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Occupants creating their own spaces without thinking as a real designer: A revolt and a routine

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Abstract

Urban design literature refers to the spatial characteristics of places that are transformed into behavioral patterns through regular use in an open space and how they are used. However, they do not mention the characteristics of the spaces which are transformed into places of short-term interaction with extraordinary and innovative uses, their intended use and the relationship between the people. This study aims to reveal the differences between the regular uses of urban open spaces and the unusual and innovative (insinuate) uses and the spatial characteristics and behavioral characteristics of the places created by the users. Half-participant behavior was observed in the study. In order to determine the behaviors at the observation points, the observations were designed as 15 minutes observation and 10 minutes break for 3 days (75 minutes). While the physical properties of the spaces chosen for behavioral patterns and unusual uses were similar, it was found that they differed in terms of spatial definitions, duration of use of space and relationships between people. The study of the disciplines that are interested in urban design only in open spaces, and the inability to include the effects of this on human behaviors and the infiltration into the space cause the emergence of gaps in such studies. With this study, it was concluded that urban open spaces, where both infiltration and behavior patterns were made together, were more effective in exchanging ideas and making joint activities.

Keywords
Behavioral patterns, Unusual uses, Revolt, Routine.

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1. Introduction

Throughout history, individuals had traditional rituals in daily life. These rituals included going to work, conducting social activities that are attractive to them in their spare time since they are social creatures and coming back home. Previous studies indicated various actions, movements and activities within these daily life routines or accustomedness. Lefebvre (1992) likened the everyday life routines mentioned above to fertile lands, and as a structure capable of revealing different things.

In fact, daily life in urban open spaces is the foundation of renewal and resistance. The daily life routines or resistance of the users in urban open spaces emerge due to the regular occupancy in these locations and develop into a continuous behavioral pattern (repeating activities) (Simpson, 2011). Regeneration includes various users, uses and activities that revolt against the existing order within these behavioral patterns (Certeau, 1988; Simpson, 2011; Kärrholm, 2007).

The present study aimed to demonstrate the properties of the places created by the occupants through regular use and revolts and accompanying activities and behavior through observations.

1.1. Revolt in urban open spaces: Creating own places through spatial insinuate

The disruption of the general order in a space by insinuate and intervention by street artists, vendors, etc. except for daily use and routine, without taking over the entire space is a revolt against the present order (Certeau, 1988). This revolt allows for the production, reproduction or representation of new places within the space (Simpson, 2011). This could sometimes include a process compatible with the environment and in other times a process where physical environment and locations are occupied. However, what is important is to orientation the built environment based on the required meaning and practices. (Edinger, 2014; Lydon and Garcia, 2015).

Certeau (1988) and Kärrholm, (2007) described this revolt as a spatial tactic. Temporary occupant interventions (by vendors-musicians-painters, activist groups, individuals, etc.) by changing the spatial function in daily routine allow the creation of transient representative spaces via invasion, nesting, and stamping. The tactic is the action of the powerless occupant (Kärrholm, 2007; Fabian and Samson, 2015; Lydon and Garcia, 2015; Kaya and Görgün, 2017) and includes demands within the context of the daily activities and under present circumstances. Thus, the production of the tactical space by groups or individuals through marking a space is more associated with the relationships established with the place (Kärrholm, 2005).

Occupants interfere with physical positions similar to other founders of the space and create their own transient places in the space sometimes due to the lack of spatial organization and sometimes due to their desire to have power over the space (Henk de Haan, 2005; Pfeifer, 2013; Enigbokan, 2016). Thus, the user organizes and dialectically differentiates the space rendered as her or his own based on the space of others. (Scholar, 1990). This is not an ordinary event. In everyday life, these extraordinary users and uses attract the passers-by, make them stop, linger around and allow them to conduct unplanned interacting with this unexpected event (Simpson, 2011).

When a street artist creates her or his own stage to perform in contradiction with the daily use of a space, unrelated groups and individuals stop and start to watch the artist to see what is going on and quickly form a half circle around the street artist. Within this enclosure, the street scene produced by the artist forms a center that attracts the attention of other passers-by, and other individuals tend to quit their jobs and follow this community (Simpson, 2011). Simultaneously, these transient scenes include organizations that allow people to stand side by side and face to face and to establish short-term interactions (Harrison-Peppper, 1990). The improvised standing, watching and interaction behavior created by the revolt initiated by the street artists spreads.

