

An interdisciplinary framework of analysis for understanding identity construction in multicultural urban spaces in Sheffield UK

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Abstract

Identity is a complex and dynamic concept developed through interrelationship between the individual and environment. Understanding this interrelationship has been dealt with from different perspectives by many scholarly disciplines, yet there is a missing essential thread linking the diverse data on identity construction. This paper argues that the disciplines that are crucial in understanding identity in an urban environment are human geography, phenomenology and social psychology. The paper examines relevant concepts in these disciplines and demonstrates their significance for a comprehensive understanding of the identity of people in the urban context. This paper will explicate the interdisciplinary framework of analysis developed from the various concepts, which is employed in a broader research context that aims to propose a spatio-behavioural model of identity construction in public spaces in the multicultural city of Sheffield. The conclusion of this paper throws light on the need for adopting interdisciplinary approaches in research for comprehending complex issues of urban societies.

Introduction

Modern identity construction is a process of adaptation and negotiation that takes place in everyday encounters within multicultural urban settings. It is an issue that is encountered in the context of debates surrounding the emergence of global cities and their impact on the identity of people belonging to diverse ethnic and/or religious backgrounds. In today's world of unequal political, economic, symbolic and cultural geographies, these encounters involve greater challenges in the negotiation of one's identity; as a result, identity undergoes a continuous process of adaptation and reconstruction. Scholars approach this phenomenon—the need to rethink identity—in terms of 'interconnectedness rather than counterposition, inclusion rather than exclusion' (Massey and Jess, 2005: 224). Similar views are echoed in the concepts of the global sense of place (Massey, 1991) and multi-territoriality (Petcou, 2002). While these global phenomena have been

addressed from different perspectives by many scholarly disciplines, a comprehensive inter-disciplinary understanding of identity construction amidst the growing multicultural nature of cities remains missing.

In this context, this paper builds on an interdisciplinary doctoral research project that draws insights from current work on identity and place from the fields of human geography, phenomenological philosophy and social psychology, and strives to reveal their relevance for spatial design thinking. In this paper, we construct a spatio-behavioural model of identity construction in multicultural urban spaces and seek to explore both the prominent role of spatial practices in identity construction and its implications for an integrated multi-cultural society. Discussing the disciplinary choices made, the paper aims to delineate the interdisciplinary framework of analysis developed as part of the research. The paper is presented in three parts. The first part discusses the concepts and approaches from the selected disciplines relevant for formulating the interdisciplinary framework of analysis. The second part explains the case study, methods of data collection and analysis using the framework developed. The third part presents the case study analysis. The paper concludes by discussing significant interconnections between various aspects of identity construction made possible by this interdisciplinary framework. The conclusions of this paper not only demonstrate the significance and need for interdisciplinary approaches to comprehending identity issues but also how various disciplines symbiotically inform each other to bridge existing knowledge gaps in identity studies.

This paper focuses on identity construction in multicultural contexts from an architectural, spatial perspective. This is not only because space invariably links to the issue of identity but also because of the challenges that are posed for architecture in dealing with identity issues. Multiculturalism requires urban contexts that can support the endless spatial negotiations of cultural difference to inscribe one's identity, which in turn implores a sensitive and responsible design approach. Today, these architectural challenges have become manifold, especially with the urgency for its meaningful intervention to address those identity issues instigated with the volatility of 'socio-physical' urban forms. These challenges are complex, as multicultural environments today demand the strengthening of the distinctive cultural identities of different ethnic communities, enabling them to have their own cultural voice and architectural expression (Incirlioglu and Tandogan, 1999). This urges new directions to be considered in architectural conceptualizations of spatiality which support the socio-cultural connotations for identity negotiations.

In search of forms to address this diversity superficially, designers often create homogenised environments rendering 'universal sameness' (Auge, 2009) in spatial and cultural expressions, erasing the scope for individuals to identify with those environments. Such environments create a condition of uniformity that leads to the deterritorialisation of the context. In

broader anthropological terms, 'deterritorialisations refer to the severance of social, political, or cultural practices from their native places and populations' (Adam, 2012). From another perspective, namely that of aesthetic sensibility, this uniformity also attests to the fact that it is impossible to reach cross-cultural aesthetic appreciation outside the social context (Incirlioglu and Tandogan, 1999). Hence designing environments for people with diverse aesthetic sensibilities also presents a challenging task, as new directions in architecture need to enable 'aesthetic openness towards divergent cultural experiences' (Hannerz, 1990). Overall, a designed environment which does not acknowledge and address multicultural needs not only tends to create greater instability and difficulty in maintaining both local and national identities, but also results in allowing spatial practices that are devoid of any cultural connotations. Such developments deny the role of architecture as a 'bearer' of cultural meaning (Emmons et al., 2012).

