# Picturing Urban Identities

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*Images of cities play a key role in the formation of urban identity, producing specific spaces and sometimes leaving traces of that process behind, inscribed in material artefacts specific to places. Picturing urban identities is a new method of mapping the linkages between specific places, the production of space, and visualising the basis of the construction of urban identity as highly specific to place, media image, and acting.*

The images of cities created by professionals, as well as by individual actors, play a key role in the formation of urban identity. Professional images are oriented towards media distribution in campaigns used to convey a precise picture of what should be regarded as specific to the city in the eyes of the beholder.

Besides these intended images, subjective ones arise from the perception of urban space, experiences, memories, and ideas, building tension between the individual constitution of urban space and the adoption of a pre-arranged mixture of symbols, historical issues, visual artefacts, and narratives produced intentionally. The individual actor's urban identity, his/her mental image of the city, is formed from this tension.

The subjective image of the city is reconstructed using visual and narrative empirical data from students at Darmstadt, where these processes of negotiating identities are studied. The city's official imagineering is analysed utilizing its Web presence, focusing especially on Darmstadt as a "city of science."

The theoretical aim behind this is to integrate concepts of place-based identity with a sociological perspective on the constitution of space as a social

process that involves action and structure, materiality and atmospheres, as-
cribing both subjective and perceived preconfigured characteristics to places
—to the urban realm.

Four main aspects will therefore be addressed here: place-marketing, with
a tendency towards homogenisation; concepts of identity and place; the newly
elaborated methodical framework for analysing processes of attributing mean-
ing to specific places while constituting space, and, finally, first findings
about a way to integrate the different theoretical approaches to place, space,
and identity.

## Place-marketing and homogenisation

Place-marketing as a metaphor describes a promotional strategy that arises
from the quest for locational competitiveness with the shift from the manage-
rialist mode of urban governance to the entrepreneurial one caused by the de-
cline of the Fordist model of mass production—but it is not its hour of birth:



Figure 1: Darmstadt 1914
(Darmstädter Kunstjahr 1914, Reclams Universum Sonderheft, Leipzig 1914)

Portrayals of Darmstadt in 1914 intend to address cultural and recreational
aspects of a city beautifully integrated into the natural environment, mediated
both textually as well as pictorially—with the smokestacks of the industrial
complexes deliberately minimized to near insignificance (Schott 1999).

Place-marketing is aimed at the projection of intentionally produced im-
ages to external audiences and local populations, bringing together two not
always compatible objectives: Next to the attraction of capital investment,
consumer spending, and highly skilled migrants, it is also addressed to the
internal audience, the citizens, seeking to legitimse regeneration and devel-
opment policies and increasing social cohesion in times of an increasingly
divided an segregated city (Griffith 1989).

Place-marketing becomes difficult in a globalised world, with communi-
cation technologies making the functional differences between places less
important, while reducing the "quality of authentic places" to simple location

factors (Hassenpflug 1999), so greater effort is spent on differentiating them by increasing their symbolic value: The fear of not being noticed drives the quest for achieving symbolic advantage over other competing cities. This is done by creating city-myths—reimaging or visionary strategies, or referring to the city's great narratives (Griffith 1989).

Publicity and advertising have been important factors in place-marketing, though the budget used for them seems to be very small compared to other forms of commercial advertising, and local authorities seem to be the main actors here, not international advertising agencies. They tend to communicate less information about functional qualities and emphasise material artefacts (or the materiality of the city) for its symbolic loading. The logic behind this idea is that "rooted" materiality gives competitive advantages in a "space of flows" (images of cities, information about them) because of its (relative) immobility.

A strong tendency towards homogenisation and convergence in the advertising strategies can be observed, both in what is included and excluded from the imaginary created for these purposes—downplaying or silencing problems and portraying only highly selective versions of a place's history.

