A spatio-temporal interpretation of domesticity

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Abstract
This paper is interested in the ways in which the home, as a built form, responds to or even contradicts cultural/social characteristics. An understanding of how individuals and families establish relationships between themselves and their environment is considered important, given the increasingly divided, complex and differentiated experiences of contemporary life. We suggest that the understanding of the house as a complex structure, that is, a social, a spatial and a temporal entity, enriches our knowledge and understanding of the relationship between humans and their residential environments and strengthens our perception of the diversity and complexity of domestic life. The paper explores the range of factors involved in the residential environment (individual needs and routines, collective household activities, parents/children and family/visitors relationships) drawing attention to the inability of the quantitative method alone (study of large sample plans) to capture the increasing complexity of family life. Drawing on data from 80 houses in a rural area of Cyprus, this study argues that a methodology which combines “cross-cutting variables”, bringing together both humanistic and technical viewpoints through the incorporation of social concerns in spatial analysis, provides a more holistic approach to the interpretation and understanding of family life and its relation to the residential environment.

1. Introduction
Houses usually encode a wealth of social and symbolic information which is usually taken for granted by their occupants. However, as Hanson suggests (1998) “social phenomena are durable in that they leave traces of the material form of their existence in the way in which the pattern of domestic space is arranged, in the kinds of objects which are found in different locations in the home and in the distribution of activities and behavior which can be observed there over time”. Homes may reflect many differences between ethnic, cultural and social categories, including gender divisions between men and women, power relations between hosts and guests, generational differences between adults and children. The way these differences are found in domestic space may vary in different cultures.

Interpretation of domestic space is thus a much more complex issue than accounts based on house plans analysis or accounts based on purely social interpretations allow. There is an underlying problem surrounding research into the relationship between society and space. Whilst the social sciences tend to sometimes lack an understanding of the independent contribution of the built environment to the way in which communities change over time, the spatial sciences sometimes lack an understanding of the political social, and cultural dynamics underpinning spatial arrangements.

Most studies relative to domestic space in Cyprus are mostly social, very few are spatial. This paper draws extensively on these few studies, where one can detect the first attempts to explore and research ways of expression and incorporation of cultural characteristics in domestic space, utilising architectural methods and tools. Studies of the spatial configuration of dwellings which consider space as an integral part of social life, suggest that space is prominent in our society in often unexpected ways as a means of social and cultural recognition. The view that human societies are
spatial phenomena has been proposed and proven through analysed examples. Society is suggested to have a definite and recognizable spatial order in two senses: firstly, it arranges people spatially with a bigger or smaller level of integration and segregation, using principles of movement and human contact that may be dense or sparse within a social group or between groups. Secondly, it arranges the space itself, by means of buildings, boundaries, roads, reference points, zoning, so that the physical milieu of that society also takes on a definite pattern.

As Brychea stresses, "even though it is an undeniable, almost commonplace view that social antithesis are projected in space, the “from now and hereafter” cannot be underestimated, space itself does not only function as a mere projection of “social being” but has its own dynamic, forming everyday life or deterring specific conduct." 

Space configuration and people’s routine can therefore be decoded so that the social and symbolic information are retrieved directly from the study of how houses are organized and used. Such a spatial view may enrich our knowledge about the relation between house form and culture by drawing attention to previously unremarked features of domestic life.

This paper will attempt to explore in more detail the relation between domestic organization and the forms of social interface in traditional dwellings in the rural area of Cyprus. By taking the physical from and space configuration of the house as a focus, the more complex and interpretative sociological dimensions such as what is meant by ‘family’ and ‘household’ in any particular situation become an emergent aspect of the study. The analytic strategy is to examine databases of house plans to identify first any regularities in the way in which the space is configured, and then to see if any configurational invariances which hold across the sample are systematically related to the labels put on particular space, to describe or even to circumscribe their use. From this simple starting point, inferences can be made about the way domestic space supports family life and household organization.

