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Original Research Article

Elucidating the Concept of Non-Institution and Its Role in Establishing Immanent Connection in Architecture and Urban Settings (A Case Study of the Edges of Buildings Surrounding the Jame' Mosque in Shahrak-e Gharb, Tehran)*

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Abstract

Problem statement: One of the primary reasons for the creation or development of buildings is to accommodate the ongoing and potential activities of individuals. However, the current focus on purely physical expansion has diminished human activities at building edges and reduced the sense of connection between buildings and the urban environment. This study seeks to identify the factors influencing immanent connections in architecture and urban settings.

Research objective: The connections between buildings and urban areas are defined as a collection of factors in which the institution plays a central role as a social agent, linking small and large scales, and is characterized by both formal and functional attributes. This study aims to provide an operational definition of the concept of institution within the context of the selected study area, exploring the attributes of institutions and non-institutions and their roles in establishing immanent connections.

Research method: This qualitative study employs an emancipatory paradigm, utilizing ethnographic strategies and grounded theory. It follows a cyclical and interactive process of data collection, summarization, visualization, and evaluation.

Conclusion: The study identifies nine indicators of an institution: familiarity, time, motivation, details, transparency, enclosure, permeability, relationships, and perspective. These indicators serve as objective criteria that collectively describe the characteristics of institutions. The elucidation of the concept of “non-institution” serves to liberate the definition of “institution” from the constraints imposed by repetitive and mundane interpretations. Non-institutions are generative ideas that create and nourish institutions, such as concepts related to cultural contexts, customs, beliefs, and all that connects individuals. Consequently, the characteristics of institutions act as a bridge linking us to non-institutions. Therefore, immanent connection in architecture and urban settings signifies the extent to which non-institutions are manifested at the edges of buildings. A city that allows greater expression of its non-institutions will appear more connected.

Keywords: *Immanent connection, emancipation, non-institution, building edges.*

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Introduction

Today, along with the privatization trends in cities, institutions, organizations, agencies, and consequently urban buildings are undergoing expansion and growth. However, the focus on building edges - as boundaries, separators, and connectors between buildings and the city - remains limited to two-dimensional façade design in cities like Tehran at local, regional, and urban scales. This focus neglects the development of human activities along these edges and the interactions between users inside and outside the buildings. The development of human activities at building edges can be framed within the concept of connection between buildings and urban environments, which is a qualitative and interdisciplinary notion in environmental design. Connection between buildings and the city encompasses various dimensions and factors (Carmona et al., 2009). The theories of this connection can be categorized into four interrelated dimensions: physical, functional-behavioral, semantic, and social. These factors do not exist at the same level and next to each other; rather, they are interconnected within an underlying network operating across three scales: large, medium, and small. The large scale comprises semantic factors, the medium scale is formed by social factors, and the small scale includes physical and functional-behavioral aspects (Heidari et al., 2023). Within this network, social factors are represented by institutions, which serve as the medium scale responsible for organizing and coordinating the large and small scales. In sociological definitions, an institution is understood as a network of processes and complex social dynamics that are oriented toward specific objectives, forming a cohesive whole. Since these processes are realized through various means, the term “social institution” extends beyond its original meaning to encompass the locations, buildings, and other resources necessary for these processes (Ogburn & Nimkoff, 2009, 315). Therefore, an institution comprises a collection of behavioral settings characterized by clear boundaries, normative order, categorized responsibilities, communication systems, and structured membership (Lang, 2011, 190).

As outlined in these definitions, an institution¹ is a network of both explicit and implicit relationships that

links the large-scale semantic factors of connection between buildings and urban environments—often unknown—with small-scale factors, namely the objective characteristics of functional and formal activities or prevailing behavioral patterns within the physical environment. While normative theories of architecture and urban design have extensively addressed the influence of physical design on human activities, the nature and role of the concept of institution in establishing connections between buildings and urban settings have not been adequately explored. Critically examining the one-dimensional relationship between the physical environment and its impact on institutions—an outcome of the positivist thinking of modern science—emerges as one of the objectives of this study.

To address this gap, the study will review existing literature and provide a brief overview of recent field studies concerning building edges. This will lead to the formulation of the concepts of non-institution and its role in establishing an immanent connection between buildings and urban environments as the theoretical framework of the study. Subsequently, the developed model will be tested as a hypothesis within the urban context. Thus, the two variables of form and activity at the edges will initially be observed, analyzed, and studied independently, and then in conjunction with one another within the study area. The results of the field studies lead to an understanding of the formal and functional attributes of institutions, to operationalize the concept of non-institution and outline pathways to achieve it.

Research Background

Among the applied studies conducted on building edges, Jan Gehl’s research titled “Suitable Places to Stand” identifies the most favored spots for standing as adjacent to the columns of porticoes, beneath eaves, and along façades. This study underscores the significance of edges and their pivotal role in establishing spatial connections between buildings and urban environments. The edge effect is rooted in the observation that people tend to pause at the boundaries of spaces (see Gehl, 2017, 84). Tomas Gill Lopez also explored the effects of edge and façade design on pedestrian behavior in bustling urban

streets in his doctoral dissertation. He points out that increased transparency, detail, and recesses in façades generate more activity on the sidewalks in front of these structures (Lopez, 2003).

In his article “Close Encounters with Buildings”, Gehl (2006) defines ground floor façades as a critical link between large and small scales, and between buildings and people. In his study titled “The Importance of Front Yards,” he sought to determine whether semi-private front yards affect street life. The findings revealed that front yards play a substantial role in the social dynamics of streets, prompting the implementation of stricter building regulations to prevent the enclosure of front yards behind walls and fences (Gehl, 2017, 98). However, one aspect Gehl does not address is the role of culture in shaping public life. All of his examples derive from cities in industrialized nations, and the applicability of these models to other cultural contexts is not examined.

