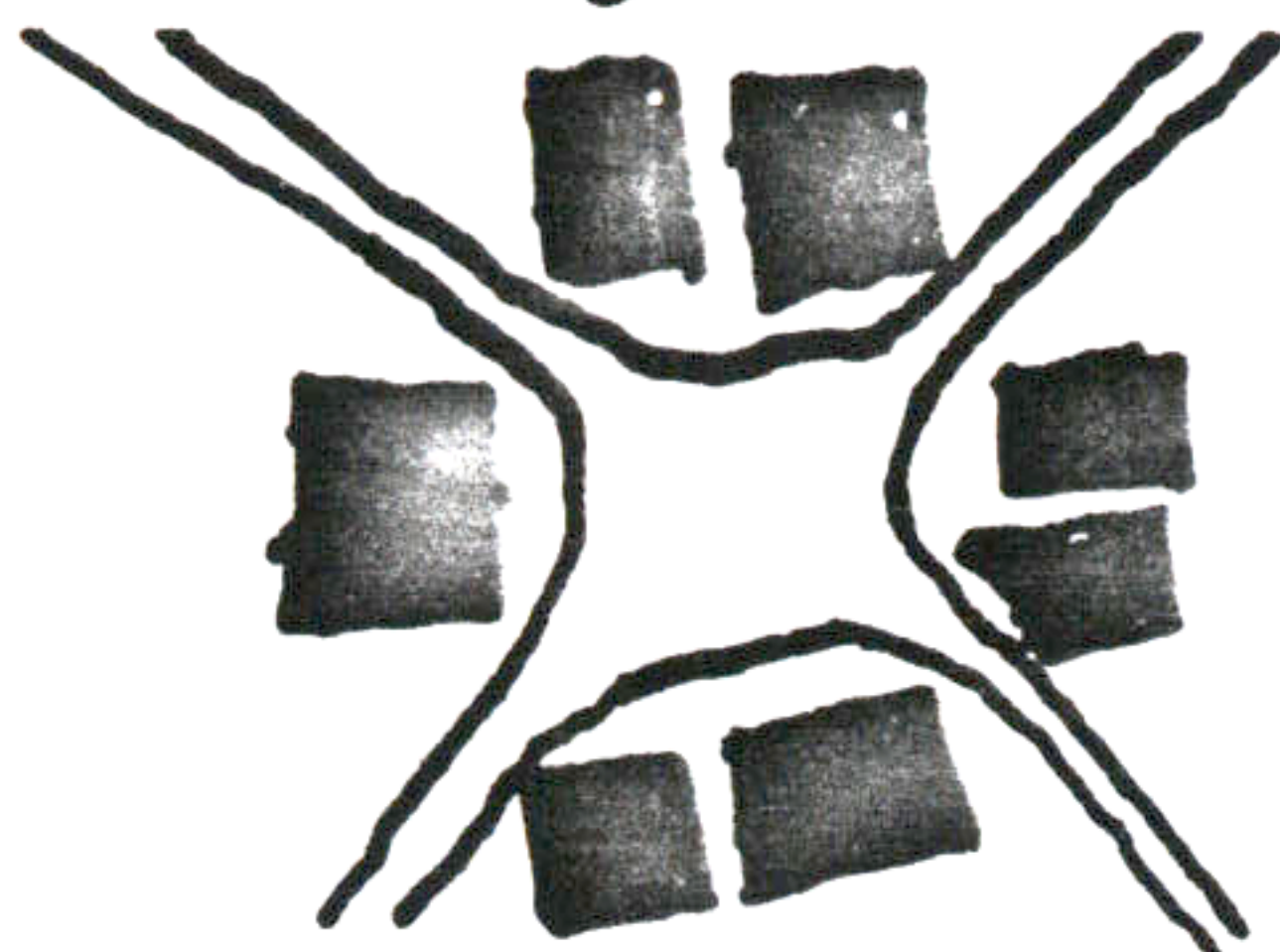


# Activity Nuclei



*Community facilities scattered individually through the city do nothing for the life of the city.*

One of the greatest problems in existing communities, is the fact that the available public life in them is spread so thin, that it has no impact on the community, and is not in any real sense "available" to the members of the community. Studies of pedestrian behavior make it clear that people seek out concentrations of other people, whenever they are available, (e.g. Jan Gehl, "Mennesker til Fods (Pedestrians)", Arkitekten, No. 20, 1968.)

To create these concentrations of people in a community, facilities must be grouped densely round very small public open spaces which can function as nuclei — and all pedestrian movement in the community channelled to pass through these nuclei. These nuclei need two properties.

First, the facilities grouped around any one activity nucleus, must be carefully chosen for their symbiotic relationships. It is definitely not enough merely to group communal functions in so called community centers. For example, church, cinema, kindergarten, and police station are all community facilities — but they do not support one another mutually. Different people go to them, at different times, with different things in mind. There is no point in grouping them together. To create intensity of action, the facilities which are placed together round any one nucleus, must function in a cooperative manner, and must attract the same kinds of people, at the same times of day.

(continued over)

*Therefore:*

*Cluster community facilities round a small number of very small open spaces to form activity nuclei.*

*Choose the facilities in any one nucleus so that they co-operate functionally. Make all paths in the community pass through these activity nuclei.*

shops & stores

evening activities

CMC facilities

facilities for children.



# Activity Nuclei

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## Problem (continued)

For example: When evening entertainments are grouped together, the people who are having a night out can use any one them, and the total concentration of action increases. When kindergartens and small parks and gardens are grouped together, mothers and young children may use either, so their total attraction is increased. When schools and swimming pools and football space are grouped together, they form natural centers for school children.

For reasons stated in *Small Open Spaces*, the open spaces which form the nuclei should be very small — 15 x 20 meters is the ideal size. If the space has to be larger, it should be long and narrow, with its short dimension no more than 20 meters.

## Context

This pattern applies to any community large enough to support community facilities — whether it is a new one just being designed, or an old one being redeveloped or undergoing a zoning change.

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This pattern is tentative. If you have any evidence to support or refute its current formulation, please send it to the Center for Environmental Structure, P.O. Box 5156, Berkeley, California 94705; we will add your comments to the next edition.