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## **GENIUS LOCI: CITY PLACE IMMUNITY**

### **ABSTRACT**

Complex social changes, mobility, progressive information and communication technological advancement, as global achievements of the modern era, lead to the transformation of space at the local level and change of the identity patterns of a place. Starting from the problem of loss of identity features of a place or inability to identify them in the contemporary context, through an extensive review of theoretical sources, the paper seeks to understand the meaning of both the spirit of place and the spirit of time. The model presented in the paper as a synthesis of theoretical research and the preferred approach to the resuscitation of the spirit of place, introduces new layers of meaning and interpretation of the spirit of place in a modern context, and is based on three key principles: assimilation, acculturation and adaptation.

**Key words:** *Genius loci, Genius saeculi, non-place, assimilation, acculturation, adaptation*

## **GENIUS LOCI: ИМУНИТЕТ ГРАДСКОГ ПРОСТОРА**

### **РЕЗИМЕ**

Сложене друштвене промјене, мобилност, прогресивни информационо-комуникациони и технолошки напредак као глобалне тековине савременог доба, производе трансформацију простора локално и мијењају идентитетске обрасце мјеста. Полазећи од проблема губитка идентитетских одлика мјеста или немогућности њихове идентификације у савременом контексту, у раду се кроз опсежан преглед теоријских извора настоји разумјети значење духа мјеста и духа времена. Модел који рад представља као синтезу теоријских истраживања и пожељан приступ за реанимацију духа мјеста уноси нове слојеве у значење и тумачење духа мјеста у савременом контексту, а темељи се на три кључна принципа: асимилацији, акултурацији и адаптацији.

**Кључне ријечи:** *Genius Loci, Genius saeculi, не-мјесто, асимилација, акултурација, адаптација*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A question of the identity of space and city, that is, *the spirit of place* in the context of achieved contemporary level of civilization development is increasingly problematized and it is necessary to examine it, not only in relation to the hereditary theory, but also in relation to the real context in which space occurs and the spirit of place disappears or survives. Modern urban theory is increasingly dealing with the complexities of the new world created as a result of political, social and economic transformation. In a research focused on *the spirit of place* and *spirit of time*, Luisa Bravo highlights a number of changes in the economic and social domain that have led to this turnaround, producing a different picture of the city: globalisation, 'new economy', redefinition of the mode of production and the labour market, new forms of marginalisation and exclusion, interweaving citizens (tourists, visitors – suburban, provincial, metropolitan), change of daily routine and rhythm of life of the working population, social mobility, transformation of a family, aging of population, an increase in the level of education, increased demand of culture, and a strong social individualisation[1].

These changes are directly related to the identity of a particular place and the identity of the population that inhabits it. Places that are 'inserted' in the contemporary context have difficulties with the identification of their spirit. Interpretation of the original values of a place and the human need for identity and recognition of sense of being in the surrounding world reveals the intimate relationship between a man and space. Architecture in a traditional view appears as a tool by means of which is achieved communication between humans and nature, where it is necessary to keep a balance between the desires and constraints, but also to establish a connection between the spiritual and material world. Due to the complex social and spatial changes there was a break with traditional notions of purpose and meaning of architecture, and its role in the creation of the identity of place.

Understanding *the spirit of place* and *the spirit of time* is the basic starting point in the research by which preferred models of transformation of the place and its spirit are defined. The aim of the research is to identify the determinants of the spirit of place that endured over time, which may be geographical, functional, symbolic or cultural. Recognition and maintenance of values of the spirit of place are crucial for the maintenance of the viability, sustainability and resilience of the place and its culture. This paper introduces the concept of historical, modernist and contemporary city, through which the complex 'processes' of transformation of the city and the attitude of society towards the preservation of the identity and spirit of place are shown. The paper represents the model as a synthesis of theoretical research of *genius loci* by Christian Norberg-Schulz and the preferred approach for the resuscitation of the spirit of place and brings a new layer in the understanding of all of the above-mentioned relationships, taking into account the traditions and contemporary trends, and also integrating the three key principles of assimilation, acculturation and adaptation defined by Michel de Coster.

## 2. GENIUS LOCI

Latin phrase *Genius Loci* (in Serbian *Duh mjesta*) is a Roman concept which is brought into relation with the ancient belief according to which each "independent" being has its spirit – a guardian angel who follows you "from the cradle to the grave", defining the character or essence and at the same time giving life not only to people, but also places. In theory, opinions are divided and there are many misconceptions when it comes to the spirit of

place. Namely, some people link the spirit of place only to the social class, others include nature, while some are concerned only with its historical significance. However, by reviewing the theoretical interpretation of the stratification and complexity of the spirit of place, it is possible to approach its meaning and to emphasise its importance at the local and global level.

The roots of the idea and meaning of the spirit of place are found in the work of Christian Norberg-Schulz. In his book *Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* he introduced the concept of environment with a specific and clear architectural structure, which is related to a place, route and domain and, as such, manages the spirit of place. The individual and their existence in the world are manifested and become clear through the architectural space [2]. The world around us does not exist without a man, because it is created through the human perception, and a two-way process between a man and his environment forms its image [3]. *Genius Loci*, according to Schulz, is characterised as complex and contradictory, but at the same time this character has a meaningful flow [2].

