

# Unfolding the Socio-Spatial Dimensions of Third Space in a Contemporary Milieu

Upendra Vinay Joshi<sup>1\*</sup>, Abhishek Kumar<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Anant National University, Ahmedabad, India*

<sup>2</sup> *Army Institute of Management, Kolkata, India*

Received 2024-01-03; accepted 2024-10-03

## Keywords

Behaviour, cognition, emotion, socio-spatial, third space.

## Abstract

There has been growing recognition of the significant role played by the term “third space” in the overall development of urban contemporary society. It has been a subject of critical analysis across multiple disciplines and intellectual traditions. The objective of this research is to enhance understanding of the formation of an urban third space in daily urban life by investigating people’s perceptions of it. This study establishes the essential requirement for a third space by using a coffeehouse as an example to show how these spaces fulfil contemporary societal needs. It concludes by demonstrating the importance of socio-spatial characteristics in the development of urban third spaces based on inferential statistics. This study offers a new understanding of the complexities associated with the formation of a third space, emphasising the importance of interdependence between society and space in the context of contemporary environments.

## Introduction

Space is the foundation of geography, social sciences, humanities, architecture, and environmental psychology. Thinkers from different intellectual traditions have developed theoretical interpretations of space, which are shaped by the socio-cultural context of the time. Existing traditions influence spatial thinking unless new ones emerge. This transitional practice of adopting new thinking, which in [1] is called a ‘paradigm shift’, is the by-product of generational transitions. Although, the primary goal of these traditions has been to clarify the part that the concept of space plays in the social, cultural, political, and economic facets of society.

Looking through the construction of space in daily discourse is crucial to having a sense of the modern perspective on space. The interdisciplinary exchange of ideas in current literature helps develop a critical vision of space. Multiple separate yet interconnected interactions can be thought of in urban space studies. Using space and place interchangeably in daily life causes a challenge in using the concepts in a specific circumstance. Initial

conceptualisation of space has been predominantly carried out by geographers, who considered space as an entity that is measurable, objective, and observational. Contrary to other opinions that regarded space as a neutral container, a blank canvas that human activity fills in, one perspective on space favoured physical features imbued with human lived experience [2]. A focus was more on the experiential properties of exploring a world of meaning.

In terms of the relevance of the research, understanding the formation of urban third spaces is crucial in addressing the social and spatial needs of rapidly evolving contemporary cities. As urban environments become denser and more complex, traditional public spaces like parks and squares are often supplemented by informal social hubs, such as cafes, bookshops, and community centres, that serve as ‘third spaces’– neither home nor work but vital sites of social interaction, leisure, and community engagement. This research addresses urban social needs as third spaces play an essential role in fulfilling these needs of urban dwellers. With the rise of remote work, increased mobility, and changing family structures, there is a growing demand for spaces that

\* Corresponding author. E-mail address: upendra.joshi.phd21@anu.edu.in

allow for casual encounters, social mixing, and community building. By investigating people's perceptions, this research highlights how these spaces contribute to the mental well-being, social identity, and sense of belonging in urban communities. Additionally, the study's findings can inform urban planners and designers on how to create and sustain successful third spaces that are responsive to user needs. Understanding the socio-spatial attributes that enhance the attractiveness and usability of third spaces enables designers to craft environments that are inclusive, adaptable, and vibrant. This study also attempts to address the gaps in theory and practice, where the concept of third spaces has been extensively explored in theory, but empirical research on how people perceive and use these spaces in different urban contexts remains limited. This study bridges this gap by linking spatial characteristics with user perceptions, providing a nuanced understanding of the dynamic interaction between people and space. Thus, in continuation of enhancing the understanding of third spaces, this research aims to:

- 1) investigate the socio-spatial dimensions that contribute to the formation of third spaces in contemporary urban environments;
- 2) analyse the role of people's perceptions in shaping and defining the success of these spaces, using coffeehouses as an exemplar;
- 3) highlight the interdependence between societal needs and spatial design in fostering inclusive, multifunctional urban third spaces.

## I. Literature Review

### A. Theorization of Space and Place

As each field has its own way of theorising space and place, Henri Lefebvre's spatial dialectical approach gives the best foundation for studying space and place in a modern urban context where everyday life prevails. According to him, social practices are responsible for the creation of social space [3]. He establishes that social space is a social product but also presents a novel interpretation of space, referring to moments *of the production of space*. These three moments are nothing but three different modes of production of space, famously known as the spatial *triad*. Different kinds of spaces are created, experienced, and expressed through these modes.

Lefebvre claims that one of the key causes of space development is how people use it daily. According to him, a marketplace, shopping centre, street corner, or flat room are unique in their intended usage. Space and user establish a multifaceted interdependence. According to him, ordinary speech notions help define a social space without isolating it. They express and establish a spatial practice because they correspond to a certain usage of

that place [3]. These practices conducted in a particular space denote a particular characteristic of the space. As a result, people come across multiple spaces that are responsible for facilitating the essence of those practices. Henri Lefebvre asserts that specialised works inform their audience about a variety of similarly specialised locations, including public spaces, workplaces, play areas, transit, and leisure [3]. The spatial *triad* idea introduces many viewpoints that are classified as spatial *practice*, *representations of space*, and *representational space*, which exhibit dialectical tendencies through their spatial presence. A dialectical interconnection refers to the social reality created as a consequence of change. A resolution of this contradiction is also binary by nature. It tends to deny or overcome contradiction as well as, at the same time, preserve or transform it to a new level. Lefebvre believes that this process produces social reality in response to a new idea of social spaces in modern society. In this process, he shows how social reality changes from industrial to urban. Lefebvre says that industrialisation-inspired urbanisation is uniform and focuses on capital, labour, and class production. However, in the second part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, daily speech dominated urban construction. Thus, the urban is pure form; it is a location of meeting, gathering, and simultaneity. This form is a focus of attraction and life, but it lacks precise content. It is an abstraction, but the urban is a tangible abstraction connected to the practice, as opposed to a metaphysical substance [4]. A city represents this urban structure where social interactions and practices matter. It allows contemporary social formations to flourish. Thus, urban form is varied. It juxtaposes and transcends things, activities, and relationships. This logic applies to the intricate interaction between space and place.

We can observe many perspectives on place within contemporary culture. This endeavour is by geographers who view the place as a bounded space associated with certain activities and practices. A place represents people's lived experience in a strange space. It provides a sense of belonging and social identity for individuals. According to an empirical perspective, a place is defined in absolute terms as a predominantly self-sufficient assembly of individuals within a defined area (territory) [2]. In contrast to this view, the humanistic approach appreciates aesthetics and emotional attachments. It prefers individualistic beliefs filled with subjectivity. Places are inherently relational and contingent, perceived and interpreted variably by individuals; they are multifaceted, contested, dynamic, and ambiguous rather than static territorial entities [2].

Another perspective stems from a dialectical interconnection between space and place, emphasising the contradiction between spatial forms and scales. Dialectics emphasises process, movement, flow, relationships, and, more specifically, contradiction in order to see change [5]. In this scenario, Marx's *concept of totality* proves to be

instrumental in terms of perceiving contradictions through a comprehensive framework. According to Ollman, each component of a whole is perceived as encompassing all its relationships with other components, including everything that contributes to the entirety [6]. It claims space has many meanings and values. It posits that space is made up of places with diverse values and meanings. One must grasp how distinct areas in a space relate to one another to appreciate their significance. How places hold/relate defines their own character and space as a whole. This perspective only suggests that how things come together becomes a vital part of who they are [7].

