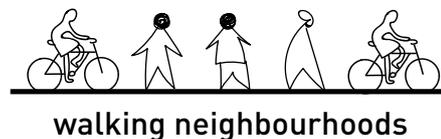
If we had to represent this idea in diagrams [14],



High population density inhibits neighbor interaction, weakening community ties, while low density restricts sociability. Medium density fosters public space interaction, promoting community ties and a stronger belonging.



Mixed land use encourages a variety of activities, fostering social interaction, community ties, and a stronger sense of neighborhood belonging.



Neighborhoods that promote walking foster stronger community ties, while car-dependent neighborhoods experience weaker ties.



Public spaces and streets as meeting places enhance social interaction and neighborhood belonging. Research shows that individuals who utilize and appreciate public spaces have stronger community ties.

According to Gehl, the spatial conditions of streets and sidewalks, including wide pavements, permeable and transparent facades, urban furniture, and mixed-use developments, play a significant role in encouraging the use of public space by inhabitants. By spending more time on the street, residents are more likely to interact with passers-by, promoting social interaction, community ties, and *belongingness** to the neighborhood. Montgomery supports this perspective, emphasizing that urban vitality, fostered by elements such as public space, mixed-use land, and the presence of shops, restaurants, and sidewalk cafes, facilitates encounters, recognition, and the development of social relationships among diverse city dwellers. These dynamics contribute to a stronger sense of territorial belonging and a vibrant urban life [15] [16].

belongingness changed here from sense of belonging.*

urban vitality

Urban vitality is the characteristic of those areas in cities that may draw a diverse range of people for various types of activities at various times of day [17]. The urban areas with a high vitality are seen as alive, active, or vibrant, and they frequently draw people to engage in activities, take strolls, or stay.



Plaza Mayor with installation from Janet Echelman, Spain

Figure 58

Maybe the location itself is the most crucial component. Regardless of scale (house, neighborhood, city), social ties are formed by the perception of belonging to the neighborhood or local region, by its residents, and by the physical features of the location. However, a *place** is a constantly changing environment that rearranges and reorganizes itself as soon as it develops new products and services. The diversity, traditions, values, and lifestyles of the people residing in a place contribute to its unique character and identity. The relationship-based process that creates a place's identity. Hence it follows that just as people shape places' identities, so do places' identities shape people.

*place** can mean (home, neighborhood, city) here

One example can be that, history, culture of the site and its architecture can influence people, their interactions, influence their sense of identity and shape their worldview. Similarly, the collective identity and distinct characteristics of a place can impact the attitudes, behaviors, and aspirations of its residents, fostering a shared cultural identity and shaping their individual sense of self.

As a case of how history and cultural architecture affect people and that people carry and protect their values, it can be mentioned that the Santa Catarina region in Brazil was once a German colonization, especially the German immigrants who migrated to the Blumenau and Joinville region. The German immigrants brought their culture, language, and traditions, which have had a lasting impact on the identity and heritage of the area and these influences can be observed in various aspects such as architecture, cuisine, festivals, and cultural traditions in Santa Catarina. By doing so, they preserved a connection to the location they departed, which served as a point of identification in their collective imagination [18].



Santa Catarina, Brazil
Figure 59



Oktoberfest, Blumenau, Brazil
Figure 60

subjective recollections*

In this section of the thesis, the word “recollection” is used to refer to a person’s experiences, feelings, and memories.*

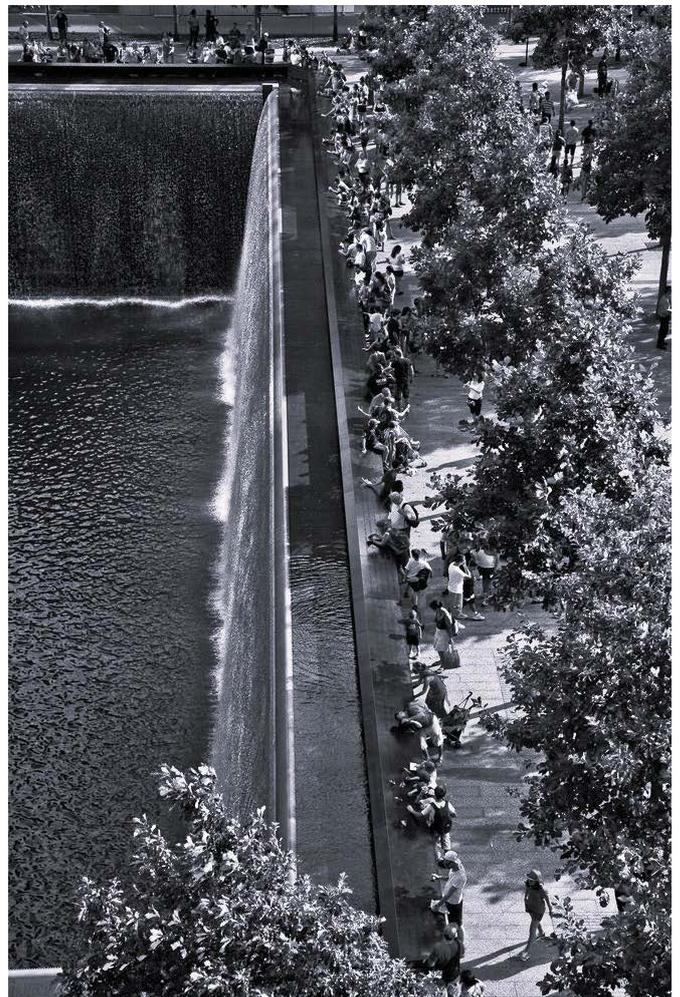
After talking about places, the importance of these places and the important role of human relations in people’s experience, memory and feelings should be mentioned. Likewise, a feeling or an experience for a place has a lasting effect on our minds.

These can include positive emotions tied to specific moments or experiences in that place, shared memories with loved ones, or a sense of nostalgia. An individual or community may feel belonging because of a unique meaning to a location because they value it. This is where the sentiment of loving and favoring one area over another comes from.

Sites of loss or tragedy can also be locations where a person feels a sense of identification and belonging, such as former battlegrounds or other locations connected to grief and suffering. A study of community-based memorials erected by 9/11 terrorist attack victims discovered that memorial sites performed three fundamental social functions: a location for special tribute activities, a place to commemorate and respect victims, and a sacred space [19].

recollection

A memory of something, or the ability to remember past events [20].



*National September 11 Memorial
by Handel Architects with Peter Walker, New York, USA
Figure 61*

According to the various researchers, three emotions are important for the establishment of the concept of *belongingness**

- + safety (protection) ,
- + search for proximity (social ties) and
- + comfort (wellbeing).

The sensations of safety or protection are considered both objectively for example, history of criminal activity in the area and subjectively for instance, sense of security in private and public spaces [21]. The presence of people in open public spaces can promote a sense of security, thereby reducing fear.

"The eyes on the street" theory can be recalled here.

*belongingness** used instead of *place attachment*

eyes on the street

Eyes on the street is a concept coined by urban planner Jane Jacobs in her influential book, "*The Death and Life of Great American Cities.*" It refers to the presence of people in public spaces who actively observe and monitor the surroundings.

This concept promotes safety, social interaction, and community engagement, as people act as informal guardians and deter potential crime. It contributes to the vitality and livability of neighborhoods by fostering a sense of security and creating a vibrant atmosphere.

The goods and services that cities provide elicit amusing responses from both individuals and the general public. For instance, public parks are often enjoyable because of recreational activities, relaxation, and social interactions. However, they may also be cause for worry if they have been neglected. Poorly maintained, with broken equipment, litter, or inadequate lighting, they may discourage people from using them and contribute to a sense of insecurity or neglect in the community.

Adult recollections of childhood places can evoke strong emotions and memories, including feelings of love, loss, enjoyment (including play, sensory, mastery, adventure, and freedom), security, and identity. Belongingness in a particular place does have its roots in childhood experiences.



recollections of childhood

Childhood appears to be a particularly formative time for belongingness. Feelings of connection or belonging initiated at an early age tend to become stronger in later years. According to attachment theory, the quality of these early attachments shapes an individual's beliefs and expectations about themselves and others.

The experience of playing, as well as the roles of family, culture, and community, have a big impact on how children discover about their surroundings while they are young. This primitive childhood landscape contributes to a person's identity and serves as a crucial benchmark when evaluating later-life environments. When adults move around, they frequently compare new locations to the landscape they were exposed to as children [22].

attachment theory

Attachment theory, developed by psychologist John Bowlby, focuses on the emotional bonds and relationships between individuals, particularly in the context of early childhood.

It suggests that humans have an innate need to form strong and secure attachments to caregivers, usually the parents, which serve as a foundation for emotional well-being and future social interactions.

Attachment theory suggests that these attachment styles developed in childhood can influence one's relationships and emotional experiences throughout their lifespan.





Dilara Teber

"I'm Dilara. I went on vacation to many places with my family and friends in my life. I saw and discovered many beautiful places. I have very good memories of each of my vacations, but when I think of the most beautiful vacation, I always think of the first vacation I went out with my family at the age of 10. I still can see my father bringing the key to the house he rented. I remember very well every room of the house, all its details, and the beautiful view of Selimpaşa from the balcony. I would find the ice cream shop near the house, the park, the fishermen as if I put it with my hand. Which is how it was because last year, my boyfriend took me to Selimpaşa by chance and while driving, I found the house immediately. In reality, 14 years have passed. While walking, I said there must be an ice cream shop around here and it came right in front of us. While walking on the beach, all my memories flashed before my eyes and I thought: I swam in beautiful seas, but none of them made me as happy as Selimpaşa, whose sea is algae and sometimes smelly."



When she was little



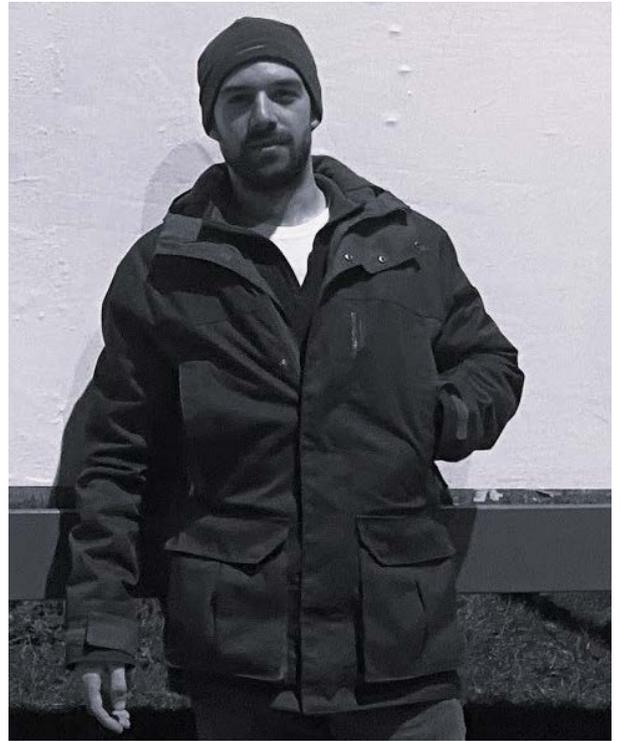
Dilara Teber in Selimpaşa

"Hello, I was asked about the places where I spent my childhood in Istanbul. When I close my eyes and fall into a dream, I immediately find myself in the wooden building of Göztepe train station. A little worn, squeaky, very stylish. I remember often getting on the train with my father. Even though I was only 4-5 years old, we used to go to the city center by train. The old commuter trains were not suitable for the legs of a 4-year-old. My father used to jump me on the train. I also remember the station's high ceiling and wooden seating areas. My father used to force me to socialize while waiting for the train to arrive. Commuter trains used to come at long intervals, not like the current subway. Since I was a curious but shy child, I would always ask questions about my surroundings. My father half encouraged and half forced me to ask these questions to those around me. After a while, I got used to it. I could go to anyone and ask questions about anything. The station was a safe space for me, the train had been a long part of my little life.

In fact, it's not just stations and trains either. I also remember Göztepe Station Street, where we also have our house. It's official name is Tütüncü Mehmet Efendi Caddesi."



In the mentioned street when he was little with his father



Ozan Can Seis

"Right next to the station, Barker Stationery, now a famous stationery chain, was then a tiny shop run by a single old man. Next to the stationery shop was a covered market and we would often go there to buy cheese and sometimes fish. It had wet, damp walls and floors whatever the weather. I remember even going there to cool off in the summer with my mother. Finally, the first cinema I went to and the first hamburger shop were on the street. It goes without saying that after a while after meeting these places, I was constantly looking for ways to go and became addicted as soon as I gained my freedom.

The end of these beautiful childhood memories was not being able to continue living in Göztepe, the neighborhood where I grew up, due to economic reasons. We were tenants in the neighborhood. Actually, my mother grew up there too, but after marrying my father, they couldn't afford to buy a house. As a result of the laws enacted over time, the real estate value in the neighborhood increased and it was transformed into a more money-making situation for the capital. As a result, worker families and their children moved away from Göztepe. Hoping to get back my neighborhood, my childhood and my station one day..."



Deniz Bal

“During my childhood, I enjoyed going to a park close to my house. My grandpa always took me there to have some quality time. We had a special connection with my grandpa, constantly I wanted to go to that park with him to spend time with him. I very much enjoyed our conversations and games. He generally found a way to make me happy. For instance, after each visit to the park, he would buy me an ice cream. It was our secret during the winter because my mom never allowed me to have ice cream when it was snowing. Those small activities after visiting the park made our bond stronger. I always felt the happiest. The trees were my friends; I hugged and played with them. I had an imaginary life in the park where trees were my friends and family, and all the park equipment was my imaginary living area. I always felt a sense of belongingness there. In recent years, they closed the park and built a building instead. Now, it is just a sweet memory. However, whenever I pass through the place (where the park used to be in the past), I feel somehow happy and sad at the same time. I feel happy because I remember all the good times that I spent with my grandpa, and I reimagine everything. But when I think of all the children that won't have the opportunity to spend time with their grandparents in that beautiful park, thus, my heart gets broken.”



In the mentioned park when she was little

“In Eskişehir, where I spent my childhood, there are small memories almost everywhere in my neighborhood, places that remind me of that place pleasantly and still make me smile when I pass by. When I was a child, a small ice skating rink was built on the upper floor of the Eskişehir Youth Center. At that time, there was an ice skating competition on TV and I loved watching it too. As I watched that competition program, I always imagined myself on the ice and tried to do those moves by skating at home, so I was very excited when I first heard about it. It was a building with small shops, sweet shops and a couple of pubs in a historical building, mostly visited by young people or tourists, and I don't remember if I've been inside before. My mom surprised me and my older brother and took us skating.. I remember how much fun I had on that track, how much I laughed, how much I fell and got up. It has remained in my memories as a very, very good memory. Later, the upper floor with the ice rink was converted into a wedding hall. Every time I see that building, my childhood memories come to mind, I find excuses to go there and spend time, I visit the shops, I sit in the small pub, I always take my friends who come for a walk. Now I live in Istanbul, but Eskişehir is my home, I grew up there. These memories are the most important things that connect me there. Although that skating rink has now been removed, it has remained one of the most beautiful places in the city that has meaning for me.”



Ayşe Kaynak



Eskişehir Youth Center, Türkiye

Figure 62

When she was little



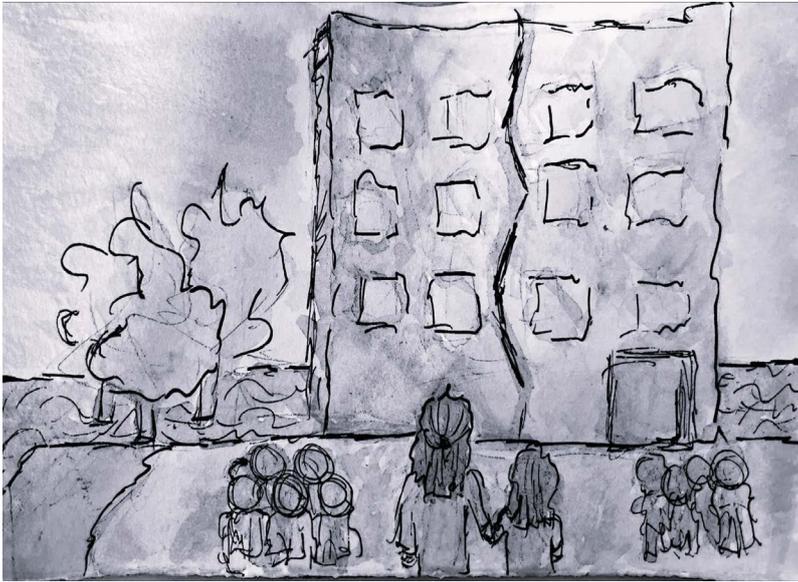
"I was born and raised in a small village in Giresun. In this village, there were no places like parks for the little ones to play. That's why we created a playground with our own methods. My father was a butcher, my mother worked in the garden, so they went to bed very early. In fact, almost everyone in the village. The houses were already adjacent to each other. We were not allowed to play near the house, because we made a lot of noise and they woke up from their sleep. But we were children, so we always wanted to play. 500 meters from the house, there was a cemetery surrounded by the pines. All the neighborhood kids, including my cousins , my siblings and I used to play there at night. It was our playground, our meeting point. We always spent time there. We played football, we played dodgeball, we played marbles. We often made up games ourselves. When we got tired, we would sneak into the house quietly. Although the cemetery is normally a very sad place, for me it is a place where I have happy memories. It was one of the places where we could socialize, be happy and feel free. I still miss those days and the cemetery so much."



Nebahat Çakıroğlu

When she was little in the mentioned cemetery with her cousins





Her sketch of the moment she remembers
Figure 63

“One of my most prominent childhood memories is related to the earthquake trauma I experienced. I remember waking up with an earthquake in the middle of the night when I was about 5 years old. I can’t forget the moment when my mom quickly took her wallet and a few pieces of clothes, and I was waiting for her with the doll in my hand. When we went out, we watched the building shake due to the earthquake for a very long time and witnessed the building crack in the middle. I felt very deeply the worries and fears of the people there. We moved out of the building very quickly after this disaster, but I can never forget that moment. I am 27 years old now, I still live in the same city, but the place where I had this memory is still a key place for me. Every time I pass by that building, I feel the same fear and worries and relive that moment. Therefore, I almost never use the street where that building is located. When I need to pass there, I always use other routes at the expense of extending my way. I was born and raised in Ankara. The whole city is my home, except for that building and street.”