No two people are alike, nor two houses or cities. A man creates his space according to his own image and experience [2], thereby he develops his identity, wherein he always establishes a strong correlation with the environment, at the same time developing a vision that all people are to some extent independent fractions of much larger unit. According to Heidegger “a man and space cannot be separated. Space is neither an external object nor an inner experience. We have no man and space, separated from one another ... “ [4:3]. The human “I”, and the space that he creates, is affected by heritage, education, comprehension, age, and then the economic conditions, social constraints and other factors from the outside world [4, 5].

Built area, as a stage of human activity, is an extension of the natural system and its adapting to the changing needs of a user [3]. According to Schulz, these artificial spaces are connected to nature in three basic ways. The first – visualization: a man tries to understand nature more precisely and therefore copies what he sees; the second – addition: a man adds the given situation what it lacks, such as a shelter from the rain; the third – symbolization: translating experiential meaning into another medium in order to release the meaning of immediate situation and turn it into a cultural context [2]. The existential purpose of architecture is to turn an empty space into a place, i.e. to reveal the ‘meaning’, potentially present in a given environment [5]. It can be said that architecture is a bridge between the spiritual nature of a man and the nature that surrounds him. In his major work *Bauen, Wohnen, Denken*, Martin Heidegger gives the conception of human existence, which itself is spacious. According to him, being, dwelling, thinking equals to building, dwelling, thinking [4]. By claiming that a man as an individual is inseparable from the context in which he is settled, Heidegger revives the architectural principle *Genius Loci* [5].

Talking about the contextual architecture, Janjušević claims: “Concrete pillar will not be regarded in the same way in the Mediterranean and in Scandinavia. Also, a chair in your dining room will receive new guise in the house of a neighbour, without changing any physical characteristics or its identity” [5:5]. Continuity in construction and culture is created in relation to the spirit of place, and an example named by Heidegger says that a tribute to parents’ house is not paid by building the same one half-century later, but by accepting the certain elements that affect the life of a man. If each symbolic, existential or another meaning, which man spontaneously adopts, were inherited in this manner, the spirit of place would not lose its essence.

Alongside many theorists, the theme of the spirit of a place has been addressed by the various institutions, and one of the most prominent in this field is the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). At the 16th General Assembly of ICOMOS held in Quebec in 2008 with the theme “Finding the spirit of place”, a Declaration on the Preservation of the Spirit of Place was adopted, by which the spirit of place is seen as a unity of *spirit* and *place*, material and immaterial. Acting in synergy they produce values, emotions and give meaning to a place and veil it in mystery. Spirit of place is a pluralistic, dynamic concept, which incorporates the multiple characteristics and meanings, which is variable over time and managed by different social groups and processes [6]. This dynamic approach and attitude to the spirit of place, as defined by ICOMOS, is more suited to today’s globalized world characterized by pluralistic society, people’s mobility (flow of people) at the global and local level, and mixture of different cultures and influences. As such, the spirit of place “offers a fuller understanding of the living and, at the same time, permanent character of monuments, sites and cultural landscapes” [6:1].

Previously presented ideas about the relation between a man and the environment are important for the analysis of flow and transformation of the (spirit of) place within modern cities. The question is what new layers and levels of environment are available today and whether they are seen as obstacles and constraints or as a priority on the way to return to the original values and coexistence of a man and the environment, i.e. to the resuscitation of the spirit of place. This can be explained by the existence of “non-place” or by acculturation and assimilation processes as phenomena from the domain of man’s understanding of other people and the environment, which will be discussed later.

### 3. CITY IN GENIUS SAECULI

The spirit of place and its survival is in close connection with the space and time, too. This chapter introduces the concept of *Genius saeculi* and establishes relations with the meaning of the spirit of place in three development stages and models that are recognised as historical, modernist and contemporary city. The aim is to highlight the dynamic forms of transformation of space and place through time and their impact on the creation, survival or disappearance of the spirit of place.

A man’s relationship to a place, and the relationship between a place and space are contained in dwelling [4]. Dwelling in this context can be interpreted as a process that introduces time as an input variable. The spirit of place and its changes over time are defined by the new concept and meaning of the spirit of time – *Genius saeculi*. It can be said that the relationship between space and time is continuous, not only as a fact of the existence of the third and fourth dimension of reality (space-time continuum), but also in terms of two main parameters that determine the orientation of a man in the world. Space and time are the main factors that make up the identity of a man, an object or a place [1].

Historical city represents the part of the built environment, from which we received the past as inheritance. It is a rooted face of culture, the result of superiority over the centuries and the best expression of cultural identity. When living in the present, a historic city can be proposed as a sustainable model, able to collect and contain all the instances of the modern world, to transform and express them through the continuity of architectural language

inherited from the past [1]. This also tells a lot about 'immunity' of a historic city – the way in which it absorbs impacts and accepts what it essentially needs, and at the same time ensures its survival and resists the coming changes. Historical city remains a great attraction and fascination, and yet it is up-to-date and ready to respond to the needs of today's generation, and it also lives as an excluded place in a timeless universe, able to present its own spirit of place. The spirit is what survives under constantly changing circumstances, what makes an indelible character of the city and the urban landscape through different phenomena, and is part of a unique and distinctive experience. A resident of the historic city establishes a sense of individual identity – the spirit – on the collective themes that visitors recognize in representative buildings and architectural heritage [1].

