

## Original Research Article

## A study of Theoretical Streams Related to Urban Spaces

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**Abstract**

**Problem statement:** The frequency and plurality of ideas and approaches on the subject of “urban spaces,” as well as the variety of definitions, characteristics, opinions, and methods of dealing with this topic, has led to various and sometimes contradicting perceptions among academics in this field. Furthermore, because urban spaces theories are not limited to a single field of study and have been explored in philosophical, sociological, psychological, political, and economic contexts, research in this topic has clear complexities and requires more investigation. Typifying theoretical ideas is one of the most common techniques to simplify and handle such challenges. This article seeks to provide a typology and, more clearly, a kind of stream of theories and perspectives related to the subject of urban spaces.

**Research objective:** This stream study organizes and categorizes the frequency of approaches in the field of “urban spaces”, making it easier to comprehend and analyze what different urban spaces theorists have proposed. Using this stream study, it is possible to discern what type of approach has been adopted, and what definition of “space and urban space” each theorist and theorist in each stream of thought has articulated. Furthermore, by identifying and framing streams of thought, it is possible to understand which stream of thought(s) each theorist belongs to, and then his/her views can be better understood. In addition, any researcher can use one or more streams in the future to conduct research. Additionally, each researcher can employ one or more streams for future study on the subject of urban spaces and better explain and explore his preferred urban space within the framework of that stream of thought.

**Research method:** To achieve the goal of this study, the “two-dimensional typology” method was used. This method consists of two steps. According to the purpose of the article, the first step was to “choose a typology strategy.” “Empirical strategy” was selected as one of the common strategies at this stage. The second step was to “build a typology,” “which was completed by describing the “Constructs”, “Bounds”, “and” Representative types “and using them to fulfill the typology. The analysis section of the article explains how to use this method and how to create types.

**Conclusion :** The stream study of theoretical approaches to urban spaces is divided into three main streams and eight streams of thought (1 :empirical macro-stream including a (empirical-cultural stream ,b (empirical-behavioral stream ,c (empirical-critical stream ,and d (empirical-perceptual stream (2 ;Theoretical macro-stream includes :a (theoretical-psychological stream ,b (theoretical-critical stream ,c (theoretical-political economy stream ,and d (theoretical-sociological stream ;and (3empirical-theoretical stream

**Keywords :** *Urban Spaces, Public Space, Stream Study, Typology, Theory of urban spaces.*

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## Introduction and statement of the problem

When reviewing various sources on “urban spaces”<sup>1</sup> particularly in the field of urbanism, existing research is generally on topics such as “defining urban spaces” (see Carmona, Heath, Tiesdell, & Oc, 2003; Gehl, 2011; Madanipour, 2003; Newman, 1996; Relph, 1976; Trancik, 1986; Zucker, 1959) “typifying urban spaces,” (Bjerkeset & Aspen, 2020; Carmona, de Magalhães, & Hammond, 2008; Franck & Huang, 2020; Leclercq & Pojani, 2020; Madanipour, 2003) “designing and arranging urban spaces,” (see Bentley, 1985; Carmona et al., 2003; Gehl & Svarre, 2013) “emphasizing and justifying their importance in urban texture,” (see Cullen, 1995; Venturi, Brown & Izenour, 1977; Whyte, 1980) “the degree of publicity of spaces,” (see Karimnia & Haas, 2020; Mehta & Palazzo, 2020; Rishbeth, 2020). It could be argued that juxtaposing these cases has resulted in the emergence of a diverse range of theories about “urban spaces,” all of which are different, sometimes contradictory.

Furthermore, various theoretical approaches to urban spaces have resulted in differing perceptions and ambiguous viewpoints, particularly among researchers in this field (Carmona et al., 2008) In addition to the abundance of approaches, the field of urban spaces theories is not limited to a single area of expertise, (such as urban design, urban planning, landscape architecture, etc.). This issue is addressed by various other intellectual approaches, including philosophical (see Einstein, 1953; Jammer, 1969; Kant, 1929; Lee, 1971; Pannenberg, 2005) sociological (see Durkheim, 1933; Giddens, 1984), anthropological (see Canter, 1981; Relph, 1976), and architectural perspectives (Norberg-Schulz, 2014b), each with its own viewpoint. Thus, the urban spaces researcher is confronted with a bewildering array of theories. “Typify urban spaces theories” is one of the most common approaches to solving this problem.

Typological thinking is one of the human mind’s capabilities, after encountering a variety of

phenomena (Doty & Glick, 1994). Typology involves categorizing concepts and applying subjective limitations to deal with the diversity of meanings (Latifi, 2018). Accepting similarities and differences, as well as the possibility of recognizing differences and similarities, produces a unique type of typology related to the subject in typology. It enables researchers to describe, comprehend, reduce complexity, identify commonalities and differences, compare and simplify various types of information (see Doty & Glick, 1994; Latifi, 2018). Therefore, it will be impossible to provide a favorable analysis of the views, theories, and even spaces formed in urban texture and their classification until ideas about urban spaces are categorized and until it is clear how to define and refine space in these approaches.

This article aims to create a typology or stream study of the various theories and approaches to urban spaces. The terms “stream” and “stream study” have been used to describe the typology presented in this article because each of these types has not only paved the way for the study of urban spaces but also could influence other concepts and has been stream-creating in some way. Thus, these philosophical frameworks arose from a source that is still relevant and popular (they may be of little value in the scientific community, but they are still used). Accordingly, the term “stream” is a better fit for the movement of a framework’s ideas as well as the viewpoints of its thinkers. Each type is described as a “stream” in this context. Consequently, “stream study” entails recognizing traditional and dominant approaches to the subject of “urban spaces,” as well as establishing and refining boundaries and intellectual frameworks for theories and theorists.

The following stream study analyzes the frequency of existing methods in the field of “urban spaces” and assists in comprehending and analyzing what various urban space theorists have presented. With this stream study, it can be identified what kind of approach, method, and even definition has

been adopted for the category of space and urban space. Furthermore, it is feasible to organize the affiliation of each theorist who has explored and presented a theory in this field at any point in time (past, present, or future) by establishing and framing streams of thought. Also, each researcher can use one or more streams for future research and study the desired urban spaces within that stream of thought. Thus, the primary goal of this stream study is to provide a kind of framing, summarizing, and revealing common approaches and features of disparate theories, as well as a simplification in dealing with the complexities of urban spaces. This stream study elucidates how each stream of thought views urban spaces. It also demonstrates that what is considered urban spaces in one stream of thought may not be the same as what is presented in another stream of thought and that space can be defined and viewed differently. We attempted to consider a wide range of urban spaces theories in this stream study rather than focusing on one particular aspect.