Thus, the places, where the revolt is conducted, do not allow obligatory ac-

tivities such as transportation-walking, but also social activities such as stopping, lingering on, watching people, listening to street artists, observing the environment, and utilizing the space for longer period of time. These activities are important for individuals to establish short-term, passive and one-time weak social relationships with each other (Gehl, 1987; Yuen and Chor, 1998; Kärrholm, 2008; Lofland, 1998). Association of an individual with another is quite important even if this relationship is very short-term (Simpson, 2011). Because, these weak relationships could be used as a first step to establish strong structural interactions (Peters et al., 2010) and provide a relief in the daily routine, and could prevent the formation of tensions (Dines and Cattell, 2006).

Previous studies identified certain environmental characteristics that lead to human-environment interaction in order to allow user intervention and spatial invasion. Alexander et al. (1977), Whyte (1980) and Gehl (2010) and today Mehta (2007, 2013). Researchers such as Aelbrecht (2016) reported that the physical environment in open spaces should include properties such as soft corners, walls, steps, small voids, protrusions, nodes, thresholds, borders, activity pockets, intersections, etc. to allow individuals to interact with the environment. These physical properties allow users to intervene these spaces and assign various uses in addition to the daily activities, thus these spaces where different activities are conducted attract other individuals. Aelbrecht (2016) described these physical properties as spaces caught in the middle and reported that these properties allow the formation of places where planned or unplanned transient events and positive human accumulations could take place.

1.2. Routines in urban open spaces: Creation of own places with behavioral patterns

Behavioral patterns do not develop arbitrarily. They are influenced by the order in the environment (Barker, 1968). The order in the environment includes the opportunities provided by the space, and when these opportunities are compatible with human behavior and meet human requirements, they become permanent behavioral patterns that occur in that environment. Behavioral patterns specific to an environment are not associated with the personal traits of individuals. Thus, users of a space have constant characteristics even when these users change (Mumcu et al., 2013). This could be explained as follows: Humans are different due to their evolutionary structure. Therefore, the presence of differences between their perceptions, preferences and behavior is inevitable. However, certain environmental properties allow similar levels of perception and behavior among occupants (Fry et al. 2009). This is due to the harmony between a particular environment and a particular behavior. In such environments, individuals perceive, interpret and assess the opportunities provided by a location similarly. Consequently, although they have different cultural, personal and psychological characteristics, they exhibit similar behavior and repetitive activities. Thus, these activities become routine behavioral patterns, in other words, daily use.

The diversity of behavioral patterns that occur in a setting varies based on the level of interaction between human and the environment. Settings where high levels of interaction are established include behavioral patterns where various activities take place. Because, in high-interaction locations, humans could establish mental associations or codes about what can be done and where in the long term. For example, use of a building wall on an open space to lean on, sitting, and waiting by the occupants through association allows them to establish short-term communication spaces, independent of the main function of the space.

Various studies reported that the occupants identify their spaces by marking these spaces with their personal belongings, placing them around, to create places where they could organize social relationships (Bäckman and Rundqvist, 2005). In fact, individuals may not intentionally or consciously create places of their own, however they could have been influenced by

planned or rational decisions due to their regular uses. An individual or group could relate a bench, a corner, a restaurant, etc. as a favorite as a place to eat, a place to sit or a place to stand with repetitive uses, could brand the space, and describe the place as their own. Thus, leaving a transient trace on spaces or branding a space or designating a place as a favorite place through human behavior (sitting on a stair/wall, eating and drinking on street furniture) allows the individuals to create their own places (Well, 2000; Aubert-Gamet 1997; Mehta, 2013). As a result of the same behavior repeated by different occupants in a space, the above-mentioned individual attitudes could turn into behavioral patterns in daily life.

This transformation and the routine use of space by individuals means the transformation of space into a place. Because, the most important feature that separates a space from a place is the relationship between individuals and that place (Cresswell, 2004). Designed as an architectural element, the building wall acquires a different dimension due to the relationship the users establish with the wall. If individuals cannot establish this relationship, the location will continue to remain as a space used for transportation. However, the use of a wall by individuals in daily life with repetitive activities renders the space no longer a bordered void, but a meaningful place where people stop at and fulfill their needs (Tuan, 1977; Kyle et al., 2004) and an alive place where various activities are conducted (Cilliers et al., 2015). This leads to the formation of group or individual 'places,' makes these places more attractive and, allows interpersonal interactions (Becker and Coniglio, 1975). By constantly conducting the same activities in spaces and turning these activities into behavioral patterns in the routine of life, individuals transform the spaces into social places where people watch others, talk with them, sit and converse with their friends and that allow them to establish passive, short-term or long-term interactions (Bäckman and Rundqvist, 2005). Whtye, 1980; Mehta, 2007, 2009).