More specifically, this study is concerned with the micro-use of space in the domestic environment attempting to relate household activities with the daily pattern of domestic routines. The aim is to capture and present the morphology of domestic experience throughout the day. Consequently, what is presented through a case study of 80 traditional houses in Cyprus, is the retrieval of spatial and temporal qualitative and quantitative information on the nature of domestic activities (collective, individual, fixed, flexible, institutional, scheduled and unscheduled) throughout a day and the social and spatial relationships between family members and between family and visitors. The paper presents findings of a recently conducted research and suggests the presence of “spatiotemporal genotypes” in traditional Cypriot houses (through spatiotemporal characteristics of institutional, collective and individual activities) which identify with three types of families found in contemporary Cyprus society. Analysis is carried out at two levels: a) the way families live, concerning who does what, with whom, how often, and where b) the spatial configuration of the house plans in relation to the activities observed, using quantitative methods of analysis. Data on the first level is obtained by means of observation techniques, questionnaires and some subsequent selected interviews in greater depth. By means of questionnaires, it is possible to identify which spaces are more (or less), used by inhabitants and by visitors, as well as those which are inaccessible to the latter. Data on the second level is obtained from the recording of domestic activities on house plans.

The understanding of the house as a complex structure, that is, a social, a spatial and a temporal entity, enriches our knowledge and understanding of the relationship between humans and their residential environments, strengthens our perception of the diversity and complexity of domestic life and possibly opens up new approaches to architectural design.
2. Culture and Built Form – theoretical framework

If the cultural geographer Yi-Fu Tuan is to be believed, culture is that which is not seen (“Seeing what is not there lies at the foundation of all human culture”). Such a definition raises an interesting paradox for the visualisation of past cultures. How do we see what is not there? How do we see culture. There are many issues in the presentation of culture. One is the definition of culture itself; the second issue is the understanding of how culture is transmitted. In this section we attempt to explore the ways in which dwellings, as built space, respond to and/or even contradict social/cultural characteristics.

According to Rapoport, without trying to define culture one can say that it is about a group of people who share a set of values, beliefs, a worldview and a symbol system that are learned and transmitted. These create a system of rules and habits which reflect ideals and create a life-style, guiding behaviour, roles and manners as well as built forms (Rapoport 1969; 1990).

“It can be suggested that “culture” is both too abstract and too global to be useful. Social expressions of culture, such as groups, family structures, institutions, social networks, status relations, and many others, often have settings associated with them or are reflected in the built environment. While it is virtually impossible to link culture to built form .... it is feasible to relate built form to family structure, clans or societies, institutions, sex roles, or status hierarchies.” (Rapoport 1969; 1990).

What distinguishes one environment from another is the nature of the rules embodied or encoded in it. These rules must themselves be identified with the formation and organization of space, time, meaning and communication. Then we are more concerned with the relationship among the elements and underlying rules than with the elements themselves (Rapoport, 1990). In reality, whether it is at the settlement or at the building scale, the man-made environment is formed by similar elements, like the house, the street, the cul-de-sac, or the room, the hall, the courtyard: but differs from one culture to another by how these elements are organized, and their meanings.

Kent also suggests that the use of space and architecture is specifically a reflection of the socio-political organization of a society (Kent 1984; 1990). Culture is seen through her work, as composed of integrated parts, subsystems or components such as the socio-political organization. These parts together articulate with behaviour and specifically the use of space, in such a way that behaviour can be viewed as a reflection of culture. Concomitantly, cultural material (a more encompassing term than material culture) such as architecture, is a reflection of behaviour and ultimately of culture.

Kent also developed a model for studying the relationship between culture and space use based on two premises: a) social complexity determines space organization and the built environment, particularly with regards to partition; b) when society becomes more socio-politically complex, its culture, social behaviour, space use and material and architectural culture, become more segmented (Kent 1984, 1990). According to the author, societies based on fragmented and differentiated cultures tend to organized segmented areas; in other words, they tend to promote architectural and urban structures functionally discrete.