Another study conducted in Australia, titled “Life on the edge: The effects of building facade three dimensionality on public social behaviour”, investigated the behaviors of individuals and groups in public spaces and their reactions to architectures with distinct three-dimensional characteristics. The results indicated significant differences in human behavior surrounding these diverse architectural styles, suggesting that building façades can create opportunities for social interactions and activities (Joyce & Guaralda, 2013).

Research examining the relationship between the physical characteristics of edges and activity patterns on sidewalks has yielded similar findings, confirming the direct influence of the formal attributes of edges on activities (Hassan et al., 2019; Heffernan et al., 2014; Simpson et al., 2018).

A review of the existing literature reveals that most studies focus on physical factors and their influence on activity factors, with less attention given to social factors that support these activities. Additionally, all these studies adopt a positivist approach, aiming to confirm or refute the influence of these two sets of factors. The focus on institutions and their role in the connection between buildings and urban environments is a topic that will be elaborated upon in the theoretical foundations.

Theoretical Foundation

• Institutions

The social factors contributing to the connection between buildings and the urban environment reflect the relationships, social interactions, and cultural characteristics of a city which manifest in the form of social interactions and dynamics. According to Henri Lefebvre, the social dimension of space is shaped by the lived experiences of individuals in their daily lives and the prevailing culture, resulting in significant variability depending on the influence of the physical environment and its reciprocal effects (Fazeli, 2012, 64). Fazeli (ibid., 177). posits that this social dimension is formed through the accumulation of memories and collective consciousness rather than merely through the accumulation of buildings, squares, or streets. He argues that a lack of local gatherings weakens a city’s ability to foster memory, leading to a failure of urban residents to communicate in a suitable urban dialect or language.

This indicates that local communities not only facilitate simultaneous gatherings of individuals but also organize interpersonal relationships while addressing their social desires and needs. When individuals share a common space, it enables the acquisition of similar experiences related to their surroundings, creating connections with past generations who shared similar physical realities, as well as with future generations who will have analogous experiences. Therefore, shared experiences arise from communal presence, rituals, public celebrations, and collective thoughts (Madanipour, 2008, 266).

These interconnected concepts—cohesive local communities, shared experiences, rituals and ceremonies, and attention to individual needs—can be framed under the concept of institutions. Defined as networks of complex social processes and dynamics oriented toward specific goals, institutions also refer to the locations and structures necessary for these processes (Ogburn & Nimkoff, 2009, 315).

Thus, the connection between buildings and the urban environment signifies the presence of social institutions that support human activities at the edges. This implies that the manifestation of activities must be underpinned by community and social foundations. Oldenburg introduces this concept as

the “Third Place,” encompassing various public spaces that welcome voluntary gatherings, separate from home and work, which are often casual and informal (Carmona et al., 2009, 226). In essence, the Third Place is a space in the city that evokes a sense of belonging, free from bureaucratic constraints, providing a feeling of emancipation and choice (Heidari et al., 2023).

Accordingly, institutions possess both unmeasurable and measurable dimensions. On one hand, they stem from fundamental human aspirations that are universal² - such as the desire to learn, to live, to meet, to inquire, and to express (Norberg-Schulz, 2014). On the other hand, they consist of behavioral settings characterized by clear boundaries, normative order, categorized responsibilities, and structured membership, indicating their measurable nature.

However, since institutions have specific forms, activities, order, purposes, and responsibilities for their members, once established, they can become stabilized. This stabilization often leads to a disconnection from the unmeasurable dimensions. Thereafter, the institution continues to exist in the form of a formal entity, primarily focused on preserving its existence and vitality. For instance, the institution of learning transforms into a school, while the institution of the neighborhood evolves into a residential complex, each with defined spatial programs and hierarchical structures. Stabilization of the institution implies its integration into a dispositive (dispositive) or a grid of intelligibility³, producing specific, defined, and predictable forms and activities through supervision and control. From the perspective of this study, the coexistence of formal institutions inevitably results in a disjunction between buildings and the urban environment.

•Immanency: an approach to emancipate the concept of institutions

When discussing immanency, the notion is that humans, as subjects, engage in a lived experience that encompasses a network of influences and susceptibilities, where no aspect of this existence can be separated (Gahreman, 2020, 205). Immanent existence is perceived as an experience through which

the subject freely understands and expresses the truth, through the relationships they establish with themselves and others, without being compelled by external forces of domination to act in a certain way (ibid., 206). In this context, immanency is defined in contrast to the concept of the “transcendent,” indicating that thought is considered immanent when it is not transcendent. What is meant by transcendent is what does not exceed the limits of possible knowledge. To achieve an immanent science, one must consciously avoid all self-evident or foundational principles, thereby constructing a framework devoid of fixed and concrete starting points (Shakeri & Mirzaee, 2015).

Accordingly, in a transcendent approach, institutions possess defined forms, activities, order, objectives, and categorized responsibilities for their members. Once established, they become capable of stabilization, as their primary goal is to generate power around the produced concept through repetition. This leads to a disconnection from the unmeasurable dimension. Thereafter, the institution continues to exist in the form of a formal entity focused on preserving its existence and vitality. Stabilization of the institution implies its integration into a grid of intelligibility, producing specific, defined, and predictable forms and activities through oversight and control. Michel Foucault argues that the power generated within the network of meaning is expanding due to its efficiency. Consequently, for a subject, there is no escape from the control of the grid of intelligibility. It is in fact the escape from the transcendent that leads Giorgio Agamben to conclude that only an immanent philosophy can confront this threat (Frost, 2019) - that is, constructing a form of life that exists immanently, relying on the grid of intelligibility rather than any form of transcendence (ibid.). Agamben suggests that this form of life can be achieved through “profanation”. The act of profanation serves as a means to repurpose elements trapped within the constraints of the grid of intelligibility, akin to a movement that can reclaim something rendered inaccessible due to excessive sanctity of meaning for the free use of humanity (Boano, 2017, 120). The possibility of profanation implies the salvation of a use that is “neither natural nor beneficial”, a use that has been lost

over time. The outcome of this is inoperative power tools that are in favor of a future that exists but is yet to be realized (*ibid.*, 121).