The creation of new urban landscapes by flag-ship buildings supports this tendency, as the services of very few superstar-architects are used to create the symbolic and material atmospheres desired for creating upscale lifestyle enclaves. The gap between anticipated and preferred living conditions, however, has been revealed in different studies, e.g. by Peter Noller and Klaus Ronneberger (1995). Next to the architecture of superlatives, more subtle ways can be found by renaming places, or by theming urban landscape from a selection of "premixed design packages that reproduce pre-existing urban forms," as Boyer (1992) describes it (p. 184; cit. from Griffith (1989)). (Re)arrangements of people and social goods found in architectural drawings showing the intended "users" and trying to locate the virtual building in its later environment may lead to homogenising pictorial representations of buildings not even built yet by the use of templates provided within the software used during the design process (Löw 2003). This thesis can be extended to visual representations of an actual built environment, the city, in electronic media in the context of professional production of images for place-promotion purposes.

From a critical point of view, place-marketing has been targeted because of its ideological effects, its highly speculative nature, and the socially regressive consequences. The criticism of its ideological bias is rooted in the virtue of the idea itself: the manipulation of meanings and perceptions in order to suggest specific prearranged ensembles of people and social goods said to be specific to the promoted place for the individual's production of space.

There is, of course, a tension between the desired effects and the way the addressed local publics perceive the strategies developed by the city's authorities, making any simplistic assumptions of cause-action impossible: Given the possibility of different "readings" from the local public, it is nowadays even easier for individual actors or marginalised groups to address electronic image campaigns, showing their rejection of the official portrayal, and to make their own interpretation of the places' history visible,[1] even if this includes showing the opposite of what official image campaigns try to do: to make the city look good.

A shimmering example of that conflict can be found online: Halle is a quite old city with a remarkable history in (higher) education and fine arts, known for its reform university during the Enlightenment. It is also known for the environmental problems caused by a huge chemical industry located nearby—and an increasing rate of unemployment caused by the decline of that industry after the Wall came down.

The conflicts arising between the official representation of the city (showing cultural and historic sites on virtual tours: www.halle.de) and a group of six people targeting this representation in quite cynical ways, starts with the name of the city's "different" representation, connecting the city's name Halle with a phonetically similar one, Hoelle, meaning hell (www.hoelle.de).

Starting with pictures of incivilities, desolated buildings, and characterising the city's problems as one of shrinkage, the website shows a counter announcing the estimated number of citizens, but going backwards, extrapolating that the last citizen will have left in 11959 days due to a decline of nine citizens per day. It is no wonder that the city has tried several times to shut down this website, though it has had only temporary success.

Given the uncertainty of place-marketing, it is reasonable to limit these risks by re-using concepts that seemed to be effective elsewhere—leading to the homogenisation of media campaigns and to pictorial representations of cities using very similar visual methods. This logic of careful competition may seem reasonable at first, avoiding spending (public) money on speculative promotion strategies when it could be very well used elsewhere, but it is compromised by a deep internal contradiction:

In a globalising world, with the importance of being noticed, cities need to stress their specificity on the one hand, while being careful in doing so on the other because of the highly speculative nature of place-marketing, allowing only slight changes from the path other cities seemed to have walked successfully. They find themselves between the poles of an *imperative for differentiation* and an *imperative for uniformity* (Griffith 1989).

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1 Cf. Escobar (2001) trying to leave the dichotomizing debate on the local and the global behind by introducing "concepts that are useful for ascertaining the supraplace effects of place-based politics, such as network and glocality" (p. 142) and empowering the defence of place-based identities and practices in contexts of globalization.

## Theoretical conceptualisations of identity and place

In the same context of globalisation that is said to have an intrinsic potential of homogenising images of places, they themselves are contemplated with different importance both theoretically in the discourse as well as practically in everyday life. Abstract connections between specific places, highly net-worked cities constitute powers of a different scale and quality, the global cities, on the one hand, while others disappear from the scene, forming the hinterworlds (Taylor 2001).

Theoretical conceptualisations of place often refer to four interplaying phenomena: to *non-material ones* as atmosphere, meanings, feelings, or memories of experiences specific to places, to *activities*, to the *social environment*, and to *materiality*[2] in situ (models of: Relph 1976, Canter 1997 with an emphasis on materiality, action, experience, and scale, Agnew 1987).