On the other hand, due to the social and political changes brought by the modernism, the spirit of place is degraded, and the value of the historic city is undermined. Although the intentions of the modernism were extremely "honourable" and directed to the welfare of society, and although in some respects they have brought positive attitudes, the identity have been gradually lost in the shadow of new ideology. Modernist architecture approach, according to which "the house is the machine for living" [7:107], was reflected in the unified architecture at global and local level, where the architecture almost completely ignores the place from which it was made. Dull idea of modernism in architecture, involved the existing space, divided into modules and converted into an international style [4, 5]. Contextual architecture and its mediating role in the communication of a man and the environment [3] is absent in modernism, and the movement itself has been one of the first steps by which traditional bond with a place was destroyed. Planning of the modern city was unable to convey the spirit of traditional values of a place, and it resulted in producing peripheral isolated enclaves. Problem of modernist periphery is in the fact that these parts of the city were designed and built as quite different from those of the city centre. Uncontrolled and unplanned growth of urban area –*urban sprawl* [8], which is designed in two different forms of the diffuse city and urbanized village, created a morphologically and architecturally homogeneous periphery [1]. These are mostly residential areas with the same social or ethnic groups that renounced public and private functions and activities that characterise the traditional city [1]. In contrast to modernist one, a historic or traditional city, as it was described by Jane Jacobs, is significant because of mixed functions and human interaction with the environment and a city. The emergence of the modern city brings something completely opposite to traditional values – it is not competent to answer the old needs, it is: efficient, functional, productive, approachable and above all unable to address the new questions, needs and desires, regarding either the existing criteria or new ones, which is to be a beautiful, usable, secure, sustainable and resilient city [9, 1]. Modernism crisis in its ideals, instruments and representations shows the inability to define 'the city', which is continued to the post-modern or contemporary universe, wherein the city is researched with inefficient and imprecise knowledge [1].

In the context of the foregoing, the definition of the modern city is additionally complicated. Namely, the modern city is faced with complex changes that are the result of civilization development and the impact that a man makes on the environment [10]. The changes that occur are often contradictory and while on the one hand, they seem to provide benefits to the society and community, on the other hand they cause damage. For example, while some cities grow and develop due to the inflow of the population, the other ones shrink and lose their viability due to the outflow [10]. But one of the important determinants of the

modern era, which affects the design of a city, is the progressive development and application of information and communication technologies.

The impact of information and communication technology on the design of cities and towns is an issue that is now increasingly dealt with by many scholars and researchers. New public space associated with the phenomenon of globalization and technological progress is emerging in the contemporary city. There are numerous patterns that are recognized in the life of modern people and places, which differ from the inherited or known: acceleration of time and space; multiple presence; deterioration in personal relations and spatial flow; new information and communication systems; experiences that are not related to the location, but the image; forms of rapid and visual, not physical skills; the loss of the old forms of solidarity and knowledge (family, community) and the birth of new (distance and independence); different and non-fixed social places.

All the above listed represent scenarios of individuality, where there is no longer a social dimension; it is the “non-place of urban area” [11], as defined by Melvin Webber. A place is the space in which the form, function and meaning are contained within the physical contiguity. Non-place is the space whose form, function and meaning are coherent with the form, function and meaning of the other non-places, outside individual physical contiguity [12]. Globalisation is responsible for the conversion of places to non-places. At the moment when a particular place over a long period of time is visited by many people from different cities of the world, it is undoubtedly transformed into a non-place. That is, users of the space create non-places from places subconsciously, and then a non-place determines by its own rules the relationship between users and a place, which is quite similar to the relationship they have with all the other places [12]. This does not mean that ‘the spirit of place’ is the same in all places, nor calls into question its disappearance. Hereby, the place does not lose anything from its true values, on the contrary, its values become universal, placed in the context of globalization, and also become available and comprehensible to all users simultaneously. The essence of the transformation of a place into a non-place is in changing attitude of the user towards the space [13]. A user of non-place is always ‘under the contract’ with non-place. He resides in the space of non-place under certain rules. A user is instructed how to comply with these rules in order that both a user and space can function properly. Thus, the user is always focused on the present moment. The ambiance of non-place releases users from the need to identify themselves with the past and encourages them to live in the future [14]. The interpretation is connected to creating in the present and gives room for understanding and improving the interpretation of the spirit of place in the spirit of time.

Marco Cenzatti and Margaret Crawford [15] similarly interpret deviation from traditional notion of public space and distinguish ‘quasi-public space’ and ‘public quasi-space’. According to Cenzatti and Crawford, ‘quasi-public spaces’ are shopping malls, stations, airports and convention centres – these are private places, but open to public use and available to anyone who has a credit card or can buy and spend money. They express a new form of social space, something between public and private with the powerful mechanism of inclusion and often similar to squares. “Public quasi-spaces” are results of new communication networks, email, fax, modem, telephone, television and have no relation between the physical place and social experience: they create a new way of seeing the city that does not represent a static organization of physical objects around one or more centres but the organization of networks, often invisible, able to multiply the ability to communicate and interact remotely and to eliminate the need for a physical place. They represent a new form of place created by

media and increasingly sophisticated technologies that promote national cultural service and contribute to the loss of all the opportunities offered by the interaction and conflicts that generate social growth [15].

#### 4. TOWARDS THE RESUSCITATION OF THE SPIRIT OF PLACE IN THE SPIRIT OF TIME

Architecture that occurs today is rooted in the past and reaches into the future. It is the material, sensuous and spiritual phenomenon. People change, but their thoughts and feelings remain the same. A place is formed with logic and mind, but also with deep feelings. Consciously or unconsciously, intuitively, a man who forms his own space reveals his own desires, hopes, faith and values. Values are the most powerful imperative for action. They help to make the world in order. We compare the world in which we really exist with feelings determined by our spiritual dimension of authenticity and full existence. Awareness of the uniqueness of place is deepened by knowledge of its traditions and memory, and also includes a vision of the future that reveals its potential. The spirit of place unites the past, the present and the future, creates a state of equilibrium between the nature and culture [16].