In this study, the concept of immanent connection between buildings and the city refers to making “institution” inoperative and its profanation from everything imposed by the logic of the grid of intelligibility; it is produced from the relationship of the institution with what is absent, namely the “non-institution” or “anti-institution.” Thus, immanent connection involves making all formal institutions inoperative to regain access to the unmeasurable realm that existed before the formation and definition of social institutions, a time when only fundamental human desires were present.

Therefore, the immanent connection between buildings and the urban environment signifies the presence of social institutions to control and manage space, while simultaneously indicating the absence of institutions or the existence of non-institutions in the spaces between buildings, fostering a sense of emancipation. Just as institutions oversee the form and manner of activities, non-institutions relate to core human desires and existential needs, negating every produced form and activity while aspiring toward unmeasurable realms. The focus of non-institutions on unplanned activities, clear and ambiguous boundaries, repetitive and dynamic nature, solitude, and collectivity embodies a continuous sense of being at home. Based on the above, the theoretical framework of this study can be illustrated as shown in Fig. 1.

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research method to achieve its objectives, as it focuses on studying phenomena in their natural settings. Since research methodology consists of three levels: paradigm, strategy, and tactics (*Groat & Wang, 2011*), the leading paradigm of this study is emancipatory, characterized by criteria of quality that include historical situatedness, eroding ignorance, and transformational impulses to foster change and growth in the field.

The strategy is the overall plan or framework for the study. The current study utilizes two strategies: ethnography and grounded theory. In the first part,

ethnography was employed to identify human activities at building edges, aiming to provide an internal understanding of stationary activities at the edges through descriptive observations. In the subsequent step, grounded theory was used to identify, analyze, and evaluate the formal attributes present at the edges of the studied area. In grounded theory, the researcher sought to allow the natural conditions of the environment to dictate the data, free from preconceived beliefs or notions, and then develop a theory from the data (*ibid.*, 180).

Tactics represent a more detailed level of methodology, also referred to as skilled actions. In this study, the researcher was engaged in a cyclical and interactive process of data collection, summarization, presentation, and evaluation. The reason is direct awareness⁴ can capture authentic ideas and reactions regarding successive observations. Thus, observation was the primary tactic for data collection, conducted through purposeful walking within the study area. The method is determined based on the time taken to walk at an average speed, passing by all relevant sections of the study area, within an average duration of one hour.

The technique used for data collection involved recording behavioral flows and audio during the walking process. Following the visit, the recorded audio is transcribed and converted into text, which is then implemented onto maps using specific symbols that represent the activities observed.

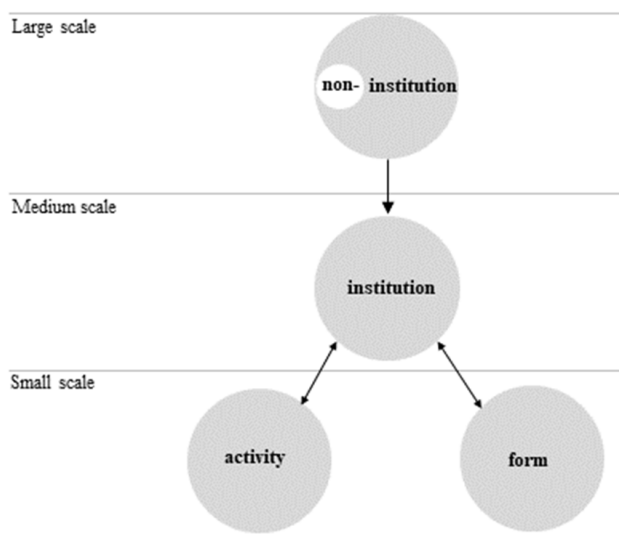


Fig. 1. Theoretical Framework: Immanent Connection between Buildings and the City. Source: Authors.

Study Area

The study area encompasses the edges of Farahzadi Boulevard in Shahrak-e Gharb in Tehran, extending approximately 500 meters from the San'at Square to Ivanak Boulevard, intersecting with Hassan Saif and Simaye Iran streets. Notable buildings within this area include the commercial centers of Milad Noor, Lidoma, Setin, Platin, the Jame' Mosque of Shahrak-e Gharb, and the Islamic Azad University, Central Tehran Unit—specifically, the Payambar-e Azam building. All the mentioned structures have been constructed in the past 30 years. Additionally, residential villas and the Pardisan residential complex, which are over 50 years old, are located in proximity to this area. The area's accessibility to metro, taxi, and bus stations is another significant feature.

• Research Units

To study and analyze human activities at the edges of the identified buildings, the researcher conducted several driving and walking surveys within the study area. Ultimately, it was decided to divide the area into nine sections. The boundaries are defined as follows: the eastern edge begins just after the Platin commercial center, the western edge is at Ivanak Boulevard, the northern edge is at the start of Hassan Saif Street and slightly above the Jame' Mosque, and the southern edge is at the university entrance on Simaye Iran Street. These nine sections are designated as A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, and I (Fig. 2). In sections that were longer or located at intersections of two streets, where it was not possible to observe the entire edge from a specific viewpoint, smaller sections were created.