Place identity can then be understood as the person's socialisation with the physical world, which is an intrinsic characteristic of a general socialisation process, not as two opposing or non-related processes.[3]

Peter Gerlach (1997) describes an empirical study of spatially related processes of identity formation conducted in Berlin. Profiling the constitution of individual identities in relation to spatial contexts, he identifies three different levels of complexity of people's spatial appropriation, identifying spatial appraisal patterns as playing a key role in the process of an emerging identification with a place.

Doreen Massey (1994) warns about the misleading potential of common-sensical conceptions of place that can result in even reactionary conclusions—especially when thinking about place and identity in spatial terms of territorial boundaries naturalising the complex processes of building and establishing spatial links to a blood-and-soil theorem. She suggests a "progressive sense of place" that considers places as networked intersections, characteristic because of its local intrinsic specificity as well as its links in different spatial scales.

Her idea harmonises with the concept of space Martina Löw (2001) has elaborated, and which is the theoretical framework for the analysis presented: By conceptualizing space as a relational setting of human beings and social things with the power of structuring social behaviour, while at the same time being structured and modified itself by perception and action, Löw found a new way of thinking about space. The sociology of space goes beyond the

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2    Hidalgo/Hernández (2001) stress the importance of analysing them in conjunction with each other since most studies about attachment to place(s) have only considered the social environment at a spatial scale and concept of neighbourhood only.

3    Cf. Twigger-Rosss/Uzzell (1996) for details on their critiques about this separation of a socialisation process.

dualism of absolute versus relativistic definitions of space (space as a container; space as constructed in the human mind only) and differentiates between two primary processes—synthesis and spacing, both recursive and interwoven, representing the two dimensions of space: structure and agency. Places are simultaneously the sources and the intention of the constituting processes: Meanings and attributes are attached to places by spatial links: Elements and people found in situ are synthesised along with perceptions of the materiality, memories, thoughts, and feelings according to their significance for the individual actor—interwoven with placing oneself in the situation in relation to the rearranged elements found there.

As a consequence, a new methodical design was developed to be able to capture specific fragments of this highly complex and perpetuating process—dealing with the inscription of meaning to places by establishing meaningful connections ("links") between elements found in situ, every day experiences, memories, ideas, and prearranged images—for analytical purposes.

## Methodical and methodological issues

Reconsidering methodical issues related to the reconstruction of the individual, subjective "image of the city" (Lynch 1965), a wide range of visual methods such as video documentary, ethnographical description of visited places, and mental maps is applicable. Kevin Lynch used the latter one combined with interviews and observation of places in his prominent five-year study of Boston, Jersey City, and Los Angeles in the 1960s, identifying five key elements shaping the spatial mental representation of a city: paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks.

Due to the methodical uncertainties involved in using mental maps or sketch maps as empirical data,[4] the crucial element of the reconstruction process is to achieve a visualisation based on the individual actors' mental image of the city, which includes pictorial definitions of urban space significant for identity formation next to narrative representations (interviews) of the city.[5]

Visual representations of cities are of course an important discourse in architecture, arts, and geography and have become more important in other dis-

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4  Mental maps, however, suffer from reliability issues and are quite problematic to analyse, since tracing contortions between the city-map and the drawn sketch map as a material representation of the internal mental map to underlying causes is highly vague (Downs/Stea 1982; May, 1992). Thomas Sieverts (1997) argues similarly and urgently recommends review of the literature from other involved disciplines as well, especially the psychology of perception.

5  Dietrich Hartmann (1989) identified three main techniques of narrative description of cities: the list, the map, and the imaginary walking tour (p. 80)—differentiated by their spatial knowledge.

ciplines over the last years, e.g. informatics and computer science. Their interests lie in the realisation of digital, visual representations of actual cities and the simulation of vital functions provided within them.

There are a number of ways to realise digital representations on the Internet, ranging from complex rendering approaches based on the geometric data of buildings to the use of panoramic scenes from a static viewpoint.

