

The Anatomy of Hostile Architecture: A Form-Function-Intent Typology for Urban Furniture and Urban Interior Space

Anatomija neprijateljske arhitekture:
tipologija forme-funkcije-namjere
za urbani mobilijar i urbani unutrašnji prostor

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Abstract Hostile Architecture represents a paradoxical design strategy that uses urban furniture and urban interior spaces as tools for social control, challenging the humanistic and inclusive goals of design and urban planning. While widely discussed, literature on Hostile Architecture at this micro-scale remains largely descriptive, lacking a systematic typology that deconstructs how these objects operate. This study addresses this gap by proposing an analytical framework to categorize Hostile Architecture practices. Adopting a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) model, the study analyzed a purposive sample of documented cases using qualitative content analysis. The analysis was structured around a novel a priori framework based on three axes: Form, Function, and Intent. The findings revealed a typology consisting of four primary form categories (Dividers, Non-Ergonomic Surfaces, Deterrent Textures, Spatial Barriers) employed to obstruct four specific functions (sleeping, long-term sitting, skateboarding, gathering). These interventions were found to serve three intersecting social intents: the exclusion of specific groups (homelessness/youth), the assertion of spatial control, and the commercialization of public space. The study's primary contribution is the development of this "form-function-intent" matrix, an analytical typology that moves beyond descriptive case studies. This model provides a new systematic tool for designers, planners, and researchers to critically deconstruct and challenge the ethical implications of exclusionary design.

Keywords hostile architecture; urban furniture; urban interior space.

Sažetak Neprijateljska arhitektura predstavlja paradoksalnu strategiju dizajna koja koristi urbani mobilijar i urbane unutrašnje prostore kao alate za društvenu kontrolu, izazivajući humanističke i inkluzivne ciljeve dizajna i urbanog planiranja. Iako se o ovoj temi često raspravlja, literatura o neprijateljskoj arhitekturi na ovoj mikro-razini ostaje uglavnom deskriptivna, te joj nedostaje sistematizirana tipologija koja dekonstruira način na koji ti objekti funkcioniraju. Ovaj rad adresira prazninu u dosadašnjim istraživanjima i predlaže analitički okvir za kategorizaciju slučajeva neprijateljske arhitekture. Usvajanjem modela sistematskog pregleda literature, u ovom radu je analiziran odabrani uzorak dokumentiranih slučajeva koristeći kvalitativnu analizu sadržaja. Analiza je strukturirana na troosovinskom okviru: forma, funkcija i namjera. Rezultati istraživanja ukazuju na tipologiju koja se sastoji od četiri primarne kategorije forme (razdjelnici, neergonomske površine, odvraćajuće teksture, prostorne barijere) koje se koriste za ometanje četiri specifične funkcije (spavanje, dugotrajno sjedenje, vožnja skejtborda, okupljanje). Utvrđeno je da su ove prostorne intervencije namijenjene trima društveno povezanim svrhama: isključivanju specifičnih grupa (beskućnici/mladi), uspostavljanju prostorne kontrole i komercijalizaciji javnog prostora. Primarni doprinos ovo rada je razvoj matrice "forma-funkcija-namjera", analitičke tipologije koja nadilazi deskriptivne studije slučaja. Ovaj model pruža novi sistematski alat za dizajnere, planere i istraživače kako bi kritički dekonstruirali i preispitali etičke implikacije dizajna koji proizvodi isključivanje.

Ključne riječi neprijateljska arhitektura; urbani mobilijar; urbani unutrašnji prostor.

1 Introduction

Design disciplines (including Architecture, Interior Architecture, and Industrial Design) are historically and theoretically rooted in a humanistic foundation focused on improving human experience, providing spatial comfort, and enhancing quality of life. The normative principle of these disciplines is to optimize human-environment interaction ergonomically, aesthetically, and functionally. These micro-scale design objectives integrate with the broader societal ideals that Urban and Regional Planning aims to establish at the macro-scale (such as collective well-being, public accessibility, social cohesion, and the democratic use of urban spaces). The urban fluidity (circulation) and free-movement areas envisioned by planning gain their functionality precisely through the inclusive nature of these design objects.

However, in recent urban practices, a paradoxical orientation directly opposing these fundamental ethical and functional goals is observed. Practices are spreading wherein design, contrary to its 'problem-solving' nature, assumes a 'problem-displacing' role; that is, instead of solving social problems, it merely displaces them from 'undesirable' to 'unseen' locations. This approach, conceptualized as Hostile Architecture, transforms design itself into a tool for social sorting and spatial control. These interventions intentionally obstruct or incapacitate the urban commons envisioned by planners for openness and free movement. This situation is not merely a technical design flaw; it provokes a profound interrogation of the core ethical codes of the design disciplines and the principle of inclusivity in public space, creating a critical, interdisciplinary field of debate.

1.1 Problem

The normative ideal of urban public spaces, often conceptualized as 'urban commons,' is to function as inclusive platforms that foster interaction among diverse social groups and nourish democratic participation. This ideal, however, frequently conflicts with strategies in urban governance and design practices that utilize space as an instrument of social control and regulation. One of the most concrete manifestations of these strategies is the concept of Hostile Architecture, which, while widely discussed in literature, has seen this discussion focus predominantly on macro-scale interventions and the sociological consequences of these practices.

The current research problem is that this academic focus has proven insufficient in systematically analyzing how the philosophy of Hostile Architecture permeates the smallest and most tactile components of the urban fabric (namely, urban furniture and elements of urban interior spaces). The literature predominantly addresses these micro-scale interventions through a fragmentary approach, often treating them as isolated, descriptive case studies rather than as parts of a systematic phenomenon.

A comprehensive typology that relates the deliberate intent behind these micro-scale design interventions, the morphological strategies used, and the targeted social outcomes from a holistic perspective is absent. This situation creates a significant theoretical gap in the field. Particularly from the perspective of interior architecture and industrial design disciplines, the lack of a critical analysis of these 'anti-design' objects as 'design objects' is deeply felt. Considering that urban furniture is the primary interface directly shaping bodily experience in public space, the absence of an analytical framework that deciphers and categorizes the deliberate manipulations within the 'form-function-intent' triangle of these objects prevents a full understanding of design's role in social exclusion.

1.2 Purpose

The primary aim of this study is to decipher the manifestations of Hostile Architecture at the scale of urban interior space and urban furniture. It seeks to propose a systematic categorization model by analyzing the 'form-function-intent' relationality of these objects. The study moves beyond mere description to analytically scrutinize how these objects intentionally manipulate bodily experience in public space.

