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22 People in Places: A Transactional View of Settings

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INTRODUCTION

The chapters in this volume highlight the current emphasis on the ecological environment in psychological research (cf. White, 1979). The significance of the large-scale environment for behavior and health has been underscored by the contemporary problems of pollution, resource shortages, and urban stress. Yet, the establishment of an ecological orientation among psychologists was prompted as much by challenging theoretical issues as by pragmatic societal concerns. For, after decades of research, it has become increasingly clear that human behavior and well-being cannot be understood solely in terms of psychological processes and the proximate social environment, but must be considered in relation to the broader context as well—the sociocultural and physical milieu in which people are actively involved.

Although the behavioral relevance of the molar environment is widely recognized, systematic studies of the transactions between people and their sociophysical settings have been sparse (see Barker & Associates, 1978; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; and Moos, 1976, for notable exceptions). A major difficulty facing such research is the staggering complexity of the large-scale environment. Unlike the discrete stimuli and cues comprising the microenvironment (cf. Gibson, 1960; Skinner, 1953), the architectural, geographical, and sociocultural components of the molar environment are interdependently arrayed in the form of dynamic, ecological systems (cf. Barker, 1968). In the face of this complexity, it becomes difficult to demarcate the appropriate units of environmental analysis, and to assess their implications for behavior and health.

A crucial challenge facing psychological research is to develop a theoretical basis for describing and categorizing the diverse settings of human behavior. Only by identifying the important dimensions and processes of settings can we begin to assess the comparability of environments and the ecological validity of our research findings and policy decisions (cf. Secord, 1977). Guided by these concerns, the major purposes of the present chapter are (1) to develop a conceptualization of settings emphasizing the cognitive and behavioral transactions between people and places; (2) to delineate a set of theoretical dimensions for describing and categorizing settings; and (3) to derive research hypotheses from the proposed taxonomic dimensions.

The term setting, as it has been used in the psychological literature, typically refers to a common set of interrelated elements—namely, a particular place in which specific individuals share recurring patterns of activity and experience (cf. Argyle, 1977; Barker, 1968; Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Magnusson, 1981; Pervin, 1978; Wicker, 1979b). Among the most comprehensive psychological analyses of settings are Barker's (1960, 1968) theory of "behavior settings" and Bronfenbrenner's (1977, 1979) analysis of the ecology of human development. Although their analyses focus on different psychological and developmental questions, both Barker and Bronfenbrenner construe settings as units of the ecological environment that are characterized by the high degree of interdependence among their physical, social-structural, and personal components.

The conceptualization of settings presented in this chapter extends earlier analyses in at least three respects. First, it gives explicit consideration to the concept of "place"—the geographical and architectural context of behavior. Previous analyses of settings have emphasized the social and behavioral aspects of settings (e.g., processes of under- and overmanning in Barker's theory; transcontextual social networks in Bronfenbrenner's analysis), while neglecting to consider the relationships between these dimensions and the architectural-geographical milieu.[1] Second, a transactional perspective is emphasized in the present analysis, highlighting the reciprocal influence between people and places. Places, thus, are viewed not only as a composite of behavior-shaping forces, but also as the material and symbolic product of human action. Third, our analysis distinguishes among settings that are oriented toward and occupied by single individuals, coacting aggregates, and/or interactive groups. This strategy is in contrast to earlier analyses that have not differentiated among settings in terms of the composition and organization of their occupants. Our approach is based on the assumption that a categorization of settings, reflecting the different levels of social organization and interdependence among occupants offers theoretical leverage for understanding the complex transactions between people and places.

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[1]Recent chapters by Barker (1979) and Proshansky, Nelson-Shulman, and Kaminoff (1979) are exceptions to this trend.

We should note, however (as becomes apparent in the latter sections of the chapter), that our analysis gives greatest attention to group-occupied settings. We have chosen to emphasize this category of settings because people spend so much of their waking time in groups, and because group-occupied settings afford an opportunity to assess the interrelationships among a wider range of environmental dimensions (e.g., social-structural and organizational as well as psychological and physical dimensions) than do individual- and aggregate-occupied settings.

As a basis for developing the proposed theoretical analysis, it is first necessary to examine in detail the two major components of settings: their physical milieu (places) and their occupants (individuals, aggregates, and groups). Theoretical terms for describing and analyzing the physical milieu and occupants of settings are delineated in the next two sections of the chapter. Throughout these sections, the artificiality of rigidly separating the components of settings becomes apparent, as our analysis arrives at a taxonomy of settings based on transactional or relational terms. Places, for example, are characterized in terms of the predominant orientation of their human functions (e.g., individual-, aggregate-, or group-oriented), whereas people are distinguished by their association or lack of association with particular places (e.g., place-specific and place-nonspecific) and their perceived attachments to those environments (e.g., place-dependent and place-independent). In the final section of the chapter, the proposed taxonomic terms are utilized as a basis for developing a theoretical analysis of the group-environment interface and for deriving hypotheses about the dynamic relationships between people and places.

PLACES: THE PHYSICAL AND SYMBOLIC CONTEXT OF HUMAN ACTION

In 1943, Clark Hull, a leading proponent of behavioral psychology, commented that "... as the behavior sciences evolve the relationships where multiple causes are involved will be expressed more and more precisely in the form of equations; ... It is hardly to be doubted that the behavior sciences are rapidly moving in this direction [p. 288]." Hull's statement summarizes the lofty aspirations of American psychologists during the 1940's, 1950's, and early 1960's—the heyday of behaviorism and the golden age of experimentation—as they rushed into their laboratories in quest of discovering the laws of human behavior.

The experimental search for enduring behavioral laws posed some important implications regarding the proper definition of the environment, on the one hand, and its behavioral consequences, on the other. First, the environment had to be construed in terms of discrete, separable units—that is, *stimuli*—that were amenable to systematic observation within the laboratory. Second, these environmental elements, or stimuli, had to be isolated—that is, examined singly or

in small clusters—so that their functional relationships with specific *responses* of the organism could be discerned through experimental manipulation. In the words of Benton Underwood (1957), a highly regarded methodologist, "One may vary more than one stimulus condition in a given experiment . . . but to draw a conclusion about the influence of any given variable, that variable must have been systematically manipulated alone, somewhere in the design [p. 35]."

As psychologists pursued the laws of behavior, their experimentalist fervor gradually gave way to concerns about the external validity or generalizability of laboratory findings (cf. Campbell & Stanley, 1963), and the simplicity of stimulus–response models vis-a-vis the complexity of behavior within naturalistic settings (cf. Gergen, 1973; Ring, 1967; Smith, 1972; Willems & Raush, 1969). In light of these concerns, many psychologists shifted their theoretical focus from the micro to the molar environment in the hope of identifying the contextual moderators of environment-behavior relationships (e.g., Barker, 1963; Chein, 1954; Craik, 1973; Gibson, 1960; Lewin, 1936).

With the emergence of environmental psychology during the late 1960's and early 1970's (cf. Craik, 1973; Wohlwill, 1970), several programs of research emphasizing the large-scale environment were implemented. Research in the areas of environmental cognition, spatial behavior, and stress exemplify this changing research strategy. In the area of environmental cognition, Lynch (1960) developed a conceptualization of cognitive mapping within humans, drawing upon Tolman's (1938) pioneering (but initially neglected) research on "cognitive maps" in rats. Also, Ittelson (1973) contributed a comprehensive analysis of the differences between environment (place) and object (stimulus) perception.

In the areas of spatial behavior and stress, researchers have examined several dimensions of the large-scale environment as they affect human performance and well-being. Studies of personal space, territoriality, and crowding, for example, have established the behavioral and health relevance of variables such as residential density and architectural design (cf. Altman, 1975; Baum & Valins, 1977; Gove, Hughes, & Galle, 1979; Newman, 1973). Other studies have demonstrated the impact of stressors such as community noise, ambient temperature, and air pollution on behavior (cf. Baron & Bell, 1976; Cohen, Glass, & Singer, 1973).

These studies of spatial behavior and stress reflect some significant trends in current research on environment and behavior. First, investigations of the molar environment typically proceed by isolating (via laboratory or field experiments) specific dimensions of the sociophysical milieu—for example, architectural design, noise, density, ambient temperature—and examining their relationships with behavior and health. Although this strategy is consistent with the sequential, experimental strategy favored by Underwood (see the previous quote), it fails to capture the interdependencies among multiple dimensions of the environment and their joint relationships with behavior. One objective of the present analysis

is to highlight the interconnections among social-structural and architectural-geographical components of settings.

Second, psychologists typically construe the environment either in terms of its objective, material features or in terms of the individual's subjective impressions of those features. Rarely are the objective and subjective elements of environments considered within the same analysis.[2] In our view, the sociophysical environment is a composite of material and symbolic features. Thus, an attempt is made to integrate the objectivist and subjectivist perspectives within the proposed conceptualization of places. More specifically, the degree to which a place has been transformed by its occupants from a mélange of material elements into a symbolically meaningful setting serves as an important criterion for describing and comparing diverse environments.

Finally, whereas most research on environmental cognition has emphasized the individual's perception of the environment (cf. Moore & Gollege, 1976), the present analysis encompasses the phenomena of social perception—that is, the processes by which setting members collectively perceive and ascribe meaning to their sociophysical milieu. By focusing on the common or widely recognized meanings that become associated with the molar environment, our analysis offers a "middle ground" between subjectivist perspectives, which construe environmental perception as essentially a personal, idiosyncratic phenomenon, and objectivist views of the environment, which avoid reference to perceptual processes altogether.

It is apparent from the preceding discussion that places can be characterized in terms of numerous criteria, including their overt physical attributes, individuals' perceptions of those attributes, and occupants' collective interpretation of place meanings. We have chosen to develop a categorization of places based on their functional, motivational, and evaluative meanings, as reflected in the collective appraisals of their occupants. We believe that an analysis of collectively held place meanings offers conceptual leverage for understanding phenomena such as the degree to which occupants feel dependent on or attached to a particular place, their reactions to abrupt environmental change or relocation, and the conditions under which residents and users will be motivated to improve or withdraw from a given place.

As a basis for identifying the functional, motivational, and evaluative meanings of places, it is necessary to examine the processes of collective perception in more detail. Our discussion of these phenomena builds upon an earlier analysis of group–place transactions presented by Stokols (1981).

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[2]As examples of the polarity between objectivist and subjectivist viewpoints in psychological research, see Brunswik's (1943) "encapsulation" critique of Lewin's (1936) life-space concept; Gibson's (1977) theory of environmental affordances vis-a-vis Neisser's (1976) constructivist view of perception, and Wohlwill's (1974) article, "The environment is not in the head!"

The Social Perception of Places

The widely recognized images or meanings conveyed by places constitute the nonmaterial properties of the physical milieu—the sociocultural "residue" or residual meaning that becomes attached to places as the result of their continuous association with specific patterns of activity. Just as environments can be described in terms of the imageability (or memorability) of their physical elements (Lynch, 1960), they also can be characterized in terms of their *social imageability*—that is, their capacity to evoke vivid and collectively held social meanings among the occupants and users of a place.[3] The sociocultural meanings associated with a place can be thought of as a kind of "glue" that binds individuals and groups to a particular environment.

Not all places can be characterized as socially imageable, due to the absence of certain circumstances that foster the development of social imageability. One such factor is the regularlity with which places are occupied. We can distinguish between *patterned-activity* (i.e., regularly occupied) and *nonpatterned-activity* (i.e., unoccupied or sporadically occupied places). Examples of the former include homes, schools, public parks and beaches, and the entire array of behavior settings that have been investigated by Barker and his colleagues (cf. Barker & Associates, 1978). Examples of the latter include empty fields or dilapidated buildings that are neither inhabited nor used by people on a regular basis. A central assumption of this analysis is that places acquire social imageability to the extent that they are regularly and predictably associated with particular patterns of individual and/or collective behavior.

For those places that are associated with recurring patterns of activity, several additional factors may mediate the development of social imageability. For example, the frequency with which community members used a particular place, the number of people in the community who use or know about the place, and the degree to which inhabitants or users of the place communicate with each other about the sociocultural meanings of their environment are all potential determinants of social imageability.