Hande Gürbüz



When she was little

familiarity

When taking into account all of the previously listed factors, the significance of repetition and a sense of familiarity will be stressed in the final factor, as well as the significance of their contribution to belongingness.

Familiarity plays a triple role in fostering belongingness. Firstly, familiarity with a place itself can contribute to a feeling of comfort and security, as we become accustomed to the physical layout, landmarks, and routines of that place. It is said that, people are more at peace in the types of landscapes they were raised in, and they struggle with less stress when they recreate in those environments.

As an another point of view, in a study conducted in Iran, it was determined that there is a significant difference between the identity and sense of belonging of the people living in the historical areas of the city and the newly built areas, the sense of identity and belonging is very weak in the newly built areas, and the symbolic structures that strengthen the belongingness* in the historical parts of the city are mosques and government buildings [23].

belongingness changed here from sense of belonging.*



Yazd, Iran
Figure 64



Tehran, Iran
Figure 65

Secondly, familiarity with the people in that place, such as neighbors or community members, can foster belongingness through shared experiences, common values, and belongingness to a social group. A study found that individuals who reported higher levels of familiarity with their neighbors were more likely to experience belongingness* to their community. The researchers observed that familiarity with neighbors created opportunities for social interactions, shared experiences, and a sense of mutual support and trust. These factors contributed to a stronger sense of belongingness and identification with the community [24].

belongingness used instead of sense of belonging and attachment*

Lastly, familiarity with activities that are being done in the same place or with the same people, can contribute to belongingness since it's a repetitive form of doing something.

In his book *"The Practice of Everyday Life"*, de Certeau explores the concept of belonging as a sentiment that emerges from our repetitive everyday activities. It is through everyday practices, accumulated knowledge, memories, and repeated practices intimate bodily experiences, such as walking, that a belongingness* is built. This belongingness* evolves and changes as these everyday experiences accumulate and shape our connection to a particular space [25].

belongingness used instead of sense of belonging*



What about identities?

As explained in “Chapter II: Living Together with Intersectionality”, we all have different identities, we all have different living conditions, experiences, stories, influenced by various factors, such as nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, religion, and social class. It consists of common moral principles, worldviews, ethnic and cultural heritage, as well as tolerance for individual differences. A mosaic of our individual experiences, character traits, passions, and distinguishing qualities make us who we are. By all means, this situation affects the way our sense of belonging is formed, developed and reflected outside.

When a deep examination is made on the identities mentioned in Chapter II, it will be understood that gender shapes the politics of belonging, emphasizing that women often experience belonging differently due to gendered power relations and expectations. This situation is related to the fact that the identity of the person is endless. Since this immense situation cannot be assessed, only things that can be common to everyone are explained here.

When individuals are willing to understand and appreciate different perspectives, it's possible to bridge differences and create an inclusive environment. This openness allows for greater acceptance and understanding of others, contributing to a stronger belongingness. Belongingness arises from finding acceptance, connection, and a shared sense of purpose within a group or community.

“True belonging doesn’t require us to change who we are; it requires us to be who we are.” [26]

tête-à-tête

a private conversation or interview between two people [27].

Now let us examine how and to what extent people from different geographies and backgrounds feel the belongingness.

The selection of participants for this exercise, or series of talks, is based on the fact that each of them has resided in different locations. Therefore, the following question aims to compare and discuss their experiences in relation to belonging.

The individuals interviewed for this study were given the opportunity to select the specific location they wished to discuss or compare. The examination of belonging takes into account both positive and negative aspects, recognizing that individuals may not fully identify with either of the chosen places or perceive a complete belongingness in their respective contexts.

The questions are as follows,

1- What is home to you?

I want to know what you consider the feeling of being at home. Is it about the place, where you come from, or another place that you have been living for a long time? Or home is where your loved ones are? Or where you are comfortable, happy etc.? You can say all of them are, or you can talk about completely different things. The essential point is that I want to understand where you get the feeling of being at home and your idea of “home” is coming from.

2- Why do you feel you belong here? Or don't feel belong here?

In exploring the concept of belonging, various elements come into play, including the influence of the physical environment, the presence of individuals within that environment, personal experiences, memories, and the sense of familiarity. These factors contribute to one's belongingness, and it is essential to consider both positive and negative aspects of this experience. Furthermore, participants may express not belonging fully to either of these aspects or to the specific place under discussion.

3- How did your identity and personality shape this belonging?

With this question I want to analyze the manner and extent to which individuals from various geographical regions and backgrounds perceive a sense of belonging, considering factors such as their cultural identity, encompassing language, religion, race, gender, ability, as well as their personal attributes and characteristics.

What is home to you?

For me, home is where my mother and father are, where I am familiar, where I know. Familiarity is very important because it is very difficult for me to get used to a new place, home. It takes time for me to adapt.

Why do you feel you belong here? Or don't feel belong here?

If I have to compare Istanbul and Linz in this regard, I am a different person in both places and therefore I have different belongings. I feel very comfortable in Linz, as my economic situation allows me to live comfortably here, and because I can meet all my needs, I feel comfortable and a sense of belonging. The low crime rate, the good functioning of systems and institutions such as the health system and residence make me feel very comfortable and safe here. My colleagues and being successful in what I do are also factors.

Linz is also a very safe place, it is very important to feel safe in order to feel that you belong somewhere, this place does not make me feel unsettled. At the same time, this is a very calm place and after getting used to this calmness, I realized that I did not want to live in a chaotic place like waste Istanbul.

For Istanbul, there are not many of these things I have mentioned. In fact, I feel obligated to belong there just because my family is there. I can say that I have an indirect sense of belonging to Istanbul, I do not feel belonging there, but I feel I belong to the things in there. Istanbul is now a very unhappy place in my opinion, the poor quality of the standards of living do not make me feel like I belong there at all, and it is very crowded.

Istanbul feels like you have to have a purpose, not just a place to go out and wander. Linz has places where you can hang out alone and have a pleasant time, as well as meet people outside and spend time.

For example, the existence of green areas and parks makes me feel very happy and unfortunately I cannot find this in Istanbul. There is a tiny park in front of my house, a very clean, quiet park that allows me to be alone safely and pleasantly and makes me feel I belong there.

For all these reasons, I can say that the place where I am homesick is not Istanbul, but Türkiye, its culture and people.



Ozan Çakiroğlu is originally from Trabzon, Türkiye but he's born and raised in İstanbul therefore he has two hometowns. He has been living in Linz, Austria for 2 years. He goes to İstanbul every now and then and every summer to Trabzon.

How did your identity and personality shape this belonging?

I think Linz is an inclusive place. I saw positivity instead of negativity when they felt that I was a stranger here, people are very helpful. But language makes a big difference. It's hard for me because I don't know German and people don't know English. If everyone knew English or I knew German, I would be so much more social. Although I am not antisocial, I feel much less social here than when I am in İstanbul. I feel like a different character.



Park that is mentioned



Mizuki Kobayashi born and raised in Tokyo, Japan. She studied abroad to Pennsylvania, USA for a year, when she was 15. She moved a lot when she was young, even changed her kindergarten 3 times, and changed her elementary school one time only for a year in Akita. Later, she moved to Milan, Italy for university for pursuing her master studies, and has been living in 2 years here.

What is home to you?

It is a place where I had the experience making the base of my life. It is about the relationship you have built with the place. In my case, my "home" is where I grew up and spent most of my childhood, because I spent time with all my families and friends who have been very important to me until now. No matter how good or bad the memories are, if your emotions move a lot, the memories tend to have a relationship with the place I believe. It depends on people, but in my case, it was "people" who have made the base of my life. I believe that your experience and the place have a strong relationship.

Why do you feel you belong here? Or don't feel belong here?

I feel like I don't belong to Milan, but it doesn't mean I feel uncomfortable. The primary reason I don't feel like it is because of the language. I think that the feeling of belonging comes from the connection with the locals. Since I don't speak Italian very well, I feel the gap with them. I have a lot of international friends and some Italian friends here, but I don't talk with them in Italian. The secondary reason is the culture. I sometimes feel the gap of the cultural rules between Italy and my home country. However, I think that the longer I stay here, the more I get used to it.

How did your identity and personality shape this belonging?

I like talking with people and being a part of a community. That's why I don't feel like I belong in Milan. It doesn't mean that I want to talk with people for 3 or 4 hours per day, but it can be just a small talk. The important thing is the feeling of living with other people everyday. Otherwise, I don't feel any connection and feel lonely.



Cem Erkam is from Denizli, Türkiye but now living in Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA and about to move to another state in the USA, to Austin, Texas. In the last 5 years he lived in several places such as Istanbul where he went to university, New Jersey, USA also for his double degree program in the university, and his hometown Denizli.



Cherry Street in Tulsa
Figure 67

There are more things I can do in Istanbul, of course my friends also contributed to this. But I can see that the idea of sociability is a little different here. It's not that I don't like Tulsa at all, I like being able to access my needs, art galleries open every Friday, sports activities, excluding transportation (very expensive).

But still, no matter what, I miss where I was born. I miss my homeland.

How did your identity and personality shape this belonging?

As I just mentioned, there are documents that I have to deal with since I am not an American citizen. That's why I think citizenship brings a certain kind of belonging. The language issue is one of the things that compels me a bit. Of course, you can't interact in your own language while socializing, so I have a hard time doing small talk. Even though I speak English, the language barrier inevitably affects me a lot.

What is home to you?

For me home is where my family and friends are, that's why Türkiye is the place where I can hang out comfortably and control my surroundings. Because of this reason, I don't feel at home in the USA, no matter what city. I feel at home in Denizli because I was born and raised there and my family is there. Also, I feel at home in Istanbul, even though I don't have a home there.

Why do you feel you belong here? Or don't feel belong here?

I think for belonging, being familiar to a place is too important. I don't have any kind of familiarity here, it's different from my culture and cities that I am used to. At the same time, of course, there are legal situations, because I am tired of dealing with documentation. This complicates the situation about belonging. I know that I can solve these problems in Istanbul, this gives me some assurance. I know English well, but of course, I could handle these problems very easily and more comfortably in my mother tongue, which affects my belonging.

I love and miss Istanbul. I miss the sea very much. I guess that's one of the things that feeds my sense of belonging. Same in Denizli, I grew up in a house with a garden surrounded by greenery. That's why I prefer places like this and unfortunately my home in Tulsa is not like this. For example, there is a street in Denizli where I used to go a lot and spend time with my friends, called Çamlık Street. There is such a place in Tulsa (Cherry Street), when I go there, I kind of remember home.



Why do you feel you belong here? Or don't feel belong here?

I have lived in Istanbul for 6 years and I like this city but I don't feel like I belong here although most of my family and friends are in Istanbul. I came here after the age of 18 and encountering different things from the culture I grew up made me feel like a foreigner here. Istanbul is just one of the different cities I lived and having good times here is not enough to feel like I belong here. Because I can't find my culture and the emotions of my childhood even I am in my country. For example, food is one of the main things that introduce the culture of Hatay and we use special spices in our foods. I can't find these spices here so it does not feel like my city.

But the times I feel belong here most are when I am with my family and close friends. Because when I am with my family and friends, I feel peaceful and this feeling is a pure emotion that I know from my childhood.

How did your identity and personality shape this belonging?

As I mentioned I believe that my character is made up by the culture of my family and city. Because my family helped me while I was trying to get to know the world. I learned to define my feelings and myself with them. If I had to give an example, In Hatay, I grew up in a large family and most of the time of my life I don't like to be alone. We always had breakfast all together everyday and my first time in Istanbul it was really hard for me because I had to have breakfast alone.

The main things that made up my character come from my childhood because of my family and culture.

Begüm Beste Ege born and raised in Hatay. She moved a lot when she was young, lived in several cities such as Ankara, Adana, Gaziantep in Türkiye and Nakhichevan in Azerbaijan. Later, she moved to Istanbul for university. Now, she has been living in Istanbul, Türkiye for 7 years and about to move to Rome, Italy.

What is home to you?

For me, home is where I find the pure emotions of my childhood. For me, this is the city where I was born, the most favorite people in my life, and the place where I grew up with its culture. Because I believe that everything that makes up my character is based on the emotions of my childhood. I lived in different cities and houses in my childhood due to my father's job, and then, I came to Istanbul for university. Therefore, I could not feel that I belonged in those houses and cities. I belong to the place where I feel closest to the emotions and definitions I knew in my childhood, which have remained constant for me. In other words, home for me is Hatay, the city where I was born and grew up, my grandmother's house who raised me, and my grandmother, boyfriend, and siblings, whose kindness I have known from my childhood. As you know, huge earthquakes happened in Hatay on February 6 and I lost part of my family. In this difficult process, I realized that I was suffering not only for my family but also for my destroyed city and our destroyed house. Even I suffered for the park that my grandfather took me to when I was a child was destroyed. I felt that I belong nowhere when I lost my family and the places as home for me and that is why I am suffering.



Manuel Antonio Garcia Fernandez born and raised in Guatemala. Later, he moved to Milan, Italy for university for pursuing his master studies. He has been living in here for 2 years.

Why do you feel you belong here? Or don't feel belong here?

Living in Milano really opened my eyes to the temporality of the feeling of home at a certain place. It allowed me to realize how normal it was to feel like my life was not being fully satisfactory in Guatemala before moving but also how some parts of my life back there won't be fully satisfied in Milano. Particularly, going back on holidays to visit family and friends after a year living abroad was a special experience as it allowed me to confront the differences of 2 worlds. Even though I know Guatemala will always be my home, at this moment, Milano feels more like my home as my goals, my duties and my life in general are here in Italy.

What is home to you?

Home is a very strong word in my opinion, as it means so much more than just a house or a place. Home is almost a feeling as it may be attached to a place and its components but might also disattach from it eventually. Home is a feeling resulting from a combination of different factors, all relating to time, space and people. A specific place can become a home for a specific time as long as the physical surrounding, spatial conditions and people or community around a given individual satisfy his different physical, physiological, social and emotional needs.

How did your identity and personality shape this belonging?

I think we usually see results of daily routine over time, which makes us neglect the changes happening in our everyday lives. Because of this, we need time and experiences to provoke reflection on our lives to understand ourselves better. For me, it was going back home after a year. Most of my friends were not living in Guatemala anymore, and whoever was there had moved on with their lives. Everything that was so special in my head and in my heart seemed so normal and ordinary back there. My first thoughts were how the place has changed and felt so different because of it, but upon reflecting I realized it was actually me, my personality and identity who had been changing that year and made me conceive home differently.



Ece Özetlerer born and raised in Adana. Later, she moved to Istanbul for university and lived 5 years there. Now, she has been living in Manchester, UK for 2 years.

What is home to you?

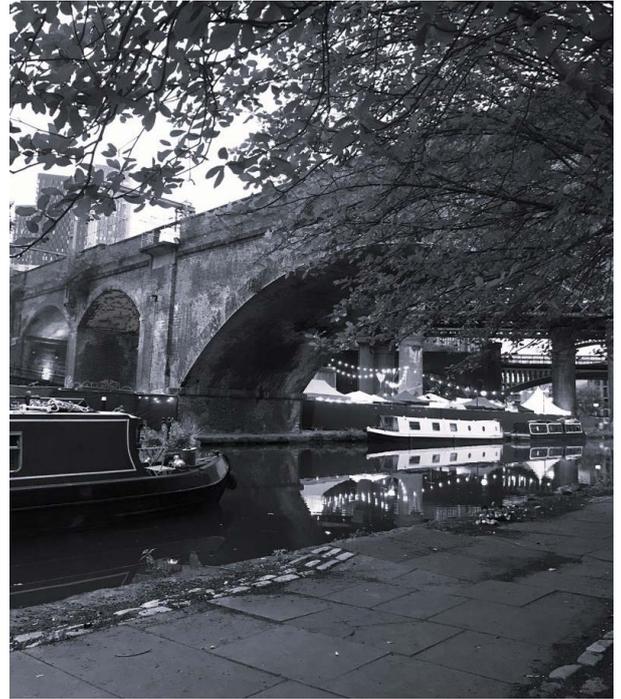
I've spent different stages of my life in Adana, İstanbul, and now Manchester, and each place holds special memories that have shaped who I am today. Yet, I find myself unsure if any of them truly qualify as my ultimate home. That uncertainty is precisely why I believe I have multiple homes. Some places provide a sense of cultural comfort, while others bring me personal comfort through the presence of my loved ones.

Home is wherever I create it, as I hold the power to shape my surroundings and nurture a deep sense of contentment and emotional connection in any location, whether it be in the present moment in the UK or in cherished memories of my past in Turkey.

Why do you feel you belong here? Or don't feel belong here?

Manchester captivates me with its perfect balance of being comfortably compact yet having diverse opportunities. This balance greatly contributes to my overall satisfaction, reminiscent of my hometown Adana. In contrast to my time living in Istanbul, where the chaotic nature of the city impacted my well-being and quality of life. Public spaces like the Castlefield Canal have a calming atmosphere reminiscent of my neighborhood in Adana. Being by the waterside brings back cherished memories and a sense of familiarity and comfort.

Also, I genuinely appreciate the sense of individuality and respect for personal choices in Manchester. The city fosters a culture of acceptance where people are more interested in connecting on a deeper level. It's refreshing to experience a society where personal boundaries are respected more. I found Manchester as a place for me to be comfortable to define my own path without unnecessary judgment, developing a sense of belonging.



Castlefield Canal
Figure 68

How did your identity and personality shape this belonging?

Being separated from Turkish language, customs, and traditions, left me feeling disconnected sometimes. These aspects are integral to my identity, and their absence made me feel unfamiliar and out of place. However, the inclusive nature of UK society allowed me to embrace my unique identity, connect with people from diverse backgrounds.

While my preferences and interests are met in the UK, the absence of regular social interaction with my friends and family affected my overall well-being. Without the social bonds that naturally complement my personality, I found it challenging to fully establish a profound sense of belonging.

What is home to you?

My name is Diego and I was born in Vigo, in northwest Spain. I grew up in a coastal city not far from there, A Coruña. Spending much of my youth there really influenced my vision of what I need from my surroundings to feel at home. The sea is everywhere you look in my hometown, and the city is mostly built around pedestrians, with a lot of narrow streets full of local shops and restaurants, adding to the sense of coziness. This coziness, brought by closeness with nature and the sense of proximity you get by being walking distance from most places is vital for me to feel at home in a city.

