

PLANNING, DESIGN AND BLACK COMMUNITY STYLE: THE PROBLEM OF OCCASION-ADEQUATE SPACE

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Introduction

While many disagree on the exact nature of black community life, there is wide agreement that black sensibilities and community life particularly at working class levels and below, differ significantly from those of most other racial and ethnically distinguishable groups in the United States. Much has been made of this point for political purposes, but there has also been some recent thought, largely stimulated by urban-ethnographic studies, (1) that such differences may have implications for the miniscule as well as large scale aspects of environmental design for black people.

I propose here to explore one distinctive feature of black community life which may ultimately be suggestive of ways in which the character of such communities can be taken into account in the design directives of city planners, architectural programmers, and others actually or potentially associated with the construction of black peoples' built environment (2).

The general need for studies which inter-relate the social and physical environments from the perspective of potential application has been recognized (3). The discussion of that connection has become enormously popular in recent years, but has mainly been the prerogative of those who have the prospects and can afford to buy the time and talent to build to suit their "life styles." For the poor there was until recently a continuing and increasingly radical disjunction between the buyer (often the Federal government), the builder, (architects and developers) and the users (the poor themselves). The corresponding increase in social distance was accompanied by a dramatic incongruence between the values and expectations of those buying, building and using.

In relation to black people in particular there has been occasional casual, startled, and even angry recognition of those value differences and their implications for design. As the recognition of these facts has increased so have calls for action. Joseph Black's comments represent a response to the particular needs of black people.

Very little documentation exists on the character of the black community as a basis for planning. . . . Nobody has carefully

analyzed the attitudes of black men concerning open space--analyzing, for example, how streets of the ghetto serve as living rooms of the community. Design formulas created in graphics studios and computer studios will help little to stimulate social interaction, economic integration, and political progress unless one adds the ingredients of intuition and respect for the life style and requirements of people from different cultural backgrounds.(4)

The new recognition is important, but the difficulties of effectively acting on such recommendations resides in the fact that design information is not grounded in any detailed theory of human association. While there has been a great deal of folkloristic sociological pronouncement by some architects speaking ex cathedra as master form givers, their notions remain untested, untestable, and unrelated to any experience other than that of the architect (5).

There is a well established heritage in architecture which supports this aesthetically based sociology and psychologizing. While there once may have been an assumable congruence between the architect or planner and his client, the interpenetration of neither desired images in built forms nor images of the living conducted in and around them can be assumed between today's user and the designer.

The following discussion, then, is the beginning of a broader conceptual and research program, taking the problem posed by Black, to pull the insights of sociology and the issues of design theory and practice into some form of alliance. Drawing from arguments in the symbolic interactionist literature in sociology (6), case examples from recent urban ethnographies, and generalizations from my own field experience (7), I want to develop a way of looking at mundane urban life to render certain social-organizational patterns problematic in a way potentially useful to design researchers and, ultimately, practitioners and planners. Much of what I'll discuss can be and has been dealt with in ordinary prose by others including architects. It is my belief, however, that a fine conceptual net which encompasses a large reality relevant to design is better for practice than ad hoc observation.

More specifically, the discussion is intended to guide the architect's attention to social phenomena potentially relevant to programming; to help develop programming through systematic attention to certain elements of social organization of actual and potential users of the built environment. Programming is the intersection of social studies and design at which useful results are likely to appear, but the variety of research findings, conceptual schema, etc., which are available in social studies must be approached primarily as aids to problem perception rather than as pieces for the construction of a theoretical structure.

The intent of this paper, then, is practical, to help programmers see, not to have designers take--chameleon-like--the shape of the client or user in their solutions. While proposing a way to look I will say little here about what to do with what is seen. The latter is most important, of course, but the first item on the agenda is refocusing programming (8). In that connection, I would like briefly to discuss some problems on the agenda of the burgeoning field of environment and behavior studies.

The field is, I believe, plagued at present with the twin tyrannies of premature precision in measurement and premature attempts to establish point-for-point articulation between the physical and the social-behavioral. In the former instance there seems to be in this young field an overweening concern with verification. This is most peculiar. Since our central subject matter is interstitial to some inexact sciences and changing practice, one would think that the "logic" of discovery would count for more at this early stage than the logic of verification. Perhaps one explanation for this emphasis is some felt need on the part of investigators interstitial to established disciplines and practices to defend themselves against the fad-like character of current "environmental" enthusiasms. And, while the concern may also be to weed out rank speculation early in the history of the developing field, it would appear certain that "a loose speculative approach to a fundamental field is better than a rigorous blindness to it" (9). We stand in danger of winding up "unscientific" only if we insist prematurely upon applying exact measures, disciplinary conventions and canons of evidence to inexact problems. We're really in no hurry, and we won't be saving science or society from any real or imagined barbarians, even if we rush!