This coherence is strengthened by Marx's views on the global capitalist system. As Merrifield [5] mentions, Marx's examination of fixed and circulating capital illustrates space-place dialectics. Marx views capital as circulating and reflecting movement and activity. It progresses through these phases in this procedure. It is posed in a particular aspect, limited to a certain form, in each phase, negating itself as the movement's overall topic. In essence, it turns into fixed capital [5]. Thus, fixed capital is a circular capital demonstrating static form at different times or phases. Adding meanings from different places and connecting them creates space as a whole. Consequently, we need to capture how they are actually forged together in a dialectical unity in order to comprehend the development and modification of space and location [5].

Thus, there have been various schools of thought about space and place that have emerged as the dominating footprints of socio-spatial aspects in a particular period. As a part of the paradigm shift mentioned earlier, these footprints faded, and new ones have arrived. Although a powerful comment sums it all up [2].

## B. Third Space and Spatiality

In continuation with an effort to understand spatial dimensions of third space in a contemporary urban environment, various ideas from post-structuralism and post-modernism can be examined to comprehend spatial characteristics of third space in current urban environments. Michel Foucault sets the context for the third space analysis, followed by Homi Bhabha on cultural hybridity. It continues with Edward Soja's critical post-modern interpretation of space and society, which reflects all the intellectuals' diverse yet interrelated perspectives.

Michel Foucault pioneered an innovative perspective on space and people's habitats. His terms 'utopias' and 'heterotopias' help us understand his space theory. He says utopias are unreal places that demonstrate how the world should be. Although they are rarely visible in daily life, heterotopias are genuine environments. Heterotopia has changed how people view modern institutions like gardens, jails, museums, theatres, libraries, festivals, fairs, and more. Foucault believed that emplacement might explain

heterotopia settings. Emplacement is the placement of areas to accommodate social activities, practices, and situations. These social practices or behaviours are uncommon in the discourse of everyday life and are generally known as '*social disorders*' or '*other behaviours*' in French literature. Thus, Foucault claims heterotopia spaces as *other spaces* that have cultural, functional, political, and symbolic meanings reflecting contemporary society. On the basis of this approach, it can be said that social practices, behaviours, situations, and their spatial contexts are integral.

A collection of guidelines produced by Foucault reveals the concept of otherness in many spatial forms. These principles host heterotopias of deviation, which are defined as those in which individuals are situated and whose behaviour deviates from the average or prescribed norm [8]. Prisons and psychiatric hospitals are heterotopic settings that may accommodate social disorders and other behaviours organically or informally. This heterotopia, according to Foucault, varies with time. Using an example of changing cemetery functions in Western culture, he discusses a heterotopian way of interpreting social change in modern society. The most interesting and relevant to the third space is the heterotopia of multiplicity. It has the ability to juxtapose different areas and emplacements that are incompatible with one another in a single physical location [8]. He uses the example of a garden where vegetation from different parts of the globe is arranged in a single setting. It means the power of heterotopia to arrange oppositions in a strategic manner can be implemented in spatial forms. Another crucial principle is about organising heterotopia across multiple junctures of time. Libraries and museums are the spatial forms that accumulate time indefinitely. According to Dehaene and Cauter [8], these shapes create a comprehensive archive, consolidating all times, epochs, forms, and tastes in a singular place, giving a concept of spatiality a massive and enduring quality. Conversely, heterotopias of festivity are associated with time in its most useless, fleeting, and unstable aspect, and this is in the celebratory mode. Fairs and festivals enact a sense of pleasure and relaxation through temporality and uncertainty. Certainly, we can observe an increasing complexity in spatial forms, which leads our way towards the concept of cultural hybridity by Homi Bhabha, particularly involved in the formation of urban social spaces.

The term '*cultural hybridity*', coined by Bhabha, resonates with Michel Foucault's '*heterogeneity*' in terms of the degree of ambivalence involved in spatial forms. Similar to how his post-colonial predecessors believed that barriers between us and them, as well as between oneself and others, build communities and identities. According to Bhabha, identity hybridisation results from the breaking down of borders to create social spaces. He describes hybridity, the intermediary, cultural translation, and the third space as a process of disruption [2]. While

addressing the socio-spatial aspect, Bhabha clearly states that culture is not only spatial but also the location of shared practices, for which he used the term third space [2]. Bhabha's cultural hybridity in spatial context can also be seen in the usage of third space. He argues that the third space functions as the cultural hub of all hybrid societies and acts as the space between cultures and the non-coincidence of a single culture with itself by defining both particular hybridised cultural practices and an element of every cultural activity [2]. It clearly shows that cultural hybridity in the third space expresses heterogeneity as multiplicity. Edward Soja's notion of third space clarifies its heterotopicity. As Soja puts it, I characterise third space as an alternative framework for comprehending and transforming the spatial dimensions of human existence, a unique form of critical spatial consciousness relevant to the evolving scope and importance emerging from the rebalanced trials of spatiality, historicity and sociality [9]. Edward Soja is known for his work revolving around the concept of third space. His work resonates with Henri Lefebvre and Michel Foucault in terms of understanding of spatiality. His perception of a third space is greatly influenced by spatial trialectics and heterotopia. As he mentions, the term third space is used to describe a certain perspective on and interpretation of socially created space [10]. The first aspect of this particular way of thinking is looking at the spatial dimension of life with as much importance as given to the social and historical dimensions. He claims that the three dialectics of social, historical, and spatial can be combined to create a fresh and original way of thinking about and comprehending space [10]. He uses Lefebvre's triple dialectic to define his third space perspective. According to Edward Soja, only two conventional perspectives on space have focused on social and historical factors. In contrast to another approach that emphasised thoughts about space, mental or ideational representations of those material, mappable forms, one interpretation of space was framed in terms of the configuration of material forms, mappable things in space [10]. Both types depict real and imagined characteristics of Soja's first and second spaces. Lefebvre names these two types of spatial practices and representations of spaces in spatiality. A third mode, representational space, is needed to think and comprehend space because two are not enough. Real and imagined locations can be experienced simultaneously in this mode. Similarly, Foucault asserts that the concurrently real and imagined alternative spaces in which we exist, where our personal narratives unfold, where social relations evolve, and where history is constructed, require a third modality [10]. Another approach to looking at the third space viewpoint is via the lens of thirding, which Soja defines as a dismantling of dominant binary logic and the establishment of a third, alternative, and markedly distinct logic or perspective [10].

When it comes to identifying third spaces present in society, Soja firmly suggests that all spaces can become third spaces. Spaces don't need to be in a particular form or with special qualities. He contends that the development of third space depends critically on one's critical spatial perspective and the degree to which one is able to use one's critical geographical imagination [10]. Extending the aspect of geography, Soja's critical post-modern analysis concretises the inter-relationship between space and society. He clearly asserts the mutual, still balanced construction of both entities, which he identifies as '*socio-spatial dialectic*'. In order to substantiate this connection, he refers to Lefebvre, who stated that the social ties of production and class relations remain abstract and illusive until they are concretised or materialised as geographical interactions [10].