The imageability of a place refers to those features of the environment that are highly salient to its occupants. Kevin Lynch's (1960) discussion of the physical imageability of places, for example, emphasizes the dimension of *perceptual salience*—that is, the number and intensity of highly noticeable features within an environment (cf. Stokols, 1979; Taylor & Fiske, 1978). Among the factors that heighten the perceptual salience of environments are stimulus contrast, novelty, and complexity (cf. Berlyne, 1960; Kaplan, 1975; Wohlwill, 1976).

The concept of social imageability, as used in this analysis, refers not to the perceptual prominence of environments, but rather to their *functional, motivational,* and *evaluative significance*. These dimensions of environmental

[3] A glossary of the various terms introduced throughout our analysis is provided at the end of this chapter.

salience encompass collectively held images that relate, respectively, to three basic facets of places: (1) their *functions*—that is, individual- or group-specific activities that occur within places on a regular basis, the norms associated with these activities, as well as descriptive information regarding the identities and social roles of setting members; (2) personal and collective *goals* and purposes, each of which is weighted by its relative importance to the inhabitants or regular users of a place; and (3) *evaluations* of occupants, physical features, and/or social functions typically associated with a place (e.g., the negative stereotypes connected with certain neighborhoods regarding the presumed dangerousness of their occupants; cf. Suttles, 1968).[4]

The actual content of those meanings associated with particular places is referred to in this discussion as the perceived social field of the physical environment. More specifically, the *perceived social field of a place is defined as the totality of functional, motivational, and evaluative meanings conveyed by the physical environment to current or prospective occupants of the place*. This matrix of meanings is essentially a set of collectively held images that evolve as the result of direct or indirect interaction with a particular place.

The evolution of sociocultural meanings within organizations and cultural groups generally has been investigated by sociologists and anthropologists (cf. Agar, Chapter 2 in this volume; Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Garfinkel, 1967; Gerson & Gerson, 1976; Mead, 1934; Tyler, 1969), though more recently psychologists have begun to apply ethnographic methods to the study of social interaction and group structure (e.g., Harré, 1977; Harré & Secord, 1972). The present analysis diverges from these earlier investigations by focusing on place-related meanings (i.e., those attached to a particular environment or category of environments) rather than on the broader set of social rules and meanings (e.g., ethical norms) that are widely held by the members of a community but are not necessarily attached to a specific place.

The notion that physical environments convey information about the sociocultural functions associated with them is similar to Gibson's (1977) "affordance" concept. The affordance of an object or place refers to the potential uses or activities it suggests to observers by virtue of its physical properties (cf. Kaplan, 1978). Gibson has distinguished among physical affordances (those associated with objects and places) and social affordances—the potential forms and consequences of interpersonal encounters available within a social situation (cf. Baron, Chapter 4 in this volume). Whereas physical affordances are presumed to be recognizable by most members of a species, many categories of social affordances are more likely to be perceived by the members of a particular group than by outsiders.

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[4]The dimensions of functional, motivational, and evaluative salience reflect the three factors of semantic meaning identified by Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum (1957): activity, potency, and evaluation.

In the present analysis, the concept of social field subsumes only those social affordances (i.e., functional meanings) that become associated with specific places (e.g., having a drink with one's friends at a local tavern), while excluding those that are not restricted to particular places or types of places (e.g., having a friendly chat). At the same time, it should be noted that the imageability of a place is determined not only by the social affordances it subsumes, but also by those that it precludes (e.g., the difficulty of informal social interaction at a religious service).

The specific meanings associated with places can be described in terms of their content, complexity, clarity, heterogeneity, distortions, and contradictions (cf. Stokols, 1981). For example, the *content* of the social field can be assessed by having a representative sample of occupants list those functional, motivational, and evaluative meanings associated with a given place. This open-ended procedure is similar to Harré and Secord's (1972) notion of "accounting" (i.e., the explication of social action in terms of shared social meanings reflected in individuals' accounts of their social experiences) but pertains more specifically to the sociocultural images attached to the physical environment.

The *complexity* of the social field can be indexed in terms of the number of shared meanings that emerge from the independent listings provided by the different users of a place. The more often a particular meaning is cited by the occupants and users of a place, the greater its *clarity*. An additional criterion for judging the relative clarity of place meanings is the extent to which they are rated by occupants as being highly or slightly characteristic of a particular place.[5]

In some situations, the content and clarity of place meanings may vary according to subgroup membership. Thus, the perceived social field can be characterized in terms of its *heterogeneity*, or the number of subgroups within an environment for whom distinguishable patterns of meaning can be discerned. The social field also can be analyzed in terms of its *distortions*. Distortions are unrecognized discrepancies between the sociocultural images of a place and the nature of the social activities and experiences that actually occur there. Distortions can arise as the result of insufficient exposure to a place (e.g., among outsiders who have never visited the area or among group members who are minimally involved in its activities) or from misinformation about the place.

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[5]Considering the perceived social field as a whole (i.e., as a composite of multiple meanings), an index of the social imageability of a place can be derived by weighting the diverse meanings of the social field (reflecting its content and complexity) by their relative clarity among setting occupants. An ambiguous social field would be characterized by low imageability—that is, by a lack or small number of vivid images and/or by a lack of agreement among occupants regarding place meanings. See also Jackson's (1965, 1966) analysis of the norm "crystallization" for an alternative approach to the assessment of collectively perceived social meanings, and Milgram and Jodelet's (1976) methods for analyzing collective images of Paris.

Finally, we can characterize place meanings in terms of their *contradictions*—that is, their consistency with or contradiction of the preferences of occupants. Discrepancies between the actual and preferred meanings of a place are exemplified by situations in which people's images of a place are negatively toned as a result of earlier, unpleasant experiences there, or where the actual uses of a place are contradictory to its intended functions (e.g., the presence of a noisy group in a reading room at the library).

The proposed dimensions and measures of place meanings, outlined, previously offer a basis for categorizing environments and for analyzing the reciprocal relationships between people and places. In the remainder of this section, we develop a categorization of places in terms of their functional meanings; in subsequent sections, we examine the processes by which the motivational and evaluative salience of places prompt their occupants to enact structural modifications of the environment.

The Functional Orientation of Places

Our analysis of the perceived social field suggests that places can be categorized in terms of their predominant functional orientations. Earlier, we distinguished between nonpatterned-activity (irregularly occupied) and patterned-activity (regularly occupied) places. In the former, the absence of recurring activity patterns precludes the association of unambiguous, widely recognized functional meanings with the environment. Such places, because they exclude the possibility of occupation or are structured in ways that inhibit the development of sustained activity, remain ambiguous in their functional meanings. Rugged mountain terrains, desert areas, and open fields, for example, are all unlikely places for the development of patterned behaviors. Although people may climb a mountain, explore a desert, or wander through an open field, the probability is low that these behaviors will be repeated or exist independently of a particular person or group. Only in those cases in which people have intervened in these natural environments and have implemented design changes that foster, for instance, hiking, exploring, or wandering (e.g., natural park trails) will clear-cut, functional meanings become associated with the place. In such instances, the places are linked with patterned activities and fall within our second category of place types.

Considering the wide array of functional meanings that evolve within patterned-activity places, it is apparent that such meanings can be categorized according to several different strategies. One such strategy involves a straightforward description of the kinds of activities and behaviors that occur within an environment (e.g., eating, socializing, parenting, political events; cf. Price & Blashfield, 1975). An alternative taxonomic approach is to subsume specific categories of behavior within a smaller set of broader categories (e.g.,

Moos, 1976). Our analysis reflects the second general strategy. Specifically, we categorize the functional meanings of places in terms of the composition and organization of occupants. An advantage of this approach, we believe, is that it provides transactional terms for describing environments that reflect the linkages between physical and social-structural features of places.

Patterned-activity places, thus, are categorized according to whether occupants and users perceive them to be functionally oriented toward single individuals, coacting aggregates, or organized groups. (We are assuming, for the time being, a correspondence between the actual and perceived functional orientations of places. Possible discrepancies between the actual functions and the perceived functional meanings of environments are discussed in a subsequent section of the chapter.)

Individual-oriented places are those typically occupied by a single individual. A private study room or carrel within a library, an individual's bedroom, or the bathroom in a family dwelling exemplify such places. The physical structure and normative properties of these environments either preclude or discourage occupancy by more than one person at a time.

Aggregate-oriented places are those typically occupied by coacting individuals—that is, by collectivities comprised of strangers or minimally related people. Examples of these environments include public subway stations, beaches, pedestrian malls, or parking lots. In these locations, activities are performed by several individuals who are usually unrelated to each other.

Group-oriented places, in contrast with the first two categories of environments, are usually occupied by people who know and interact with each other on a regular basis—that is, by organized groups. The secret meeting place of a neighborhood gang, the headquarters of a business or religious group, the backyard of a family residence, and the practice field of an athletic team exemplify group-oriented places. In each instance, the predominant functions of the environment are geared toward the presence of organized groups. (See Fig. 22.1). (The distinguishing features of groups vis-a-vis coacting aggregates are discussed in the following section of the chapter.)

For several of the examples just mentioned, it is apparent that the main functions associated with a place can be performed by either the same occupants or by different occupants on different occasions. Library study rooms, for instance, might be reserved for use by a specific person, or could be used by several individuals on a rotating basis. Similarly, an athletic practice field might be reserved for use by one team only or could be utilized by different groups at various times. Environments whose functions are performed by the same people on a regular basis we label *same-occupant places;* those whose functions are carried out by different people on a rotating basis we refer to as *variable-occupant places*. The implications of occupant variability for understanding the dynamic relationships between people and their environments are examined in the section of this chapter focusing on settings.

The proposed categories of individual-, aggregate-, and group-oriented places are intended as "ideal types" and, as such, reflect oversimplifications of the actual environment. The meaning and applicability of the proposed place types, therefore, should be qualified in relation to several conceptual issues. First, the suggested categorization of places might imply that environments have singular, rather than multiple, functional orientations. Yet, the constituency of many environments varies over time, as illustrated by offices that support the simultaneous activities of individuals and small groups, or by classrooms that are sometimes used as a study place by individuals and, at other times, as a meeting place by the people enrolled in a course. Thus, a distinction can be drawn between *single-function* and *multiple-function* places. This distinction suggests that any attempt to characterize the functional orientation/s of a place must be carefully bounded with respect to specific time and space coordinates (e.g., the use of Room 432 on Thursday from 1:00 to 2:00 P.M.; the conference meeting area within the executive suite of ACME corporation).

Closely related to the issue of single versus multiple functions of places is the nested or *hierarchical structure of environments* (cf. Barker, 1968). Library study rooms, for example, are located within broader territorial and administrative systems (e.g., the library building, the campus environment). Thus, such places can be characterized not only in terms of the functional meanings associated with individual study, but also with those reflecting the administration of the library (e.g., the maintenance schedule dictating the times at which study rooms must be vacated by readers to permit floor mopping, or the opening and closing hours of the library building).

The functional meanings associated with library study rooms can be assessed from the perspective of individual users or from that of library administrators. In general, our analysis of place meanings emphasizes the perspective of performers within places, but it is important to note that the images of environments can be assessed from the vantage point of administrators and managers, or from the perspective of potential occupants who have had minimal direct exposure to the environment under consideration.

An additional distinction between *geographical* versus *generic places* should be noted.[6] The former refers to a particular geographical area whereas the latter refers to a category of places that are functionally similar. For instance, in attempting to ascertain the functional orientations of BarBQue restaurants, we can query current or potential customers of BarBQue restaurants in general, or we can ask them about "Shorty's BarBQue on Dixie Highway in South Miami, Florida." The level of specificity of the environment poses a number of implications regarding the complexity, clarity, and heterogeneity of place meanings reflected in the respondents' comments. The composite of functional meanings

[6]The distinction between particular and generic places was suggested by Stephan Kaplan in a personal communication.

associated with a particular place is likely to be more complex (detailed) than that conveyed by a generic category of environments. Moreover, the place meanings perceived by actual versus potential users of an environment are more likely to diverge when they consider a specific place rather than a more general category of places. For example, people who have never been to a restaurant are more likely to have encountered indirect information about restaurants in general, via the media and friends, than about a specific eating place.

