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Spaces of Radical Possibility: Designing for and from Intersectionality

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Abstract: This study examines the crucial role architecture plays in fostering inclusive and equitable experiences on college campuses, focusing on how physical spaces communicate implicit messages of access and belonging. Drawing on interdisciplinary feminist spatial justice frameworks and intersectional analysis, the research critiques traditional top-down design practices that may overlook the identity-based needs of diverse users. Through a case study approach, the paper highlights the disconnect between architectural intentions and lived experiences, illustrating how design choices can unintentionally reinforce social hierarchies. The study advocates for participatory architectural approaches that prioritize the voices and experiences of campus community members, promoting radical inclusivity in the design process. This research contributes to the ongoing discourse on integrating feminist and intersectional approaches into architectural education and practice, emphasizing the importance of creating more just and inclusive spaces.

Keywords: radical inclusivity; feminist spatial justice; intersectionality; collaborative architecture; campus equity; architectural education

1. Introduction

One day, on my way to teach a class, I witnessed a striking example of architectural injustice. A student using a wheelchair struggled to access the main entrance of a building, which could only be reached via a steep flight of stairs, with no ramp or elevator in sight. The student's frustration was evident as they searched for an alternative route, eventually finding a narrow, cluttered service entrance at the back of the building. This experience highlighted how architectural design—often overlooked by those without mobility challenges—acts as a gatekeeper, determining who has easy access and who is marginalized by the built environment. It also reminded me of how space conveys both explicit and implicit messages about belonging, shaping people's experiences in just or unjust ways.

Reflecting on this incident, I considered my entry into the field of architecture, fueled by the belief that it was about creating spaces where everyone could thrive. However, I have encountered a profession that frequently overlooks the critical identity-based needs of those it is meant to serve, whether these are related to accessibility, cultural relevance, safety, or more nuanced aspects of inclusion. The voices of those most affected by design—like an elderly person struggling to navigate a multi-story home without an elevator, a mother searching for a private lactation room in a public space, or a wheelchair user facing impassable pathways on a poorly planned campus—are too often absent from architectural discussions. Women who feel unsafe in dimly lit or isolated public areas, and people of color whose cultural heritage is erased by standardized, cookie-cutter homes, similarly experience a disconnect between architectural intentions and their lived realities.

That day, I began my class by asking non-architecture majors to share their experiences with campus spaces. The responses revealed a wide range of insights. Some students noted how navigating the campus became challenging due to physical obstacles, such as heavy doors or narrow corridors, especially during busy times. Others mentioned a lack of clear signage, which made it easy to feel lost. One student pointed out that uneven

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outdoor pathways made safe traversal difficult for those with mobility challenges. Another student shared that they had never considered how much these aspects of design impact individuals' daily experiences until our discussion began. These collective reflections highlighted how various aspects of campus design—both interior and exterior—shape user experiences. Often, these experiences extend beyond the original intentions of architects and planners.

Given the significant changes in United States (US) higher education—such as enrollment growth, increasing student diversity, and advancements in technology, to name a few—it is essential to reflect on the varied responses from users, which raise critical questions: How can campus designs be re-imagined to better support inclusivity and accessibility? What distinct experiences do diverse campus community members bring—considering race, gender, class, and (dis)ability—and how can these inform architectural pedagogy that prioritizes equity? This paper argues that by integrating intersectional user experiences and applying interdisciplinary methodological and theoretical frameworks grounded in spatial justice, we can critically re-examine and re-design campus spaces to promote inclusive experiences for all.

2. Unveiling Architectural Dialogues by Non-Architecture Majors

2.1. Mapping Insights and Uncovering Gaps in the Literature

This paper builds on existing literature addressing inclusive campus design in the US. Studies on campus architecture and planning often explore themes such as land use, design, sustainability, development, and collaboration [1–5]. For example, Richard Dober provides practical guidance on creating functional, safe, and accessible university campuses in the US. Drawing on his experience advising over 450 colleges, universities, and cultural institutions worldwide, Dober argues that campus design shapes an institution's identity, mission, and values through its physical environment [6]. Likewise, in an analysis of 50 selected master plans for university campuses in the US, Amir Hajrasouliha identifies common goals, actions, and design strategies aimed at transforming campuses from deficient and isolated spaces to ones that are complete and contextual [7]. These strategies include promoting walkability, integrating academic and social spaces, and enhancing connectivity with surrounding communities. Hajrasouliha's work emphasizes the importance of creating vibrant and engaging campus environments that enhance a sense of belonging.

