

Public Space Appropriation of a Public Peripheric Library in El Agustino, Lima Metropolitana: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract : The importance of public spaces has been shown for many years, and in different disciplines, with one example being their ability for developing a sustainable social environment, especially in mega cities like Lima. The aim of this study was to explore the process of space appropriation that occurs in the Peripheral Library of the district El Agustino in Lima, Peru. Space appropriation is a process by which people develop a link with a place within a specific sociocultural context. This process has been related to positive outcomes, such as: participation and in the development of compassionate behaviors with these places. To achieve the purpose of the research, a qualitative design was selected because this will allowed exploring in deep the process in an specific context. The study interviewed six adults, all of whom were deliberately chosen to have the longest residence time in the district and also utilized the library the most. In a complementary manner, two children and one adolescent were interviewed. Likewise, two observations were made on a weekday and weekend, and public documentation information was collected. As a result, five categories linked to this process were identified. It was found that the process of space appropriation begins with the needs of the people who arrive at the library, which provides benefits to these people by fulfilling them. Next in the process, through the construction of meanings, the library is then valued as a pleasant, productive, safe and regulated place; as a result, people become identified with the library. The identification generated is subsequently reflected in the level of participation that the person has in the library, which may go in a continuum from no participating at all to a more direct involvement in the library activities, as well as voluntary and altruistic work. Finally, this process leads to the library becoming part of the neighborhood. This study allows having a better understanding of how sociospatial processes work in a Latinamerican context and in cities like Lima, where the third of the country's population lives. Also, Lima has grown in the past 50 years in a excessively way and with lack of planification. Therefore, these results brings new research questions and highlights the importance of learning how to design public spaces in order to promote these processes to develop.

Keywords : bond with the place, place identity, public spaces, space appropriation

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