### Research background

So far, various typologies for “urban theories” have been developed (see [Allmendinger, 2001 & 2009](#); [Faludi, 1973](#); [Friedmann, 1987](#); [Lang, 1987](#)), but research on “theories related to urban spaces,” as well as its typify and stream study, has been limited.

In his book “Space and Society,” Afrough (2015) introduces a typology of approaches to urban spaces. Afrough divides related theories into two main categories and defines other subcategories in the second category, noting that it seeks to reveal the relationships and processes influencing the emergence of a rich and poor space 1) pioneers’ perspectives on the city and urbanization, 2) a summary of theories of the city and urbanization (ecologists<sup>2</sup>, culturalism<sup>3</sup>, power relations and management orientation<sup>4</sup>, phenomenology<sup>5</sup>, political economy of space<sup>6</sup>, urban non-spatial sociology<sup>7</sup>). The purely sociological nature of

theories, as well as the study of space in the field of sociological knowledge, are two features of Afrough’s work.

In the field of urbanism, Kashanijoo (2010) examines the most important theoretical approaches to urban spaces since the Industrial Revolution and evaluates the field’s developments. He categorizes and characterizes urban spaces theories in three main periods, taking into account their temporal nature: 1) after the Industrial Revolution until 1960 (emphasizing spatial and visual perception), 2) from 1960 to 1990 (emphasizing environmental-behavioral influences, the approach to strengthening social interactions, emphasizing movement in urban space, and the expansion of pedestrianization), and 3) since 1990 until now (the approach to creating security and human scale in urban space, environmental considerations, and sustainability). Kashanijoo claims to have compiled a list of the most influential experts and approaches in the field of urban public spaces. He mentions the dominant approaches in each period in addition to the historical and periodic divisions.

In his book “Spaces in the City, Concepts, Theories, and Types,” Pourjafar (2016) divides theories about “spaces in the city” into four categories based on the work done: structuralists<sup>8</sup>, perceptualists<sup>9</sup>, environmental psychologists<sup>10</sup>, and environmental psychologists<sup>11</sup>.

In Latin sources, most theorists tend to typify urban spaces rather than study their theories in depth (see [Carmona et al., 2008](#); [Carmona et al., 2003](#)); however, some recent efforts, such as Companion to Public Space, can be noted in the meantime (see [Mehta & Palazzo, 2020](#)).

Perhaps Gehl’s (2013) perspective, which is presented in a brief section of “How to Study Public Life”, can be viewed as a categorization of urban spaces theories in the form of public life studies, even though he does not address or exploit this issue. Gehl employs a historical and temporal perspective in this regard. He divides these studies into four general categories: 1) early works, 2) the

first studies of public life, 3) public life studies as a strategic tool, and 4) public life studies as the macro-stream. In all these categories, the study of public life plays a main role in the study (Gehl & Svarre, 2013). Zieleniec (2007) uses the theories of important thinkers in political economy and the critical school to characterize the theoretical trends that these theorists are considering in his book “Space and Social Theory” (Zieleniec, 2007) 1) The Implicit Spatiality of Historical Materialism: Karl Marx, 2) The Space of Formal Sociology: Georg Simmel, 3) The Production of Space: Henri Lefebvre, 4) The Political Economy of Space: David Harvey, and 5) Space, Knowledge, and Power: Michel Foucault. It is important to note that, in Zieleniec’s work, space is used in a broad sense and does not refer to a specific case; second, all dimensions are considered from a purely socio-political standpoint. Therefore, this classification is abstract and complicated when it comes to spatial concepts.

Because the above typologies were created to address a specific topic (such as sociology, political economy, urban design, and so on), they were unable to cover all aspects of streams of thought, theories of various urban spaces, and only addressed some of them. As previously stated, the topic of “urban spaces” cannot be considered in isolation. Hence, an attempt is made in the current stream study to introduce a broader intellectual dimension centered on the intellectual domain of urbanism, and each stream explains the dominant intellectual framework on the subject of urban spaces.

## Methodology

To achieve a two-dimensional typology and the operational process of its construction, it is necessary to go through two steps: 1) choosing a typology strategy and 2) building a typology (Bailey, 1994 & 2011; Latifi, 2018; Martín-Peña & Díaz-Garrido, 2008; Smith, 2002).

### • First step: choosing a typology strategy

In general, there are three types of typology creation strategies: conceptual<sup>12</sup>, empirical, and operational<sup>13</sup>

(a combination of the previous two strategies) (Bailey, 1994; Latifi, 2018). Empirical typology can be formed using an “empirical strategy,” in which observations are directly referenced. This inductive strategy assigns observations to a type based on intra-group similarities and distinguishes them from intergroup observations based on obvious differences (Bailey, 1994; Smith, 2002). As stated in the introduction and problem statement, this article aims to examine existing theories and develop a specific typology and stream study based on the analysis of these theories. Thus, these types are visible. It is intended to explain the desired stream study and classify the similarities that exist between different theories, and finally introduce the types by referring to the principles of the theories and examining them. Consequently, “empirical strategy” is the best way to achieve the article’s goal, based on the aforementioned feature and character.

### • Second step: Typification

Typology should be created after the strategy has been determined and refined. Every typology, in general, is made up of elements that contribute to its creation. There are hierarchical components to a two-dimensional typology: There are three types of constructs or concepts: 1) Constructs<sup>14</sup>, 2) Bounds<sup>15</sup>, and 3) Types<sup>16</sup>. According to Table 1, these components are relative to one another and outline the general pattern of a two-dimensional typology.

### • Analysis

In this section, the main purpose of the article is examined. of the article; and a stream study of theoretical related to urban spaces are introduced. In this case, the issues related to the topic are explained first, and the desired stream study is formed step by step, according to the introduced method and the steps in which the final typology was described. However, it should be noted that the proposed method’s construction of a typology is a reciprocal process between various components (constructs, bounds, and types).

### • Constructs (Dimensions)

According to studies on theories and approaches

Table 1. General pattern of a two-dimensional typology and its components. Source: Authors.