Findings

To describe and understand human activities, observations were conducted during six walking sessions at various times of the day throughout the week and on weekends. These observations aimed to reflect the flow of life and activity within the study area. Two approaches were employed for this purpose: narrative writing of space and behavioral mapping. The narrative notes not only describe the observations but also incorporate a storytelling perspective to establish a human and

emotional connection with the phenomena and locations. This narrative unfolds as the author moves through the space over time, leading to the title “spatial stories.” A summary of the spatial stories from each of the six visits is provided in Table 1.

After composing the spatial stories for each visit, the texts were reviewed multiple times. Subsequently, the stories were simplified to focus on stationary activities for each visit. These stationary activities were then implemented onto a foundational map prepared for this purpose. The behavioral maps provide a snapshot of the location at specific moments. Fig. 3 illustrates the behavioral mapping for Visit Number 6, where the starting point of the author's movement and the path taken is highlighted in orange.

In the next step, repetitive activities identified in the visits were removed by reviewing the behavioral maps, resulting in a list of stationary activities within the study area, as detailed in Fig. 4.

One of the most critical stages in qualitative research is identifying a classification that encompasses the diversity of recorded data, which in this study pertains to categorizing types of stationary human activities. Two researchers who have categorized activities during their field studies are Jan Gehl and Vikas Mehta. Jan Gehl proposes a classification dividing activities in public spaces into three categories: optional, necessary, and social (Gehl & Svarre, 2016, 17). Vikas Mehta, focusing on social activities, introduces a tripartite classification comprising passive activities, fleeting social activities, and active social activities (Mehta, 2019, 171).



Fig. 2. Study Area and Research Units. Source: Authors.

Table 1. Excerpt from the spatial story. Source: Authors.

Visit Number	Summary of Spatial Story
First Visit - Friday, 04/01/2023, 18:40-19:40 Weekend Evening	... In this vibrant space, I walk among street vendors toward Lidoma. At Lidoma's Edge, two people are dancing and performing art as music plays. The sound of music and the young audience add warmth to this winter evening. The performance, along with the spectators' engagement, revitalizes this area, fostering interaction among those captivated by the same event.
Second Visit -Monday, 23/01/2023, 16:00-17:00 Mid-Week Evening	... I cross the pedestrian bridge in front of Lidoma and head north along Farahzadi Boulevard. A funeral ceremony is taking place in the mosque, and under the bridge, two individuals are waiting. Fifteen people have formed a circle, and engaged in conversation. A shoemaker has set up shop in front of the pedestrian bridge. I pass by the library without observing any activities. I continue towards Setin, where one person is standing at the parking lot's entrance smoking a cigarette. The car exhibition on the ground floor of the Setin complex is open, yet there is still no activity in front of it...
Third Visit - Thursday, 02/02/2023, 18:30-19:30 Weekend Evening	... I walk into the alley beside Milad Noor. It's a passageway for both transit and pause. At the end, there's a restaurant with tables where two people are dining. I enter a residential area. This alley, south of Milad Noor, serves as a backyard for the commercial complex but lacks a view of the city's life. Nonetheless, it could be a good hangout spot. I climb the stairs at the end of the alley, reaching the boundary between Milad Noor and the power control building, where the vendors' setup ends...
Fourth Visit - Saturday, 04/02/2023, 11:00-12:00 Morning of a Holiday	... I start walking down Hassan Saif Street. The weather is sunny, and the sky is blue. The sound of birds is heard—a delightful holiday. Today marks the birthday of Imam Ali (AS) and Father's Day. The southern section of Hassan Saif offers a beautiful view of Milad Tower and Platin Center. I arrive at the Jame' Mosque, which appears to be hosting a funeral; groups of people dressed in black are heading toward the mosque. Two women wait at the women's entrance, while three others converse nearby...
Fifth Visit - Sunday, 12/03/2023, 12:00-13:00 Midday on a Workday	... I continue my walk toward the university along the sidewalk. Unlike previous visits, the university parking gate is open. I noticed a small room has been set up inside the parking area for the New Year, featuring a temporary exhibition selling various holiday goods. This minimal presence adds a pleasant diversity to the otherwise closed-off area. I wonder why such activities don't occur throughout the year. Why is the university closed off from the city? ...
Sixth Visit - Sunday, 19/03/2023, 19:30-20:30 Evening Before End of the Year	... I sit on the steps at the entrance of Milad Noor in the open air. These steps provide a good view of the pedestrian walkway, vehicle traffic on the street, and the Setin complex across the road. I reflect that people seize every opportunity to be present in the space and city. They seek places for recreation and enjoyment while shopping—a venue to spend time on an evening, whether busy or tranquil, a place that feels unique, where they can be together without disturbance, a place like this, with all its imperfections...

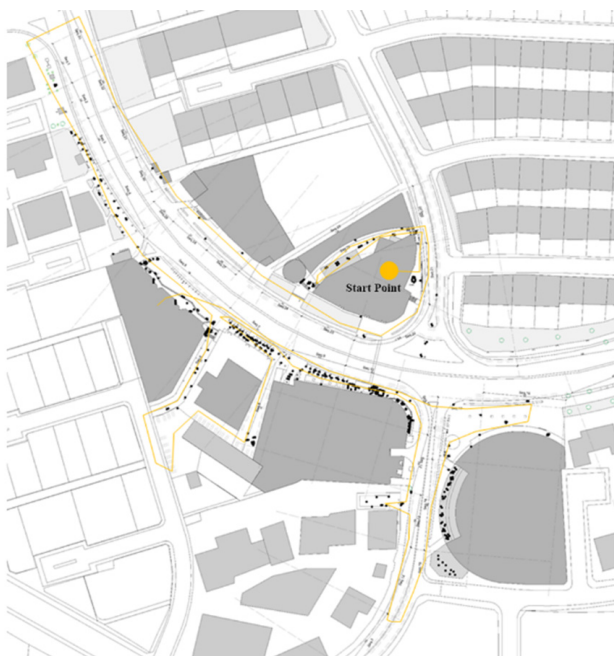


Fig. 3. Behavioral Mapping of Visit 6. Source: Authors.