The study first identifies documented deterrent strategies within the literature. Subsequently, it analyzes the specific morphological, material, and ergonomic manipulations (form) used to restrict certain bodily behaviors (function). This analysis then investigates the implicit or explicit purpose (intent) behind the blocked function, identifying the targeted social groups. Finally, these findings are synthesized to establish a comprehensive analytical typology based on the form, function, and intent axes, detailing the strategies, actions, and social outcomes of hostile design.

1.3 Questions

This research is structured around three Research Questions (RQs) that examine three interrelated core dimensions to analyze the Hostile Architecture phenomenon at the urban scale. The first question (RQ1) focuses on the "form" dimension, the second (RQ2) on the "function" dimension, and the third (RQ3) on the "intent" dimension:

RQ1: Which design forms do Hostile Architecture practices manifest?

RQ2: Which user behaviors (functions) do Hostile Architecture practices aim to restrict or prevent?

RQ3: Which social intents do Hostile Architecture practices seek to achieve?

1.4. Importance

This study is intended to contribute to both theoretical and practical domains by examining the Hostile Architecture phenomenon at the scale of urban furniture and urban interior space. Academically, a step has been taken toward addressing the lack of systematic classification in the literature that focuses on micro-scale applications (namely, furniture and urban interior

space). The analytical typology developed on the 'form-function-intent' axis seeks to provide a novel theoretical instrument for future critical analyses in this field.

On the practical and social plane, this classification has contributed to enhancing the awareness of designers, urban planners, and local authorities regarding the ethical and social consequences of everyday objects in public space. Through the visualization and conceptualization of these implicit design strategies, the study aims to establish a concrete foundation for advocating more inclusive and democratic urban spatial policies. In this respect, the research intersects the disciplines of interior architecture, industrial design, urban design, and sociology, enabling the critical role of design in mechanisms of social control and social exclusion to be emphasized from an interdisciplinary perspective.

1.5 Limitations

This study offers significant analytical insights into the operation of the Hostile Architecture phenomenon at the scale of urban furniture and urban interior space, based on the 'form-function-intent' axis. However, the study's findings and the typology it has developed are subject to specific theoretical and methodological limitations. The primary dataset (corpus) of the study consists of existing secondary sources regarding Hostile Architecture applications, used to develop the proposed typology. These sources are restricted to documented examples found in peer-reviewed academic literature (articles, book chapters), professional architecture and design publications, and reputable media (news/analysis) sources. This situation is a factor affecting the external validity (transferability) of the research, creating a constraint on the generalizability of the findings to examples not yet documented in the literature or those existing in different geographical/cultural contexts (e.g., non-Western cities).

As a natural consequence of this methodological choice, the research does not include primary data collection processes (such as conducting new field observations in a specific urban context, carrying out ethnographic studies, or holding in-depth interviews with the user groups targeted by these designs). Therefore, the study's findings and the typology developed are based on a content analysis and systematic literature review. This approach also entails a limitation regarding the study's internal validity (credibility/trustworthiness). While the 'form' and 'function' analyses are largely based on observable data, the interpretation of the 'intent' dimension must rely on authorial commentary and secondary inferences from the existing literature, rather than on primary stakeholder perspectives (designer, administrator, or user).

Finally, as a theoretical limitation, the research has deliberately focused its scope on physical and material design interventions (the morphology, ergonomics, and materiality of urban furniture). Other significant forms of social control and exclusion in public spaces, such as technological surveillance systems (e.g., CCTV), psychological deterrence methods (e.g., broadcasting specific music genres or high-frequency sounds), or

spatial programming (policies restricting usage hours), which are non-physical deterrent strategies, have been excluded from this study's analytical framework.

2 Theoretical Framework

This section addresses the concept of Hostile Architecture, which forms the foundation of this research, along with the relevant theoretical discussions and the current state of the literature. This theoretical ground provides the essential basis for contextualizing the study's 'form-function-intent' analytical framework. One of the fundamental conflicts that this concept addresses pertains to security-oriented interventions implemented within the organization of urban space. These practices not only intensify surveillance over public areas but also significantly constrict the entire repertoire of actions (action repertoire) available within these shared spaces. A false dichotomy established as 'freedom versus security' plays a significant role not only in theoretical debates but also in the physical shaping of the urban environment (Özmakas & Yıldırım, 2020).

The physical manifestation of this desire for control and the restriction of action is most often embodied in the design objects themselves. Design objects, which are traditionally evaluated based on aesthetic concerns and functional requirements, are often overlooked for the cultural, social, and ideological meanings they potentially carry. However, design is not merely a visual and functional problem-solving process; it is also a powerful communicative domain in which specific social values, cultural identities, and ideological structures are made visible. Everyday utilitarian objects, such as furniture, can be regarded as tools that not only reflect but also actively reproduce certain worldviews, social structures, and cultural narratives through their formal and material characteristics. Therefore, evaluating such designs solely in terms of physical and aesthetic parameters is insufficient; it is essential to decipher the narrative and ideological layers inherently embedded in these objects (Kaya Demirbozan & Türkmen, 2025).

In light of these theoretical foundations, properly contextualizing the analytical framework of the current research necessitates, first, clarifying the terminological origins of the Hostile Architecture concept and its distinct aspects from related concepts; second, examining the theoretical dynamics underlying the use of design as a tool for social exclusion and public space control; and finally, underscoring the specific analytical gap this study aims to fill by moving beyond the descriptive approaches prevalent in the existing literature.

2.1 Hostile Architecture: Definition, Origins, and Related Concepts

Practices that aim to control urban space through architecture and design are referred to in the literature by many different conceptualizations. These practices carry objectives that not only restrict access to this space, but also shape its forms of use and direct attitudes within it. Among these are terms such as 'exclusionary

architecture', 'defensive urban architecture', and 'disciplinary architecture' (Özmağas & Yıldırım, 2020).

From within this broad terminological spectrum, this study adopts the concept of Hostile Architecture as its central analytical category, as this term most effectively highlights the critical and intentionally exclusionary aspects of these practices. Hostile Architecture is defined as a critical concept identifying the exclusionary design strategies deliberately implemented in urban spaces to deter, prevent, or restrict specific behaviors of particular user groups (de Fine Licht, 2023). These practices are frequently disguised behind seemingly legitimate justifications, such as the "regulation," "cleansing," or "securing" of public space. However, their primary objective is to render the physical presence of individuals or groups coded as "undesirable" impossible (Petty, 2016). Rosenberger (2023) has also conceptualized such designs as "unpleasant design" or "sarcastic design," emphasizing that these objects implicitly convey a specific "message" (e.g., 'you are not wanted here') to certain people.