Other studies emphasize the necessity of engaging diverse stakeholders in the design process to create effective learning environments. They highlight the value of participatory design, which empowers various voices in decision making. Rook et al. reflect on the design of the Krause Innovation Studio at Pennsylvania State University, demonstrating how collaboration among experts in architecture, human resources, and education aligns campus design with the needs and values of all users [8]. They argue that this strategic partnership exemplifies how collaborative efforts across disciplines can lead to the creation of innovative educational spaces.

A substantial body of literature explores the role of learning environments—including technological shifts, classroom layouts, and natural landscapes—in influencing student engagement and academic success, collectively underscoring the importance of adapting campus designs to meet the diverse and evolving needs of today's college students. For example, several studies suggest that technology-rich classrooms enhance student participation and collaboration, leading to improved academic performance [9,10]. Other research indicates that spaces designed to support active learning, particularly those featuring flexible layouts, contribute to higher levels of student satisfaction [11,12]. In their study, Scholl and Gulwadi consider natural landscapes as valuable learning resources [13]. They emphasize that natural environments not only help direct attention but also provide critical opportunities for indirect attention, which enhances cognitive restoration and overall student well-being on campus.

Feminist scholarship on campus design remains limited, with relatively few studies examining how campus environments intersect with gender, race, class, and (dis)ability.

The works of Baglieri, Shapiro, and Dolmage highlight how traditional educational practices perpetuate systemic inequalities, particularly for students with disabilities. Baglieri advocates for a critical approach that creates inclusive spaces by recognizing the interconnectedness of disability with other social identities, including race, class, and gender [14,15]. This perspective aligns with Dolmage's critique of ableism in higher education, where he argues that the prevalent accommodation model treats the needs of disabled students as mere afterthoughts rather than integrating accessibility as a fundamental aspect of educational design. He calls for the adoption of universal design principles, which proactively address the diverse needs of all students and challenge the historical legacies of exclusion [16]. These insights underscore the necessity of reshaping educational spaces to support all students effectively. Despite these contributions, significant gaps remain in the literature regarding the need for bottom-up, diverse user perspectives that reflect the intersectionality of today's campus demographics and their experiences. Addressing this gap extends beyond conventional architectural education and design practices, which often reinforce social hierarchies. It requires an interdisciplinary framework to understand how existing spaces can perpetuate inequalities and injustices.

2.2. Research Method and Theoretical Framework

This section outlines the qualitative methods and interdisciplinary theoretical framework that inform the study, demonstrating how the research bridges architectural and feminist perspectives to examine campus spaces.

2.2.1. Method

This study employed a structured qualitative research methodology comprising distinct stages. These included designing a course assignment to encourage critical engagement with campus spaces, forming diverse groups to ensure varied perspectives, facilitating group observation and collaborative reflections of publicly accessible assigned campus buildings, and coding data to identify recurring themes. Each stage aligned with pedagogical goals and feminist methodologies, highlighting diverse perspectives while encouraging collaborative inquiry (Figure 1).