The above discussion sets out the need and the significance of the larger multicultural context for understanding identity constructions. Building on this, this paper examines the impacts of urban spatial experiences on identity construction processes. In the context of globalisation, multiculturalism and alienation in cities today, the study examines the complex phenomenon of identity constructions through everyday urban spatial experiences in Sheffield in the United Kingdom. Sheffield, with its thriving and diverse international community (international students make up 16.7% of the city's population) was identified as an appropriate and rich case study for this research. The study focussed on the experiences of international students (studying at the University of Sheffield), as this offers an interesting dimension to the study of urban spatial experiences and valuable insights into the notions of identity negotiations in contemporary societies more broadly. As different cultural groups have different perceptions, their spatial practices also differ and it is important to understand how these diversities are accommodated and/or adapted through myriad possibilities in physical settings.

The need for interdisciplinary research

Manuel Castells observes that, from a sociological perspective, although all identities are constructed, the complexity lies in understanding how, from what, by whom and for what it is constructed (Castells, 2004). He notes how identity construction involves multifarious factors:

The construction of identities uses building materials from history, from geography, from biology, from productive and reproductive institutions, from collective memory and from personal fantasies, from power apparatuses and religious revelations (Castells, 2004).

Each discipline approaches or comprehends the above factors within its own limits and boundaries. Fundamentally functioning 'to represent

society and culture' (Kaminer, 2011), architecture is an all-encompassing discipline which has been significantly challenged by identity issues that characterise many urban societies today. The reasons for this can be attributed to two major factors. Firstly, identity itself is caught in a labyrinth of diverse yet interwoven issues of multiculturalism, which inscribe differences at socio-cultural, economic and political levels. This in turn is spatially manifested, transforming urban environments into places for contestation and/or negotiation, adding to the already entangled and complex spatial conditions. Secondly, spatial disciplines such as architecture and urban planning are accused of foisting exaggerated attention onto visual experience; moreover the designed environment is increasingly suffering from what Relph (1985) refers to as stuffing one's own genius into somebody else's 'loci'. All these have not only made the relationship between people and the physical environment fragile, but have also made it more difficult for architecture to address independently the notions of identity negotiations and constructions. In the current urban development paradigm however, 'identity constructions become crucial for generating a sense of belonging' (Castells, 2004). Hence from an architectural perspective, understanding the notions of identity construction amidst the complexity of spatial practices in multicultural societies compels an interdisciplinary approach towards studying identity issues. The following section examines three disciplines, each identified for its appropriate content and concepts which closely relate to the aims and objectives of this research. The disciplines chosen are fundamentally different but prove to be significant – and commensurate – in terms of their 'interfaces which connect [them] with human and place relation' (Castello, 2010).

The first disciplinary perspective used in this research is Phenomenology and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Research into identity construction in everyday life largely focuses on the implicit meanings of perceptual and spatial experiences of people. For this reason, the IPA method is considered to be of great significance as it explores and seeks to explain the lived experience of a specified phenomenon, providing a qualitative research approach committed to the examination of how people make sense of their experiences (Smith, 2009). IPA research follows philosopher Edmund Husserl's (1927) advice when he urged phenomenologists to go 'back to things themselves', and denies any attempt to fix experiences in predefined or overly abstract categories. Focussing on the phenomenological understanding of lived experiences, IPA is particularly important for this research as it is context-dependent and contingent upon social, historical and cultural perspectives which have a great impact on identity (Eatough and Smith 2008; Smith, 2009). IPA as a method enables an understanding of peoples' place experiences that is deeper and unselfconscious, allowing researchers to capture the complexity of people-place relationships that is crucial for this study.

The second disciplinary perspective that informs this research is human geography, with a particular focus on Relph's seven levels of experiential involvement/identification in place. Relph (1976: 49) explains that the essence of a place is embedded 'in the experience of an inside that is distinct from an outside; more than anything else this is what sets places apart in space and defines a particular system of physical features, activities and the meanings'. He offers an interesting way to understand place experiences in terms of the notion of being 'inside' or 'outside' of a place, which becomes intrinsically connected to the extent that one identifies or belong to that place. Relph states that 'the more profoundly inside you are the stronger is this identity with the place' (1976: 49). The dynamic changes in contemporary urban living have required that peoples' involvement and relationship with places be reconceptualised. Relph's seven modes of experiential involvement/identification in places offer the required depth in experiential concepts, with different levels and layers for comprehending the complex spatiality and place engagement in contemporary urban environments. The notion of insideness/outsideness is particularly appropriate for studying and analysing peoples' experiential understanding and involvement with the physical setting in the cotemporary context. Figure 1 provides a brief summary of the various levels of Relph's classification.