Finally, the relationship between environmental specificity and the characteristics of place meanings (e.g., their complexity, clarity) suggests the importance of distinguishing among *personal*, *common*, and *shared meanings* of environments. Personal meanings are impressions about places (i.e., their functional, motivational, and evaluative meanings) that are held by single individuals. Personal meanings can be arrived at on an idiosyncratic basis (i.e., through intuition alone), through direct experience with an environment, or through communication with others about their experiences with a place. Personal meanings become part of the perceived social field, described earlier, to the extent that they closely resemble (or are cross-validated by) the place meanings perceived by other users of the environment.

Considering those meanings that are subsumed under the perceived social field (i.e., are jointly held by current or potential occupants of the place), we can distinguish between common and shared meanings. The key difference between these categories of meanings is that the former do not presuppose communication among place users (that is, the commonly held meanings do not arise, intensify, or change as the result of such communication), whereas the latter do. The functional meanings associated with public beaches may arise as the result of each bather's personal experiences with the beach or through communication about the beach with sources other than fellow bathers at the time of occupancy. By contrast, the meanings that become attached to the "turf" of a neighborhood gang arise through the joint use of and communication about the area by members of the gang.

Summary

In this section, we have divided places into two general categories: (1) unoccupied or irregularly occupied; and (2) regularly occupied. When places are occupied on a recurring basis, they become associated with widely recognized, sociocultural meanings. These collectively held images of a place—its perceived social field—evolve from the sustained interactions that occur within it. The major components of the perceived social field are the functional, motivational, and evaluative meanings of places.

The patterned activities that occur in regularly occupied places can be oriented toward single individuals, coacting aggregates, or organized groups. These functional orientations are reflected in the physical and normative properties of

places. The characterization of places in terms of their functional orientations is proposed as a very general classification scheme; several factors that qualify the proposed categorization are discussed (e.g., variability among occupants.) Having outlined and qualified some of the functional properties of places, we turn now to a more explicit analysis of the composition and organizational attributes of the occupants within places.

OCCUPANTS: THEIR COMPOSITION, ORGANIZATION, AND RELATIONSHIP TO PLACE

The number of ways people vary, both as individuals and in commerce with others, has been studied extensively by social scientists. The results of many of these investigations could be usefully applied to a description of place occupants. Any attempt on our part to review this literature here, however, would both tax our expertise and take the reader far beyond the scope and intended focus of this chapter. Instead, we highlight two features of occupants that critically influence the types of transactions that occur between people and places and are, therefore, particularly relevant to our development of a setting taxonomy. We first consider the composition and organization of occupants, and then discuss the types and degrees of associations that exist between places and people. Our distinctions among occupants along these two dimensions are, primarily, descriptive. However, in the following section of this chapter, the dynamic implications of these distinctions are developed.

Composition and Organization

One of the first things that is obvious when viewing place occupants is simply the number of people present. Is an occupant alone, or are there more than one occupant present in the same place? And, when there is more than one person present, how do the occupants relate to one another? That is, are they individuals who appear to behave independently of one another (e.g., an audience at a Broadway play) or are they more of a unit (e.g., a family picnicking together?) These initial observations produce an unambiguous classification of occupants. People in places act alone, as part of an aggregate, or as members of a group (see Figure 22.2). Before discussing some of the implications of this classification scheme, we would like to clarify our distinction between groups and aggregates.

Definitions of groups are numerous and range from general, inclusive descriptions to very elaborate, precise delineations. This range comes from the number of characteristics used to describe groups, including: internal structure, reciprocal influence of members, amount and form of interaction, degree of real and perceived boundedness, objectives (e.g., work, therapy), size, level of formality, and activities performed (cf. Cartwright & Zander, 1968; Hare, Borgatta, &

Bales, 1965; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; McGrath, 1964; Shaw, 1976; Steiner, 1972). Because of this variety, and our emphasis on group-occupied places in the next section of this chapter, it is important that we make explicit our meaning of groups vis-a-vis aggregates. Shaw (1976) defines a group as: "... two or more persons who are interacting with one another in such a manner that each person influences and is influenced by each other person [p. 11]." We would like to add to this definition the criterion that members are aware of their interdependence. This expanded definition complements our goal of clearly differentiating groups from aggregates, while simultaneously allowing us flexibility and leverage in our discussion of setting dynamics in the following section. In that section, we discuss a number of group characteristics (e.g., boundedness, formation, structure, etc.) that are not explicitly reflected in the foregoing definition.

Although the classification of occupants by number (single versus multiple) and organization (aggregate versus group) is straightforward, each occupant category has complex implications when the transaction with place is considered. When acting alone, an individual brings to a place a number of personal factors (e.g., values and attitudes, dispositions, history, and behavioral style) that will influence his or her perception and use of the resources within that place. Thus, in conjunction with "collectively held images," there are a number of differences among individuals that impact on the transaction between person and place.

As soon as two or more people transact with the same place at the same time, a number of social factors, in addition to the individual issues, become relevant. For example, social facilitation (Zajonc, 1965), privacy (Altman, 1975), personal space (Evans & Howard, 1973), distribution of resources (Wicker, 1979a, 1979b), and complementarity in personality styles (Altman, 1977) are issues that may influence the person–place interface. When the occupants are a group, these individual and social issues are further complicated by the features that distinguish groups from aggregates (i.e., the interaction and interdependency of members), as well as by other characteristics that are specific to groups (e.g., internal structure and cohesiveness).

On a very general level, variations in occupant numbers and organization influence the sources and kinds of information available to the occupants. The perceived place meaning for a person acting alone derives from his or her personal experience with the place, shared norms, and the widely known and collectively held images of the place. A member of an aggregate has the same sources of information, with the additional input acquired from observing the transactions of others with the place; and, group members' experience is further augmented by the explicit sharing among members of place impressions and images.

One example of the possible impact of information differences on person-place transactions comes from viewing a person who enters a place for the first time and is faced with the immediate task of determining what behaviors are

appropriate and how to best use the resources available. If alone, this occupant has no social cues and, therefore, must rely on the physical cues (i.e., affordances) provided by the place, and whatever he or she knows from general norms. If others are present in the place, social cues are available; and, if there is a group of friends present, the individual can enhance his or her commerce with the place by asking them relevant questions.

This example suggests a further nuance in a person's commerce with place that differs because of the number and organization of occupants. Though the presence of others may provide additional information about behavior, it also may restrict behavior. When alone, inappropriate behavior cannot be judged or evaluated by others. However, when in the presence of others, a degree of conformity is a probable outcome and pressures toward conformity are even stronger within a group (cf. Cartwright & Zander, 1968). Thus, even though movement from individual to group increases information, it may concomitantly decrease one's freedom of self expression.

Relationship to Places

Objective Properties of Association: Place specificity. Whether occupants are acting alone or in the presence of others, their association with place can vary considerably. An individual may walk alone along a beach, join a crowd of people who are watching a sailboat race, and by chance meet some friends who are discussing sailing. In each of these situations, the association between person and place is short-lived and impromptu. Furthermore, the probability is low that the same or similar activities will predictably recur in the same places. When people occupy particular places on a sporadic basis, we describe them in these situations as being *place nonspecific*.

Another situation in which people are place nonspecific is one in which they are members of organizations that rarely (or, perhaps never) meet in a particular place on a regular basis. Members of unions and professional organizations, for example, may be place nonspecific. For them, there is no shared image of a physical place, and though recurring behaviors may occur (e.g., voting by mail for leaders), they do so independently of place.

It is important to emphasize that when we use the term place nonspecific (or, later in this section, place specific), we are not talking about trans-situational traits. Certainly, there are different styles among people in their associations with places and one difference may be the recurring nature of an occupant's association with place. That is, some people may more frequently be place nonspecific than others. However, our application of this term is limited to particular activities associated with distinct places. Limiting the term to a description of specific situations promotes a more ecological perspective than viewing it as a trait. That is, it forces us to consider the multiple factors (including individual differences) that would produce a place-nonspecific (or place-specific) association.

We describe people as *place specific* when they perform particular activities in the same location or in categories of places, on a regular, predictable, basis. To distinguish among situations in which occupants are associated with particular places versus categories of places, we use the terms *geographical* and *generic place specificity*, respectively. Examples of *geographical place specificity* are: the student working in a library carrel over a school year, the businessperson who works in an office each day, the secretary who performs his or her job-related activities at the same desk, and the football team that practices on its home field each week. These associations between people and places are predictable and they recur on a regular basis.

If people perform particular activities at differently located, but functionally similar, places, we describe their association to place as *generically place specific*. For example, a group of friends may meet for lunch, every Monday, but rotate their meeting places among restaurants. Or, a scientific organization might rotate annual convention sites among a number of university campuses. In both of these examples, the people are place specific—that is, the places they occupy are alike in characteristics that are essential to the activities in question (in these examples, eating lunch and exchanging information and ideas).

There are several possible reasons why people are place specific or place nonspecific. For example, activities vary in terms of how place specific the resources are that they require. An individual can hike in a number of places, but playing tennis requires a court, net, and so on. Activities may also differ by how acceptable their performance is in particular places (cf. Price & Bouffard, 1974). Some, for example, may require more privacy or solitude than others. People also differ in how flexible they are in their use of the environment. These variations could evolve from personality traits (e.g., a rigid versus open style), or economic realities including income and mobility (cf. Michelson, 1977). Whatever the antecedents or causes, people do develop different modal styles in their associations with particular activities and places. These styles can be classified into the two broad categories of place specific and place nonspecific. In most instances, this classification is easily done and is based on objectively observable events. Within the set of place-specific occupants, there are two further objective properties of association that merit consideration. These are *endurance* and *frequency*.

A farmer who has worked the same land all of his or her life has an association with place (i.e., the farmland) that has persisted over a lifetime. If the farmer's family has owned and worked this same land for several generations, one might argue that the association that has existed between the family and place has a quality of endurance that goes beyond the experience of the one, current family member. That is, the farmer's sense of endurance is based on his or her actual transactions with the land, and is amplified by the ancestral ties.

The example of the farmer represents one end on a continum ranging from enduring to transitory place specificity. Individuals, however, may associate

with places in less enduring ways. A student's relationship to his or her dormitory room will probably not persist beyond 1 year. Even shorter associations occur between groups that form to solve specific problems in a given period of time and that use the same place for their problem-solving activities. Thus, endurance might range from a lifetime to a few days. In all cases, the people are place specific; but, the quality of their transactions with the environment varies considerably as a function of endurance.

Although frequency of association may relate to endurance, it is not the same property. That is, people may have an infrequent, but enduring association with a place. For example, a group of college alumni may annually reconvene for the homecoming football game. Their transaction with place may endure for several decades, but it occurs only once per year. The problem-solving group described in the earlier example may meet six times per day for 1 month, or only three times during their existence as a group. For the farmer and dormitory student, frequency of transaction with place is very high. Endurance, however, ranges from 1 year to one lifetime.

Subjective Properties of Association: Place Dependence. In addition to the objective properties of association (i.e., specificity, endurance, and frequency), there is a subjective quality to the relationship between occupants and places. Individuals have differing perceptions of their associations with places—the same person may feel an intense or compelling connection to some places, and very little linkage to others. When occupants perceive themselves as having a strong association with a place, we describe them as *place dependent*. In contrast, when occupants observe a weak connection between themselves and a place, they are characterized as *place independent*. Thus, *place dependence describes an occupant's perceived strength of association between him- or herself and specific places.*[7]

This perceived strength of association can occur at any level of analysis with respect to place. That is, a person may be place dependent on a home, a

[7]This presentation of place dependence extends an earlier definition presented in Stokols (1981). In the original definition, place dependence referred to an *on-going setting*, and the degree to which the major functions and actual existence of the setting are linked to a specific physical environment. In addition, the definition was limited to group members' collective perceptions of the connections between setting functions and places.

Our revised definition of place dependence is broader than the initial description, and differs in certain respects. These differences include: (1) an emphasis on the occupants' perceptions of the strength of association between *themselves* and places, as well as between their group and places; (2) the inclusion of individuals and aggregates, as well as groups, as possible setting occupants; (3) a detailed discussion of the processes underlying the development of place dependence and those factors that strengthen people's subjective attachments to places; (4) an extension of the concept by applying it to categorically similar places, as well as to specific geographical areas; and (5) the inclusion of a temporal component of place dependence that extends the concept from present to past and idealized, future places.

neighborhood, or an entire city. Furthermore, the same person may be place dependent for some associations, and place independent for others, (e.g., a person may feel a strong attachment to his or her home, but not to the office in which he or she works).