The parameters used by these two researchers for classifying activities include individual intent, whether an activity is individual or collective, the duration of the activity, the physical characteristics of the location, local

rules and customs, and the level of intimacy among individuals. Upon reviewing the observations and the list of stationary activities, it appears that suitable physical and environmental conditions for active social activities relate to the concept of supportiveness. Generally, individuals feel more comfortable in places they are familiar with and where they have a history with both the people and the spaces. A deeper familiarity fosters comfort and ease, while unfamiliarity induces feelings of strangeness. Another significant topic is the motivation behind activities. Motivation refers to the essence and existential desire driving an activity. On a large or unmeasurable scale, this motivation pertains to how closely the purpose of the activity aligns with fundamental human aspirations, while on a small or material scale, it addresses how well it fulfills immediate individual needs. For instance, the presence of a bench may satisfy a short-term need for sitting and resting; however, when sitting is accompanied by a conversation between two or more individuals, a stronger motivational aspect emerges. The next parameter for categorizing and defining

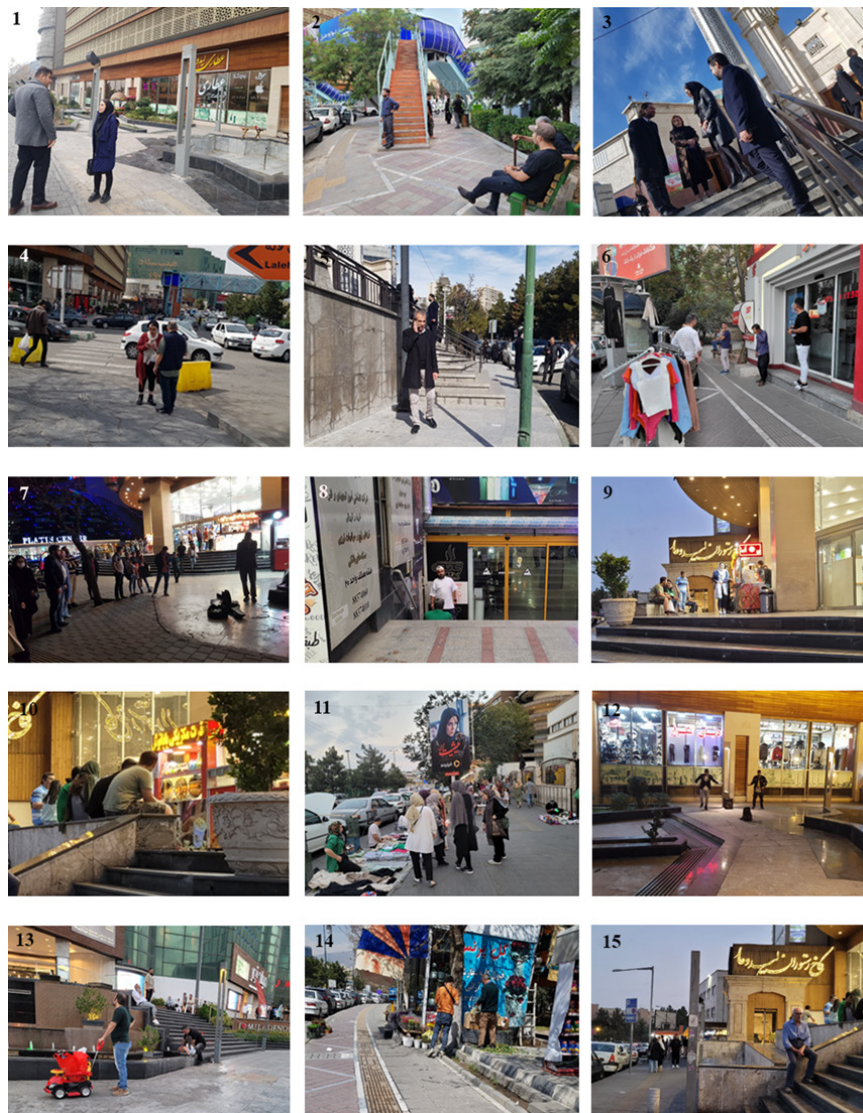


Fig. 4. List of Stationary Activities. (1) Standing and conversing; (2) Sitting and conversing; (3) Conversing after a ceremony; (4) Working on a cellphone; (5) Calling (6) Waiting; (7) Watching (attentively observing an event); (8) Smoking; (9) Shopping; (10) Eating; (11) Shopping alongside; (12) Performing (dancing, playing music, and singing); (13) Playing; (14) Working next to; (15) Resting on. Source: Authors.

activities is time. Time encompasses both the duration of an activity and the timing or frequency of events. Initially, the duration of activities can be long, medium, or short; in the second sense, the focus is on the repeatability of a specific activity in a location. This refers to how much the nature of the activity occurs randomly and lacks dependence on the location. Thus, the three characteristics of familiarity, motivation, and time combine with varying intensities to form three spectra of stationary activities: fleeting, receptive, and enduring activities (Table 2).

Fleeting activities are short-term and random, reflecting minimal individual connection to the space, driven by the need to address a momentary

issue; examples include talking on a mobile phone or withdrawing cash from an ATM.

Receptive activities occur in an environment that is welcoming and repeatable; they are not necessarily directly connected to the interior of a building, but there is a reason for their occurrence at a specific point, meaning they are accepted by people or groups and may foster some interaction among individuals, although they do not establish deep connections with the environment. Consequently, these activities may not occur in the same location the next day or at another time.

