Sensory–political topography (SPT): An operational framework for micro-public realms

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Abstract

This article develops Sensory–Political Topography (SPT) as a normative–analytic framework for diagnosing and improving micro-public realms. SPT bridges the dominant access and service-provision agenda in social-infrastructure research with theatre/space debates on staging, thresholds, and atmospheres, and conceptualises the sensory–spatial conditions of publicness at the scale of the venue as four parameters: public visibility, sensory commonality, embodied participation, and spatial permeability. Each parameter is operationalised through a practical rubric with clear definitions, observable indicators (proxy measures), evaluation criteria, and design/operational levers. Methodologically, the study is theory-driven: secondary materials (time-stamped vignettes; spatial readings of plans and photographs) are used to conduct a single-case stress test on an independent venue in Istanbul. The analysis shows how threshold ecologies and staging arrangements render actions publicly visible while assembling a field of sensory commonality, and how these configurations act as effective levers in helping to sustain that field. The contribution is twofold: (i) an operational theory of micro-publicness that links atmospheric conditions to concrete spatial and organisational choices; and (ii) a transferable assessment-and-intervention rubric to inform the design and evaluation of social infrastructure across venues such as libraries, community centres, and clinics. Limitations include the absence of new participant data and the single-site scope; future work should test SPT across multiple settings with mixed methods.

Keywords
Social Infrastructure, Public Realm, Atmospheres, Embodied Participation, Spatial Permeability

Introduction

Alternative performance venues are more than architectural configurations shaped by aesthetic preference. They operate as relational environments that foster social encounter, collective experience, and public visibility. Scholarship on theatre architecture has mapped spatial/formal transformation, stage–audience dynamics and aesthetic expression; yet the social and political infrastructures through which such venues sustain publicness and relate to the public realm remain comparatively under-examined. In particular, micro-scale, flexible and participatory settings can be read as sensory–social infrastructures that contribute to the formation of the public realm—positioning theatre as an arena for public imagination rather than a surface of representation. Field-based research from Kadıköy further indicates that independent stages shape publicness through street interfaces, programme practices and audience engagement.

Beyond discursive accounts of the public sphere, critiques highlight that publicness is inseparable from its spatial–aesthetic medium: how bodies appear to one another is mediated by interfaces, layouts and atmosphere (Didi-Huberman, 2018/2009). In this register, theatre is not merely a surface of representation but—when configured accordingly—a spatial means of public appearance. On that premise, SPT focuses on the site-level conditions under which micro-public realms become legible, comfortable and repeatable.

This article brings Hannah Arendt's account of appearance, action and plurality into dialogue with Gernot Böhme's aesthetics of atmospheres. Arendt clarifies the conditions under which action becomes publicly legible; Böhme explains how shared attunement is composed through light, sound, materiality and proxemics. Taken together, they clarify how situations become public—through visibility and recognition—and how they are sensed—through affective tonality and bodily attunement. While Arendt

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is normative–political and Böhme phenomenological–aesthetic, the two remain methodologically compatible when read at the level of conditions.

The article proposes Sensory–Political Topography (SPT) as an original, theory-led, venue-agnostic normative–analytic framework that formalises four parameters—public visibility, sensory commonality, embodied participation and spatial permeability. These parameters are formalised as jointly necessary at site level and specify the spatial and organisational levers—interfaces and threshold optics; light–sound–material composition; proxemics and multi-address layouts; edge devices and routines—by which collective presence is made legible, comfortable and repeatable. SPT does not prescribe a typology; it translates sensory formation and political appearance into operational criteria applicable across social-infrastructure settings.

The study asks whether alternative performance venues can be understood as micro-public social infrastructures, and whether a normative–analytic framework can be formalised to guide spatial/operational decisions beyond theatre. Three guiding questions organise the inquiry:

•RQ1. Which spatial and organisational conditions enable micro-public realms in alternative venues?

•RQ2. Can a theory-led set of parameters (visibility, sensory commonality, embodied participation, permeability) be operationalised as a transferable framework (SPT)?

•RQ3. How do these parameters manifest in a well-documented case, and what does this reveal about transfer to other social-infrastructure contexts?

Corresponding propositions are advanced: P1. Calibrated interfaces/layouts increase mutual legibility; P2. Composed atmospheres sustain shared attention without exclusion; P3. Proxemics and conversational scaffolds redistribute initiative; P4. Porous thresholds convert nominal access into lived practice.

The analysis is theory-driven and supported by secondary sources (2013–2025): recorded talks and interviews (platform/time-stamped), press pieces and architectural/urban commentaries. Items were purposefully sampled for direct relevance to the four parameters. Evidence is presented as brief vignettes tied to publication metadata (title, channel, date; timecodes where available). Publicly available documentary materials (e.g., Perdesiz Sahneler, 2018) are treated as secondary sources. No new participant data were collected. Plans, photographs and screenshots are discussed for their analytical role rather than illustration. This design privileges visibility of routines and limits claims about unseen practices; scope conditions and implications are addressed in Section 6.

Moda Sahnesi—a former cinema repurposed as a theatre in the early 2010s within Kadıköy's independent-theatre ecology—offers a well-documented setting to stress-test SPT. Beyond architectural transformation, the venue exhibits: (i) porous street–entry commons interfaces; (ii) flexible staging and reconfigurable seating; and (iii) programme practices that frame audiences as interlocutors. These features, together with accessible public documentation, justify case selection. Generalisation is conceptual and conditional rather than statistical; SPT is proposed as transferable guidance across social-infrastructure types.

SPT specifies site-level mechanisms—interfaces, layouts, atmospheric composition and threshold routines—that link spatial composition to day-to-day practices, providing operational guidance beyond access metrics (see Section 5; Figure 5).

Section 2 develops the conceptual background by situating alternative staging ecologies within social-infrastructure debates. Section 3 elaborates the Arendt–Böhme synthesis and defines SPT. Section 4 applies the framework to Moda Sahnesi. Section 5 formalises the four parameters into a rubric with a Diagnosis → Action → Evaluation cycle (summarised in Figure 5). Section 6 concludes with limitations, links to spatial justice and commons-based urbanism, and implications for transferability beyond theatre.

Conceptual Background

This section develops two conceptual axes that structure the study: (i) alternative staging ecologies—approached beyond any single hall typology—and (ii) social infrastructure. Read together, these axes indicate that theatre venues are more than sites of aesthetic representation: they operate as relational and political environments in which spatial arrangements, dramaturgical choices and institutional practices condition publicness. The discussion prepares the ground for the theoretical synthesis in Section 3 and the case analysis in Section 4.

Alternative Staging Ecologies

Alternative staging denotes configurations that enable reconfiguration, proximity and role fluidity between performers and audiences. Here, *staging* refers to the spatial ecology of the entire venue—including the entry commons (lobby/foyer or equivalent), thresholds, in-between spaces, circulation and street-facing interfaces—rather than the auditorium alone.

Across the literature, emphasis falls on what spaces afford—embodied encounter, shared attention and the situational reframing of relations—rather than adherence to a fixed formal template. Brook's reflections on the "empty space" articulate theatre as a field of action that comes into being through performance, beyond architectural fixity (Brook, 1995). Venues that are modest in scale, technically equipped and architecturally minimal frequently support such adaptability; footage from the documentary *Perdesiz Sahneler* (2018) documents independent theatre practices across multiple venues, illustrating how minimal interiors are mobilised for multi-purpose use and audience involvement.

Participation-oriented practices reinforce this reading by foregrounding collective transformation and dramaturgies that invite intervention (Boal, 2008; Cohen-Cruz & Schutzman, 2006). Boal's spect-actor points to audiences who intervene and co-produce meaning; these practices gain spatial traction where movable seating, dissolved thresholds between performers and viewers, and collective reconfiguration are feasible. Historical critiques of representational fixity likewise pivot towards immediacy and intensity as spatial-performative values (Artaud, 1938/2024). In the Turkish context, research on site-specific and alternative practices shows how spatial adaptability sustains emergent publics and corporeal interaction (Altunkaya, 2017; Başar, 2014).

Within this broader field, typological labels that privilege a neutral, reconfigurable hall retain historical value but do not exhaust contemporary alternative venues. Treating any single hall configuration as an umbrella risks over-generalisation, particularly where the entry commons, thresholds, in-between spaces and street-facing interfaces are constitutive of the venue-wide staging ecology. While movable seating and neutral finishes facilitate adaptability, alternative staging equally turns on porous interfaces and city-facing routines that are not reducible to a room type. Accordingly, the analysis that follows addresses the venue-wide spatial ecology—public edge, entry commons, circulation and assembly zones—so that interfaces, thresholds and city-facing routines are treated as constitutive, not as annexes to an auditorium.