		Constructs		
		Bound	Bound	...
Constructs	Bound	Type (a)	Type (b)	...
	Bound	Type (c)	Type (d)	...
	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮

of urban spaces, constructs that can be introduced in the upcoming two-dimensional typology are: 1) the analytical-research dimension; 2) the structural dimension. The first construct that distinguishes theories is the “analytical-research dimension.” This construct refers to the research method and study design used to develop a theory. To put it another way, urban spaces theories can be distinguished based on the type of analytical approach used, as well as how data is collected and analyzed. The approach that governs the integrity of the theory that underpins and constructs its substance is also referred to as the “structural dimension”. Because urban spaces theories cover such a broad spectrum and a wide range of topics, each one can be classified into its intellectual-philosophical structure.

• **Bounds**

Each of the constructs (dimensions) listed in the previous section should include bounds, based on what was mentioned in the research method and [Table 1](#). The first construct (analytical-research dimension) is divided into two bounds in this paper: empirical and theoretical. Theories whose theorists owe their research accomplishments to experiences and wandering around the city are referred to as “bound empirical”. They research urban spaces by focusing on the city’s experiences, texture, citizen behavior patterns, and how the city is managed. On the empirical bound, the theorist pays more

attention to what he sees, feels, and experiences than to what has been addressed in theoretical terms so far. The most widely used research method used in the empirical bound is field research (observation and interview) and laboratory methods. “Theoretical bounds” refers to theories that have more theoretical views and use of proven theories of the past as well as their critique and review. In this regard, the items presented are generally theoretical, abstract, and subjective, and the research achievements are announced in the form of a theoretical perspective. Even though the theories used are empirical, the theorist expresses his or her findings and analysis theoretically and abstractly. The most commonly used methods in “theoretical bounds” are library studies and content analysis.

The second construct (structural dimension) is divided into three bounds: perceptual, critical, and socio-political. The term “perceptual bound” refers to theories about mental perception and human behavior in an urban environment. Its theorists want to know what’s going on in people’s heads and how urban spaces affect their behavior and mentality. “Critical Bound” takes a critical and grounded approach to urban space issues and theories and seeks to find imperfection as well as criticize them. For achieving critical principles, urban spaces are sometimes chastised, and also, the theories and approaches that produced them. Theories that look at the cultural and historical contexts of society, as well as how political and economic issues influence people’s behavior and how urban textures are formed based on these factors, are referred to as “socio-political boundaries”. Theorists present their viewpoints in this regard by observing behavioral patterns, historical and contemporary works, and textures, societal policies, and analyzing human behaviors in urban spaces.

Since the constructs (dimensions) and typology bounds (stream study) of the present article have been established, it is possible to explain [Table 2](#), which is the two-dimensional typology’s main foundation, before moving on to the types of

Table 2. General pattern of two-dimensional typology of theories related to urban spaces. Source: Authors.

		analytical-research dimension	
		Empirical	Theoretical
structural dimension	Socio-political	Representative type	Representative type
	Critical	Representative type	Representative type
	Perceptual	Representative type	Representative type

streams of thought. The general two-dimensional typology pattern of this paper on theories related to urban spaces is shown in this Table 2.

• **Streams of thought (Types)**

Following the definition of constructs and bounds, the different types and streams of thought are explained in this stage of juxtaposing theories based on the two-dimensional typology pattern, which is also shown in Table 2. Since the types presented in this article represent a stream of theories whose examples and approaches can be found in the real world (scientific and theoretical), the definitions of types (polar, representative, criteria, and ideal) will be used, from “representative type” to introduce types. A “stream of thought” is used to describe each type, and a “stream study” is used to describe this typology.

- **Empirical-cultural stream of thought**

The empirical-cultural stream of thought examines urban spaces from historical, cultural, and artistic perspectives. Scholars in this field of study criticize modern city life and see what it creates as the primary factor in separating city dwellers from their culture and history. They describe monotony, boredom, and a lack of public life as characteristics of modern cities, citing the lack of public space and squares as the cause (as one of the most important

urban spaces) (Bacon, 1974; Cullen, 1995; Krier, 1979; Rapoport, 1969; Sitte, 1986; Zucker, 1959).

In the stream of empirical-cultural thought, urban spaces are spaces that are surrounded and limited by physical elements (Bacon, 1974; Cullen, 1995; Krier, 1979). According to empirical-cultural thinkers, the most distinguishing feature of urban spaces is a wall defined by artistic and physical elements.

One of the basic principles used by stream empirical-cultural writers in their study and exploration of urban life and formed spaces is paying attention to historical and cultural features and using them in theorizing. This group believes that the original concept of city life has been forgotten and that urban spaces have failed to provide the appropriate quality of life due to a lack of cultural and artistic elements (Cullen, 1995; Sitte, 1986). Therefore, they are more likely to give urban areas a sense of life. This stream of thought approach will not be purely technical and will take into account artistic and cultural factors. They prioritize an artistic and cultural approach, introducing urban life as a link between culture and society.

Empirical-cultural theorists have traditionally used the method of experiencing the historical texture of cities and urban spaces, as well as examining the nature of past decisions in urban space design (Cullen, 1995). This group believes that it is necessary to be present in the texture to achieve design principles and criteria. This stream’s design rules are derived from historical, cultural, and artistic research. They believe that the principles that have historically allowed cities to create successful spaces with meaning are worth reusing (Krier, 1979; Rapoport, 1969). This means knowing the culture to appreciate the space formed in the city. It can be said that using the pattern of designing squares and how to organize old buildings, and the use of historical studies, is one of the most important tools in the analysis and study of urban spaces in the empirical-cultural stream

of thought. They attempted to decode and encode the principles and criteria that emerged from these studies to create a cultural, historical, and artistic framework for urban spaces. The most important theorists of this stream of thought are Camillo Sitte, Gordon Cullen, Edmund Bacon, Paul Zucker, Amos Rapoport, and Rob Krier.

#### - Empirical- behavioral stream of thought

As a continuation of the empirical-cultural stream of thought, which found its interest in re-reading and examining historical and cultural textures, empirical-behavioral stream of thought theorists looks for solutions to improve urban issues in the contemporary texture itself with all of its flaws. They critique the current cityscape as well as dysfunctional urban spaces. They believe that by delving deeper into the structure of modern cities and examining the effects of modern construction that have reduced the city to a mere living space, the causes of contemporary urban space failure can be discovered (Bentley, 1985; Gehl, 2011; Gehl & Svarre, 2013; Whyte, 1980).

