

Conceptualizing Place Attachment Affordance

Authors : Priya Narayanan

Abstract : Despite several studies having been conducted on the highly subjective concept of place attachment in the last 60 years, there is a lack of consensus among researchers about how it can be measured empirically. Further, there is no available literature that discusses how a place can be manipulated via design and/or policy to allow people to feel/get attached to it, an aspect that seems to be the need of the hour in a world where a substantial population is living in shelter homes as war/climate/social refugees. Consequently, this paper draws from studies on place, affordance and attachment to conceptualize an objectively measurable entity in place attachment affordance by asking 'whether and to what degree a place allows one to form attachment bonds with it' rather than the generally asked 'whether and to what degree one is/feels attached to a place'. Towards this, the place attachment affordance scale (PAAS) has been developed to not only quantitatively measure place attachment affordance but also act as a point of entry into a more in-depth analysis of both place policy and place properties. To illustrate the validity of the scale, the study uses PAAS to compare shelter homes for women in crisis with the homes they once lived in to glean the degree to which both places afford the formation of place attachment bonds to the residents. PAAS has also been used to compare shelter homes as places of short-/long-term residence for the residents and as places of work for the staff. Based on the results, it is suggested that place attachment and built environment researchers employ the PAAS as an objective measurement tool to better understand not only the presence or absence of attachment bonds with place but also the attributes of place that encourage or discourage the same. The study also briefly discusses the universality of the PAAS, although further fieldwork might be required to substantiate the same.

Keywords : place attachment, affordance, shelter homes, home, scale, environmental psychology

Conference Title : ICEPA 2025 : International Conference on Environmental Psychology and Architecture

Conference Location : Taipei, Taiwan

Conference Dates : March 03-04, 2025