In the post-2000 Turkish context, independent theatre expanded and diversified, with Istanbul's scene—notably Kadıköy—consolidating around flexible, reconfigurable studio-format venues and neighbourhood-facing practices in which thresholds, entry commons (foyer), and street-facing interfaces are integral to staging rather than ancillary to it (Ejder & Salta, 2019; Bengü, 2019).

Evidence from Kadıköy's independent-theatre ecology shows that privately operated venues can host micro-public realms when site-level conditions are met—reversible street–foyer address, proxemic closeness that frames audiences as interlocutors, and doors-open/threshold routines that sustain shared attention before/after shows (Erbaş & Bengü, 2018; Özgür & Bengü, 2022).

Read alongside social-infrastructure debates, focality — understood as shared, place-based focal practices — clarifies why interfaces and staging should be judged by how well they sustain shared, participatory use rather than mere service delivery (Passinmäki, 2019).

Social Infrastructure: Site-Level Foundations of the Public Realm

Contemporary urban theory recognises that city life takes shape through relations as well as spatial arrangements. Within this perspective, social infrastructure offers a powerful lens for explaining how encounters are organised and how public life becomes sustainable. Klinenberg (2018, p. 5) defines social infrastructure as the *physical places and organisations that shape interaction*, enabling people to meet, build trust and weave support networks. He also demonstrates the stakes of this argument in the analysis of the 1995 Chicago heatwave: neighbourhoods with dense social ties showed markedly higher survival among older residents living alone (Klinenberg, 2018, pp. 23–25).

In earlier work, Klinenberg (2012) traced the rise of single-person households and examined how public places function as buffers against urban solitude (pp. 190–195). A conceptual proximity is evident here to Arendt's account of the public realm as a domain of appearance and action (1998): infrastructures that cultivate encounter help render actions and bodies legible to one another. The compatibility — and limits —of this proximity are taken up in Section 3.

Building on this foundation, Latham and Layton (2019) propose four analytic dimensions that make the concept operational: *infrastructure*, *publicness*, *encounter* and the *politics of provision*. These dimensions shift attention beyond access toward the qualities and governance of places — how inequality, belonging and spatial justice are negotiated over time. Accessibility is necessary yet insufficient; sustaining a culture of encounter and its institutional supports is equally vital (Latham & Layton, 2019, pp. 4–6).

Extending their synthesis, Latham and Layton (2022, pp. 660–664) map four ways the concept is read in urban studies: (1) persons as infrastructure (e.g., Simone, 2004); (2) social relations crystallising around physical systems; (3) care services (health, education) that underwrite social reproduction; and (4) semi-public spaces that stage everyday encounters. The last category includes settings where sensory co-presence — bodies, voices and gazes sharing a field — emerges as a condition for collective life. In this respect, cultural social infrastructures such as theatre venues can operate as specific spatial forms that strengthen ties and animate sensory publicness through participatory aesthetic experiences.

Evidence from adjacent domains supports this reading. Layton (2022) shows how amateur football fields, swimming pools and fitness centres function beyond exercise alone: they are environments in which differences of class, age and gender are collectively experienced, facilitating embodied and inclusive forms of public life (pp. 8–11).

Read in this light, alternative theatre venues function as cultural social infrastructures where visibility, sensory commonality, proxemics and permeability jointly mediate encounter quality—beyond access alone—through interfaces, layouts and threshold routines.

As framed in Section 2.1, alternative theatre venues configured as venue-wide staging ecologies exemplify this potential. Reconfigurable seating, proximity between performers and audiences and porous interfaces between street, entry commons and auditorium enable embodied participation and inclusive gathering. Across complementary traditions, Brook's (1995) notion of the "empty space" underscores performance as a field of action beyond the constraints of fixed built form; Boal's (2008) participatory methods, alongside practice-oriented readings (Cohen-Cruz & Schutzman, 2006), foreground intervention and collective transformation; and Artaud's (1938/2024) critique of representational fixity clarifies why immediacy and intensity matter as spatial-performative values).

In sum, social infrastructure is more than service-delivery hardware: it encompasses the relational, sensory and political production of public life across concrete settings. Read in this light, alternative theatre venues operate as cultural social infrastructures that foster ties, sustain practices of visibility and stage inclusive encounters—with implications for both political appearance and atmospheric–embodied formation.

Theoretical Framework

To analyse alternative theatre venues as micro-public realms with both political and sensory stakes, Section 3 develops a synthesis of Hannah Arendt's account of the public realm (appearance, plurality) and Gernot Böhme's aesthetics of atmosphere (embodied sensing), enabling joint analysis while keeping the two registers theoretically distinct.

Hannah Arendt: The Political Spatiality of the Public Realm

In *The Human Condition*, Arendt distinguishes labour, work, and action, and defines the public realm through action as a shared domain where persons appear to one another, act, and speak, thereby constituting a common world (Arendt, 1998, pp. 7–10, 198–199). Rather than a fixed enclosure, the public realm functions as a space of appearance—a relational field in which deeds and words gain meaning through mutual visibility. The foundational condition is plurality: acting-together with and through difference discloses unique identities and makes initiatives legible (Arendt, 1998, pp. 179–181).

This spatial imagination aligns theatre and politics at the level of co-presence, contingency, and beginning (natality): theatrical and political actions unfold before others, entail unpredictability and irreversibility, and render persons recognisable (Arendt, 1998, pp. 195–200, 243–245). Read spatially, Arendt's public realm denotes relational intensity—a field in which bodies, voices, gazes, and expressions become perceptible in common. This clarifies why theatre settings can be treated as political spatialities insofar as they organise conditions of visibility and collective address.

Public visibility concerns perceptual–spatial legibility; political publicness concerns acting-together under plurality within a shared realm of recognition and judgement. This distinction structures the subsequent analysis. Democratic theory reinforces this linkage: for Bobbio, democracy stands against

arcana imperii—public power is power under visibility and thus open to scrutiny; representation, *a fortiori*, is necessarily public (Bobbio, 1987, pp. 33–34). Accordingly, visibility functions as a condition of accountability: when procedures are mutually legible to those affected, actions and decisions can be recognised and judged in common (Brighenti, 2010, pp. 113–114). Political representation requires publicness. Theatre, too, is an art of representation that stages word and deed before a public. When a configuration of visibility, plurality, and mutual recognition is established, theatre acquires a political dimension; representation opens to the public, accountability becomes possible, and publicness is achieved (Arendt, 1998; Bobbio, 1987).

Gernot Böhme: The Sensory Formation of Atmospheric Space

Böhme theorises atmosphere as a shared affective field—neither a purely objective property nor a private feeling—through which space is felt (Böhme, 1993, pp. 114, 122; 2016, p. 2). This conception is reinforced by his account of the quasi-objectivity of atmospheres in scenographic production and reception (Böhme, 2016, p. 2; 2017, pp. 159–162).

In performance, atmospheres are produced through scenographic composition (light, sound, voice, movement) and through bodily arrangements; Böhme explicitly takes the stage set as the paradigm for the art of making atmospheres, detailing how staging tunes audiences and coordinates embodied perception (Böhme, 2016, p. 2; 2017, pp. 160–166).

Accordingly, the emphasis shifts from visual composition alone to how environments are composed to direct attention and attune bodies—including acoustic and spatial articulation—so that actions become legible in common (see also Böhme on acoustic "spatial music") (Böhme, 2017, pp. 128–129, 163–166; 2016, p. 2).

Extending this account, *Atmospheric Architectures* develops how spaces convey public meaning through affective patterning and embodied experience—beyond representational content—particularly in chapters on the social experience of atmospheres and interpersonal communication (Böhme, 2017, pp. 97–103; see also pp. 86–90 on bodily presence). In this light, theatre is not reducible to a narrative vehicle; it operates as a collective sensory–political field organised through sound, light, proximity, and movement. The book's programmatic subtitle frames such conditions as "felt spaces" (Böhme, 2017, pp. 13–17, 97–103).

For the framework developed in Section 3.3, this specifies sensory commonality as a shared field that holds attention and informs embodied participation by showing how bodies are tuned and invited to act in co-presence.