Thus, we come down to four major spatial dimensions of third space, which are spatial trialectics by Henri Lefebvre, host of the otherness, also known as heterogeneity by Foucault, cultural hybridity in spatiality by Homi Bhabha, and critical thirding as othering by Edward Soja. All four aspects elicit the need for a third space while prompting us to extend our imagination and interpret the third space from a new and different perspective. As Soja points out, a third space perspective is not only ontologically necessary, theoretically revealing, empirically insightful, and politically effective; it is also compatible with other perspectives [10].

### C. Third Space and Sociality

Change your life! Change society! These ideals are meaningless without the creation of an appropriate space. Put another way, new spaces are needed for new social ties, and vice versa [3]. In contemporary society, socio-spatial dialectic is essential to third-space interpretation. Edward Soja gives both components equal importance in creating a third space. He believes spatial relations and forms create social interactions and forms. He specifies this mutual relation as an intrinsically balanced relation where they shape each other, with neither privileged over the other [10]. Manuel Castells elaborates on the socio-spatial dialectic with the concept of space of flows, which he considers global in nature. The technical and organisational capability of coordinating the simultaneity of social practices without geographical contiguity is referred to as the space of flows [11]. He argues that society is maintained by a space of flows made up of physical and social flows that have fundamentally altered how modern social, economic, and political life is structured and is perceived to influence the lives of its inhabitants [2]. The simultaneous interaction of sociality and spatiality influencing one another may stem from a significant alteration in societal organisation. It appears to be significant in the context of contemporary society, where Castell asserts that space is not merely a reflection of society; it constitutes society itself [12].

If we look at the formation of third space, particularly in the context of cities, the emergence of a new capitalist structure of urban spaces is said to be the determining factor. According to Castells [12], in the capitalist-urban age, one of the primary tasks of cities is to provide communal consumption amenities such as leisure, shopping, and health care. The way we have seen cultural hybridity in the form of spatiality, third space constitutes capital in the form of cultural assets. These assets are nothing but the forms of superior qualities one can possess to show cultural dominance over others. In light of this, Pierre Bourdieu is quoted as saying that his invention posits that forms of capital encompass cultural assets; the capacity to appreciate rare goods, such as some artworks, may necessitate skills of discernment and appreciation rooted in familial background or formal education [2]. As a result, these qualities provide a certain class with an opportunity to show its 'otherness' or distinctiveness. This notion materialises social identity emerged through the inhabitation of third space. As mentioned earlier, a third space, also known as heterotopic space, reflects the domain of liminality. It is nothing but a threshold showing the character of ambiguity and temporality. As the process of identity formation happens across this threshold, it presents the act of connecting while separating and separating while connecting, which is a social as well as spatial process [13]. This is where we can encounter social change, which turns into a social identity.

If we try to analyse the formation of identity from a broader perspective in the context of the third space, the role of consumption at the global level can be considered as the major aspect of the process. As Peter Jackson refers to it, the '*global capitalist political economy*' [2] has been instrumental in changing meanings, values, and symbols, resulting in the re-structuring of social, political, and cultural aspects of life on the basis of which we structure our identities. Despite the fact that there have been many discussions about the power of consumption among contemporary thinkers, everyone agrees upon the transformation it has nurtured in society. While giving the example of the process of shopping, Jackson emphasises the importance of the act of consumption in shaping identity and how cultural meaning is attached to it. He asserts that within the cultural turn in human geography, which perceives the economy as a cultural construct and culture as a pivotal explanatory factor in economics, his research on consumption and identities employs ethnographies of consumption sites to demonstrate how local cultures and economies are created and perpetuated through consumption practices. He establishes a link between culture, economy, consumption, and identity [14], [15].

Thus, the third space exhibits a nuance of simultaneity through social practices and relations, space creation, consumption, and identity formation. According to Foucault, we exist in an era characterised by simultaneity,

an era defined by juxtaposition, including the proximate and the distant, the adjacent, and the dispersed [8]. This proposition is reinforced by Anthony Giddens' theory of structuration, which explores the mutually dependent relationship of agency and structure responsible for concurrently shaping social reality. As Giddens puts it, agency refers to the ability of individuals to operate autonomously from societal systems in their decision-making and choices [16]. Human agents are capable enough to produce and re-produce as well as influence the structures leading to social change. As a result, they are involved in the continuous flow of actions. Although Giddens investigates the causality behind the actions carried out by an agent.

In this process, he questions whether agents behave independently or are directed by social institutions. In answering this question, he uses duality to explain agency-structure relationships. This relationship cannot be analysed independently since individual acts generate and re-form structures, which are materialised in a certain form due to social structures. In other words, agency transforms society, but structure constrains human acts. Therefore, agency and structure are not competing for autonomy and control. They complement and shape each other as social forces, sometimes altering and sometimes controlling each other. Giddens conceptualises this power relationship as regularised relations of autonomy and dependence [16].

To this point, we can notice that conceptions like socio-spatial dialectic, space of flows constituted of social and spatial flows, identity formation through consumption, and the notion of duality through the interrelationship of agency and structure are fundamentally integrated. While juxtaposing all these conceptions concurrently, the third space in itself becomes a distinct establishment compared to the first and second spaces. The existence of the notion of simultaneity as a prominent aspect of the third space can be recognised in the context of the public-private sphere as well.

#### D. Third Space and Public-Private Sphere

Public space is important in a spatial context, according to several studies. If we idealise public space, it should be open to all classes of society. However, reality shows that capitalist space creation, especially in urbanisation, dominates contemporary society. In cities, commercialised public space controls public access, which goes against our idea of public space.

It raises the question of whether public space has ever been inclusive enough to cater to all the classes of society in reality. As Demir Kahraman, Pak, and Scheerlinck [17] mention, Public places have historically served as sites of exclusion for a wide range of civilisations and have always been the subject of conflicts between various

publics. Agora may help us understand public space history, especially in Western culture. It symbolises democracy by encouraging people to appreciate social, cultural, political, and commercial aspects of public life. Nevertheless, it is often accused of excluding women, slaves, the elderly, minors, and foreigners from citizenship privileges [18]. In other words, in the decision-making process, public space has not been inclusive of the public. Public areas serve as the optimal environment for acquiring governance skills and social conformity [19], but not necessarily by the common people, and included in the public domain [17]. It means public space holds political elements in society. It is utilised as a representational tool of power or dominance through class struggle.

As Demir Kahraman, Pak, and Scheerlinck [17] claim, in the social sciences, the phrase public sphere denotes elements that extend beyond the tangible confines of publicness, highlighting its intrinsically political character. The political nature of the public space is revealed in the form of contestation between different classes over the domination of public space. As a result, it has been exclusionary for some classes of society. Thus, we can realise the contradiction in terms of the existence of a public space that is democratic by essence but regulated by a few dominants. It can be supported by critiques of the democratic nature of public space, mentioning that narratives of loss and reclamation have been used to define public space [20]. This narrative loss has resulted in an inflated romanticisation of historical public spaces [21], which turns into a '*phantom*' never materialising historically but haunting our conceptualisations of the present [20]. Another criticism by Berman [19] reflects that public space has been a stage for the common people as subjects.