The origins of this concept are deeply intertwined with the "Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)" theory (as referenced in the opening paragraph), and it is frequently discussed as an aggressive evolution or even a perversion of this theory (Book, 2021; Jeffery, 1971). CPTED, in its original formulation, proposed the "neutral" regulation of environmental conditions (e.g., lighting, visibility, sense of ownership/territoriality) as a means to prevent crime (Nubani et al., 2023; Saraiva & Teixeira, 2023). However, the critical debate surrounding Hostile Architecture contends that this approach has insidiously shifted from "preventing crime" to "preventing certain people" (Carr, 2020; Chellew, 2019). Petty (2016) underscores this critical distinction by highlighting that CPTED, at least theoretically, focuses on the potential for criminality. In stark contrast, Hostile Architecture practices treat social conditions such as "poverty" or "homelessness" as if they were criminal issues in themselves, thereby utilizing the built environment as a direct instrument for "social sorting".

2.2 Public Space, Social Exclusion, and Control Through Design

The fundamental theoretical tension underlying the phenomenon of Hostile Architecture is fueled by an ongoing conflict regarding the very nature of public space. In its normative ideal, public space is conceptualized as an inclusive arena for "encounter" and "deliberation" (Fraser, 1990; Spain, 2008), where all segments of society converge, democratic interactions flourish, and collective life is sustained. The Habermasian model of the public sphere (Habermas, 2022) idealizes a realm where members of civil society rationally discuss common issues to arrive at a collective good.

Offering a significant critical contribution to this ideal, Henri Lefebvre's (1967) concept of "the right to the city" (see also Harvey, 2003) argues that these spaces are not merely abstract platforms for deliberation, but living arenas of social production and struggle. Lefebvre emphasizes the right of all urban inhabitants to participate in the production and use of urban spaces, asserting that the value of these spaces should be measured by their

"use value" in the daily lives of residents, rather than their market-driven "exchange value" (King, 2019; Marcuse, 2009). This perspective stands as a political call to action against the commodifying effects of urban policies and capitalism on space.

However, these normative ideals and the demand for "the right to the city" have undergone a profound erosion, particularly with the rise of recent neoliberal urbanization policies. Public spaces are increasingly being privatized, commercialized, and subjected to intense securitization (Borja, 2022; Weaver, 2014). This process has been accelerated by the state's withdrawal from traditional public responsibilities and the subsequent filling of this void by private sector investments (Martinez et al., 2024). In this new urban order, public spaces are ceasing to be inclusive commons for "everyone" and are instead being transformed into profit-driven, exclusionary arenas designed primarily for "legitimate consumers" (Escudero Gómez, 2021).

As Németh and Schmidt (2011) have also pointed out, these privately-owned (yet public-appearing) spaces systematically diminish the "publicness" of the public sphere by restricting social interaction, limiting individual freedoms, and, most importantly, actively excluding population groups coded as "undesirable" (e.g., the poor, the homeless). It is precisely at this juncture that design intervenes as the primary instrument for implementing this "social sorting" and solidifying spatial hierarchies. In his classic work "City of Quartz," Mike Davis (1990) provocatively detailed how public spaces in Los Angeles were becoming "defensive" and fortified with an "architecture of fear," deliberately expelling the poor from these spaces through specific designs like "bum-proof benches." These practices, which continue to proliferate in capitalist societies, are also employed in metropolises such as Paris, London, and New York as a "precaution" against "problems" generated by refugees and the homeless. Furthermore, these exclusionary arrangements can differ according to the political attitudes of the countries where they are implemented and may be fundamentally shaped by distinctions such as race or ethnic origin (Altuncu, 2023). In this context, Hostile Architecture stands as one of the most concrete proofs that design is never a "neutral" practice; rather, it is a political act that directly translates social norms, property boundaries, and societal hierarchies into physical form (Broms et al., 2017).

2.3 The Research Gap in the Literature

The existing academic literature provides a rich pool of case studies documenting Hostile Architecture, which successfully establish its existence and highlight its significant ethical problems. However, this research argues that a significant gap remains at this juncture. These interventions are predominantly treated through a descriptive or fragmentary lens, often analyzing them as isolated case studies rather than as components of a coherent system. While the literature is adept at identifying what these objects are, it is insufficient in explaining the systematic patterns underlying them. A comprehensive analytical framework that holistically connects the design strategies (form), the specific bodily behaviors they obstruct (function), and the

implicit/explicit social purposes (intent) is absent. This research aims to fill precisely this analytical gap by applying the 'form-function-intent' model to provide an analytical typology.

3 Method

This section comprehensively presents the methodological framework adopted to answer the research questions. The method section is structured around four fundamental components: (1) the research model that guided the study's design, (2) the selection process and justification for the dataset (sample) included in the analysis, (3) the data collection procedures employed, and (4) the data analysis strategy utilized to synthesize the findings. The research is based entirely on publicly available and open-access secondary sources. At all stages of the research, the principles of scientific research and publication ethics were rigorously adhered to, particularly regarding the transparent and accurate citation of all references used.

3.1 Model

This research adopts the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) model to analyze the Hostile Architecture phenomenon at the urban scale and develop a novel typology. This approach, unlike a traditional review which merely summarizes existing literature, treats the literature (academic publications, professional portals, media reports) as a primary data source that is systematically searched, selected, and analyzed according to predefined protocols. All research processes (data search, selection, extraction, and analysis) have followed the reproducible and transparent steps required by this model.

3.2 Sample

The universe of this research was constituted by all publicly accessible and documented examples of urban interior space and urban furniture that demonstrate Hostile Architecture practices. From this universe, the dataset (corpus) was selected using purposive sampling, specifically criterion sampling. Accordingly, the dataset was constructed based on a rigorous purposive sampling strategy governed by three distinct inclusion criteria designed to ensure analytical validity and reproducibility: (1) Scale: The selection was strictly limited to cases at the level of 'urban furniture' and 'urban interior space' elements, deliberately excluding macro-scale urban design interventions to focus on the immediate bodily experience; (2) Context: The cases were required to be explicitly documented in academic and professional literature within the specific context of exclusionary design, ensuring that the analyzed objects were firmly situated within the theoretical discourse; and (3) Data Availability: Only cases possessing high-quality visual or textual data allowing for a detailed

morphological decomposition were included to enable a robust application of the 'form-function-intent' analysis. In line with these criteria, the dataset was formed by documented 'hostile design' examples that are not restricted by a specific geography or time, but which are the most frequently recurring and feature as 'typical cases' in the literature.