Sensory-Political Topography (SPT): Definition, Scope, and Terms

Building on the distinctions above, Sensory–Political Topography (SPT) formalises four jointly necessary, site-level conditions—public visibility, sensory commonality, embodied participation, and spatial permeability—under which micro-public realms can take shape, and renders them observable through indicators, proxies, and design/operational levers. Introduced here as a new, venue-agnostic term, SPT names an operational–normative framework rather than a descriptive reuse of "topography". The sources cited below anchor the scope of "topography" and the terminology used; they do not prefigure or name the framework. To our knowledge, no prior framework treats these four site-level conditions as jointly necessary for sustaining micro-public realms.

SPT draws on Arendt for the public realm, appearance and plurality (Arendt, 1998), and on Böhme for atmosphere and embodied sensing (Böhme, 1993, 2016, 2017). It is further informed by the place/topography literature—Casey on the phenomenology of place (memory, bodily presence, sensory experience), Frampton on topography as a layered cultural–historical matrix, and Norberg-Schulz on meaningful totalities articulated by light, material, climate and symbol (Casey, 1997; Frampton, 1995; Norberg-Schulz, 1985). Regional scholarship emphasising cultural memory, sensory configuration and relational place resonates with this extension (Yürekli, 2014; Özbek Eren, 2019; Nane, 2022). Debates on the distribution of the sensible, sensorial politics and sensory inequality are treated as adjacent rather than foundational (Rancière, 2004; Davidson & Brash, 2021; Gissen, 2023).

The term *topography* is used beyond physical relief to include the affective, experiential and representational layers through which places acquire relational thickness—memory, bodily presence, and cultural narrative. This expanded sense—articulated by Casey, Frampton and Norberg-Schulz, with regional resonances in Özbek Eren and Yürekli—grounds the use of topography (Casey, 1997; Frampton, 1995; Norberg-Schulz, 1985; Özbek Eren, 2019; Yürekli, 2014). On this basis, SPT is formulated to travel across venues and public settings while remaining anchored in situated spatial articulations.

On Malpas's (2019) account, place is the enabling horizon of appearance: appearance belongs to, and arises in, place. Within this register, SPT uses "topography" to name the situated articulations—interfaces, thresholds and proxemic layouts—through which actions, bodies and atmospheres are rendered mutually legible as a shared field, with limits operating as productive thresholds.

Sensory commonality is used as the primary label for shared sensory fields; sensory co-presence and shared sensory field are retained as stylistic variants. The distinction between public visibility and political publicness is maintained throughout. Operationally, Section 3.5 derives these parameters; Section 5 formalises them as indicators, proxies and levers.

Arendt × Böhme: Compatibility and Productive Tensions

Arendt clarifies the political conditions of publicness—appearance and plurality (and, in later writings, judgement)—whereas Böhme clarifies the sensory conditions—atmospheric production and embodied perception (Arendt, 1998; Böhme, 1993, 2016, 2017). Read together, they explain both how situations become public—through visibility and recognition among a plurality—and how they are sensed—through affective tonality and bodily attunement. Ontologically, Arendt centres intersubjective action, whereas Böhme centres aesthetic–affective fields. To prevent conflation, SPT treats atmosphere as an enabling or constraining condition for Arendtian appearance—never a substitute for political action. Accordingly, SPT preserves Arendt's normative horizon while using Böhme to specify the sensory medium of co-presence; read with Passinmäki's account of focal practices, this implies that venues are judged by how they sustain focal participation rather than device-like consumption (Passinmäki, 2019). Operationally, this complementarity grounds the four venue-scale parameters that structure Section 5.

How the Normative Principles Were Determined

The four parameters are theory-led and operationalised for case analysis; their full elaboration appears in Section 5.

From Arendt to "public visibility":

Appearance, plurality and address require conditions of legibility—interfaces, sightlines, and proximities (Arendt, 1998, pp. 179–199).

From Böhme to "sensory commonality" and "embodied participation":

Atmosphere as a shared affective field implies co-sensing; scenographic and layout operations that invite bodily engagement are treated as enabling conditions (Böhme, 1993, pp. 114, 122; 2017, pp. 83–85, 157–159; 2016, pp. 15–16).

From social-infrastructure debates to "spatial permeability":

Cultures of encounter depend on porous thresholds and in-between spaces that sustain flows, spill-outs, and informal gathering—beyond access alone (Klinenberg, 2018; Latham & Layton, 2019, 2022; Layton, 2022).

Section 4 stress-tests these parameters through time-stamped vignettes (source, date, platform; timecodes where available) and plan/photographic readings of interfaces and layout operations, enabling a focused reading of Moda Sahnesi's venue-wide staging ecology—auditorium, entry commons (foyer/lobby) and street interface—while keeping analytical criteria stable for later generalisation.

Moda Sahnesi: Case Analysis Through SPT

Moda Sahnesi is treated as a theory-led, single-case stress test for SPT; claims aim at analytic rather than statistical generalisation (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Yin, 2014). The analysis operationalises the four SPT parameters—public visibility, sensory commonality, embodied participation and spatial permeability—using purposively sampled secondary materials (recorded talks/interviews, press pieces, architectural project pages, publicly available videos) with time-stamped vignettes, complemented by plan/photographic readings. No new participant data were collected. The unit of analysis is the street–foyer–hall interface and its everyday routines. Prior field-based work in Kadıköy provides contextual grounding for case selection and for the theatre–publicness relation (Özgür & Bengü, 2022; Erbaş & Bengü, 2018). Limitations are discussed in Section 6; the aim is situated feasibility, not universality.

Each subsection operationalises one SPT parameter: first, the spatial operation is specified (with figure callouts); second, it is anchored in time-stamped vignettes; finally, a brief synthesis feeds forward to the next parameter.

Since the 2000s, Istanbul's independent stages have reoriented beyond conventional dramatic and spatial logics, experimenting with flexible formats and audience–performer proximities (Başar, 2014; Altunkaya, 2017). Following the mid-2000s restructuring of cultural venues in Beyoğlu and market pressures, independent groups sought new spatial trajectories, with Kadıköy emerging as a productive locus for cultural action (Bengü, 2019; Curavcı, 2021; Ejder & Salta, 2019; Yalçın, 2019). Studies document theatres that operate as zones of encounter and platforms for political engagement as well as artistic expression (Öztek, 2024a, 2024b). Within this milieu, Moda Sahnesi was designed through a collaborative, user-oriented process that prioritised openness, modularity, and permeability (Kalfa & İşcan, 2013; Ertem, 2023; Uğur, 2019; Arkitera, 2013; Halukar Architecture, 2013). Publicly available talks and documentary material present the venue as part of a neighbourhood-facing culture of gathering and discussion (Açık Radyo, n.d.; Kamusal Tiyatro, 2019; *Perdesiz Sahneler*, 2018; soL TV, 2023). This background frames Moda Sahnesi as a suitable test bed for SPT.

Typological and Spatial Setup

This subsection establishes the typological and spatial conditions that enable the analytical reading developed in Sections 3 and 4. Figures 1 and 2 serve as evidence for the principal operations at work in Moda Sahnesi's staging ecology. The aim is to specify how architectural arrangements organise conditions for public visibility, sensory commonality, embodied participation, and spatial permeability. The discussion proceeds from the auditorium to the foyer and thresholds, and concludes with a synthesis linking these arrangements to the four parameters of SPT.