All these perceptions of public space lead us towards the coexistence of the dominant and its counterpart, exposing an unending power struggle between them. This power struggle is referred to as the '*paradox of political representation*', which shows the continuity of the representation of the dominant requires both the absence and presence of other public [17].

Thus, it might be an appropriate argument to say that a public space exhibits a notion of duality, disclosing elements of privacy by serving the intents of a few dominants at the same time. This notion of duality present in the public-private sphere is underpinned by Jurgen Habermas in his book '*The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*' [22]. Initially, Habermas reflects clarity on the word 'public', which is employed in different ways in different contexts. He refers to the various connotations, from general accessibility to the common good of all and public recognition to public reputation. Although he specifically focusses on the aspect of public opinion while referring to the words 'public sphere'. He traces the origin, development, and transformation of the public sphere across the 18<sup>th</sup>,

19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. While doing that, he adopts the examples of coffeehouses from Great Britain.

Habermas begins by referring to the absence of the term public sphere in the early 18th century when the feudal system was dominant. Institutions like state authorities, churches, and courts are the symbols of power to which he refers as *representative publicness*. According to him, by the end of the eighteenth century, the feudal forces, the church, the prince, and the aristocracy, who were the bearers of representational publicness, had crumbled in a process of polarisation [22]. It provides a chance for a new social order to form that is inspired by early finance and capitalism based on long-distance commerce and comprises the components of the novel commercial relationships: the exchange of commodities and information [22]. This relationship flourishes new forms of trade like finance through letters of credit, which by default demand the centres of communication. As Habermas [22] points out, the development of the press, stock markets, and postal services institutionalised frequent interaction and communication that serviced exclusively the requirements of the government and excluded the general population. This need is fulfilled by printed weekly journals, of which the educated class of civil society is considered to be the first beneficiary. Habermas employs the term '*bourgeois*' to characterise this newly established class, which is basically an educated middle class consisting of physicians, clergy, officials, academics, and intellectuals at the apex of a hierarchy extending down to educators and clerks, reaching the general populace [22]. This is an ensemble of private individuals representing themselves as public and exhibiting the best interests of civil society in the world of commodity exchange influenced by capitalism.

A bourgeois sphere develops skills of critical discussions with an aristocratic sphere in the form of debates and exchange of ideas and information. It progressively transforms into a social activity within the literary realm, with coffeehouses, salons, and literary organisations acting as institutions that facilitate these social interactions in a city [22]. Thus, new social practices are responsible for the creation of new social institutions to accomplish new social needs. Before political equality, there were efforts to initiate social equality outside the state authority. A coffeehouse is one of the first spaces to appreciate social equality to a limited extent by initiating dialogue between the two spheres. At the time, the bourgeois, i.e., the educated middle class, was the first beneficiary of civil society. This class gets access due to their ability to discuss, debate, argue, and provide critical opinions, which are considered guidelines to follow for the rest of civil society in order to execute the common good for all. Thus, these institutions account for socio-spatial change in terms of bringing state-society intellectuals on the same platform, boosting the exchange of information in the fields of art, literature, culture, economy, and politics, and displaying products of culture as

commodities. Coffee shops, in particular, incorporated the broader segments of the middle class, including artisans and retailers, so rendering admission to pertinent circles less formal and more accessible [22]. As newly established social institutions like coffeehouses, salons, and table societies become institutionalised, irrespective of their variations in terms of operating structures, consumers hosted by them, and the social climate they provide, we can observe a number of institutional criteria in common due to discussions among private people that tend to be ongoing [22]. The first criterion disregards the principle of existing social hierarchy present in any form in society. An ability to exhibit critical opinion, debate, or argument becomes the only parameter for private individuals, irrespective of their social background, to enter the public sphere. Coffeehouse plays a crucial role in materialising the idea of the common good for all. According to Habermas [22], not that this concept of the public was not genuinely realised in coffee shops, salons, and societies; however, it had become institutionalised and hence articulated as an objective declaration. Coffeehouse makes this tendency objective, which eventually emerges as a social practice showing the nuances of duality between structure and agency, as mentioned earlier. The second criterion explains the effects of capitalism by stating that as works in the disciplines of philosophy, literature, and art are produced as commodities for the markets, these cultural goods become akin to that sort of information; as commodities, they become, in principle, broadly accessible. They are no longer included in the publicity for representation used by the church and the court [22]. In other words, the cultural product becomes a product of information, which is recognised as a commodity by the public sphere, making it free from state authority and, in principle, accessible to everyone. Thus, in the process of treating every private individual as a consumer of cultural products irrespective of his/her background, coffeehouses encourage the transformation of social structure from a feudal approach to a democratic one. The same procedure that turned culture into a commodity also made the general public inclusive [22]. In the third criterion, the bourgeois sphere appears as the custodian of the cultural products in a sense to decide and settle the identity, character, scope, and direction of those products. Habermas refers to it as a new form of bourgeois representation, where it does not equate itself with the public but acts as its mouthpiece [22].

Thus, a coffeehouse exhibits itself as a privatised public space exercising the ability to interact on equal terms with people belonging to different backgrounds. It acts as a platform to nurture a social habit of self-expression for private individuals. It works as a commodity or product of information where an individual is treated as a consumer, which makes it easy for the wider strata of society to be part of a changing contemporary social milieu. As a result, an individual appreciates it as a symbolisation of autonomy

and freedom, which causes a social upliftment imparting a social identity. If we try to relate the significance of the coffeehouse as an in-between space existing at the threshold of the public-private sphere, it can be identified as a third space eliciting diverse forms of contemporary social needs.

## II. Methodology

An example of a coffeehouse clearly demonstrates the socio-spatial practices that occur in urban third spaces within contemporary urban society. These practices are expressed in this study through a conceptual framework developed by architectural psychologist David Canter, as shown in Fig. 1. Canter views place as a convergence of thoughts, feelings, and behaviours that revolve around human actions [23].

A projective survey questionnaire was distributed to 80 participants across four age cohorts: age group 56–75, age group 41–55, age group 26–40, and age group 11–25. The survey aims to understand public perceptions of the coffee shop. A total of 20 respondents, comprising ten men and ten women, represent all age groups. It enhances the generalisability and validity of the research by considering the distinct characteristics of each group. Responses from the survey are categorised and quantified into three domains: emotional, cognitive, and behavioural. The matrix coding query in NVIVO software is primarily employed to categorise responses across various age demographics.

### Stage 1: To figure out if a statistically significant correlation exists between a specific age group and their perception of urban third space.

The chi-square test is an inferential, non-parametric statistical test that enables conclusions about a population based on a sample. Specifically, it determines if two variables are correlated within a population. It assesses the null and alternative hypotheses.