In order for users to routinize a space with repetitive occupancy in the routine of daily life, the space must possess certain features or an order (Kärrholm, 2005). Thus, people could relate these elements to what is adequate and could use them repetitively. In a study where Mehta (2009) investigated the behavioral patterns that form behavior locations with repetitive activities, the properties of spaces that become routine and behavioral patterns were determined as edges, corners, steps, walls, sidewalks, street furniture, commercial dwellings, gathering places, permeability, personalization, and business diversity. In a study, Mumcu et al. (2013) correlated features such as steps and walls with the theory of possibility and demonstrated behavioral patterns and variety of activities that occur in spaces that include these elements.

Literature review demonstrated the characteristics of the locations of daily uses that occurred in urban open spaces, transformed into behavioral patterns and routinized and the locations where individuals penetrate into the space by revolting against the existing order, accompanying activities and interpersonal relationships (Table 1).

The main aim of the present study was to reveal the diversity of spatial occupant use, accompanying activities, relationship diversity with the concepts of behavioral pattern and spatial invasion and to discuss the difference between these concepts based on the opportunities provided by several spatial properties. For this purpose, a detailed literature review was conducted, and

Table 1. *Properties of locations transformed into behavioral patterns and used for spatial insinuate.*

Routines: Behavioral Patterns	**Revolt: Spatial Insinuate**
Spatial properties **Micro-scale properties** (Steps, walls, corners, borders, niches, gaps, protrusions, etc.)	**Spatial properties** Micro-scale properties (Steps, walls, corners, borders, niches, gaps, protrusions, etc.)
Interpersonal relations Primarily among acquaintances • Fleeting relationship (Short-term) • Passive relationship • Enduring relationship (Long-term)	**Interpersonal relations** **Primarily among strangers** • Fleeting relationship (Short-term) • Passive relationship
Spatial definition • Ordinary • Traditional • No striking	**Spatial definition** • Unexpected • Novelty • Striking
Spatial use (form-function-use) • Use limited to function and form • Ordinary activities • Planned activities • Long-term occupancy such as eating-drinking, converse, waiting, sitting, resting,	**Spatial use (form-function-use)** • Flexible use • Diverse use between form and function • Diverse activities • Unplanned, spontaneous activities • Short-term occupancy such as diversion, stopping, watching

similar and different characteristics of these concepts were determined. In the next stage, the study aimed to empirically determine the correlation between these theoretical concepts, spatial properties and the diversity of occupancy through observations conducted at a designated area.

2. Material and method

2.1. Study area

The study material was Uzun Sokak Street located in Trabzon urban center (Figure 1). This street is not only an important center with an active social life, but also the main urban axis that the citizens conduct compulsory activities such as transportation and commute. Uzun Sokak street is an easy to access, safe, close to different points of interest in the urban center and utilized extensively by all in addition to transportation. The fact that it is a pedestrian-only street closed to vehicle traffic and the presence of different businesses and vendors on the street are among the important factors that attract users.

2.2. Method

The most important feature of the behavioral observation technique, which is widely used in the field of environmental psychology, is the fact that it provides the researcher the opportunity to access first-hand data (Düzenli et al., 2010). Observation of human behavior in natural environment is a prerequisite for realistic analysis of these behavior. Therefore, it is the most reliable technique to obtain information on how people behave and utilize the environment (Tarakçı et al., 2018).

Thus, semi-participatory behavior observation technique was adopted in the present study. The observer acted as an occupant of the street without hiding while taking photographs and notes. The observations were conducted by taking photographs and notes at designated locations, and no video was recorded. Observations were conducted in September 2017 and planned as 15-minute observation and 10-minute break between 17.00-19.30 hours. Thus, it was possible to control the continuity of the observed behavior. Observations were conducted for 2 days during the week and 1 day during the weekend.