According to Ranko Radovic, architecture is a joyful and bright shadow of human life, because it is not built on ideals but on the nature of people [5]. Architectural work links the visible and invisible – it immediately makes the invisible tangible and durable in people's lives [16]. The desire to make a better world real has its impact on the creation of space and turns architecture into a virtual gallery of feelings. Sustainability of the spirit of place requires a skilful combination of the material and spiritual, the physical and metaphysical. One could say that the spirit of place is what the sustainability triad of economy, society and ecology has in its core, establishing equilibrium between all aspects and keeping them in a tightly connected system.

On the other hand, the spirit of time requires constant updating of collective themes, public spaces, places for activities and facilities that are attributed to historical forms by the people who live and inhabit these places, as well as introducing new meanings, new values, new forms of social life [1]. Ranko Radovic, who was dealing with vernacular architecture, sought to achieve a balance and communication between traditional values, modernist and contemporary trends in architecture, i.e. to introduce the concept of the spirit of time as a connecting one [17]. In the context of reflection and conceptualization of the spirit of time, recognized as important is the concept of "the world of everyday life", which was introduced by Edmund Husserl in his work *"The Crisis of European Science and Transcendental Phenomenology,"* which says: "[...] The world of our everyday life consists of concrete phenomena. It consists of people, animals, flowers, trees and forests, rocks, land, wood and water, cities, streets and houses, doors, windows and furniture. It also consists of the sun, moon and stars, airborne clouds, night and day and the changing of seasons. But also, it contains less tangible phenomena such as feelings. This is 'given' to us – this is the "content" of our existence." [18:15]. This concept stresses what this research wants to emphasize, which is the spirit of the present. Today's practice of space production shows the designs and plans for the future, neglecting the present moment and the perception of the current environment. Mankind has for centuries been focused on 'providing a better future', doing so unconsciously, without the presence and interest in enjoying the present and hoping for a



better tomorrow. In order that the world 'returns' to what is happening now, it is necessary to focus attention on the present, and to keep the images of the past and the future at the level of understanding but not to identify with them. The identity inevitably arises on the foundations of the past, but the question is whether it is possible to live well and to create in the illusion of time which is not "here and now".

A series of the said views is about how time helps on the path to awakening and understanding the real world and how they clearly approach the importance of setting the spirit of place in a dimension where history, present and future are interweaving, in order to ensure quality of life of everyday man within the collective to which he belongs.

Searching for the range (place) within which the spirit of place and the spirit of time may be problematized, a stronghold is found in Scandurra's point of view. Specifically, it argues that it is just in the public space, the physical place of human relationship between individuals, that the modern city can try to define its identity, because it is the place where everybody can exercise the experience of autonomy and uniqueness and at the same time of the community, the local and the global, diversity, comparison, hybridisation, knowledge, contamination, socialization by speaking, listening, games, rules, transgression, recognition. Therefore, the place where each individual can *be*, where democracy and freedom are put into practice, where the values of mankind are elevated [19].

However, provided that the technology and all that it entails in the modern world could be utilized to strengthen the immunity of urban space and the spirit of place, Scandurra's claims could be brought into question. Spirit of time in the context of the historic city and the approach that includes respect for tradition as the backbone of sustainability and resilience of the spirit of place, is one of the possible and potentially tested methods of preservation. But if we take into account migration, mixture of different people, culture and the communication and cultural contact, which have been brought along with the technology, it is possible to consider different approaches that will connect tradition with emerging technological era. Places of high quality, such as Scandurra's exalted values of humanity, can find their essence in the assimilation of the virtual and physical world, where virtual 'empty space' gives the ability of expression because it is not 'overdefined' and does not limit the creativity of the individual or collective [19].

How to design places that can generate affection and satisfy the desire for collective life in a complex global society that tends to equalize the differences and negates the forms of solidarity because it encourages isolation and loneliness? It is obviously not possible to establish places that are accessible to everyone, to all the existing human differences since the exclusion would be inevitable. The paradigm of contemporary urban theory is to reverse the traditional concept of public space, conceived as a place where people gather to discuss the facts of the city, towards the ideal of political life based on dialogue and reasoning, and consider the urban place as a place of comparison between different people with the same rights, wherein everybody feel free and safe in communication with others[1].

It is necessary to look at the city and its spirit of place through new eyes, because the question is whether you can see and think differently from the way you think and see, but it is necessary to continue to see and think [20]. This means you need to start a true epistemological revolution, which aims to establish new knowledge able to understand our inner world, which consists of our thinking and our feeling — the spirit of time that leads us in reflecting these thoughts and feelings in the historic built environment. A parameter is no longer just a man – an individual, as defined by traditional, normative and universalistic

models of humanism, but the people, different populations living together in a created city, focused on what they really do and are, not on who they should be [1]. It is imperative to create a city thinking of the people, to have people as a reference point, entering the different humanity that makes the contemporary social world, in order to respond to the growing desire to live in the city and enjoy it, to have 'the right to the city', as Lefever has put it [21].