Types of place involvement	Characteristics
Existential Insideness	The deepest involvement in place where a person feels being part of the place. The person feels at home.
Existential Outsideness	The person feels out of place. There is no involvement and the place gives a feeling of alienation, of strangeness.
Objective Outsideness	Involving deliberate distancing. The place is like an object of study, experienced based on reason, surveyed scientifically and logically.
Incidental Outsideness	Involving the situation where place is just a backdrop, as when the person is heading somewhere else.
Behavioural Insideness	When the deliberate experience of place is expected, there is a set of elements, views, landmarks, visual patterns, observable visual qualities.
Empathetic Insideness	When a person from outside shows empathy with what the place demonstrates as the expression of those who created it and live in it.
Vicarious Insideness	A second-hand feeling of indirect experience, where the person is transported to the place via image, painting, film, mass media.

Figure 1: Relph's Different Modes of Experiencing Places (adapted from Seamon D, 1996)

The third, and last, disciplinary perspective adopted in this research is social psychology, in particular Motivated Identity Construction Theory. The concept of ‘motive’ brings out both explicit and implicit factors that govern peoples’ spatial practices and experiences in a place. This research incorporates Motivated Identity Construction Theory within the framework of analysis. According to this theory, there are six motives of identity constructions (distinctiveness, meaning, belongingness, continuity, self-esteem and efficacy) in people which were substantiated by recent studies in social psychology (Easterbrook and Vignoles, 2012). Although these motives are fundamentally related to how people develop their identity with different groups of people, for this research these six motives are interpreted as follows:

- *Distinctiveness*: How much does being part of a place give a sense of people’s experience in any sense?
- *Meaning*: How much does being part of a place give people a sense of meaningfulness to their life?
- *Continuity*: How much does being part of a place make people feel that their past, present and future are connected?
- *Belonging*: How much does being part of a place make people feel that they are included or accepted?
- *Self-esteem*: How much does being part of a place make people see themselves positively?
- *Efficacy*: How much does being part of a place make people feel efficient, competent and capable?

Although these six motives may not be comprehensive (Easterbrook and Vignoles, 2012) they facilitate this research by providing valuable insights into the impact of spatial dimensions on these identity motives. Figure 2 illustrates how the various theories and concepts discussed above were integrated to form an interdisciplinary framework of analysis for this research.

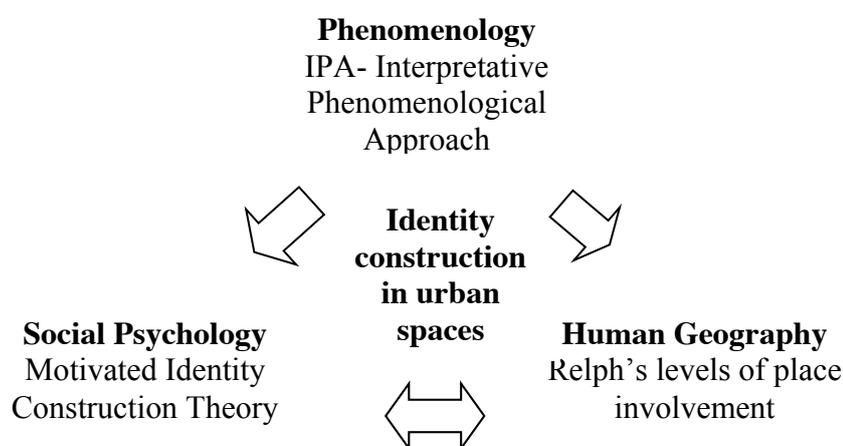


Figure 2: Interdisciplinary framework of analysis

Research design and methodology

Research design for this research is developed based on Maxwell's interactive model where case study methodology, methods, goals and conceptual framework formed an integrated and interacting whole, with each component closely tied to several others, rather than being linked in a linear or cyclic sequence (Figure 3)