Empirical-behavioral theorists study modern urban life and try to see and analyze the city and its people well by drawing on personal experiences and wandering in urban spaces (Whyte, 1980). This group is trying to figure out what principles, criteria, and even theories it can use to organize the same modern urban spaces (Gehl, 2011; Whyte, 1980). This stream's theorists rely heavily on "observation" to achieve their philosophical goals. The authors of the empirical-behavioral stream believe that "public space" is the most important path out of the modern city's problems and dilemmas. They believe that providing a context for people to meet and carry out daily activities and public space can address the modern city's main flaws and weaknesses, such as a lack of space for walking and experiencing the city (Gehl, 2011). Empirical-behavioral stream thinkers believe that urban spaces are more closely related to parks and urban squares.

The empirical-behavioral stream of thought

solution's most important feature is its compatibility with people's current needs and problems. People's daily activities and how they behave in urban spaces are both investigated in this regard (Gehl, 2011). This group believes that emphasizing the diversity of experience in urban spaces and examining urban activities, behaviors, and experiences can achieve principles, and criteria for improving the performance of current urban spaces and develop and use them in design and planning (Bentley, 1985). Thus, the majority of their focus and thought is on experience-oriented and even emotion-oriented approaches and they frequently prefer what they feel and experience over theoretical views. Leading theorists in this stream of thought include Jan Gehl, William H. Whyte, Ian Bentley, Oscar Newman, and Roger Trancik.

#### - Empirical-critical stream of thought

This stream of thought, like the empirical school, critiques today's cities. The criticism of this stream of thought focuses on the effects and processes of common and seemingly inviolable planning, which are accepted as correct without reservation (Jacobs, 1961; Tibbalds, 1992). The suggestions in this stream of thought are mostly general and abstract, and they stay within the realm of strategic and written principles, with little regard for executive perspectives.

He criticizes the importance of cars in cities, believing that today's cities are designed more for automobiles than humans (Jacobs, 1961; Tibbalds, 1992). The empirical-critical stream of thought views "public space" as the primary means of achieving human-centered objectives, emphasizing that attractive public spaces will inspire the entire city (Jacobs, 1961; Tibbalds, 1992). Most of the city's streets and sidewalks are considered to be problematic by empirical-critical thinkers. They explain their critical framework by examining and how they are used by the public and then use this observation and experience to develop their own principles and intellectual framework for

improving urban spaces. These two spaces (street and sidewalk), according to Jacobs (1961), are the most important public places in a city and play a critical role in ensuring the city's security. Empirical and inductive perceptions are the most common method used by empirical-critical streams. Francis Tibbalds and Jane Jacobs were two of the people who helped shape this stream of thought.

#### - Empirical-perceptual stream of thought

The empirical-perceptual stream of thought is the stream of thought that is most concerned with how people see and understand the city. Kevin Lynch (1960) uses the phrase "educating the public's eyes" to emphasize the importance of people's understanding. He believes that what people observe is as important as the appearance of a city because what people observe creates a perception of the city in the individual's mind, which theorists in this stream value highly. People's perceptions of their city, they believe, influence their behavior and actions in urban spaces (Appleyard, 1976 & 1981; Hall, 1966; Lynch, 1960)

This group criticizes modern and contemporary cities for failing to consider citizens' perceptions of public space, which has resulted in it becoming a sterile and monotonous environment (Appleyard, 1976). With the principles and methods they offer, empirical-perceptual thinkers attempt to change and improve this perception<sup>17</sup>.

They emphasize that the visual quality of the city, as well as citizens' mental images of the city and urban culture, is the most important factor in how people behave and act in urban spaces. Hence, by better understanding the various dimensions and features of this mental image and its mechanism, it is possible to achieve a better approach to the design of the city and the desired urban spaces. As a result, one of the most important and main methods that this stream of thought uses in the study of urban spaces and creating an optimal mental image of the city is identifying the process of creating people's mental perception of the city

and the language used by every citizen to know and understand the city.

The predominant method that empirical-perceptual thinkers use in their research is to use methods to measure people's behavior and mental perception. (see Appleyard, 1976; Lynch, 1960), and they usually use the field analysis method. Empirical-perceptual theorists argue that understanding the city from the perspective of a pedestrian is more important than understanding the city from the perspective of a rider (see Appleyard, 1976; Hall, 1966; Lynch, 1960). The most important thinkers in forming this stream of thought were Kevin Lynch, Donald Appleyard, and Edward Hall.

#### - Theoretical-psychological stream of thought

In dealing with cities and urban spaces, the theoretical-psychological stream of thought commonly employs different approaches such as philosophical considerations, environmental and personal psychology dimensions, and also how to communicate with space personally, interpersonally, and impersonally. According to the thinkers in this stream, modernist perspectives do not provide a proper understanding of daily life. They criticize today's cities for their lack of "meaning" and "identity" as well as their de-identification. They focus more on the semantic aspects of man's role and position when explaining his role and position and consider the loss of "imagination" to be the greatest crisis of our time (Canter, 1981; Relph, 1976; Norberg-Schulz, 2005 & 2014a).

This stream of thought emphasizes the importance of "meaning" in urban spaces in all of its theoretical dimensions, to the point where it influences their definition of "space". They emphasize the concept of "place" rather than "space" and make a connection between them. In a more concrete sense, place refers to a space that has been experienced and is meaningful (Relph, 1976).

Theoretical-psychological thinkers examine the category of urban spaces in greater depth and take a sequential and step-by-step approach to space research: They make use of physical characteristics,

emphasize events, and focus on the importance of human experience and the space's perceived meaning. They eventually come to "place" as a category; because imagination and meaning are formed in the human mind in this way, they pursue an important but often overlooked category in today's cities: "authentication"<sup>18</sup>.

A place has a different meaning and evokes feelings, depending on who it is viewed from. Therefore, the way people define a particular place depends on certain elements; These elements are used as a foundation for defining and designing a place in the theoretical-psychological stream of thought. Therefore, "sense of place" differs from person to person in this stream, and "creation of place" is the ultimate goal of environmental design (Canter, 1981).

