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THE ROLE OF PUBLIC SPACE IN SHAPING URBAN IDENTITY

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Public space plays a crucial role in shaping urban identity. It serves as a place for social interactions, cultural events, and community formation.

Public spaces are not only physical environments but also cultural, social, and psychological artifacts that reflect and define urban identity. These places not only provide space for activities and socializing but also create specific urban impressions that influence the self-awareness and sense of belonging of residents to their city.

Public space can reflect the history, culture, and values of a city. It can be a place where local residents feel a connection to their city and its history. For example, monuments, museums, parks, and other public places can reflect historical events significant to the local community.

Urban identity is a complex concept formed by many factors, including:

1. Architecture and urban landscape: The physical environment and layout of a city contribute to its identity.
2. Cultural heritage and traditions: Museums, galleries, theaters, and music festivals are places where urban identity is expressed through art, history, and culture, shaping the unique character of the city.
3. Social structure and communities: It is essential to consider the diverse social, age, ethnic, gender groups, and various interest-based user groups in forming urban identity.

Public spaces are delineated by diverse architectural and landscape elements that define their character and functionality. Buildings and structures within public spaces can encapsulate the historical and cultural heritage of a city, as well as its contemporaneity and innovations. Furthermore, the array of functional possibilities

within public spaces presents extensive opportunities for the development of urban life and culture.

Public spaces serve as venues for social interactions and communication, fostering the formation of urban identity. Plazas, parks, and squares become loci for encounters and interactions among city dwellers. The organization of cultural events in public spaces contributes to the preservation and perpetuation of local identity, while communal activities such as sporting events, festivals, and exhibitions promote the cohesion of urban residents.

To investigate the role of public space in shaping urban identity, both quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed. Quantitative methods encompassed the analysis of statistical data concerning the utilization of public spaces and surveys of residents regarding their impressions and engagements with these spaces. Qualitative methods entailed observations of residents' behavior within public spaces, as well as interviews with stakeholders.

The study revealed that public spaces play a significant role in shaping urban identity, encompassing feelings of belonging, cohesion, and residents' identification with their city. It was found that architectural elements such as historical buildings and structures, symbolic monuments, and landscapes contribute to the formation of the city's identity, reproducing its uniqueness and heritage. Additionally, it was identified that the functionality and accessibility of public spaces for various sociocultural groups are crucial factors in shaping urban identity, as they create opportunities for communication and interaction among city residents.

The development of public spaces in Ukraine is facilitated through various initiatives and programs. Here are several key aspects:

1. Restoration and Development Programs for Communities: The USAID DOBRE program assists communities in developing restoration and expansion programs, sharing this experience with other communities. They also provide advice and assistance in creating a better future for citizens.

2. Creation of Public Space: Communities plan the creation of public space despite new challenges. Public space is considered part of the community's economy.

3. Reconstruction Planning Policy: Reconstruction should serve as the foundation for further development of Ukrainian territorial communities, conducted through a comprehensive approach and modern planning decisions.

4. Theoretical Foundations of Public Space Formation: Theoretical foundations for the formation of public spaces are being developed in Ukraine, taking into account various local histories, social, political, domestic, and cultural aspects.

5. Assessment of Public Spaces: Criteria for assessing public spaces in Ukrainian cities have been substantiated based on urban planning, social, economic, and environmental indicators.

These initiatives and programs contribute to the development of public spaces in Ukraine, considering the community's needs and facilitating the creation of space for recreation, realization of communicative potential, and meeting social and societal needs.

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