The second tyranny involves our peculiar problem of having to map, simultaneously, into social and physical reality. Design research must develop an integrated set of concepts

which bridge concerns of the physical and the social. It is inadequate simply to juxtapose words from both areas of investigation in the hope that they will achieve some meaning peculiar to design. The area label "Environmental Psychology" is often misused in this fashion. For the generation of usable research findings the task is deeper than that.

When an architect speaks of walls he speaks of structure, mass, form, texture, etc., or materials such as brick, concrete, steel, and the like. After dealing with certain stress features of the materials and the wall, his aesthetic concerns may come into play. To a sociologist, any interest in walls is likely to concern what activities and people they include, exclude, represent, and so forth. Not that the architect isn't similarly concerned, but his interests ordinarily do not take the discipline-based focus of understanding how the walls of a home, asylum, or an office tie persons, roles, statuses, together in a relatively coherent social organization.

Many will, of course, argue that a good architect does do the latter and that that analysis is reflected in any good program, if not in a sociological tract. This is arguable, but the central issue here is that the simple summary concept "wall" can mean very different things to the sociologist and the architect. The nouns (popular concepts) of ordinary language can route the thinking of two competent speakers of that language in opposite directions determined by the context to which they attach their meaning.

A community of design researchers needs an integrated set of concepts and conventions which point to and describe a reality of peculiar interest to it. Concepts like Robert Sommer's "personal space" or Roger Barker's "behavior setting" are compelling to design researchers and designers not simply because, as concepts, they bridge social and physical concerns by including a physical and human component in them, but because they have described, through research, a portion of the phenomenal world of potential use to the architect, and they also provide tools for the conduct of research in greater depth.

"Ecological psychology," (10) for example, had to await development of a set of highly articulated and competitive orientations to psychological man before it could grow, as it were, in the cracks between them. But our problem is more severe in that the "field" stands squarely in the midst of traditional concerns with practice on the part of design professionals cum researchers, researchers now excited with the possibilities of application, and researchers who come from differently

focused, if not competing, behavioral studies. The problem of developing bridging concepts is compounded by this fact.

One task which must be undertaken, then, is the vigorous exploration of theories and concepts extant in social and behavioral studies and the selection from among them of what appears promising for productive application to problems of the built environment. There is, I believe, a tremendous amount there which will prove to be irrelevant to those concerns. As I have indicated, although my interest is ultimately practical, the orientation of the discussion which follows is toward a comprehensive view of certain social activities--social occasions--distinctively effected and bounded in physical space. "Social occasions" is not exactly a bridging concept in itself, but points to elements of social organization based in and in large measure dependent on the physical. It deals with acts which bring gatherings together in spatial situations. This article explores that connection. Still to be undertaken is the exploration of possible ways in which designed physical arrangements might or might not accommodate the social-occasional style of varied people. The people toward whom this discussion is practically aimed are the black poor in urban communities and neighborhoods. They are taken here to be stylistically distinctive in the ways in which they occupy and use the spaces they inherit or that are built for their occupancy.

Social Occasions

Human social existence is, among other things, about the purposeful, periodic and, usually, regular coming together of people for the satisfaction of various individual and social ends. Such gatherings are the subject matter of disciplined attempts to understand the nature of orderly human existence. The sociology of Erving Goffman constitutes an approach to such gatherings which has great potential utility for clarifying social issues related to the built environment, its planning and design.

Casually in Encounters and with more precise detail later in Behavior in Public Places, Goffman develops the concept of "social occasion." Recognizing, I suspect, the interpretive potential of the concept, he goes beyond roughly equating it with his "focused gatherings" and "situated activity systems" as he had done in the earlier work and discovers for it a relatively clear definition:

When persons come into each other's immediate presence they tend to do so as participants of what I shall call a social occasion. This is a wider social affair, undertaking, or event, bounded in regard to place and

time and typically facilitated by fixed equipment; a social occasion provides the structuring social context in which many situations and their gatherings are likely to form, dissolve, and re-form, while a pattern of conduct tends to be recognized as the appropriate and (often) official or intended one--'standing behavior pattern,' to use Barker's term. Examples of social occasions are a social party, a workday in an office, a picnic, or a night at the opera (11).