Why do you feel you belong here? Or don't feel belong here?

After my bachelor studies I spent a couple years in The Netherlands, a country that I had always been very interested in and idealized. There, I discovered the wonder of how well connected everything is thanks to the biking infrastructure. However, I also experienced the cultural differences in terms of social life compared to my home country in Spain. Being a very organized person myself, I was surprised by how much I missed how unorganized and improvised social life is in Spain. Plans are made at the last minute and everyone is available on short notice to share time together. I've learned to appreciate spontaneity a lot more since my experience abroad, and that is one of the reasons I decided to move back to Spain for work.

Now that I've been living in Madrid for the last couple of years, I have learned to value all those little things that I only realized when living abroad. How lively streets are on a weekday right after work, how open people are to meet and spend time together with little to no planification, and how parks and squares are always packed with life and full of gastronomical, cultural or musical events every weekend. To me, this slightly chaotic but beautiful social aspect of life is now the thing that would make me feel like I belong somewhere over any other factor.



Diego Albo born in Vigo and raised in A Coruña, Spain. Later, he moved to Delft, The Netherlands for university for pursuing his master studies and lived 2 years there. Now, he has been living in Madrid, Spain for 2 years.

How did your identity and personality shape this belonging?

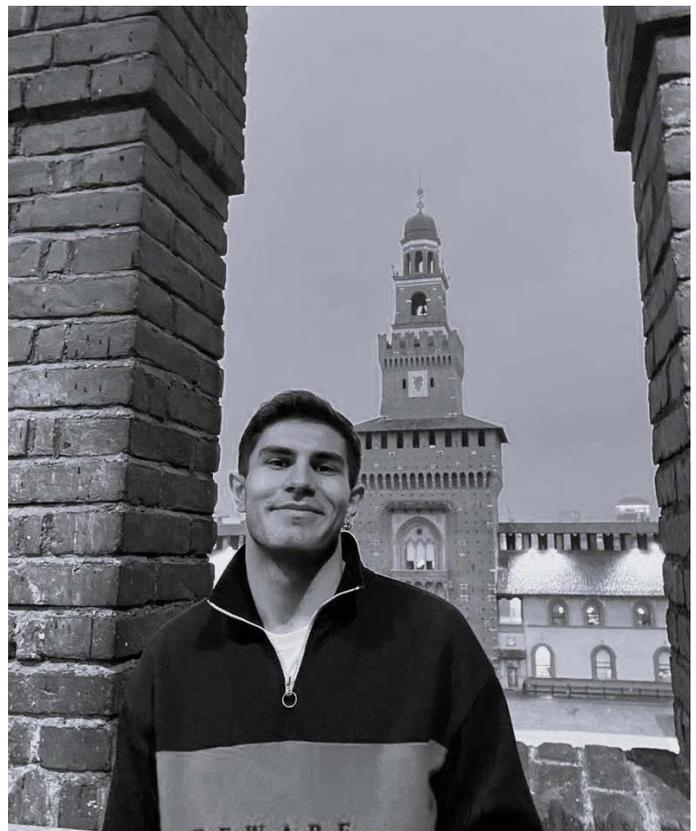
I feel like as I grew older I progressively became a more extroverted person, and as my personality changed so did the factors that affected my sense of belonging. I would now see that sense of coziness and closeness to nature as individual factors, which had a bigger impact when being more introverted. In contrast, now the more social and community-based factors have a higher effect on my perception of belonging.

What is home to you?

Home is where I feel I belong, where I can express myself and live as who I am. For me, it is a place where I do not feel any pressure on me, where I can act as I want without worrying about what anyone will say. It is very important to feel happy and to be together with my loved ones in these areas. But most importantly, home is the place where I can find happiness alone and be happy with it without feeling lonely.

Why do you feel you belong here? Or don't feel belong here?

I feel like I belong in Milan, but I can't deny that I don't belong in Istanbul. But when I compare the two, I feel more belonging to Milan. There are actually many different reasons for this. Both of them have people I love very much, I have a family in Istanbul and I was born and raised here. But there are moments when I lose myself in the crowd and chaos of Istanbul. After I had the opportunity to live in Milan, Istanbul started to make me think from time to time that I didn't make sense among the majority, or that they had no meaning to me and were just empty crowds. They are both economic capitals of the countries they are in, big metropolises, but Milan is just as dense as I can handle it. Rather than chaos and confusion, it is more orderly and calm in every sense. It is a place where you can isolate from the crowd when you want, find yourself in the middle of the crowd when you want, and be yourself in any environment. Because Istanbul is so big, it enables all of these, but it is very tiring to realize them.



Emre Tuç born in Istanbul, Türkiye. Later, he moved to Milan for university for his studies and lived 1 year there. Now, he has been living in Istanbul again.

How did your identity and personality shape this belonging?

I have never experienced racism in Milan, but some of my friends have spoken and experienced their misfortune. This was a plus for me, maybe because of my appearance, maybe because I know the language, maybe because the people I meet are always decent people. Anyway, while I can comfortably express that I don't believe in any religion in every corner of Milan, while living my sexual identity freely and telling people without hesitation, unfortunately in Istanbul I have to behave differently in different districts. This makes me feel more belonging to Milan because it is a city where I can always live freely and without fear.



Kiran Ravindra Ranka is from Pune, India but has now been living in Milan for 2 years and studying at Politecnico di Milano.

How did your identity and personality shape this belonging?

I thrive to be in a more community-oriented environment, the lack of social connections or a sense of community in Milan has hindered my sense of belonging. For example, I am a very extrovert and a social person since my childhood. And I believe my greatest strengths have always been making friends quickly. But here in Milan, due to a lot of cultural and social voids, I have turned into a more reserved and introvert person.

What is home to you?

My old house, where I spent my childhood, feels like home to me. It contributes a strong sense of belonging for me to that place. I think that the experiences and emotions associated with that house has shaped me as a person over the years. The house holds numerous memories, both joyful and challenging, that have contributed to my personal growth. These memories, when I think about them now, evokes a sense of warmth and security within me. The love and care received from my family, the relationships built with neighbours and friends in the neighbourhood, and the daily routines and experiences within that house all contribute to the feeling of belonging.

Why do you feel you belong here? Or don't feel belong here?

There are several reasons why I don't feel a sense of belonging in Milan while coming from Pune, India. Milan and Pune have distinct cultural backgrounds, traditions, and ways of life. Adjusting to a new culture was and is still challenging for me, and I find it difficult to connect with or adapt to the cultural norms and practices in Milan. Though I can't deny the fact that I have adapted to lot of things here in Milan over time.

Also, I feel I haven't been able to fully grasp or communicate in the Italian language, and it has created a sense of isolation and hindered my ability to form connections and engage with the local community.

What is home to you?

If this question had been asked me a few years ago, maybe I would have answered differently. But right now, after leaving my house and coming to abroad study, I would say home is where I feel “safe” and “comfortable”. It is more than the place. It is about who I am living with, and who else I communicate with every day. I think I can also say my family, the people I love, is my home because when I’m around them I feel safe and can be who I am. when I felt homesick in the last years I tried to organize my room as how I feel happy, but I realized that the feeling of home is something much more than objects, it is something, a place where you feel really safe and comfortable in your heart, body, and mind.

Why do you feel you belong here? Or don’t feel belong here?

It is a good but tough question. I can answer by talking about my last two years. When I came to Italy from Turkey and settle in my house first time in Padua, I didn’t feel I belonged to this place at all. I didn’t feel I belonged in the house, the neighborhood, the city, the country, even to people. I was missing my own country, my own city (Istanbul), and mostly my family. And I really realized that feeling “not belong where you live”, is really but really hard. Whenever I talked with my family and friends in Istanbul, I more deeply felt that I don’t belong in this new place. Because also that time I was feeling that I don’t really have real close people here, and most of the time I felt so alone. However, in a few months, I found new friends and improved the quality of my existing friendship in here, Padua, I started to join more social events, and slowly I started to belong to this house, neighborhood, city, and country. When I was on the way to back my country for a holiday, I felt sad leaving Padova behind. So, I can say that my belonging here is because of people and my relationships with them. That’s why last year I missed my home in Istanbul so much because all the people I love were there. But right now, I really have good friends here, people whom I love, and I spend most of my time with them collecting good memories.



Melis Aktaş born and raised in Istanbul, Türkiye. Later, she moved to Padova, Italy for university for pursuing her master studies and lived 2 years there. Now, she has been living in Padova for 2 years.

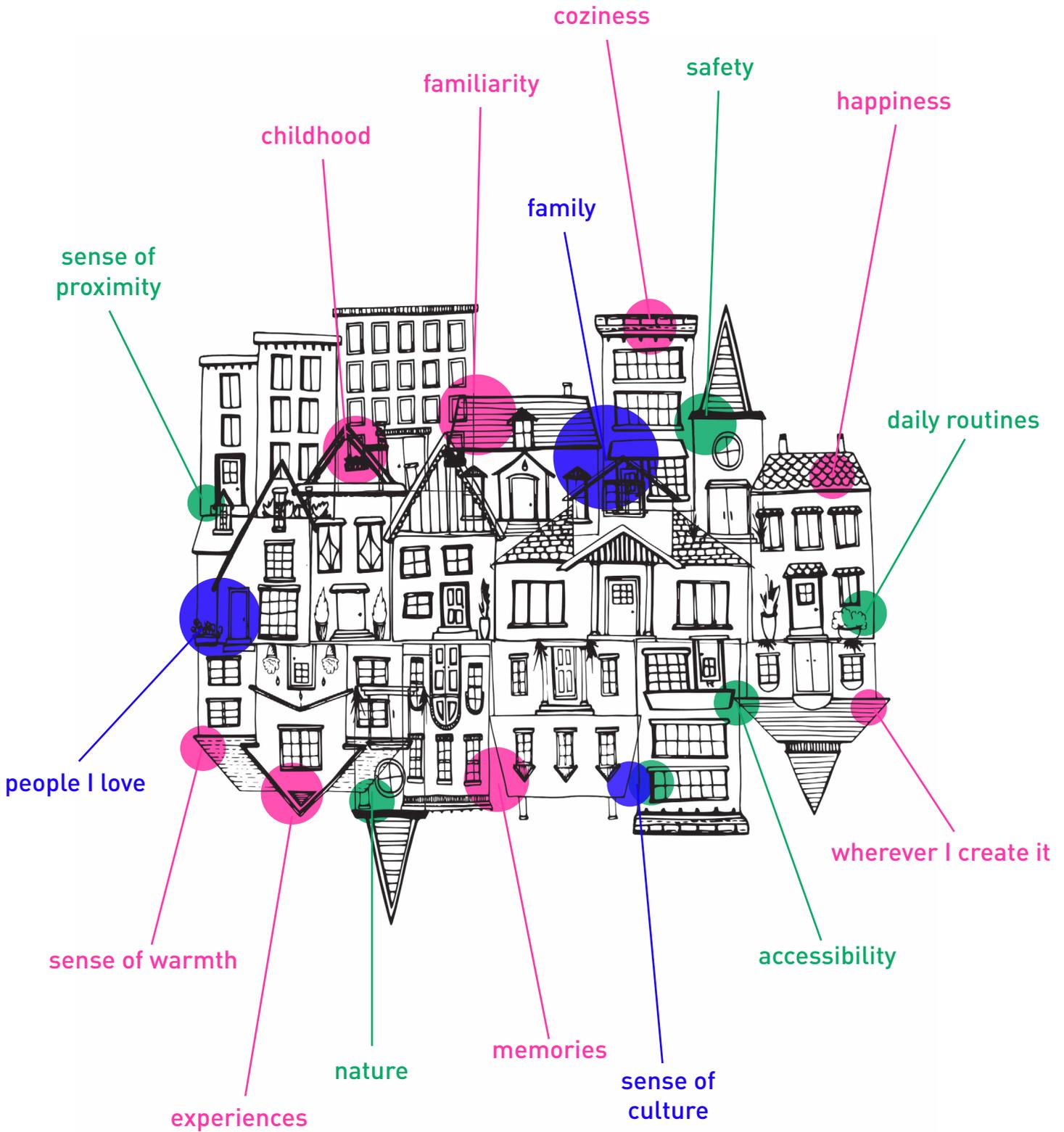
Finally, I feel that I also belong to this place. Of course, from time to time I’m questioning myself by asking “Do I really belong here?”, and “Do I want to continue my life in this country?”, and I cannot find the real answers, but I think it is because I have significant people in two countries, and I don’t want to end either of them.

How did your identity and personality shape this belonging?

I love to stay alone but also spend time with people. So, it is important for me to find a balance to don’t feel overwhelmed or alone. Also, speaking in another language sometimes can create some boundaries and make it hard to feel really connected with others. When I talk in my native language with other Turkish people who share the same culture and historical background as me, it would be easier to build friendships and understand each other’s life and problems, so I think it is something that strengthens my belonging. Also, if I don’t feel comfortable around some people or in some specific place, I can be more introverted, those times I feel that my belongingness is also influenced in a negative way.

Perceptions of Home

Summary of the most used words for the first question "What is home to you?"



● people ● place ● feelings

Perceptions of Home
Figure 69

Perceptions of Belonging

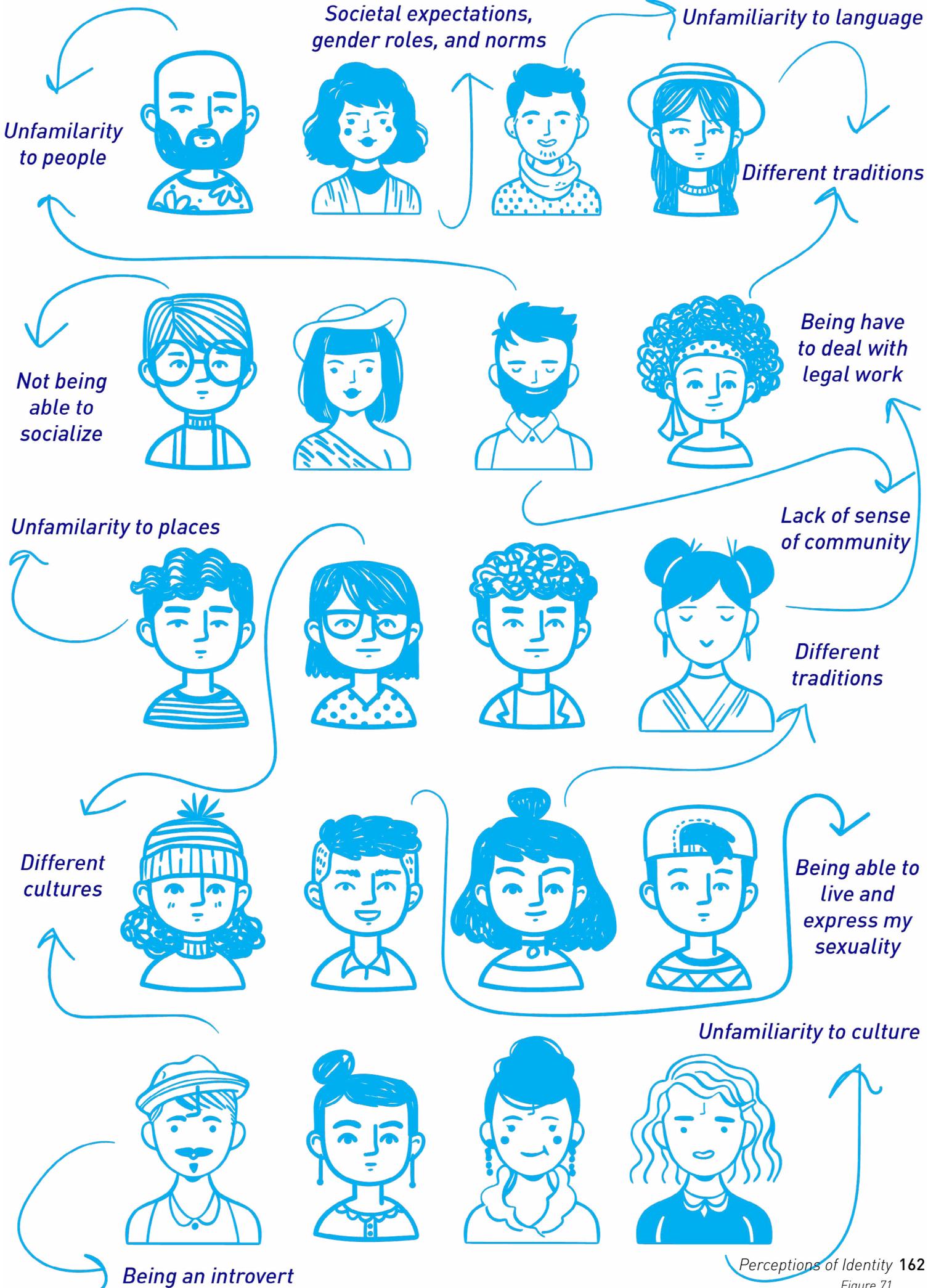
A diagrammatic template of the keywords extracted from the answers to the question of "Why do you feel you belong here? Or don't feel belong here?"

In the visualization, empty circles mean a negative association, indicating that the mentioned keyword is either unavailable or different in the person's location or doesn't contribute to their belonging. Filled circles represent a positive association, suggesting that the keyword either exists there or plays a significant role in fostering a belonging. Each number represents a person's perception. The letter "T" represents "Total," and the circle sizes reflect the total number of mentions of the selected keywords.