The approach used in this study is based on a network of photos derived from the actual town, an interactive collage with links between the pictorial representations of actual places. It was intended for the creation of digital cities by individual actors, allowing them to share their own experiences moderated visually, or show memorable sights to other people publicly on the Net, allowing the building of digital representations from scratch with the fewest barriers possible – like a grass-roots visualisation of the actor's city (Tanaka/Arikawa 2001).

To analyse subjective images of the city, students were asked to take photos of their town, Darmstadt, and to link them with this software to create an interactive collage.

Linking the pictures is done by identifying persons, objects, or even parts of the picture itself on at least another one: The corresponding areas of the photo are chosen by the actor and then linked according to the persons or objects they both have in common—or that should be considered as belonging to each other (symbolic loading).
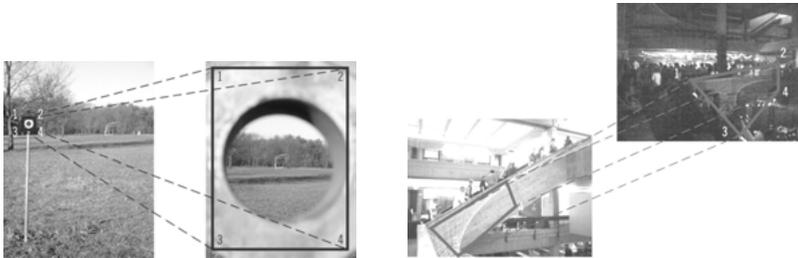


*Figure 2 a/b: Linking corresponding areas*
*2a) detaillisation purpose, 2b) shift of atmosphere*
*(both taken from empirical basis, second collage presented). © Sergej Stoetzer*

The links between the pictures are spatial relations, attached with meaning by the actors' selection (of what to link and in which ways).

Following the links, the photos will be crossfaded, allowing the impression of walking through the collage, or the city, just by choosing the next among the linked pictures. The possibilities of navigating and exploring this digital city are framed by the structure of the collage itself, by the shape of the network emerging from the links between the pictures.

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The task given to the students as participants explicitly dealt with the specificity of place and the need for a kind of serial photography, allowing easier linking afterwards. Similar to film-making, they had to prepare a storyboard beforehand to sharpen the idea of what to show of "their Darmstadt" for its digital representation. Considering the complex possibilities of overlapping constructions of space, the chosen topic was anticipated while the serial photography took place, assuring that the range of choices—which elements between different pictures could be chosen for the collage later to fit the topic—would be narrowed down while being at the specific place taking pictures. This instant selection at the "place of action" is a methodological trick to keep influences (e.g. atmospheres, conflicting or overlapping spaces) on this process place- and time-specific, meaning that the subsequent linking only "mechanically" reproduces the selection processes that took place in the city's realm, adding no further complexity to the production of space.

In order to be able to compare the levels of analysis between the *reconstruction* of the actor's image of the city based on the visual data (photos, collage) and the *actor's own* description of that visual representation and its intended effects, an interview was conducted after the photos were taken and the intention (the "storyboard") was requested in writing. Triangulating the pictures taken by the students with the collage and the interview itself is now possible.

Analysis of the webpage is done on three levels, starting with *formal arrangements* and *contents*. In the *final step*, content and formal analyses are cross-referenced, identifying the support or lowering of intended meaning(s) and structure.

In the following, that comparism will be narrowed down to the image of Darmstadt as a city of science, an official title that was granted to Darmstadt by the Ministry of the Interior of the state Hessen in 1997. The official website of the city devotes one navigational reference to Darmstadt being a city of science, listing the research centres located in the city, as well a the research carried out in local enterprises. Interestingly, the students are excluded from this conceptualisation, they are not perceived by the local public or the press in this context—notwithstanding their contribution to a city of science as revealed by a recent study from Beate Krais and Maja Suderland (2004)—just the university is mentioned, of course, among the other research centres. It will therefore be interesting to find out what references students draw from this concept of their city.

## Examples from the empirical base of the study

The two portraits of Darmstadt that are introduced in the next passage have the following in common: First, Darmstadt was attributed with negative imaginations, like "ugly city" or the buildings were described as "architectonic malformation"[6], but as time passed this attitude changed.

