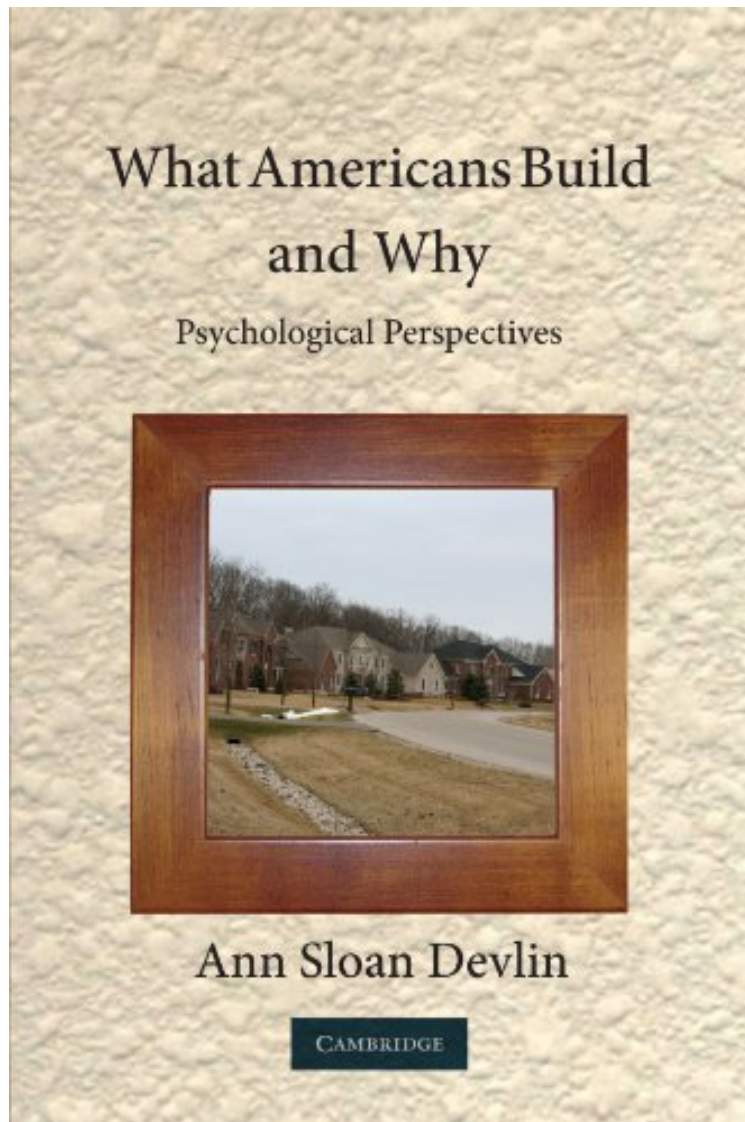


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What Americans Build and Why: Psychological Perspectives

Ann Sloan Devlin PhD

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Ann Sloan Devlin PhD : What Americans Build and Why: Psychological Perspectives before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised What Americans Build and Why: Psychological Perspectives:

What Americans Build and Why examines five areas of Americans' built environment: houses, healthcare facilities, schools, workplaces, and shopping environments. Synthesizing information from both academic journals and the popular press, the book looks at the relationships of size and scale to the way Americans live their lives and how their

way of life is fundamentally shaped by the highway system, cheap land, and incentives. This book is timely because although Americans say they crave community, they continue to construct buildings, such as McMansions and big box stores, that make creating community a challenge. Furthermore, in many ways the movement toward teleworking, discussed in the chapter on office environments, also challenges the traditional place-based formation of community. Although focused on the United States, the book also includes reference to other parts of the world, especially regarding the retail environment.

"When do homes, schools, health care facilities, workplaces, and shopping centers become too big, too void of community, to do the essential psychological work of sustaining human well-being? In this book, Ann Sloan Devlin's distinctive voice questions how everyday environments came about and how the places where we spend most of our time have evolved to be inauthentic and alienating. Her work sheds light on the invisible 'program' underlying what is built in the U.S. Although the program is often well intentioned, it ultimately has proved to thwart some of our basic human needs for health and well-being. According to Devlin, our quest for a better community will require us to start recognizing the power of these forces shaping the world we construct. She shows how research on human needs and well-being can support the future evolution of the daily built environment into more supportive places that sustain both individual and community needs. Devlin's work is well timed to take on the challenges of creating a more sustainable and humane future." - Barbara Brown, University of Utah

"Ann Sloan Devlin's *What Americans Build and Why: Psychological Perspectives* covers the forces that shape our built landscape and our connections to one another. It deals with those land uses which occupy the most space and where we spend most of our time: housing, schools, work places, shopping environments (malls and main streets), and health care. Moving easily between personal experience, history, policy, research, and case studies, the book involves and offers the reader complete and expert evidence, analysis, and recommendations. It is an essential book for present and future designers, planners, clients, city managers, and others who care about the links between the built environment and our quality of life." - Jack L. Nasar, The Ohio State University

"Ann Sloan Devlin decodes the physical form of contemporary American icons, including high tech hospitals, suburbs and McMansions, malls and big box stores, small and large schools, and cubicles and telework. She is a cool participant-observer, a talented researcher, and an engaging writer. This book combines personal experience with current research and tells us not only who we are but what we have to do to achieve a more satisfying relationship with our buildings and communities." - Robert Sommer, University of California, Davis

"From houses to hospitals and shopping malls, Devlin provides delightful personal insights coupled with authoritative research to understand the forces that have shaped the American dream. She opens the door to reveal the social and spatial costs of our 'bigger is better' perspective, and provides us with steps we might take to restore humanity into our American way of life." - Jean Wineman, University of Michigan

"...The volume is heavy with data in some chapters, particularly those on schools and health care facilities.... Recommended...." --J. Quinan, University at Buffalo Suny, CHOICE

"....In *What Americans Build and Why: Psychological Perspectives*, Ann Sloan Devlin brings the metaphor of thinking outside the box alive by describing first the box, then the contents of the box.... thought-provoking.... The essence of this book is appropriately captured in the title *What Americans Build and Why*. This book is well researched, providing social scientific research from many different scholarly outlets, including empirical research, expert opinions, and mainstream media articles.... Devlin provides a thorough history of the debates relevant to design in America, and any reader will view the constructed world much differently after reading *What Americans Build and Why*. This book will be of interest to any scholar, academic or other, with an inquisitive mind and a fascination for learning how things come to be the things they are in front of us." --Robert D. Mather, PsycCRITIQUES

About the Author: Ann Sloan Devlin is the May Buckley Sadowski '19 Professor of Psychology and College Marshal at Connecticut College. She has taught at Connecticut College since 1973 and has received the John S. King Faculty Teaching Award (2006) and the Student Government Association Excellence in Teaching Award (1991). In the spring of 2009, she taught at the Pantheon Institute in Rome in a Study Away Teach Away (SATA) program sponsored by Connecticut College. While in Rome, she gave an invited seminar at La Sapienza (University of Rome). She is on the editorial review board of the journal *Environment and Behavior* and has been a Board Member and Secretary of the Environmental Design Research Association. She is a Fellow of Division 34, Population and Environmental Psychology of the American Psychological Association. She has two previous books: *Mind and Maze: Spatial Cognition and Environmental Behavior* (2001) and *Research Methods: Planning, Conducting, and Presenting Research* (2006). Her articles appear in journals such as *Environment and Behavior*, the *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, and the EDRA (Environmental Design Research Association) Proceedings.