Since many in design research are familiar with Barker's concept of "behavior setting," it may be efficient to clarify Goffman's concept by contrast. Briefly, "situation" in the above definition is the "full spatial environment anywhere within which an entering person becomes a member of the gathering that is (or does become) present" (12). "Situation" is, then, generally equivalent to Barker's "milieu" containing when relevant, for example, the fixed equipment facilitating the occasion. The consistent relationship between a type of conduct and a situation is what Barker calls a "standing behavior pattern" (13). But social occasions differ from behavior settings in that inter-subjective meaning among the participants is critical to the former and tangential to the latter (14). The meaning of the inter-action in ongoing occasions is crucial to participants (and to observers). To comprehend the action one must know "what's going on" in the participants' terms.

This latter difference between the two concepts is further demonstrated in Goffman's notion of "social order" upon which the concept of social occasion is predicated. A social order is

the consequence of any set of moral norms that regulates the way in which persons pursue objectives. The set of norms does not specify the objectives the participants are to seek, nor the pattern formed by and through the coordination or integration of these ends, but merely the modes of seeking them. (15)

Barker, in his work by contrast, is not concerned with moral norms regulating the legitimate modes of seeking objectives but with the consequences of consistently located assemblies of "molar" behavior and milieu forming an integrated whole in time and space (16).

Social occasions are, then, like behavior settings specifically located in time and space, but, whereas the properly social character of symbolic communication defines occasions, it is an epiphenomenal feature of behavior settings.

Goffman's primary concern is with the regulated

content of social occasions; the interactive dynamics of what he calls "face work" and the "situational properties" (17) of occasions as ongoing process. He is concerned with the kind of regulation which "governs a person's handling of himself and others during, and by virtue of, his immediate physical presence among them. . . ." (18) But there are at least two ways in which the presence to each other of gathered people can be regulated, and, in adapting and extending Goffman's productive concept, I will want to concentrate on one: First, there are rules which govern the interactive content of occasions, that is, how the rules of a social order instruct the people co-present in an occasion to be with each other once they are gathered. These rules are about interpersonal detail and style of communication among those at church, a party, a funeral, at work, etc. Secondly, but prior in the timing of occasions, there is a related set of regulations governing the forming up of the people and situations in which such interaction takes place, rules, in other words, which govern the construction of the "arena" or "shell"--both social and physical--of social occasions.

Aside from the face-to-face aspects of orderly co-presence in social occasions, then, there is the additional dynamic of bringing about, locating and completing them in time and space. Depending on the occasion, action on behalf of these regulations may or may not be the province of single persons, but they are, in any case, always analytically separable as acts. In one case a formal meeting may be called by a secretary, managed by a chairman, controlled by a sergeant-at-arms (the case of some union meetings, for example), in another the host of a social party may be assumed responsible for all these forming up tasks.

What is terribly interesting to me in this is the possibility of applying an understanding of acts effecting the emergence of social occasions--occasioning acts--to the problem of analyzing and understanding the users of various spaces and places for which plans and design programs must be developed. My interest therefore, is in the ways in which social occasions are caused to emerge, are located and defined by the various individual and group members of organizations, neighborhoods, homes, offices, and the like; how, again, the "shell" of social occasion structure is established in time and space. Answers to these questions asked of various users of the built environment will, I believe, carry important information for the construction of the physical "shell" within which their social-occasional life can best be accommodated.

Occasioning Acts

A preliminary and extremely suggestive effort to develop a typology of social occasion-effecting acts has been conducted by Howard Boughey. Indeed, it is his work which has, I believe, extended Goffman's in such a way as to make it particularly relevant to problems of social analysis for design. Boughey's recent work is in fact the result of his earlier attempts to make social and sociological sense of architect-designed spaces and the intentions of architects to affect behavior in them (19).

In "Time, Space, Occasion: An Analytic Scheme for the Study of Timing and Spacing Acts," he inquires after those acts which render spaces "occasion-adequate." He posits

One way to open our eyes to the concrete realities of time and space as they are construed by participants in social interaction is to ask the question, how do occasions of social interaction get occasioned, that is, what is the work of participants necessary and sufficient to establish and maintain an occasion as what it is in time and space?(20)

He presents two sets of acts which create what he calls the Elements of Occasion-Adequate Space and Occasion-Adequate Time. For purposes of this discussion I will consult only the former.

Boughey has extracted from many examples of spacing acts a categorical scheme of act types which in effect construct the socio-spatial arrangements of whole social occasions. Space limitations, unfortunately, will not permit a detailed or extended discussion of the scheme as presented here nor in my application of some of its elements to patterns of occasioning the black urban poor. But it is necessary and instructive, nonetheless, to reproduce the types here in outline. I have done so below, retaining, where possible in brief form, Boughey's explanatory terms (21).