In this study, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): A statistically significant relationship does not exist between a specific

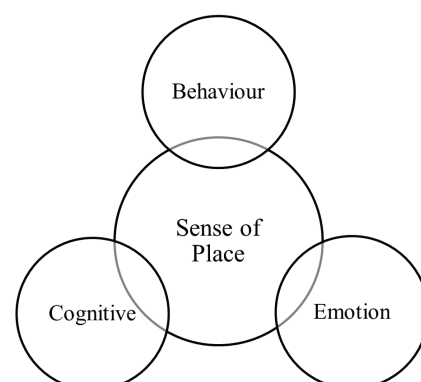


Fig. 1. Sense of Place model [23]

TABLE I

Grouped Frequency Distribution, Count of Responses [developed by the authors]

|             | Sample responses/age groups        | 56–75 | 41–55 | 26–40 | 11–25 |
|-------------|------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Behavioural | Comfort & relaxation               | 35    | 60    | 59    | 45    |
|             | Formal interaction                 | 10    | 8     | 7     | 11    |
|             | Host of evolving needs             | 57    | 71    | 77    | 74    |
|             | Informal sociability & interaction | 92    | 104   | 107   | 97    |
|             | Opportunity of celebration         | 45    | 83    | 68    | 70    |
|             | Personal space                     | 32    | 39    | 40    | 45    |
|             | Productive environment             | 31    | 52    | 43    | 52    |
| Cognitive   | Lifestyle                          | 44    | 66    | 55    | 57    |
|             | Sense of identity                  | 28    | 37    | 33    | 39    |
| Emotional   | Nostalgia                          | 38    | 24    | 29    | 28    |
|             | Sense of belonging                 | 47    | 38    | 34    | 38    |
|             | Sense of privacy                   | 28    | 32    | 32    | 39    |
|             | Sense of temporality               | 49    | 80    | 67    | 82    |
|             | Sensory experience                 | 86    | 128   | 148   | 127   |

age group and its perception of the urban third space. Alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ): A statistically significant relationship exists between a specific age group and its perception of the urban third space.

Chi square is characterized by  $\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$ ,

where  $O$  is the frequency, and  $E$  is the expected frequency. Degrees of freedom ( $df$ ) =  $n - 1$ , where  $n$  is the number of items, and significance level ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.05. The chi-square test performed is represented in Table II.

We may determine the association between age and sample population responses by comparing the chi-square value to the crucial value from the distribution table [24]. If the value of  $\chi^2$  exceeds the distribution table's critical value, the association is statistically significant. Conversely, if the value of  $\chi^2$  is less than the critical value, the variables' association looks insignificant. Table II indicates statistically significant behavioural and emotional aspects across all ages. The cognitive factor is only significant for age ranges 41–55 and 26–40. It seems insignificant for 56–75 and 11–25-year-olds.

TABLE II

Chi-Square Test of Independence [developed by the authors]

| Age group 56–75 |             |                                                                     |    |       |        |                      |                         |
|-----------------|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----|-------|--------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Sr. No.         | Dimension   | Sample responses                                                    | O  | E     | O – E  | (O – E) <sup>2</sup> | (O – E) <sup>2</sup> /E |
| 1               | Behavioural | Comfort & relaxation                                                | 35 | 43.14 | –8.14  | 66.25                | 1.53                    |
|                 |             | Formal interaction                                                  | 10 | 43.14 | –33.14 | 1098.25              | 25.45                   |
|                 |             | Host of evolving needs                                              | 57 | 43.14 | 13.86  | 192.09               | 4.45                    |
|                 |             | Informal sociability & interaction                                  | 92 | 43.14 | 48.86  | 2387.29              | 55.33                   |
|                 |             | Opportunity of celebration                                          | 45 | 43.14 | 1.86   | 3.45                 | 0.07                    |
|                 |             | Personal space                                                      | 32 | 43.14 | –10.13 | 102.61               | 2.37                    |
|                 |             | Productive environment                                              | 31 | 43.14 | –12.14 | 147.37               | 3.41                    |
|                 |             | $\chi^2 = \sum (O - E)^2/E = 92.6 > \text{Critical value} = 12.592$ |    |       |        |                      |                         |
| 2               | Cognitive   | Lifestyle                                                           | 44 | 36    | 8      | 64                   | 1.77                    |
|                 |             | Sense of identity                                                   | 28 | 36    | –8     | 64                   | 1.77                    |
|                 |             | $\chi^2 = \sum (O - E)^2/E = 3.54 < \text{Critical value} = 3.841$  |    |       |        |                      |                         |
| 3               | Emotional   | Nostalgia                                                           | 38 | 49.6  | –11.6  | 134.56               | 2.71                    |
|                 |             | Sense of belonging                                                  | 47 | 49.6  | –2.6   | 6.76                 | 0.13                    |
|                 |             | Sense of privacy                                                    | 28 | 49.6  | –21.6  | 466.56               | 9.40                    |
|                 |             | Sense of temporality                                                | 49 | 49.6  | –0.6   | 0.36                 | 0.007                   |
|                 |             | Sensory experience                                                  | 86 | 49.6  | 36.4   | 1324.96              | 26.71                   |
|                 |             | $\chi^2 = \sum (O - E)^2/E = 38.95 > \text{Critical value} = 9.488$ |    |       |        |                      |                         |

| Age group 41–55 |             |                                                                      |     |       |        |                      |                         |
|-----------------|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------|--------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Sr. No.         | Dimension   | Sample responses                                                     | O   | E     | O – E  | (O – E) <sup>2</sup> | (O – E) <sup>2</sup> /E |
| 1               | Behavioural | Comfort & relaxation                                                 | 60  | 59.57 | 0.43   | 0.18                 | 0.003                   |
|                 |             | Formal interaction                                                   | 8   | 59.57 | –51.57 | 2659.46              | 44.64                   |
|                 |             | Host of evolving needs                                               | 71  | 59.57 | 11.43  | 130.64               | 2.19                    |
|                 |             | Informal sociability & interaction                                   | 104 | 59.57 | 44.43  | 1974.02              | 33.13                   |
|                 |             | Opportunity of celebration                                           | 83  | 59.57 | 23.43  | 548.96               | 9.21                    |
|                 |             | Personal space                                                       | 39  | 59.57 | –20.57 | 423.12               | 7.10                    |
|                 |             | Productive environment                                               | 52  | 59.57 | –7.57  | 57.30                | 0.96                    |
|                 |             | $\chi^2 = \sum (O - E)^2/E = 97.23 > \text{Critical value} = 12.592$ |     |       |        |                      |                         |
| 2               | Cognitive   | Lifestyle                                                            | 66  | 51.5  | 14.5   | 210.25               | 4.08                    |
|                 |             | Sense of identity                                                    | 37  | 51.5  | –14.5  | 210.25               | 4.08                    |
|                 |             | $\chi^2 = \sum (O - E)^2/E = 8.16 > \text{Critical value} = 3.841$   |     |       |        |                      |                         |
| 3               | Emotional   | Nostalgia                                                            | 24  | 60.4  | –36.4  | 1324.96              | 21.93                   |
|                 |             | Sense of belonging                                                   | 38  | 60.4  | –22.4  | 501.76               | 8.30                    |
|                 |             | Sense of privacy                                                     | 32  | 60.4  | –28.4  | 806.56               | 13.35                   |
|                 |             | Sense of temporality                                                 | 80  | 60.4  | 19.6   | 384.16               | 6.36                    |
|                 |             | Sensory experience                                                   | 128 | 60.4  | 67.6   | 4569.76              | 75.65                   |
|                 |             | $\chi^2 = \sum (O - E)^2/E = 125.59 > \text{Critical value} = 9.488$ |     |       |        |                      |                         |