Flexible seating and reconfigurable staging

First, telescopic tribunes, mobile platforms, and reoriented playing zones recalibrate proximity and address by varying performer–audience distance, sightlines, and mutual orientation (Figure 1).
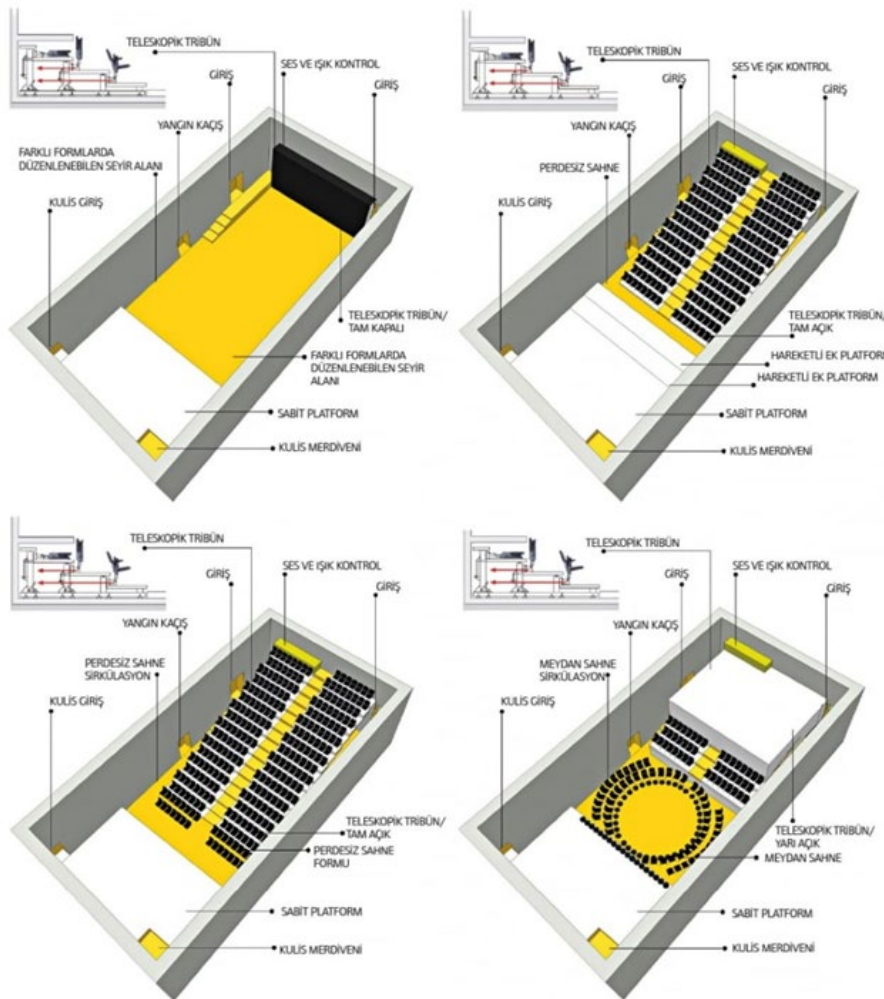

Figure 1. *Flexible seating and stage configuration at Moda Sahnesi. Source: Author's archive—Adapted from Moda Sahnesi archives (2019).*

As Figure 1 indicates, longitudinal layouts stabilise attention along a dominant axis, whereas transverse, corner, or circular arrangements distribute gaze multi-directionally, inviting lateral exchange and peripheral awareness across spectators. Such shifts are not cosmetic; they operationalise conditions for embodied participation (role fluidity, short traversals, standing/standing–seated mixes) and shape sensory commonality by tuning how voice, breath, and small gestures circulate at close range. Minimal interventions—tribune deployment, platform relocation, re-seating—thus produce distinct spatial logics without structural renovation, acting on perception, interaction, and shared attention rather than on technical capacity alone.

Foyer interfaces, reflective surfaces, and translucent organisation

Next, the foyer operates as an optical and social threshold: reflective glass planes, glazed openings, semi-translucent partitions, and the columned void mediate the street–interior relation and multiply sightlines between the entrance, foyer, stair, and internal rooms (Figure 2).

Figure 2. *Reflective glass surface and translucent spatial organisation at Moda Sahnesi. Source: Moda Sahnesi Archive (2019). Image reproduced with permission from Kemal Aydoğan.*

Figure 2 clarifies how visitors see and are seen before and after performances, extending public visibility beyond the stage to spaces of arrival, waiting, and dispersal. The foyer's openness to the street—together with informal standing/seating patterns—prepares spatial permeability: flows spill out at peak times and re-enter without rigid checkpoints, while reflective/translucent surfaces sustain a sense of co-presence across adjacent zones. Thresholds, in other words, do not merely connect rooms; they compose a continuous environment in which perceptual and social cues carry from city edge to auditorium.

Analytical synthesis: mapping operations to SPT

Taken together, Figure 1 and Figure 2 ground the case analysis in architectural operations that can be explicitly mapped onto the SPT parameter:

Public visibility: Multi-point sightlines in the foyer/thresholds (Figure 2) and gaze redistribution in non-longitudinal seating (Figure 1) establish legibility across street–foyer–auditorium interfaces.

Sensory commonality: Reconfigured proximities and enveloping layouts (Figure 1) foster shared sensory fields; reflective/translucent planes (Figure 2) sustain co-presence across adjacent spaces.

Embodied participation: Mobile tribunes and playing areas (Figure 1) enable role **fluidity** and local traversals, allowing bodily engagement during performances and post-show exchanges.

Spatial permeability: The foyer's porosity to the street and layered thresholds (Figure 2) support flows, spill-outs, and informal gathering, extending public life beyond the auditorium.

Together, these typological and spatial features establish the analytic baseline for what follows. The four parameters are then examined in turn at site level, with cross-references to Figure 1 and Figure 2 where specific spatial operations—auditorium configurations and threshold optics — require brief clarification.

Public Visibility

This subsection examines how public visibility — the perceptual and spatial legibility of bodies and actions — emerges across the street–foyer–auditorium sequence. Within the SPT framework, visibility is read as a set of spatial operations that enable seeing/being seen across thresholds and within the hall, beyond stage illumination. Figure 1 and Figure 2 are cross-referenced where specific spatial moves require clarification; the conceptual distinction between public visibility (legibility) and political publicness (acting together under plurality) is maintained.

At the street–foyer interface, the entrance aperture and the two-storey void choreograph arrival, waiting, and dispersal as perceivable situations (see Figure 2). Glazed and translucent elements generate layered vistas that expose interior rhythms to passers-by while preserving a view back to the neighbourhood. This reversible address turns thresholds into a public-facing proscenium where micro-events—ticket exchange, announcements, conversation—gain appearance before others. In effect, visibility operates beyond the stage as a continuous condition distributed across frontality and interior void.

In threshold areas, reflective planes and semi-translucent partitions multiply lines of sight across entrance, stair, and upper landing (see Figure 2). Reflections create secondary sightlines that double movement and gesture; translucent elements maintain silhouettes and colour-fields that signal occupancy. These low-tech optical devices stabilise legibility without surveillance effects and render presence as recognisable participation in shared routines.

Inside the auditorium, reconfigurable seating and playing zones enable gaze redistribution (see Figure 1). Longitudinal layouts consolidate attention along a dominant axis; transverse, corner, or circular arrangements produce lateral and reciprocal sightlines among spectators, turning the audience into co-witnesses of one another's responses. Analytically, reconfiguration converts visibility into an interactive resource, a precondition for recognising actions and speech as public in the sense outlined in Section 3.

Having specified the street–foyer interface, threshold optics, and auditorium address, the analysis turns to brief vignettes drawn from secondary sources; each example anchors the above operations in concrete scenes (title, platform, date; timestamps where available).

V1 — Entrance as reversible address: Pre-show gathering at the glazed frontage illustrates threshold-based appearance; open doors and waiting clusters render interior rhythms legible from the street *(ArchDaily, 2016)*.

V2 — Redistributed gaze in non-longitudinal seating: Project documentation shows transverse/corner layouts that enable multi-directional sightlines and audience co-witnessing *(ARKİV, n.d.)*.

V3 — Reflections and silhouettes across thresholds: Night-time images indicate mirror-like readings at the foyer screen; silhouettes and secondary reflections extend visibility across the stair–landing sequence *(Halukar Architecture, n.d.)*.

In sum, public visibility is spatially produced across street–foyer–auditorium interfaces as a distributed, site-level condition, distinct from political publicness. A corollary is that its legibility depends on a shared sensory field, specified in the next subsection.

Sensory Commonality

Building on Section 4.2, sensory commonality is examined as the atmospheric field that sustains shared attention and co-presence across the street–foyer–auditorium sequence. In the SPT framework, it denotes collectively structured sensing—how light, sound, proximity, and material interfaces tune bodies into a shared field. Atmospheres are composed rather than incidental, produced through spatial and scenographic decisions (Böhme, 1993, 2017).

A first operation concerns the glass interface that connects the foyer to the street. Depending on the lighting balance, the surface reads as transparent or mirror-like, generating reflections and silhouettes

that register movement as ambient stimulus. These optics keep bodies perceptible across the threshold while maintaining a soft boundary between inside and outside. Figure 3 documents how rehearsal fragments, warm-ups, or small-scale activities behind the glass inflect the foyer's ambience without collapsing separation

Figure 3. *Transparent glass interface connecting the foyer to the street at Moda Sahnesi. Source: Author archive (2024), based on personal fieldwork.*

A second operation is the street-facing seating element fronting the venue. Pre- and post-show gatherings produce a low-intensity sound bed—murmur, footsteps, laughter—under a filtered daylight canopy; these cues carry into the foyer during arrival and dispersal. The seating turns the street edge into a continuous envelope of sensing, cultivating anticipatory focus and familiar routines of meeting, pausing, and conversing. Figure 4 illustrates this condition and its role in extending the theatre's ambience beyond the hall.

