ABSTRACT: In the struggle between globalization and localization, place identity, which originates from the redevelopment of the public places and the obscurity of authentic sense of place, emerges as a central concern of both the inhabitants and the tourists. This research aims to examine the specific aspects of city elements, such as the cultural heritages and the new designs in the historical context, may contribute to place identity in Tainan’s Anping district, the most important historical settlement in Taiwan. Based on the contexturism, a wider discussion of ‘identity’ is developed. In relation to the preferences of the cultural heritages and of the new designs which permit individual interpretations, such an identity is capable of reflecting the authenticity of the city and fitting into the diversity of new modernity. It was concluded that although there are discrepancies between the inhabitants and the tourists, there are still overlapped regions which are large enough to serve as an operational interface between the existing context and the new built forms.

KEYWORDS: identity, context, sense of place, preference.

1 INTRODUCTION

At the turn of the 21st century, a lot of cities are reconstructing the urban space to confront the issues of globalization. In this context, historical cities emerge form a driving force in the interest of the new images for these cities. The new image of city implies not only the acceptance of the existing context, but also the specific changes to fit in the fashion, and perhaps the expectation to the future.

The new image of city is related ot the topic of ‘place identity’ (see Lynch, 1960; Vidler, 1978; Rossi, 1982; Rowe & Koetter, 1978; Colquhoun, 1981). As pointed out by Norberg-Schulz (1980), place identity is frequently the kind of narrative of the genius loci. Recently, this view of place identity also emphasizes by Hauge (2004:7) who stated that the place identity are ‘formed through milieus of feelings, meanings, experiences, memories and actions that, while ultimately personal, are substantially filtered through social structures and fostered through socialization.

This research aims to examine the specific aspects of city elements, the cultural heritages and the new designs, at a practical scale for local provision and spatial planning. It began with a questionnaire survey in an attempt to understand the preference of the cultural heritages and of the new designs which permit individual interpretations of the sense of the evolving Anping. The questionnaire concentrates in two parts: to interpret people’s concern about the city during the change, and to understand the difference in reading the cultural heritages and the new designs. The consequence is capable of reflecting the authenticity of the Anping city and fitting into the diversity of new modernity.

2 THE RESEARCH

2.1 The Background of Anping

The study site was selected in Tainan’s Anping district that had grown since the late 17th century in the tides of western colonialism (Figure 1). It is the first Western settlement in Taiwan which was built by the Dutch in 1624, and was transformed continuously during the sovereignty changes of Ming, Ching and the subsequent Japanese. However, the city has been left out from the process of modernization during the last three decades since World War II. After the city government has completed the overall planning for the National Anping Harbor Historic Park, many redevelopment projects, such as the recreational wharf,
shipping center, and the waterfront park, were carried out around the historical settlement for the local economy and the ecological preservation. Consequently, the city has combined the preserved historical settlement with important monuments from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries and some new design schemes developed in the last three years.

2.2 Questionnaire

The research started in September 2005. A questionnaire survey was addressed to two main categories of users in the historical settlement: (1) inhabitants; and (2) tourists. The study was carried out by a total of 123 interviews, among which 66 were with inhabitants and 57 with tourists.

All samples are selected from the official tourist guide of the city of Anping and the recent publications focusing on new design and the international design competition.

The questionnaire provides the interviewees with a list of 11 cultural heritages and innovative public open spaces (Figure 2). Six of them are important elements in the historical settlement: Anping Forty (Figure 2-1), Tienhou Temple (Figure 2-3), Yenping Street (First Street in Taiwan) (Figure 2-5), Tait & Co. (Figure 2-7), Erkunshen Fortress (Eternal Golden Castle) (Figure 2-9), Seaside Park (Figure 2-11). Five of them represent new design schemes developed in the last three years: Anping Tree House (Figure 2-2), Anping Recreational Park (Figure 2-4), Anping Oyster Ash Kiln and its buildings (Figure 2-6), Tainan Canal (Figure 2-8), and Anping Fishing Port (Figure 2-10).

Interviews were carried out in different places in Anping, as follows.

♦ For inhabitants, the interviews took place in the square of Kaitai Tienhou Temple, marketplace and the community park.
♦ For tourists, the interviews took place in front of the Anping Fort and the Yenping Street.