3.3 Data Collection

Consistent with the research's Systematic Literature Review (SLR) model, the data collection process adhered to a multi-stage document review protocol. This process involved the use of predefined keywords and their derivatives, such as Hostile Architecture, Defensive Architecture, and Deterrent Design. These terms were utilized to systematically search major interdisciplinary academic databases (e.g., Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar) as well as prominent design portals that document professional reflections on the topic (e.g., ArchDaily and Dezeen). The documents (articles, case studies, critical analyses) retrieved from this search that met the predefined inclusion criteria were compiled to form the final dataset (corpus) for analysis.

3.4 Data Analysis

The analysis of the collected qualitative data (visual and textual documents) was conducted using the qualitative content analysis technique, simultaneously employing both deductive and inductive approaches.

As the initial deductive step of the analysis, a custom data extraction form was designed and utilized to standardize and systematically process the data. This form was structured to correspond directly to the study's a priori analytical framework, the 'form-function-intent' axes, and the research questions (RQ1, RQ2, RQ3). For each case in the final dataset (corpus), relevant information from the source texts was entered into this form: for the RQ1 (Form) axis, visuals and morphological/material descriptions were recorded; for the RQ2 (Function) axis, descriptions of the specific bodily behaviors the design prevented were recorded; and for the RQ3 (Intent) axis, author/critic commentary on the implicit/explicit purpose and targeted social group was recorded.

Following this deductive data extraction process, the second, inductive step of the analysis involved subjecting each main category (Form, Function, Intent) to an 'open coding' process. For example, all data under the 'Form' category was examined to generate sub-codes (design strategies) such as 'adding dividers,' 'sloping surfaces,' or 'using spikes.' The same process was repeated for the 'Function' (prevented behaviors) and 'Intent' (social aims) categories.

In the final stage of the analysis (Synthesis), the sub-codes and categories derived from these three axes were interrelated and compared using a cross-tabulation (matrix) method. The systematic relational patterns between 'form-function-intent' were examined, and the study's final contribution, the analytical typology (categorization model), was synthesized.

4 Findings and Discussion

This section presents the analytical resolution of the final dataset (corpus), which was compiled via the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology and selected according to the criteria defined within the research's methodology. The results of this analysis are subsequently discussed within the context of the literature. As detailed in the Method section, the a priori 'form-function-intent' analytical framework, which constitutes the methodological backbone of this research, was used as the primary structuring tool for this section. This approach aims to overcome the problem identified in the Theoretical Framework section: that Hostile Architecture practices are predominantly treated in a descriptive and fragmentary manner in the literature. Therefore, the findings presented below not only answer the three core research questions defined in the introduction but also synthesize the systematic relationality between these three axes to present the study's final contribution: an analytical typology.

4.1 The Design Forms of Hostile Architecture Practices

The first research question (RQ1), which constitutes the initial component of the 'form-function-intent' analytical framework, aimed to decipher the specific design forms through which Hostile Architecture practices manifest. In this context, the inductive qualitative content analysis applied to the cases in the dataset (corpus) revealed that these interventions, often presented disparately in the literature, are not isolated or random solutions. On the contrary, it was determined that the design interventions used are systematically repeated in line with specific strategies and can be grouped under four main analytical categories. These categories represent the fundamental 'form' techniques that design employs to manipulate bodily experience.

4.1.1 Dividers, Separators, and Restrictors

The most widespread morphological intervention identified in the analyzed dataset was noted in this category. The core strategy is predicated on the segmentation of horizontal planes found on public seating elements, particularly benches. This segmentation is frequently mediated through pseudo-functional elements, such as components presented as 'armrests'. The primary technique of this specific form is to deliberately interrupt the topological continuity of the surface. This interruption, in turn, renders the surface physically unusable for full-length bodily actions like reclining or sleeping. These interventions manifest in the literature in two distinct ways: sometimes as metal additions retrofitted onto existing designs, and in other instances, as restrictive elements fully integrated into the design's own form (for example, as individualized seats) (Figure 1).

The visual evidence presented in Figure 1 provides a clear substantiation of the strategic spectrum inherent to this 'divider' category. The application ranges from overt, 'retrofitted' additions (Figure 1a), where the intervention is legible as an external and often crude application of

control, to more covert, 'integrated' solutions (Figure 1b). In the latter, the restrictive element is seamlessly assimilated into the design's own morphology, often masked as a pseudo-functional component like an armrest. This integration signifies a more sophisticated design intent, blurring the line between function and control. Figure 1c represents the strategy's most extreme manifestation: the complete 'atomization' of the public surface. By replacing a communal bench with individualized, separated seating, this form moves beyond the singular function of preventing sleeping. It fundamentally redesigns the social potential of the space, actively discouraging any shared interaction or collective social use, thereby enforcing social separation at the level of the object itself.