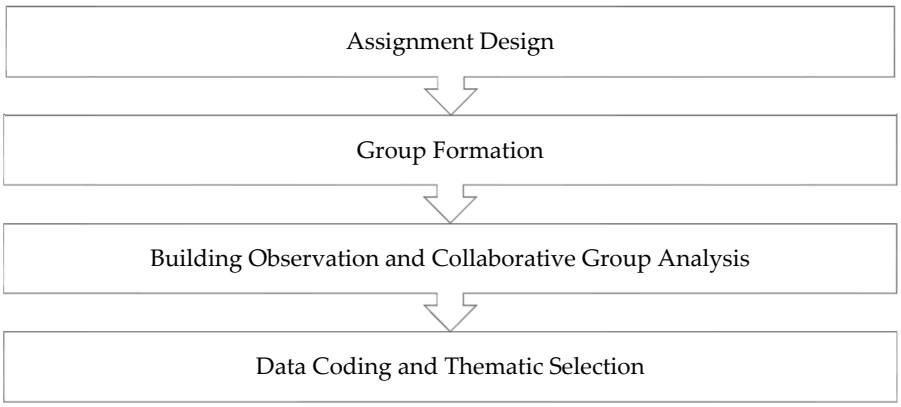

Figure 1. Overview of the structured qualitative research methodology and its key stages.

Over two academic years, I conducted the data collection process in classes averaging about 45 non-architecture majors. I assigned 18 small groups, each consisting of five members with varying majors and years of study, to analyze a specific building. The buildings analyzed served various functions, including classrooms, administrative offices, health facilities, and the library, coded in this paper as B1 to B9. The members' diverse backgrounds—including race, gender, academic discipline, and first-generation college status—provided a wide range of perspectives, enriching the analysis with maximum variation [17].

The study included three in-class workshops, each lasting approximately two and a half hours and conducted as part of regular course activities. In the first workshop, groups actively observed and documented the physical and social characteristics of their assigned buildings. They employed methods such as notetaking, photography, and other creative tools to examine general spaces and how these spaces shaped user experiences. In the subsequent workshops, groups analyzed their observations using five guiding categories: (1) physical environment, (2) social organization, (3) activities, (4) beliefs, and (5) feelings. These categories guided groups in critically examining how architecture influences access, belonging, and the representation of diverse identities. In the final workshop, groups synthesized their findings to articulate their interpretations of a feminist space. They presented their analyses to peers, integrating concepts discussed in class, including equality, equity, intersectionality, (dis)ability, and environmental justice.

I then used thematic coding as the primary method of analysis to categorize the groups' observations and reflections on the buildings. This approach identified recurring themes and patterns, highlighting the diverse perspectives shared by the groups and providing valuable insights into how users engage with campus spaces [18,19]. Incorporating feminist pedagogical principles, I viewed classrooms as radical spaces of possibility, as bell hooks asserts: "The classroom remains the most radical space of possibility in the academy" [20]. hooks emphasizes the "politics of location", which posits that one's social and geographical context shapes their experiences and perspectives, as well as the significance of collaborative knowledge production [21]. This perspective framed the study, encouraging groups to re-imagine and critically engage with campus spaces.

2.2.2. Theoretical Framework

This paper develops a distinctive interdisciplinary theoretical framework that merges insights from architecture with those from women's and gender studies, bridging traditionally separate fields. It employs a qualitative approach grounded in intersectionality, situated knowledge, and feminist spatial studies. Kimberlé Crenshaw's concept of intersectionality examines how overlapping social identities—such as race, gender, class, ability, and other social categories—shape individuals' experiences of privilege and oppression [22]. While scholars typically use intersectionality to analyze social dynamics and power relations, this paper applies it to the physical design of campus spaces, revealing how campus architecture differentially impacts individuals based on their intersecting identities.

Articulated by Donna Haraway, the concept of situated knowledge posits that all knowledge is produced within specific contexts and shaped by the unique perspectives of those generating it [23]. This concept challenges traditional notions of objectivity in research, emphasizing that understanding is inherently subjective and influenced by the social, cultural, and political positions of researchers. As an interdisciplinary architect, architectural historian, and scholar of women's and gender studies, I apply my academic expertise and interdisciplinary training to critically examine the application of feminist perspectives to architectural practice.