Elements of Occasion-Adequate Space

1. Acts of SPATIAL DESIGNATION:(naming, labelling and locating the place at which the occasion shall occur). Designation is that process which ends in the establishment for participants in a social occasion of a 'where' for that occasion to take place. The meaning of that 'where' for participants may be inherent in the spatially designated locale or in the name given an occasion in the designatory act. Such acts may perform any or all of the following functions:

a) Location: Mapping an occasion into literal spatial reality.

b) Inclusion: Enclosing all relevant participants in an occasion within a system of adequately shared meanings as to the relationship between its name or label and the physical place.

c) Intimation: Instructing occasion participants (and sometimes those specifically excluded) as to the nature of the intended occasion.

d) Binding: "Synonymizing" locale and occasion. "Inhering" occasion features in its spatial designation and vice versa.

2. Acts of SPATIAL CONVENIENCE: (taking a route; 'arriving' and 'entering': gathering; indicating and acknowledging 'presence'; the establishment of a 'here', and the converse of gathering, dispersal). All acts adding up at some point to the convening of occasion participants. They may perform any or all of the following functions:

a) Gathering participants physically into the spatial grouping required for the activities of the occasion.

b) Identifying boundaries of co-presence for the course of the occasion.

c) Spatial positioning of each participant to include or exclude him from occasional interaction at any moment.

d) Establishing mode of occasion co-presence. Degree of formality. Degree of intimacy.

e) Establishing mode of individual presence. Appropriate mode of individual participation. Legitimacy of individual presence. Requiredness of individual presence.

f) Dispersing acts reverse the occasional process

3. Acts of SPATIAL PROVENIENCE: (22) ('hosting' and 'guesting'; asserting jurisdiction; controlling access; maintaining boundaries; the establishment of 'whose place'). The occasion-space, having been made the possible site for the occasion by adequate designation and further constituted as the appropriate interaction-space by convening acts, acts of provenience assert control, jurisdiction and territorial domination over the occasion-space. These may perform any or all of the following functions:

a) Legitimizing the boundaries of the occasion-space.

b) Attaching specific rules of behavior to the space.

c) Protecting the identity of the occasion-space against possible incursions over the course of the occasion.

Boughey discusses a final residual category of acts he calls "spatial interaction." I shall not include it here since it deals with the

regulated content of social occasions, "('face work'; using personal space; appropriate moving and self-placement; space rituals)," which take place after an occasion-space has been made adequate through naming, locating, convening and provingenue.

Spaces are, then, made occasion-adequate by bringing the site into occasion-possibility through designation, rendering it occasion-appropriate through convenience, and the participants and activities dominative over the site throughout the duration of the occasion. In lieu of proliferating examples of each act at this point, I will procede to a discussion of some examples of occasioning in some black urban poor settings. The reader should refer to Boughey's fuller exemplary discussion of his scheme on both timing and spacing acts (23).

It must suffice here to point out that he does not suggest that occasioning acts are exclusively the performance of individuals or groups at the time of an occasion. "Employees only!", "Board Room - Keep Out!", "Dining room," and other signs for public instruction and direction he takes as acts as he does generally designatory symbolic objects and statements "marking" the spatial arena appropriate for certain occasions. But these acts are operative in real time and language ("back to work!") and roles (chairman, host, sergeant, maitre d'hotel) are equally the province of occasioning acts. These latter constitute the primary focus of this paper.

Occasioning: Distinctive Forms of the Urban Poor

Since I propose to apply some of the ideas developed thus far to an understanding of the spatial behavior of poor people and poor black people in particular, a few words are in order about race and poverty. First, while I am taking race to be important for the topic under discussion, race, except as an historically determined canalizer of experience, is unimportant. It should be clear at the outset that I am not suggesting anything as stupid as genetically determined relations between social and spatial variables. Secondly, poverty is evil. All social systems predicated on its continued existence among a distinguishable group or stratum must be destroyed.

While one must neither celebrate the "culture of poverty" nor plan or design "low cost" anything on the assumption of its continued presence, neither, however, should it be assumed that all modes of life among the poor and correlative to their poverty need be destroyed with its elimination. I believe some poor people live better lives than their more affluent brothers, but it is a celebration of

man, not poverty, to acknowledge his genius at humane survival in the face of it.