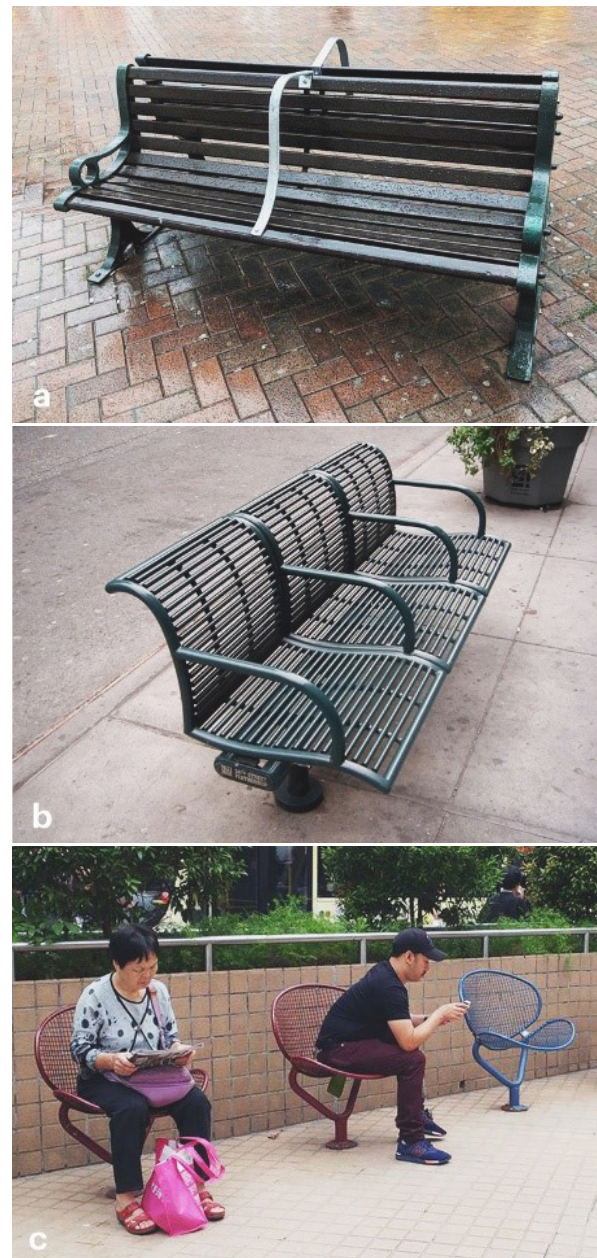


Figure 1a Additions retrofitted to the design. Source: Chris Baynes, 2018.; **1b** Restrictor integrated into the design's own form. Source: Jessica Antony, 2023.; **1c** Segmentation through individual seating units. Source: City Unseen, 2024.



Figure 2a Sloped leaning bench. Source: Lorenzo Carbone, 2021.; **2b** Bench that atomizes the user. Source: Mina Benothman, 2021.; **2c** Bench with reduced sitting depth. Source: Haruhiko Okumura, 2014.

4.1.2 Non-Ergonomic Surfaces

Slopes, Curves, and Insufficiency: The second category includes forms that intentionally invert ergonomic norms or apply what can be termed "negative ergonomics." The primary objective here is to render the surface unfavorable for bodily comfort. The manifestations of this strategy in the analyzed cases show diversity. In examples known as "leaning benches," the act of sitting is reduced to a temporary "leaning" action requiring bodily effort, rather than static resting, through sloped surfaces. Another common form, seen especially in metro stations or waiting areas, involves curved or divided surfaces that disrupt horizontal continuity and "atomize" (confine) each user to their "individual" space; these forms prevent both collective use and lying down. Finally, insufficient surfaces that intentionally reduce sitting depth, angle, or area (e.g., narrow stools, shallow benches) are also included in this category. These designs make long-term comfort physically impossible, permitting only brief "perching" of the body (Figure 2).

Figure 2 illustrates the tactical diversity within this "negative ergonomics" category, where the strategy is not monolithic but employs distinct methods to achieve discomfort. Figure 2a directly attacks the function of 'static rest,' transforming the act of sitting into a temporary, effort-based act of 'leaning.' Figure 2b moves beyond individual discomfort to target social potential; its form, often presented as an aesthetic choice, not only prevents lying down but also 'atomizes' users, thereby precluding shared or collective use. Finally, Figure 2c demonstrates a more subtle, yet equally effective, form of ergonomic deprivation. By intentionally providing insufficient sitting depth, the design makes a correct or comfortable posture physically impossible, reducing the user's bodily action from a restorative rest to a brief, unstable 'perch.'

4.1.3 Deterrent Textures and Materials

The third category focuses on the manipulation of a surface's haptic or material properties to deter specific actions. This strategy spans a wide spectrum, from its most aggressive and overt forms to its most covert and subtle applications. At the most aggressive end of the spectrum are the 'spikes,' which are among the most visible examples in the literature. These metal or concrete spikes, installed on flat planes such as building alcoves, low walls, or under bridges (areas with sheltering potential), render the surface physically painful and unusable for any bodily contact. A more target-specific strategy involves 'skate-stoppers,' which are small, rough metal fixtures that interrupt the continuity of a surface. This form is designed to block only a specific action (skateboarding); thus, while not 'hostile' to pedestrians, it exhibits a targeted 'hostility' towards a specific subcultural use. At the most covert end of the spectrum lies deterrence-by-materiality. This involves the deliberate selection of materials that are intentionally harsh (e.g., polished concrete, aggregate gravel) or thermally conductive (e.g., stainless steel in cold climates) to make long-term sitting uncomfortable (Figure 3).

Figure 3 visually captures the full spectrum of this haptic strategy, ranging from overt aggression to covert materiality. Figure 3a represents the most explicit and aggressive form of deterrence, using 'spikes' to make any bodily contact physically painful, thereby directly targeting the function of sheltering. Figure 3b demonstrates the 'target-specific' or 'surgical' nature of this strategy; the 'skate-stoppers' are implemented to intercept a specific subcultural action (skateboarding) without impacting general pedestrians, thus framing a specific user group as illegitimate. Finally, Figure 3c illustrates the most subtle and covert application. Here, the hostility is not morphological but material; the

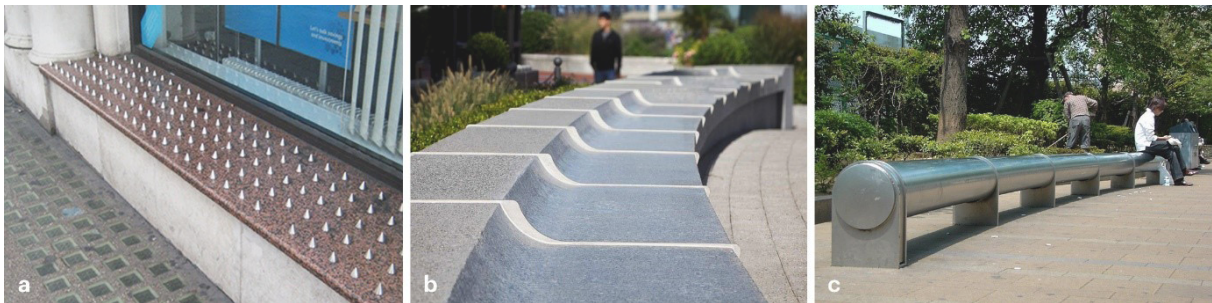


Figure 3a Metal spikes on the window parapet. Source: Shaun Soanes, 2018.; **3b** Skate-stoppers interrupting the surface continuity of the seating element. Source: Ed Wonsek, n.d.; **3c** Seating element made of hard and cold material. Source: Yumiko Hayakawa, n.d.



Figure 4a Under-road spikes. Source: Louise Irpino, 2024.; **4b** Under-road boulders. Source: Kyle Lam, 2023.; **4c** Sidewalk garden planters. Source: David Sjostedt, 2024.

use of thermally conductive stainless steel (as shown) or intentionally harsh aggregates makes the object unusable for long-term sitting in certain climates, achieving deterrence under the guise of a sleek, modern aesthetic.