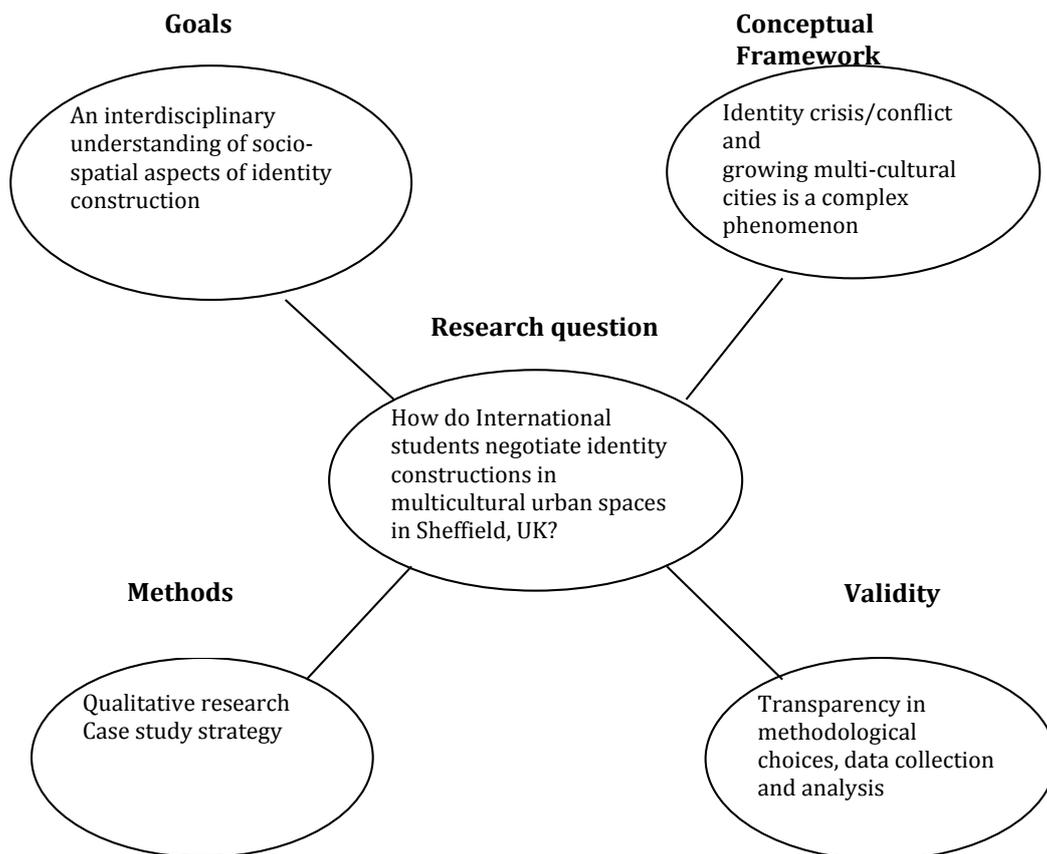


Figure 3: Research design (adapted from Maxwell, 1998)

During this research a qualitative case study methodology was adopted. Purposive sampling was undertaken which aimed for an overall diverse cultural background within the participants. All participants had been living in Sheffield for period of two to three years and Sheffield was their first experience living outside of their home country. The research participants included fifteen international students (from China, Iran, Mexico, Netherlands, Nigeria, Romania, and Thailand) studying at the University of Sheffield. The places for studying their experiences included urban outdoor spatial settings. These settings were carefully selected based on the following criteria: the everyday life associated with the spaces, avoidance of the overly 'designed' aspects of contemporary urban spaces and familiarity/frequency of its use. Data collection was carried out through

in-depth qualitative semi-structured interviews with the participants lasting between 45 minutes and 1 hour. These interviews were composed of various tasks including ranking images of the selected settings according to how much each related to their self.

A total of thirty images of various physical settings (numbered one to thirty) were used in the interview session. These images included the everyday pathways leading to various university buildings, public parks within the circulation zone of the university, spaces outside the student union building, bus stops, and city centre spaces (Figure 4). Participants were asked to rank the images in a 'Diamond 9' template,¹ based on the degree to which each image, and the experiences associated with it, related to their self-identity.



Figure 4: Selected images of Sheffield used during the interview

The participants also matched the chosen nine images to words in the wordlist provided during the interview. This list included words such as 'comfort', 'safe', 'pleasant', 'complex' (Figure 5). These terms were deliberately chosen for their broad and general connotations with two aims

¹ Diamond 9 ranking allows participants rank their choices from most significant to least significant. The strength of the diamond 9 ranking lies in developing the interconnections between the various choices and basis on which it was organised by the participants.

in mind: firstly, to allow participants to choose easily and associate them with the images chosen; and, secondly, to increase the opportunities for exploring the implicit meanings associated with common words describing spatial experiences. In the final task of the session, the participants were asked to sketch places based on their personal choices and preferences about spatial aspects in public/personal spaces to make one's self 'fit in' to the places. Based on the sketch provided, follow-up questions were posed to help understand the deeper meanings of the spatial experiences represented in terms of participants' personal choices. Data at various stages were recorded using smart pen technology.² This also facilitated the transcription and synchronisation of data sets. As the research aimed to elicit deeper aspects of spatial experiences, the diverse methods of data collection and analysis were designed to play a crucial role in capturing the elusive and implicit aspects of the case study.