Enduring activities are fundamentally formed through a deep connection with the environment, are longer in duration, and involve interaction among individuals through

Table 2. Categorization of Activities Accompanied by Pauses at Edges. Source: Authors.

Scale	Institutional Activity Attributes			Type of Activity	Activity Examples
	Time	Familiarity	Motivation		
Small	Short-Random	Low	Needs	Fleeting	- Working on a cellphone - Calling - Withdrawing cash from an ATM - Using a vehicle - Being in space with a pet - Standing and conversing - Conversing after ceremony
Medium	Repeatable	Moderate	Desires	Receptive	- Waiting - Smoking - Shopping - Resting on
Large	Timeless - at all times	Deep	Existential Wants	Enduring	- Sitting and conversing - Eating - Performing art - Drinking tea - Playing - Working next to

conversation, observation of a fixed scene, or simply being among others. The primary motivation for these activities can be described as the realization of individuals’ desires and existential needs. The essence of enduring activities lies in the comfort and vitality of the space.

Simultaneously, while studying the activity attributes of institutions, cross-sectional slices were prepared to identify the formal attributes of each of the 33 sections within the study area. These slices examined the relationship between the interior and exterior of buildings and their connection to the street and pedestrian pathways, detailing the spatial attributes of the edges while briefly describing the observed flow of life within each section. Moreover, to simultaneously analyze the attributes of form and activity, the observed activities at the edges were marked with a red line on the slices. In this depiction, nodes signify the intersection of form, activity, and stationary pause points while the size of these nodes indicates the intensity and extent of the observed activity. A summary of the analyses conducted is presented in [Table 3](#).

Based on the analyses conducted, the components that constitute the form at building edges are categorized into three levels and three scales: small, medium, and large. The small scale refers to the details and elements of space at the building edge; the medium scale encompasses spatial characteristics of the edge, such as permeability, transparency, and enclosure; while the

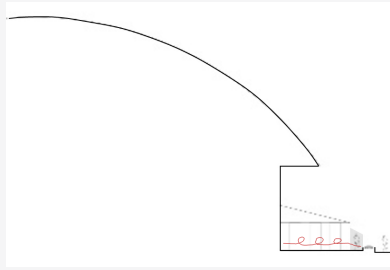
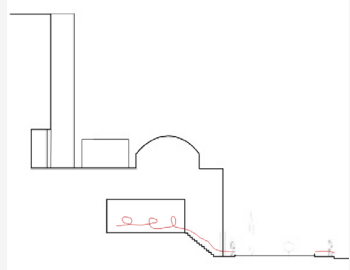
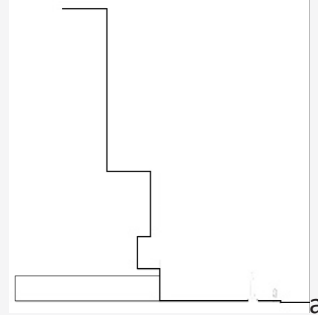
large scale relates to the building’s position in the city and its relation with its surroundings, as well as how it is perceived. These can be defined as follows:

- Details: Architectural and urban elements are located at the edge, such as benches, platforms, trees, and building facades.
 - Transparency: The extent of visibility from inside to outside and vice versa. It creates a sense of awareness and perception of the internal flow of the building.
 - Permeability: The capacity and extent of entry points into the building, reflecting the ease of access to the interior.
 - Enclosure: The coverage of the building’s edge area. An enclosed space provides shelter from wind and rain while reducing visibility to the edge, allowing individuals to seek refuge within a protected area.
 - Relation: This refers to the pattern of the building’s relations with the city, including both the pattern of entry into the building from the city and its relation with adjacent buildings and streets.
 - Perspective: This encompasses both the depth and diversity of views towards the building and the surrounding landscapes, as well as how the building presents a new façade as the observer moves through the space.
- Based on the aforementioned points, three activity indicators and six formal attributes can be defined for the institution: activity attributes are familiarity, time, and motivation. Formal attributes are details, permeability, transparency, enclosure, relation, and perspective.

Table 3. Excerpt from the Analysis of Formal Attributes in the Study Area. Source: Authors.

		Sections of the Study Area		
		Section 5	Section 11	Section 17
Cross section				
A brief description of the flow of life within each section		<p>In this section, the pedestrian zone serves as a passage for urban pedestrians. The entrance staircase, with its elongated form, not only provides access to the building but also serves as a resting and seating area for conversations, dining, and sometimes for watching. The platform, where the most stationary pauses occur, is a confined space at the entrance, designated for sitting, resting, standing, and waiting.</p>	<p>The staircase and platform at the entrance of the shopping center serve as the main access point into the complex, while the food vendors on the platform provide a space for both group and individual dining. The entrance acts like a circular center; as one moves away from it, the crowding and density of people gradually decrease.</p>	<p>The entrance to the building is located in this section, where significant effort has been made to enclose the space with the creation of an entrance arcade. Some people gather under this arcade, mostly shopkeepers who come here to rest and smoke. However, the spatial feel in this section is neither lively nor attractive. One can hear and see the sounds of life and chatter from across the street, specifically from Lidoma.</p>
		Section 7	Section 9	Section 10
Cross section				
A brief description of the flow of life within each section		<p>If the Power control building's courtyard were open to the public, it would be considered a special event. However, since this has not happened, the flow of life along the edge is divided into two parts: administrative hours and non-administrative hours. During administrative hours, it serves solely as a passage with no stationary pauses, while after hours, especially on weekends and toward dusk, it becomes a space for street vendors. The proximity of these vendors along the two passages of Milad Noor and Lidoma creates a larger market with a greater variety of products and audiences. The hustle and bustle of street vendors and passing shoppers creates a vibrant urban atmosphere.</p>	<p>The food stall is a significant spatial event in this area, where individuals can be seen buying and eating, either seated or standing, in a scattered manner. Street vendors are also visible in front of the Power control building along the edge of this building, especially on weekends and during the evenings.</p>	<p>During the day, this edge is a wide pedestrian walkway. However, in the evening, especially on weekends, the nighttime lighting, the enclosure created by the bridge, the street vendors, and the evening bustle create a vibrant urban atmosphere. Particularly in this section, live performances of dance and music by young people cause many passersby to pause, adding a unique dynamism to the site.</p>

Rest of Table 3.