4.1.4 Spatial Barriers and Corner Obstructions

The fourth and final category of form can be described as the "negation of void." This strategy's aim is not to render a surface unusable by adding an object, but rather to physically "occupy" the urban "niches" themselves (such as alcoves, corners, ventilation shafts, or underpasses) that hold potential for sheltering or gathering. In the analyzed cases, this "occupation" is achieved by strategically placing large-scale objects in these potential refuge areas. Crucially, these interventions are almost always presented under a pseudo-legitimate justification, such as "aesthetics" (decorative boulders), "ecology" (large concrete planters/greenery), or "security" (asymmetrical concrete blocks), effectively masking the underlying exclusionary intent (Figure 4).

This final category is particularly revealing as it demonstrates how Hostile Architecture operates by masking its exclusionary intent behind 'pseudo-legitimate' justifications, as visualized in Figure 4. The strategy moves from manipulating a *surface* (as in spikes, Figure 4a) to *occupying an entire volume* of space. Figure 4b (boulders) and Figure 4c (planters) are prime examples of this. In both cases, the intervention is presented under the guise of "aesthetics" (landscape boulders) or "ecology" (urban greenery). However, their strategic placement in alcoves, underpasses, or along sidewalks serves the primary function of physically "negating the void" (occupying the niche), making it impossible for individuals to use these spaces for sheltering or rest. This demonstrates a sophisticated form of hostility, where the exclusionary function is laundered through a seemingly positive or benign design contribution.

4.2 Prevented User Behaviors

The second step of the 'form-function-intent' analytical framework provides the critical analysis of 'function' (RQ2). This stage progresses from the morphological 'what' (RQ1) to the operational 'how,' analyzing which specific bodily actions and public space uses the design forms previously categorized are engineered to restrict, deter, or render impossible. This conceptual

shift is critical: 'Function' here is not understood as the traditional 'positive' purpose of design (e.g., to enable sitting, or to promote ergonomic comfort), which aligns with the humanistic ideals of the discipline. Instead, 'function' is conceptualized as the 'negative function' (or anti-function). This negative function is the specific, intended, and deliberate obstruction of a human action, representing a conscious inversion of ergonomic principles where discomfort or impossibility is the objective, not an accidental failure. The dataset analysis confirmed this systematic approach, revealing that these interventions do not target random behaviors but converge on four primary categories of user actions that are deemed 'undesirable' by the designers or proprietors of the space.

4.2.1 Sleeping / Lying Down

This bodily action emerged from the analysis as the most primary and aggressively targeted function by Hostile Architecture practices. The intensity of this focus is significant; it suggests that the targeting is not directed at the mere act of sleeping or reclining itself, which could be seen as a universal human need for rest. Rather, the targeting is directly correlated with the social condition that this action has come to represent in public space: namely, homelessness and the use of public surfaces for sheltering. The forms identified in the preceding analysis of RQ1 (such as "Dividers," "Aggressive Textures," and "Curved/ Individualized Surfaces") are all strategically deployed to categorically reject this specific action. Their design operates by rendering a horizontal surface (the fundamental prerequisite for rest) physically impossible for full bodily use, constituting an unambiguous spatial expulsion designed to prevent sheltering or resting.

4.2.2 Long-term Sitting / Loitering

This second category targets not the act of sitting itself, but its duration. The strategy is predicated less on "physical obstruction" (like the dividers) and more on "ergonomic deterrence" and the creation of "psychological discomfort." Forms within the "Non-Ergonomic Surfaces" (e.g., sloped benches) and "Deterrent Materials" (e.g., cold metal) categories operate through the explicit denial of bodily comfort. They render the act of sitting so uncomfortable, effortful, or even painful that legitimate public activities such as "waiting," "resting," or "socializing" are effectively re-coded as "loitering" (a deviant behavior), and these actions are prevented from extending beyond a brief, acceptable timeframe.

4.2.3 Skateboarding

This category is critical as it demonstrates the capacity of Hostile Architecture to function as a highly target-specific, surgical intervention. The specific metal additions known as "skate-stoppers" (which fall under the "Deterrent Textures" category) are prime examples. These forms are designed to have almost no impact on other public uses (like walking or sitting) while exclusively targeting a specific sub-cultural activity: the "re-appropriation" or "misuse" of urban surfaces by youth (skateboarding). This finding reveals how design can be mobilized to protect property lines and criminalize a very specific, non-conformist bodily action.

4.2.4 Gathering / Grouping

This final category targets the most fundamental social function of public space: its "collective" use. "Spatial Barriers" (e.g., planters in corners) and "Insufficient/Individualized Surfaces" (e.g., using single stools or curved seats instead of a shared bench) deliberately limit the social capacity of the space. These forms transform the public realm from a space of "assembly" (a place for coming together) into a mere space of "transition" (a place for moving through), where individuals exist side-by-side but not "together." The objective is the atomization of users, physically complicating or preventing people from socializing in groups or engaging in any collective activity.

4.3 The Social Intent Behind the Designs

The final and most critical component of the 'form-function-intent' analytical framework is the third research question (RQ3), which investigates the underlying 'why' of these interventions. This stage moves beyond the analysis of morphology (RQ1) and obstructed behavior (RQ2) to interrogate the implicit (covert) and explicit (overt) social intents and the governing ideological foundations driving these designs. To achieve this, the analysis of the source texts (author commentaries, critical analyses, and administrative justifications) within the dataset required moving beyond mere description. A more profound interpretive (hermeneutic) content analysis was applied, probing the latent motivations behind the documented practices. This interpretive reading revealed that the motivations are not arbitrary but systematically converge around three primary motivational categories, which define the ultimate purpose of these objects.

4.3.1 Exclusion of Specific Social Groups

The analysis confirms that the most prominent and pervasive intent behind Hostile Architecture practices is the targeted, discriminatory intervention against specific social groups, rather than a neutral application of design to the general populace. These objects are designed not for "everyone" but precisely against "someone," reinforcing social hierarchies by spatial means. This intent for social exclusion manifests primarily against two core subjects. The primary subject is unequivocally identified as homeless individuals. The forms designed to render sleeping or lying down

impossible (e.g., dividers, spikes, curved surfaces) are directly intended to eliminate the public visibility of this group. The intent here is to "cleanse" the space of their presence, effectively treating a complex social problem (homelessness) as a spatial infraction to be physically displaced and pushed from public view. The secondary subject of exclusion comprises youth. The forms targeting skateboarding (skate-stoppers) and gathering (individualized seats) are directly intended to control and curtail the spatial practices of young people. This intent stems from a desire to manage youth sub-cultures often perceived by authorities as "noisy," "unpredictable," or "loitering" (a term often used to criminalize their presence), thereby preventing their "re-appropriation" or perceived "misuse" of urban infrastructure.