Theoretical-psychological theorists try to figure out what humans think and how they think about it using theoretical-philosophical (often phenomenological) and psychological approaches. This stream can be defined as studying how and why people "make sense of places". They believe that place is the most important factor in developing deep emotional and physical bonds between people. Hence, the concept of place must be used to establish the link between man and the environment. The main theorists in this field of thought are Christian Norberg-Schulz, Edward Relph, and David Canter.

#### - Theoretical-critical stream of thought

The theoretical-critical stream of thought is frequently concerned with theoretical and conceptual issues, as well as the critique of previous ideas. The study and critique of common and well-known theories in the field of urban space theory, as well as the analysis of the consequences of using those theories, are important features of this stream of thought. This group criticizes the ease with which some theories are accepted and believes that many of the theories currently in use are the primary cause of urban problems (Chermayeff & Alexander, 1963; Jacobs, 1961).

It's also worth noting that the solutions presented

in the theoretical-critical stream of thought are generally abstract and remain in the realm of thought dominance. The theoretical-critical stream of thought looks at the characteristics of modern urban planning and how they affect the characteristics of urban life and space. These criticisms are usually directed at modern urban life (Chermayeff & Alexander, 1963; Jacobs, 1961). Meanwhile, thinkers like Jacobs, Alexander, and Chermayeff have used this stream to present their ideas.

#### - Theoretical-political economy stream of thought

The theoretical-political economy stream is the most ruthless in analyzing cities and urban spaces. The first thing to notice about this group is how they define space. Space has very broad dimensions in the context of political economy, and it refers to anything created by power (capital and government) during a process. "All physical structures, including houses, roads, offices, sewage systems, parks, cultural, educational, and other facilities, as well as items of capital used in production (such as factories, highways, railways, offices, and so on) (Zieleniec, 2007) are all urban spaces," according to this stream of thought.

The characteristics of urban spaces in political economy serve as a power to achieve its political and economic goals in society. The importance that power attaches to the space creates a sense of importance for space, which drives capital to seek ownership of it. Controlling and dominating space can strengthen economic power (Cuthbert, 2008; Zieleniec, 2007). Controlling, organizing, regulating, and manipulating space thus becomes a tool for empowering capital and capitalism, as well as government. Therefore, space (as a commodity) has advantages for an individual or a group, making social activities and actions in that space a tool for organizing and structuring. Power (capital and government) will always win the dominance and control of urban spaces in this conflict (Lefebvre, 1991).

Capital and power use space as a tool to control it for their own gain. They are willing to use any means

necessary to demonstrate their power and dominance over society, including monuments, symbols, public art, and so on (Cuthbert, 2008; Harvey, 1985; Zieleniec, 2007). “When the economic system shapes the structure of urban spaces, the ideological system, in turn, strengthens the foundation of this situation,” Cuthbert says, “The reason for this is that urban spaces are both a stage and a symbolic representation of social events and encounters, with [dominant] ideas and values” (Cuthbert, 2008). Consequently, society will inevitably encounter this type of ideological behavior, which will eventually be dominated by power.

The frightening thing is that society accepts this dominance as normal. Power and capital control, regulate, monitor, and even manipulate society’s economic, political, and social functions by governing these spaces, transforming them into a kind of urban culture. This culture takes the form of “everyday life” and gradually becomes accepted by the general public. As a result of this process, we have a society that is dominated by capital and power without even realizing it, providing the means for capitalism’s survival (Lefebvre, 1976). In other words, the people’s demands appear to be in line with the power’s economic needs and political interests (capitalist class and government), and the situation appears to be calm and normal. This will be society’s “political-economic hegemony23.”(Foucault, 1980 & 1984; Harvey, 1973 & 2003; Lefebvre, 1976, 1991)

A significant issue is raised in the theoretical-political economy stream of thought. To maintain this process (power’s dominance of space, then the impact on social relations, “Fetishism”, and finally “commoditization of space<sup>19)</sup>), capitalism strives for production and creation “need”. Every need requires space to be met; thus, in addition to the concept of space, attention must be paid to its complementary subject, namely “space creation and production”. “The most important point to consider,” Lefebvre says, “is the production of space by political power” (Lefebvre, 1991).

So, in this line of thought, space is more than just a financial consideration. Space, in the context of capitalism, becomes a tool with a political as well as an economic function. There is always a two-way relationship and cycle between the space created and the relationships that create that space. This can sometimes create space and an atmosphere that creates more relationships. This rotation always results in the reproduction of space - both the reproduction that creates the need and the need that requires space. The longer this cycle goes on, the longer capitalism and power will survive.

It’s worth noting that the philosophers of the theoretical-political economy stream condemn and criticize such this kind of space, despite defining and explaining it. Therefore, it’s important not to overlook the fact that the political economy stream of thought does not back up this space. Quite the opposite, this stream of thought seeks to challenge “how it came into being” by understanding space. This stream’s thinkers describe how power and capital dominate space, revealing the issues that affect social life from behind the scenes. However, in response to their criticisms, they usually do not come up with practical and executable solutions and remain abstract (see Cuthbert, 2008; Foucault, 1980 & 1984; Harvey, 1973 & 2003; Lefebvre, 1976; Lefebvre, 1991; Zieleniec, 2007 & 2018). The most famous people who have effective activities in this field were Henri Lefebvre, David Harvey, Michel Foucault, and Alexander Cuthbert.

#### - Theoretical-sociological stream of thought

In terms of defining and explaining the concept of space, the theoretical-sociological stream of thought is often difficult to distinguish from the stream of political economy. While the theoretical-sociological stream of thought focuses on society and analysis based on individual behavior in society, the political economy stream of thought focuses on the dominant power’s behavior in space.

The study of the relationship between city and rural is the starting point for theoretical views in the stream of sociological thought, connecting it to the

concept of space and urban spaces. Cities take on a new form of society as a result of this relationship and the process between city and rural. A stream of sociological thought examines and criticizes this type of society and, thus, society's behavior in cities and urban spaces.

According to this line of thought, the city, as a "manifestation of power, a place of economic, military, and political strength and intelligence", (Afrough, 2015) becomes a point of attraction for the villagers; which city that needs a "social division of labor" to advance its economic goals, and a population density that needs to fill its workspace (Durkheim, 1933). The social division of labor is thus completed in an immigration relationship between the city and rural area, and the city becomes a place where "the social system is expanded... and the system's cohesion is based on relations of dominance and interdependence between cities and their rural areas"(Afrough, 2015). However, to strengthen this dominance, some spaces must be created that allow labor division to function more effectively. In this regard, class relations emerge in the urban system, as well as in the economy and management that governs it, and these class relations manifest themselves in various spaces. One of the most obvious examples of the formation of this type of spaces is texture formation north of the city and south of the city. Accordingly, the role of power and capital in this type of urban society cannot be overlooked - and this is where this line of thought intersects with political economy theory.