| Age group 26–40 |             |                                                                      |     |       |        |                      |                         |
|-----------------|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------|--------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Sr. No.         | Dimension   | Sample Responses                                                     | O   | E     | O – E  | (O – E) <sup>2</sup> | (O – E) <sup>2</sup> /E |
| 1               | Behavioural | Comfort & relaxation                                                 | 59  | 57.28 | 1.72   | 2.95                 | 0.05                    |
|                 |             | Formal interaction                                                   | 7   | 57.28 | –50.28 | 2528.07              | 44.13                   |
|                 |             | Host of evolving needs                                               | 77  | 57.28 | 19.72  | 388.87               | 6.78                    |
|                 |             | Informal sociability & interaction                                   | 107 | 57.28 | 49.72  | 2472.07              | 43.15                   |
|                 |             | Opportunity of celebration                                           | 68  | 57.28 | 10.72  | 114.91               | 2.00                    |
|                 |             | Personal space                                                       | 40  | 57.28 | –17.28 | 298.59               | 5.21                    |
|                 |             | Productive environment                                               | 43  | 57.28 | –14.28 | 203.91               | 3.55                    |
|                 |             | $\chi^2 = \sum(O - E)^2/E = 104.87 > \text{Critical value} = 12.592$ |     |       |        |                      |                         |
| 2               | Cognitive   | Lifestyle                                                            | 55  | 44    | 11     | 121                  | 2.75                    |
|                 |             | Sense of identity                                                    | 33  | 44    | –11    | 121                  | 2.75                    |
|                 |             | $\chi^2 = \sum(O - E)^2/E = 5.5 > \text{Critical value} = 3.841$     |     |       |        |                      |                         |
| 3               | Emotional   | Nostalgia                                                            | 29  | 62    | –33    | 1089                 | 17.56                   |
|                 |             | Sense of belonging                                                   | 34  | 62    | –28    | 784                  | 12.64                   |
|                 |             | Sense of privacy                                                     | 32  | 62    | –30    | 900                  | 14.51                   |
|                 |             | Sense of temporality                                                 | 67  | 62    | 5      | 25                   | 0.40                    |
|                 |             | Sensory experience                                                   | 148 | 62    | 86     | 7396                 | 119.29                  |
|                 |             | $\chi^2 = \sum(O - E)^2/E = 164.40 > \text{Critical value} = 9.488$  |     |       |        |                      |                         |

| Age group 11–25 |             |                                                                      |     |       |        |                      |                         |  |
|-----------------|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------|--------|----------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Sr. No.         | Dimension   | Sample responses                                                     | O   | E     | O – E  | (O – E) <sup>2</sup> | (O – E) <sup>2</sup> /E |  |
| 1               | Behavioural | Comfort & relaxation                                                 | 45  | 56.28 | –11.28 | 127.23               | 2.26                    |  |
|                 |             | Formal interaction                                                   | 11  | 56.28 | –45.28 | 2050.27              | 36.42                   |  |
|                 |             | Host of evolving needs                                               | 74  | 56.28 | 17.72  | 313.99               | 5.57                    |  |
|                 |             | Informal sociability & interaction                                   | 97  | 56.28 | 40.72  | 1658.11              | 29.46                   |  |
|                 |             | Opportunity of celebration                                           | 70  | 56.28 | 13.72  | 188.11               | 3.34                    |  |
|                 |             | Personal space                                                       | 45  | 56.28 | –11.28 | 127.23               | 2.26                    |  |
|                 |             | Productive environment                                               | 52  | 56.28 | –4.28  | 18.31                | 0.32                    |  |
|                 |             | $\chi^2 = \sum (O - E)^2/E = 79.63 > \text{Critical value} = 12.592$ |     |       |        |                      |                         |  |
| 2               | Cognitive   | Lifestyle                                                            | 57  | 48    | 9      | 81                   | 1.68                    |  |
|                 |             | Sense of identity                                                    | 39  | 48    | –9     | 81                   | 1.68                    |  |
|                 |             | $\chi^2 = \sum (O - E)^2/E = 3.36 < \text{Critical value} = 3.841$   |     |       |        |                      |                         |  |
| 3               | Emotional   | Nostalgia                                                            | 28  | 62.8  | –34.8  | 1211.04              | 19.28                   |  |
|                 |             | Sense of belonging                                                   | 38  | 62.8  | –24.8  | 615.04               | 9.79                    |  |
|                 |             | Sense of privacy                                                     | 39  | 62.8  | –23.8  | 566.44               | 9.01                    |  |
|                 |             | Sense of temporality                                                 | 82  | 62.8  | 19.2   | 368.64               | 5.87                    |  |
|                 |             | Sensory experience                                                   | 127 | 62.8  | 64.2   | 4121.64              | 65.63                   |  |
|                 |             | $\chi^2 = \sum (O - E)^2/E = 109.58 > \text{Critical value} = 9.488$ |     |       |        |                      |                         |  |

**Stage 2: To examine the main responses contributing to the development of urban third space among all age demographics within the sample population.**

Stage 1 reveals that the behavioural and emotional dimensions are more pertinent to the sample population.

To augment the chi-square test findings, additional conventional statistical tests should be utilised to enhance comprehension of the correlation between age groups and replies. ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) is a parametric statistical test that examines the variations in means

**TABLE III**  
**One-way ANOVA of the Sample Population [developed by the authors]**

| Behavioural dimension              |          |    |          |          |          |          |
|------------------------------------|----------|----|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Comfort & relaxation               |          |    |          |          |          |          |
| Source of variation                | SS       | df | MS       | F        | P-value  | F crit.  |
| Between groups                     | 21.5375  | 3  | 7.179167 | 2.695069 | 0.051859 | 2.724944 |
| Within groups                      | 202.45   | 76 | 2.663816 |          |          |          |
| Total                              | 223.9875 | 79 |          |          |          |          |
| Formal interaction                 |          |    |          |          |          |          |
| Source of variation                | SS       | df | MS       | F        | P-value  | F crit.  |
| Between groups                     | 0.5      | 3  | 0.166667 | 0.339589 | 0.796748 | 2.724944 |
| Within groups                      | 37.3     | 76 | 0.490789 |          |          |          |
| Total                              | 37.8     | 79 |          |          |          |          |
| Host of evolving needs             |          |    |          |          |          |          |
| Source of variation                | SS       | df | MS       | F        | P-value  | F crit.  |
| Between groups                     | 11.7375  | 3  | 3.9125   | 1.414269 | 0.245155 | 2.724944 |
| Within groups                      | 210.25   | 76 | 2.766447 |          |          |          |
| Total                              | 221.9875 | 79 |          |          |          |          |
| Informal sociability & interaction |          |    |          |          |          |          |
| Source of variation                | SS       | df | MS       | F        | P-value  | F crit.  |
| Between groups                     | 6.9      | 3  | 2.3      | 0.613118 | 0.608576 | 2.724944 |
| Within groups                      | 285.1    | 76 | 3.751316 |          |          |          |
| Total                              | 292      | 79 |          |          |          |          |
| Opportunity of celebration         |          |    |          |          |          |          |
| Source of variation                | SS       | df | MS       | F        | P-value  | F crit.  |
| Between groups                     | 37.45    | 3  | 12.48333 | 3.619738 | 0.016818 | 2.724944 |
| Within groups                      | 262.1    | 76 | 3.448684 |          |          |          |
| Total                              | 299.55   | 79 |          |          |          |          |
| Personal space                     |          |    |          |          |          |          |
| Source of variation                | SS       | df | MS       | F        | P-value  | F crit.  |
| Between groups                     | 4.3      | 3  | 1.433333 | 0.759117 | 0.520509 | 2.724944 |
| Within groups                      | 143.5    | 76 | 1.888158 |          |          |          |
| Total                              | 147.8    | 79 |          |          |          |          |
| Productive environment             |          |    |          |          |          |          |
| Source of variation                | SS       | df | MS       | F        | P-value  | F crit.  |
| Between groups                     | 14.85    | 3  | 4.95     | 2.425532 | 0.072085 | 2.724944 |
| Within groups                      | 155.1    | 76 | 2.040789 |          |          |          |
| Total                              | 169.95   | 79 |          |          |          |          |
| Cognitive dimension                |          |    |          |          |          |          |
| Lifestyle                          |          |    |          |          |          |          |
| Source of variation                | SS       | df | MS       | F        | P-value  | F crit.  |
| Between groups                     | 3.025    | 1  | 3.025    | 1.10582  | 0.299634 | 4.098172 |
| Within groups                      | 103.95   | 38 | 2.735526 |          |          |          |
| Total                              | 106.975  | 39 |          |          |          |          |
| Sense of identity                  |          |    |          |          |          |          |
| Source of variation                | SS       | df | MS       | F        | P-value  | F crit.  |
| Between groups                     | 0.4      | 1  | 0.4      | 0.337029 | 0.564976 | 4.098172 |
| Within groups                      | 45.1     | 38 | 1.186842 |          |          |          |
| Total                              | 45.5     | 39 |          |          |          |          |