4.3.2 Spatial Control and Regulation

The second category of intent relates to a broader desire to enforce a strict normative or 'intended' use of a space, thereby preventing any actions that fall outside this prescribed script. This intent is deeply rooted in a modern urban governance assumption that public space must be predictable, manageable, efficient, and almost "aseptic" (sterile) to function correctly. The design practices driven by this intent specifically target behaviors analyzed in RQ2, such as "long-term sitting" or "gathering," which are perceived as threatening the "fluidity" (flow of capital and consumers) or "order" of the space. This intent is frequently presented under a legitimizing rhetoric of "maintaining public order," "enhancing safety," or "preventing anti-social behavior." In this context, the design object itself becomes a non-human actor, a tool of passive surveillance and behavioral control, enforcing spatial discipline on all users by pre-emptively designing out behaviors deemed non-compliant or disorderly.

4.3.3 Commercialization and Privatization of Public Space

Third, the analysis revealed that a significant number of Hostile Architecture practices are inextricably linked to the neoliberal transformation of public space. This intent is most evident in the forms designed to deter "long-term sitting" (e.g., sloped benches, uncomfortable materials). This strategy implicitly codes the act of resting or waiting as a "non-consuming" activity, and therefore illegitimate in spaces increasingly defined by commerce. By doing so, these designs actively reduce the public realm from a space of assembly, rest, and social interaction into a mere space of consumption and circulation. In the analyzed cases (particularly those near retail centers or in business improvement districts), this intent functionally equates the "legitimate user" with the "paying customer." This finding is critical as it demonstrates an intent for privatization that is not only de facto (in effect) but also ideological. The design object itself becomes an instrument that serves the commodification of public space, enforcing market logic by excluding those who do not, or cannot, participate in consumption.

4.4 Synthesis of Findings: A Form-Function-Intent Typology

This final analysis stage of the research methodologically represents the study's apex, signifying the transition from the decomposition of the Hostile Architecture phenomenon (conducted in subsections 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3) to its recomposition as an integrated model. The focus now shifts from identifying singular components to the systematic synthesis and integration of the findings derived from the 'form-function-intent' axes. The collective answers to RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3 strongly substantiate that these design practices are not isolated, idiosyncratic, or coincidental acts; rather, they are deliberate strategies exhibiting replicable, systematic, and predictable patterns. This finding directly addresses the theoretical gap identified in the theoretical framework (namely, the fragmentary and descriptive nature of the literature) by providing a holistic analytical framework.

The matrix presented below (Table 1) is the final output of this study's analytical backbone. This matrix does not merely present a list of the three axes; it is a holistic analytical tool that reveals the dynamic

relationality and intersectionality between them. This matrix demonstrates that 'form' is not arbitrary; on the contrary, 'form' is instrumentalized by 'intent,' and 'function' serves as the critical bridge that links the physical object to its social purpose. The matrix, therefore, effectively maps how the specific 'form' techniques derived from the dataset are employed to obstruct particular 'functions,' thereby serving specific social 'intents.' In doing so, Table 1 provides the concrete evidence and the operational model for the analytical typology that constitutes the core contribution of this research.

The findings synthesized in Table 1 robustly substantiate the central argument of this research: the manifestations of Hostile Architecture at the scale of urban furniture and urban interior space are not random, isolated, or merely examples of "bad design." Rather, they constitute analytical typologies that are intentionally selected and systematically replicable to achieve specific social intents. These findings validate that the 'form-function-intent' a priori framework possesses an analytical validity that transcends the predominantly descriptive approaches currently found in the literature.

Table 1 Analytical Typology of Hostile Architecture

Form Category	Category Definition	Obstructed Function(s)	Social Intent(s)
Dividers, Separators, and Restrictors	Morphological interventions that deliberately divide or partition a surface's continuity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preventing sleeping and reclining (horizontal use) • Obstructing collective use and social gathering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preventing the visibility and sheltering of homeless individuals • Actively restricting the collective (horizontal) use of public surfaces
Non-Ergonomic Surfaces	Sloped, curved, or insufficient forms that render the surface unfavorable for bodily comfort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively deterring long-term sitting (waiting, resting) • Physically denying all bodily comfort (sleeping, reclining) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling commercialization by preventing "loitering" (non-consumption) • Imposing spatial control (short-term use) and denying bodily comfort
Deterrent Textures and Materials	Interventions that render the surface's haptic or material properties painful or uncomfortable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obstructing sleeping and sheltering (in the most aggressive form) • Targeting specific sub-cultural uses (skateboarding) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excluding specific social groups (homeless, youth) via physical deterrence • Protecting property and preventing "unintended" (sub-cultural) uses
Spatial Barriers and Corner Obstructions	Objects that occupy urban niches and voids, thereby eliminating their sheltering potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preventing sleeping and sheltering (in refuge spaces) • Obstructing collective gathering (grouping) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusion by "occupying" urban niches that offer potential shelter • Enforcing spatial control under the guise of "order" and "tidiness"

The analysis reveals that interventions often grouped under a singular, general heading like "anti-homeless design" actually possess far more layered functional objectives. The fact that each 'Form Category' in Table 1 obstructs at least two distinct 'Functions' demonstrates the efficiency of these strategies. For example, the "Dividers, Separators, and Restrictors" category, alongside its most obvious objective (preventing sleeping and reclining), simultaneously fulfills the function of "obstructing collective use and social gathering" through the same morphological intervention (surface segmentation). This finding indicates that this form targets not only sheltering but also assembly (as a social action).

Similarly, the "Non-Ergonomic Surfaces" category serves a dual purpose by, on one hand, "detering long-term sitting" (e.g., sloped benches), and on the other, preventing sleeping by "physically denying all bodily comfort" (e.g., curved surfaces). This distinction is critical: the former (Dividers) renders an action physically impossible, whereas the latter (Non-Ergonomic Surfaces) creates a more covert, psychological deterrence by making the action ergonomically painful. The "Deterrent Textures and Materials" category, meanwhile, exemplifies the capacity of this strategy to be a highly target-specific, surgical intervention. This category targets the most fundamental human actions like "obstructing sleeping and sheltering" via "spikes," while also "targeting specific sub-cultural uses" like skateboarding via "skate-stoppers." This highlights the analytic precision of the model, showing how a single Form category can operationally target two distinct social groups and functions.