While developing and building new spaces and tools, such as new modes of transportation and communication, Emile Durkheim (1933) contends that the city encourages "labor division". "The only way for urban populations to survive is for functions to be differentiated", he explains, "different professions coexist in the city without destroying one another because each has its own goals"(Durkheim as quoted by Afrough, 2015). This "class-based society," as Durkheim refers to it, manifests itself in the form of space in his city, which is filled by

the people of the society in proportion to their social class, and thus a "class-based society" is formed in urban spaces.

Apart from the importance of theoretical-sociological thought in the formation of space and population concentration for the division of labor and the formation of a class-based society, this stream contains opinions that "analyze the behaviors of urban society" and examine how life is lived "through facilities and urban spaces". Simmel (1997), referring to department stores and megamalls as "modern temples of consumption and consumerism", claims The only thing that is common among all the people who use these spaces is the kind of occupation that causes real hypnosis, which entertains people while allowing them to forget the pressures, they face in urban spaces and modern life (Simmel, 1994, 1997).

So, in this stream of thought, space is a tool for indirect control, social regulation, and people's urban culture, As with the theoretical-political economy stream. The sociological stream is more concerned with the sociological characteristics of the space and people's behavioral actions, whereas the political economy stream critiques the capitalist approach to producing and reproducing these spaces. Among the most influential thinkers in this stream of thought are Georg Simmel, Emile Durkheim, and Anthony Giddens.

#### - Empirical-theoretical stream of thought

The empirical-theoretical stream of thought dates back to the early twenty-first century and is characterized by the intersection of empirical and theoretical perspectives. This stream of thought and its proponents address one of the most serious flaws in urban spaces theories: the failure to bridge the theoretical and practical dimensions. Scholars believe theoretical and practical perspectives should be dominant to solve city and urban space problems, with simultaneous monitoring and analysis used to achieve design and planning principles. Therefore, they don't limit themselves to a single aspect of urban space research and consider various

factors (Carmona et al., 2008; Carmona et al., 2003; Madanipour, 2013; Mehta & Palazzo, 2020; PPS, 2000).

Developing “feasible” principles and criteria for the design, planning, and management of urban spaces is one of the main reasons for the simultaneous use of theoretical and empirical dimensions in this stream of thought (see Carmona et al., 2008; Carmona et al., 2003; Madanipour, 2003; 2010 & 2013). Researchers who combine empirical and theoretical methods are attempting to create great space and place. Four characteristics define a “great public spaces”: they are a) accessible; b) people are engaged in activities there; c) the space is comfortable and has a good image; and finally, d) it is a sociable place (PPS, 2000). This group stresses the significance of urban public space in creating value in urban design and planning. Great public spaces, they say, establish good visual and social connections with their surroundings because they are highly readable and provocative (Carmona, Latham, Swenarton, & Chatwin, 1996). One of the main priorities of this stream of thought is to discuss how to improve the “public quality” of space and how to increase generality and collectability in urban spaces (Carmona et al., 2003; Carmona et al., 1996; Madanipour, 2003 & 2013; PPS, 2000).

Theorists of the empirical stream of thought strive to create a safe, engaging, and practical environment for society. They propose principles and methods for the construction of urban spaces, as well as methods for putting these principles into practice. This group aims to apply a holistic approach to urban spaces, taking morphological, perceptual, historical, physical, and other factors into account. They recognize important concepts such as economics and management. They seek ways to implement and realize their concepts and theoretical and intellectual framework in the world of practice and experience and re-reading related theories. They’re looking for conceptualization, and their theories always emphasize the process of solving the problem, in addition to these rules and patterns. They avoid specializing works because they believe that solutions must be derived from experience and

theory with a solid understanding of the fundamentals (Carmona, 2019; Carmona et al., 2008; Carmona et al., 2003; Carmona et al., 1996).

Because this stream of thought is new, and most thinkers in this field of thought have scanned and presented articles and books in recent decades (see Bjerkeset & Aspen, 2020; Franck & Huang, 2020; Karimnia & Haas, 2020; Leclercq & Pojani, 2020; Rishbeth, 2020), it is expected that the stream of empirical-theoretical thought will continue to be much broader than it is today and that will be able to create streams of thought. Important theorists such as Ali Madanipour and Matthew Carmona have presented significant and influential research in this context.

## Research findings and Discussion

Representative types (streams of thought) were introduced and described based on the steps taken and the presented constructs and bounds. Thus, Table 3 can be used to complete Table 2, which is the article’s most advanced two-dimensional typology construction method. This table shows how urban space stream study theories relate to typology elements.

Table 3 can be presented as a “tree structure” to go beyond the output of the method used in the paper, as well as to better understand the stream study presented (Fig. 1). According to the analytical-research dimension, three main streams can be achieved under the title of “the macro-stream “. Three stream categories are introduced as a result of this explanation: empirical, theoretical, and empirical-theoretical. Each of the “the macro-stream “ also has its own divisions and subcategories, which are the same as the “streams of thought “ introduced. This stream study is depicted in Diagram 1 as a whole.

## Conclusion

An attempt was made in the stream study presented to deal with the issue of urban spaces from a broader perspective and to explain different perspectives in this regard. The goal of this stream study was not only

Table 3. Two-dimensional typology of the study of theoretical streams related to urban spaces. Source: Authors.