The place-dependence dimension is descriptive of individuals' (as in the preceding example), aggregates', and groups' relationships to places. A number of surfers, for example, may feel a strong attachment to a beach that they consider the "best" in their area. Though they behave fairly independently of one another (i.e., constitute an aggregate), their perceived association with the place is common. They are all place dependent with respect to that beach. Their commonality in place dependence could produce behaviors that derive strength from the aggregate, as opposed to an individual, perception—a kind of surrogate social support system (cf. Jacobs, 1961). Territorial behavior exemplifies this point. The surfers may have a tacit agreement among themselves as to who has "rights" to use of "their" beach area, and who is an outsider. This implicit understanding could bolster both their coactive and their individual responses to potential encroachments.

Groups have perceived associations with places that transcend the place dependence of individual members. The San Francisco Giants, for example, may, as a team, be place dependent on Candlestick Park. This strong association could evolve from a number of factors. Team members may share perceptions of place meanings, the park may uniquely support the team's activities, they may have a higher success rate at "home," and there may be little opportunity for relocation. Whatever the contributing elements, the outcome is a strong link to a specific place.

Our definition and examples of place dependence provide a general characterization of the concept. In order for place dependence to be usefully applied to settings, however, it is important that we go beyond this imprecise and static description to a more systematic and dynamic analysis. That is, we need to focus on the factors that underlie individual or group assessments of dependency on place. These factors can be organized within a two-component process. Briefly, they include an occupant's assessment of: (1) *the quality of current place;* and (2) *the relative quality of comparable alternative places.*

Before expanding on these components, we should note that although we are conceptualizing place dependence as evolving from occupants' assessments of the quality of places, we are not suggesting that people are continuously and self consciously monitoring their transactions with places. Place dependence is not always salient to occupants. Rather, it becomes relevant when circumstances occur that heighten the occupants' awareness of their associations to places. Periods of abrupt environmental change, relocation, and very pleasant or unpleasant experiences with places are all circumstances that could bring issues of place dependence to the fore (cf. Fried, 1963; Michelson, 1977). Our two components, therefore, merely model the process undergone by occupants when relevant levers cause place dependence to become prominent.

Whatever the particular triggering incident, once people become aware of their association to a place, they will likely assess the place's quality, and the quality of relevant alternatives, in order to determine the strength of their association (i.e., how dependent they are on a particular place). In evaluating the quality of a place, individuals judge how well the place facilitates their goals and activities. This is particularly true of those goals and activities that are most important to them. The result of this evaluation determines an occupant's satisfaction with a place—the better a place meets one's goals, the greater one's satisfaction. This kind of assessment is necessarily subjective and based on some internal standard of the occupant's as to how well a place should meet one's goals. That is, people expect certain outcomes in their transactions with places. These expectations, derived from a person's direct or vicarious experiences with possible outcomes, produces his or her Comparison Level (CL) for places (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Thus, degree of satisfaction with place is indexed by the extent to which an existing place's quality diverges from the occupants' CL for places (i.e., their expected level of place quality.)

A number of factors contribute to an assessment of place quality. As noted, a person's CL develops from his or her previous experiences with places. The valence of these experiences will determine current CL. Thus, for example, if individuals historically have had relatively negative outcomes, their CL will be low and they will have lower expectations in their evaluation of place quality. In contrast, a history of positive outcomes with current or comparable, previously experienced places will raise their CL and, concomitantly, the expectations imposed upon their current situation.

Several features of the resources available within a place can affect whether a place facilitates or inhibits goal attainment and, thereby, assessments of place quality. These include the amount of resources in an area, their caliber, and the degree to which they fit the needs of the occupant. The impact of each of these resource characteristics on assessments may vary considerably, and is dependent on the goal in question. For example, a hospital patient whose goal is to become healthier would be more concerned with the caliber or expertise of his or her doctor than with the number and variety of doctors available within that particular hospital.

The value or salience of the goals that are met in a particular place also influence judgments of quality. Although the thwarting of any goal is frustrating, the more important the goal, the more upsetting its blockage (cf. Stokols, 1979; Wortman & Brehm, 1975). Similarly, the achievement of highly valued goals will produce more positive feelings than the attainment of minor ones. Therefore, the value of goals or needs will mediate an occupant's assessment of place quality by influencing the strength of an occupant's reactions to goal facilitation or thwarting.

The second component in the process of assessing place dependence involves the occupants' evaluation of the relative quality of their current situation vis-a-vis alternative comparable places. That is, occupants compare the environment they

presently occupy with places that they view as potential locations for their activities. Following Thibaut and Kelley's (1959) formulation of the construct Comparison Level for Alternatives (CLalt), occupants assess the quality of expected outcomes among suitable alternative places. Thus, the issue of place dependence goes beyond a simple assessment of the place currently occupied by focusing on the quality differentials among present place and relevant options.

The identification and evaluation of alternatives is affected by several factors. First, a comparison of possible options is predicated on an occupant's *awareness*, and to a lesser degree *familiarity*, with existing alternatives. Awareness refers to an individual's knowledge of relevant options. Familiarity extends awareness to actual experiences in different places. The more individuals and groups use a variety of places for similar activities, the better able they are to make informed judgments about the relative quality of places. Both awareness and familiarity of potential locations can vary considerably among people. Differences in personality styles may explain why some people are more willing to learn about locational alternatives than others. For example, one couple moving into a new home might actively explore the environment, seeking out accessible recreational facilities and service organizations. Another couple, in the same situation, might be reluctant or uninterested in searching for options, settling quickly on single places for specific activities and never becoming cognizant of other possibilities.

Mobility is another factor that can influence an evaluation of the quality of alternative places. The elderly, physically handicapped, and the poor are often severely limited in their access to different environments and are forced to perform most of their activities in places located within the immediate vicinity of their homes. Although this limited mobility can decrease knowledge of alternatives, this is not necessarily the case. People who lack mobility may be aware of and familiar with alternatives, and even recognize higher quality in places other than the ones they currently occupy. However, as long as places are inaccessible, they are nonviable alternatives.

The resources needed for the performance of some activities may be more specific than for others, thereby limiting the number of alternative places available. Sports activities like golfing and tennis are considerably more *resource specific* than jogging or bicycling. Even more limiting are the resources required by certain types of business establishments. Saw mills, ship builders, and ski resorts all are economically dependent on particular features of the environment.

Our consideration of the elements that influence assessments of current place quality (i.e., CL, resource characteristics, and value of goals), and the quality of relevant options (i.e., awareness of alternatives, mobility, and resource specificity) is not meant to represent an exhaustive list. Rather, these elements are reasonable representations of the kinds of issues that contribute to the two-component process involved in an occupant's assessment of place dependence. In addition to these specific factors, there are a number of more subtle considera-

tions that relate to both components of the assessment process, and account for variations in the essential *character of place dependence*. We consider these variations in place dependence because of their potential implications for the dynamics of settings.

As we have mentioned, place dependence is partially evaluated in terms of how well current and alternative places facilitate the attainment of important goals. The *number and range of needs* met by a particular place will affect judgments of the character of place dependence. Places that satisfy several needs (e.g., primary environments) probably lead to a type of place dependence that can be described as being more embedded, extensive, or deep-seated for the occupants than places in which possible activities (and, therefore, attainable goals) are narrowly defined (cf. Stokols, 1979). In such situations, satisfaction with current place is based on a number of expected outcomes and represents a kind of weighted averaging of all possible effects (i.e., all needs met in one place weighted by value, and averaged across expected outcomes). In addition, the range of possible alternatives may narrow as the range of needs met in one's current environment increases.

The *type of needs* that are met within a particular place can also influence the nature of place dependence. The place dependence that occurs in environments where basic survival needs are met will undoubtedly differ from that that emerges in places where less crucial (e.g., recreational) needs are met (cf. Maslow, 1968). These differences would be most salient when place dependence is strong and occupants are threatened with a loss or disruption of place. The repercussions and impact of such threats would be considerably more serious in places meeting basic subsistence needs then in those associated with less central goals.

Place dependence can occur in situations in which outcomes are *above or below CL*. That is, occupants can be place dependent when their experiences with places are either satisfying or nonsatisfying. In some instances, people will perceive themselves as place dependent when they are satisfied with the quality of their transaction with a particular place, and they believe that this same level of satisfaction cannot be derived from their best comparable alternatives (CLalt). Occupants also can perceive themselves as being strongly linked to a particular place when their transactions with the place are unsatisfactory (below CL) but their best relevant alternative (CLalt) is perceived to be even more negative, or when they feel they have no other alternatives. For example, institutionalized people or those who lack mobility might be dissatisfied with their current place transactions, yet they may still perceive themselves as place dependent because alternatives are inaccessible.

There are several implications for the kind of place dependence that evolves in these very different circumstances. For example, when outcomes are below CL but options are worse or nonexistent, people may react against their environments (e.g., vandalism; cf. Zeisel, 1976; Sommer, 1974), or they may develop a sense of helplessness (Seligman, 1975) and feel unable to act in ways that will

improve their lives. Conversely, place dependence that develops because of very positive outcomes may cause people to be very protective of their situations, unwilling to seek out alternatives, and/or resistant to any changes, even those that might improve their current situations (Burton, Kates, & White, 1978).

There are two ways in which the *temporal component* of place dependence affects its general character. As noted, place dependence can occur because of a paucity of relevant options. This lack of alternatives, however, may result from very different factors. In some situations, there may be, from the onset of transaction with place, a limited number of places in which the activity can be performed (e.g., saw mills and ski resorts). In other cases, options may decrease over time. That is, there may have been, initially, a number of viable alternatives for a particular activity but, as occupants spend more time in one place, a narrowing of known alternatives occurs.

A second temporal feature of place dependence relates to the associations people sometimes feel toward places they do not currently occupy. For example, people who are relocated because of business transfers or urban renewal projects may still perceive themselves as strongly linked to their previous or past environment. As long as this perception persists, adaptation to their new environment will most likely be slow. Similarly, people may feel a compelling association toward prospective places. Members of the Palestinian Liberation Organization exemplify this temporal quality of place dependence. That is, they perceive themselves to be linked to, and dependent on, a land that they do not currently occupy. A strong future-oriented place dependence may influence an individual's willingness to adapt to his or her current place transactions, and his or her motivation to alter current activity locations.

In assessing place dependence, occupants evaluate the quality of *perceived place options*. For a variety of reasons (e.g., awareness), there may be discrepancies between these perceived options and *actual place options*. Such inconsistencies would not affect the perception of place dependence, per se. They could, however, have major implications if the occupants become cognizant of the discrepancies. The sudden recognition that one's formerly perceived options do not really exist, or the awareness that more options exist than were initially realized, potentially could affect the long-range survival of settings as well as the short-term stress and well-being of occupants.

A final nuance of place dependence to consider here represents an extension of the CLalt construct, as developed by Thibaut and Kelley (1959). CLalt is the occupant's assessed quality of the single, best alternative. In determining strength of association between oneself and a place, the *number of available* alternatives, as well as the quality of the best alternative, are considered by the occupant. A person perceiving him or herself to have several, qualitatively similar options will probably feel less place dependent than the individual who recognizes only one alternative. Thus, the evaluation of place dependence de-

rives from an assessment of the range or richness of options available, and the quality differentials among all viable options.

Consistent with our earlier distinction between geographical and generic place specificity, it follows that people can be dependent on either a particular place or on a category of places (*geographical* versus *generic place dependence*). People may care deeply about a place that they have never seen and probably never will—because of what it (like generically similar areas) affords. Thus, bird watchers may fight for the preservation of remote, relatively inaccessible places (an example suggested by Stephen Kaplan in a personal communication). People are motivated to preserve their generically similar place options—they care about alternatives that are attractive to them in principle, irrespective of whether they have experienced them in the past or are likely to do so in the future.