Figure 4. *Street-facing seating element in front of Moda Sahnesi. Source: Author archive (2024), based on personal fieldwork.*

Beyond thresholds, scenographic composition within the auditorium consolidates joint attentiveness. Directional lighting cues, blackout resets, and spatialised sound create shared focus while keeping spectators mutually perceptible; flexible staging (Figure 1) supports proximity-based listening and lateral awareness among audience members. Neutral finishes and technical grids enable quick shifts of tonality, aligning with Böhme's account of atmosphere as a produced condition that tunes perception (Böhme, 2017). Read together, threshold operations (Figures 3–4) and in-hall scenography (Figure 1) compose a single atmospheric field that spans street, foyer, and auditorium.

To anchor these mechanisms in reported audience experience, the subsection closes with brief secondary-source vignettes drawn from published criticism. Each vignette paraphrases a concrete description (title, platform, date; timestamps not applicable for print/online reviews) that exemplifies how sensory commonality is assembled.

V4 — Dream-like atmosphere as a shared field: The review notes a "dream atmosphere" that renders mental states tangible; light/music/stage design gather spectators into a common field (Çekirge, 2023).

V5 — Minimal scenography, concentrated attention: The piece reports a "markedly minimal line" that yields "clever solutions," stripping distraction and sharpening shared focus (Yılmaz, 2017).

V6 — Aftertaste of shared affect: Audience reports describe laughter giving way to a lingering sting after the show—an after-glow indicating that the shared field persists beyond the event (Mitrani, 2017).

Taken together, the transparent foyer (Figure 3), street-edge seating (Figure 4), and restrained, attention-centring scenography assemble sensory commonality as an operational condition. This atmospheric ground supports the forms of embodied participation and spatial permeability analysed in Sections 4.4 and 4.5.

Embodied Participation

Embodied participation is examined as the redistribution of agency through bodily proximity, movement, and role fluidity between performers and spectators. Within the SPT framework, participation is treated as a situated practice: layouts, scenographic cues, and front-of-house routines organise how bodies co-produce the event. Flexible staging (see Figure 1) provides the material substrate, while dramaturgies of address sustain reciprocal engagement (Boal, 2008; Cohen-Cruz & Schutzman, 2006).

Proxemic reconfiguration. Telescopic seating and multiple playing zones enable shifts from longitudinal focus to lateral witnessing. Corner, transverse, and circular arrangements allow spectators to register one another's responses—laughter, hesitation, silence—as part of the performance texture. These proxemic effects convert attention into an interactive resource, consonant with Arendt's account of appearance and recognition under plurality (Arendt, 1998, pp. 179–199). In practice, reconfiguration reduces distance, multiplies lines of address, and opens space for micro-interventions (eye contact, brief verbal exchange, negotiated pathways).

Participation beyond the stage. An open-threshold policy and entrance/egress routines, together with pre-/post-show gatherings and moderated conversations, foreground spectators as interlocutors rather than recipients. Staff and performers circulate through the foyer before and after shows; announcements and informal exchanges construct a conversational frame that carries back into the hall. In this ecology, the audience's presence acquires legibility and consequence: actions and speech become recognisable to others, a precondition for political publicness as outlined in Section 3.

Field reports from Kadıköy's independent-theatre ecology document close seating and conversational framing that render spectators co-witnesses and co-speakers rather than distant viewers, aligning with SPT's visibility/participation parameters (Özgür & Bengü, 2022).

To anchor these mechanisms in reported practice, this subsection presents secondary-source vignettes annotated with platform, upload date, and timestamps (for audio/video):

V8 — Audience as interlocutor (muhatap): In *Tiyatronun İçinden – Seyirci*, the audience is framed as an interlocutor rather than a passive viewer, linking theatre to neighborhood-level democratic address (moda sahnesi, 2025, 03:25–07:50).

V9 — Public dimension as appearance and interaction: In *Dr Esra Dicle: Kamusal ve Tiyatro Kavramı İlişkisi*, Dicle (drawing on Arendt) argues that theatre's public dimension lies in speech–action and civic interaction, not mere exhibition (Kamusal Tiyatro, 2021, 06:00–16:00).

V10 — Reconfiguring relations among those present: In *Dr Zeynep Uğur: Kamusal Tiyatro Nedir*, Uğur (drawing on Rancière) states that to reconfigure space—i.e., the *distribution of the sensible*—is to reorganize relations among those present (Kamusal Tiyatro, 2021, 26:00–28:00).

V11 — Civic activation and co-presence: In *Tiyatronun İçinden – Tiyatro Kurmak*, participation is described as civic practice and theatre as the togetherness of audience and actor (moda sahnesi, 2024, 22:10–24:10; 26:30–28:50).

At Moda Sahnesi, embodied participation is assembled through proxemic design (reconfigurable seating, multi-address layouts) and relational routines (conversational framing, post-show exchange). V8–V11 specify these as civic address and shared initiative: proxemic closeness, multi-address talk, and lighting facilitation redistribute agency and render participation publicly witnessable.

Spatial Permeability

This subsection examines spatial permeability—the porous thresholds and in-between spaces that allow flows, spill-outs, and informal gathering across the street–foyer–auditorium sequence. Within the SPT framework, permeability denotes operative openness through which bodies and routines cross

address lines while remaining legible as public appearance (Arendt, 1998, pp. 198–199) and atmospherically attuned as a shared field of sensing (Böhme, 2017, pp. 83–85, 157–159).

At Moda Sahnesi, permeability at the street–foyer interface is achieved through a continuous glazed line and an open threshold that operates more as a filter than a boundary. By day the glazing reads as a translucent scrim; by night interior luminosity turns the foyer into a soft lantern for the lane (see Figure 3). The street-facing seating extends this interface into the public realm, creating a semi-stationary pocket where people pause, wait, converse, and return (see Figure 4). The café counter, aligned with the glazed line, couples interior service routines with street life so that ordering, waiting, and conversing unfold across the threshold within one low-barrier milieu (Figures 3–4). Taken together, these elements produce reversible address: sights and cues travel in both directions, carrying the foyer's ambience to the street while drawing neighbourhood rhythms back into the building.

Permeability is also institutionalised as policy. The following published materials substantiate this coupling of spatial interface and governance; each item is cited with platform, upload date, and timestamps.

V12 — Doorless front as inclusive policy: In *Başka Sanat – Kemal Aydoğan*, the director states that the theatre frontage is kept doorless to avoid erecting a barrier and that neighbours should be able to "enter and exit without fear," framing architectural openness as inclusive house practice (Martı Medya, 2024, 08:24–10:30).

V13 — Publicness depends on spatial/aesthetic medium: In *27 mart sunumlar*, Zeynep Uğur argues that publicness cannot be conceived apart from its spatial medium and aesthetic composition; under some conditions, privately operated stages can enable publicness by protecting organisational autonomy while sustaining open assembly—observed in alternative theatres (Kamusal Tiyatro, 2021, 01:10:00–01:15:00).

V14 — Space-led practice as civic interface: In Şeyler & Şeytanlar (2): 90'lar ve sonrasında alternatif tiyatro hareketi, participants recall a 1990s shift where venue knowledge, street-facing thresholds, and actor-completed spaces framed co-creation and public address (Medyascope, 2016, 05:24; 53:24).

Operationally, this openness modulates time as well as space. Pre- and post-show spill-outs on the seating edge generate a low-intensity sound bed—murmur, footsteps, laughter—that drifts through the glass into the foyer during arrival and dispersal; the same cues invite passers-by to linger and observe. Such routines extend the theatre's temporal envelope, sustaining micro-public encounter before and after the performance and strengthening ties between venue and neighbourhood (Özgür & Bengü, 2022; Erbaş & Bengü, 2018).

This pattern aligns with observations from Kadıköy's independent-theatre ecology, where doors-open routines, reversible address and proxemic closeness sustain micro-public encounter before and after performances (Erbaş & Bengü, 2018; Özgür & Bengü, 2022).