Hillier and Hanson suggest that the use of space and in particular domestic space, is “a ‘sociogram’ not of a family but of something much more: of a social system” (Hillier and Hanson 1984). In 1984, Hillier and Hanson published The Social Logic of Space in which they outlined a syntactic theory for the organization of space in buildings and settlements. They argued that buildings, town and cities have particular spatial properties that translate into sociological rules which affect where activities are situated and how people relate to one another. Within this framework, the spatial configuration of a dwelling or a settlement is believed to present a fairly precise map of the economic, social, and
ideological relations of its intended inhabitants (Hanson, 1998: 13); in other words as Rapoport suggested, it presents the social manifestations of culture.

3. **Empirical studies of domestic architecture – methodological framework**

Through the study of a number of dwellings one may be able to observe similar social and spatial “ingredients”: the living room, the kitchen, the bedroom. However, mere visual inspection and comparison of broad geometric and locational aspects, cannot on their own help us to ascertain how the domestic form of a society differs or is similar to domestic forms of another society, or to suggest what the dimensions of variability within each society might be. It has often been suggested through a number of empirical studies, that although houses in different ethnic/cultural/social groups have the same spatial "ingredients", it is their spatial configuration which discloses ethnic/cultural/social identity: “the residence contains a lot more than a roof...related functions, even the most basic functions such as sleeping, eating, can be spaced in very different ways and demand areas with very different characteristics, according to the different cultural traditions and the variant environmental conditions...”

Such studies of samples of traditional houses have been continuing over the years taking as their starting point the approach of using a quantitative and statistical approach to search for regularities in a body of house plans that already exist in the historical record, in order to identify the way the houses are configured and to pinpoint the spatial characteristics of the locations of different household activities. The basic strategy of such an analysis is to search for invariants in the spatial pattern and integration values and then to consider the relation of labels to spaces. To the extent that space is systematically and consistently patterned across a sample of houses or settlements, these embody in their configuration the social intentions of their makers. When differences are strongly and consistently replicated then we can infer that the structural relations which are articulated are culturally significant.

A study of 184 Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot traditional houses by the author, utilising syntactic analysis of the rooms in each house, does shed light on these issues and demonstrates that spatial differences between societies are indeed associated with their cultural differences but also with the differences in terms of the form of their social solidarity. Within the whole sample there are clear differences in which functions are spatialised. Two distinct genotypical tendencies emerge: one centres on the highly integrating and shallow yard, little spatial differences among living spaces, which are segregated, and a more integrated exterior. The other centers on the highly integrating and shallow living room, strong spatial differences among living spaces and a more segregated exterior; living spaces are in this case more integrating while the yard though still very integrating becomes relatively deep in the complex. The former identifies with the Greek Cypriot subset while the latter identifies with the Turkish Cypriot subset. These strong trends across the sample are in themselves strong evidence of underlying spatial cultures, expressing themselves through the spatial form of the houses.

Results from a number of such studies over the years, indicate that “integration” is a powerful predictor for how “busy” or how “quite” a space will be (Hanson, 1998: 10). Spaces are usually connected together in ways that affect how integration is distributes throughout the structure, making some areas of a dwelling more accessible and/or visible than others. The sequencing of integration serves to regulate interactions among inhabitants, and spatially separate activities which might be deemed incompatible because of their mechanical properties (e.g. noisy/messy versus quiet/clean) and social context (e.g. individual versus communal, private versus public). For example, households that maintain sex-specific and mono-functional activity areas tend to segment and compartmentalize them
in space, thereby re-enforcing attitudes regarding sexual division of labor, individuality, and a need to keep various activities with incompatible mechanical properties ordered and separated. (Kent, 1986: 196-97). This often results in houses with many rooms that vary according to integration. In contrast, households where different activities are conducted by the same individuals tend to unify space (Kent, 1986: 204). Under these circumstances, households are usually far more tolerant of “lamping” activities with different mechanical properties together in the same spatial location (Kent, 1986: 204). As a result, the dwellings occupied for such households are often characterized by more open and accessible floor plans with integration values that are roughly equivalent. It therefore seems logical that how integration is distributed within a dwelling’s configuration becomes an important means of determining how culture is conveyed through architecture (Hanson, 1998:32).