We have endeavored to define and characterize place dependence because we consider the concept to be critical in understanding several issues related to settings. Occupants' willingness to alter existing settings or establish new ones, and the impact of settings' termination on occupants, are mediated by the strength of association between place and occupant (cf. Firey, 1945; Fried, 1963). Moreover, the subtle variations in place dependence (e.g., its temporal quality) can be expected to affect the dynamics of settings in several ways. The Palestine Liberation Organization provides an interesting example of how these variations manifest themselves.

The PLO, as a group, is dependent on its current environment (i.e., settlements outside of Israel) because (1) this environment meets the subsistence needs of the members; and (2) the locational alternatives of the group are severely limited. At the same time, the group is dependent on an unrealized future place (i.e., a Palestinian state) that represents an ideal in which the member's subsistence, higher-order personal (e.g., self respect) and group (e.g., collective autonomy as a nation) needs can be met. The incongruity between the outcomes achieved in the current setting (below CL) and those believed to be attainable in the ideal setting (above CL) is stressful, motivating the group to resist adaptation to their current setting and continually strive for their ideal. The PLO is, perhaps, an extreme example of the possible variations in place dependence and the impact of these variations on settings. The more typical ways in which dependence might influence settings are discussed in the following section of this chapter. Before discussing the dynamic interface between people and places (i.e., settings), a brief review of our categorization of occupants may be helpful to the reader.

Summary

People occupy places individually, or as a part of aggregates and groups. The relationship between people and places may be regular or sporadic. When people

occupy a particular place on a predictable basis, we describe them as *place specific*. When their relationship to place is irregular, we describe them as *place nonspecific*. Regular relationships between people and places vary objectively with respect to the frequency and enduring nature of the transactions. Subjectively, there may be differences in the degree to which occupants perceive themselves as linked to a particular place (i.e., *place-dependent* versus *place-independent* people).

SETTINGS: THE TRANSACTIONS AMONG PEOPLE AND PLACES

The preceding discussion offers a set of dimensions for categorizing people and places. In general, places have been characterized in terms of their predominant functional orientations, and people in terms of their organization and the type and degree of their associations with places. Although the proposed dimensions are transactional—that is, they reflect the inherent interrelatedness of people and places—we have yet to examine explicitly the dynamic relationships implied by those dimensions. To this point in the discussion, we have neglected questions such as the following: Under what conditions do places acquire a particular functional orientation? To what extent does place dependence mediate people's reactions to abrupt environmental change and to life events involving residential or occupational relocation? What factors prompt people to actively modify their sociophysical environment?

To address these and related questions pertaining to people-place transactions, we begin by delineating a taxonomy of settings based on the dimensions presented in earlier sections of this chapter. Having designated the various types of settings included in our taxonomy, we proceed to examine the dynamic relationships among people and places that are associated with those settings. Our analysis of people-place transactions is organized around a broad set of issues relating to the "life cycles of settings" (cf. Devereux, 1977; Stokols, 1978; Wicker, 1979a)—that is, the conditions under which settings are established, maintained, modified, and/or terminated.

A Taxonomy of Settings

The intersection between categories of places (see Fig. 22.1) and categories of people (see Fig. 22.2) illustrates the distinction between *settings*—that is, patterned-activity places occupied by place-specific people—and *nonsettings*—that is, nonpatterned-activity places that are either unoccupied or sporadically occupied by place-nonspecific people (see Fig. 22.3). Moreover, settings can be partitioned into six major categories on the basis of the composition and organization of their occupants (individuals, aggregates or organized groups) and the

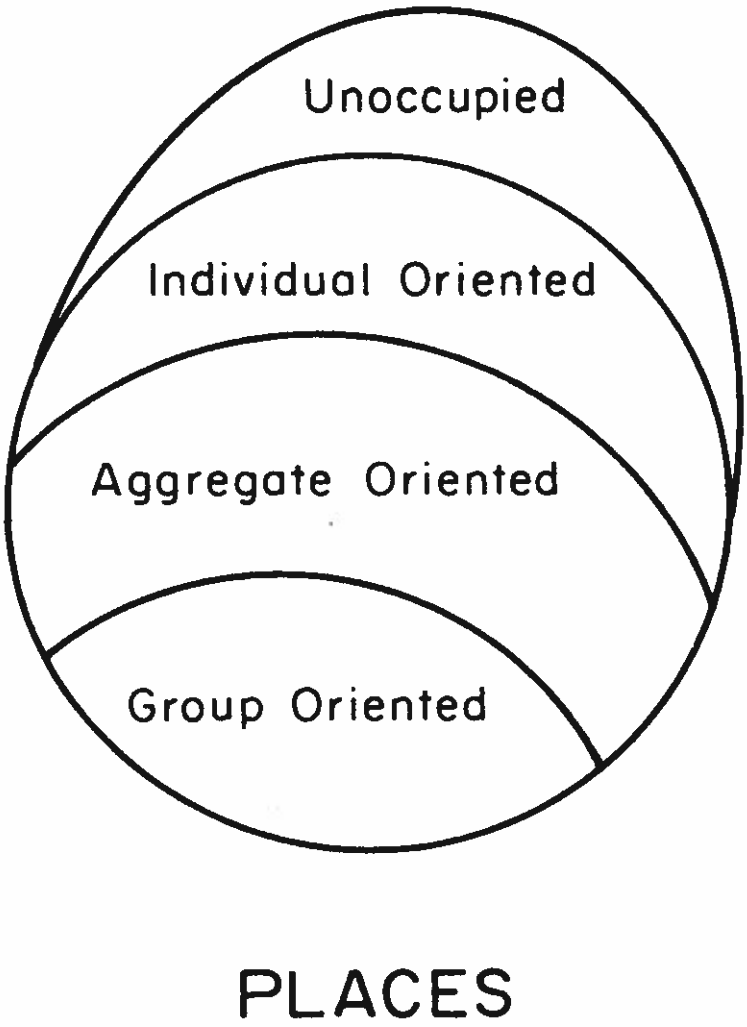

FIG. 22.1. Categories of places according to their functional orientation.

predominant functional meanings associated with their physical milieu (individual, aggregate, or group oriented), as depicted in Fig. 22.4. Thus, the composition and organization of occupants can be either consistent with the predominant, widely recognized orientation of the setting (e.g., an individual studying in a library carrel) or inconsistent with that orientation (e.g., a raucous group that appropriates a library study area as a regular meeting place).

Because the proposed categories of settings represent "ideal types," they necessarily oversimplify a number of inherently complex issues, including situations in which settings are associated with multiple functional orientations (e.g.,

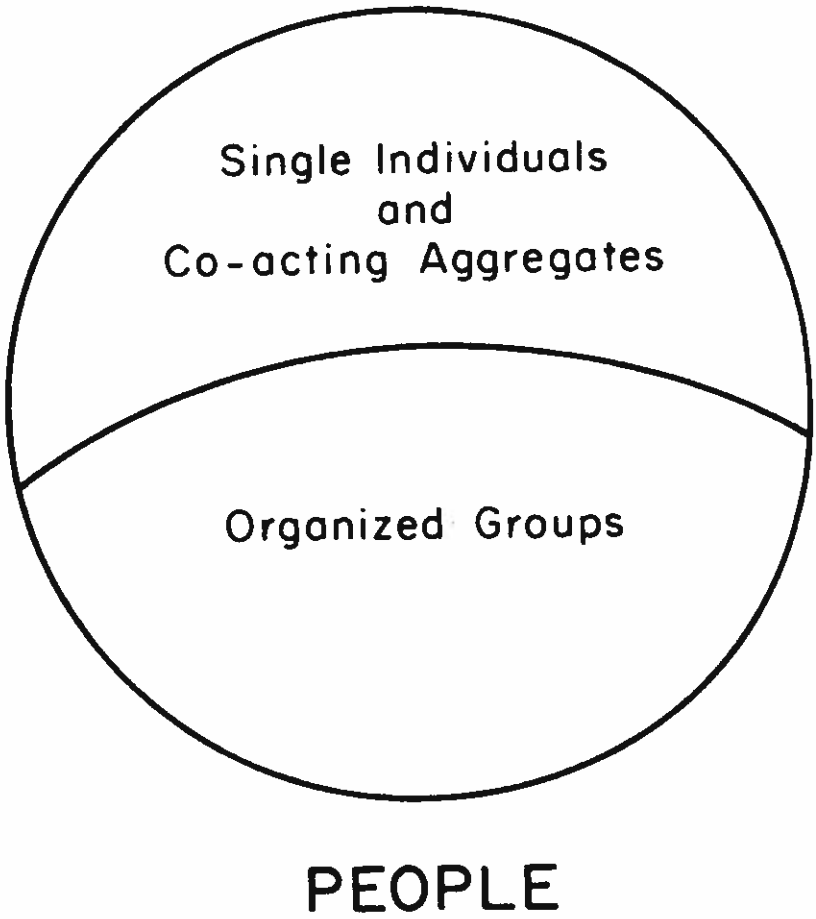

FIG. 22.2. Categories of people according to their composition and organization.

a large company office containing individual work stations, aggregate-oriented reception areas for visitors, and group-oriented conference rooms), and are occupied simultaneously by individuals, aggregates, and groups. Clearly, then, the boundaries between the proposed categories should not be viewed as rigid and impermeable.

The utility of the proposed taxonomy of settings, we believe, resides not so much in its descriptive capacity but rather in the range of theoretical questions and hypotheses that it suggests. As oversimplified as the proposed categories of settings may be, they nonetheless suggest several intriguing questions concerning the etiology, maintenance, modification, and demise of settings. For instance, in what ways do the consistencies or discrepancies among place orientations

and occupant organization predispose settings to stability or instability, to internal cohesion or conflict? It is with these kinds of transactional phenomena that we are concerned throughout the remainder of this chapter.

Before turning to an analysis of the life cycle of settings, we should note once again that our discussion focuses on group-occupied rather than on individual- or aggregate-occupied settings. Our reasons for focusing on this subset of our taxonomy are threefold. First, people spend an inordinate amount of their daily routine within group-occupied places, be they family dwellings, classrooms, company offices, or friends' homes. Second, the analysis of group-occupied settings affords the consideration of social-structural as well as personal and architectural-geographical elements of settings. And third, due to space limitations, it is not possible in this discussion to provide a more comprehensive treatment of the full range of settings included within our taxonomy.

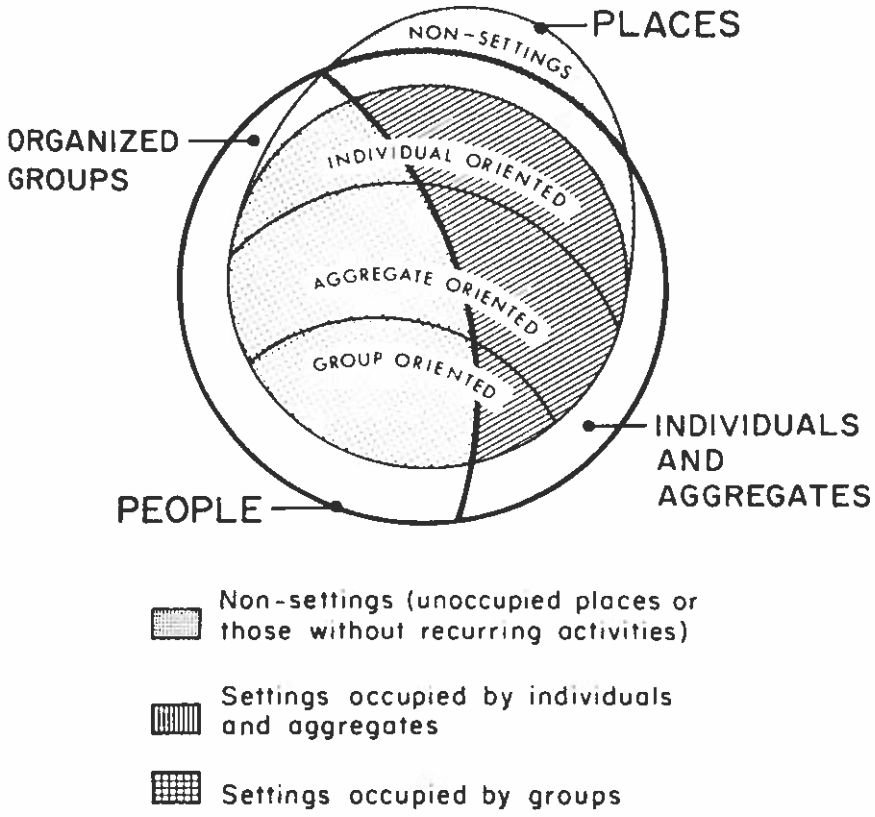

FIG. 22.3. The intersection of people and place categories.