Feminist spatial studies critically assess how physical environments reflect and shape social inequalities. They advocate for utilizing the transformative power of collaborative efforts that prioritize the voices and experiences of users while emphasizing the equitable distribution of access, resources, and opportunities [24–28]. For example, Leslie Weisman argues that the design and arrangement of spaces can either reinforce social inequalities or challenge systemic disparities. She advocates for an approach to architecture and urban planning that centers the needs and voices of marginalized groups [29]. Similarly, other studies challenge existing power structures and norms, particularly traditional top-down approaches that often exclude certain groups [30]. Feminist spatial justice thus provides a framework for developing architectural and spatial solutions that are just and equitable.

3. Everyday Epiphanies and Feminist Spatial Justice Narratives

The physical environment category prompted groups to analyze tangible aspects of the campus, such as spatial layout, construction materials, built-in amenities, and furniture placement. For social organization, they observed general patterns of user interactions and examined disparities in access to resources and inclusivity across various spaces. In the activities category, groups explored the diverse range of uses and functions of campus spaces, focusing on how these areas support academic, recreational, and communal activities on a daily basis. The beliefs category guided them to consider the operational guidelines of campus spaces and buildings, including accessibility policies and safety protocols, as reflected in features such as elevators. The feelings category encouraged groups to reflect on atmospheres created by public events and gatherings held within their assigned building spaces (Figure 2).

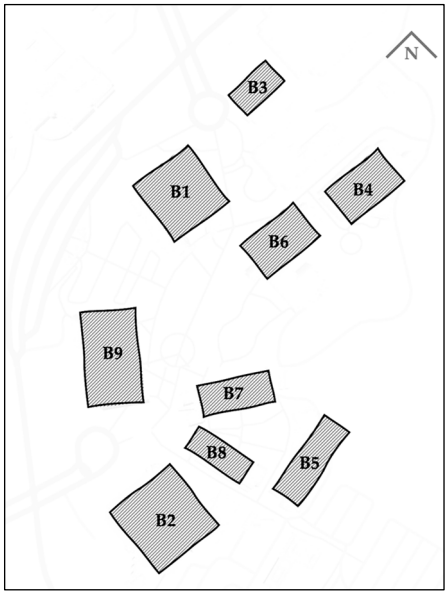

Figure 2. Schematic diagram showing the spatial arrangement and location of the buildings analyzed in the study (coded as B1 to B9).

B1, a four-story mid-size institutional building (ranging from 50,000 to 100,000 square feet), serves as a key entry point to the campus. Designed by a local firm in the 2010s, B1 features expansive glass façades framed in aluminum, creating an inviting and accessible atmosphere. Its contemporary aesthetic highlights clean lines, geometric forms, and sustainable materials. The open floor plan connects student lounges, study areas, retail shops, a café, and exhibit spaces. The dining court offers both indoor and outdoor seating options, while the rooftop patio provides panoramic views of the campus. The atrium-style lobby, enhanced by ample natural light, further contributes to its welcoming environment.

Groups described B1 as a modern site characterized by abundant natural light and glass façades. They noted that these physical features significantly enhance users' sense of welcome and well-being. One group highlighted how the open layout and communal areas provide spaces for relaxation and social engagement, encouraging connection and interaction among diverse campus members. However, another group expressed concerns about the layout, stairs, and navigation within the building. They identified challenges related to signage and accessibility features, pointing out specific issues that could impede movement for individuals with disabilities.

Additionally, all groups appreciated the variety of amenities in B1, including gender-inclusive restrooms, a lactation pod, lounging areas, gaming facilities, dining options, a help desk, a store, charging stations, and expansive spaces like the ballroom. These features support community-building activities and help daily routines on campus. One group

highlighted posters advocating for support services for survivors of gender-based violence, along with information on counseling services and hotlines. Another group pointed out a flyer detailing financial aid and emergency assistance programs, viewing it as a proactive effort to address socio-economic needs. They emphasized that the posters on the walls are not mere decorations; instead, they actively promote various forms of support and champion equality. By dedicating space to these advocacy posters, they argued, the building promotes awareness and encourages support for important causes. One group particularly appreciated the role of various centers within B1, such as the gender equity center, cultural centers, and student leadership office, in organizing events and advocating for broader representation to further enhance B1's inclusivity.