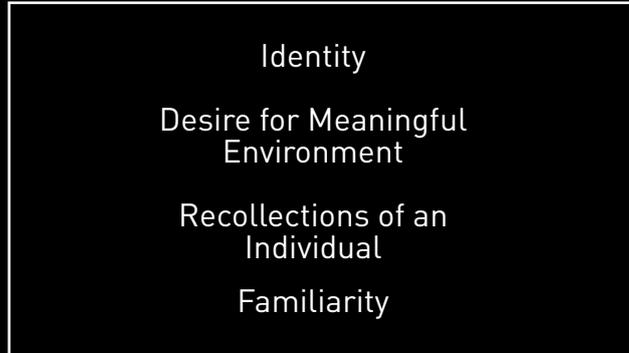
Perceptions of Identity

Societal expectations, gender roles, and norms

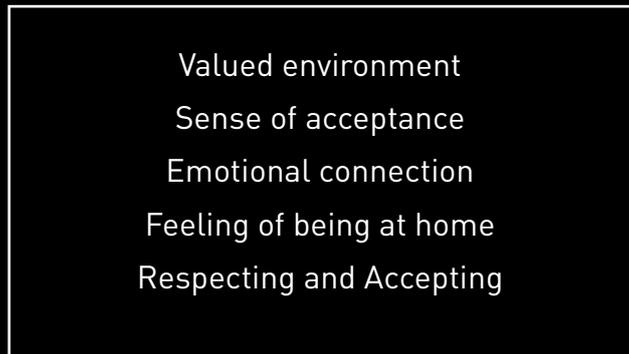


The model of belongingness, which encapsulates everything that has been discussed in these chapters,

ANTECEDENTS

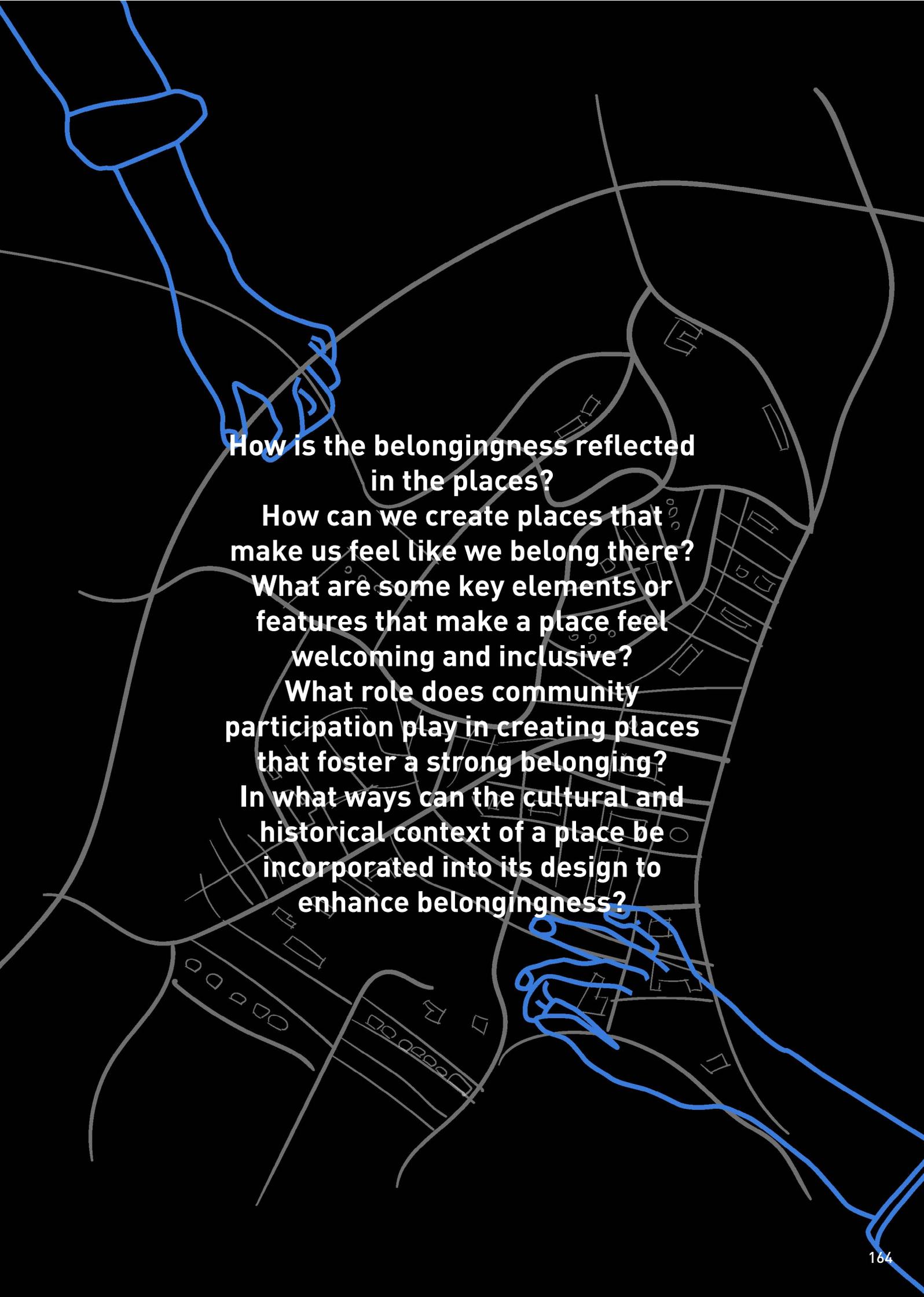


BELONGINGNESS



CONSEQUENCES





How is the belongingness reflected in the places?

How can we create places that make us feel like we belong there?

What are some key elements or features that make a place feel welcoming and inclusive?

What role does community participation play in creating places that foster a strong belonging?

In what ways can the cultural and historical context of a place be incorporated into its design to enhance belongingness?

Weaving The Connections: The Art of Placemaking

“Finding a sense of belonging in the places we live allows us to flourish, grow, and contribute to the collective well-being of our communities.”

Jane Jacobs

prologue

Amidst the ever-evolving urban landscape where cities are bustling with diverse communities and individual and ever-evolving belongingness characteristics, the search for belongingness in places, cities becomes increasingly significant. It is within the realm of physical spaces that this quest takes shape, where the art of placemaking comes into play.

“Chapter IV: Weaving The Connections: The Art of Placemaking” delves into the profound connection between belongingness and placemaking, exploring how the design, characteristics, and aesthetics of a place can shape and cultivate a strong belongingness among its inhabitants. This entails navigating through the intricacies of design elements that breathe life into a space, crafting an environment that fosters meaningful connections and evokes a deep belongingness.

Through in-depth analysis, case studies, and exploration of the practices that celebrate the innate human desire to belong, it is aimed to shed light on the transformative potential of placemaking strategies and delve into the various ways in which belongingness is manifested in physical spaces.

"Public spaces act as catalysts for creativity, innovation, and social change, providing fertile ground for the collision of ideas and the birth of new possibilities."

"Public spaces... are not just physical entities, they are not just streets, parks, markets, sidewalks, boulevards, squares; they are the embodiment of social interaction, providing a stage for spontaneous connections and cultural expressions."



"Public spaces are not just spaces; they are living organisms that evolve with the rhythms of a city, reflecting the ever-changing needs and aspirations of its inhabitants."



"Public spaces are the embodiment of a city's history, culture, and identity, weaving stories of the past with aspirations for the future, creating a sense of place and belonging."

"Public spaces influence how people live and experience urban life, places that bring people together, introduce them, mingle and meet."



"In the realm of public spaces, the ordinary becomes extraordinary, as these spaces have the power to transform mundane routines into extraordinary moments of serendipity and human connection."

"Public spaces serve as democratic platforms, where every individual has the right to access and enjoy the collective resources of a city, irrespective of their background or socioeconomic status."



"They vary in size, scale, and function, ranging from large urban parks, public plazas, and citywide bicycle networks to small libraries and recreation centers to building courtyards, intimate pocket parks, and hidden alleys."

"Public spaces are the great equalizers, transcending social, economic, and cultural barriers, offering a common ground where people can connect, share, and celebrate their humanity."



"Public spaces are the soul of a city, where people from diverse backgrounds come together, creating a tapestry of shared experiences and fostering a sense of community."

public spaces as a site for democracy

Public places are frequently regarded as democratic forums for assembly and political expression where individuals and groups can express their rights [1].

They serve as forums that encourage communication between many people of different backgrounds, promoting democratic dialogue and participation. Democracy depends on having a safe space, a common ground for citizens to come together to exercise their right to free speech and assembly. People can gather in these places for demonstrations, protests, open forums, and other types of civic involvement. Public places support democratic values of inclusion, diversity, and civic empowerment by offering a venue for group expression and discussion. They represent the core of democratic societies, where people may unite, express their opinions, and actively determine the course of their localities.

One example about how public spaces become places of democracy, the Gezi Park movement in Istanbul, Türkiye shows how public spaces can unite people. Gezi Park initially served as a green oasis in the heart of Istanbul, providing a respite from the bustling urban environment. However, when plans emerged to redevelop the park into a commercial complex, it ignited widespread public discontent.



Taksim Square During Gezi Protests, Istanbul, Türkiye
Figure 74

***“When public space is eroded, our civic culture suffers, even our democracy.”
Richard Rodgers***

Atatürk Cultural Center During Gezi Protests, İstanbul, Türkiye

Figure 75



Gezi Park became a space where people from diverse backgrounds united to voice their concerns, exercise their democratic rights, and challenge the existing power structures. It brought together individuals with various political ideologies, environmental activists, artists, and ordinary citizens, all rallying for a common cause. The park became a symbol of resistance, with slogans like “Everywhere is Taksim, everywhere is resistance” resonating throughout the country. It exemplifies how a seemingly mundane park can evolve into a site of social and political significance, empowering citizens to actively participate in shaping their city’s future [2].



Gezi Protests, İstanbul, Türkiye

Figure 76

placemaking

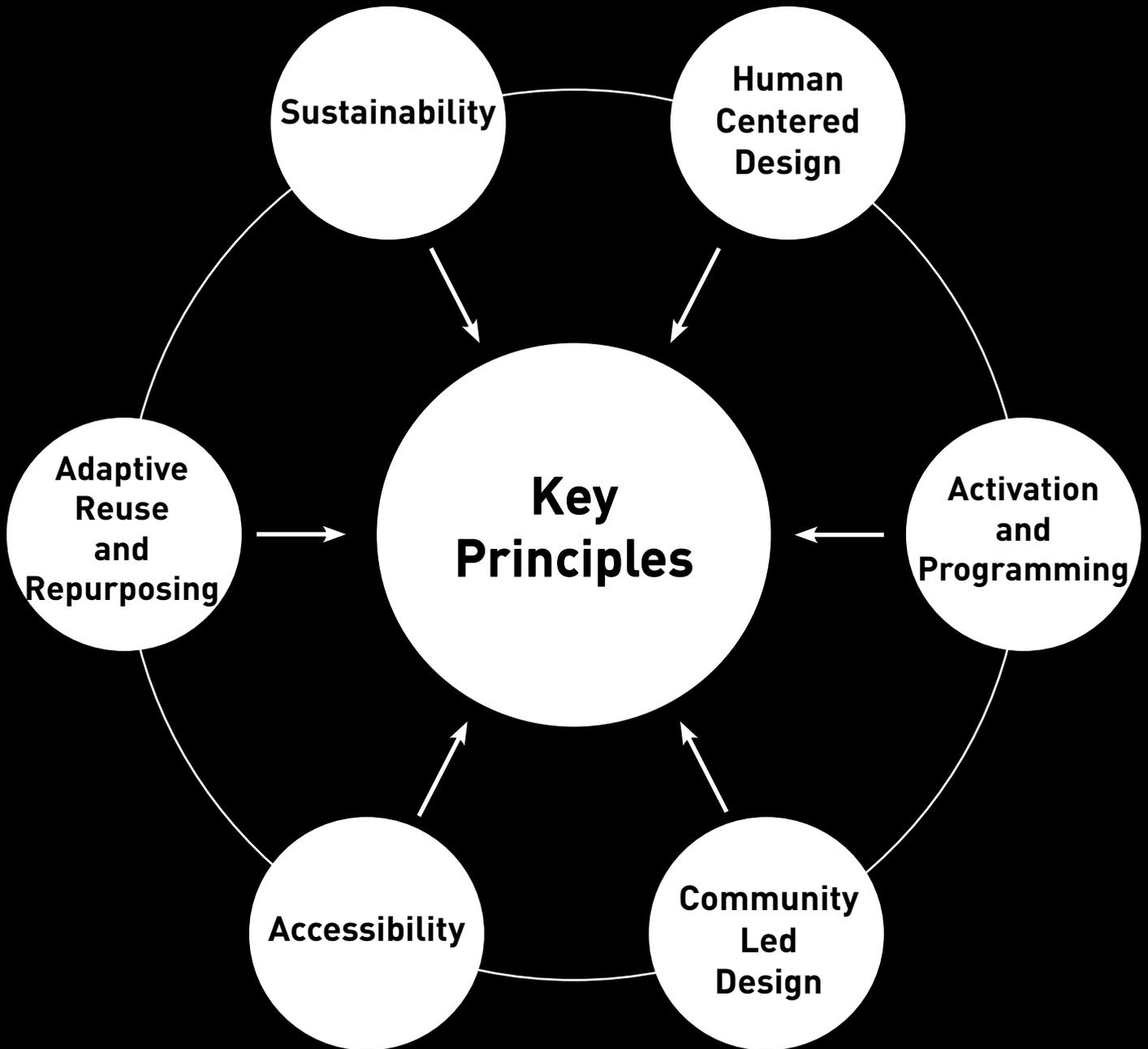
Jane Jacobs and William Whyte, two of our mentors, provided ground-breaking ideas on creating welcoming cities for people. While Jacobs popularized the concept of “eyes on the street”, Whyte focused on defining the important factors for fostering vibrant social life in public areas. Hence, the phenomenon of “*placemaking*” was born.

Placemaking is a collaborative and participatory approach to urban design and planning that focuses on creating vibrant, inclusive, and people-centered public spaces. It involves transforming underutilized or neglected areas into inviting and functional places that promote social interaction, cultural expression, and community well-being.

It is far greater than just a beautification of a place, a simple urban design process. Placemaking is the idea to transform a space into a place that gives people a feeling of trust and connection; a sense of belongingness. It is a collaborative method for modifying the public sphere with the goal of strengthening the bond between people and the places they share by paying close attention to the physical, cultural, and social characteristics that define a place and promote its continual evolution, placemaking supports innovative patterns of use.

Key Principles

Since the systems and the forms of our cities influence how we feel and how we interact with each other, they should be planned in a way to make its residents feel comfortable. For social justice we need to find new ways of designing cities that are drawing us together instead of pushing us away so that we can create the communication we need.



The public space is the heart of living together and in our new technological era and society is constantly evolving, mirroring the dynamics of techniques, tools, ideas, social needs and experiences, always creating new tangible and intangible reflections of contemporary cities. Amidst this ongoing transformation, these key principles remain as a central and unchangeable focal point.



*The Seoul Cheonggye River at Night
Seoul, Korea
Figure 80*

The Cheonggyecheon Stream Restoration Project

The Cheonggyecheon Stream Restoration Project in Seoul, South Korea, is a prime example of sustainable placemaking. By prioritizing environmental restoration, social connectivity, and economic revitalization, the project successfully transformed a neglected waterway into a thriving public space. The restoration efforts improved water quality, reintroduced native vegetation, and created pedestrian-friendly paths, bridges, and seating areas. The project's holistic approach showcases how sustainability can be integrated into placemaking, benefiting the environment, fostering community engagement, and driving economic growth [3].



*The Seoul Cheonggye Project Area
Seoul, Korea
Figure 81*

Human Centered Design

It emphasizes understanding the needs, preferences, and aspirations of the individuals and communities who will use and inhabit the space. This includes individuals of different ages, physical abilities, cultural backgrounds, and socio-economic statuses. This user-centered approach ensures that public spaces are tailored to the specific context and reflect the identities, values, and desires of the people who will interact with them.

Jan Gehl has emphasized the significance of scale and proportion in creating successful and people-friendly places. Gehl argues that human-scale design, which considers the size and proportions of elements in relation to the human body, is crucial for fostering comfortable and inviting environments. When spaces are designed with human-scale considerations in mind, they can better accommodate social interactions and create a sense of intimacy, which encourages people to linger and engage with the place [4].

For instance, narrow streets and pathways, appropriate building heights, and well-placed street furniture can contribute to a more human-scale environment. By avoiding oversized or overwhelming elements, and instead focusing on creating a comfortable and inviting setting, placemaking can enhance the overall experience for users and foster belongingness.



*Jay Pritzker Pavilion by Gehry Partners
Millennium Park, Chicago, USA
Figure 82 - 83*

*Clou
Mill*



Millennium Park

Millennium Park in Chicago exemplifies human-centered design principles through interactive art installations like “Cloud Gate” and the Crown Fountain, outdoor performance venues like the Jay Pritzker Pavilion, accessible pathways, beautifully landscaped gardens such as the Lurie Garden, and diverse amenities such as seating areas and food vendors. The park’s design prioritizes inclusivity, encourages social interaction, takes into account the scale and proportions of elements and provides a comfortable and inviting environment for people of all ages and backgrounds to enjoy.

*Cloud Gate by Anish Kapoor
Millennium Park, Chicago, USA
Figure 84*



*The Crown Fountain by Krueck & Sexton Architects
Millennium Park, Chicago, USA
Figure 85*

Accessibility

Pedestrianization strategies are crucial for promoting accessibility and inclusive urban environments for people with diverse mobility needs, including pedestrians, cyclists, and individuals with (dis)abilities. These strategies prioritize creating safe, convenient, and barrier-free public spaces that cater to the mobility requirements of all users.

These strategies incorporate various elements to enhance accessibility, such as wide and well-maintained sidewalks, curb cuts, tactile paving, and accessible crosswalks with auditory signals. By integrating these features, the public space becomes more navigable and user-friendly for individuals with mobility challenges, ensuring that everyone can move around independently and safely. This includes providing ramps, elevators, and accessible entrances at key access points, as well as considering the visibility and legibility of signage and wayfinding for people with visual impairments. By addressing these considerations, public spaces become welcoming and accommodating to individuals with diverse mobility requirements.



Aerial View of Barcelona

The Superblock Plan

The Superblock Plan in Barcelona, Spain, reimagined several city blocks by transforming them into car-free zones. These pedestrian-friendly spaces prioritize walking, cycling, and public transit, allowing residents and visitors to move around the city more safely and comfortably while creating a safer and more inclusive urban environment [5].

Accessibility considerations are integrated into the Superblock Plan through various design elements. Wide and well-maintained sidewalks ensure ample space for pedestrians, including those using mobility aids or traveling in groups. Curb cuts provide smooth transitions between sidewalks and streets, allowing individuals with mobility challenges, such as wheelchair users, to navigate the area without barriers.