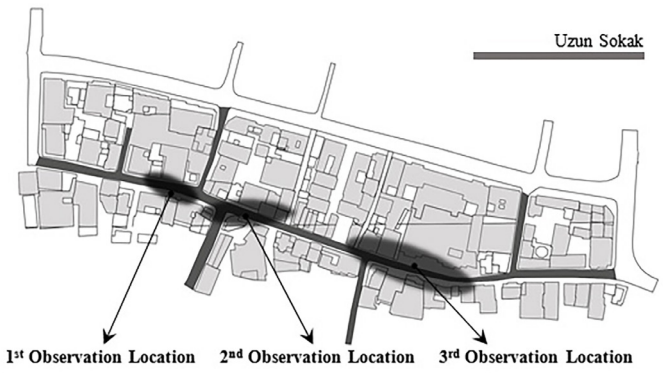


Figure 1. *Study area.*

3. Findings

As a result of the behavioral observations, the spatial invasion in the street and the routine behavioral pattern uses were grouped (Table 2) and conducted activities, human behavior, and spatial definitions were determined.

1. The descriptive properties of the observation area included the wall of an architectural building, the cavities and protrusions on the wall, and a void or focal point that allows various uses that did not extend in a straight linear line in front of the wall. It was determined that the cavities and protrusions on the building wall were used by the occupants for both ordinary daily use and by different users for different purposes.

•It was found that the cavities and protrusions on the building wall were routinely used by the users to lean on, sit, chat, wait, and talk on the phone and these behaviors were turned into ordinary behavior patterns in that place. A total of 88 individuals repeated these behaviors at the observation area during 3 days. User behavior, which became a behavioral pattern, often allowed long-term social relationships between individuals who knew each other. These long-term social relationships included sitting together, chatting, and waiting.

•Passive short-term relationships such as watching each other and exchanging glances were identified among users who conduct behavior that turned into a single behavioral pattern. The occupants were asked how they would define the location. Among the 62 occupants, 66.1% (43

individuals) stated that the location was ordinary, 19.3% (12 people) considered the location modest and the remaining 11.2% stated that the location was routine. The definition of the space utilized by the occupants with daily patterns was ordinary according to the users.

•In all observation locations, only in the first observation point, it was found that street artists utilized the space as their own scene. During the observations (when the street artists were present in the space), short interviews were conducted with the users and they were asked to define the space they were in. Of 62 users, 77.4% (48 people) stated that it was conspicuous, 17.7% (11 people) stated that it was intriguing and the remaining 4.8% stated that it was fun. The fact that street artists used the space to perform in daily use patterns was considered conspicuous by the occupants.

•Among the observation locations, the area where most people stopped at the same time and spent time, and where the highest level of passive and short-term interaction was observed, increasing the vitality index of the space the most, was the location where the street artists invaded the space.

•One hundred twenty-seven individuals stopped to listen to street artists, spent time in the space and did not walk away immediately. Apart from listening to the artists, stopped users generally conducted the activities of taking photographs and singing the song along.

•Apart from the daily routine use of the space, one street vendor placed his products on the curb located in the space, creating his commercial space and introduced an innovative approach to the ordinary spatial use. In total, 24 people stopped in front of this seller and made purchases.

2. The properties of the observation area that defined the space included a gap or focal point that allowed various uses and border furniture units that included plants.

•It was determined that the border furniture unit was routinely used by the users for activities such as sitting, leaning on, resting, and waiting, and these behavior become ordinary be-

Table 2. *The spaces used for spatial insinuate and behavioral patterns and their properties.*