		Analytical-Research dimension	
		Empirical	Theoretical
Structural dimension	Sociopolitical	Empirical-cultural stream of thought	Theoretical-sociological stream of thought
		Empirical-behavioral stream of thought	Theoretical-political economy stream of thought
	Critica	Empirical-critical stream of thought	Theoretical-critical stream of thought
		Empirical-perceptual stream of thought	Theoretical-psychological stream of thought
	Perceptual	Empirical-theoretical stream of thought	

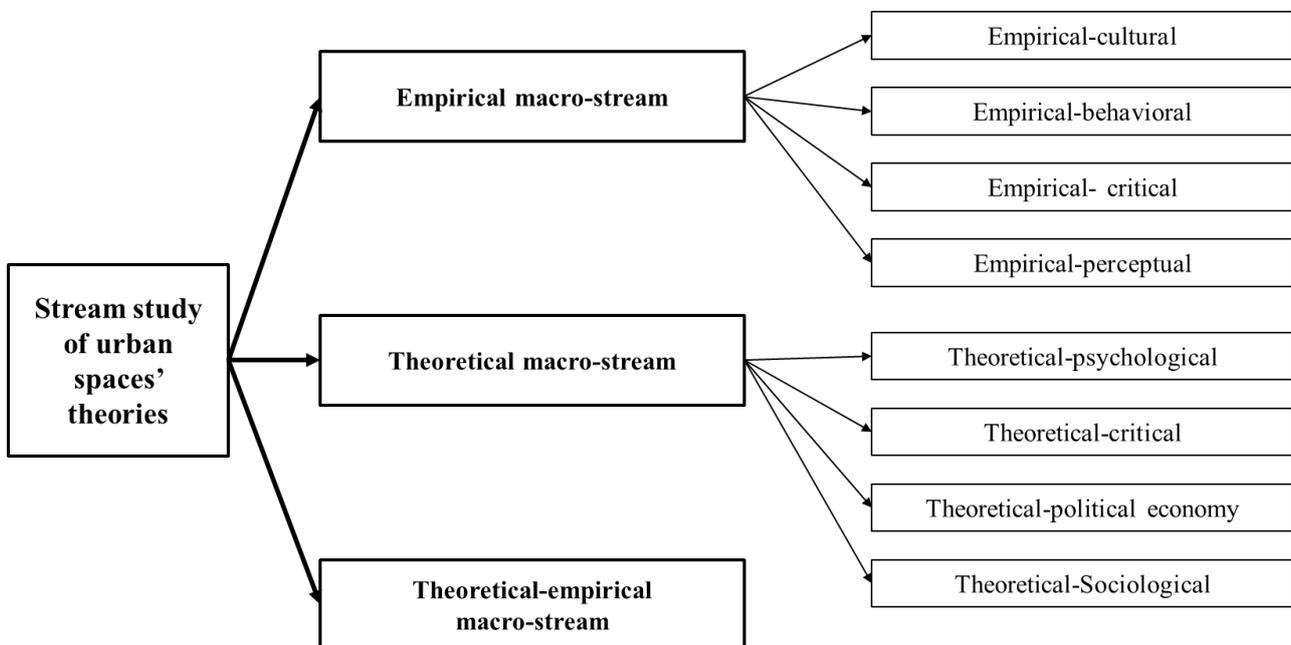


Fig. 1. Tree structure of the study of theoretical streams related to urban spaces. Source: Authors.

to categorize theories but also to identify a type of thinking framework for thinking about urban spaces. Furthermore, by defining and framing streams of thought, one or more streams of thought can be used

for future research on urban spaces, with the desired urban spaces defined and studied within them. This stream study will provide a better understanding of what urban theorists have proposed. Theoretical

approaches to urban spaces can be categorized into three-stream sets and eight streams of thought, based on the information presented (Table 4).

1) The empirical macro-stream draws on urban experiences and wanderings to produce research outcomes. The theorist is more concerned with what he sees, feels, and experiences in this macro-stream than with what has been addressed in the theoretical dimension so far. Principles, frameworks, criteria, and indicators for the empirical macro-stream are all based on personal experience. Thus, this macro-stream is more executable and closer to the practical dimensions. Field methods (observation and interviews) and laboratory methods are frequently used for this purpose. There are four streams of thought in the empirical macro-stream: 1-1) empirical-cultural, 1-2) empirical-behavioral, 1-3) empirical-critical, and 1-4) empirical-perceptual.

The use of theories, as well as their critique, is a common practice in 2) the theoretical macro-stream. The majority of cases are abstract and subjective in this stream, and thinkers announce their research accomplishments through a theoretical perspective. The most common theoretical stream methods are desk research and content analysis, with theories as to the final output. Four streams of thought are introduced in the following theoretical stream: 2-1) theoretical-psychological, 2-2) theoretical-critical, 2-3) theoretical-political economy and 2-4) theoretical-sociological.

3) The theoretical empirical macro-stream stream aims to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Empirical perspectives and theoretical approaches are both included in this stream of thought category. The principal features of the empirical-theoretical macro-stream include the simultaneous use of theoretical and empirical dimensions, as well as a comprehensive perspective. This macro-stream thought aims to define “feasible” design and planning principles and criteria for urban spaces. Empirical-theoretical researchers aim to create a great public space and place, as well as improve the quality and collectivity of public space. He avoids specializing in work

alone, arguing that solutions must be derived from personal experiences and theories with a solid understanding of the fundamentals.

## Endnotes

1. The term “urban spaces” was chosen over “urban space” because the latter is ambiguous and can lead to multiple interpretations. To put it another way, different schools of thought have different examples of “urban space” as well as different uses and definitions. For example, from the political economy perspective, the term “space and urban space” refers to anything created by capital and capitalism, whereas for some urban planners, it refers to open spaces with social interactions. Architectural and interior spaces are also considered part of urban space on a smaller scale and in architectural terms. As a result of these differences in “urban space” definitions, multiple readings are possible. However, the only thing that all of these definitions have in common is that they all exist in the context of an urban texture. Thus, instead of “urban space,” it is preferable to use “urban spaces” - plural form, representing abundance and diversity - to ensure comprehensiveness in word choice as well as to show the overlap of different spaces in the city. Defining and refining this problem, however, will necessitate a separate investigation.
2. The perspective of ecologists: This school has attempted to comprehend the city using biological concepts (Afrough, 2015).
3. Culturalist interpretations: interpretations that, on the one hand, express the differences and tensions that theorists of this stream of thought believe exist between rural and urban life, and, on the other hand, express their desire to live with rural culture to some extent (ibid.).
4. Power relations and management orientation: political conflicts over land use, social isolation, working-class deprivation, (ibid.)
5. Phenomenalism: This perspective takes a non-spatial stance, claiming that the city and urban space are nothing more than a phenomenon... The city isn't a self-contained entity with a theorized operating system (ibid.).
6. The political economy of space perspective: This perspective is centered on the city, unlike previous perspectives. Indeed, it placed spatial implications on the broader agenda, issues that were rooted in Marxism and, in some ways, focused on the economic dimension and the relations that resulted (ibid.).
7. Urban non-spatial sociology from various perspectives: This perspective provides an intermediate approach to spatial categories and social processes by going beyond the spatial and non-spatial stages (ibid.).
8. Matthew Carmona, Richard Rogers, Cliff Martin, Edmund Bacon, Paul Zucker, and Rob Krier are among the eight structuralists (Pourjafar, 2016).
9. Perceptualists: They believe that people in cities use their five senses to distinguish between spaces and places. Residents of the city have formed this opinion (ibid.).
10. Behaviorists believe that designing urban space should be based on people's mental and psychological needs. Human needs, activities, and how people perceive and behave are all important in this context (ibid.).
11. Environmental psychologists: Their work is based on human-environment interactions, which they have applied to urban space designing. It is necessary to consider both the impact of man on the environment and the impact of the environment on man (ibid.).
12. Conceptual strategy: are reduced to smaller components using fundamental concepts and deduction (syllogism), following a pattern similar to the deductive approach used in research. Mental constructs, classes, and even types are defined using this strategy, regardless of prior knowledge or empirical considerations (Bailey, 1994, 2011).
13. Operational strategy: This takes into account both empirical and conceptual factors. This strategy results from the use of both analogy and establishment and is the result of reciprocating between concepts and examples (Bailey, 1994; Latifi, 2018).