The Superblock Plan also addresses accessibility in terms of entrances and facilities. Key access points are equipped with ramps and elevators, ensuring that individuals with mobility limitations can enter and exit the pedestrianized areas with ease. In addition, consideration is given to the visibility and legibility of signage and wayfinding systems, making navigation within the superblocks more accessible for people with visual impairments.

The pedestrian-focused approach not only enhances the overall accessibility of the city but also contributes to improved quality of life, community engagement, and sustainable transportation choices for all residents and visitors.

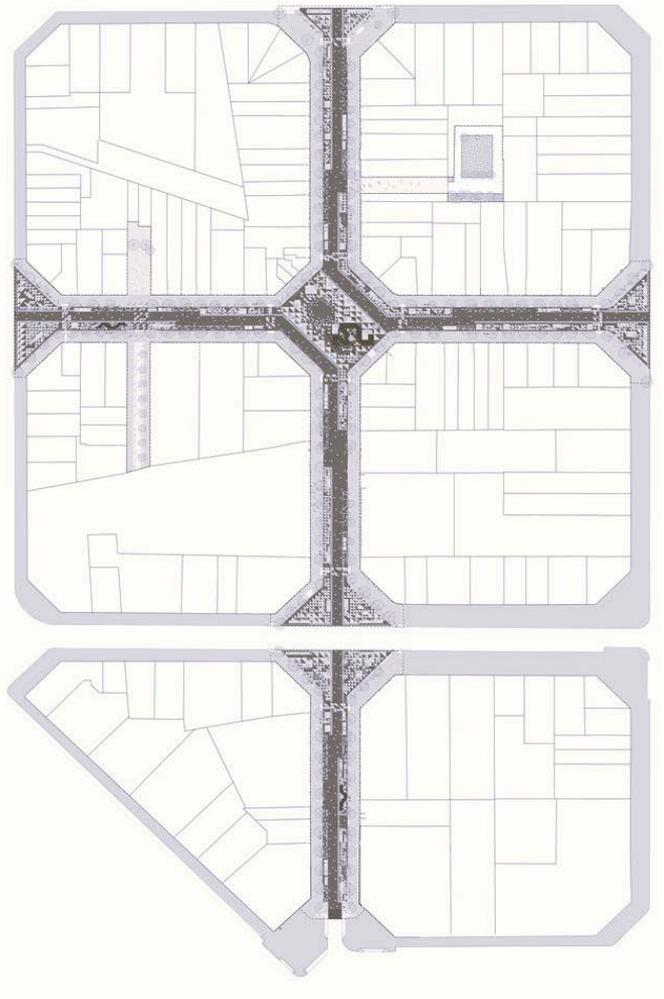


Barcelona, Spain
Figure 86



Superblock of Sant Antoni by Leku Studio

Figure 87 - 88



An example of this effort is the Superblock of Sant Antoni, where adaptable urbanization has enabled the progressive and adaptive extension of the Superblock concept in the neighborhood [6].

Activation and Programming

Focuses on providing a diverse range of activities, events, and programming to attract and engage people in the public space while ensuring the spaces serve a clear purpose and meet community needs. It is essential for creating sociability and urban vitality. By offering a diverse range of activities, events, and programming, they attract and engage people in public spaces. These strategies transform underutilized areas into vibrant hubs, fostering a sense of community and enhancing the livability of urban environments. Through collaboration and community involvement, they promote inclusivity, cultural diversity, and economic growth. Ultimately, activation and programming initiatives contribute to social interaction, well-being, and the overall vibrancy of cities.



*Bryant Park
New York, USA
Figure 89*

Bryant Park

Bryant Park in New York City is a prime example of a park that excels in activation and programming strategies, making it a hub for sociability and urban vitality. The park's success lies in its ability to provide a diverse range of activities, events, and programming that attract and engage people of all ages and interests.



*Yoga in Bryant Park
New York, USA
Figure 90*



One of the key factors contributing to Bryant Park's success is its year-round programming calendar. Regardless of the season, there is always something happening in the park. From outdoor film screenings in the summer to ice skating in the winter, Bryant Park offers activities that cater to different preferences and capitalize on the unique characteristics of each season. This variety ensures that the park remains a vibrant and lively destination throughout the year, attracting both locals and tourists.

Another aspect that sets Bryant Park apart is the quality and diversity of its programming. The park hosts a wide array of events, including concerts, cultural festivals, art exhibitions, fitness classes, and educational workshops. By offering such a diverse range of activities, Bryant Park appeals to a broad audience, promoting inclusivity and providing something for everyone. This inclusivity fosters social interaction, as people from different backgrounds and interests come together to enjoy and participate in the park's offerings.

*Broadway in Bryant Park
New York, USA
Figure 92*



Adaptive Reuse and Repurposing

Adaptive reuse and repurposing involves transforming underutilized or abandoned spaces by repurposing existing structures and elements. Rather than demolishing structures and starting from scratch, repurposing allows for the preservation of architectural elements and materials, reducing waste, cost savings and conserving energy. This sustainable approach contributes to environmental stewardship by minimizing the carbon footprint associated with new construction.

By breathing new life into underutilized spaces, these strategies can revitalize neighborhoods and catalyze economic growth. Repurposed buildings often attract businesses, entrepreneurs, and investors, creating job opportunities and boosting local economies.

Furthermore, adaptive reuse and repurposing projects have the potential to preserve and enhance the character of a neighborhood or community. By repurposing existing structures, unique architectural styles and design elements can be preserved, adding to the visual richness and character of a city. This contributes to a sense of place and heritage, promoting local pride and identity.





The High Line

The success of the High Line lies in its innovative approach to repurposing existing infrastructure while preserving the historical and architectural significance of the site.

By creatively repurposing the railway infrastructure, the High Line retained the industrial charm and character of the original structure, transforming an underutilized infrastructure into a vibrant public space and enhancing the site's sense of place and preserving its historical identity.

In addition to its aesthetic and recreational value, the High Line has had a transformative impact on the Chelsea neighborhood and city. The once-abandoned industrial area has now become a thriving cultural hub, attracting businesses, galleries, shops, and restaurants.

The project's success also lies in its commitment to community engagement and involvement. The development of the High Line incorporated extensive input from local residents, community organizations, and stakeholders. This collaborative approach ensured that the park's design and programming catered to the needs and aspirations of the surrounding community, making it a truly inclusive and community-oriented space.

Community Led Design

The key principle of community engagement and collaboration in placemaking projects emphasizes the active involvement of the local community throughout the planning, design, and implementation phases. Engaging and collaborating with stakeholders, including residents, local businesses, community organizations, and government agencies, is crucial for several reasons.

Firstly, stakeholders possess valuable local knowledge and perspectives that inform the design and decision-making process. This diversity of input ensures a more holistic understanding of the community's needs, preferences, and aspirations. It allows for the integration of multiple viewpoints like design professionals, urban planners, and other experts, leading to more inclusive and representative placemaking interventions. Their insights ensure that the placemaking project truly reflects and serves the community's needs, aspirations, and cultural context while reducing the risk of imposing interventions that may not resonate with the local context or address community priorities.

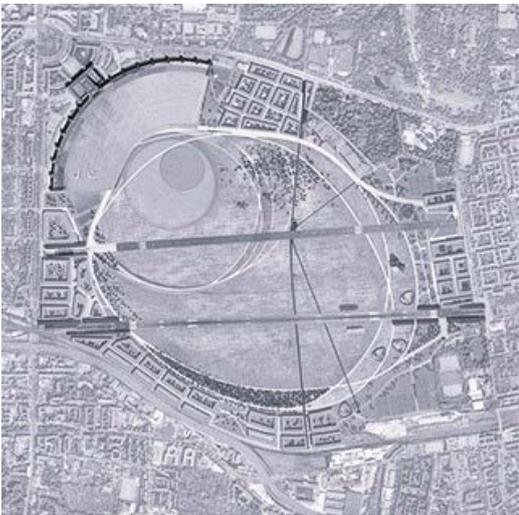


*Tempelhof Airport Park
Berlin, Germany
Figure 97*

Community engagement builds trust, establishes relationships, and strengthens social capital within the community. When individuals are actively involved in decision-making processes and have a voice in shaping their environment, it strengthens social connections and enhances social capital within the community [7].

Meaningful collaboration fosters cooperation, communication, and a sense of shared responsibility. It empowers community members, fosters a sense of ownership and belonging, and encourages long-term stewardship of the place [8].

Research has found that when different groups come together to collaborate on placemaking initiatives, it encourages dialogue, shared understanding, and the pooling of resources and expertise [9] [10].



*Plan of Tempelhof Airport Park by Gross Max
Berlin, Germany
Figure 98*

*Barbecue Area on the Tempelhof Airport Park
Berlin, Germany
Figure 99*



*Urban Gardening in the Park
Berlin, Germany
Figure 100*

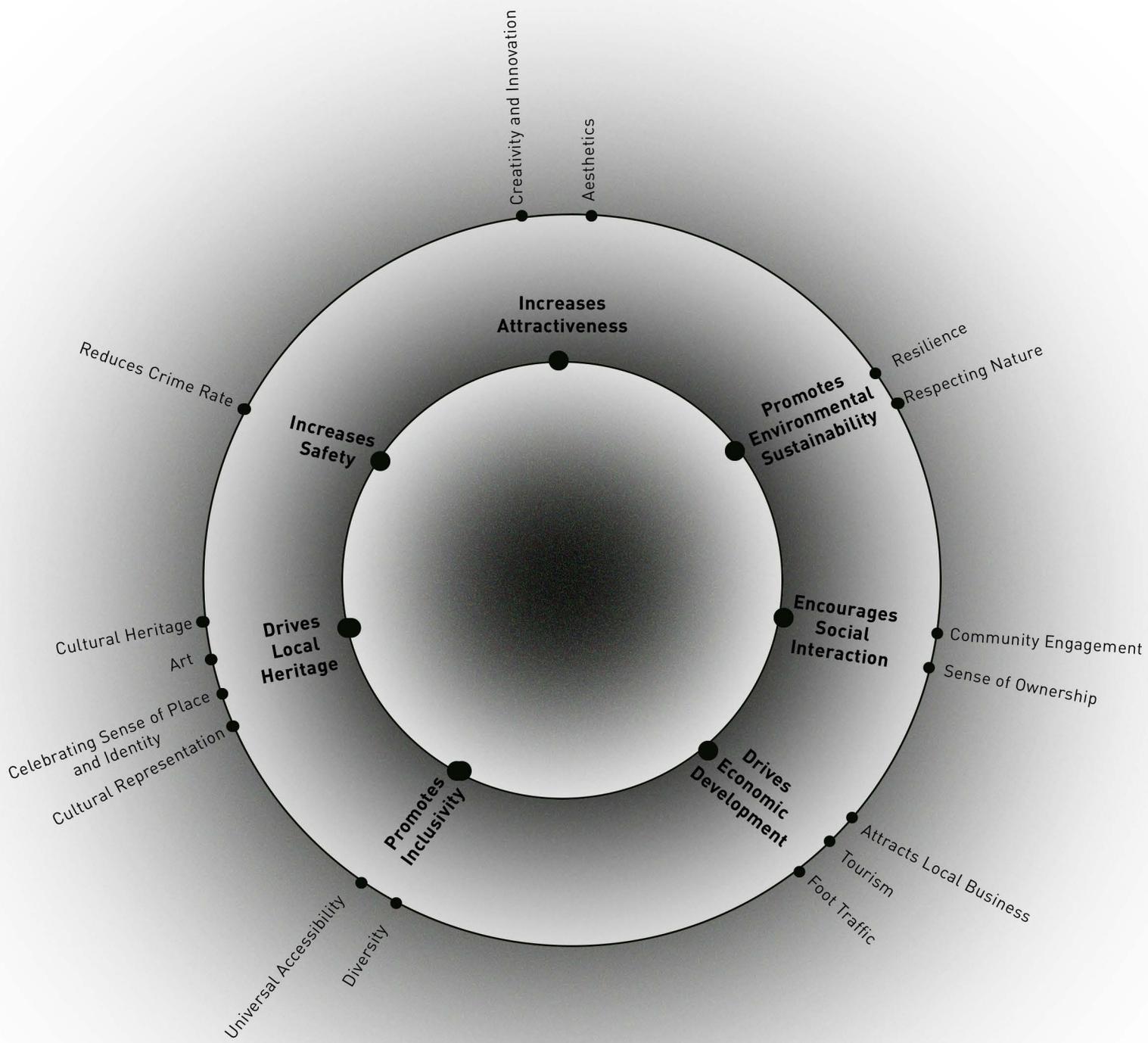


Tempelhof Airport Park

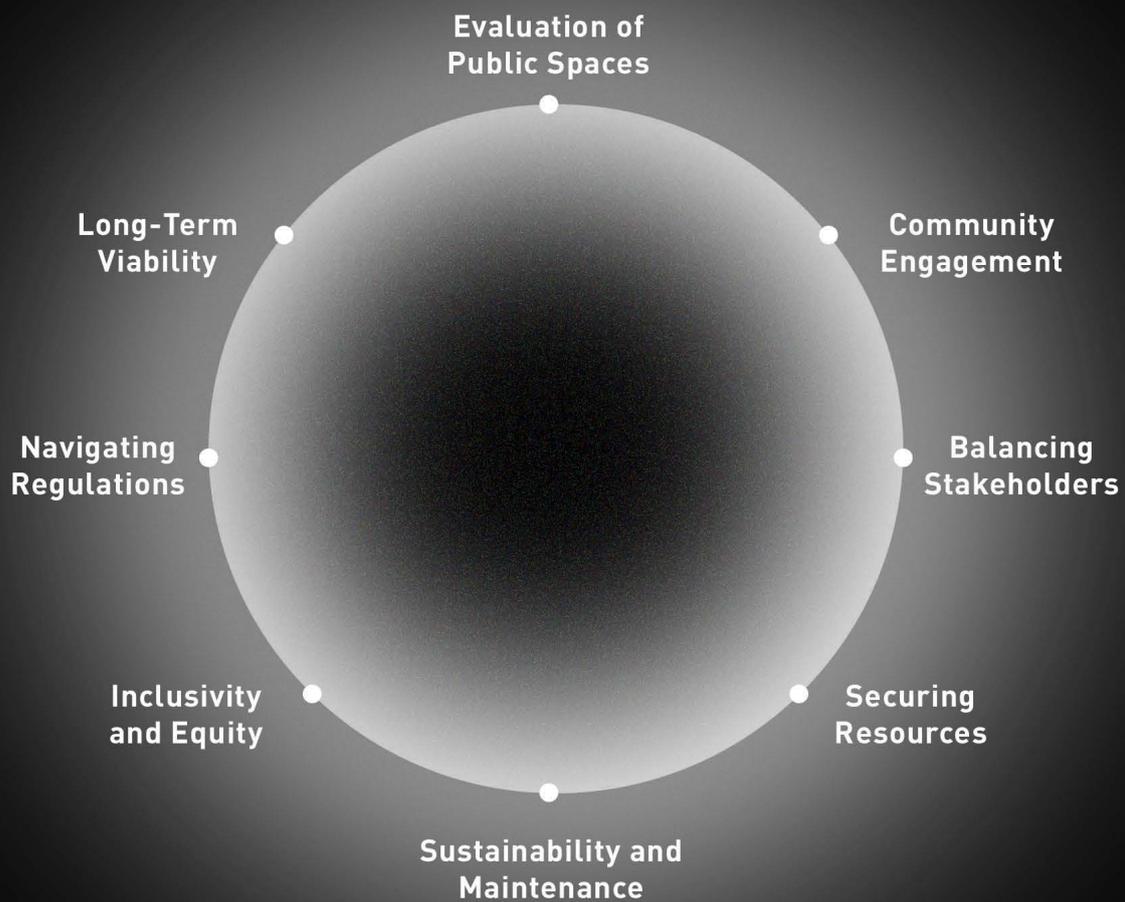
The Tempelhof Airport Park project allowed community members and stakeholders to actively participate in the planning and design process. There were numerous public consultations, workshops, and engagement sessions where residents, neighborhood associations, and other interested parties could contribute their ideas, visions, and concerns. The project organizers recognized the importance of involving the community in decision-making, ensuring that the park design reflects the needs, aspirations, and values of the local residents.

Furthermore, the stakeholders involved in the project were diverse, including local authorities, urban planners, landscape architects, and community organizations. The engagement of stakeholders allowed for the integration of various perspectives and ensured that the park's development addressed a wide range of interests and concerns.