Typically, occasions may vary along a number of dimensions, among them diffuseness, seriousness, regularity, hosted, etc. But there are more basic distinctions to be made among types of occasioning. One orientation is represented in the following autobiographical observation by René DuBose:

Recently, during a discussion by a small group about creating parks in New York City, one of the representatives of the black community said, 'That's not what we want; what we want is a stage.' I didn't understand what he meant until the next day, when I realized that what he means by stage is an environment where he can act his own life, according to his own wishes. That obviously differs enormously from one person to the other, from black to white, and from man to woman. It immediately imposes the need for introducing a diversity of stages of environment in any community that is to be successful.

As a young boy, I was raised in the industrial suburbs of Paris. The great difference between growing up there and growing up in New York City or any other large American city is that when I lived in that Paris suburb I could, within a few minutes, walk to ten, twenty, thirty, forty different environments, in which I could act out the different aspects of my life. There were public squares where everybody goes to gossip and engage in small, very human interchanges of life; then there were romantic spots along the river where maids and children and lovers could get together when the weather permitted. There were fashionable parks where people could go and play some other aspect of their life, and then there were those extraordinary parks near the university where people liked to engage in stimulating, challenging talk. In other words, there were a multiplicity of environments where one could act out the different aspects of one's potentiality. Each person could select his stage. That's what that fellow had in mind, I believe, when he said, 'What we need is a stage,'--a kind of environment suitable for the act that you want to make of your life.

That certainly introduces immense complexity into planning a city, but I think we exaggerate those complexities. It looks difficult to create because it has been so foreign to Americans, but the plain fact is that's the way it is all over the rest of the world, so I don't see why it couldn't be done here. I want to emphasize that it's only through diversity of environment that

true freedom can exist, and if there is no place where you can act your freedom, there is no freedom. (24)

This is an important statement in its delicate connection of such social-occasional activities as play, display, conversation and romance with concrete physical place and in DuBose's recognition that such a relationship is deeply associated with as elusive a thing as human freedom itself. His admonition to American city planners is equally important. But let's look more closely, albeit out of context, at what he has made of the black community representative's use of the dramaturgic analogy in calling for a "stage."

Dubose's image of an urban round of occasions and their locations is interesting in that the picture he paints is of a highly differentiated urban environment within which a varied set of social activities takes place, each corresponding to relatively fixed locales. No doubt, these river banks, parks and squares were not specifically designed and built to contain or conform to the subtly different social forms taking place in them. In all probability the activities became locale-fixed as an organic result of that great city's traditions. The image upon which DuBose is operating is based on his experiences within that tradition, and, unlike others who may more properly be called planners or designers, he has made a useful observation from his own life experiences generalizable to others with unlike experiences.

But I suspect--not having been there, I do not know--that the black man was likely to have had something different in mind in speaking of a stage. I do not intend to hinge this discussion on the likelihood that he did, but to point up with this example a different relationship between locale and social-occasion than is commonly imagined, when thought of at all: in contrast to the compelling image DuBose presents, a stage can also be seen as a single space or place in which a variety of actors can achieve certain freedoms by acting out many different aspects of their individual and collective lives.

Put more generally and technically, this discussion can be based in two related views of occasion-adequate spaces taken to be characteristic of the urban poor in general and, stylistically speaking, of the black urban poor in particular. In this case occasion-adequate space can be seen as 1) single spaces rendered adequate almost exclusively by the details of a social order regulating the character and emergence of occasions in those particular spaces over time. Such (interchangeable) spaces house now display, now play, now

assignments, now casual conversation or group argument, etc., with all such changes in its use subject to a regulatory order which stresses, not the serial shift to occasion-specific spaces, but redefinition (re-designation, re-convening, re-provening) of that space for a new occasion through occasioning acts.

Correlatively, 2) a single group can, through regulated occasioning acts, render various locales occasion-adequate for varied purposes. Seen either way, occasion-adequate spaces are, in this conception, much more a sociological matter of mutuality in the comprehension of group-regulated occasioning acts in time than they are of social occasions being attached to fixed physical locations. In terms of the DuBoise example, this puts the "stage" and the act in the social order of a people rather than in the socio-(particular) physical. Stage and act become portable in time in a single space and to interchangeable spaces in time.

Obviously there are class factors at play here. Among the urban poor this use of space is determined both by the paucity of space and the unpredictable temporal juxtaposition of work, play, "business," etc., occasions among those who must, for example, get their status or get a living by their wits. Where money is scarce, goods and transactions are often illegal. One must be able to move easily among business and other occasions. A common solution intermediate to the two being described here is that exemplified in "the oldest established permanent floating crap game in New York" (25).