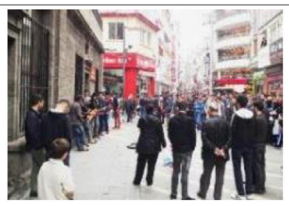
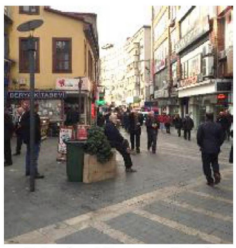
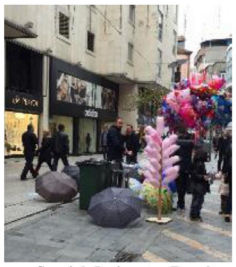
 **Spatial Insinuate: Revolt**	 **Behavioral Patterns: Routine**
Spatial properties Wall, gap, niches	**Spatial properties** Wall, gap, niches
Spatial occupancy (form-function-use) ***Occupant***: Street performer ***Spatial insinuate (use):*** Forming a scene using the building wall, the niche and the space in front of the building ***Activity:*** Unplanned halting, watching, taking photographs, listening, and tipping activities	**Spatial occupancy (form-function-use)** ***Occupant***: Users ***Behavioral pattern (use):*** Forming places where they could sit, rest, chat and wait using the building wall and the niche ***Activity:*** Planned sitting, waiting, resting, chatting, watching, leaning on activities
Interpersonal relations • Fleeting (Short-term) and passive relationships between passer-by strangers (i.e., listening, watching, singing along, eye contact).	**Interpersonal relations** • Enduring (Long term) relationships between generally acquainted individuals (i.e., sitting, chatting, waiting, resting) • Passive relationships between strangers (i.e., monitoring, watching)
Spatial definition Unexpected, Novelty, Striking	**Spatial definition** Ordinary
Observation Findings: Day: Saturday **The time street vendors spent at location**: 75 minutes **Number of individuals who stopped**: Female: 52 Male: 58 Children: 17 **The time individuals spent at the location**: Between 1-5 and 5-10 minutes **Liveliness:** High number of individuals participating in the activities **The number users who invaded the space at this observation location in 3 days** Street performers: 1 (127 users stopped by and interacted with the vendor) Street Vendors: (beret-gloves-hats): 1 (24 users stopped by: 17 females, 7 males)	**Observation Findings: Day:** Friday **Number of individuals who stopped** : Female: 9 Male: 29 **The time individuals spent at the location**: Between 5-10 and 10-15 minutes **Liveliness:** Moderate number of individuals participating in the activities **The number users who used the space at this observation location in 3 days with behavioral patterns** **Female:** 27 **Male:** 52 **Children:** 9
2nd Observation Location	
 **Spatial Insinuate : Revolt**	 **Behavioral Patterns: Routine**
Spatial properties Gap	**Spatial properties** Border
Spatial occupancy (form-function-use) ***Occupants***: Street vendor ***Spatial insinuate (use):*** Forming a commercial space using the gaps in the streets ***Activity:*** Shopping, checking out the products	**Spatial occupancy (form-function-use)** ***Occupants***: Street users ***Behavioral pattern (use):*** Forming places where they could sit, rest, and wait using the border ***Activity:*** Planned sitting, waiting, resting, chatting, watching, leaning on activities
Interpersonal relations Fleeting (Short-term) and passive relationships between strangers (i.e., shopping, talking about the products, etc.).	**Interpersonal relations** Passive relationships between strangers (i.e., monitoring, watching, etc.).
Spatial definition Novelty, Striking	**Spatial definition** Ordinary, No Striking
Observation Findings: Day: Saturday **The time street vendors spent at location**: 52 minutes **Number of individuals who stopped**: Female: 19 Male: 8 **The time individuals spent at the location**: 1-3 minutes **Liveliness:** Moderate number of individuals participating in the activities **The number users who invaded the space at this observation location in 3 days** Street vendors (balloon vendor): 1 (27 users stopped by; 19 females, 8 males)	**Observation Findings: Day:** Thursday **Number of individuals who stopped** : Female: 6 Male: 16 **The time individuals spent at the location**: Between 1-5 and 5-10 minutes **Liveliness:** Moderate number of individuals participating in the activities **The number users who used the space at this observation location in 3 days with behavioral patterns** **Female:** 14 **Male:** 37 **Children:** 6

Table 2 (Continued). *The spaces used for spatial insinuate and behavioral patterns and their properties.*