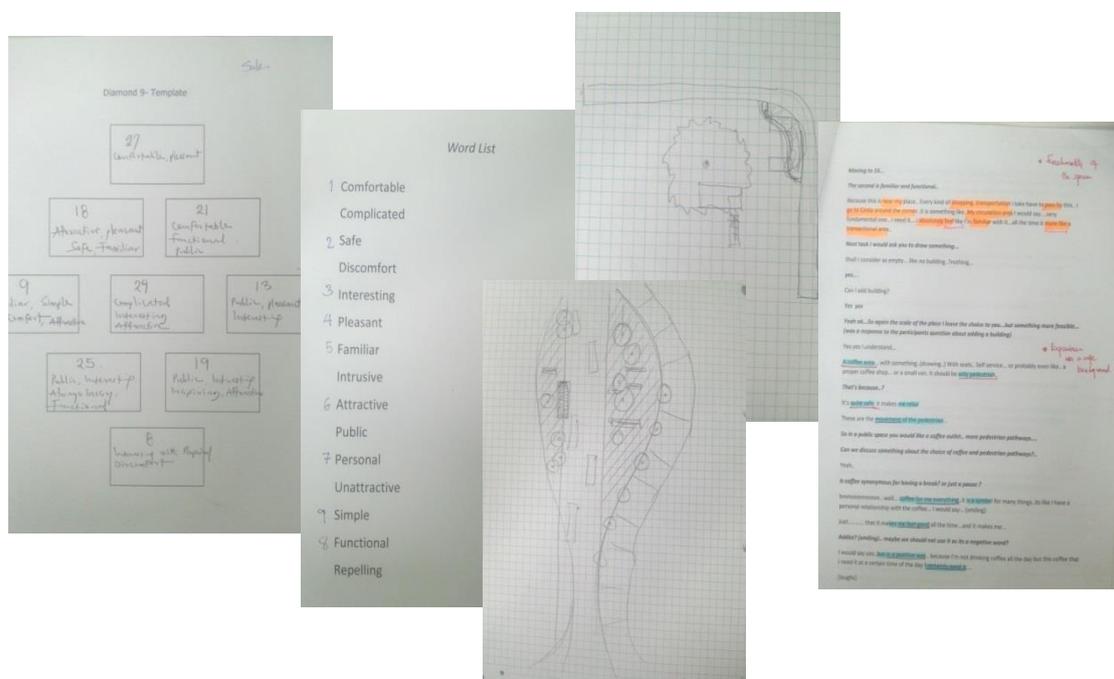


Figure 5: Samples of data collection: Diamond 9 Template, Wordlist, Sketching and Interview Transcript

The analysis employed an interdisciplinary framework which forms the crux of this research developed from the concepts discussed earlier. Following the analysis, various significant interconnections and themes emerged regarding the socio-spatial practices of the participants and their identity constructions. The interconnections and themes identified were instrumental in developing a socio-spatial model for understanding identity constructions in multi-cultural urban spaces. As the presentation of the final theoretical model is beyond the scope of this paper, discussions that follow

² Echo Smartpen is a ballpoint pen with an embedded computer and digital audio recorder. When used with [Anoto digital paper](#), it records what it writes for later uploading to a computer and synchronizes those notes with any audio it has recorded.

focus on the delineation of analysis using the interdisciplinary framework and the subsequent inferences. Overall, the research involved complex and rich qualitative data gathered from semi-structured interviews and data interpretation was based on the assumptions outlined in Figure 7.