The most critical findings of the research emerged from the Social Intent axis, which lies behind this Form-Function relationality. The "Social Intent(s)" column in Table 1 confirms that the motivation behind these design strategies is almost never a neutral, technical justification like "public safety" or "aesthetics." On the contrary, the essence of the intent is social exclusion and spatial control. The fact that the Intent column in the table consistently features two main themes (Exclusion and Control/Commercialization) demonstrates that these two intents operate as a mutually reinforcing strategy. For example, the "Non-Ergonomic Surfaces" category enables the "Commercialization" of space (a neoliberal intent) by "preventing 'loitering,'" while simultaneously "imposing spatial control" (a disciplinary intent). This finding proves that Hostile Architecture is not just a problem related to specific marginal groups (like the homeless or youth) but is also directly linked to the privatization and commodification of public space under neoliberal policies.

The primary contribution of this research is its proposal of an analytical typology (a classification model) for Hostile Architecture practices, based on the 'form-function-intent' relationality synthesized in Table 1. Contrary to existing studies in the literature (as discussed in the Theoretical Framework) which mostly treat these examples as descriptive case studies, this research offers a systematic analysis. Table 1 is not merely an inventory listing typical examples (which are

already discussed in the main text); it is a categorical definition. The presence of the "Category Definition" column (Column 2) is what makes this typology novel. This model provides a replicable analytical tool for deciphering how urban furniture is transformed into an instrument of social control. For example, according to this typology, a "bench armrest" is no longer just an isolated example; it is part of an "Exclusionary Restrictor" typology. It functions as a strategy that "divides surface continuity" (Form), to obstruct "sleeping" and "collective use" (Function), serving the purpose of "excluding homeless individuals" and "restricting public surfaces" (Intent). Similarly, a "sloped bench" is no longer just a "modern" form. It is part of a "Commercializing Deterrent" typology, operating as a strategy that "renders comfort unfavorable" (Form), to target "long-term sitting" and "deny comfort" (Function), thereby achieving the intent of "enabling commercialization" and "imposing spatial control."

The proposed 'form-function-intent' typology advances the discourse by transforming key theoretical debates into a tangible analytical tool. The identified 'Intent' of spatial control mirrors Davis's (1990) observations on the militarization of urban space, yet details exactly how this fear is materialized at the micro-scale. Similarly, the focus on 'Form' resonates with Rosenberger's (2023) 'politics of objects,' while the 'Commercialization' intent aligns with Zukin's (1995) critique of 'pacified' consumer spaces. By synthesizing these distinct theoretical perspectives into a unified matrix, this framework enables designers, urban planners, and local authorities to question the implicit social and ethical intents behind these designs, which are often masked under the guise of 'aesthetics,' 'modernity,' or 'security.'

5 Conclusion

This study was designed to analyze the phenomenon of Hostile Architecture, which is increasingly prevalent in urban public spaces yet predominantly addressed in academic literature through descriptive, isolated case studies. The analysis was conducted through the lens of interior architecture and industrial design disciplines. The primary objective was to systematically classify the manifestations of these design practices at the scale of urban furniture and urban interior space based on documented examples from the literature. To achieve this objective, the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology was adopted. The analysis of the collected data was performed using an a priori analytical framework developed by the researcher: the 'form-function-intent' model. This methodology deciphered which design forms (RQ1) Hostile Architecture practices utilize, which bodily functions (RQ2) they obstruct, and the social intents (RQ3) that lie behind these interventions. The final output of the research was an analytical typology that revealed the intersectional patterns between these three axes.

The significance of this research lies not only in contributing a new typology to the Hostile Architecture literature but also in the analytical depth this typology

provides. By operationalizing the 'form-function-intent' framework, this study systematically demonstrated that objects categorized as 'hostile' are neither coincidental nor neutral. On the contrary, it showed they are deliberately structured instruments designed to exclude specific social groups and to assert spatial control. This finding elevates the discussion from a "general" (e.g., "this is anti-homeless") or "aesthetic" (e.g., "this bench is ugly") plane to an ethical and specific one (e.g., "this form obstructs the function of sleeping to fulfill the intent of excluding"). Thus, a concrete, critical terminology and an analytical instrument have been presented to interrogate the role and ethical responsibilities of the design disciplines (interior architecture, industrial design) within neoliberal urbanization practices.

Building upon this ethical foundation, the study offers concrete practical implications for urban policy and design practice. For local authorities and municipalities, the proposed typology serves as a critical evaluation tool during the procurement of urban furniture, enabling the identification of 'hidden' hostile strategies, such as spatial barriers disguised as 'artistic' landscaping, that might otherwise pass as benign design. For industrial and interior designers, this analytical model provides an ethical checklist to audit proposed designs, ensuring that ergonomic decisions do not inadvertently function as instruments of social exclusion. Consequently, this framework supports the transition from 'defensive' urbanism to explicitly 'inclusive' design policies by making the mechanisms of exclusion visible and contestable.

The methodological choices of this research also introduced specific limitations. The study's reliance on secondary data (existing literature) rather than primary data (fieldwork) restricted the analysis to documented (and predominantly Western-centric) examples.

Furthermore, the analysis of the 'intent' (RQ3) dimension had to rely on authorial commentary and inferences from source texts, rather than on the declarations of designers or administrators. In future studies, these limitations can be overcome by testing the proposed typology through empirical fieldwork. Researchers could utilize the 'data extraction form' developed in this study as a field observation tool to document 'hostile furniture' practices in different geographical and cultural contexts (e.g., in Turkish cities), thereby testing the typology's external validity.

The findings of this research open several avenues for future studies. First, researchers are encouraged to deepen the 'intent' dimension. This can be achieved through qualitative interviews with the "producers" of hostile designs (designers, local authorities, private property owners) to decipher the ideological and economic motivations behind these decisions. Second, the "user" dimension, a significant gap in this study, must be addressed. Ethnographic studies and phenomenological interviews with the groups targeted by hostile designs (e.g., homeless individuals, youth) as well as non-targeted groups ("legitimate" urban inhabitants) will reveal the impacts of these objects at the level of lived experience, moving beyond the 'form-function' analysis.

Finally, this study focused exclusively on "physical" forms. Future researchers should expand this model to also analyze non-physical deterrents in public space (e.g., specific music broadcasts, uncomfortable lighting, surveillance technologies) along the same 'form-function-intent' axis. Ultimately, understanding "hostile" design is a necessary first step in initiating the political and practical discussion of how its antithesis (namely, "welcoming" and "inclusive" design) can be made possible.

6 References

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