Instead of using the interactive collages themselves, an overview of them will be used, generated by extracting the linkage information. This overview is static, but gives significant insight into the structural conceptualisation and uses a graphic representation that is energy-minimized by placing a "virtual" spring between the photos so that, by iteration, an arrangement can be found that allows minimal overlap between pictures and links. Even pictures excluded from links with the other ones can be identified, showing what was included in the collage as well as what was excluded from the original material.

Starting with the first collage, five segments can be identified, representing different themes and paths connected to each other by one picture in the middle, a photomontage that looks like a postcard. The starting pictures of each of these five walks through Darmstadt's imaginary space are situated here.



1. Labour and internment camp
2. "Kavalleriesand-Kasernen"
3. Formerly private bank
   ("Bank für Handel und Industrie")
4. Houses and courtyards
   at the Magdalenenstraße
5. Residential Castle

*Figure 3: Collage from empirical base; generated overview. © Sergej Stoetzer*

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6   Quoted from the interview with F.O. (with reference to the first collage; line 180).

The labour and internment camp was located on the property of the Telekom's research centre directly after WWII (by Allied forces), and fragments of it, like the old gatehouse with the main entrance, still exist, but usually do not get noticed, even by people who have worked there for ten or more years, like the student taking these pictures.

The second theme shows a view of a barracks square in the same area as the internment camp, the Kavalleriesand-Kasernen. The original picture was taken after the war and the participant tried to relocate the exact position from which the old photo was taken, trying to show the relationship of tension between similarities and changes that occurred over the decades.

The first two motifs have a very close relationship to the biographical background of the student, who had worked at these locations for about a decade before studying again. They represent the main idea of this collage, identifying places from which old pictures were taken and trying to show what remained, was altered, vanished, or which new elements appeared on the scene—inspired by a publication doing just that and evoking a first interest in the rest of the city, not just the place of work.

The third tour shows a formerly private Bank (to 1932; built 1873-1875), the "Bank für Handel und Industrie." It is located quite close to the inner city, next to a former railway station that was relocated to its present location in 1912. The roof was damaged during WWII and two storeys were added afterwards, with very little architectural sensitivity—thus the student's accusation: The building is protected as an architectural monument, but the reconstruction of at least the façade could have been made better to be fair to the building's architectural and aesthetic roots.

The houses and courtyards at the Magdalenenstraße were chosen because their old fabric is still intact. The old half-timbered houses created a specific flair that could be (at least partly) preserved.

The Residential Castle, along with the university, constitutes the second main biographical reference: the place of study. Similar to the motive before, the castle's courtyard is shown, too, as well as references to the underlying theme of similarity/change and references to destruction caused by war (and buildings in the post-war period): A single house was discovered close to the university that still shows signs of another building that must have been next to it, but was destroyed by the bombing of the city in September 1944.

Engaged with pictures of pre-war Darmstadt, the city's history holds great potential for explaining what was perceived as "architectural sins," leading to a more forgiving judgement of the city's present appearance: The formerly nice-looking city with a lot of Jugendstil buildings was nearly completely destroyed on the 11th and 12th of September 1944, making rapid rebuilding necessary after the war. The buildings of the post-war period were perceived as sterile, but knowing the city's history lead to the reinterpretation of Darm-

stadt's outer appearance, the victimising of the city by historical circumstances beyond its influence in times of global conflict.