Thus, the historic city could be the instrument of a new genesis, the element that sets the order within the complexity, because it can collect and contain all the instances of the modern world in consolidated urban core. *Genius saeculi* requires updating the content of public spaces and collective themes, which are read and attributed to historical forms by the people who live and inhabit these places, as well as introducing new meanings, new values, and new forms of exploitation. Historical city is able to translate this need and express it through the continuity of the architectural language, inherited from the past, and through the values of community identity, according to sustainable model that has already shown its effectiveness throughout the history, by adapting and creating a layer upon layer, century after century. It has the ability to create a spatial unity, in which different layers communicate through the interconnection of public spaces or they are updated and adapted to the new forms of social life, forming evolved narrative environment, converted into a new ethical, functional and aesthetic dimension [1]. The historic city is able to awaken a sense of belonging to the world of modern man, which he has built himself and which is the purest reflection of his social evolution. It should be noted that the world that the history passed on us is a long process – the result which must be repeatedly modified by introducing new variables, where the only constant has always been a man. And only through a comprehensive and clear understanding of the human real world, it is possible to return to the work on city and recognize the importance and value of all things. Speaking of transformations over time Castells states: "for the moment, between losing everything I previously knew and buying everything I learned later, I was able to accept in one thought the world as it was and the world as it might have been, and I realized that a unique system holds everything" [22].

Certainly, historical city has the advantage of preserving the spirit of place, but what about the cities without history, cities that were formed on the edge, on the outskirts or the hinterland? Social circumstances that caused the transformation of the urban matrix and relationships between people, led to changes that are different and cannot be universal for each area and environment. This work presents understanding the importance of the spirit of place, but it also seeks to answer some complex questions concerning the local contextual conditions, the environment and the relationship of a man toward it. The following chapters will provide insight into a new way of thinking and the attempt to interpolate different studies, in order that the spirit of place and the spirit of time reconcile and offer possibilities for the preservation of identity based on the spiritual foundations of tradition drawn into all favourable instances of contemporary meaning.

#### 4.1. BOUNDARIES

Boundary as a concept can be seen as the territorial framework which is characterized by physical space that has its coverage and builds on other areas. However, looking at the boundary as a parameter of the spirit of place and its framework of existence or activity, it is necessary to pose a question whether every place has the spirit (of place)? Different authors address this issue and try to reach the answer by comparing the environment and using

sensitive methods to examine the existence of this non-visible phenomenon. Certainly, one can imply that some places have *Genius loci*, while other places lack it. Alternatively, it can be assumed that each environment has its own spirit of place which is ignored or hidden, or that in some areas there is the spirit, but its quality is neutral or even bad. Therefore, it is logical to ask the question where the boundaries of these specific and less specific places are and where the boundary of the spirit of place is [23]. The question is whether there is a clear boundary, where the influence of the spirit of place decreases until it is completely diluted and not noticed at all?

A key factor in this discussion is a man and the civilization he created. For example, if we look at the place that has never been inhabited or has never been manipulated by a man and see how this place is rich in *Genius Loci*, again the question can be posed, whether this place has its qualities without a man as an observer? It also introduces the question whether the spirit of place is a part of the environment which can be noticed by the observer or it is a projection of human values to the place where he dwells? The issue becomes even more complex if we observe the built environment where the human behavioural patterns are interwoven with the environment and form an inseparable part of the spirit of place [23]. One thing is certain and that is that a man and space are inseparable, and that the spirit of place is a sensible thread that is woven into both factors, and which in some way is the product of their interaction. There is no doubt that the environment shapes people, but also people build the environment.

What is the character of common point between the two zones inhabited by different people? The main question is how to define when one place ends and another begins? This might be called the boundary. Boundaries consist of similar aspects, but within a different scale. For example, the boundaries of the built environment consist of floor, wall and ceiling, whereas the landscape has boundaries such as the earth, horizon and sky. Heidegger said: "A boundary is not that at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something begins." Properties of closed borders are therefore defined by openings. It is possible to consider the existence of "good" and "bad" boundaries. Sometimes the boundary is a link between – sometimes it is punctured, disperse, open and that is when it is "good", and sometimes it is the dividing line, and then we can say that it is "almost" unhealthy.

Isis Brooks's essay in the book "*On ethics and the built environment*" begins with notes that "the spirit of place" is more than a clear idea, and then it poses the following questions: Does "the spirit of place" exist everywhere? Is there a boundary? Are there regional spirits of place? What is the role of human beings in this – is the spirit of place a projection of people? (The answers are, respectively, Yes; No clear boundaries; Yes, according to some writers Yes, by others Not). Then he identifies the following range of ideas that are associated with the spirit of place: dwellings of special beings, spirits; energetic fields – spots of intensive energy; authenticity, local speciality, empowerment of ordinary people; the essence or the inside; character – a place appears as it is in its individuality; ecosystem and the way in which natural systems operate together; pantheism or manifestation of God's creation; panpsychism – the idea that all things, even non-living, have their own consciousness or mental characteristics; the health of a place or the property [23].

Taking into account these features of the spirit of place and the framework of its action, it is clear that there is no definition that will precisely make clear where it begins, where it ends

and how it borders with other areas, especially when trying to generalize and take as valid for each particular spatial area.

## 5. 3A MODEL

3A model represents the original theoretic contribution of the paper. It is an approach which consists of three processes that operate in time and space (real and virtual): acculturation, assimilation and adaptation (Figure 1). The model uses the spirit of place as a bond between phenomena of acculturation, assimilation and adaptation. On the basis of the diversity provided by the modern age, what is being pursued is the mode by which traditional and contemporary initiation, which are mainly characterized by technological development and new view of the world, can be linked.