However, an important limitation on studying the “labeling” of house plans and the values of integration for each room, which was a feature of the author’s previous study, is that a single space may have to adapt to accommodate several, often incompatible functions over the course of a working day. Interpretations of domestic space also need to take account of time as an aspect of space. An important piece of social information which may not be at all obvious from the layout of a house may be the difference between how it is occupied and used during normal social time and how the house is transformed to take account of the special or sacred times during which household rituals or family celebrations take place (Hanson 1998). As Hanson points out “non-labeled spaces may also be used for a number of activities throughout the course of a day. It is therefore argued that modes of labeling in the house interact with patterns of movement within it, co-presence and potential encounter; between family members and between family members and visitors. Interface between people during the day is related to the structure of domestic experience and introduces a temporal as well as a spatial dimension in the process of interpretation of the domestic experience”.

Furthermore, people’s homes are unlike the complex, non-residential buildings, in that the introduction of a researcher into the domestic setting immediately violates the privacy of the home and so behavior within the family is almost certain to alter to take account of their researcher-guest. In order to make a fuller interpretation of the house which includes social practices and invokes a temporal as well as a spatial dimension, it appears necessary to question residents closely about their everyday domestic routines and activities and what happens on special occasions.

It seems likely that in the future, studies of homes and houses will no longer be satisfied with identifying similarities in the spatial patterning of a set of houses in a particular region or cultural context. Increasingly, a configurational approach will reach out to related disciplines such as sociology, anthropology and psychology in addressing the social and personal interpretation of domestic space (Hanson 1998). New variables and consequently methods of analysis, are deemed necessary for the interpretation of contemporary domestic space: namely, domestic activities (collective as well as individual, fixed as well as spontaneous, regularly repeated as well as rarely happening) and the temporal dimension (the pattern of activities through space and time).

This paper utilizes such a spatio-temporal approach in an attempt to explore the relationship between contemporary Cypriot family’s activities and domestic space organization. Two methods of analysis, bringing together both qualitative and quantitative viewpoints are utilised in order to facilitate the retrieval of spatio-temporal information:

• field research method, namely observation-recording-decoding, through field observation, questionnaires and personal interviews. This approach, used in parallel to spatial analysis,
draws from ethnography and is based on field research within each dwelling (observation of family activities throughout a day, and the recording, decoding and interpretation of these observations). This method attempted to retrieve information about the family “routine”, the individual and collective daily patterns of the members of the families through the study of:

- the interaction between family members through the frequency of their possible gatherings in the dwelling during a working day,
- the distribution of roles and responsibilities and
- the “unexpected” or “special” activities of the family, which might interrupt the daily routine and possible interaction with visitors.

- spatial analysis of each dwelling independent of people’s beliefs and perceptions. This includes survey of each house plan, recording of interview and observation results on each plan (activities, spaces, and time bands) and spatial analysis. For each activity and respectively for each group of activities, the values of “integration” according to the value that was calculated for the area in which the specific activity was observed more often, are presented in relative graphs.

4. The Traditional Cypriot Dwelling today

4.1. Summary of analysis results – observation, questionnaires, spatial analysis

Ethnographic material on the rural life of Cyprus suggests that the household and the family has always formed the main social and functional unit of Cypriot society (Markides, 1978), (Loizos, 1975). The agricultural economies of the villages led to similar needs and a similar pattern of rural life. Recent changes observed in the Cypriot family, which remains the main operating unit of Cypriot society to a greater extent than in other countries, are significant. Many of these changes derive from economical and social transformations (such as the possibility of women to be part of the workforce, lack of time for adequate contact and meetings among family members and increased difficulty for parents to be present at home with the children).

