

- 16778 | SPACE APPROPRIATION AND IDENTITY

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*"(...) school is the first public equipment with which the pupil contacts as a user, right there it takes place an initial educational experience within the scope of respect for a collective good, an object with both co-habitation and usage rules that should endure during social life. (...) the school building (...) represents an initiatory pole for citizenship and personal development."*¹

Inhabiting the school shapes its identity, memory and value. As agents of socialization and growth, schools embody a space where the teaching-learning process should be enriched by spatial features.

Regardless the user type, believing that architecture *matters* confirms that both human and social dimensions lay its essence. By nature, the school environment has a determinative role in the personal development of each individual as the most persisting experience of life in community.

When connecting with school on a daily basis, each person appropriates space on a particular form. Because of its human dimension, his behavior is key to simultaneously complemente and complete school buildings.

This abstract, embedded in the investigation project *Escolas: Complexidade e Interpretação*, based on CEAU (FAUP), seeks to understand the architectural transformation of school buildings in Portugal, focusing on the interactions between users and spaces. The project aims at deepening the space appropriation process, and its interferences with the users needs. In these terms, the present study highlights the dialectic's significance between architecture and spacial identity.

1 - BARATA, João Pedro Martins - Enquadramento para a realidade escolar. In PARQUE ESCOLAR, E.P.E. - Manual de projecto para a acessibilidade nas escolas.(p.7).