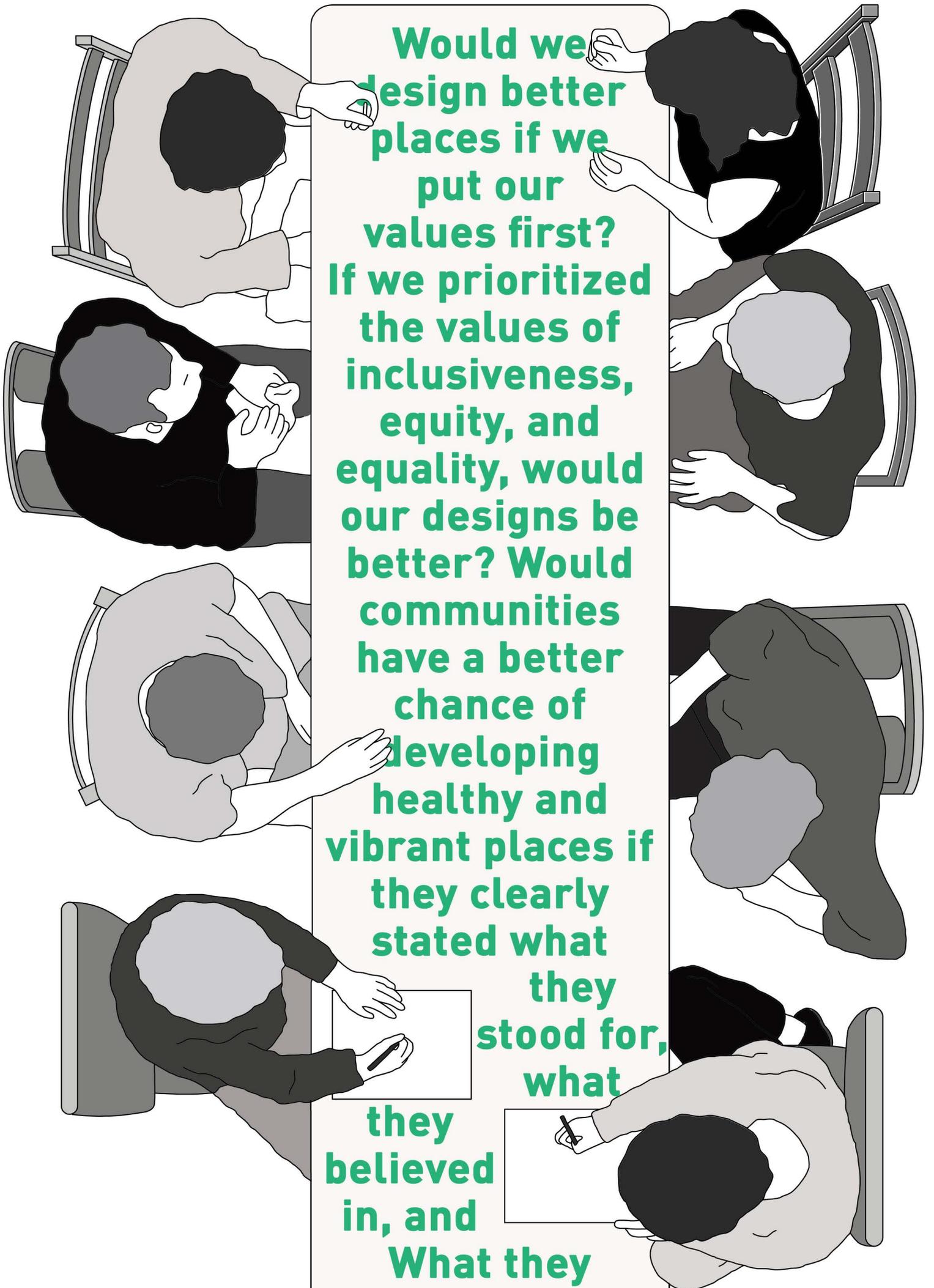
Placemaking involves communities in designing and activating public spaces, fosters belongingness, social cohesion and ultimately improving overall well-being. These well-designed public spaces provide aesthetically pleasing and functional environments for relaxation, leisure, and cultural expression. Economically, placemaking stimulates growth, attracts investment, and increases property values by drawing in tourists, residents, and businesses. It also promotes environmental sustainability through green infrastructure and contributes to public health by providing access to nature, reducing stress, and encouraging physical activity. By empowering communities to shape their environments, placemaking enhances civic engagement and preserves local cultures and heritage. A lot of research also specifically highlights the positive impacts of well-designed public spaces on social interaction, reduced social isolation, and community belonging [11].



Developing and maintaining public spaces is a complex task with challenges in evaluation, community engagement, stakeholder balancing, financial resources, technical expertise, regulations, sustainability, inclusivity, and adaptability. In order to develop lively and sustainable public places that benefit the community, overcoming these obstacles calls for a collaborative approach involving local governments, planners, designers, and stakeholders.



Would we design better places if we put our values first? If we prioritized the values of inclusiveness, equity, and equality, would our designs be better? Would communities have a better chance of developing healthy and vibrant places if they clearly stated what they stood for, what they believed in, and what they aspired to be?



“Our surroundings influence our thoughts, our values,
our aspirations, and our very being.”

Jan Gehl

Our surroundings profoundly influence our thoughts, values, and aspirations. To initiate positive change, we must first focus on transforming our environment, particularly public spaces. By enhancing these communal areas, we foster cultural vibrancy, belongingness, and ultimately advance happiness and well-being. This involves creating inclusive and accessible spaces that encourage social interaction, while also preserving and celebrating local heritage. Changing our surroundings is a catalyst for holistic progress, shaping individuals' perspectives and fostering a shared vision for the future.



“Cities are a symphony of voices, each contributing a distinct note to the urban chorus. By listening to the residents, we compose harmonious and inclusive spaces.”

Gil Penalosa

prologue

This survey aimed to investigate the belongingness, perceptions of spatial justice, and attitudes toward placemaking strategies among urban residents residing in diverse cities and countries. By examining these aspects, the survey sought to gain insights into the public's perspectives on these matters and stimulate contemplation and proactive engagement.

A central focus of the survey was to unravel the multifaceted nature of belongingness through a diverse set of questions. By probing various dimensions, the aim was to identify potential indicators that could effectively measure individuals' belongingness to their communities.

In addition, the survey aimed to delve into the public's views on spatial justice and placemaking strategies, the survey sought to reveal their perceptions and attitudes toward the equitable distribution of resources, opportunities, and amenities within urban spaces. This exploration aimed to uncover whether individuals perceive their surroundings as just and inclusive, as well as their level of support for strategies aimed at improving the quality of urban environments.

Through the dissemination of the survey findings and analysis, the intention was to stimulate critical thinking and encourage individuals to reflect on their own beliefs and experiences related to belongingness, spatial justice, and placemaking. By raising awareness and fostering dialogue, it is hoped that the survey will inspire individuals to take active roles in advocating for positive change within their communities and beyond.

The survey results is expected highlight the different needs and perspectives of each individuals, demonstrating the need to increase the research on the topics of belongingness and the importance of the consideration of the results of this study.



A survey was conducted with a total of 125 participants, all of whom provided complete responses. Among the respondents, 52 identified as men, while 73 identified as women.

The majority of participants, accounting for 53.6%, fell within the age range of 25 to 34 years old.

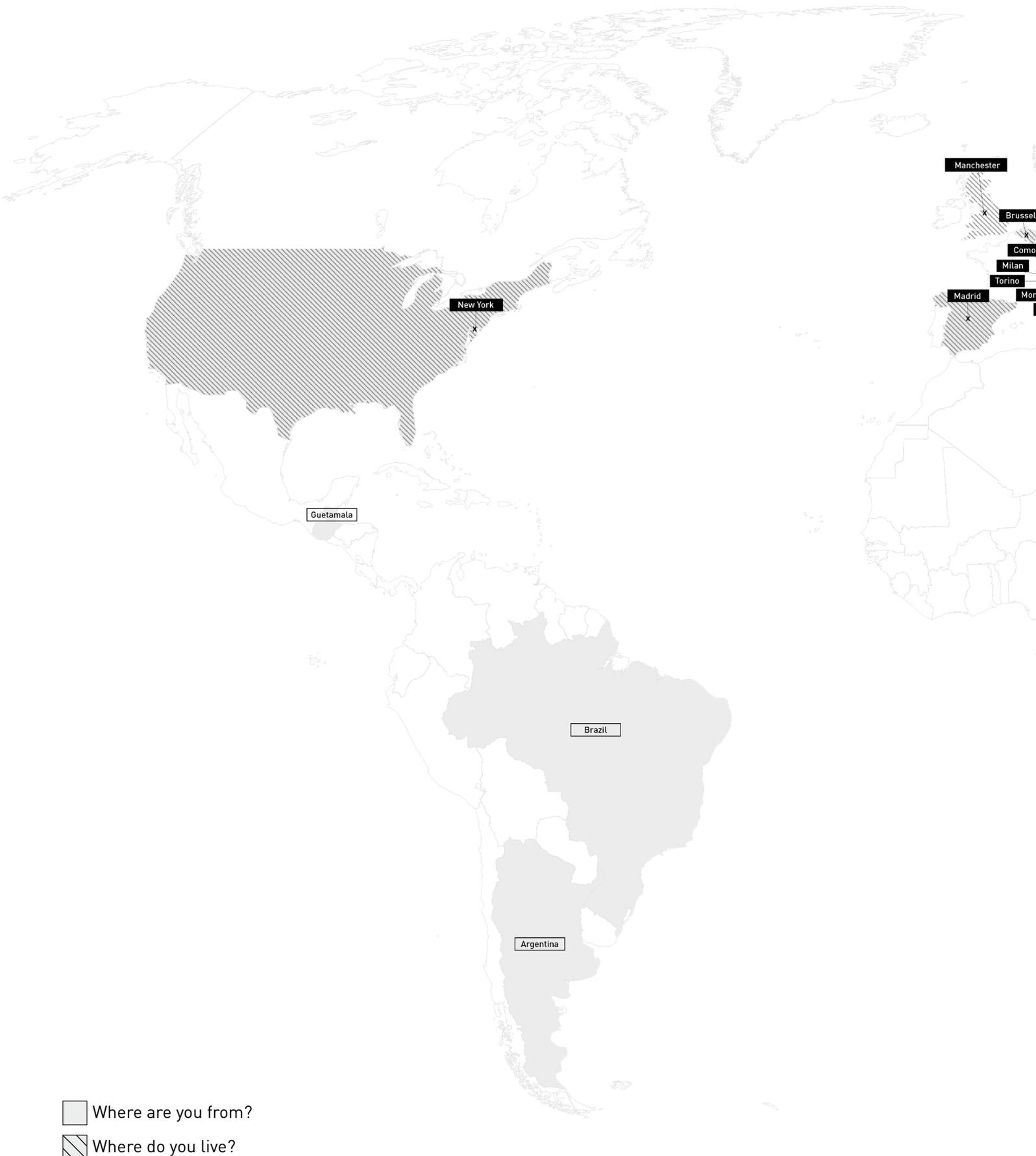
Regarding the duration of residency, 41.6% of the participants reported living in the same place for more than 10 years, while 37.6% stated a residency period of 1 to 5 years. Additionally, 12% indicated a duration of less than 1 year, and 8.8% reported residing in the same place for 5 to 10 years.

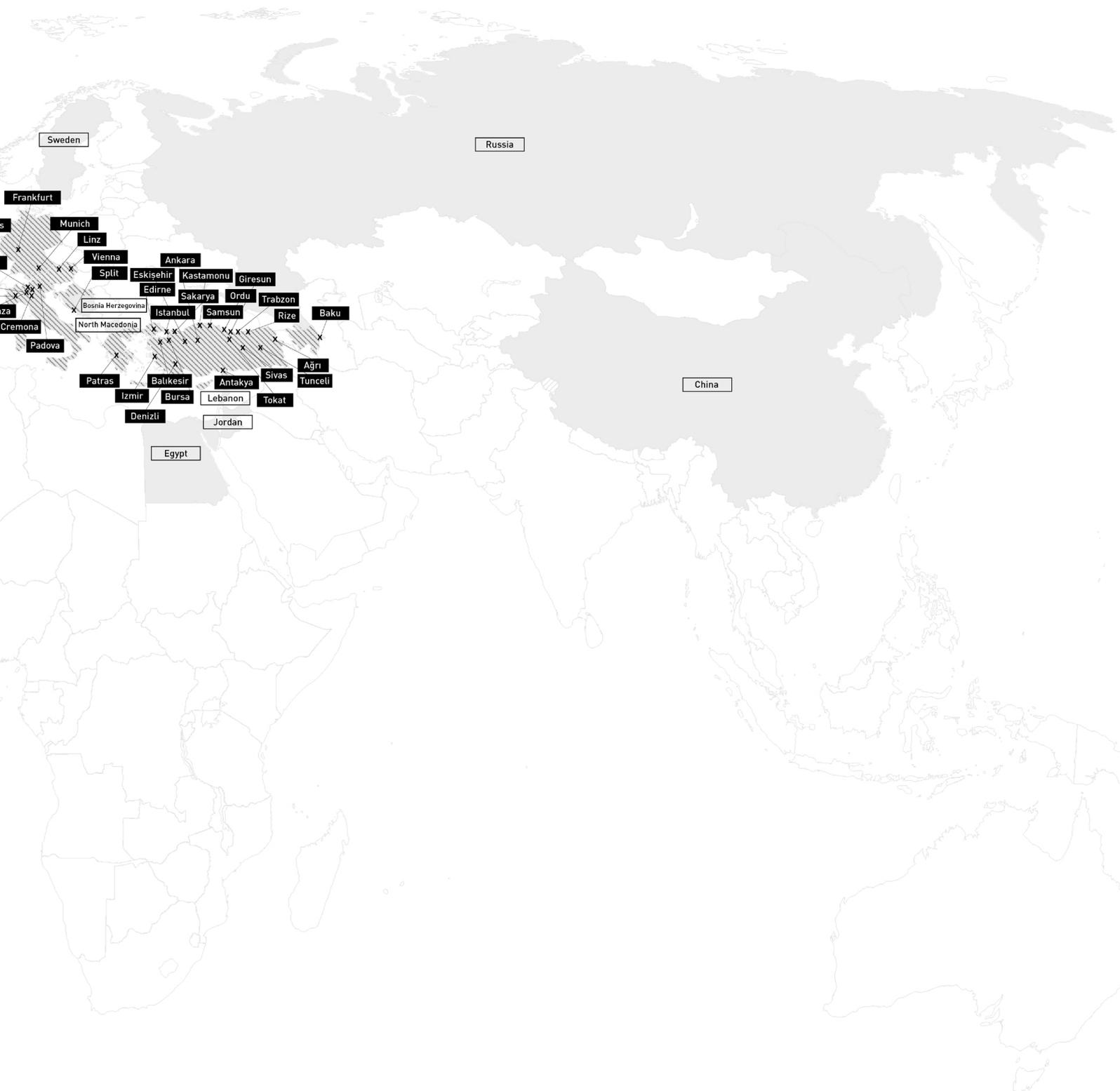
The survey revealed diverse definitions of “community” among the participants. The majority (35.2%) defined it based on shared interests, followed by 32% associating it with a specific place. Family relationships were seen as community by 16.8%, while 8.8% linked it to race/ethnicity. A smaller portion (7.2%) provided alternative interpretations.

Participants were also asked to rate their overall sense of belongingness to their place of residence on a scale of 1 to 5. The results revealed that 28.8% of respondents selected 3 as their rating, while an equal percentage of 28.8% chose 4 as their rating.



Geospatial visualization was employed to depict the distribution of the 125 survey respondents' geographic origins and current residential locations on a world map. The analysis revealed that participants hailed from a diverse range of cities, with a total of 38 cities represented in the survey. Notably, a substantial portion of respondents resided in Turkey, while Italy emerged as another prominent location.





This geographical depiction provides an informative overview of the dispersion of respondents across various cities, thereby enhancing the understanding of the sample's geographical diversity and potential regional variations in survey responses.

How old are you? x How important is it to you to feel a sense of belonging in your neighborhood/city?

Within the surveyed population, age distribution was observed as follows: 41 individuals fell within the 15-24 age range, 67 individuals fell within the 25-34 age range, 3 individuals fell within the 35-44 age range, and 14 individuals belonged to the 45+ age range.

Regarding the questionnaire question that assessed the importance of belonging in one's neighborhood or city across different age ranges, notable patterns emerged. Particularly among individuals aged 25-34, as well as those aged 15-24, a significant majority rated the importance of belongingness quite high. Specifically, within the 41 respondents in the 15-24 age range, 23 individuals assigned a rating of 5, while 13 individuals assigned a rating of 4.

How old are you? x On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate your overall sense of belonging in your neighborhood, with 1 being very low and 5 being very high.

When analyzing the extent to which individuals within each age range felt a sense of belonging in their respective living environments, contrasting results emerged. For the 15-24 age group, a majority assigned a rating of 4. In contrast, the majority in the 25-34 age group assigned a rating of 3. Conversely, the 35-44 age group reported a majority rating of 5 for belongingness, while the 45+ age group reported a majority rating of 4.



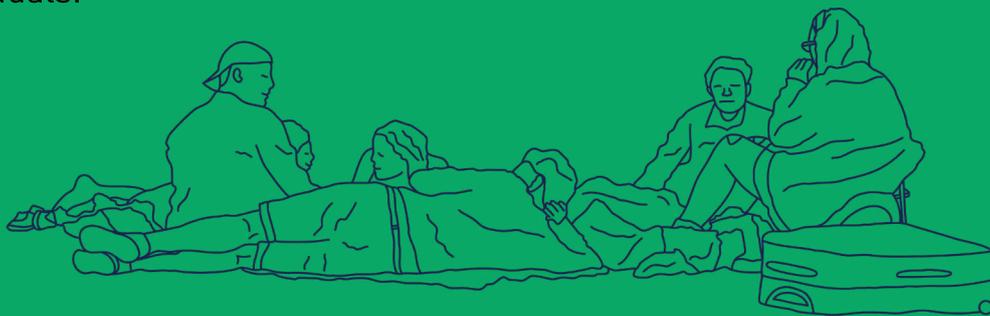
These findings shed light on the varying perceptions of belongingness among different age groups within the surveyed population. The data suggests that individuals in the 15-24 and 25-34 age ranges place significant importance on belongingness, whereas the 35-44 age group tends to report a higher belongingness. Meanwhile, the 45+ age group exhibits a more balanced distribution of ratings for belongingness.

On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate your overall sense of belonging in your neighborhood , with 1 being very low and 5 being very high X How often do you interact with your neighbors on a social level?

The survey explored the frequency of social interactions with neighbors and its relationship with the respondents' sense of belongingness. Among the participants, 10 individuals reported daily interactions, 37 reported weekly interactions, 16 reported monthly interactions, 40 reported rare interactions, and 22 reported never interacting with their neighbors. When examining the sense of belongingness, it was found that of the 31 individuals who rated their belongingness as 5, 15 reported weekly interactions and 6 reported daily interactions.

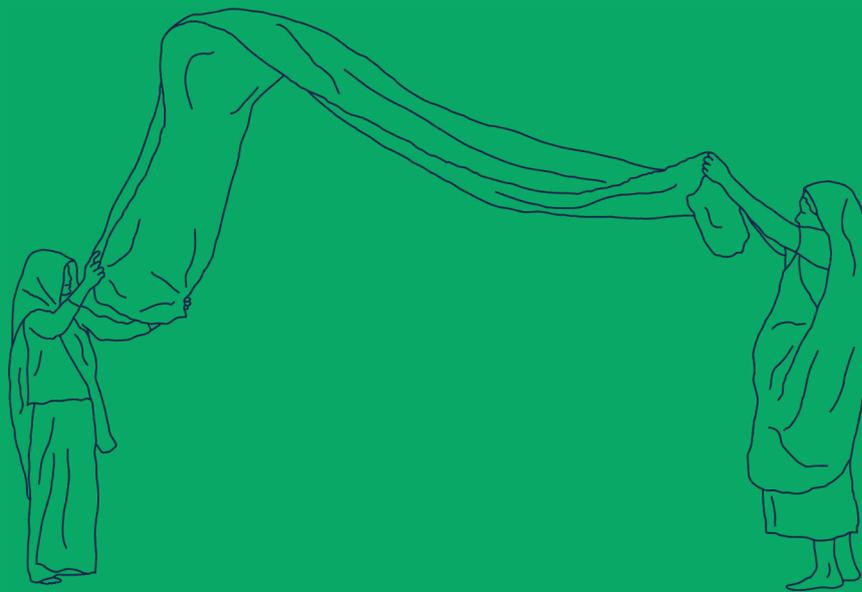
These findings suggest that individuals who have a stronger belongingness are more likely to engage with their neighbors on a regular basis. Specifically, those who reported weekly or daily interactions exhibited higher levels of belongingness compared to individuals who reported less frequent or no social interactions with their neighbors.