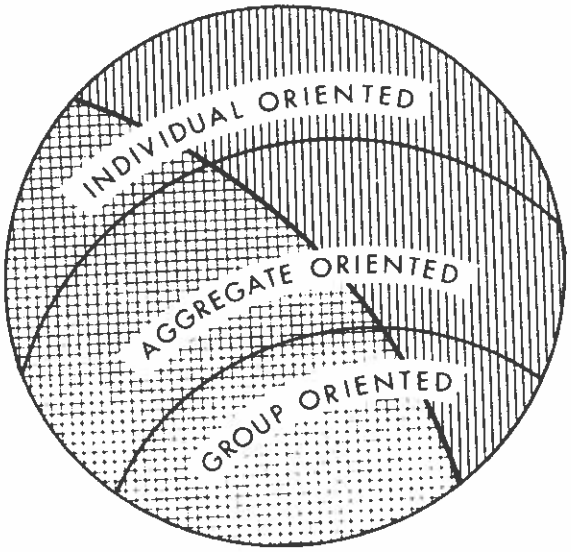

FIG. 22.4. A taxonomy of settings.

The Life Cycles of Settings

Factors Affecting the Emergence of Settings. Edward Devereux, in a recent discussion of the life cycles of settings (Devereux, 1977), has stated that "Behavior settings are nothing more than the swirls and eddies in the flow of motivated human behavior which have become, to some degree, organized, stabilized, localized, recurrent and institutionalized [p. 13]." But what is the nature of those processes by which behavioral "swirls and eddies" are transformed into organized and enduring settings? As a preliminary basis for address-

ing this question, we distinguish between settings that emerge within previously unoccupied (nonpatterned-activity) places and those that develop within occupied (patterned-activity) areas. Moreover, we distinguish among situations in which the emergence of a setting coincides with the gradual development of a group within a particular place, and those in which a setting emerges as the result of territorial migration or invasion on the part of a preexisting group. These antecedents of setting development are interrelated but not wholly overlapping, and their interaction yields four different sets of conditions under which settings evolve: *unoccupied areas* that either (1) foster the development of a group and, potentially, a setting; or (2) are abruptly appropriated by a preexisting group; and *occupied areas* that either (3) permit or encourage the development of a new group; or (4) are invaded by (or peacefully merge with) an already existing, outside group. In the third and fourth instances, the previous meanings and orientation of the place are altered by the emergence or invasion of the new group.

Before examining the specific factors that influence the emergence of settings within unoccupied or occupied areas, it is necessary to consider the temporal stages reflected in the emergence of settings. At least three such stages can be identified: (1) the *inert (or sporadic-activity) phase;* (2) the *transitional-activity phase;* and (3) the *patterned-activity phase*. The first phase applies only to nonsettings—that is, unoccupied places or those characterized by sporadic occupancy and activities. The second phase describes "transitional places"—that is, occupied areas characterized by preliminary patterns of activity but lacking the clarity of functional orientation and occupant organization that typify structured settings. The emergence of a setting occurs at the outset of phase 3, once the predictability, functional meanings, and occupant structure (e.g., role relationships) associated with patterned activities are recognized and maintained by setting members.

Note that patterned-activity places (i.e., settings) are conceptualized in this analysis as more than the objective "social facts" described by Durkheim (1964). That is, the emergence of settings in our analysis presupposes a subjective dimension involving the recognition among occupants (including previous, current, or prospective occupants) of the stable, functional meanings associated with a place, and of the organizational requirements for maintaining the setting intact. Thus, settings are construed as a category of "perceived social facts"—objective social forces whose existence and impact are collectively recognized.

Having outlined some of the spatial and temporal patterns of setting emergence, we now consider a number of specific circumstances that foster the establishment of settings within unoccupied and occupied areas. Our analysis focuses, first, on conditions favoring the transformation of an initially unoccupied place from a composite of purely physical elements into an organized setting—a mixture of social as well as physical affordances. Second, we consider

factors contributing to the evolution of new settings within already existing ones, such that the symbolic meanings (e.g., functional orientation) previously associated with the place undergo fundamental change.

We begin with the assumptions that unoccupied places are differentially suitable for the establishment of settings, and that those areas of greatest latent value to prospective occupants will be most likely to evolve into organized settings. The *latent value of a place* refers to its as-yet unrecognized capacity for accommodating the preferred goals and activities of prospective occupants. To the extent that this supportive capacity of an environment is recognized and, in some cases, actualized by occupants, its value becomes manifest rather than latent. Our earlier discussion of perceived environmental quality and place dependence, for example, emphasized the *manifest value* of environments. That is, environmental quality is judged in terms of the degree to which places are viewed by occupants as congruent or incongruent with their preferred goals and activities (see also the definition of environmental congruence in the glossary of this chapter and in Stokols, 1981). Thus, the distinction between manifest and latent value relates to whether or not potential or current occupants *recognize* the place as congruent with their needs.

The same kinds of factors that determine assessments of manifest value (e.g., the perceived fit between physical affordances of an environment and the activities of its users) offer a basis for estimating the latent value of places. For example, an out-of-the-way, undiscovered pond that remains frozen throughout winter has latent potential value as an outdoor recreational area. Once the pond is discovered by ice-skating enthusiasts, its potential value is recognized and transitional (presetting) activity develops in the area. To the extent that manifest or recognized value is high, the likelihood of a setting emerging (e.g., an outdoor skating rink) is enhanced. Note that in some instances, the recognized potential value of places is not actualized due to physical barriers or normative constraints (e.g., the presence of "no trespassing" signs near the pond).

Any attempt to assess the latent or manifest value of places requires consideration of the potential or actual match between place characteristics and the attributes of a particular set of occupants. The present discussion is not intended to provide a comprehensive listing of the determinants of place value, but it is possible to suggest certain environmental and occupant factors that are relevant to this issue. For instance, places whose supportive physical features are unique (i.e., few comparable areas exist elsewhere or are accessible) are likely to be of high value to prospective or current occupants. Such features might include the esthetic quality of a place, its proximity to transportation and communication facilities, and the degree to which its geographical characteristics offer physical protection and well-demarcated group territory. Among the occupant attributes that are likely to contribute to assessments of place value are the range of alternative environments available to occupants, and the kinds of environmental

supports that are required for their accomplishment of desired goals and activities.

Considering the three phases of setting emergence proposed earlier (i.e., inert, transitional activity, and patterned activity), we thus hypothesize that: (1) unoccupied places high in latent value for prospective occupants are more likely to attract and sustain transitional activity than those of low latent value; and that (2) the higher the manifest value of a place either prior or subsequent to occupancy, the greater the probability that patterned activities will be established and a setting will form.

We further hypothesize that: (3) the occupants of settings that emerge gradually within unoccupied areas will ascribe greater symbolic meaning to place than will the members of preexisting groups that migrate to the area. This heightened symbolic meaning of the physical milieu for locally formed versus migratory groups is assumed to result from the greater experience of local groups with a place prior to setting emergence, and the temporal linkage of group formation processes (e.g., the development of cohesion) with the establishment of a setting. At the outset of the patterned-activity phase, then, members of locally formed groups will manifest greater clarity and consensus in their perception of place meanings than will those of migratory groups. Thus, for locally formed groups, the physical environment will be viewed as symbolic of group identity. Accordingly, we predict that: (4) within newly formed settings, assessments of place dependence or independence will be more extreme among local versus migratory groups due to the former's relatively greater experience with the place. Moreover, (5) the direction of occupants' assessments toward either place dependence or independence will be mediated by the quality of their cumulative experiences within that environment.

As our analysis of setting development shifts from initially unoccupied to already-occupied areas, additional conceptual issues arise. Most importantly, the establishment of new settings in occupied areas involves not only a transformation of physical affordances into symbolic meanings, but also the modification of the existing, symbolic meaning by the new occupants. This alteration in the perceived social field of the environment introduces the potential for social conflict, particularly when place meanings associated with the original and newly formed settings are contradictory. Differing perceptions of territorial jurisdiction and ownership rights exemplify sources of conflict among occupant groups who lay claim to the same area.

In many situations, the establishment of a new setting within an already-existing one occurs without social conflict. This is particularly the case when members of a preexisting setting decide voluntarily to subdivide into smaller settings or to merge with the members of an outside group. Examples of subdivision within settings and mergers between them can be found in the research literature of ecological psychology (e.g., Bechtel, 1977; Lozar, 1974; Srivas-

tava, 1974; Wicker & Kauma, 1974). This literature also provides evidence for the impact of subdivisions and mergers on organizational effectiveness and member well-being.

The establishment of a new setting within an occupied area, however, often raises the potential for social conflict, especially when members of the original setting view the impending subdivision or merger as unwanted and involuntary. An attempt by an alienated faction of a teenage gang to develop an alternative setting within an existing one, or the appropriation and alteration of a setting by another gang, exemplify the involuntary or imposed establishment of settings in occupied areas.

The preceding discussion suggests the following, additional hypotheses:

6. The likelihood of a new setting developing within the territorial domain of an already-existing one decreases as the potential for conflict between members of the two settings increases.

7. The potential for intergroup conflict is heightened to the extent that the original setting undergoes involuntary subdivision or merger (particularly when territorial resources are limited and the place meanings perceived by members of the original and new settings are contradictory).

8. Given a high level of potential conflict, active attempts to establish new settings within existing ones will promote overt, intergroup aggression to the degree that the relative power (e.g., membership size, economic resources) of the opposed occupant groups is comparable. Differential power among occupant groups is expected to reduce the likelihood and duration of overt violence, following nonvoluntary subdivisions and mergers of settings (cf. French & Raven, 1959).

Because of our focus on group-occupied settings in this discussion, we have emphasized the role of intergroup conflict as a concomitant of setting emergence in certain situations. We should note, however, that attempts to establish new settings are sometimes accompanied by conflict arising among different categories of occupants (i.e., groups, aggregates, and individuals). The earlier-mentioned examples of a noisy group "hanging out" in a library study area, or a youth gang whose "turf" includes the parking lot of a shopping center, illustrate situations involving potential group-versus-individual and group-versus-aggregate conflicts. Thus, in relation to our proposed typology of settings (see Fig. 22.4), we hypothesize that: (9) the likelihood of a new setting developing within an occupied area decreases to the extent that its membership structure (e.g., group organization) is discrepant with the predominant functional orientation (e.g., individual or aggregate orientation) of the original setting. In those instances in which functionally discrepant settings do emerge, their stability and duration are likely to depend on the rigidity and enforcability of functional meanings associated with the original setting.

Factors Affecting the Maintenance and Modification of Settings. The three stages of setting emergence previously discussed—that is, the sporadic, transitional, and patterned-activity phases—precede the appearance of those processes by which existing settings are maintained, modified, and terminated. The present section considers some of those processes by focusing on three additional stages in the life cycle of settings—namely, (4) the *stability-maintenance phase;* (5) the *deviation phase;* and (6) the *structural-transformation phase.* In the subsequent section, we examine the (7) *crisis* and (8) *termination phases* marked by the occurrence of events within settings that lead to their deterioration and eventual demise. Crisis events are viewed as a category of severe deviations and transformations whose detrimental impact on the setting is irreversible.

Most conceptualizations of settings deemphasize the emergence, transformation, and termination phases, focusing instead on the ways in which on-going settings maintain their stability and cope with environmentally induced deviations. Barker's (1968) analysis of behavior settings, for example, highlights the synomorphy or fit between recurring patterns of human activity and the sociophysical environment. Deviations from optimal fit between human and environmental resources (e.g., undermanning) are counteracted by setting-protective strategies (e.g., the recruitment of additional members). Thus, the behavior setting is construed as an open system (cf. Katz & Kahn, 1966; von Bertalanffy, 1950) that strives to maintain a stable (equilibrium-like) relationship between itself and the broader environment through internal organization and negative feedback mechanisms.