Despite the changes, the traditional dwelling remains an area of safety, protection and privacy as well as an area where social life takes place. Interestingly, labelling as well as activities taking place in the house are still described as “informal” where the daily life of the family takes place and “formal” where guests are usually received.

Collective activities are in general the most “integrated” activities for most part of the day. Interaction among family members as well as among family members and guests, are “unifying”. Activities directly linked to the value of hospitality, simultaneously underline the social position and the identity of the family. “Formal”, typical and usually scheduled, guest hospitality activities deter the unpredictable and spontaneous, with the aim of maintaining and reproducing the rules of decency and hospitality.

The “formal” living room acts as the main area of reception of guests that do not usually belong to the close relative environment. The observation that this area has the most positive spatial characteristics (easily accessible, incorporated and unifying) is interesting, nevertheless it is sparsely used and mainly for social hosting activities. It controls their transit to the rest of the dwelling areas. For the family members and the individuals this space allows access to the more private areas, it is mainly used as a transit area towards the rest of the areas of the house. It perhaps maintains and refers to the characteristics of the “best” room of the traditional residences of the previous century, suggesting the social status and values of the family while at the same time maintaining the values of hospitality, which have always been important social practices for the Cypriot family.
Objects of relative value are displayed in the area of the “formal” sitting room, family and ancestor photographs, religious icons but also national heroes’ photos. It perhaps operates as a reminder and reaffirmation mechanism of the identity and values of the traditional family (especially in the dwellings that are today occupied by refugee families) but also perhaps as a resistance mechanism to the pressure towards modernisation of the traditional way of life.

Scheduled “ritualistic” activities during most of the big religious festivites are also an important part of every family in rural areas. They mainly focus on the meal “ritual” (Christmas dinner, Easter feast) and they are hosted in the “official” dining room of the dwellingxi. This area also hosts more rare, typical and official dinners (Sunday meals etc). The particular activities aim at maintaining and reproducing important social values and institutions for each family but also the indication of the “proper” family image.

We could perhaps suggest with caution, that the guests encounter the “proper”, “accepted” reality of the family, according to De Certeauxii. An interesting parallel with the conduct of people in the neighbourhood environment, as the scholar describes this, is created. A “proper” conduct for the reaffirmation of individual identity, through the collective environment of the neighbourhood where “the residents of the houses are simultaneously actors in the family scene and viewers-entangled in their space, but despite this distanced from it”xiii.

Contrary to the “formal” hospitality activities of the traditional family, we simultaneously observe a more “informal” aspect of everyday life. Essentially different and most of the time non-scheduled activities (individual, group and in some cases private activities) are hosted during the day in the area of the “informal” sitting room, displaying perhaps a more familiar, flexible and casual relationship of space and user. The time variant depiction of activities in this area from the various members of the family, indicates the time and spatial coexistence of activities of a different nature, but at the same time the transient character of this area.

The “informal” living room is an area with positive structural characteristics, and quite “integrated”, even if it is not so easily accessible for a visitor from the entrance of the residence. This perhaps indicates the family’s need for privacy, contrary to the more “social” and “extrovert” nature of the “formal” living room. It controls the access to the rest of the areas of the dwellings, which are mainly used by members of the family (bedrooms, kitchen). Members of the nuclear family mainly use it during the whole day, with the exception of the very close relatives of the extended family, such as the grandfather and grandmother and the female neighbours, with whom the hostess maintains very close relationships. The members of the extended family and very close friends encounter the family’s everyday life, they participate in the “real”, unofficial life of the family.

Activities of such a nature, unofficial and more frequent, demand a spatial dimension and cannot function at a distance. They encourage individuality and the creation of unexpected, chance meetings and events through movement and spatial proximity. We can describe such activities as “flexible” and “spatial”.

