

## Chapter-3

# The Role of Cultural Identity in Place-Making: A Case of Cultural Centers in Kisumu City

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### Abstract

This study investigated the role of cultural identity in shaping the design of Kisumu City cultural centers amidst the global trend of cultural homogenization of public spaces. Focused on the Luo ethnic group in Kisumu, the research explored the impact of integrating specific elements of cultural identity in creating functional spaces that respect local culture. Fieldwork, including observations and interviews, evaluated three cultural centers, uncovering the interplay between cultural identity and place-making. The findings highlighted how access, spatial layout, shape, materiality, and color contribute to reflecting local identity, enhancing user experiences with positive distractions, and community engagement. Conclusions emphasized the pivotal role of cultural identity in cultural centers, suggesting a design that integrates identity elements. The study contributes to existing knowledge by identifying distinctive contextual and cultural features, advocating for hierarchical spatial organization, circular motifs, a blend of modern and traditional materials, earthy color palettes, and cultural artifacts within centers. The infusion of specific cultural components aims to make these spaces representative and meaningful to the local community. Adopting specific design approaches, layouts, forms, scales, material choices, colors, and positive distractions was recommended. Future research should explore cultural centers in diverse contexts of unique communities, broadening the understanding of cultural integration in design.

**Keywords:** cultural homogenization, cultural identity, place-making

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