Our analysis builds upon earlier discussions of setting maintenance and deviation-countering processes. We assume, for example, that settings develop mechanisms for maintaining their stability (e.g., the norms and role structure associated with group-oriented settings), and for resisting internal and external threats to setting operations. The stability-maintenance phase previously mentioned is characterized by the smooth and predictable recurrence of organized activity patterns within the setting. To the extent that perceived or actual departures from typical activity patterns occur, the setting is said to be in a deviation phase. The structural-transformation phase is marked by the occurrence of deviations that result in significant and enduring changes in the setting's activity structure and/or physical milieu.

The present analysis, however, differs from earlier discussions of setting maintenance and deviation in some important respects. First, whereas previous analyses of behavior settings and group dynamics (cf. Barker & Associates, 1978; Cartwright & Zander, 1968) emphasize deviation-countering mechanisms, which serve to preserve equilibrium within groups, we give equal attention to the deviation-amplifying processes (Maruyama, 1963) by which settings are structurally transformed. The phenomenon of overmanning, for example, could be analyzed in terms of occupants' efforts to reduce population pressure by admitting fewer-than-usual new members to the setting (deviation counteraction) or,

alternatively, in terms of their initial decision to expand the physical size of the setting, thereby attracting larger numbers of applicants, creating overmanning and stimulating further efforts to expand the physical dimensions of the setting (deviation amplification). We view both of these perspectives as crucial to the analysis of setting maintenance, deviation, and transformation.

Second, earlier discussions of deviations within settings have emphasized the predominant role of the environment in altering stable patterns of setting activities—for example, through the sudden influx of new occupants from outside the setting (cf. Wicker & Kauma, 1974) or through abrupt architectural-geographical changes (cf. Bechtel, 1977). In the face of these events, occupants are usually portrayed as passive responders to environmental problems. Yet, it is often the case that setting members act spontaneously and decisively to refine their activities and surroundings, even in the absence of pressing environmental problems. Thus, we distinguish between *occupant-induced* and *environment-induced deviations* to highlight both the active and responsive roles played by occupants in creating and coping with setting deviations.

Finally, unlike earlier discussions of disequilibrium within settings (e.g., Barker & Associates, 1978), our analysis emphasizes anticipated as well as actual deviations. Whereas the anticipation of deviations will often lead to their actual occurrence, this is not necessarily the case. A company's plans for relocation to a larger office building, for instance, may be delayed or even abandonned due to resource constraints. We, therefore, treat *anticipated* and *actually occurring deviations* within settings as separable phenomena. In the ensuing discussion, we are particularly concerned with those circumstances that prompt occupants first to devise plans for transforming and improving the setting and, subsequently, to actively implement their plans.

Under what conditions are settings likely to shift from stability to deviation and transformation phases? Our attempt to identify some of these conditions begins with an assessment of the *transformational potential* of settings (cf. Stokols, 1981). Transformational potential refers to the motivation of occupants to modify the physical or social structure of their setting in accord with collective preferences. Transformational potential will be high to the degree that existing levels of occupant-environment congruence are lower than the potential level of congruence thought to be available in the best alternative setting. The "best alternative setting" can be either a transformed version of the existing setting or a completely different setting that has not yet been established or experienced.

We noted earlier that when preferred, alternative settings are thought to be available outside of the existing situation, occupants will tend to be place independent rather than place dependent. We, therefore, hypothesize that: (10) when the existing level of environmental congruence is perceived to be low, place-independent occupants will be more motivated to leave rather than attempt to improve the existing setting, whereas place-dependent occupants will be more motivated to transform rather than leave the immediate setting.

In our discussion of place dependence and perceived environmental quality, we mentioned a variety of factors that may contribute to occupants' assessments of actual and potential levels of congruence (e.g., the unique goals and activities of setting occupants; the degree to which these goals are supported by the environment; occupants' awareness of and exposure to alternative settings). The same diversity of factors influences the transformational potential within settings at a given point in time. Changes in the particular goals pursued by occupants, for example, may prompt them to search for more congruent, alternative settings or to restructure their existing environment (occupant-induced deviations). At the same time, sudden shifts in the form and quality of the physical environment may decrease perceived levels of congruence (environment-induced deviations), thereby promoting dissatisfaction with the setting and efforts to improve or withdraw from it.

In general, the perceived gap between actual and potential congruence will be greater to the extent that occupants possess clear images of preferred future environments. Images of preferred settings arise from the collective imagination of occupants within the context of existing environmental conditions. But the salience of preferred environmental arrangements (i.e., a high level of transformational potential) does not necessarily promote structural modification of the setting, even when attractive alternative settings are thought to be unavailable. For, the accomplishment of environmental change requires not only salient images of the future, but also sufficient levels of environmental flexibility, social organization, and behavioral competence among occupants. Thus, assuming that setting members are motivated to improve their environment, the greatest amount of change would be initiated by imaginative individuals and groups within flexible settings, whereas the least change would be accomplished by unimaginative occupants within rigid settings.

The preceding discussion suggests the following specific hypotheses regarding the determinants of setting stability, deviation, and transformation:

11. Place-dependent groups located within group-oriented areas will, in general, maintain settings of greater stability and endurance than will place-independent groups located within group-oriented, aggregate-oriented, or individual-oriented areas. Also, settings established by place-dependent groups within aggregate- or individual-oriented areas will be less stable than those consisting of place-dependent groups within group-oriented areas.

12. Group-oriented places whose physical characteristics favor the development of group identity and cohesion (e.g., "defensible spaces" with well-defined boundaries; cf. Newman, 1973) will be more congruent and, therefore, stable than group-oriented places that do not offer architectural or geographical supports for maintaining group solidarity.

13. Group-occupied settings that have emerged gradually within initially unoccupied areas, or were established voluntarily within previously occupied areas,

will manifest greater stability than those whose establishment was nonvoluntary (i.e., contrary to the preferences of occupants within the original setting).

14. Environmentally induced deviations (e.g., sudden geographical changes or the appearance of unwanted stimuli such as noise and congestion) will be more disruptive to place-dependent than to place-independent groups, due to the former's lack of attractive place options and (consequently) their greater psychological investment in the immediate situation.

14. Deviations from optimal staffing levels within settings (e.g., undermanning and overmanning; cf. Wicker, McGrath, & Armstrong, 1972) will induce greater stress and deviation-countering efforts among place-dependent than among place-independent occupants. In the face of membership shortages, for example, place-independent occupants might be more willing to allow their setting to deteriorate or to merge with other undermanned settings.[8]

15. Given a high level of transformational potential and the lack of better alternative settings elsewhere, structural modifications will more likely be implemented by organized and cohesive groups than by occupants whose disorganization precludes their ability to agree upon and to implement a remedial course of action.

To this point in our analysis, we have ignored the question of whether deviations and transformations within settings are functional or dysfunctional from the occupants' point of view. This issue raises additional, complex questions such as: "functional or dysfunctional in the short run or long run, and for individual occupants or the setting as a whole?" In the remainder of our analysis, we employ two basic criteria for gauging the effectiveness of occupant-induced deviations and transformations within settings—namely, the degree to which these changes raise perceived levels of environmental congruence among occupants, and the degree to which the modifications enacted within settings promote its renewed stability or its eventual demise. The former criterion is essentially one of occupant well-being whereas the latter is more a matter of organizational survival. Depending on the situation, these criteria can be directly, inversely, or negligibly related to each other.

Factors Affecting the Termination of Settings. The present section focuses on the circumstances leading to an irreversible deterioration in the activity patterns of a setting (the *crisis phase*) and, ultimately, to the disappearance of such patterns altogether (the *termination phase*). Our emphasis in this portion of the chapter is on settings of undefined rather than defined duration. *Undefined-duration settings,* such as neighborhood restaurants, churches, and movie theaters, can persist indefinitely, whereas *defined-duration settings,* such as college classes, the campaign headquarters of a presidential candidate, and the yearly

[8]This possibility was suggested by Allan Wicker in a personal communication.

convention of a professional group, have prescribed termination dates—for example, the closing of the semester, the presidential election, and the national convention, respectively. Our principal concern, then, is to identify factors that affect the longevity of settings whose duration is indefinite.

Among the various circumstances that can prompt the abrupt and unexpected termination of settings are severe environmental perturbations (e.g., earthquakes and floods forcing migration to safer areas) and events relating to the life cycles of occupants (e.g., increased family size or the death of a spouse necessitating residential relocation). In our analysis of setting crises and termination, we are more concerned with the interplay of environmental and occupant factors than with either of these categories considered alone. For instance, we are more interested in the relative impact of environmental change on place-dependent versus place-independent groups than in the impact of such change on groups in general.

We begin with a series of hypotheses derived from our earlier discussion of environmental congruence, place dependence, and transformational potential:

16. To the extent that occupants' efforts to improve their setting fail to enhance perceived levels of environmental congruence, the setting is more likely to enter the crisis and termination phases, particularly when dissatisfaction among occupants has been prolonged.

17. The abrupt termination of settings following environmental crises and/or occupants' life events will induce greater stress (e.g., mental and physical disorder, social disorganization) among place-dependent vis-a-vis place-independent occupants.

18. Due to their greater psychological ties to their setting, place-dependent groups will take longer to establish new settings following geographical relocation than will place-independent groups.

The concept of place dependence, defined earlier, reflects the perceived strength of association between occupants and their environments. Throughout our analysis, we have emphasized the role of place dependence in affecting the maintenance, modification, and termination of settings. Just as it is possible to assess the dependence of individuals and groups on their environments, it is also conceivable that settings are differentially dependent on particular occupants for maintaining their efficiency and very survival. Prosperous companies, for example, may collapse precipitously following the departure of key executives. Similarly, a neighborhood tennis club may face premature closing as increasing numbers of its members shift their allegiance to raquetball and resign from the club.

Occupant-dependent settings, thus, are defined as those whose continued existence requires the presence of specific occupants or a subset of occupants. *Occupant-independent settings* are those that do not require the presence of

specific members for their continuation. In general, variable-occupant settings (or those whose membership varies over time) will be less dependent on specific occupants for their survival than will same-occupant settings (see our earlier discussion of place categories).

On the basis of the preceding definitions, we hypothesize that: (19) occupant-dependent settings are more likely to terminate following the departure of setting members than are occupant-independent settings. Moreover, (20) group-occupied settings characterized by constant rather than rotating members will be more likely to terminate following the departure of key individuals (e.g., charismatic leaders, persons occupying important roles in the organization) than following the loss of less crucial personnel.

In addition to the dimensions of place dependence and occupant dependence, we introduce a final factor into our analysis of setting termination. Emery and Trist (1965) suggest that the environments of organizations vary with respect to their relative "turbulence"—that is, their complexity and unpredictability. Consistent with their discussion of environmental turbulence, we hypothesize that: (21) the prospects for prolonged survival decrease to the extent that settings exist within turbulent environments. For instance, a housing construction firm may find it increasingly difficult to survive in an economy beset by wildly fluctuating interest rates, spiraling inflation, and a global energy crisis. Furthermore, we predict that: (22) within turbulent environments, settings whose internal organization enables members to forecast environmental changes and to actively initiate self-protective strategies prior to the occurrence of environmental crises (rather than simply responding passively to such events) will be more likely to survive than will less organized and sophisticated settings (cf. Terreberry, 1968; Weick, 1979).

Summary

In this section of the chapter, we have presented a taxonomy of settings based on the intersection of place-specific people and functionally organized places. Additionally, we have outlined eight distinct stages in the life cycles of settings and have offered a series of hypotheses concerning the antecedents and processes associated with setting emergence, maintenance, modification, and termination. Although our analysis of these phenomena is preliminary and incomplete, it may provide a useful framework for future research on the transactions between people and places, and a conceptual basis for designing and improving settings.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In recent years, the focus of psychological research has shifted increasingly from the micro to the molar (ecological) environment. This expanded frame of refer-

ence stems from the recognition among social scientists that models based solely on intrapersonal processes and/or social interaction do not adequately explain human behavior. Instead, behavior must be viewed within the context in which it occurs. In this chapter, we have developed a classification framework for describing the sociophysical milieu of behavior. This taxonomy of settings is derived theoretically, and serves as a basis for: (1) conceptualizing the complex transactions between peole and their environment; (2) conducting theory-guided research that focuses on the molar environment; and, (3) developing criteria for assessing the ecological validity of research findings and policy recommendations.