Read together with the visibility operations in Section 4.2 (threshold optics, reversible address) and the atmospheric composition in Section 4.3, spatial permeability at Moda Sahnesi shows how a porous, policy-backed interface anchors public life across architectural and institutional registers. The four parameters examined in Sections 4.2–4.5—public visibility, sensory commonality, embodied participation, and spatial permeability—form the operative ground of SPT in this case.

Formalising SPT: An Operational Normative Framework For Social Infrastructure

Why SPT? Accounts of social infrastructure typically foreground access, amenities and provision. SPT complements these by specifying the necessary spatial–sensory conditions under which micro-public realms become legible, comfortable and repeatable. In doing so, SPT translates Arendt's appearance/plurality and Böhme's atmospheres/embodiment into a transferable framework that designers and operators can apply across libraries, community hubs, clinics, sports facilities and cultural venues.

Sensory–Political Topography (SPT) is a venue-agnostic normative–analytic framework that specifies four jointly necessary, site-level conditions—public visibility, sensory commonality, embodied participation and spatial permeability—under which micro-public realms can take shape. Each condition is translated into observable indicators, evaluation proxies, and design/operational levers.

On Malpas's (2019) orientation to placed truth—truth and appearance arise in and belong to place—SPT formalises the four conditions as jointly necessary at site level. In operational terms, the site ceases to read as a micro-public realm when any one is absent: without visibility there is no legibility; without

sensory commonality, no shared field; without embodied participation, no co-present action; and without spatial permeability, no durable two-way address.

Rather than prescribing a building type, SPT sets out spatial and organisational conditions through which micro-public realms can be configured across diverse settings. Read alongside social-infrastructure research (Section 2), SPT shifts attention beyond access to the quality of encounter at site level, turning interfaces and threshold optics, atmospheric/proxemic composition, and governance routines into concrete levers for making appearance mutually legible and durable. The parameters are theory-led (Section 3), stress-tested on Moda Sahnesi (Section 4) and formalised here as cross-typology guidance.

Each parameter is presented through a venue-agnostic rubric: (1) Definition; (2) Observable indicators; (3) Evaluation criteria (proxies); (4) Design/operational levers; (5) Governance notes; (6) Test-case mapping; (7) Transfer questions. The rubric supports a Diagnosis → Action → Evaluation cycle and includes a feedback loop that refines levers and proxies over time. *Method note (applies across parameters):* no specific measurement technique is prescribed; proxies can be assessed through periodic walkthrough observations and simple plan-based checks.

Figure 5 summarises how theoretical inputs (Section 2) and case materials (Section 4) are processed through this rubric to yield transferable guidance
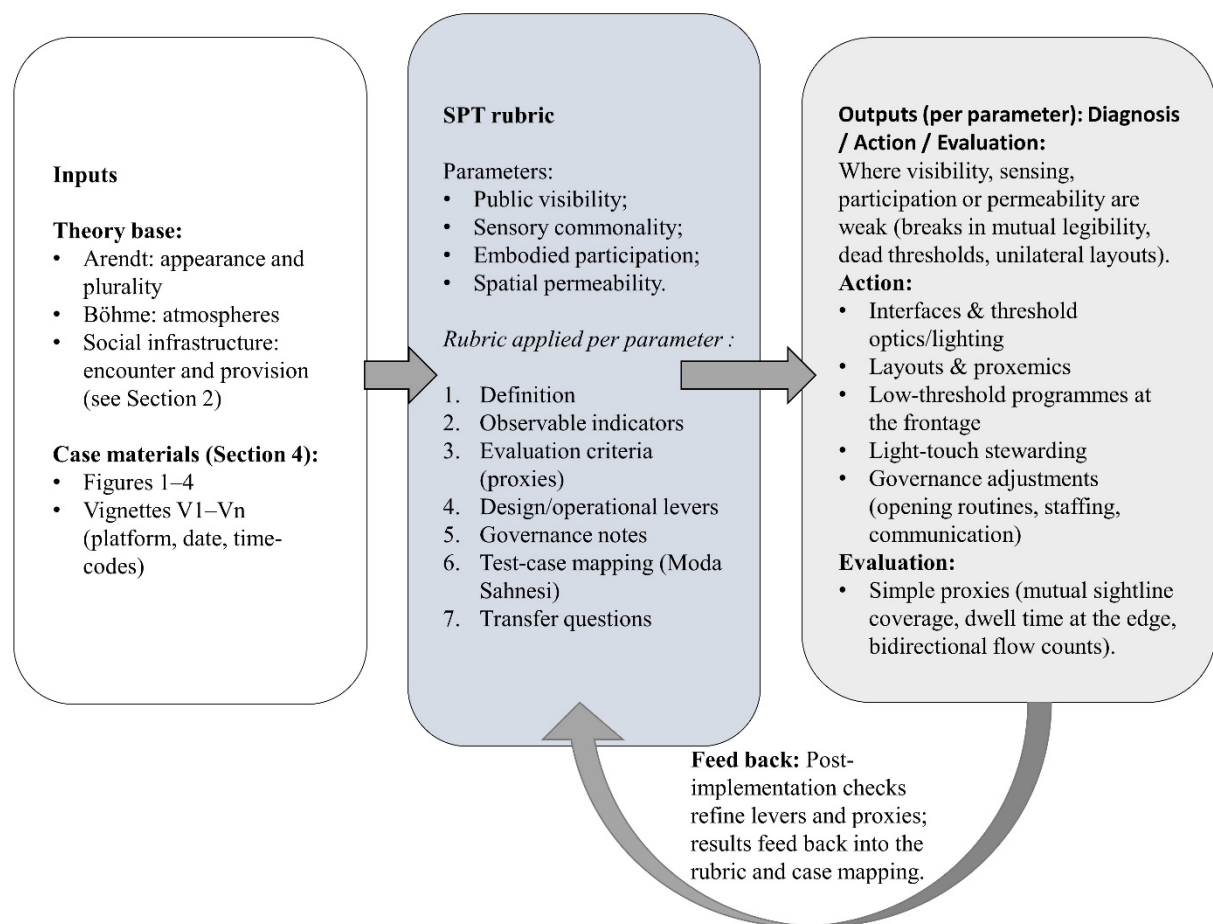
Figure 5. SPT workflow: from theory and case materials to transferable guidance. Inputs (theory base and case materials) are processed through the SPT rubric, applied to each parameter to generate diagnosis, action and evaluation outputs; a feedback loop refines levers and proxies over time. Abbreviation: SPT = Sensory–Political Topography. Source: Author illustration (2025).

Applied as shown in Figure 5, the rubric now formalises the four parameters at site level; the first is public visibility, operationalised through interfaces, threshold optics and interior address.

Public Visibility

Workflow: Diagnosis → Action → Evaluation.

Definition:

Public visibility denotes the perceptual and spatial legibility of bodies and actions in a shared realm. In SPT, visibility is treated beyond lighting levels as a distributed condition produced across the urban interface, thresholds/entry commons (lobby/foyer) and interior assembly zones—settings where seeing/being seen enables recognition and collective address (Arendt, 1998, pp. 198–199), as derived in Section 3.5.

Public visibility concerns legibility through optics and address; spatial permeability concerns flows across thresholds and in-between spaces. They are complementary but non-substitutable.

Observable indicators (morphology–interface–use scenario):

Urban interface: transparent/reflective boundaries, daylight balance, outward-facing activities; the extent to which interior rhythms are legible from the street and vice versa.

Threshold optics: reflective planes and translucent partitions that generate multi-point sightlines across entrance, stair and landings; silhouettes and colour fields that signal occupancy.

Interior address: layouts (longitudinal, transverse, corner, in-the-round, clustered) that redistribute gaze and allow users to register one another's responses; applicable to assembly halls, reading rooms, waiting areas and multi-purpose rooms.

Evaluation criteria (proxies):

Mutual Visibility Index (MVI): proportion of mutually visible pairs across key zones (street↔entry commons; entry commons↔stair/landing; user↔user); include blind-spot mapping.

Event legibility: clarity with which micro-events (announcements, gathering, dispersal) are perceptible to others without inducing surveillance effects.

Temporal envelope: duration for which visibility is maintained before/after programmed activity (arrival/dispersal windows; lingering time at the frontage).

Design/operational levers:

Interfaces: calibrate glass reflectance/translucency and lighting contrast to switch between transparent and mirror-like readings across day/night cycles (Böhme, 2017, pp. 83–85, 157–159).