B2, a multi-story building, serves as the central administrative hub of the campus. Constructed in the early 1990s, it was among the first buildings designed to accommodate administrative functions. Spanning over 100,000 square feet, B2 is one of the largest structures on campus. Designed by a local architecture firm known for creating functional spaces for educational and institutional projects, B2 features a utilitarian yet striking architectural style. Its central rotunda promotes visibility and accessibility, while the exterior combines minimalist concrete surfaces with large windows that maximize natural light and connect the interior to the surrounding landscape.

Groups perceived B2 as having a more hierarchical design, despite its role as a hub for essential services such as administrative offices and student support centers. They described it as a large, multi-story building with a minimalist façade and a stark, unadorned interior that feels cold and institutional. They also reflected that the white color scheme of the hallways, combined with harsh LED lighting, created an uninviting atmosphere. Additionally, they pointed out that the long, maze-like corridors, cramped spaces, and dim lighting in some areas contributed to a sense of confinement. These design choices, they argued, enhanced feelings of detachment from the vibrant campus life just outside. In addition, one group criticized B2's accessibility design, highlighting its failure to adequately accommodate the diverse needs of users. Many in the group found navigation challenging, particularly for individuals with mobility impairments. They pointed out the lack of clear signage, ramps, and elevators contributed to an isolating and disengaging environment.

B3 is a modern two-story structure designed to promote student well-being and mental health. A local architectural firm completed B3 in the mid-2010s to create a supportive and calming environment. Its contemporary design incorporates warm, earthy tones and large windows that fill the interior with natural light. Groups praised B3 for its modern and aesthetically pleasing design, emphasizing its soothing colors and accessible layout. The building supports users' physical and mental health through a range of services, including counseling, medical care, over-the-counter medications, sexual health resources, and dedicated quiet spaces for relaxation. Groups also appreciated the clear guidelines and signage at the entrance, which enhanced feelings of well-being and inclusion. However, some noted that B3's relatively isolated location on the campus presents navigation challenges, particularly for wheelchair users, as accessing the building often requires navigating stairs from most directions.

Groups explored buildings designated for classroom and office functions, including B4, B5, B6, B7, and B8, each representing different periods of campus development. B4, the newest building, completed in the early 2010s by a renowned architectural firm, is a four-story, mid-sized structure with a contemporary façade that integrates concrete, glass, and metal. B5, a three-story, mid-sized building completed in the mid-2000s by a local architectural firm, features a modern architectural style with sleek lines and a harmonious combination of glass, concrete, and metal. Similarly, B6, completed in the early 2000s by a distinguished architectural firm, is a mid-sized building showcasing a brick, glass, and steel exterior. Moving back to the late 1990s, B7, a three-story, mid-sized building completed by a firm known for innovative educational designs, features a minimalist aesthetic with concrete and glass elements. B8, the oldest in this group, completed in the early 1990s by a

local architectural firm, is a small-sized structure distinguished by its clock tower and a unique blend of brick and glass.

For the classroom and office function buildings, groups identified both strengths and shortcomings. They noted that while some buildings featured modern, inclusive designs, others appeared generic, lacking clear functional indications from the exterior. Among the strengths, they praised inclusive architectural elements such as braille signage, accessible water fountains, diverse room sizes, emergency evacuation devices, and automatic doors. However, they raised concerns about the absence of all-gender restrooms and inadequate accessible ramps in most of these buildings. These shortcomings directly impact individuals' sense of belonging and safety, particularly for those who rely on such facilities for comfort. Research indicates that campus space design is inherently impactful and should be purposefully crafted to meet evolving needs and accommodate diverse functions. As space is socially constructed, it can be reshaped to facilitate interaction and enhance a sense of belonging [31,32].