The second collage consists of three main topics: the private sector with the shared flat, or student's residence, leisure time activities and, the university itself. The latter can be differentiated into five subtopics:
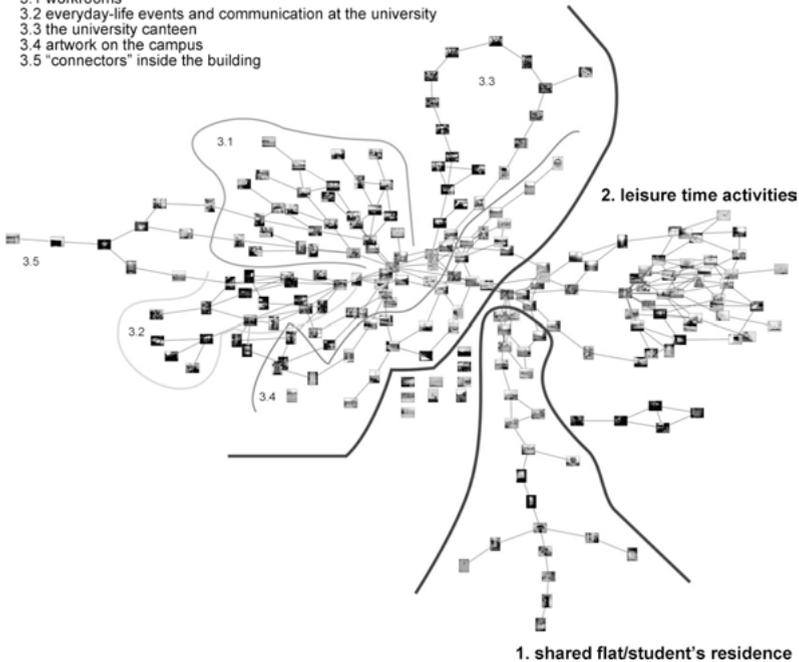


*Figure 4: Second Collage. © Sergej Stoetzer*

The collage begins with the exit from the private sector to one of the centres of the collage, an aerial picture, allowing the observer to choose between the two other main topics: the university or leisure.

The right part of the collage is about leisure activities, especially sports at the university's stadium. It can be reached from the other topics by aerial pictures and photos of a schematic map showing the different buildings at the campus. The importance of this place is due to the events taking place there, like an ironically-named doddery-triathlon with ten people working together to overcome the distance intended for one. In connection with this Olympic spirit, the people who meet there and activities with friends are what are important and load this place with meaning by peers, action, and archaic symbols. Another interesting aspect is the use of photos taken at different times of

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the same place, but with a different timescale: While the photo tour took place in winter, some of the important "ensembles" for the participant's production of space (and ascription of a specific meaning to this place) were missing: the peers and friends gathering around him there are substituted by using pictures where they are present.

The last five identifiable themes are grouped around the third main topic, "university." Starting with the two most complex ones, working and partying at the same location, there are very interesting descriptions of place-attributed informal rules concerning both working rooms and events inside university life: The students' workrooms are highly hierarchically ordered, with the best and most wanted places occupied by more advanced students, who spend most of their time there. Time, as a resource, has to be invested on a long-term basis to improve one's own situation.

Communicational functions inside that building are very important and are provided by a coffee shop and places intended for assembly. Even the material of the building, concrete, plays an important role, providing people with durable walls to which one can nail posters or attach different kinds of artwork, including graffiti or mosaics. In this respect, the material of the building provides communicational functions, serving as a platform for presenting ideas, exchanging them, and—technically speaking—working as a distribution machine with the corridors, elevators, and stairwells serving as connectors between different places. A cluster of pictures takes these connections as a topic. The canteen serves as a communication platform, too.

As a counterweight to the atmosphere of work and study, parties change the atmosphere by decoration, including different DJs for separate rooms and visual projections. This atmosphere provides a specific quality of freedom: the freedom to be able to do things that are very close to being illegal (just concerning safety issues) without anybody asking questions on the one hand, and on the other knowing that without responsible behaviour this freedom would vanish very soon. There is a very interesting contrast here between the highly organised way workplaces have to be appropriated by students and the freedom to organise events.

The subtopic connecting the two great poles of university and leisure in the overview of the collage is artwork. It can be found on the campus and even next to the student residence. The artwork shown in the collage ranges from huge installations (the linear house) to very tiny graffiti or mosaic patterns. For the student constructing this collage, art symbolically loads a place with meaning by inviting the observer to discover meanings and links to other places, people, or times—seeking traces other people have left behind. The presence of others is characteristic of a place. To acquire a place then means to institutionalise the perception of space at this specific place in a way that the self is perceived (by the person as well as by others) to be one "legiti-

mate" element of the constitution process. Identity, as belonging to certain groups and places, is inscribed this way by institutionalising the process of the production of space specific to places.