The questionnaire has two versions (inhabitant/tourists). Each version contains three questions relating to the sense of space, the character of space, and the meaning of space. There are:

♦ Which of the listed samples can represent the city and give you a sense of Anping? (choose one only)
♦ Which of the listed samples are your favorite places in Anping? (multiple choices)
♦ For inhabitant, which of the listed samples you would show to your friends when they come for visiting? (multiple choices)
♦ For tourists, which of the listed samples you would go when you come to Anping? (multiple choices)
3 THE FINDING

3.1 The sense of Anping

Regarding the question of ‘the sense of Anping’, the cultural heritage appears to play an important role in symbolizing Anping. New design is insignificant to representing the city. The percentages of choices made by both groups of interviewees are presented graphically in Figure 15. The Anping Fort (56% by tourists, and 52% by inhabitant) is the top choice to representing Anping, and the Yenping Street (19% by tourists, and 27% by inhabitant) comes in the second. All interviewees appeared to have a similar attitude to select cultural heritages as more effective elements in creating a sense of place. Fewer answers were associated with the new design. The percentages fall dramatically for all the new design of the list, ranging from a minimum of 0% to a maximum of 3.42%. In addition, it seems that the cognition of new design decreases with age.

![Figure 3](image1.png)

**Figure 3** Percentage of choices that elements provide a sense of Anping.

3.2 Preference of cultural heritage and new design

Turning to the question regarding to the preference of cultural heritage and new design, the choices made by both groups of interviewees are presented in Figure 16. Cultural heritage still remains to be a critical element of interviewers’ preference. It is easy to tell the difference in the preferences between inhabitants and tourists directly from the data. There are respectively 33.3% inhabitants selected the Anping Fort and 32.1% tourists selected Yenping Street as their most favorite place. The second to the forth best choices by inhabitants are, respectively, the Seaside Park (20.2%), the Yenping Street (18.2%), and the Anping Fishing Port (10.1%). By contrast, the corresponding choices by tourists are the Anping Fort (22.2%), the Anping Tree House (19.8%), and the Anping Fishing Port (18.5%).

![Figure 4](image2.png)

**Figure 4** Percentage of choices that the place of people like.

3.3 Meaning of cultural heritage and new design

Regarding the third question of ‘the place wish to show’ and ‘the place wish to go’, the meanings of cultural heritage and new design to inhabitants and to visitors are easy to tell (see Figure 17). More precisely, the percentage distribution of the inhabitant’s choices is similar to that of the first question, and the
percentage distribution of the visitor’s choices is similar to that of the second question. The cultural heritage still remains to be a critical element to interviewers’ choices. However, new design becomes an option to inhabitants (21%) and tourists (32%). The different ideas about the places between the inhabitant and the tourist can be read off directly from the hierarchy of their selections. The best choice to this question is similar to that to the second question. To the inhabitants the top three choices are all cultural heritages, which has the same hierarchy as the answer to the question about the sense of place. The choices made by the tourists, on the other hand, also created a relatively even distribution between cultural site and new design, like the situation in the previous question.

Figure 5 Percentage of choices that the site of inhabitant having great dignity and the site of visitor want to visit again.

4 CONCLUSION

The results of the questionnaire in Anping indicate that cultural heritage and new design may work as place identity generators. There is also some evidence that the preference of cultural heritage or new design is the inter-link between the living experience and the traditional culture with meanings. As Lynch pointed out (1960:1), “every citizen has had long association with some part of city, and his images soaked memories and meanings”.

To the inhabitant, historical heritage is just like an ideal element occupied a privileged place in the vision of city. The historical heritage, seen as the essence of environmental development, also provides a framework for inhabitant’s daily functions. On the contrary, to the tourists, historical heritage is just a part of factors that attract them to come to the city. However, the new design which is notated by different functions and architectural forms is satisfactory to the tourists. Thus, new design not only provides the new image of the historical settlement for the tourists, but also enhances the city identity in the local–global interplay.

In the changing context, the historical city is trying to find a proper way to deal with the new design to integrate with the existing urban context. It could be a process of transforming. It may give the city more verity which is not significant enough to replace the local identities. Regarding the outcome of the research, we may still have two suggestions for the changing Anping. Firstly, although there are discrepancies between the inhabitant and the tourist, both cultural heritage and new design can serve as an operational interface between the local and the global. Secondly, such an interface should be process-oriented, focusing on not only how the city element has been integrated into the historical city, but the understanding of the logic and the meaning of the new city forms.

REFERENCES