But while class as reflected in available spatial resources is important, "controlling for it" (figuratively speaking of course), ethnic style still makes its imprint. Ethnic groups often make self-chiding jokes about their relationship with time, for example, a resource more generally available to the poorer of them. For many years black Americans would joke that a meeting was to be held at 8:00 P.M., "C.P. (Colored People's) Time." And some English Jews call the same tendency to be variably late "J.M.T." (Jewish Mean Time). I will want to take these stylistic differences more seriously and speak about C.P. space, although I will not call it that here.

Some Specimens from Community Studies

Systematic research on urban black communities has only recently become florid, but is firmly rooted nonetheless. In that research tradition the spatial and social-occasional activities of black people have often been very carefully described, of course, never by that

name. The most famous of these studies is that of Drake and Cayton. Based on research conducted in the '30's and '40's, it is rife with descriptions of formal and informal gatherings and occasions surrounding and making up the daily life of the black communities of Chicago's Bronzeville (26). Even more impressive for its thoroughness is W.E.B. DuBois' study of The Philadelphia Negro published in 1899! His chapter, "The Environment of the Negro," contains a section on "Social Classes and Amusements" which compares favorably with most contemporary work in terms of alertness to what we here call social-occasional life (27). But for sheer alertness to what I have loosely called the "shell" of formed up social occasional life among the black urban poor, nothing compares with the recent rash of studies by white social scientists. These writers are often very acute at seeing and making problematic the outside features of black social-occasional life. Like all anthropologists, these observers often miss the meaning--the content in the form--a matter with which their contemporary black counterparts are almost exclusively concerned, but they seldom fail to describe the life they see in terms impossible or irrelevant for those in it to have done. As a consequence, I find these recent studies by "outsiders" very helpful in the thinking out of the present problem.

Consider Ulf Hannerz' description of black streetcorner life in Washington, D.C.:

Many streetcorner men, . . . spend a great deal of their time in clusters with other men at street corners or on the front staircases of the rundown houses. . . . Many of the men join the gatherings only in their spare time before or after work. Others belong to the spurious leisure class of the unemployed and spend a great part of their days, and sometimes a part of their nights, in the gatherings. There are usually some men who form a core membership of such a clique, participating in its get-togethers one day after another. Other men take part more occasionally, and now and then somebody joins the circle only for a single encounter as he happens to be on the scene in the company of one of the more regular participants. Almost never is a woman present. Possibly she may sit in (without contributing more than sporadic comments) if she is married to the man at whose house the gathering takes place, but most women prefer not to. The gathering begins and ends elastically as the men drift in and out of it, coming from home or from work, going to see a woman, or to a pool hall, or to a bowling alley. Although all this is usually referred to as peer group life [by sociologists], it is clearly more a question of ad hoc gatherings

than of well-delineated groups.

Certainly the gatherings are not all the same. There are times when the men at the corner stand around without talking much, just watching what goes on around them. Sometimes they may play cards or shoot crap, and hardly anything is said that does not have to do with the game. If somebody, player or spectator, tries to get a conversation started then, at least some players will brusquely ask him to shut up. At yet other times, conversations become contests . . . (28).

Hannerz acknowledges but dismisses a possible interpretation of these gatherings as pure sociability in Simmel's sense (29) and develops an alternate interpretation of them as masculine mythmaking sessions.

Issues of content aside, Hannerz has outlined in this example the major elements of the all-purpose single-space social occasional format described earlier in which the loose but frequent gatherings move, on signal, through a variety of occasions. In what Hannerz describes as a group form somewhat less distinct and more ad hoc than that ordinarily construed sociologically to be a peer group, there is certain to be some sort of interpersonal division of labor. But the general type of gathering described here suggests that acts of designation (card game women excluded), convenience (re-positioning) and provenience (shutting up irrelevant conversation) are handled by various persons by occasion. The contrast, physically and temporally, with "bridge at Martha's every Thursday at eight" is obvious.

An example of the second orientation to space and occasion is found in Suttles' excellent study The Social Order of the Slum. Among gatherings of slum youth he finds

it is fairly obvious that the boys rely on something other than explicit rules to establish common procedures and goals. Typically, when some of the boys arrive at their hangout during the afternoon, there is no previous agreement about what they are going to do. Generally, the practice is simply to 'come on the scene' and ask 'what's happening?' From then on, joint activities emerge crescively as situations present themselves. Probably the most frequent activity is gossiping about people in the neighborhood. On a Friday (payday) some of the older boys may 'chip in' for some beer or wine. From time to time they may start 'rapping' or insulting one another. Sometimes they pitch pennies for an hour or two. During weekends there may be a local dance or social, and some of them may go there.

