

Temporal Aspects of Homes

A TRANSACTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

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There are many ways of studying homes, each focusing on a different aspect, such as physical qualities, satisfaction, use patterns, and phenomenological experiences. Our thesis is that, central to any of these aspects of homes, and therefore integral to the distinction between *house* and *home*, are the temporal qualities of linear and cyclical time and their subordinate qualities of salience, scale, pace, and rhythm. The goal of this chapter is to propose a general framework that describes these key temporal qualities in the context of a broader transactional orientation. The chapter has four major sections: (1) a description of the transactional world view and of the home as a transactional unity; (2) a discussion of the proposed temporal framework bolstered by examples from a variety of societies; (3) two case studies that demonstrate the application of the framework; and (4) potential research and practical implications of the model.

TRANSACTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The proposed framework is derived from a transactional perspective in which events are treated as holistic unities comprised of three

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major aspects: people/psychological processes; environmental properties; and temporal qualities (Altman & Rogoff, 1986). Two key assumptions in this perspective are that people and their environments are an integral and inseparable unit; they cannot be defined separately, and indeed are mutually defining. Second, temporal qualities are intrinsic to people–environment relationships, so that homes are conceived of as a dynamic confluence of people, places, and psychological processes.

The transactional view has been explored by philosophers (Dewey & Bentley, 1949; Pepper, 1942) and has been adopted by some psychologists, especially those in environmental psychology (see Altman & Rogoff, 1986; Barker, 1968; Ittelson, 1973; Proshansky, 1976; Wicker, 1979, 1986). Our conception of the home as a transactional unity is

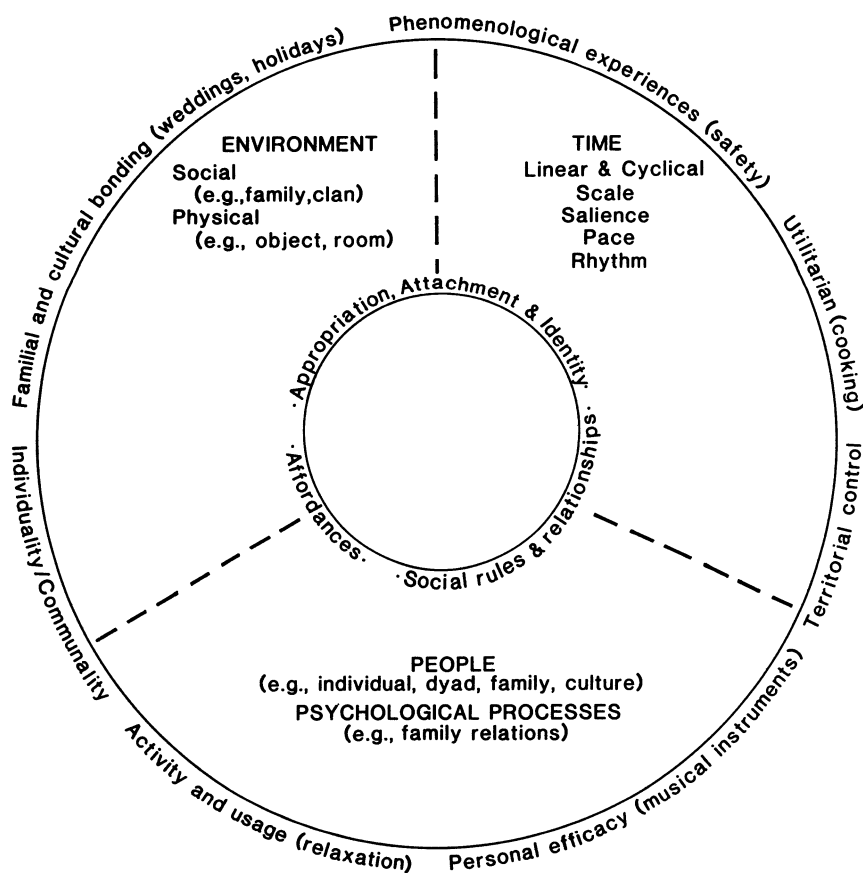


Figure 1. The home as a transactional unity.