

Public Space

Sociology

What makes a space public in practice, and how access is narrowed.

Publicness is a matter of degree, set by ownership, rules and design.

What varies

Who owns it, and who polices it.

Rules on assembly, trade and photography.

Whether staying without spending is allowed.

Hours of access and lighting.

Physical accessibility and seating.

How access narrows

Privately owned public space, with house rules.

Hostile design against sitting or lying.

Ambiguous rules enforced selectively.

Gating and controlled entry.

Jacobs: eyes on the street, not more cameras.

Whyte: people go where people already are.

Educational reference. Whether privately owned public space reduces real access is contested and depends on how it is run.