In terms of classroom design, groups appreciated the abundance of light and windows in most spaces, which positively contributed to the learning environment. However, some groups reflected on the sloped, semi-circular seating in the formal lecture halls of B5, noting that this arrangement reinforces a traditional hierarchy by positioning the professor at the center. Research shows that different classroom configurations shape both instructor behavior and student engagement, significantly impacting classroom activities and on-task behavior. For instance, traditional lecture halls facilitate lectures but limit active learning, while active learning classrooms—characterized by flexible seating and collaborative spaces—promote interaction and engagement, albeit potentially marginalizing the effectiveness of lecture-based techniques [33]. As Mohanan states, classroom design serves as "built pedagogy", where the physical environment embodies educational theories and values. He argues that built environments enable and constrain specific modes of social action and interaction, meaning that educational structures inherently reflect curricula and values through their design [34]. Therefore, instructors benefit from aligning their pedagogical approaches with the spatial layout of the classroom and adapting methods to optimize student participation and engagement within the given environment.

Most groups noted that fixed seating arrangements in classrooms limit opportunities for collaborative work and inhibit open dialogue among students. Research shows that active learning environments, such as roundtable classrooms, enhance socialization and the exchange of feedback—key elements for developing critical professional skills. However, it is important to recognize that not all students may feel comfortable in these settings, which can affect their participation levels [35,36]. Additionally, the traditional fixed lecture-style classroom setup misaligns with contemporary understandings of effective learning, prompting many universities to invest in redesigned spaces that cultivate experiential, participatory learning approaches [37,38].

Furthermore, groups highlighted the importance of equitable seating arrangements that accommodate diverse body types and mobility needs, emphasizing the need for adjustable, accessible seating options. According to Smith, spatial layouts and furniture arrangements play a crucial role in shaping power dynamics within a classroom, frequently reinforcing traditional hierarchies and limiting student engagement, even in ostensibly student-centered settings [39]. For effective contemporary learning environments, classrooms must adopt flexible layouts and furniture that empower students to take psychological ownership of their surroundings, promoting a more inclusive and interactive setting that values each individual's presence and contributions.

In contrast to other buildings, groups valued B9, the library, for its thoughtful design and functionality. Centrally located on the campus, B9 is a large, five-story building completed in the mid-2000s by a prominent architectural firm. Its design blends the structure subtly into its natural surroundings. Expansive windows offer views of the surroundings, creating a seamless connection between indoor and outdoor spaces, while the glass façade illuminates the atrium with natural light. Groups praised its designated

quiet areas, multi-functional rooms, art exhibitions, and self-care activities for supporting both individual focus and collaborative work (Figure 3).