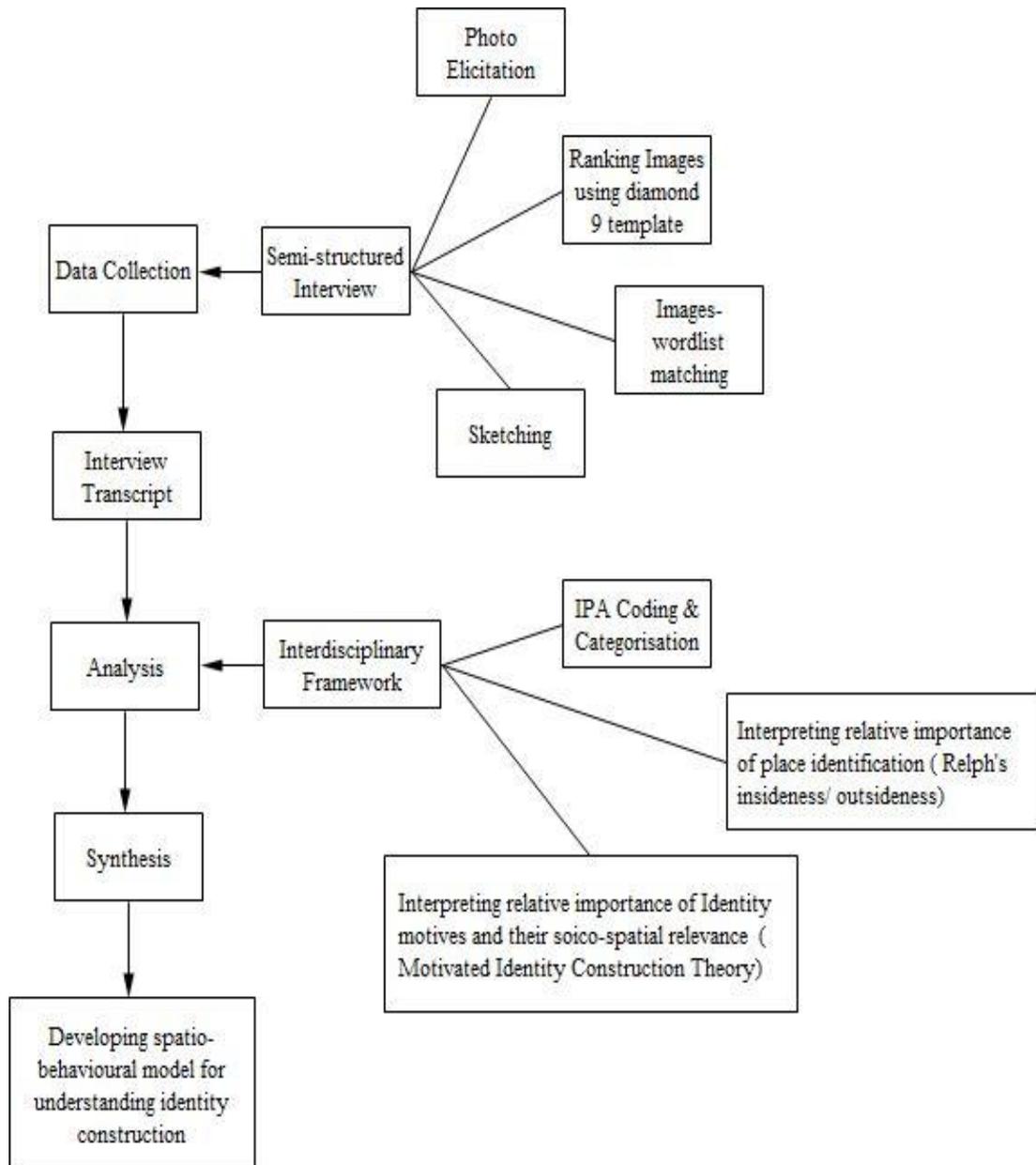


Figure 6: Stages of research data collection and analysis

Social Aspects	Spatial Aspects	Place Involvement	Identity Motives
When the participants' narratives emphasised more than the socio-cultural elements/factors of the places (sense of privacy, religious attachments, life style etc) defining their experiences the emergent themes were assumed to be more socio-cultural than spatial.	When the participants' narratives emphasised more than the physical elements/factors (form, function, visual and aesthetic elements) of the places defining their experiences the emergent themes were assumed to be more spatial than socio-cultural.	The presence or absence of specific modes of experiences are based on the participants' experiences matching with the description of the respective modes of place involvement.	The presence or absence of identity motives were based on the participants' experiences responding to the spatial interpretation of the questions.

Figure 7: Assumptions guiding data interpretation

Analysis and discussions

The interview transcripts prepared from the data collection of the 15 participants (referred as P1 to P15) were coded and interpreted using the IPA method, allowing several themes to emerge which were analysed for their socio-cultural and spatial relevance. These themes were used in the later stages of analysis for comprehending the relationship between the identity motives and spatial experiences of participants. Finally the prevalence of various levels of place involvement in the participants' narratives that enabled identity negotiations/construction was analysed. The following section discusses in detail the analysis and inferences developed based on the interdisciplinary framework (see Figure 3).

Emergent themes of identity and place experience

There were several themes that emerged from the participants' narratives about their experiences with the places with which they identified. As this paper focuses on the methodological framework and analysis, themes are discussed selectively to allow the reader to understand how the rich and complex data was systematically layered to decipher the implicit connections between participants' spatial experiences and identity constructions. A summary of all emergent themes is given at the end this section for reference (Figure 8).