Our theoretical analysis of settings began with a detailed examination of their two major components: places (the physical context of behavior) and occupants (the people who transact with places). After distinguishing between regularly and irregularly occupied places, we discussed aspects of the former that contribute to their social imageability among current and prospective occupants. We further classified regularly occupied places in terms of their predominant functional orientation (i.e., individual, aggregate, and group oriented), and noted certain qualifications of this categorization scheme.

Occupants were described as acting alone, as part of an aggregate, or as members of organized groups. They can be sporadically associated with some places (i.e., place nonspecific), while predictably associated with others (i.e., place specific). When place specific, occupants may develop strong subjective attachments to particular locations. We termed this phenomenon place dependence and discussed, in some detail, its antecedents, subtle qualities, and its role in mediating occupants' reactions to environmental change.

In the last section of the chapter, we examined the interface of place and occupant categories as the basis for developing our taxonomy of settings. We then discussed eight distinct stages in the life cycle of settings and presented several hypotheses derived from our analysis.

Even though the present chapter has not been explicitly policy oriented, we do believe that our analysis of settings is germane to contemporary environmental and political problems. The concept of place dependence, for example, offers a basis for understanding and altering the behavior of people living in hazardous areas who refuse to resettle in different regions, despite the potential for disaster within their current locations. And, in the context of international politics, the place-dependence concept suggests why the fervor of terrorist groups is heightened rather than neutralized by the perception that they have been denied a desired geographical area, or that they have been thwarted in their attempts to transform a currently occupied area into a new setting. These phenomena are exemplified by the efforts of revolutionary groups, such as the PLO and the IRA, to establish independent nations. In these and other instances of social conflict, the place dependence of groups and the collectively perceived contradictions between existing and preferred qualities of an area can have enormous political ramifications.

We have attempted in this chapter to develop a conceptualization of settings that reflects the reciprocal relationship between people and places. Framing behavior within this multicausal model is, admittedly, complex. We believe, however, that taxonomic efforts at describing the large-scale environment, which necessarily reflect the complexity of that environment, are crucial if psychological research is to move effectively from micro to more molar levels of behavioral analysis. As a first step in submitting our conceptualization to empirical test, we are currently evaluating the reliability and validity of an index of place dependence.

DESCRIBING AND CLASSIFYING THE TRANSACTIONS BETWEEN PEOPLE AND PLACES: A GLOSSARY

1. *Aggregate-oriented places (or settings).* Place (or settings) that are typically designed for and occupied by aggregates of strangers or minimally related people.
2. *Character of place dependence.* Subtle variations in occupants' perception of their attachment to place/s derived from differences on dimensions such as (1) the number and range of needs met by a particular place; (2) temporal aspects of place dependence; and (3) the perceived availability of alternative place options. See also *place dependence.*
3. *Crisis events.* Severe deviations within settings whose detrimental impact on the setting is irreversible. Such events lead to the deterioration and eventual demise of the setting.
4. *Crisis phase of settings.* A stage within the life cycle of settings marked by the occurrence of events that lead to the deterioration and eventual demise of the setting.
5. *Defined-duration settings.* Settings that have a prescribed termination date.
6. *Deviation phase of settings.* A phase within the life cycle of settings marked by the occurrence of perceived or actual changes in the typical activity patterns and/or physical structure of a setting.
7. *Deviations within settings.* Anticipated or actual departures from the typical activity patterns and/or physical structure of a setting.
8. *Environmental congruence.* The degree to which the environment enables occupants to meet their needs and attain their valued goals. (A method for quantifying congruence is presented by Stokols [1979, 1981]. See also Michelson, 1976, for an analysis of environmental congruence).
9. *Environment-induced deviations.* Alterations in the typical activity patterns or physical arrangement of a setting arising from changes in the

external or internal environment of the setting (e.g., abrupt geographical changes within or adjacent to the setting).

10. *Generic place dependence of occupants*. The degree to which occupants perceive themselves to be strongly associated with and dependent on a category of functionally similar places. See also *geographical place dependence of occupants*.
11. *Generic place specificity of occupants*. The degree to which the activities of people are associated with a category of functionally similar places on a regular and predictable basis. See also *geographical place specificity of occupants*.
12. *Geographical place dependence of occupants*. The degree to which occupants perceive themselves to be strongly associated with and dependent on a particular place. See also *place dependence* and *generic place dependence of occupants*.
13. *Geographical place specificity of occupants*. The degree to which the activities of people are associated with a particular place on a regular and predictable basis. See also *place specificity of occupants* and *generic place specificity of occupants*.
14. *Group*. Two or more individuals whose activities and goals are interdependent, and who are aware of their interdependence. See also the definitions of group presented by Cartwright and Zander (1968); Hare, Borgatta, and Bales (1965); McGrath (1964); and Shaw (1976).
15. *Group-oriented places (or settings)*. Places (or settings) whose predominant functions are geared toward people who know and interact with each other on a regular basis.
16. *Individual-oriented places (or settings)*. Places (or settings) whose physical and normative properties either exclude or discourage occupancy by more than one person at a time.
17. *Inert (or sporadic-activity) phase*. A stage in the life cycle of settings marked by the absence of occupants or by sporadic occupancy and activities.
18. *Irregularly occupied places*. Places characterized by sporadic occupancy and human activities. See also *nonsettings* and *nonpatterned-activity places*.
19. *Latent value of places*. The unrecognized capacity of places to accommodate the preferred goals and activities of prospective or current occupants.
20. *Life cycle of settings*. Processes associated with the establishment, maintenance, modification, and termination of organized settings. As conceptualized in this analysis, the life cycle of settings incorporates the following distinct stages: (1) *inert* (or *sporadic-activity*) *phase;* (2) *transitional-activity phase;* (3) *patterned-activity phase;* (4) *stability-maintenance phase;* (5) *deviation phase;* (6) *structural-transformation*

phase; (7) *crisis phase;* and (8) *termination phase*. See also Devereux's (1977) and Wicker's (1979a) discussions of the life cycle of behavior settings.

21. *Local groups*. Groups whose development coincides with the emergence of an organized, environmental setting. See also *migratory groups*.
22. *Manifest value of places*. The recognized (and sometimes actualized) capacity of places to support the preferred goals and activities of prospective or current occupants. See also *environmental congruence* and *potential congruence*.
23. *Migratory groups*. Preexisting groups that move into a new area and establish a setting there. See also *local groups*.
24. *Nonpatterned-activity places*. Areas characterized by the absence of occupants or by sporadic occupancy and association with human activities. See also *irregularly occupied places* and *nonsettings*.
25. *Nonsettings*. Nonpatterned-activity places that are either unoccupied or sporadically occupied by place-nonspecific people. Nonsettings are characterized by the absence of recurring patterns of behavior and the lack of a clear functional orientation. See also *irregularly occupied places, nonpatterned-activity places,* and *place specificity of occupants*.
26. *Occupant dependence of settings*. The degree to which a setting requires the presence of particular occupants, or a subset of occupants, for its continued existence.
27. *Occupant-induced deviations*. Alterations in the typical activity patterns or physical arrangement of a setting arising from the spontaneous and voluntary actions of setting members.
28. *Patterned-activity phase of settings*. A stage in the life cycle of settings marked by the establishment of stable, recurring patterns of activity and widely recognized place meanings (e.g., the functional orientation of the setting).
29. *Patterned-activity places*. Places in which recurring and predictable patterns of behavior occur. The predominant, functional orientation of such places can be classified as individual oriented, aggregate oriented, or group oriented. See also *settings*.
30. *Perceived social field of the physical environment*. The totality of functional, motivational, and evaluative meanings conveyed by the physical milieu to current or prospective occupants of a place. The specific meanings associated with a place can be described in terms of their content, complexity, clarity, heterogeneity, distortions, and contradictions. (Strategies for quantifying these dimensions are discussed in Stokols, 1981).
31. *Place*. A geographically and/or architecturally delimited area. Places in this analysis are categorized as unoccupied (or sporadically occupied) and regularly occupied. The latter category includes three types of places:

individual oriented, aggregate oriented, and group oriented, depending on the predominant functional orientation associated with the place.

32. *Place dependence*. The degree to which occupants perceive themselves to be strongly associated with and dependent on a particular place, or a category of functionally similar places. The perception of place dependence derives from a two-component process by which occupants assess the quality of their current place, and the relative quality of comparable alternative places. These assessments are influenced by factors such as the importance of occupants' goals, the kinds of resources available within an area, and occupants' awareness of and familiarity with relevant alternative places. See also *geographical place dependence of occupants* and *generic place dependence of occupants*.
33. *Place meanings*. Functional, motivational, and evaluative information and impressions associated with particular places. *Personal meanings* are those held by single individuals. Personal meanings become part of the perceived social field of an environment to the extent that they are held in common with other occupants (*common meanings*), and/or are shared through the interaction and communication among members of organized groups (*shared meanings*). See also the *perceived social field of the physical environment* and *social imageability*.
34. *Place options*. Geographical areas that are perceived by occupants as comparable to their present location and as realistic (accessible) alternatives to their current place. The perceived availability of place options is a crucial factor in determining occupants' assessments of place dependence. See also *place dependence*.
35. *Place specificity of occupants*. The degree to which the activities of people are associated with a particular place, or with a category of functionally similar places, on a regular and predictable basis. See also *geographical place specificity of occupants* and *generic place-specificity of occupants*.
36. *Potential congruence*. The level of goal facilitation perceived by the occupants of a place to be available within their best alternative setting. The best alternative setting can be either a transformed version of the existing setting or a different setting that has not yet been experienced or established.
37. *Regularly occupied places*. Places characterized by stable patterns of occupancy, human activity, and functional orientation. See also *patterned-activity places* and *settings*.
38. *Same-occupant places (or settings)*. Places or settings whose functions are performed by the same people on a regular basis. See also *variable-occupant places (or settings)*.
39. *Settings*. Patterned-activity places occupied by place-specific people. Settings are characterized by recurring patterns of behavior and by widely

recognized place meanings (e.g., functional orientation). The functional orientation of the physical milieu and the composition and organization of its occupants are used in this analysis to develop a taxonomy of settings. See also the analyses of behavior settings presented by Barker (1968), Barker and Associates (1978), and Wicker (1979b). See also *patterned-activity places*, *regularly occupied places*, and *place specificity of occupants*.

40. *Social imageability*. The capacity of a place to evoke vivid and collectively held social meanings among its occupants. Places acquire social imageability to the extent that they are regularly and predictably associated with patterns of individual and/or collective behavior. See also the *perceived social field of the physical environment*.
41. *Stability-maintenance phase of settings*. A stage in the life cycle of settings characterized by the smooth and predictable recurrence of organized activity patterns.
42. *Structural-transformation phase of settings*. A stage in the life cycle of settings marked by the occurrence of deviations that result in significant and enduring changes in the setting's activity structure and/or physical milieu. See also *deviations within settings* and *transformations within settings*.
43. *Termination phase of settings*. A stage within the life cycle of settings marked by the cessation of organized activity patterns within an area. See also *crisis events* and the *crisis phase of settings*.
44. *Transformational potential*. The motivation of occupants to modify the physical or social structure of their setting in accord with personal and collective preferences. The actual accomplishment of desired transformations depends not only on motivational factors but also on occupant resources (e.g., imagination, organization) and environmental circumstances (e.g., rigidity or flexibility of the environment).
45. *Transformations within settings*. A category of deviations within settings that result in significant and enduring alterations of the activity structure and/or physical milieu of the setting.
46. *Transitional-activity phase of settings*. A stage in the life cycle of settings marked by the preliminary occurrence of patterned activity within an area that is not yet associated with a clear, functional orientation.
47. *Transitional places*. Occupied areas characterized by preliminary patterns of activity but lacking the clarity of functional orientation and occupant organization associated with structured settings.
48. *Undefined-duration settings*. Settings that do not have a prescribed termination date. See also *defined-duration settings*.
49. *Unoccupied places*. Places that either preclude the possibility of occupation or are structured in ways that inhibit the development of sustained activity and, thereby, remain ambiguous in their functional meaning.

50. *Variable-occupant places (or settings).* Places or settings whose functions are performed by different people on a rotating basis.

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