| Emotional dimension              |          |    |          |          |          |          |
|----------------------------------|----------|----|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Nostalgia                        |          |    |          |          |          |          |
| Source of variation              | SS       | df | MS       | F        | P-value  | F crit.  |
| Between groups                   | 5.2375   | 3  | 1.745833 | 2.114475 | 0.105355 | 2.724944 |
| Within groups                    | 62.75    | 76 | 0.825658 |          |          |          |
| Total                            | 67.9875  | 79 |          |          |          |          |
| Sense of belonging               |          |    |          |          |          |          |
| Source of variation              | SS       | df | MS       | F        | P-value  | F crit.  |
| Between groups                   | 4.5375   | 3  | 1.5125   | 0.895598 | 0.447478 | 2.724944 |
| Within groups                    | 128.35   | 76 | 1.688816 |          |          |          |
| Total                            | 132.8875 | 79 |          |          |          |          |
| Sense of privacy & ownership     |          |    |          |          |          |          |
| Source of variation              | SS       | df | MS       | F        | P-value  | F crit.  |
| Between groups                   | 3.1375   | 3  | 1.045833 | 0.624133 | 0.601583 | 2.724944 |
| Within groups                    | 127.35   | 76 | 1.675658 |          |          |          |
| Total                            | 130.4875 | 79 |          |          |          |          |
| Sense of temporality & festivity |          |    |          |          |          |          |
| Source of variation              | SS       | df | MS       | F        | P-value  | F crit.  |
| Between groups                   | 34.65    | 3  | 11.55    | 4.360656 | 0.006891 | 2.724944 |
| Within groups                    | 201.3    | 76 | 2.648684 |          |          |          |
| Total                            | 235.95   | 79 |          |          |          |          |
| Sensory experience               |          |    |          |          |          |          |
| Source of variation              | SS       | df | MS       | F        | P-value  | F crit.  |
| Between groups                   | 101.6375 | 3  | 33.87917 | 6.125411 | 0.000869 | 2.724944 |
| Within groups                    | 420.35   | 76 | 5.530921 |          |          |          |
| Total                            | 521.9875 | 79 |          |          |          |          |

among many groups. A one-way ANOVA is employed to determine the most common elements among all age groups within the sample population.

The null hypothesis (H0): The sample population has no preferred responses. Alternative Hypothesis 1 (H1): The sample population has at least one statistically preferred response.

ANOVA is performed using Microsoft Excel software. Table III displays the results of the ANOVA analysis.

Table III shows that the P-value is less than the significance level of 0.05 for four responses: comfort & relaxation, opportunity of celebration, sense of temporality and sensory experience. It indicates that the alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted for these features. Put simply, these are the primary ways in which users perceive the urban third space differently from the first and second spaces. However, for other responses, the P-value is greater than the significance level of 0.05, leading to the adoption of the null hypothesis (H0).

III. Results & Discussion

The results of this study reveal several key insights into the formation and perception of urban third spaces, with a particular focus on coffeehouses as exemplary third spaces. The data collected through the survey

provides a comprehensive understanding of how people perceive and interact with these spaces. The research reveals existing theories that view space and place as dynamic and socially constructed. Users’ perceptions align with the idea that third spaces are shaped by social practices and interactions, reinforcing the concept that these spaces are co-created by their users. The analysis indicates that particularly behavioural and emotional dimensions significantly influence the formation of third spaces. Respondents highlight that comfort and relaxation, opportunity for celebration, sense of temporality, and sensory experience contribute to their frequent use and positive perception of coffeehouses. The study shows that coffeehouses serve as vital hubs for social interaction and community building. Many respondents believe that using these spaces for informal sociability and interaction, as well as a productive environment for everyday urban living, is becoming increasingly important. Concepts such as nostalgia and a sense of belonging, as well as a sense of privacy and ownership, are identified as significant aspects that increase the social relevance of these spaces. The findings highlight the complex interplay between third spaces’ public and private realms. Though privately held, coffeehouses serve as public gathering places where people can feel comfortable blending their personal and public lives. Users particularly enjoy this dual nature since it allows for personal expression in a communal setting.

The research underscores the significant role that third spaces play in contemporary urban society. The observed socio-spatial features that are essential for the establishment and success of third spaces are in accordance with theories of socio-spatiality, which highlight the significance of having diverse and concurrent uses of third spaces. These characteristics not only attract users but also foster a sense of belonging and community, highlighting the interdependence between society and space. The study's focus on coffeehouses as exemplars of third spaces illustrates how these environments meet contemporary societal needs for social interaction, relaxation, and community building. Coffeehouses provide a versatile setting that accommodates various activities, from casual meetings to solitary work, thereby supporting diverse user needs. This versatility, coupled with their accessible and welcoming nature, explains their popularity and effectiveness as third spaces.

Furthermore, the research sheds light on the complex interplay between public and private spheres within third spaces. The ability of coffeehouses to function as semi-public venues where private activities can take place publicly illustrates the fluid boundaries of third spaces. This duality is a key factor in their appeal, offering users the freedom to engage in personal or social activities within a communal setting. By using inferential statistics, the study demonstrates that socio-spatial characteristics are significant predictors of the success and utilisation of third spaces. These findings provide empirical support for the theoretical frameworks that describe third spaces as crucial elements of urban life that bridge the gap between the first and second spaces.

## Conclusions

In order to unfold the socio-spatial dimensions of third space, particularly in a contemporary milieu, it is crucial to interpret the production of space in the discourse of everyday life, which majorly happens through an exchange of multi-disciplinary ideas of space. It helps us to generate a critical and rational understanding of the relationship between society and space. One of the main observations can be that any space is an output of a particular social practice conducted at a particular time. Interpretations of space might be subjective and exist simultaneously.