Often someone in the older groups will own a car, and all the guys will 'pile in' and go for a ride around the neighborhood, yelling and waving to the girls and other boys they know. Occasionally, all those present will rise and go to the nearby beefstand, the Tastee Freeze, the Good Humor truck, or a hot dog stand. If there is a fight, a fire, or wreck, everybody--adults and adolescents--runs to see it. Sometimes there are games: 'babies,' 'ringoliva,' 'war,' and so on (30).

Most American males can recall such periods in their youth, but among middle class people it is precisely the opposite of this seeming insouciance which is defined as "maturity." Whether or not the poor or black people have a monopoly on this mode of social-occasional operation, it is a characteristic pattern during the "role moratorium" phase of, especially, adolescent male life. While the continuation of this "adolescent" social-occasional pattern into adulthood would appear to be common among the poor, such a pattern is thought to be positively regressive by what might loosely be called middleclass Americans.

But such a pattern of occasioning can also be seen as an effective solution to the problem, at least, of crowding which usually attends conditions of urban poverty. Among other things, a major problem identified by Goffman is dispatched:

Once a social situation is referred back to the social occasion that sets the tone for the gathering in it, we must admit the possibility that the same physical space may be caught within the domain of two different social occasions. The social situation then may be the scene of potential or actual conflict between the sets of regulations that ought to govern. (31)

The problem is managed in at least two ways, judging from our two examples: One is, in effect, a socialization to space use among the poor which puts the major responsibility for occasioning in persons rather than in locations. Secondly, spoken language becomes the effective device for occasioning acts. Occasion-adequate space is rendered so in conversation, and, while it is easy to be wrong, it is difficult to overinterpret the language used in such occasioning. Thus the concentration placed on it in the example from Suttles and throughout that work and Hannerz'.

But the existence of this primarily outdoor pattern has another basis and, as a location for social occasions, another interpretation. Suttles found in one of the Chicago districts he studied that eighty per cent of blocks had at least one social-occasional prop (my terms,

not his) like an old sofa, auto seat, bench and even a television set on the sidewalk. Weather permitting, this device not only provided relief from the pressures inside the small dwellings, but provided some insulation of the, often problematic, personal life conducted inside from those in the neighborhood to whom they are particularly vulnerable due to the very active communication network operating in the community. But he also contends that

the household planning and preparation for visits which are so prominent in more affluent neighborhoods is almost entirely lacking in the... area. Telephone calls are seldom made before people 'drop in.' Advance invitations are even more uncommon and most prearranged domestic gatherings follow the annual cycle of customary holidays (Christmas, Thanksgiving, New Year's Eve, Lent) rather than individual convenience. Formal gatherings tend to be equally rare; cocktail parties, formal dinners, teas, and invitational parties are almost unheard of. Once started, then, domestic exchanges subject the residents either to unpredictable exposures or to additional confrontations from which they cannot easily retreat. Moreover, the gatherings within their households are not sufficiently guarded by the formalizations that keep a 'safe distance' between [those] present (32).

Save for the central culture's major markers, Christmas, etc., the round of occasions which make up the expected part of, say a designer's, occasional affairs (e.g., cocktail parties, formal dinners) are lacking among this group. Also missing, of course, are the occasioning acts which produce such gatherings, viz., invitations, announcements, formal telephone calls, etc.

This discussion from the literature is not intended as "proof" of the argument being presented here, but to point with illustrative empirical materials to what may be a compelling mode of occasioning to which more attention might be paid by planners and designers who ordinarily approach such situations with totally different life-conduct images. Let us look now at some type differences in occasions suggested by this contrast.

Occasions and Occasion Acts: A Typology of Gatherings in Urban Black Communities

It is appropriate now to propose a typology of occasions, occasioning acts and spaces which would appear distinctive to the community forms under discussion. Such a typology is necessarily relative and is not regarded as exclusive but emphatic modes characteristic of their occasioning activity. Two qualifications are

in order: 1) Intertwined here are issues of indoor-outdoor and public-private spaces. The typology is, at this moment, general including not only houses, stoops and yards, but street corners, churches, pool halls, bowling alleys, liquor stores, barbershops, parks, etc.; 2) the proposed types derive from a survey of literature like those from which our specimens are drawn, from previous field investigation, and upon investigation currently underway. Further examples, elaboration, tests and application await the expansion of current work. OCCASIONS: primary occasional distinction (pp. 6-12-6, 6-12-7) suggests two characteristic occasion forms: A. Fixed Occasions, fixed by acts of designation not by the physical structure of the occasion space or facilitating equipment. Such occasions are situation bound in time, tied to defined-in-time and named locales, but these latter are variable as are those persons convened in them; B. Portable Occasions, actively mobile and situation free, tied to a convened-in-time gathering the personnel of which is relatively fixed. More stable than, but dynamically equivalent to "bar hopping," with locales on route less limited, in terms of physical type and facilitating equipment.