For participants identifying with those urban spaces that were defined more by the spatial aspects of the environment, the themes that emerged consistently in most of their narratives were the notion of visual

appeal of the place (landscape, natural setting, buildings), familiarity (frequency of use, proximity to home/work), physical comfort and safety (pedestrian safety, thermal comfort) and functionality (proximity, efficiency). From the discussions that developed around the participants' sketches of their personal choice of places where they would identify themselves, several participants expressed the need for inside/outside connectedness which enabled a sense of relaxation, and considered this as a means to avoid feeling isolated. The feeling of comfort in urban spaces, which was expressed as a significant factor that enabled participants to develop a sense of identity, was derived from the extent of spatial freedom the environment offered. This was explained in terms of participants' desire for uncluttered spaces, clarity in circulation, spaces without obstacles (behavioural restriction) and wider choices in using such spaces.

Almost all the participants expressed an affinity towards natural landscape elements such as water bodies, plants and trees, and considered these to be an important aspect of places that they identify themselves with. Often the need for passive entertainment in urban spaces (such as watching people engaged in activities) was mentioned as a strong factor to enable the feeling of connectedness with the environment. In the category of themes that manifested equal socio-cultural and spatial relevance were the notions of privacy/sense of enclosure and user group comfort. Participants from different ethnic background clearly expressed different ways in which they perceived the need for privacy in urban spaces. For example, female Iranian participants expressed this need for privacy and a sense of enclosure in public spaces more strongly (preference for physically defined elements and corner space) whereas female Romanian and male Chinese participants were content with places where they were not the centre of attention.

Amongst the themes which were defined equally by socio-cultural and spatial parameters of place experiences, the most prominent and frequently occurring themes were familiarity and belonging to a place (derived from similarity to their native spatial elements), user group comfort, socio-psychological comfort, and territoriality. Although these themes were defined by the socio-cultural background of participants, they are realised through spatial manifestations. For instance, one of the male Chinese participants, while explaining the notion of territoriality, discussed his preference for circular forms of seating along with a road defining its location, which marks the space of his group when using an urban space. Additionally, the participant highlighted how such an arrangement could give them more privacy from other student groups. Similarly, Iranian female participants rarely engaged themselves in some urban spaces which were busy as they were uncomfortable due to the sense that they were being watched. In this case, although the participants' socio cultural background defined the meaning of 'comfort,' it was influenced/defined by the particular spatiality of places.

Those themes that placed more emphasis on the socio-cultural aspects of place experience and which encouraged the sense of identity for participants were religious needs, nostalgic place memories, and the sense of community/social life. Participants' religious backgrounds played a significant role in determining the personal choice of places with which they can identify. In this context, the proximity of a mosque or church, meeting people with similar religious beliefs, and the resulting social life, emerged as important needs for participants identifying with a specific urban environment. Participants' narratives also expressed an empathetic attachment with urban spaces that allowed them to recollect memories associated with their native and childhood memories.

The summary of various themes derived from the analysis of the interview transcripts using IPA are illustrated in Figure 8. The themes are categorized and colour coded according to the socio-cultural and spatial relevance of each theme. This colour coding is followed throughout the analysis.

Socio-cultural >Spatial	Equally Socio-cultural and Spatial	Spatial > Socio-cultural
Religious needs	Historic/grandness	Inside/Outside connectedness
Nostalgic place memories	Similarities to native places	Nature
Childhood associations	User group comfort	Spatial freedom
Entertainment	Sense of enclosure	Functional
Social life	More observer/ less observed	Uncluttered spaces
Territoriality	Memory objects	Safety/natural surveillance
Familiarity through native spatial experiences	Familiarity-Personal experiences	Belonging in relation to home/ everyday activities
	Visual and physical connectedness	Everyday connectivity
	Inspiring	Entertainment
	Visual appeal	Attractiveness
	Tactile experience	Safety
	Socio-psychological comfort	Personal meaning
		Unselfconscious behaviour
		Convenience
		Physical comfort
		Haptic experiences
		Sense of Ownership

Figure 8: Summary of emergent themes and their socio-cultural and spatial relevance themes developed using IPA

Identity motives and their socio-spatial relevance

The themes discussed above were analysed for their interconnections with the various identity motives (namely Distinctiveness, Meaning, Continuity, Belonging, Self-Esteem and Efficiency) and their socio-cultural and spatial relevance/significance in participants' place experience as this related to identity constructions. Belonging and Distinctiveness were manifest as the most prominent identity motives in place experiences of 12 and nine participants respectively. Distinctiveness was attached to themes which involved more spatial elements (for instance, the historicity of the structure, native style of buildings, the significance of the activities which the spaces led into). Belonging was manifest through participants expressing the importance they attached to native place memories, user group comfort, and social life. While Distinctiveness was largely manifest through the spatial elements of participants' experiences, Belonging was defined through both spatial and socio-cultural aspects. Meaning was also defined by both socio-cultural and spatial aspects of participants' experiences. Some of the themes which revealed the meaningful experiences attached to identity construction were a social life along with family in urban spaces, everyday connectedness and place engagement through activities. The Efficiency motive was prevalent to the same extent as the Distinctiveness motive.