Considering drastic transformations in the societal structure, the spatiality of the third space has become complex in nature. Third space exhibits heterogeneity where multiple social practices, meanings, values, symbols, and identities are not only facilitated but also nurtured concurrently. Contemporary thinkers like Soja suggest that a third space is nothing but a unique perspective that holds the capability to make every space a third space. From social dimensions, as the third space shows elements of uniqueness, it becomes an asset acting as a cultural capital imparting a distinct identity to its users. A main reason for the importance given to social identity is the influence of the capitalist structure of society. A notion of simultaneity in social aspects can also be seen in the form of duality, where private individuals shape the third space and, at the same time, the third space influences individuals, making the process more dynamic. A coffeehouse is an exemplar of experiencing the process of simultaneity, where it showcases itself as an in-between space between the public and private spheres experienced as a highly subjective phenomenon. It is a hub where socio-spatial practices are structured, experienced, experimented with, and restructured, which makes the third space distinct from the first and second. Third space is in the continuous process of socio-spatial transformation by accommodating multiplicity and simultaneity, which is the fundamental need of contemporary society.

In conclusion, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the formation and significance of urban third spaces. It highlights the essential role of socio-spatial characteristics in creating environments that support social interaction, community engagement, and personal well-being. The insights gained from this study can inform urban planning and design practices, ensuring that third spaces continue to fulfil their vital role in contemporary urban society.

## Acknowledgement

The authors would like to extend their sincere gratitude to all the participants who generously contributed their time and insights to this study. Your willingness to share your experiences and perspectives has been invaluable to the success of this research. This study would not have been possible without your active involvement.

## REFERENCES

1. **Johnston, R. J.** Paradigms and Revolution or Evolution? In: J. A. Agnew, D. J. Livingstone and A. Rogers (eds.). *Human Geography: An Essential Anthology*. 1996, pp. 37–53.
2. **Hubbard, P., Kitchin, R.** *Key Thinkers on Space and Place, Second Edition*. London: Sage Publications, 2011. 528 p.
3. **Lefebvre, H.** *The Production of Space*. English tr. edited by D. Nicholson-Smith. Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1991. 464 p.
4. **Lefebvre, H.** *The Urban Revolution*. In: R. Bononno (ed.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003. 224 p.
5. **Merrifield, A.** Place and Space: A Lefebvrian Reconciliation. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, vol. 18, no. 4, 1993, p. 516. <https://doi.org/10.2307/622564>
6. **Ollman, B.** Putting Dialectics to Work: The Process of Abstraction in Marx's Method. *Rethinking Marxism*, no. 3, 1990, pp. 26–74. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08935699008657901>
7. **Ollman, B.** *Dialectical Investigations*. London: Routledge, 1993. 208 p.
8. **Dehaene, M., De Cauter, L.** Introduction: Heterotopia in a postcivil society, In: M. Dehaene and L. De Cauter (eds.), *Heterotopia and the City: Public Space in a Postcivil Society*. London: Routledge, 2008, pp. 3–9. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203089415>
9. **Soja, E. W.** *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*. New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 1996. 352 p.
10. **Borch, C.** Interview with Edward W. Soja: Thirdspace, Postmetropolis, and Social Theory. *Distinktion: Journal of Social Theory*, vol. 3, no. 1. 2002, pp. 113–120. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1600910X.2002.9672816>
11. **Castells, M.** Materials for an exploratory theory of the network society. *British Journal of Sociology*. vol. 51, no. 1, 2000, pp. 5–24. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-4446.2000.00005.x>
12. **Fishman, R., Castells, M.** The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements. *The American Historical Review*. vol. 91, no. 5, 1986. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1864387>
13. **Franck, K. A., Stevens, Q.** Loose space: Possibility and diversity in urban life. *Loose Space: Possibility and Diversity in Urban Life*, 2006, pp. 1–303. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203799574>
14. **Holbrook, B., Jackson, P.** The social milieux of two north London shopping centres. *Geoforum*, vol. 27, no. 2, 1996, pp. 193–204. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0016-7185\(96\)00009-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/0016-7185(96)00009-7)
15. **Jackson, P.** Commodity cultures: the traffic in things. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, vol. 24, no. 1, 1999, pp. 95–108. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0020-2754.1999.00095.x>
16. **Parsons, H. L., Giddens, A.** Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol. 41, no. 1/2, 1980, p. 246. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2107414>
17. **Demir Kahraman, M., Pak, B., Scheerlinck, K.** Production of heterotopias as public spaces and paradox of political representation: A Lefebvrian approach. *A/Z ITU Journal of the Faculty of Architecture*, vol. 15, no. 1, 2018, pp. 135–145. <https://doi.org/10.5505/ituja.2018.58569>
18. **Raaflaub, K. A., Ober, J., Wallace, R. W.** *Origins of Democracy in Ancient Greece*. University of California Press, 2007. 253 p. <https://doi.org/10.5860/CHOICE.44-6382>
19. **Berman, M.** The Romance of Public Space. In: A. Fisyak et al. (eds.). *Beyond Zuccotti Park: Freedom of Assembly and the Occupation of Public Space*, New Village Press, 2018, pp. 197–206. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt21pxn0j.26>
20. **Iveson, K.** *Publics and the City*. London: Wiley. 2007. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470761748>
21. **Madanipour, A.** (ed.). *Whose Public Space? International Case Studies in Urban Design and Development*. London: Routledge, 2010. 288 p. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203860946>
22. **Habermas, J.** *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. The MIT Press: Cambridge, 1989. 160 p.
23. **Canter, D.** *The Psychology of Place*. London: Architectural Press, 1977. 198 p.
24. **Joshi, U. V., Nagarsheth, S.** People, Places, and Perceptions: Assessing Spatial Quality Attributes of Urban Third-place With Projective Survey. *Journal of Contemporary Urban Affairs*. vol. 8, no. 2, 2024, pp. 509–528. <https://doi.org/10.25034/ijcua.2024.v8n2-13>



**Upendra Vinay Joshi** is a PhD Scholar from Anant National University, Ahmedabad, India. He received an undergraduate degree in architecture in 2009 from Shivaji University, Kolhapur, India. He obtained his master's degree specializing in Interior Architecture from the University of Canberra, Australia. Currently, he is an

Associate Professor at DIT University, Dehradun, India.

His research interests include architecture theory & philosophy, theory of space, theory of third place, socio-cultural anthropology, and urban sociology.



**Abhishek Kumar** completed his PhD at Pondicherry University in the field of Branding and Semiotics in 2016 and obtained his postgraduate degree in management from BIM Trichy. His undergraduate degree in Economics is from Calcutta University, Kolkata, India. He has nearly 15 years of experience in academia and ten years in industry. His most

popular courses are Philosophy of Architecture, Critical Thinking, Brand Management, and Leadership.

#### Contact Data

**Upendra V. Joshi**, Associate Professor

E-mail: [upendra.joshi.phd21@anu.edu.in](mailto:upendra.joshi.phd21@anu.edu.in)

ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6829-0978>

**Abhishek Kumar**, Professor, Dr

E-mail: [kumar.abhishek@aim.ac.in](mailto:kumar.abhishek@aim.ac.in)

ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2658-1187>