Layouts: provide reconfigurable arrangements to vary axes of attention and thicken lateral perception (applicable to libraries, clinics, sports facilities, community centres, cultural venues).

Programming/curation: position low-threshold programmes near the frontage (pre-session talks, reading circles, advice desks, vaccination/info booths, open sessions) so that appearance is threshold-based rather than confined to back-of-house; align wayfinding and notice boards with the field of view established by the optics (see Test-case mapping below; cf. Section 4, Figures 1–3).

Governance and management:

Adopt front-of-house routines that favour open presence (doors open at peak times; staff circulation in the entry commons) and light-touch stewarding that supports looking without policing.

Align communications (signage, boards, digital tickers) with spatial optics so that information itself has a visible stage.

Avoid surveillance cues (prominent camera signage; hard policing); prefer presence-based stewardship and observable routines.

Publish visibility-relevant routines (opening windows, stewarding presence) on the entry commons notice board so that provision is publicly inspectable.

Test-case mapping (Moda Sahnesi):

Urban interface and thresholds: the transparent/mirror-like façade/entry line and columned void extend appearance into arrival and waiting zones (Figures 2–3).

Interior address: non-longitudinal layouts redistribute gaze and allow users to co-witness one another's responses (Figure 1).

Transfer questions:

From how many vantage points can interior rhythms be perceived without entering?

Which thresholds generate recognisable micro-events?

Can the interior layout be re-addressed to increase lateral visibility and mutual perception?

Do lighting and material choices support reciprocal legibility across day/night cycles?

Position within social-infrastructure debates: At site level, public visibility makes publicness actionable by calibrating interfaces, threshold optics and interior address so that presence and procedures are mutually legible—beyond access alone (Section 2; Klinenberg, 2012, 2018; Latham & Layton, 2019, 2022). In democratic terms, visibility renders provision inspectable and hence accountable (Bobbio, 1987). For measurement, use the proxies specified above (MVI, dwell time, event legibility) as small, repeatable indices across libraries, community hubs, clinics, sports facilities and cultural venues, with focal participation as the normative benchmark (Passinmäki, 2019).

Sensory Commonality

Workflow: Diagnosis → Action → Evaluation.

Definition:

Sensory commonality refers to collectively structured sensing—how light, sound, proximity, thermal conditions and material cues tune bodies into a shared field of attention and co-presence. In SPT, atmospheres are composed conditions rather than decorative by-products: they are produced through spatial/optical decisions (light and transparency), acoustic zoning, material tactility and proxemic organisation that sustain joint attentiveness (Böhme, 1993, pp. 114, 122; 2016, pp. 15–16; 2017, pp. 83–85, 157–159), as derived in Section 3.5.

Observable indicators (morphology–interface–use scenario):

Optical field: layered illuminance (task/ambient/accent), glare control, day–night transitions, colour-temperature consistency across the public edge, thresholds and interior assembly zones.

Background soundscape: a stable sound bed that keeps speech intelligible; source placement that avoids hotspots and dead zones.

Material and thermal cues: mixed absorptive/diffusive finishes (fabric, timber, perforated panels); surface temperature/air movement that maintain comfort without sensory flattening; tactile anchors (handrails, low walls, bench-ledges) enabling relaxed lingering.

Proximity and pacing: furniture density, seated–standing mixes, slow/fast paths and edge seating that allow lateral sensing of others, not only frontal address.

Evaluation criteria (proxies):

Acoustic intelligibility: background levels and dispersion patterns support clear conversation without strain; announcements are perceivable without inducing a sense of surveillance or reliance on intrusive amplification.

Light balance: faces remain legible while glare is avoided; day–night transitions at interfaces are smooth and maintain visual comfort.

Comfort & dwell: perceived comfort supports lingering at interface/assembly zones; usage patterns show a healthy distribution between lingering and pass-through.

Lateral awareness: qualitative signs of shared attention (mutual noticing, micro-gestures, shared laughter, coordinated silences) are observable across layouts.

Design/operational levers:

Light composition: combine ambient and task layers; prefer warm–neutral colour temperatures to keep faces readable; script day–night shifts so that interfaces perform as filters—more than mere thresholds—rather than barriers (Böhme, 2017, pp. 83–85, 157–159).

Acoustic zoning: create quiet and conversational pockets via absorption (curtains, soffits, books stacks/planting masses), diffusion and soft surfaces; avoid continuous hard canopies that increase reverberation.

Material palette: use mixed absorptive/diffusive surfaces and tactile elements that invite relaxed posture; avoid fully reflective palettes that collapse the soundscape.

Proxemics: offer reconfigurable arrangements (clusters, edge benches, leaning ledges) to enable lateral listening and shared attention across different user mixes.

Programming/curation: schedule low-threshold frontage routines (reading circles, advice desks, open bench hours, warm-ups) to seed a continuous atmospheric field spanning public edge–threshold–interior.

Governance and management:

Atmosphere stewardship: light-touch practices (volume guidance, device etiquette, staff positioning) that support looking and listening without policing.

Temporal scripting: arrival/interval/exit light–sound cues; "quiet hours" or "conversation windows" aligned with user profiles (e.g., after-school slot, mornings for older adults).

Communication: align signage and notice points with the designed optical field so information remains readable at likely dwell nodes.

Test-case mapping (Moda Sahnesi):

Interface optics: glazed frontage reads as transparent by day and softly reflective at night, extending a single atmospheric field across street–entry commons (Section 4, Figures 3–4).

Street-edge seating: pre-/post-**session** gathering produces a low-intensity sound bed that carries into the entry commons during arrival and dispersal (Section 4, Figure 4).

Interior flexibility: neutral finishes and reconfigurable layouts support proximity-based listening and lateral awareness among users (Section 4, Figure 1).

Transfer questions:

Which light–sound combinations help users hold a shared focus without glare or overload?

Where do quiet and conversational pockets form, and how can materials/fixtures stabilise them?

Do day–night transitions at the public edge maintain a continuous atmospheric field?

Which small-scale routines (reading circles, advice desks, open bench hours) could anchor sensory continuity between interface and interior?

Position within social-infrastructure debates: See Section 2 for the overarching frame; here the site-level focus is the quality of encounter (atmospheric/proxemic composition).

Embodied Participation

Workflow: Diagnosis → Action → Evaluation.

Definition:

Embodied participation denotes the redistribution of agency through bodily proximity, movement and role fluidity among users, facilitators and staff. Within SPT, participation is treated as a situational practice organised by layouts, optical/atmospheric cues and front-of-house routines—as derived in Section 3.5. The emphasis is on converting presence into co-authored action, aligned with Arendt's account of action and plurality and with atmospheric attunement as an embodied mode of sensing.

Observable indicators (morphology–interface–use scenario):

Proxemic set-ups: Furniture densities, mixed seated/standing arrangements and circulation paths that shorten interpersonal distance and enable lateral noticing.

Multi-address configurations: Multiple focal points (islands, corners, workbenches, pop-up stations) rather than a single front; the ease with which a room can be re-addressed mid-session.

Conversational scaffolds: Visible facilitation devices (portable microphones, writable surfaces, pin-boards), question prompts and time windows assigned to user voice.

Frontage-adjacent engagement: Low-threshold routines at the public edge (advice desks, open bench hours, warm-up/drill windows, micro-clinics) that license try-and-talk forms of participation at the entry commons.

Evaluation criteria (proxies):

Turn-taking and contribution spread: Observed distribution of speakers across a session; ratio of staff talk-time to user contributions.

Distance and path clarity: Typical interpersonal distances during active segments; ability to cross the room without bottlenecks; number of viable approach paths to focal points.

Attendance→participation conversion: Share of attendees who move from watching to contributing (speaking, writing, assisting, demonstrating).

Post-session carryover: Frequency of threshold-area exchanges (Q&A clusters, sign-ups, peer follow-ups) after sessions.

Design/operational levers:

Proxemics and layouts: Provide reconfigurable clusters (tables on castors, stackable chairs, mobile leaning ledges) and short-radius arrangements that support easy eye contact and quick entry/exit from discussion.

Multi-address focal points: Equip rooms with moveable focal points (portable lecterns, dispersed microphone points, writable boards/screens) so that address can **rotate** and **decentralise** mid-session.

Participation windows: Insert embedded slots within programmes (micro-tasks, show-and-tell, peer demos); place some at the entry commons to enable drop-ins; use clear visual prompts and cues.

