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# New Urban Identities

An International Conference of the "Cross-Disciplinary Urban Space" Network

19-20 June 2018

University of Florence – Department of Architecture

Call for papers

## Organizers:

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## Scientific committee:

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Identity is a fundamental yet variously interpreted theoretical concept in a number of fields, including social theory, anthropology, psychology, geography, philosophy, literary studies, and politics. Cultural theory has developed increasingly sophisticated interpretations of identity and how it is constructed in diverse spheres, positing that it can be, for instance, hybrid (Bhabha), or even questioning the very use of the term itself (Nealon). Thus, it can be said that 'urban identity' does not exist as such: it is a psychological and social construct. In fact, the concept of 'urban identity' hides a complex and multifaceted set of phenomena. Interaction with one's lived environment fundamentally contributes to determining individual and collective self-perception. This happens in diverse ways, hence the need



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to refer to urban identities in the plural. Indeed, as theorists have noted, we embody multiple identities, and a 'solitarist' approach to identity should be avoided, as it reduces us to a single, defining label (Sen).

Urban identities, furthermore, can also be artificially constructed by cultural and political elites. Sometimes they promote unifying and exclusionary visions of the relationship between space and society; sometimes they are reworked with the aim of connecting cities to the global flows of capital. Urban identities generally consist of narrations that have their own structure and that make various uses of past and present histories. Although they may be constructed artificially, they are never fixed and they continuously change across time. In an increasingly heterogeneous society, urban identities can also express various forms of social, political, cultural and ethnic conflict. Finally, individual and collective identities are an essential part of our way of inhabiting and living a city. Gender, sexuality, age, (dis)ability, race, class and religion, among other factors, all form part of our urban identities and our modes of inhabiting and shaping city space.

As part of the 'Cross-disciplinary Approaches to Urban Space' network, this conference aims to investigate the ways in which different disciplines contribute to unveiling and investigating new urban identities, in areas ranging from architecture, urban planning, literature, film studies, geography, history, linguistics, philosophy, art history, landscape studies, sociology, theatre studies, anthropology, among others.

Topics of investigation could include:

- Urban identity and urban/architectural design
- Hegemonic urban identities
- Identity and spaces of inclusion/exclusion
- Conflictual urban identities
- Political and architectural reworkings of urban identities
- Urban and metropolitan identities and resurgent nationalisms
- Migrant urban identities
- Children and youth identities in the city
- Identity and emotional geographies of the city
- Queering urban identities
- Mobility, (dis)ability and urban identities
- Gender and identity in the urban sphere
- Belonging, identity and alterity and the city



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- Identity, memory and urban space
- Urban landscape identity

**GOALS AND OUTCOMES** The ‘New Urban Identities’ Conference is conceived as an intensive workshop, and presenters will be expected to attend and participate throughout the duration of the conference. The Conference has four major goals:

1. To advance the debate on new urban identities from different disciplinary perspectives, taking into account their mutual influence;
2. To explore theoretical perspectives, as well as theoretically-informed case studies on new urban identities in a comparative context,
3. To enhance critical awareness about the complex and problematic (political, social, economic, cultural etc.) effects of architecture and urban design on identity;
4. To extend the network of scholars interested in investigating urban space from different disciplinary perspectives, as already seen in the various events, seminars and forthcoming publications of the “Crossdisciplinary Urban Space” Network.

#### **SUBMISSION PROCESS:**

The organizers invite submissions for 20-minute presentations to be delivered in English. Please send a 300-word abstract, contact details and a brief bio by **Thursday, 1 February 2018** to the conference email address [conference@crossdisciplinaryurbanspace.com](mailto:conference@crossdisciplinaryurbanspace.com)

Conference web site: <http://crossdisciplinaryurbanspace.com/>

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/crossdisciplinaryurbanspace/>

The organizers anticipate that a peer-reviewed collection of selected essays, to be published with an academic press, will result from the conference.