Sections of the Study Area			
	Section 19	Section 23	Section 27
Cross section			
A brief description of the flow of life within each section	<p>This section is about the ground floor entrance of the restaurant. The restaurant is easily visible from the outside. However, it's important to note that the restaurant is linked to the building like an island, operating independently without a direct connection to the building. As a result, it doesn't clearly define the building's edge. This arrangement creates a gradual transition at the boundary between private and public streets, which can be both intriguing and somewhat ambiguous.</p>	<p>Even though finding the library is our main priority in this section, there is no indication of its presence in the activities happening at the edge. Specifically, there is no activity at the edge with a pause.</p>	<p>Due to the ground floor usage of this edge, which is a car exhibition, there is hardly any stationary activity observed in this section. Of course, the history of the space also plays a role, as the building is a newly constructed complex and is generally not well-known to the public.</p>

Discussion

The cumulative frequency of all observed stationary activities during the six visits can be illustrated for each of the 33 sections, as shown in Fig. 5. This chart indicates that, overall, the highest number of stationary enduring activities occurred in section 5, which is the entrance of Milad Noor. Although the edges of the Lidoma commercial center supported the highest total of stationary activities—approximately 29% of all activities—most of these were of the receptive type.

Similarly, at the edges of the power control building (part C), the majority of observed activities were also receptive, with a noticeable increase after working hours and on weekends. In essence, receptive activities represent a medium scale; they are not random and indicate a degree of familiarity and prior experience with the space, yet there exists only a minimal relationship between these activities and the interior of the building.

Another important point is that in part G, which encompasses the edges of the Jame' Mosque where 17% of the total stationary activities were observed and was ranked in the third place for most frequency, a very low number of enduring activities were recorded.

This suggests that the mosque primarily focuses on providing services to the city in alignment with its predetermined objectives, potentially distancing itself from certain spontaneous interactions.

Analyzing the formal attributes in Segments 5, 11, and 17, which exhibited the highest enduring stationary activities, reveals the following insights:

- All these sections demonstrate permeability into the building.
- Transparency, as the concept of visibility from inside to outside and vice versa, is relative.
- The edges in all sections are reported as semi-enclosed.
- The access pattern in these sections is structured as “entry - entry platform - staircase - pedestrian walkway,” indicating a spatial hierarchy for entry and a designated area for stationary pauses.
- The depth of view on these edges is either deep or moderate.

In contrast, sections 7, 9, and 10, which showcased the highest receptive activities, have the following formal attributes:

- None of these sections demonstrate permeability.
- They are transparent and feature façades that allow visibility into the interior.
- While not enclosed, some are partially surrounded by

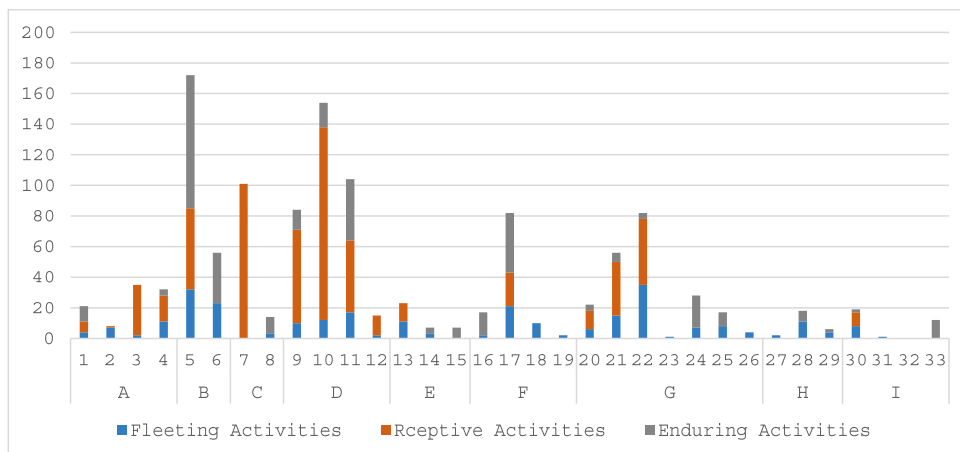


Fig. 5. Cumulative Frequency of Stationary Activities at the Edges of the Study Area. Source: Authors.

non-architectural elements like pedestrian bridges or trees, creating a conducive environment for receptive activities.

- The access pattern is characterized as “wall - pedestrian walkway” or “showcase windows- pedestrian walkway,” indicating no direct connection to the interior and ensuring quick access for passersby.

A noteworthy discussion arises when considering sections 19, 27, and 23, which reported the lowest activity levels. Section 19, located at the fourth section of the Platin commercial center where the Behzad restaurant entrance is situated, features architectural details like a wooden colonnade. Although the restaurant’s body is transparent and enclosed by the colonnade, the pedestrian walkway’s depth and visibility are short. The relation pattern with the city is “showcase window - pedestrian walkway,” and it is not located in the proximity of the entrance of the commercial center or the traffic of other individuals.

Section 23 is the entrance to the library, situated within the complex of the Jame’ Mosque. This section has permeability but lacks transparency, providing no awareness of the library or its activities from the outside. While this edge does not create an enclosure, there is a wide pedestrian walkway in front. The spatial relation is characterized as a “wall-pedestrian walkway,” leading to a sense of isolation since it is not on the main route for pedestrians.

