

People-Environment Relations and Architecture

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Over the last few decades, the development of studies in the social and behavioural sciences of the relations between the environment and human behaviour has been matched by the emergence of a culture of participation and the integration of a more *human perspective* in architecture and urban development, and in environmental design in general. Thus the particularities and idiosyncrasies of local cultures, their ways of life and values, have been elevated to a position of respect in urban transformation programmes.

The following six papers, selected from the 17th IAPS Conference held in A Coruña in 2002, discuss how architecture and urban planning is closely linked to the development of people-environment studies.

The first paper addresses the relations between culture and sustainability. Roger Tyrrell explores the influence of climate and culture in the development of Malaysian architecture. He also discusses how an analysis of these dimensions might allow us to develop an understanding of how to reconcile the tensions between local and global culture.

In the second paper, Laksmi Siregar deals with the role of *ethics* and *ecology* as necessary elements providing for a dignified living of life itself. This becomes possible as a consequence of respecting cultural values within a framework of management of human resources, and by answering environmental challenges by focusing on their economic and social aspects.

The paper by Angel Blanco; José Luis Losada and M^a Teresa Anguera, describes a set of analytical techniques for use with observational designs, noting similarities, differences and the convenience of selecting one or other. The key constraints and restrictions for scientific research, which addresses the study of environment-behaviour relations with observational designs, are also discussed.

The paper by María José Azurmendi and Itsaso Olaizola approach the issue from a more global and interdisciplinary perspective, paying attention to the need to develop a model of sustainable development

based in the integration of disciplines connected to the design of quality of life in urban space, highlighting several aspects of cultural diversity from the double focus of Law and Social Psychology.

Stephany Hess, Ernesto Suárez y Bernardo Hernández survey more recent developments within people-environment studies in Spain. The paper analysis the definition of the area; the hypothesis of green psychology; if studies directed towards intervention have a relevant place in the area; the development of research groups; the scientific impact of the studies; and the type of sample, the design and statistical analytical techniques utilized.

Finally, the paper from Drago Kos, Ivan Marušič, Marko Polič & Tadeja Zupančič Strojan examines how people-environment studies in Slovenia have evolved in parallel with global developments and ways that are similar in the European Union.

We should like to thank the contributors - both those coming from the urban planning and architectural fields, and those from environmental psychology. All their papers illustrate the scope and utility of this research field and provide examples as to how it can be addressed. They demonstrate the importance of cross-disciplinary work in the analysis of people-environment relations in helping to build a better world in which the quality of life becomes a key expression of our values and our cultures. We should also like to express our gratitude to Bernardo Hernández for his support in allowing this special edition, as well as to those colleagues who provided anonymous reviews. Finally, we would like to thank the *International Association for People-Environment Studies* and the *Xoan Vicente Viqueira Psychosocial Studies and Research Institute* for supporting our work on this issue.