Darmstadt, as a city of science, is addressed in both collages by references to the university as well as to a research centre outside the academic world. In the interviews this concept of a city of science was questioned with answers ranging from pride and identification (referring to national ranking concerning research centres in and outside academia, where Darmstadt occupies the third top place) to criticism, since this town has more to offer.

The analysis of the collages so far indicates three main visual representational techniques, addressing different levels of the process of identity-formation in urban space:

The *first technique, overview,* is a result of an unfamiliar way of orientation in the city's space, like the way the collages would be *without* these vantage points, allowing one to gain any sense of direction from the perspective of street-level *only*. Brenda Yeoh (2001: 457) explains postcolonialism next to its more known, tangible conception as a conceptual frame of reference "to destabilize dominant discourses in the metropolitan west," revealing assumptions about perception and orientation in the city (of the West).

Transferring this to purposes of orientation in Japanese urban space (leaving the Eurocentric perspective), streets seldom have names and navigation in the city is done by using some landmarks for a rough sense of direction, then depending on traffic lights, pedestrian overpasses, hospitals, schools, and other easily identifiable buildings. The intended way to build a digital city with the approach used here visualises just that: the way a certain path through the city would look like from the perspective of street-level. This would enhance the recognition of the observer actually visiting the places, preventing him from getting lost, if not helping him grow accustomed, to this kind of navigating. These collages can indeed be found almost solely with reference to the Asian region: hotels showing their anticipated customers the way from the train station, historic and religious monuments offering virtual explorations supporting an easier finding of one's way around actually visiting the site, or people visualising their neighbourhood, house, or holiday trips.

Caricaturing the other perspective used in the collages, one could say that people rooted in "Western culture" can imagine the city only after looking at a map showing them the bird's-eye view in a highly schematic and abstract way.

Combining both views in the collages looks like a workaround at first, considering the taken-for-granted assumptions about how urban space is explored. Having to work with a tool (the software was developed in Japan) that is not intended for these "overview" purposes, using this technique anyway

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illustrates the deeply rooted cultural bias in exploring urban space—influencing the constitution of urban identities by culturally different approaches of navigation and orientation in urban space ("needed" overview in Western cultures).[7]

The *structural arrangement* of the collage explains the highly selective choice of what to show of the city's diversity. The meanings of certain places depend on the context of the actor's intention exploring urban space, exposing the influence of context of action for the choice of places to "interact" with.

Moderating the *shift(s) in the temporal order* of the collages by integrating pictorial representations from different times using variable time-scales, the places' dependency on time is stated concerning its atmosphere and the possibilities of attaching meanings to it by integrating people and materiality.

## Summary

Focussing these provisional findings, the following cornerstones of identity-formation relating to places are available:

Concurrent to a three-pole triangular model of meaning of place suggested by Per Gustafson (2001), the corner-stones of identity-formation are Self, Others, and Environment, with the possibility of mapping meanings of place between the three poles instead of assigning them to one as a sole category. Other important aspects are the scales of place and time, the cultural context, and the structure of attributed meanings.

Condensing these observations, Gustafson's model of mapping meanings of places can be regarded as what Martina Löw (2001) describes as production of space, consisting of two processes of perception (synthesis) and action (spacing). Synthesis includes the perception of self, environment, and others, depending on the symbolic and material factors in situ, the habitus of the acting person(s), the structural in- and exclusions. Synthesis and spacing are interwoven and referenced against each other.

The production of space regarding place-based identity is therefore highly dynamic, with each of the triad's components underlying the axes of time, the specificity of the places included (which changes due to the context the places are visited), and the knowledge about the cultural connotation (Figure 5). This leaves time as an ambiguous influencing factor. Mediating this triad on the one hand, while being one of the resources used on the other hand, it at least reassures what Norbert Elias (1994) said about space and time: being the two main concepts of reference.