These results underscore the potential correlation between social interactions with neighbors and the sense of belongingness within a community. They imply that regular social engagement with neighbors can contribute to fostering a greater belongingness among individuals.



On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate your overall sense of belonging in your neighborhood , with 1 being very low and 5 being very high X How often do you visit public spaces, such as parks or plazas, in your neighborhood?

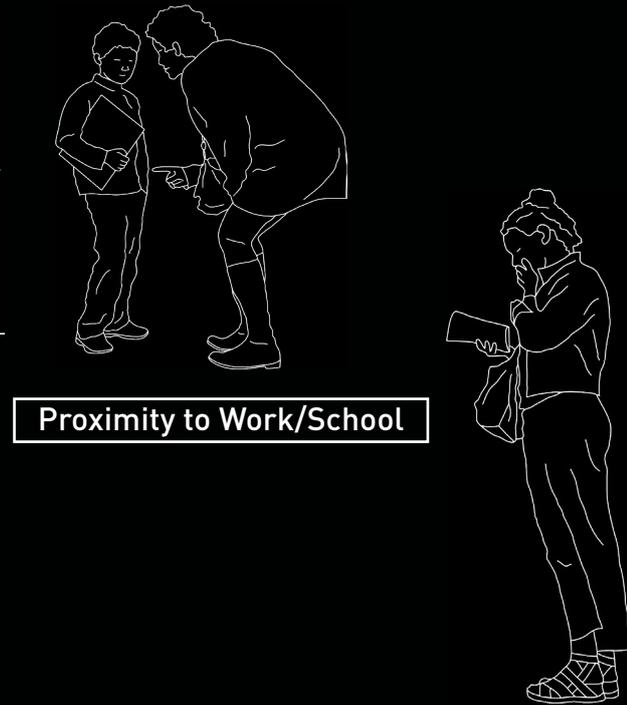
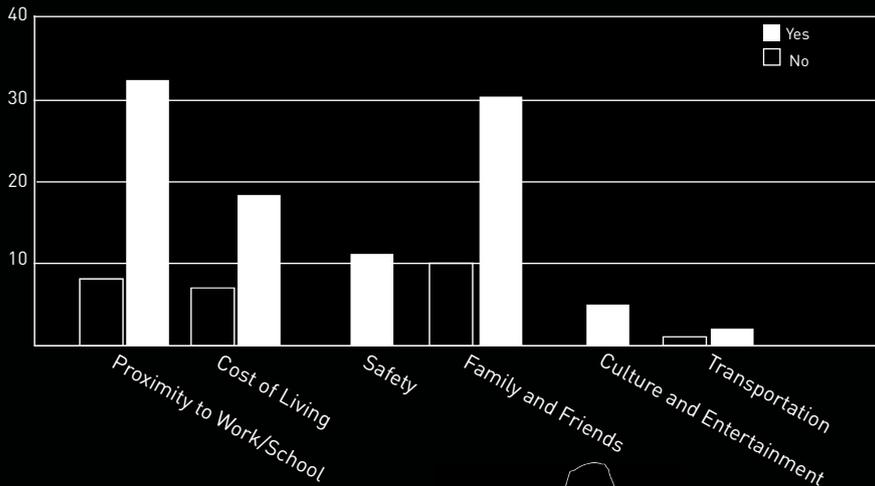
The survey examined the frequency of visits to public spaces in respondents' neighborhoods. Results showed that 17 individuals visited daily, 59 visited weekly, 27 visited monthly, 14 visited rarely, and 8 never visited. Interestingly, those who are visiting public spaces regularly tend to have a high belongingness score of 5. This was particularly evident among those who visited weekly. These findings suggest that regular visits to public spaces may contribute to a stronger sense of belongingness and social connection within the community.



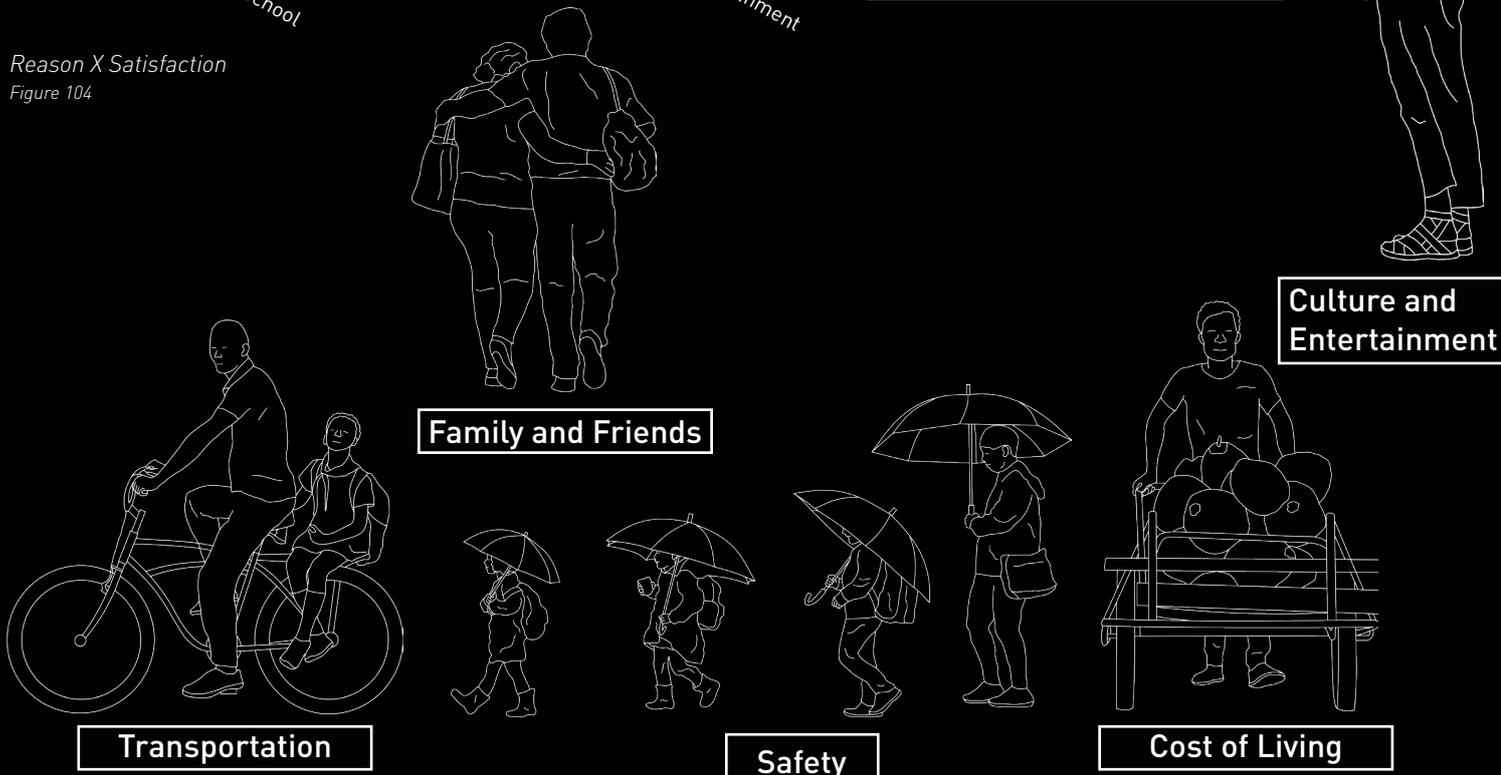
Why did you choose this neighborhood to live in? X Do you like where you are living now?

The survey included a question regarding the reasons for choosing a particular neighborhood to reside in, and the responses were further compared with participants' satisfaction with their current living situation. The findings revealed six distinct categories of responses, providing insights into the factors influencing residential decisions.

Among the 125 respondents, 41 individuals cited family and friends as their primary motive for selecting their current neighborhood, while 40 individuals indicated proximity to work and school as a key factor. This suggests that family and social connections, along with convenience in daily commuting, are the two most influential determinants in the decision-making process. Additionally, 25 respondents identified the cost of living as their primary consideration, followed by 11 individuals who prioritized safety, 5 individuals who valued cultural and entertainment opportunities, and 3 individuals who emphasized transportation availability in their neighborhood selection.



Reason X Satisfaction
Figure 104



Comparing these responses to participants' level of satisfaction with their current living situation, it was found that 99 respondents expressed contentment, while 26 respondents expressed dissatisfaction. Notably, a significant proportion of the dissatisfied respondents were those who had chosen their neighborhood based on family and friends, suggesting that their commitment to these relationships may have limited their ability to exercise full agency in the selection process. Similarly, dissatisfaction was also observed among those who prioritized proximity to work/school, indicating that professional or educational obligations might have influenced their choice rather than personal preference. Conversely, among those who expressed satisfaction, the order of priorities closely mirrored the selection criteria, with safety being an important factor. It is noteworthy that all respondents who prioritized safety expressed satisfaction with their current living situation.

What is your gender? X How safe do you feel walking alone in your neighborhood at night?

The survey included a question that assessed respondents' perceived safety when walking alone in their neighborhood at night. The answers were further analyzed based on the respondents' gender. Participants were asked to rate their level of safety on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 indicating not feeling safe at all and 5 indicating feeling very safe. It is important to note that among the respondents, 52 identified as men, while 73 identified as women.

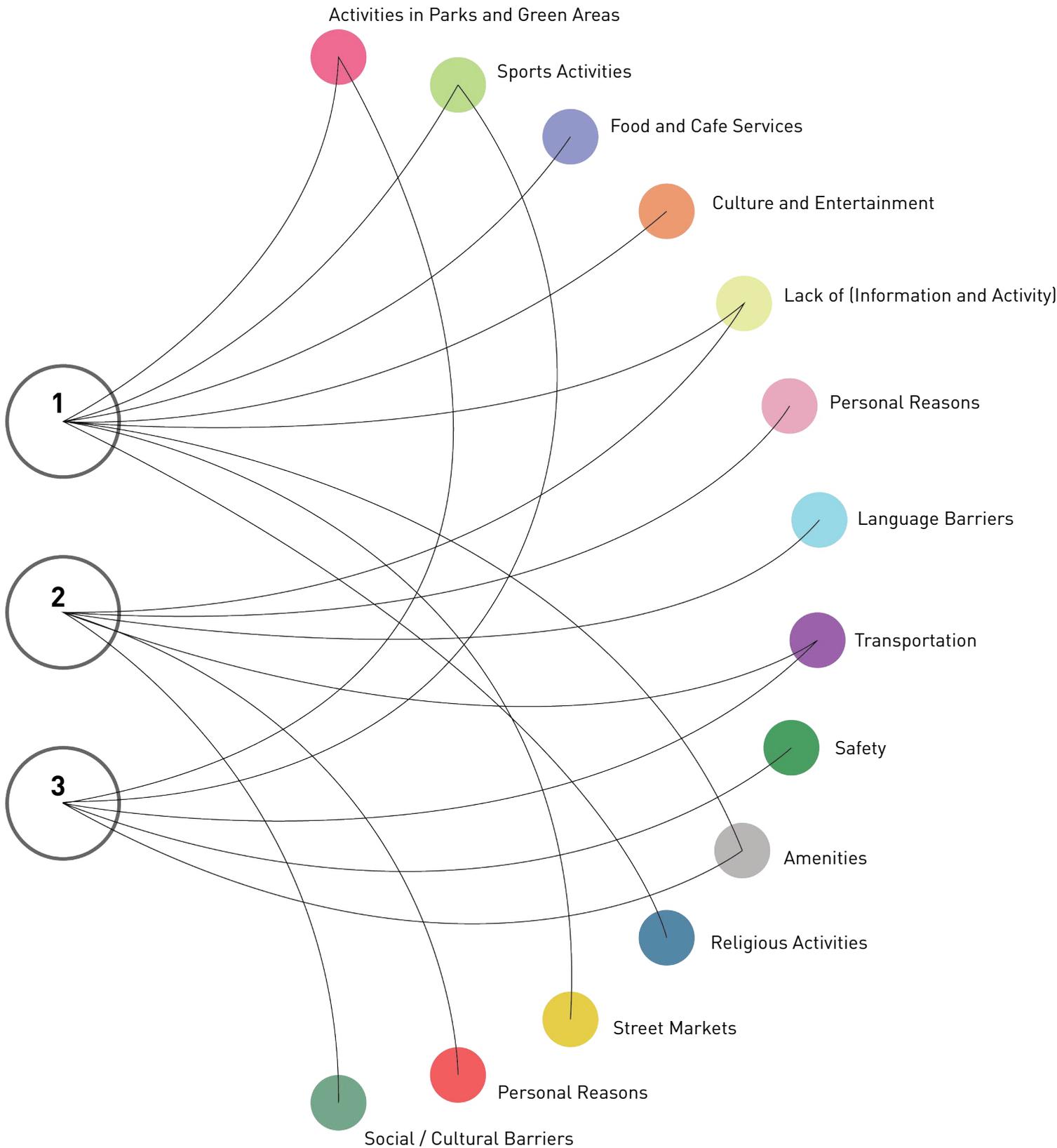
The analysis of the responses revealed notable gender differences in the perceived safety of walking alone at night. Among the 52 male respondents, 22 individuals indicated a rating of 5, expressing that they feel very safe. In contrast, only 13 of the 73 female respondents gave the same response. This discrepancy suggests that a higher proportion of men feel secure when walking alone at night compared to women.

Specifically, the data indicates that 57% of men reported feeling safe walking alone at night, while the corresponding figure for women was 10% lower. This significant gap highlights the divergence in perceived safety between genders, with men generally expressing a higher level of comfort and security in such situations compared to women.

These findings shed light on the gendered experiences and perceptions of safety within neighborhoods, emphasizing the need for further examination and potential interventions to address the disparities in safety perceptions among different demographic groups.



1. What are the most common types of activities that you can find in your neighborhood?
2. If you do not join social activities in your neighborhood, what is the reason?
3. What kind of services would you need in public areas to support your outdoor activities?



Activity Preferences
Figure 105

The participants of the survey were posed with the inquiry, “Please rank the following factors in order of importance to you when it comes to feeling a sense of belonging in your community.”

The options and their importance provided were as follows:



These findings shed light on the varying degrees of importance attributed by participants to different factors contributing to their belongingness. The prominence accorded to a sense of safety underscores its fundamental role as a prerequisite for fostering a strong community connection. Moreover, the acknowledgment of access to amenities and the quality of public spaces highlights the significance of well-appointed and functional urban infrastructures. The relatively lower prioritization of variety of public spaces, community events, and diversity invites further exploration to better understand the nuanced factors contributing to individuals’ belongingness within their community.

What are the elements of these places that make you feel like you belong there?

SAFETY
AND
SECURITY

41 PEOPLE

"If I feel safe like I am in my house and encouraged to interact with others, I would feel like I belong there."

COMMUNITY
AND SOCIAL
INTERACTIONS

21 PEOPLE

"For me, community engagement is what makes a public place feel like home. When I'm with other people, participating in activities and creating memories, I feel like I belong there."

INCLUSIVE
SPACES
AND RESPECT

8 PEOPLE

"Civic common sense and care for one's own territory, a welcoming environment and diversity."

COMFORT

13 PEOPLE

"Feeling peaceful, the sense of comfort and being able to spend time there comfortably as at home."

EVENTS
AND
ACTIVITIES

10 PEOPLE

"Allowing people with the same hobbies to come together and having variety of the events."

QUALITY OF
DESIGN AND
URBAN LAYOUT

7 PEOPLE

"Green public spaces, more bike lanes and pedestrian areas, more trees and urban furnitures."

FAMILIARITY

6 PEOPLE

"The feeling of being in there for many years, the fact that I know the people in the neighborhood, I know the shopkeepers, I know the places and all the familiar features."

ACCESIBILITY

6 PEOPLE

"Ease of access, not making a lot of effort to reach the places."

MAINTENANCE
4 PEOPLE

"Meeting physical and social needs without any problems."

NATURE
6 PEOPLE

"Having natural beauty around."

CULTURE
3 PEOPLE

"Having to experience cultural interactions."

What do you think could be done to make your city a more just and equitable place for all residents?

-
- Balancing population distribution to maintain equal density across neighborhoods.
 - Making efforts to address employment inequalities and ensuring for everyone.
 - Organizing public gatherings for citizens to listen to them.
 - Enhancing safety measures across the city.
 - Bridging the gap between all city areas with alternative transportation methods.
 - Organizing new events, interactive activities and encouraging more participation.
 - Inclusion and consideration of all people living in the area.
 - Encouraging more diversity.
 - Ensuring access to amenities for all residents.
 - Making the city cleaner and more functional.
 - Ensuring equal opportunities for everyone.
 - Public awareness.
 - Making municipal improvements.
 - Proposing small interventions like installations and arts in parks.
 - Improving the quality of public spaces in peripheral areas.
 - Lowering housing prices and making it affordable.
 - Creating opportunities for people to learn about other cultures.
 - Implementing efficient city plans, including better sidewalks, parking.
 - Encouraging users to participate in the city's design and decision-making processes.
 - Creating opportunities for people to learn about other cultures.
 - Prioritizing education and awareness about diversity and inclusion.
 - Considering the needs of people with disabilities.
 - Decreasing discrimination.
 - Enhancing public spaces, improving green spaces.
 - Establishing homeless centers.
 - Enhancing communication among all inhabitants.
 - Promoting more free activities.

This research aimed to explore users' perceptions of urban design, spatial justice, and belongingness through various methodologies, including literature review, one-on-one conversations, and a questionnaire encompassing diverse questions.