The model is applied to newly created places, places between cities, between history and the future, places that exist here and now, places developed by virtual communication between people who may be located in different parts of the world. Existing historical cities, which have great potential for the preservation of the spirit of place since they are deeply rooted in tradition, whose traces must have remained visible, are not subject to the application of the model 3A. Therefore, the focus is on the interface, inside and outside the spatial coverage defined by natural or administrative boundaries. On a new layer and new mode of communication and the creation of new cultural values that contribute to strengthening the immunity of the spirit of place.

Having understood the idea of place as a determinant of space in a concrete and abstract sense, the knowledge of the spirit itself is being pursued. The spirit of place is delimited and explained in terms of its essence and the problem of boundaries, i.e. the area within which the spirit of place is present, is highlighted. This does not call into question its existence, therefore the concept of 'non-place' is introduced as a possible transition zone, and at the same time it leaves the possibility of blending one spirit of place into another, but in this case the boundaries are not clear.

If a city arises abruptly, without historical roots or spirit of time (it was not developed over a long period of time, nor is it the product of some multicultural influences ...), how the residents, who came from the environment where such spirit dominantly exists, can bring a part of this spirit into a new place where they start a new life? That is, how someone, who lived in a particular city for a long time, who dedicated their time to it, who was educated or employed there, who was influenced by the atmosphere that prevailed in the city, who attended cultural events, and who suddenly comes to a new place and bring all of these memories with them, but cannot recognize neither space nor its spirit, can implement these memories into a new environment? It might be called a sort of blending. Therefore, if the constant visit to a particular place turns it into a non-place, what sort of determinant has the place that has been inhabited abruptly by the people who come from the existing historical context and develop a new city on the foundation of their memories [13]?

If people live in a stimulating environment, which offers the chance for a better life, they are motivated to give their contribution to this environment, in every respect. If the environment in which a man dwells is affirmative, it gets its affirmation in terms of survival and evolution. Spirit of place has the ability to influence on the people by its comprehensiveness. However, more important and understandable are the factors that form the spirit of place. Therefore, on the foundation of the introduced concepts of non-place and

emergence of a new spirit, analysed are the processes of acculturation, assimilation and adaptation, which are the formative basis of the spirit of place, the main generator of space development and the basic building blocks of 3A model.

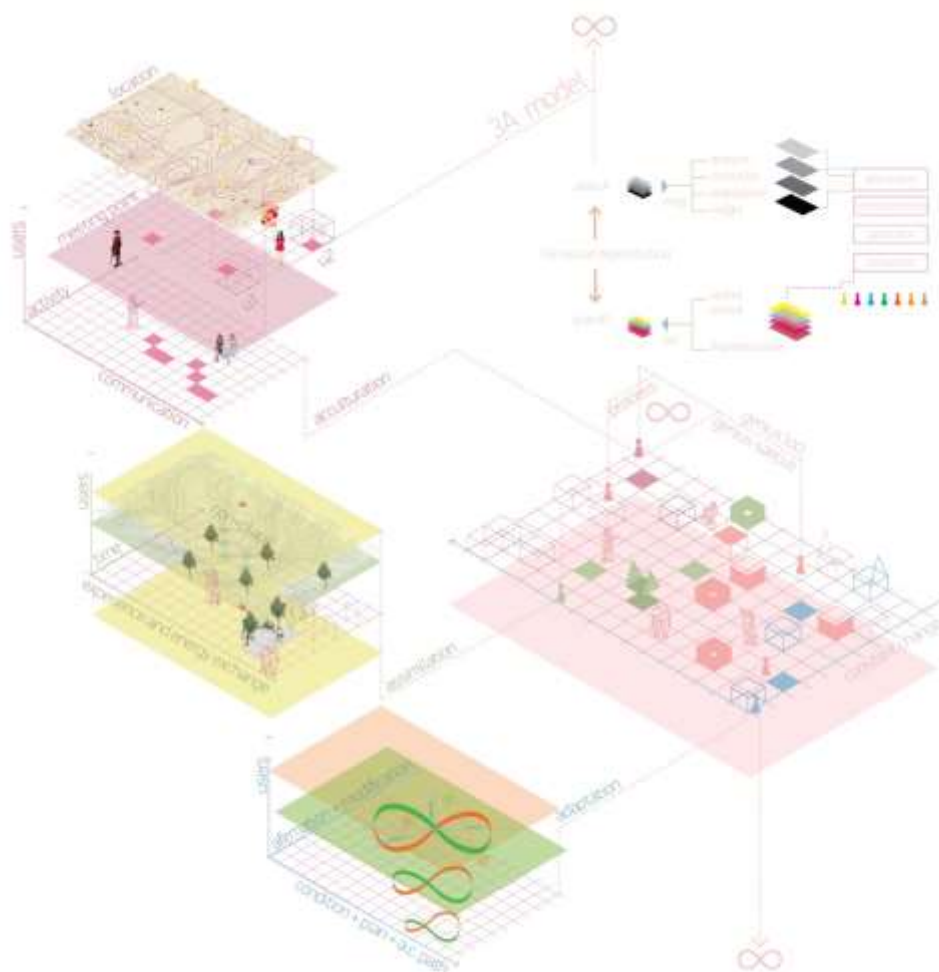


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of 3A model (Source: Dajana Papaz)

### 5.1. ACCULTURATION AND ASSIMILATION

Acculturation as a concept represents a cultural contact, i.e. people bring their cultural characteristics from different parts of the world and in touch with other people they receive something new or they give something of their own. Acculturation is a process that follows the evolution of civilization from its beginning until today. Cultural mix – a result of mixing of different cultures has always preceded the emergence of a new culture. Origin of the word acculturation can be defined as a contact or merge of two or more cultures, and cultural contact is almost synonymous with acculturation. Given that acculturation is a process, it means the result and effects produced by cultural contact [24, 13]. Certainly, “a carrier” of culture is still a man, and in relation to his mobility this process expands or stagnates, thereby globalization and technological development contributed greatly to the spread of this process and thus pointed to its importance.