3rd Observation Location	
	
Spatial Insinuate: Revolt	**Behavioral Patterns: Routine**
Spatial properties Corners, edges, gap, niches	**Spatial properties** Corners, edges, gap, niches
Spatial occupancy (form-function-use) ***Occupant***: Street vendors ***Spatial* Insinuate *(use):*** Forming a commercial space using the focal points in the street ***Activity:*** Shopping, checking out the products	**Spatial occupancy (form-function-use)** ***Occupant***: Street users ***Behavioral pattern (use):*** Forming places where they could sit, rest, and wait, etc. using the building wall and the niche ***Activity:*** Planned sitting, waiting, resting, chatting, watching, leaning on activities
Interpersonal relations Short-term and passive relationships between strangers (i.e., shopping, talking about the products, etc.).	**Interpersonal relations** Long term relationships between generally acquainted individuals (i.e., sitting, chatting, waiting, resting) Passive relationships between strangers (i.e., monitoring, watching, etc.)
Spatial definition Striking	**Spatial definition** Ordinary
Observation Findings: Day: Saturday **The time street vendors spent at location**: 55 minutes **Number of individuals who stopped**: Female: 28 Male: 12 **The time individuals spent at the location**: 1-5 minutes **Liveliness:** Moderate number of individuals participating in the activities **The number users who invaded the space at this observation location in 3 days** Baloon vendor: 1 (18 users stopped by; 12 females, 6 males) Cotton candy vendors: 2 (42 users stopped by; 31 females, 11 males) Umbrella vendor: 1 (4 users stopped by; 3 females, 1 male)	**Observation Findings: Day:** Friday **Number of individuals who stopped**: Female: 32 Male: 43 Children:7 **The time individuals spent at the location**: Between 5-10 and 10-15 minutes **Liveliness:** Moderate number of individuals participating in the activities **The number users who used the space at this observation location in 3 days with behavioral patterns** **Female:** 52 **Male:** 74 **Children:** 13

havior patterns in that space. A total of 57 individuals repeated these behavior at the observation location during 3 days of observation. User behavior that turned into behavioral patterns allowed passive relationships such as watching each other and watching the area.

•Apart from the daily routine use of the space, one street vendor was positioned at the focal point of the space and created a commercial space of his own and introduced an innovative approach to the regular spatial use. In total, 27 individuals visited the vendor and made purchases.

3. Large gaps, soft corners and edges, and spaces in front of the buildings were the defining features of the observation area.

•This observation location was the area that was most frequently used for purposes other than the daily routine by vendors, who invaded the space. During the 3 days of observation, 4 vendors invaded the space and allowed 64 users to stop there.

•It was found that the building corners and small gaps in front of the buildings were routinely used by the users for leaning on, chatting, waiting, talking on the phone and watching the surroundings, and these behaviors turned into regular behavior patterns in that space. A total of 139 individuals repeated these behaviors at the observation location during the 3 days of observation. User behavior, which became a behavioral pattern, often allowed long-term social relationships between individuals who knew each other. These long-term social relationships included chatting, waiting, etc. Passive short-term relationships such as watching each other and exchanging glances were identified among users whose behavior turned into single behavioral pattern.

4. Conclusion

Urban open spaces are important for establishing relationships among individuals and building strong social ties (Laurier and Philo, 2006; Ruppert, 2006). Thus, there is a need for spaces where individuals interact with each other, discuss ideas and share certain common elements (Mehta, 2007). Designers interested in urban open spaces should determine the properties of the spaces that could fulfill these functions and which behavior these spaces support.

Studies conducted on open spaces generally tend to investigate daily use and user behaviors in line with the facilities provided by the spatial properties (Mehta, 2009; Mumcu et al., 2013). In the present study, various spatial uses were defined as revolt and spatial invasion. Thus, apart from routine uses, revolt against the space or spatial invasion and behavioral patterns that were observed in the space and diverse relationships among the individuals were also discussed.

It was determined that the open space occupancies that are transformed into behavioral patterns allowed long-term relationships such as chatting and sitting among acquainted indi-

viduals. It was found that on the other hand, spatial invasion occupancies led to short-term passive relationships such as listening and watching among strangers. Furthermore, it was determined that the revolt by the occupants such as street vendors against the spatial order and their occupancy based on their own needs were able to keep several strangers in the space at the same time. In other words, the spaces where the society commonly established the highest level of unplanned harmony were the invaded spaces. Simpson (2011) and Harrison-Peppper (1990) also reported that due to spatial street artist invasion, short-term interactions were established among individuals and the invasion encouraged individuals to stay in the space longer than they originally planned.

It was determined that daily routine occupancies allowed fewer users to interact concurrently. It was determined that the spatial properties were similar (edges, protrusions, corners, focal points, gaps) in both occupancies, however the spatial definitions differed based on occupancy. The same space was defined as conspicuous when invader, while it was defined as ordinary when behavioral patterns were adopted.

In conclusion, the concentration of studies on spatial behavior on regular behavioral patterns that take place in the space is insufficient for determination of spatial occupancy and its impact on individuals. The present study findings would allow future researchers, who would investigate urban design and its impact on individuals, to assess various dimensions of spatial occupancy.

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