Contrary to the characteristics of the “informal” sitting room, the area of the “informal” dining room seems to the used to a great extent from all members of the family, in specific (perhaps scheduled) hours of the day, basically hosting the same activity: the family meal. The spatial characteristics of the “informal” dining room present a space that is “removed” and “segregated”, which perhaps suggests an effort to maintain the cohesion and privacy of the family, through the traditionally “ritualistic” meal activity. The outcome of the questionnaires and observations confirm and enhance this suggestion. The biggest percentage of the sample states that they have a meal with the rest of the family at least
once a day. Therefore this is a “regular” activity both spatially and temporally, that aims to maintain and reproduce its current form.

A detailed study of the results determines the particular “informal” areasxiv as the main areas of possible gathering of the members of the traditional Cypriot family, albeit under different circumstances in every case (unscheduled and flexible in the case of the “informal” sitting room, scheduled and regular in the case of the “informal” dining room). The multiplication of spaces allows for the constant maintenance of the hospitality and decency rules, while allowing the family to relax in the house when there are no guests. These double spaces can therefore be called formal and informal respectively xv.

At the same time throughout the sample, we can observe individual activities being quite prominent throughout the day, flexible in relation to space and time, pointing to the need for autonomy and individual daily schedules.

The study of the use of space in the domestic environment in relation to household activities and the daily pattern of domestic routines, also reveals three distinct spatio-temporal “genotypes” in the traditional houses of Cyprus which seem to identify with three types of families found in contemporary Cyprus society.

In the first case, collective activities are carried out in the most “integrated” spaces of the dwellings and mostly include family gatherings in the mornings and entertainment of guests in the evenings. Interestingly enough, family collective activities are flexible in relation to space and time and mostly take place in what the residences call the “informal” areas of their house. On the contrary, activities involving guests are quite fixed in time and space and usually take place in what the residents call “formal spaces” of the house. Individual activities are observed throughout the day and are quite flexible in space and time. This sample identifies with a higher socio-economic level of families of “double career”.

In the second case, individual activities are the most “integrated” ones and are flexible both in space and time. Collective activities mainly take place in mornings or evenings. This sample identifies with what sociological studies have recently named semi-traditional family model.

In the third case, the “integrated” activities of family members are those of the family meals, placed deep in the house, indicating a fixed activity both in space and time. Individual activities happen unexpectedly, informally encouraging unanticipated social interactions through movement and spatial proximity. This sample identifies with the traditional family model of a lower socio-economic level.

5. From space to society
The previous part provided an analysis of relatively simple house plans, which showed that superficially similar domestic space arrangements can hide distinctive lifestyles, which seem to relate to different forms of household organization and community life. The study of a sample of traditional houses in Cyprus used both a quantitative/statistical and a qualitative analysis to uncover ‘genotypical’ differences in houses, which apparently have similar floor plans. Thus, a careful exploration of the relative integration and segregation of different household activities in different times of the day, demonstrates that cultural ideas may be objectively present in artifacts as much as they are subjectively present in minds.

The evolution of family life during the period understudy, with the observed relationships between husband and life, adults and children, and household members and visitors to the home, seems to provide suggestive parallels to the physical layouts which have been observed in the traditional Cypriot domestic space. If houses are in any sense cultural products, it seems reasonable to place the
spatial configurations which are taking place in traditional Cypriot houses today in the context of the respective social changes which are shaping concepts of family life and community relations.

As Hanson points out we may suggest that “if the layout of space is patterned so as to embody and structure changing social and cultural relationships, it can only do so according to laws of space itself. In real space-time, as opposed to the multi-dimensional space of the mind, mathematics or a computer, things can be put next to one another or they can be placed one inside another. Activities and objects can be manifested to one another or they can be hidden away. The most complex configurational structures are built out of these elementary spatial gestures” (Hanson, 1998).