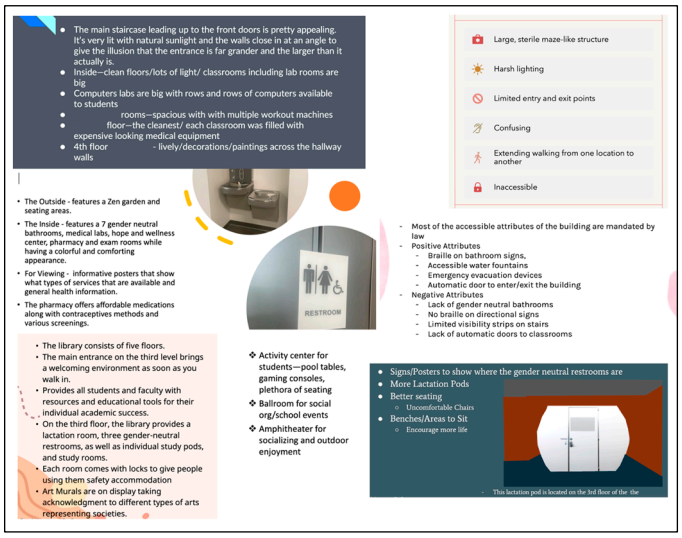

Figure 3. Exemplary analyses of campus spaces by non-architecture majors, highlighting diverse perspectives and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Overall, these five interconnected categories reveal the significant influence of the physical environment in shaping the social dynamics of the campus. The groups' observations underscore how architectural elements and spatial design can either enhance accessibility or perpetuate exclusion. While many campus facilities provide essential services, their effectiveness is often compromised by design choices that fail to accommodate diverse needs. Inaccessible pathways, extensive stairs, inadequate seating options, and unclear signage, to name a few, illustrates how the built environment can marginalize specific groups, limiting their participation in campus life. Additionally, the zoning and placement of support services can undermine their effectiveness when they are not accessible to all users. Outdoor spaces, though designed for creativity and relaxation, often remain inaccessible due to safety concerns and physical barriers. Hierarchical designs reinforce power structures and hinder inclusivity and belonging. These findings suggest that architecture education and practice should consider feminist spatial justice, reimagining campus design to reflect intersectional identities and create environments that better serve diverse communities.

4. Defining a Feminist Space

Each group's final task was to define a feminist space and outline its key attributes, focusing on aspects such as inclusivity, accessibility, empowerment, and the acknowledgment of diverse identities. Their definitions reflected a nuanced understanding of spatial justice and that the built environment is not neutral; rather, it plays a significant role in shaping social interactions and power dynamics within a community. Almost all groups emphasized that respect for diverse identities is a core principle of feminist space, asserting that these spaces should actively accommodate and reflect the unique experiences of all individuals. They believed that by prioritizing inclusivity and accessibility, feminist spaces can empower marginalized groups and enhance a sense of belonging.

Furthermore, some groups reflected on incorporating intersectional perspectives as essential for ensuring that the complex layers of identity—such as gender, race, class, and (dis)ability—are recognized and addressed, creating spaces where everyone feels valued and represented. As Crenshaw argues, oppression impacts individuals in multiple, intersecting ways that cannot be fully understood by looking at single categories of identity alone. Recognizing how these identities intersect helps us understand unique experiences

of discrimination and privilege, underscoring the importance of designing inclusive spaces that reflect the complexities of lived realities. Some groups expressed that without an intersectional lens in design, the overlapping forms of oppression individuals face cannot be effectively addressed.

Others drew on Marilyn Frye's concept of oppression and the "birdcage analogy", which illustrates how barriers restrict the opportunities of underrepresented groups by creating an interlocking network of obstacles that are difficult to perceive when viewed individually [40]. Frye compares oppression to a birdcage, with each wire representing a different form of constraint; together, these wires trap the bird, much like intersecting systems of oppression constrain individuals. This analogy emphasizes that the experience of oppression is not due to isolated barriers but results from a combination of social, cultural, economic, and spatial constraints that work together and collectively limit agency and movement.

The "birdcage" concept aligns with the framework of spatial justice, which explores how physical spaces can reinforce or challenge systems of inequality and inequity. Spatial justice calls for environments designed to dismantle barriers—whether physical, social, or symbolic—that disproportionately affect marginalized groups. By addressing structural inequities through design, we can envision spaces that actively support empowerment and inclusivity rather than perpetuating exclusion. As one group noted, a feminist space would not only accommodate diverse needs but also aim to address the inequalities embedded within the built environment. They emphasized that inclusive architecture should facilitate access for all users.

Safety emerged as a critical factor in defining these spaces, emphasizing the importance of clear signage and well-lit areas to enhance navigation and security for all individuals. One group shared that addressing safety concerns is essential to dismantling the oppressive wires of the metaphorical birdcage. When safety is compromised, individuals may feel restricted in their ability to engage freely with their environments, reinforcing existing barriers to access and participation. Thoughtful consideration of design elements can transform the built environment from a mere physical space into a powerful catalyst for inclusion (Figure 4).