The Efficiency motive emerged from those narratives where the participants indicated the functional efficiency of the urban spaces as an important criterion in developing of sense of identity with that environment, while Continuity and Self-esteem motives rarely occurred in the participants' experiences. Interestingly some of the themes raised did not fit under any of the aforementioned motives. To name a few of these, they were: physical comfort, inside/outside connectedness, spatial freedom, and familiarity. These themes were listed under non-categorical motives. It is important to note that all the participants' narratives suggested the prevalence of non-categorical motives.

The various identity motives and their socio-spatial significance inferred from the narratives of 15 participants were tabulated (see Figure 9). Individual cells are colour-coded referring to the extent of socio cultural and spatial relevance attached to each motive. Where the motives did not occur in a participant's place experiences, the respective cells are left blank. In this stage of the analysis it became difficult to explain the socio-spatial relevance of responses, due to the complexity of non-categorical motives; hence the coding with a grey colour indicates only the prevalence of a non-categorical motive for each participant.

Identity Motives and their Socio-Spatial Relevance															
Identity Motives	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 5	P 6	P 7	P 8	P 9	P 10	P 11	P 12	P 13	P 14	P 15
Distinctiveness		■	■	■	■	■	■	■			■				■
Meaning				■	■					■	■	■	■	■	■
Continuity															
Belonging	■	■		■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■	■
Self-Esteem													■		
Efficiency		■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■				■	
Non-Categorical	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

Figure 8: Identity motives analysis

Modes of place involvement and sense of identity

In the final stage of the analysis, participants' narratives were studied for comprehending the modes of place involvement experienced in urban spaces that are related to participant identity construction. Figure 9 illustrates the presence (cells coloured) and absence (blank cells) of various modes of place involvement that occurred in the participants' experiences. It can be observed that Existential Outsideness (complete alienation from the place) and Vicarious Insideness (indirect experience of places) rarely occurred in the participants' narratives. Behavioural Insideness was the most prevalent (14 participants) mode of place involvement in identity-related experiences, followed by Objective Outsideness (13 participants) and Empathetic Insideness (12 participants). It is important to note here that places that allowed logical reasoning and efficiency (in terms of safety and functional aspects of a place) play an equally significant role as the observable qualities, visual patterns (created by the visual appeal of the place) and emotional experiences (associated with the notions of sense of belonging). It is also observed that complete unselfconscious involvement with people was notably prevalent (8 participants) in the experiences of participants pertaining to identity construction.

Modes of Place Involvement	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 5	P 6	P 7	P 8	P 9	P 10	P 11	P 12	P 13	P 14	P 15
Existential insideness		■	■	■		■		■	■	■	■				
Empathetic Insideness	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			■	
Behavioural Insideness	■	■	■	■	■	■			■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Vicarious Insideness										■					
Incidental Outsideness								■		■		■	■	■	■
Objective Outsideness			■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Existential Outsideness															

Figure 9: Modes of place involvement analysis: Place involvement and sense of identity relationship

Conclusion

The above discussion reveals the complexities of contemporary urban spatial experiences. Especially with the increasing multi-cultural nature of societies, complexities of people-place and identity, it becomes particularly significant to disentangle their relationships. Understanding this complexity through an interdisciplinary lens offers valuable insights into the interrelationships between the socio-spatial aspects of identity construction. The socio-cultural and spatial relevance of the various themes suggests the significance of spatiality in understanding identity in contemporary societies. This is reinforced in the analysis of identity motives. The spatial reinterpretation of identity motives also reveals other non-categorical motives that are often neglected due to disciplinary boundaries of identity studies and requires further investigation. It also highlights how, when interpreted spatially, identity motives require a reassessment in terms of their meaning and relevance in order to reconceptualise the motives explained by Motivated Identity Construction Theory in the contemporary urban context. The study of various modes of places involved offers interesting insights on the changing conceptions of people-place-identity relationships in contemporary urban living.

The crucial part of the study involved both in generating rich data and an effective method to analyse the complexity of identity constructions and urban space experiences. The various methods employed in this research facilitated the process of data collection. The interdisciplinary framework enabled the creation of meaningful datasets that allowed the revelation of the significant relationship between people-place-identity. The framework established the need for and significance of adopting an interdisciplinary approach, as it enabled the development of significant

interconnections within the datasets from the three disciplinary concepts which facilitated the move towards a more comprehensive socio-spatial understanding of identity construction in multi-cultural urban environment. The dataset discussed above offers the possibility of being synthesised further for developing a socio-spatial model for understanding identity construction, which is the main goal of this research.

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