Facilitation kit: Standardise a light kit (clip-on microphones, writable boards, sticky surfaces, portable task lights) to lower the activation energy for user voice.

Edge devices at the entry commons: Provide leaning ledges, small tables and perch points to seed informal exchange before/after sessions.

Governance and management:

Access & inclusion: Clear, inclusive participation rules at entry points (how to request the floor; where to sit/stand; how to post questions).

Safeguarding and inclusion: Concise codes of conduct; gentle moderation; translation, captioning or assistive listening where relevant.

Training & facilitation: Staff coaching in light-touch facilitation (prompting, summarising, distributing turns) and de-escalation that preserves openness without policing.

Feedback loops: Rapid pulse checks (cards/dots/QR) to adjust layouts, timings and formats over time.

Test-case mapping (Moda Sahnesi):

Proxemics & multi-address. Non-longitudinal layouts and multiple interaction zones shorten distances and allow users to co-witness one another's responses (Figure 1).

Conversational framing. Pre-/post-**session** exchanges and recorded talks frame users as interlocutors rather than recipients (see Section 4.4, vignettes V8 and V11).

Transfer questions:

Which proxemic changes would allow more voices to enter with minimal friction?

Can the room be re-addressed mid-session so that attention rotates rather than accumulating at a single front?

Where can entry commons participation be safely trialled (e.g., info desks, open benches) to reduce the threshold to entry?

What light facilitation kit is needed so any room can host contribution without advance build-out?

Position within social-infrastructure debates: See Section 2; here the emphasis is civic capacity (proxemics, multi-address layouts, conversational scaffolds).

Spatial Permeability

Workflow: Diagnosis → Action → Evaluation.

Definition:

Spatial permeability denotes the porosity of thresholds and in-between spaces that allow flows, spill-outs and informal gathering across the public edge, the entry commons and interior assembly zones. Within SPT, permeability is read as operative openness: it preserves legibility as public appearance (Arendt, 1998, pp. 198–199) while sustaining an atmospheric continuum across edge–threshold–interior (Böhme, 2017, pp. 83–85, 157–159). The concern is less gatekeeping and more filtered exchange—two-way cues, reversible address and an extended temporal envelope around sessions and everyday use.

Observable indicators (morphology–interface–use scenario):

Threshold configuration: number/type of entrances (wide spans, operable glazing, transparent vestibules), step-free access, canopy depth, visibility through the façade/entry line.

In-between spaces: entry commons proportions that permit lingering; landings/vestibules that decongest flows; exterior setback pockets with benches/ledges.

Edge continuity: level changes, kerb alignment and surface continuity at the frontage; **visual porosity** (calibrated glazing) and controlled acoustic leakage that invites approach.

Operational permeability: open-door periods; queue layouts that do not block passers-by; managed spill-out onto forecourts or seating edges.

Temporal permeability: pre-/post-session windows; frontage-adjacent micro-programmes (info desks, help points) that keep the edge active outside narrow session times.

Evaluation criteria (proxies):

Bidirectional flow pattern: in/out movement at the threshold shows spread peaks rather than single spikes; queues do not impede non-users.

Edge dwell: lingering is observable at the frontage/vestibule without producing blockage; a healthy distribution between linger and pass-through use.

Open-window practice: documented periods when doors/operable glazing are physically open (seasonally adjusted).

Step-free & bottlenecks: minimum clear width is maintained at pinch points; principal routes provide gentle gradients and step-free access.

Weather resilience: the frontage remains usable in rain/wind/night with modest adjustments (canopy, baffles, light).

Perceived ease of approach: quick intercept notes indicate "easy to enter/leave" and "comfortable to wait" at the threshold.

Design/operational levers:

Threshold design: use operable glazing or wide doors with transparent vestibules so the entry behaves as a filter —more than a mere threshold—rather than a barrier; provide step-free, level transitions and tactile cues.

Edge furniture & micro-topography: integrate continuous seating ledges/leaning rails, bicycle stands and small forecourt pockets that absorb spill-outs without obstructing flows.

Microclimate & lighting: canopies, wind baffles, air curtains and graded exterior/interior lighting that support evening use and a "lantern" effect without glare.

Surface continuity: non-slip finishes, clear drainage and seamless crossings that signal public invitation rather than a private threshold.

Program at the edge: low-threshold desks/pop-ups (advice, registration, reading/after-school corners, warm-up windows) to activate the frontage on ordinary days.

Queue stewardship: light-touch stewarding and wayfinding that shape lines while maintaining pavement permeability for non-users.

access alone; (ii) composed atmospheres sustain shared attention; (iii) proxemic and conversational arrangements redistribute initiative; and (iv) porous thresholds convert nominal access into lived practice. Read through Passinmäki's account of focal practices, this amounts to evaluating settings by how well they sustain focal participation rather than device-like consumption; at venue scale, SPT's parameters specify when provision is converted into lived publicness through sustained, shared engagement (Passinmäki, 2019).

For evidentiary orientation, the case material in Section 4 documented (with dates/timecodes) how these parameters operate in practice: threshold optics and two-way address at the street–entry commons interface (Figures 2–3; vignettes V1–V3); redistributed gaze through non-longitudinal layouts (Figure 1; V2); conversational framing and proxemic closeness that position users as interlocutors (V8–V11); and a deliberately open, door-free threshold paired with inclusive front-of-house routines (V12). These scenes substantiate feasibility and clarify the situated operations through which encounter becomes legible, comfortable, and repeatable.

Scope conditions qualify the inferences. The analysis relies on secondary-source vignettes and readings of plans and photographs; no new participant data were collected. Such sources are curated and time-bound, which may over-represent visible routines and under-represent less perceptible practices, limiting claims about user diversity. The argument is tested on a single case in a particular neighbourhood and building configuration; generalisation is therefore conceptual and conditional rather than statistical. While the parameters are operational, measurement rests on pragmatic proxies that need calibration in field settings. SPT should consequently be read as a heuristic design-and-governance lens that specifies if/then relations—for example, if interfaces and layouts are calibrated in X ways, the qualities of encounter tend to improve—rather than as a causal theory validated across multiple sites.

These limitations point to three strands of future work. First, comparative, multi-case studies across libraries, community hubs, museum foyers, outpatient and clinic lobbies, sports facilities, and post-disaster community spaces can test where transfer holds and where local adaptation is required. Second, mixed-method audits pairing plan-based visibility analysis with simple, repeatable proxies—coverage and reciprocity of sightlines, dwell time at the frontage, conversational audibility bands, pre-/post-session use logs—would enable before/after comparison and longitudinal tracking. Third, governance experiments—low-threshold programmes at the edge, light-touch stewarding, and doors-open routines—co-designed with operators and user groups can examine how everyday practices sustain encounter over time. Across these strands, a specific hypothesis to test is whether the proposed design and operational levers measurably reduce device-like patterns and increase focal participation across venue types (Passinmäki, 2019).

SPT also speaks to debates on spatial justice and commons-based urbanism. Choices about optics, thresholds and doors-open routines shape who is visible, who can stay, and on what terms. In this sense, SPT translates justice claims into concrete, designable operations. At the edge, shared elements—benches, leaning ledges and poster walls—and light protocols of care function as everyday commons, maintained jointly through spatial devices and user practices rather than left solely to access rules.

Figure 5 summarises the workflow. Theory and case material enter the SPT rubric; the rubric produces Diagnosis → Action → Evaluation outputs; a feedback loop then refines levers and proxies. Together, this provides a clear bridge from conceptual parameters to transferable practice.

In sum, SPT advances public-realm theory by placing sensory, embodied, and relational formation on the same analytic plane as political appearance, and by translating that plane into actionable levers for design and management. The workflow set out in Section 5 is meant to be used context-specifically as a playbook: (i) design programmes and layouts that widen mutual legibility; (ii) compose atmospheres that sustain shared attention without exclusion; (iii) scaffold proxemics and conversational frames that share initiative; and (iv) keep thresholds open and intelligible over time. As these adaptations are tested and tracked across diverse venues, SPT can serve as a common language linking theory, spatial practice, and governance—and as a practical route to spaces of encounter that are more inclusive, more durable, and more equitably sensed.

SPT is best read as a minimal, transferable grammar of micro-public provision: four non-substitutable conditions, each rendered observable and actionable.

The case shows that private governance can enable publicness when the site-level conditions specified by SPT are met, suggesting transfer pathways beyond theatre.

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