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7   Thomas Sieverts (1997) is thinking about ways to integrate a schematic overview for orientation purposes, while keeping the myth of the urban labyrinthine alive, making it a task for urban and regional planning.
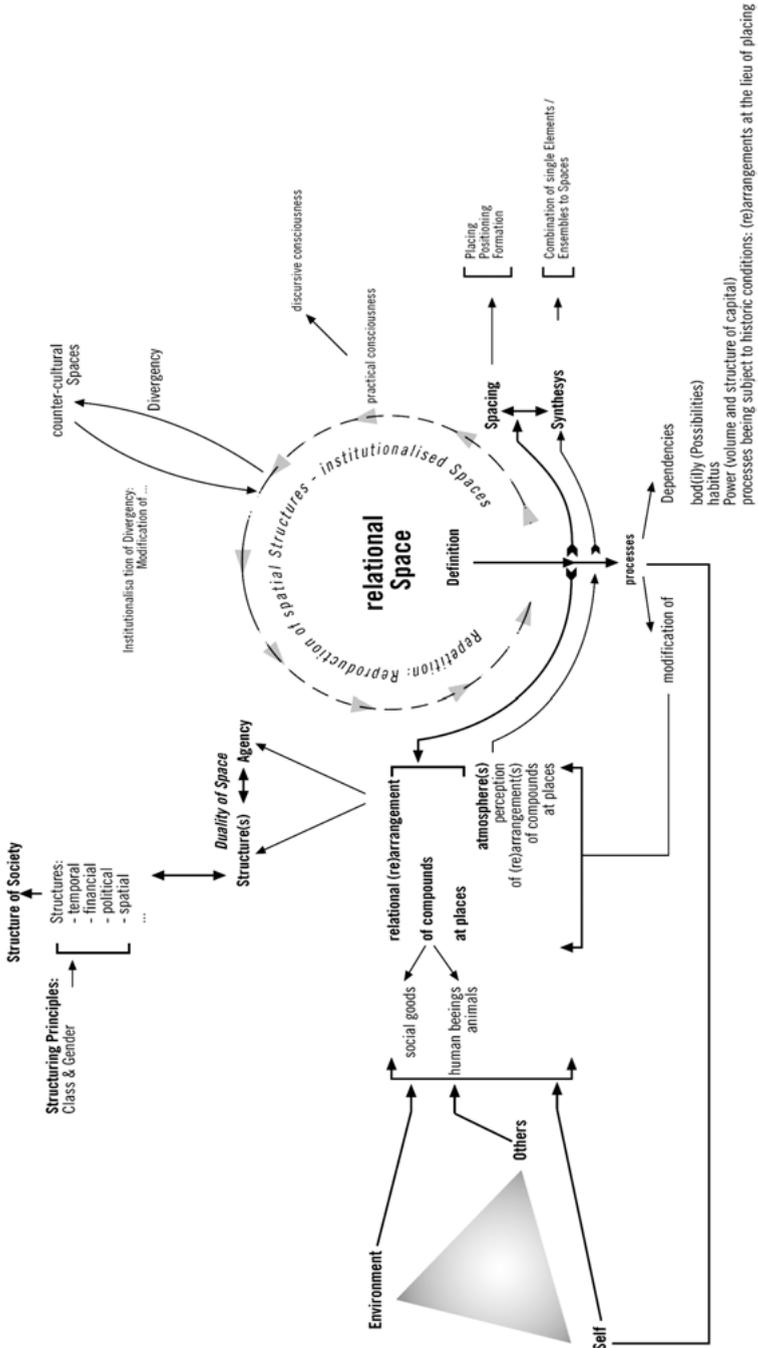
*Figure 5: Model of Löw's relational space—attached with Gustaffsons tripolar model of place-based identity. © Sergej Stoetzer*

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Building a collage as a network of photos of specific places, the students participating were able to build their subjective image of the city as a digital one existing in medial space—like the official image production using ordinary webpages. Showing fragments of the city's space with specific importance, these iconographics (semantic network of photographic essences of places) can be analysed in order to examine the processes in which identity is bound to places by repetition, memory, imagination, and social networks. Time and the efforts for the production of space(s), as well as the place itself, artefacts, and practises are the resources in this process.

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