The findings of this study shed light on the concept of "home" as described by participants. Recurrent themes included the importance of family and loved ones, familiarity with places and people, emotional connections, feelings of safety, memories, and childhood experiences. These elements collectively contribute to the sense of home, emphasizing the significance of long-term residency, memory formation, comfort, safety, and most importantly, interpersonal relationships within the community.

Additionally, participants were asked to identify the most crucial factors influencing their sense of belongingness. The survey responses and one-on-one conversations yielded similar outcomes, highlighting the importance of family, friends, and community; safety; quality of life; cultural and linguistic factors; familiarity; social interactions; inclusivity; events and activities; and environmental accessibility. These findings align with the notion of home, emphasizing commonalities between the factors shaping individuals' sense of belongingness and the feeling of home.

Furthermore, the study explored the impact of identity on belongingness, revealing that cultural and linguistic differences often act as significant barriers to fostering belongingness, hindering social interactions among individuals.

Moreover, the research revealed a positive correlation between higher levels of belongingness and increased social interactions with neighbors. Public spaces were found to be frequented by participants, indicating a demand for improved transportation, enhanced safety measures, diverse activities, greater variety, increased green spaces, and a wider range of amenities that cater to their needs within these areas.

The findings from the analysis of data suggest that women, as reported in the Chapter III, exhibit distinct behaviors and experiences compared to men within urban environments. Notably, women express a significantly higher degree of unease and vulnerability when walking alone at night.

Participants expressed several recommendations to foster a more just and livable city, including equal access and opportunities, improved urban design layouts, inclusivity, diversity, respect, and greater community participation in decision-making processes.

The assessment of belongingness, as derived from the survey responses and in-depth conversations conducted during this study, can be effectively measured through a set of four key indicators. The percentage of neighbor interaction, the percentage of public space interaction, the length of stay, and the importance of elements such as safety, diversity, and access to amenities. These indicators provide valuable insights into individuals' belongingness within their communities, aiding in the identification of areas for improvement and the development of targeted interventions to foster a stronger belonging.

In conclusion, the research underscored safety, social interactions, quality public spaces, community events and activities, and equal access to amenities as crucial factors contributing to individuals' belongingness. The findings highlight the need for spatial justice, enhanced urban environments, inclusivity, and community-driven initiatives to cultivate a stronger sense of belonging within cities.

Conclusion

“The heart of a city is not found in its buildings, but in the relationships and sense of belonging it cultivates among its residents.”

William H. Whyte

prologue

In the realm of architecture, a transformative vision awaits one where the boundaries of design dissolve and give birth to spaces that embody our shared humanity.

It is a call to action, a commitment to forge a built environment that champions belongingness, inclusivity, and spatial justice.

Adhering to a design mentality centered on belongingness is the essential and we need to ask questions like this:

Adhering to a design mentality grounded in the foundational principle of belongingness constitutes a vital imperative, necessitating the exploration of pertinent interrogations within this domain.

What is the significance of residing in an environment where a profound belongingness is absent? How can societal progress and positive outcomes be anticipated when the individuals comprising a society do not feel a belongingness within it? To what extent does the absence of a nurturing environment that fosters belonging hinder sustainability, regardless of concerted efforts towards resilience? Can prosperity be attained within a community or society that lacks a fundamental sense of belongingness? Is it possible to establish a cohesive and harmonious community or society in the absence of a shared sense of belongingness? How does the absence of belonging impact individual well-being and overall societal cohesion?

This architectural manifesto stands as a testament to our unwavering dedication, echoing the principles that shape our craft and guide our journey toward a better world.

**A MANIFESTO
FOR MAKING
THINGS**

*A LITTLE BIT
BETTER*

PLACES.

memories, feelings, remembering, connecting.

Places we make it, shape it.

Places we perceive.

Places we give meaning.

Places that we forget.

Places we keep in our hearts.

Places we keep in our minds.

Places we value.

Places we interact, we bond, we connect.

Through places, we express ourselves, forge memories, maintain routines, and make decisions that become ingrained within us.

A sense of place is a deeply personal and emotional connection that reflects the unique character and significance of a location, influencing how people. It is a holistic perception that combines elements such as the landscape, architecture, landmarks, natural features, climate, local traditions, and the people who inhabit or visit the place.

In the face of disconnection and fragmented communities, individuals are meant to rise to restore a sense of place. After all, the identity of a place is intricately intertwined with our own identities, as we contribute to its formation while simultaneously finding meaning within it. Our identities are shaped by the places we encounter, and in turn, our presence and actions impact the very essence of those places.

IDENTITY.

character, belief, need, perception, pride, culture, thought, difference.

We all are different.

We all are unique.

We have different experiences.

We have different beliefs, different values.

We make different choices.

We have different perceptions.

We need different things.

Identity shapes a place, just as it shapes us. The interplay between the two can be complementary, influenced by our individual perceptions. Our diverse experiences and identities have guided us to this point, resulting in distinct characteristics. However, perceptions are subject to change. Priorities change. Perspectives change. Desires, dreams and aspirations change. Because we change, places change and the world changes. And we need to keep up with it.

CHANGE.

adaptability, durability, resilience, sustainability, contunity.

We change.

People we love change.

Places change.

Emotions change.

Thoughts change.

Needs change.

Perceptions change.

The world changes.

Everything changes.

Cities are living organisms, ever-evolving and adapting. Belongingness is not a static concept, it flourishes and transforms over time. We are bound to embrace this dynamism, perpetually learning and adapting our surroundings, our perceptions to the ever-changing needs of individuals and communities. We require adaptation because the world itself is constantly changing, and we must strive to keep pace with it. To effectively keep pace with such changes, it is essential that we remain inquisitive and engaged. We must actively seek out research, constantly asking questions to gain a deeper understanding of the evolving landscape. By doing so, we equip ourselves with the knowledge needed to contribute meaningfully and ensure that our actions align with the evolving nature of our cities and the diverse needs of their residents.

QUESTION.

knowledge, education, explore, research.

Question everything.

Ask everything.

Try to learn everything.

Educate yourself. So you can ask better questions.

What is missing in the community?

In the environment?

What do you want?

What do we need?

“Question everything” is a catalyst for personal and collective growth. It encourages us to challenge assumptions, explore possibilities, and seek knowledge. By asking thought-provoking questions, we unlock doors to understanding and delve deeper into the intricacies of our community and environment. We strive to identify what is lacking, what requires attention and improvement. Through introspection, we ponder our own desires and aspirations, aligning them with the needs of the wider collective. Education becomes our ally, equipping us with the tools to ask more insightful and impactful questions, propelling us towards transformative action. This process of continuous questioning fuels our thirst for knowledge and empowers us to demand the changes necessary to foster a more fulfilling future.

Question everything. So you can,

DEMAND.

ownership, freedom, equality, respect, democracy.

Demand better rights, you have the power to shape your own future.

Demand respect.

Demand equality.

Demand better rights.

Demand freedom.

Take ownership.

Work together.

Demand them to do better.

Raise your voice.

You have the power to shape your own future.

In the pursuit of a future that fosters a fulfilling environment, the power lies within people to demand better rights. Our voice possesses the strength to shape the trajectory of our own destiny. Demand the respect that is rightfully yours and raise your voice against injustices. Together, through collaboration and unity, we can advocate for improvement. Let us forge a path together, where the threads of connection, healing, and justice are interwoven into the very fabric of our built environment. It is through our collective efforts that we will shape cities that harmonize with the rhythms of human interaction, inspire a profound sense of belonging, and create a world where equity and inclusivity prevail.

We have the ability to demand better conditions, better spaces, and a better world.

BETTER.

equality, equity, inclusivity, cities, accessibility, harmony, respect.

Better communication.

Better rights.

Better conditions.

Better spaces.

Better design.

Better inclusion, equity, diversity, harmony, environments.

Better everything.

Spaces must become agents of empowerment, restoring dignity and amplifying the voices of the marginalized. Dismantle the barriers that hinder spatial justice, challenging the status quo, demanding equitable access to resources and opportunities. Because what does it matter if it's gonna be useful for one group anyway. We must believe in the power of co-creation, harmonizing the dreams, needs, and cultures of those we serve to construct spaces that resonate with their essence.

DESIGN.

connectivity, aesthetics, interactive, inclusive, welcoming, sustainability, authenticity, vitality, diversity, healthiness, flexibility, creativity, sociability.

Design better.

Design consciously.

Design fairly.

Recognize the multiple dimensions of identity.

It changes everything.

The design of spaces holds immense significance in our lives, as it has the power to bring people together and profoundly influence our well-being. Through thoughtful and intentional design, we can create spaces that foster connection, interaction, and belongingness. Communities with a strong sense of place often prioritize the preservation and protection of their environment and cultural heritage. They may actively engage in place-making efforts, such as creating public spaces, promoting local art and traditions, and developing sustainable practices, to enhance the sense of place and strengthen community bonds. Good design transcends mere aesthetics; it encompasses functionality, accessibility, and the consideration of human needs. When spaces are designed with care, they become inclusive and inviting, encouraging diverse individuals to gather, collaborate, and engage. Such spaces have the potential to positively impact our physical, emotional, and social well-being, nurturing a sense of community and enhancing the quality of our interactions. Whether it's a public park, a community center, or a shared workspace, the design of these spaces matters significantly. It shapes our experiences, influences our moods, and inspires creativity. By prioritizing good design, we can create environments that promote positivity, productivity, and a sense of harmony, ultimately enriching our lives and fostering a stronger sense of connection with one another.

but first,

SAFETY.

security, protection, priority.

How can I feel good?

How can I participate?

How can I engage?

How can I do anything at all?

If I feel unsafe.

Before anything else, the foundation of any endeavor must be built upon the pillars of safety. It is the foremost priority, the fundamental demand that takes precedence above all else. Ensuring safety for all is the bedrock that enables open dialogue and meaningful engagement. By establishing an environment where safety is guaranteed for every individual, we lay the groundwork for inclusive conversations, fostering a space where diverse perspectives can converge and meaningful connections can be forged. Only then can we embark on the journey of progress, with everyone's voices valued and amplified. Only then we can start talking.

ENGAGE.

community, participation, cooperation, togetherness, kinship, gathering.

Gather.

Talk to each other.

Create together.

Interact. Cooperate.

We need each other.

We depend on each other.

Within the realm of community, the act of engaging with others takes on paramount significance. It is through active participation, cooperative efforts, and a sense of togetherness that we unlock the potential for growth and progress. Recognizing the inherent interdependence among individuals, we come to understand that our collective strength lies in our unity. As we gather, sharing experiences, ideas, and aspirations, a profound kinship is cultivated, enriching the fabric of our community. By embracing the notion that “we need each other, we depend on each other” we create an environment where collaboration thrives, collective challenges are overcome, and collective achievements are celebrated. Through the power of collaboration, we augment our capacities, drawing upon the diverse skills, perspectives, and talents of each individual. Thus, by fostering a culture of interconnectedness and mutual support, we unlock the ability to collectively strive for a better future, leveraging the strength derived from our shared purpose and commitment.

And maybe finally, we can feel belonging.

BELONG.

need to belong, home, familiarity, memories, connecting, feelings.

Being able to belong somewhere.

Being able to feel at home.

Through engaging, whether with places or people, we cultivate a profound belongingness, a sanctuary where individuals find solace, connection, and purpose. The feeling of belonging is a fundamental aspect of human existence that permeates every facet of our lives. It encompasses a deep sense of connection, acceptance, and attachment to a place, community, or group. When individuals experience a genuine belonging, it positively influences their well-being, self-esteem, and overall happiness. It fosters a sense of security, enabling individuals to express their authentic selves and contribute meaningfully to their surroundings. The impact of belonging extends beyond personal fulfillment, as it nurtures stronger social bonds, cooperation, and collective efficacy. In communities where belonging is fostered, individuals are more likely to collaborate, support one another, and work towards common goals. It fuels innovation, encourages diversity of thought, and promotes social cohesion. Ultimately, the feeling of belonging is a transformative force that shapes individuals, communities, and society at large, allowing everyone to thrive and contribute to the collective tapestry of human existence. It fuels innovation, encourages diversity of thought, and promotes social cohesion. Ultimately, the feeling of belonging is a transformative force that shapes individuals, communities, and society at large, allowing everyone to thrive and contribute to the collective tapestry of human existence.

HOPE.

dreaming, aspiration, prosperity.

*With hope as our compass,
We find solace in the knowledge that even in the
darkest of times,
There is a path towards healing.
We hope,
to get a better future.*

Hope, a powerful and transformative force, breathes life into our aspirations and fuels our pursuit of a better future. In the face of challenges, disconnection, and social fragmentation, hope becomes a beacon of light, inspiring resilience and igniting positive change. It is the belief in the possibility of a brighter tomorrow that propels individuals, communities, and societies forward. Hope is the catalyst to build a future where all individuals can thrive and fulfill their potential.



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Dilara Teber
Ebrar Ziyalar
Ece Özetler
Ecem Karakavuk
Ecem Torun
Efe Girgin
Ekin Alfar
Elma Rizkallah
Emine Fatoğlu Topkaya
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Furkan Aksoy
Furkan Özşafak
Giovanna Cuzziol
Gözde Küçüksu
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Meral Kurtul
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 Mete Erkan
Mizuki Kobayashi
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Ömer Altay
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survey

- **What is your name and surname?***

*Response to this question is optional.

- **What is your gender?**

- Female
- Male
- Non- binary
- Prefer not to say
- Other

- **How old are you?**

- 15-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45+

- **Where are you from?**

- **Where do you live?**

- **How long have you lived in your current city?**

- Less than 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 5-10 years
- More than 10 years

- **Why did you choose this neighborhood to live in?**

- Proximity to work/school
- Cost of living
- Safety
- Family and friends
- Culture and entertainment / Social Life
- Transportation
- Other

- **On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate your overall sense of belonging in your neighborhood , with 1 being very low and 5 being very high.**

On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate your overall sense of belonging in your neighborhood , with 1 being very low and 5 being very high.

Very Low 1 2 3 4 5 Very High
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

- **Have you ever felt a sense of belonging in another city or neighborhood?**

- Yes
- No

- **How important is it to you to feel a sense of belonging in your neighborhood/city?**

Not at all important 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely important
○ ○ ○ ○ ○

- **How do you define community?**

- Race/Ethnicity
- Place/Location
- Family or Position within a Family
- Gender Identity/Sexual Orientation
- Interests
- Other

- **How often do you interact with your neighbors on a social level?**

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Rarely
- Never

- **How often do you visit public spaces, such as parks or plazas, in your neighborhood?**

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Rarely
- Never

- **How often do you attend community events or activities in your neighborhood?**

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Rarely
- Never

- **If you do not join social activities in your neighborhood, what is the reason?**

- **What are the most common types of activities that you can find in your neighborhood?**

- **How safe do you feel walking alone in your neighborhood at night?**

Very Unsafe 1 2 3 4 5 Very Safe
○ ○ ○ ○ ○

- **How important is the availability of public transportation in your neighborhood to you?**

Not at all important 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely important
○ ○ ○ ○ ○

- **How important is access to amenities (e.g., parks, schools, healthcare, shopping) for your sense of belonging in your community?**

Not at all important 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely important

- **How important is the availability of public amenities such as restrooms and drinking fountains in public spaces in your neighborhood?**

Not at all important 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely important

- **How accessible are public spaces, such as parks or plazas, in your neighborhood?**

Inaccessible 1 2 3 4 5 Very Accessible

- **How important is the availability of cultural amenities, such as museums or theaters, in your neighborhood to you?**

Not at all important 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely important

- **Are you aware of any placemaking strategies or initiatives implemented in your community?**

(Placemaking is about improving the quality of public spaces and the lives of the people who use them.)

- Yes
- No

- **Have you ever participated in a placemaking initiative in your neighborhood or elsewhere?**

(Placemaking is about improving the quality of public spaces and the lives of the people who use them.)

- Yes
- No

- **Have you ever participated in a placemaking initiative in your neighborhood or elsewhere?**

(Placemaking strategies encompass intentional approaches such as community engagement, mixed-use development, pedestrian-friendly design, public art installations, green spaces, and programming to transform public spaces into vibrant, inclusive, and engaging environments that foster community interaction and well-being.)

- Very effective
- Somewhat effective
- Not effective at all
- There are none

- **Do you feel that your opinions and needs are taken into account in local planning and decision-making processes?**

- Yes
- No

- **How important do you think community participation is in the planning and design of public spaces?**

Not at all important 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely important

- **Do you think it's important that your community addresses the issues of social and economic inequality for one's sense of belonging?**

- Yes
- No

- **How important is it to you that your neighborhood/city is free of discrimination and exclusion?**

Not at all important 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely important

- **How important is diversity in your community for fostering a sense of belonging?**

Not at all important 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely important

- **How important is the availability of affordable housing in your neighborhood to you?**

Not at all important 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely important

- **How important is the presence of green space, such as parks or gardens, in your neighborhood to you?**

Not at all important 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely important

- **How important are community events (e.g., festivals, gatherings, local activities) for fostering a sense of belonging in your community?**

Not at all important 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely important

- **How important is the preservation of historic and cultural landmarks in your neighborhood to you?**

Not at all important 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely important

- **How important is the availability of seating and gathering areas in public spaces?**

Not at all important 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely important

- **How important do you think that public spaces in your neighborhood should be designed with the needs of children and families in mind?**

1 2 3 4 5
 Not at all important Extremely important

- **How important do you believe it is for your community and sense of belonging to have dedicated queer spaces for LGBTQ community centers?**

1 2 3 4 5
 Not at all important Extremely important

- **Please rank the following factors in order of importance to you when it comes to feeling a sense of belonging in your community:**

	Extremely important	Very important	Somewhat important	Neutral	Somewhat unimportant	Unimportant
Sense of Safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diversity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Access to Amenities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Variety of Public Spaces	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of Public Spaces	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community Events (e.g., festivals, gatherings, local activities)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- **Which of the following factors do you think contribute most to a sense of belonging in a community?**

- Divers
- Safety
- Accessibility
- Community Events
- Variety of Public Spaces
- Quality of Public Spaces
- Other

- **What kind of services would you need in public areas to support your outdoor activities?**

- **What are the elements of these places that make you feel like you belong there?**

- **Are there any specific places in your city that you feel a particularly strong sense of belonging to?**

- Yes
- No

- **What do you think could be done to make your city a more just and equitable place for all residents?**

- **Do you like where you are living now?**

- Yes
- No

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