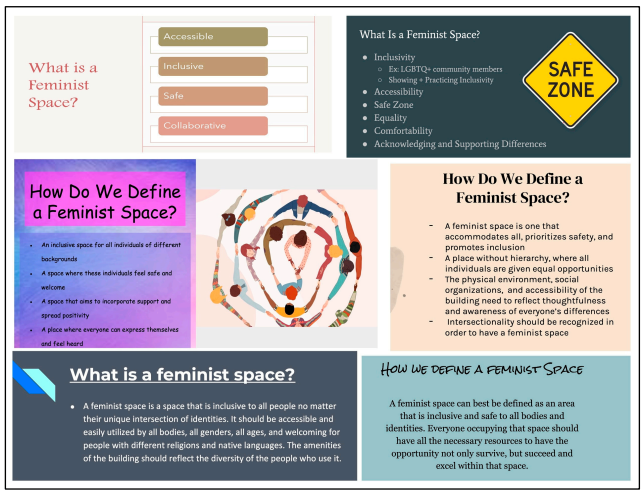

Figure 4. Illustrations of feminist spaces as defined by groups, emphasizing concepts of intersectionality, safety, accessibility, and inclusivity in campus design.

In conceptualizing architectural spaces that embody feminist principles, most groups identified accessibility as a fundamental component. Drawing particularly on Wendy Seymour's research on disability and technology studied in the course, they emphasized the need to address both visible and invisible disabilities [41]. They advocated for universally navigable designs that enable all community members, regardless of physical or cognitive abilities, to move through spaces with dignity and ease. To achieve this, they proposed

features such as ramps, tactile pathways, auditory signals, and quiet zones for neurodiverse individuals in every building. Another group emphasized the importance of adaptable furniture that accommodates diverse body sizes, abilities, and preferences, including comfortable seating and desks suitable for left-handed individuals. This approach challenges ableist norms and creates a more inclusive environment.

In addition, some groups emphasized that feminist spaces encompass not only physical structures but also social, cultural, and institutional dimensions that significantly influence users' daily experiences and sense of belonging. Their findings echo the arguments of scholars like Dolores Hayden, who advocate for the representation of historically underrepresented communities in the built environment, urging designers to incorporate the collective histories of diverse groups [42]. For example, one group highlighted the need for representation in architectural and interior design, arguing that spaces should reflect the diverse histories of the community they serve. They suggested incorporating artwork, signage, and design elements that celebrate various cultures, and local architectural traditions can challenge the invisibility and misrepresentation of marginalized voices.

5. Concluding Thoughts

In conclusion, the workshops and assignments effectively facilitated thought-provoking, interdisciplinary discussions among non-architecture majors about the relationship between architecture and spatial justice. Drawing on bell hooks' concept of critical pedagogy, the exercise emphasized education as a transformative tool for encouraging inclusivity and addressing inequalities within higher education environments [43]. Through a user-centered approach to analyzing architectural spaces, groups engaged in reflective exercises that illuminated implicit design biases and exclusionary features, deepening their understanding of how architecture affects lived experiences. The findings resonate with existing literature on inclusive campus design, which underscores the necessity of engaging diverse stakeholders—specifically students—in the decision-making process. This engagement is crucial for ensuring that architectural decisions effectively address the varied needs of all users.

However, the analysis reveals how architectural choices often overlook the diverse needs of users, inadvertently perpetuating inequalities and reinforcing social hierarchies within higher education environments. The limited interdisciplinary scholarship on spatial justice in campus design, coupled with a lack of reflective situated knowledge, contributes to this issue. Few studies examine how campus environments influence the intersections of gender, race, class, and (dis)ability, often focusing on a single aspect within these categories. There is an urgent need for new approaches to architectural principles and pedagogies that proactively address the diverse needs of all users. This shift is particularly critical for incorporating the perspectives of underrepresented groups in the design process, as failing to do so can undermine efforts to create more inclusive and supportive environments for all.

This paper calls for radical inclusivity and collaborative practices in both architectural design and pedagogy. It advocates for the integration of feminist perspectives into mainstream architectural practice, urging architects, planners, and decision makers to embrace these principles. To effectively address disparities, architecture must intersect with feminist spatial theories, reshaping the built environment to promote inclusion and justice. Achieving this requires a fundamental shift in thinking—not only moving beyond traditional gendered, racial, class-based, and ability-related dichotomies but also recognizing that architecture is ultimately about human experiences, not merely aesthetics, building codes, or technical solutions. By transforming the built environment into a platform for social justice, we honor the collective goal of liberation: "None of us is free until all of us are free".

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