Acculturation can be viewed through a combination of several civilizations as separate identities as well as through a compound of individuals or groups of individuals. A significant contribution to the study of acculturation gave Michel de Caster who has dealt more with the social relation which arises through cultural transformation, and who has specified six forms: first the contact and then the communication, the period of determining the values or estimates, then full or partial acceptance or rejection, followed by the integration and harmonization of initial dispositions and eventually the assimilation [25]. This process can be characterized as very significant in terms of forming and strengthening the cultural principles, and joining multiple different views of the world that contribute to a broader perception of the environment and thus provide greater opportunity for solving contemporary problems.

Participants in communication estimate each other and make judgments about whether and how to accept the information, thoughts or opinions they have understood in the communication. Then they determine how they will be integrated into the circumstances which are surrounding them. Integration means determining the relationship to information, thoughts or opinions which the participant of communication has encountered. The last phase of the process implies that the participant accepts the information, thoughts or opinions that he did not have before the start of the acculturation process [25, 13]. The contact puts participants in a new context; a new context is the first step to the formation of a new culture or acculturated old space [24, 13]. This new-old space is a mixture of several spatial layers, which now represent a new dimension and have a new definition of identity.

Assimilation as a final step in the process of acculturation is very important and can be seen as a separate process that contributes to the creation of a new place. "Assimilation looks to the future, not to the past; applies its alchemy mainly in the context of youth and pliable next generation, but mostly superficially to the already formed adults who have introduced a double reference frame. Assimilation involves seduction, not only the coercion; detection, not only the loss and twilight; deep conflicts of loyalty and rather existential emergency, not only assimilating with the social pressure and choosing the line of least resistance. It also relates to creative mixtures and unusual hybrids, and not only to the surrender under the terms of dominant core. The processes of assimilation include the inventiveness of human activity created by the need and the gravity of the circumstances. In any event, neither assimilator nor assimilated is a fixed, static category, but permanently unfinished creation with the boring degree of autonomy [26].

Creation as a process is a key segment of life in every respect, particularly when it comes to architecture and creating adequate space for people. Consequently, mixing cultures in the right manner (without violence and acceptance of negative determinants) has always resulted in a new, refreshed dimension that brings changes at the global level and motivates the entire civilization to follow the emerged current and choose the path of intensive progress.

In other words, there are visible and invisible contacts, spacious and virtual, and all of them pursue the same objectives – strengthening the integrity, identity and immunity of the spirit of place; they combine multiple sources into one and then, from the newly created one they send frequencies to the global network system. Undoubtedly, in order to reach the global, one needs to start from the local, because only after getting to know the local context it is possible to know the other one and then pursue their assimilation.

## 5.2. ADAPTATION

Finally, the last element of 3A model is adaptation and adaptive cycle. Taking into account time as a factor, a boundary as territory and non-place as a phenomenon beyond time and space, spirit of place of a particular urban area can be simulated. In comparison to all the concepts explained and their mode of action in space, and focusing on special zone "between cities" it is possible to analyse the possibilities of evolution of a particular city on the foundations of social stratification and outcomes of cultural contact. Each context and environment has its own spirit of place that is being changed due to various factors.

Perhaps the most important factor that should be followed is to identify the reasons of continuous attraction of a particular place that maintains its vitality over time. Places absorb the essential aspects that give them identity. They support their development. These are subtle aspects, emerged in the collective unconscious and must be awoken. However, these are powerful aspects, able to cause profound changes. Concretization gives meaning and significance to a place. If they are adapted to the present time, they can cause attraction and development. Connecting the tangible with the intangible and turning the spirit into a hope, gives a new hope and continuity, adapted to today's needs [11].

As the historical centres represent the identity and affiliation to the values that the community has objectively recognized through the spirit of place, the suburbs are places of dynamics and viability produced by rapid communication means and the interrelationship between the place and its functions [27]. Technology, as an expression of the contemporary spirit of time overrides the interdependence of the various parts of a territory: it intercepts the territorial dynamics of aggregation, particularly in suburbs, with the communication system that have evolved from a social fabric, based on the non-conventional forms of public activity. Therefore, the public space of the historical city encounters virtual public space of the periphery, by transferring the values from morphologically defined space to the virtual one that is socially alive and active, where the heritage can act as an element of the value [27].

Technology, collection of population's participation and sharing activities, from the physical to the virtual world, discovers new possibilities for presenting contemporary urban complexity, linking the real public city with ever-changing spirit of place and time. Placing these elements side by side on parametric maps can provide a tool designed to detect a self-generated forms produced by urban appropriation, in which the hidden or forgotten aspects of the city associated with the legacy can be analysed and documented by the citizens themselves. Thus, the modern city can be understood as an extended network of public spaces, where the *Genius Loci* and *Genius Saeculi* act as technologically interconnected and interdependent variables, and where one can affect the other in a continuum of values and meanings through space and time [27].