However, it would not be wise to expect all aspects of society to imprint themselves directly on space in a simple ‘cause and effect’ relationship. “Human spatial behavior reflects the working of rather fewer social forces than there are cultural phenomena to be accounted for. Such forces include differentiating individuals or groups with different statuses, roles or categories, and generating and controlling the possibility of encounter and avoidance among them. Houses are sensitive to social relations only in so far as they construct and constrain interfaces between different kinds of inhabitants, and different categories of visitor. It is these spatial potentials, which are used to make a culturally intelligible pattern of space within the domestic interior” (Hanson, 1998).

We should acknowledge that the pattern itself is usually capable of more than one interpretation. The simplest of space configuration can support complex, many-layered and evolving meanings, which can be assigned and reinterpreted by different individuals and groups. Ordinary people’s homes tend to be much more varied and represent a complex expression of the social and individual world of the inhabitants. Homes may reflect many differences between cultural categories, including gender divisions between men and women, power relations between hosts and guests and generational differences between adults and children. These differences may also vary from culture to culture.

It does seem obvious that studies of dwellings can no longer be satisfied with identifying similarities in the spatial patterning of a set of houses in a particular region or cultural context. Configurational approaches need to reach out to related disciplines such as sociology, anthropology and psychology in addressing the social and personal interpretation of domestic space. Field studies such as the one presented, confirm that in this kind of analysis needs to take account of both the qualitative and the quantitative aspects of dwellings in interpreting architectural plans and attributing social meaning to syntactic data. It once more becomes apparent that the concept of domesticity is a complex, multi-dimensional one and as such needs to be approached with an interdisciplinary intent.

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What does the term “configuration” tell us? According to Hanson (1998), spatial relations exist where there is any type of link between two spaces. Configuration exists when the relations that exist between two spaces are changed according to how we relate each to a third. Configurational descriptions, therefore, deal with the way in which a system of spaces is related together to form a pattern, rather than the more localized properties of any particular space.

A domestic environment as well as buildings in general, accommodate encounter by providing spaces for people (inhabitants and visitors) to occupy and meet. What is interesting at this point is the nature of the meeting or occupancy; meetings within the house can be scheduled (like a formal dinner, a party) or unscheduled and generated by the space itself (play, talk). Co-presence varies throughout the course of a day within a house and is influenced by the daily pattern of domestic routines and activities in which people engage.

As Peponis characteristically states, this interest leads us to the formulation of theories on the principles that govern the construction of form, but also on the way the properties of form affect its utilization (Peponis 1997, p. 15).

Integration is a normalized (inverse) measure of the mean shortest path from one point to all other points in a building.

Studies concerning the family and thus the concept of residency, are of particular importance for Cyprus, because beyond the usual factors that more or less affect family and thus residency in all countries, in Cyprus changes are occurring that have to do with separate events and particularities, both in the urban and the traditional environment—such as the consequences of the 1974 invasion, the abrupt dislocation and urbanisation of thousands of Cypriots, the hiring of foreign workers and of house assistants in the residences in particular, the effects of mass media, the reduction of schools but also of agricultural chores in rural areas, as well as the rapid increase of tourism and consequently the intense presence of tourists (local and foreigners) in traditional settlements.

The differentiation that is observed in the kind of items that are displayed in the “official” sitting room in relation to the socioeconomic level of the residents is interesting. Valuable objects which display their owner’s social status are more often found in residences of a higher socioeconomic status, while objects of photographs related to national heroes or family ancestors, in residences of a lower socioeconomic level.

We should note that this area and its naming is usually found in areas of a higher socioeconomic level and at a lesser degree in the residences of lower socioeconomic levels.

We should repeat at this point that the particular “spaces” in this thesis are not defined by physical boundaries but “mental” boundaries, that are created by furniture and the utilisation of the “spaces” based on the activities observed in them.