Section 27, located at the edges of the Setin commercial center, exhibits both permeability and high transparency on its ground floor, with a broad pedestrian walkway in front. However, these features are not supported by the ground floor’s use as a car exhibition, as no

activities were reported in front of this edge during any observations.

From the discussions above, it appears that stationary activities occur in spaces and points where a convergence between form and activity takes place. This convergence reflects the intersection of familiarity, time, and motivation with form and its attributes. This convergence and simultaneity is termed “institution” in this study.

In essence, familiarity, time, and motivation represent the individuals moving through the space, pausing at certain points, and sharing experiences or stories. Each pause in the space serves a purpose and creates an institutional moment. In this sense, enduring activities materialize where there is a more profound connection between the institution and the interior of the building, thereby enhancing or sustaining the activities within.

In contrast, receptive activities exhibit a weaker connection to the interior but are somewhat supported by it, encountering no significant opposition to their occurrence. These largely unplanned receptive activities infuse warmth into the space, offering diversity and varying density, yet may diminish to zero due to conflict with the interior core at another moment. Fleeting activities generally have little serious connection to the interior but play a crucial role in initiating receptive and enduring activities.

Thus, the institution represents the convergence of form and activity that manifests in space. Prior to its realization, the institution exists as a “non-institution”, akin to our metaphors⁵ and fantasies, or the narratives we carry in our minds as we navigate our lives - going to work, attending

university, or shopping. Non-institutions are fluid; they accompany us from home and are transported from one space to another. When they are expressed through an activity, a convergence of time and place occurs, transforming them into an institution, and allowing them to be recognized. Consequently, at any moment, a new institution can be created. Non-institutions resemble bubbles surrounding individuals, carried along as they move from place to place. These bubbles possess potential forms that become actualized through an activity in the current time and space.

Based on this understanding, the attributes of an institution are fundamentally qualitative factors that can be perceived through the direct and unmediated experience of space. These factors collectively describe the characteristics of the institution and serve as a bridge connecting to non-institutions. As long as established institutions find opportunities and permission to interact with the hard core of the building’s interior, enduring stationary activities will occur. Enduring activities take place where the formal attributes of institutions engage with human aspirations and are designed for human presence.

Therefore, the influential formal components of the immanent connection between the interior of buildings and the city can be defined as follows:

- Details: Ensuring an unfamiliar human-scale experience.
- Transparency: Providing unfamiliar awareness of the interior.
- Enclosure: Allowing for unfamiliar refuge and spatial dominance.
- Permeability: Facilitating unfamiliar exploration possibilities.
- Relation: Enabling unfamiliar experiences and movement.
- Perspective: Offering an unfamiliar breadth of view (Fig. 6).

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there was no conflict for them in conducting this research.

Endnotes

1. The Persian word “Nahaad”(institution) literally means nature, essence, and also organization, foundation, basis, ceremony, rite, and customs (Moin, 1992). This word is synonymous with the English word “nature” and derives from the Indo-European root “gen”. The English equivalent of this word, “institution”,

also refers to a custom, practice, relationship, or important behavioral pattern in the life of a community or society, an established organization or foundation, particularly one dedicated to education, public services, or culture (American Heritage Dictionary, 2001).

2. According to Louis Kahn, human institutions stem from fundamental human desires. Kahn introduced the school as an example of institutions that arise from the desire to learn (Gharibpour, 2010).

3. The term *dispositif* or “the grid of intelligibility” is a key concept in modern power analysis, introduced and developed by Foucault in 1975, which has helped him track the various ways that humans, as subjects and objects, transform relationships of power (Boano, 2017, 116). A *dispositif* literally refers to anything that has the capacity to capture, direct, determine, separate, model, control, or secure gestures, behaviors, and ideas or discourses of living beings (Agamben, 2015).

4. The term “direct awareness” refers to a type of awareness that is not predefined or specified. Rumi expresses this idea as follows: “The soul is nothing but awareness in trial / Whoever has more awareness, their soul is more.”

5. Metaphor derives from the Indo-European root “*bher*” and is synonymous with “transfer” (American Heritage Dictionary, 2001). In ancient Greece, metaphor was a means by which people moved through the city. This means that in reality, metaphors and stories, which are metaphors themselves, transport people daily, shape places, and connect them (De Certeau, 1988, 51).

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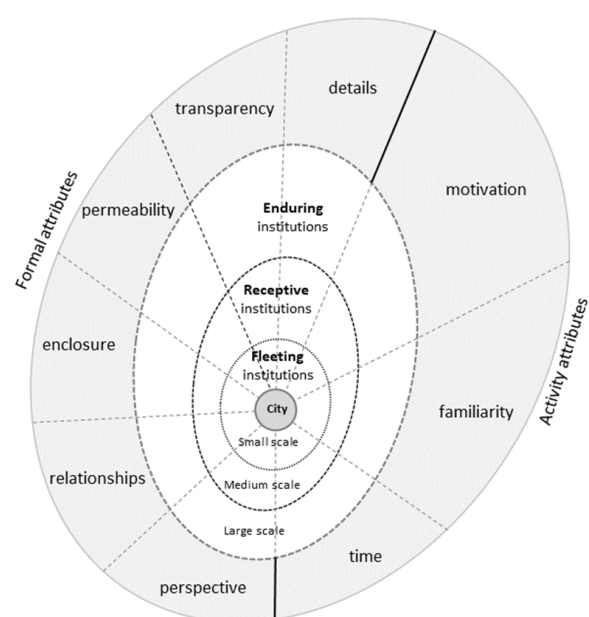


Fig. 6. Formation of Institutions from the Interaction of Formal and Activity Attributes at Small, Medium, and Large Scales. Source: Authors.

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