The aim of 3A model is to potentially identify processes of a certain area in the context of acculturation, assimilation and adaptation, which would contribute to the interpretation, comprehension and preservation of the spirit of place. The model in its essence is a concept that acts in the space, and either directly or indirectly refers to the relationship between a user of space and the (non)built environment.

The formation of "3A" model, in addition to three main processes, involves the initiator in the space, double stimulus that starts the processes between users and within the space itself. Small scale interventions, in the form of 'dot spatial design' (urban acupuncture) would

act as initiators for starting “3A” model, contribute to the creation of discrete and useful spatial stimuli that would gradually and successively strengthen immunity of built environment, encourage processes of “3A” model and thus correct the entire system within the spirit of place of the observed coverage.

Joint processes A + A + A, define the model of resuscitation of the spirit of place of suburbs, which establishes the continuity of building and the balance between the natural and built environment, provides users with high-quality environment and contributes to the creation of a sustainable and resilient structure. “3A” model would potentially contribute to developing and strengthening of the immunity of inhabited areas, by assimilating all newly applied influences and creating spatial stimuli that encourage communication between people, cultural contacts and other activities. In this manner, the spirit of place would be conveniently aimed, and the entire process would be reversible; progress would be made with the help of the spirit of place, the spirit of place would be produced by progress, they would complement each other, because a man builds the environment, and the environment builds a man.

Adaptation as a key process of merging the existing and new state stands out in the domain of the theory of sustainability and resilience, while acculturation and assimilation are simultaneous and constantly changing processes whose intensity depends on the demographic structure, the built environment, the level of publicity and privacy, etc.

Review of the main determinants of the spirit of place in relation to these processes can define the basic criteria to analyse each identical or similar spatial coverage. Spirit of place is mostly “recognized” where people reside, stay and introduce their patterns of behaviour and activity to the environment, and provided that the suburb is a typical territory with predominantly residential function, potentials clearly stand out at the spatial and social context. The ongoing process within the model depends on the degree of communication and user participation in joint activities which initiate the use of experiential frameworks in everyday relations. The aim is to develop the concept for the purposes of identifying the spirit of place or forming a new spirit of place where there is none, through the analysis of theoretical assumptions of phenomenology that deals with the physical and spiritual realms of space and architecture. Also, to leave room for improvement of the concept and problem approach, and thus enable the application to different polygons, not only on the periphery; also, to understand the strengths and weaknesses of all present spatial and social elements and try to integrate them into potentially viable and resilient structure, which has the opportunity to adapt and modify over time its spirit of place, the identity and immunity, while capturing the essence – the backbone of its inception.

The purpose of architecture is to know the essence of context, to use discovered traces or clues and their symbolic representation: the rain-roof, wind-wall, sun-blind. Users of space would be provided with the guidelines or freedom to express oneself in an area which in turn could provide high-quality and stimulating environment that leads to communication, cultural exchange and deposition of new layers of the spirit of place. This approach to solving the problem of the spirit of place would initially bring a new-old approach to creating space that allows users to express themselves to the maximum, while respecting the needs of other users. Guidelines and rules would have the character of adaptability, flexibility or elasticity in terms of spatial relationships, encouraging the movement of users and routing the design to a human dimension, and thus giving the ability to each user to express themselves simultaneously.



## 6. CONCLUSION

*Genius Loci* has an important role in terms of sustainability and resilience, uniting the past, the future and the present, creating a state of balance between nature and culture. Its role is also important in terms of the evolution of the urban fabric, since it is a strong character and identity that make the city able to cope with the coming challenges and to overcome them by preserving rooted principles. Identity protects the immunity. Is there a person who has visited a special place without sensing its spirit and feeling touched? The feeling may be based on perception, memory, affection and evaluation. But these references need observers. In other words, there is a 'scene' and 'audience', and thus the spirit of place depends on the observer. Therefore, understanding is individual, some people can perceive it, but others cannot, and they particularly find it difficult to explain it. What would certainly be a challenge of the modern world is reconciliation of the spirit of place, *Genius loci*, with the spirit of time, *Genius saeculi*, acceptance of historical values through their preservation and combination in the present moment through sustainable model. Also, continuity is very important, perhaps crucial when it comes to the overall process to which the modern world is exposed, as well as collaborative cooperation that can successfully prevent the disappearance or even complete loss of the identity – the spirit of place.

Immunity as a base and the ability of *Genius Loci* to withstand unexpected changes, be it the social or natural uncertainties, can be built by the affirmation of situation as it is, its reconciliation with all the positive and negative instances, and adaptation to the spirit of the present time of *Genius saeculi*. In order to protect and preserve the spirit of place, in fact, means to concretize its essence in every new historical context, including the era of globalization and technological development which is on the stage at the moment.

In relation to the theoretical background, proposed is a potential new model (Figure 1) that might contribute to the interpretation, comprehension and preservation of the spirit of place, and it is based on acculturation, assimilation and adaptation as processes that space and civilization undergo due to cultural mixing. The paper presents the phenomenon of non-place as a determinant of space between cities, that based on the simultaneous presence and absence of native traditional principles act in the present and gives the user an opportunity for the full expression of the creative potential of the 'here and now'.

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