Table 4. the study of theoretical streams related to urban spaces. Source: Authors.

Stream of thought	The most important thinkers	Main approach	How to treat urban spaces	The concept of urban spaces	Scale of thinking
Empirical-cultural	Camillo Sitte, Gordon Cullen, Edmund Bacon, Paul Zucker, Anos Rapoport, Rob Krier,	An artistic and culture-based approach	Experiencing the historical texture and urban spaces and examining the nature of past decisions	It is a space that is surrounded and enclosed by physical elements	Designing
Empirical-behavioral	Jan Gehl, William H. Whyte	Finding solutions to problems within the same troubled city	Using urban and strolling experiences in contemporary urban spaces	Parks and squares, street	Designing
Empirical-critical	Ian Bentley, Oscar Newman, Roger Trancik, Francis Tibbalds, Jane Jacobs	Experience-oriented and emotion-oriented and away from the theoretical point of view	See the city and the people well, and analyze them		
Empirical-perceptual	Kevin Lynch, Donald Appleyard, Edward T. Hall	Criticizing the current situation of contemporary and modern cities	Examining streets and sidewalks and how people use them in a critical context	Its streets and sidewalks	Managerial Planning
Theoretical-psychological	Christian Norberg-Schulz, Edward Relph, David Canter	Analyzing people's mental perception of the city and urban spaces and trying to change and improve people's mental image	Identify how people perceive mentally; Utilizing methods of measuring people's behavioral and mental and field analysis	Streets and town squares	Designing
Theoretical-critical	Serge Chermayeff, Christopher Alexander, Jane Jacobs	Utilizing philosophical and psychological approaches	Phenomenological: Recognition of any phenomenon related to the direct experience of that phenomenon	Place, meaningful and event-oriented space	Architectural Designing
Theoretical-political economy	Henri Lefebvre, David Harvey, Michel Foucault, Alexander Cuthbert	Creating meaning and identity	Library methods and content analysis		
Sociological	Georg Simmel, Émile Durkheim, Anthony Giddens	Reviewing and criticizing common theories of urban spaces and the consequences of their use	Reviewing and identifying the characteristics of the power structure and capital governing society and how the political economy of space, as the (main) method for spatialization by power and capital	Its streets and sidewalks	Planning
Theoretical-empirical Macro-stream	Matthew Carmona, Ali Madanipour	Criticizing and analysis of the characteristics of power and capital, as well as clarifying how power and capital affect the space and society and use space for survival itself.	Library methods and content analysis, and statistical methods for analyzing the characteristics of people in the community and the spaces they use	Anything created by capital, power, or government during a process is called space.	Managerial
		Analyzing the behavior of individuals in society in the form of sociological issues and the formation of urban spaces in accordance with the class characteristics of society	Developing principles and thought patterns to create great public spaces	Great public space: available space, active, comfortable, with a good mental image, and has a space to socialize and gather in it	Designing Managerial planning
		Emphasizing the simultaneous use of theoretical and empirical foundations	Seeking to create a great public space and place		
		Increasing the quality of urban spaces and making them collectible			

14. Constructs: types are based on theoretical concepts, which are introduced as the first constructs or bounding concepts. Each dimension in two-dimensional typology represents a type of construct in this regard. By using different bounding concepts, a researcher can clearly demonstrate different typologies from the same examples (Bailey, 1994, 2011; Doty & Glick, 1994).

15. Bounds: Each construct or dimension has a number of them. Because it distinguishes between instances, typology invariably creates a kind of boundary, which is referred to as "bound" in typology. Types have their own characteristics, and bounds are common features of some types in binary relationships with one another.

16. Type: It is a label for external or subjective instances, and it is a concept and framework that is thought to be formed from a set of identical instances. Depending on how they are used and where they fit into the typology, types are classified into four categories: polar, representative, criteria, and ideal. Polar types have at least two types that are diametrically opposed and at opposite ends of the spectrum. Representative types are a type of instances that can be objective or subjective. Criteria types are extremely important and can be used as comparison criteria. Ideal types are an abstract, unattainable, yet researcher-created concept that provides a horizon for measuring the appropriateness of phenomena with an ideal pattern; They do not explain reality (Latifi, 2018; Newman, 2010).

17. Terms like Personal City and Urban Knowledge are used to describe the differences in how urban spaces are perceived.

18. The "lack of a sense of place in urban spaces" is emphasized by the theoretical-psychological stream of thought. According to this group, life takes place in space. To put it another way, the environment's perceived meaning has a spatial dimension that defines the context for human actions (behaviors). The spatial aspect of this behavioral framework in the city always leads to authentication.

19. From an ontological standpoint, all natural things (such as mountains, forests, and land) and unnatural things (such as inanimate beings) cannot be considered or turned into commodities (saleable objects). On the other hand, capitalism seeks to transform them all into possessable, inheritable, and tradable commodities. As a result of the logic of the capitalist method, those things can be described as "commoditization". This concept also applies to the transformation of space into a product.

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