OCCASIONING ACTS: Two broad types of acts which qualify those of designation, convenience and provenience. A. Occasion Intensifying acts tend to increase the variability of focus (33) in occasioned gatherings. For designation, for example, this involves re-instructing, re-including, etc. B. Occasion Extensifying acts tend to increase variability in spacing, positioning, etc. For designation, again, this involves re-naming, re-binding, etc. The effect of both types of acts is to restructure the "shell" of the fixed or portable occasions. C. Occasion Maintaining acts stabilize, for a time, the activities in fixed and portable occasions. The intersection of these occasion types and occasioning acts, along with examples of the specific types of occasions with which they are associated among urban black people are graphically represented in Table 1. Space limits prevent detailing of a variety of complementary occasions spaces such as those which are occasion intensive, occasion extensive, occasion specific, etc.

Conclusion

Outlined here is a framework for the analysis of social occasions with suggestions for application to a segment of the urban world. The scheme is introductory and tentative. Further detailed case studies will reveal the utility of such a taxonomic and dynamic analysis of social occasions for planning and design. They are proposed here on the assumption that information derived from systematic analyses are of more general use than ad hoc information. The point of the approach is not to find a

Table 1
Occasion Type

	Portable	Fixed
Occasioning	Intensifying "walking" (doing business)	"rapping" (partying)
	Extensifying "cruising" (on the move)	"styling" (on stage)
Acts	Maintaining Establishing an occasion route or circuit	Establishing an occasion "set" or hangout

people's pattern for occasioning and fix them in it, but for programmers to discover and acknowledge occasioning styles in their analyses of design problems allowing both for the style and possible changes in it among users. Obviously the poor of all ethnicities would and do chose more recognizably middle class modes of occasioning as they are upwardly mobile.

But, in addition to learning about a people to "tailor" designs for their existence and change, we may in doing so discover new possibilities for society at large. With the high probability of both increased crowding and leisure in the future, we are very much in need of new images of possible modes of occupancy of private and public spaces and places. Among other things, the, at present, extremely tight connection between our occasional life and the physical locales and equipment in which they must take place is just another way in which contemporary life is alienated and segmented. An understanding of occasions may give us some good ideas about designing better for what is and provide a foil for imaging what might be.

Notes

1. Important examples are: Kenneth Clark, Dark Ghetto, New York: Harper and Row, 1965; Lee Rainwater, Behind Ghetto Walls, Aldine, 1970; Elliot Liebow's Tally's Corner, Little Brown, 1967; Gerald D. Suttles, The Social Order of the Slum, University of Chicago, 1968; Ulf Hannerz, Soulside, Columbia Univ. Press, 1969; John Horton, "Time and Cool People," Trans-action, 4:5-12 (April, 1967); Thomas Kochman, "Rapping in the Black Ghetto," Trans-action, 6:4 (Feb., 1969); William McCord, John Howard, et al., Life Styles in the Black Ghetto, New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1969. 2. Sir William Holford, "The Built Environment: Its Creation, Motivation and Control," in Environmental Psychology: Man and His Physical Setting, Harold M. Proshansky, et al. (eds.) N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970. 3. Constance Perin, With Man in Mind, M.I.T. Press, 1970. 4. W. Joseph Black, "A Farsighted Study and some Blind Spots," Architectural Forum, Dec. 1968, pp. 44-49, cited in Perin, op.cit., pp. 79-80. 5. For a very interesting exploration of this topic see Howard N. Boughey, Jr., Blueprints for Behavior: The Intentions of Architects to Influence Social Action Through Design, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton Univ., 1968, Ann Arbor: Univ. Microfilms #69-2726, 1969. 6. Erving Goffman, Behavior in Public Places: Notes on the Social Organization of Gatherings, New York: The Free Press, 1966; Encounters, Indianapolis:

Bobbs-Merrill, 1961. 7. William R. Ellis, Jr., Operation Bootstrap: A Case Study in Ideology and the Institutionalization of Protest, unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, UCLA, 1969, Ann Arbor: Univ. Microfilms #69-16, 903. 8. See Perin, op.cit., p. 63. 9. Goffman, Behavior . . ., p. 4. 10. Barker, Roger, Ecological Psychology, Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press., 1968. 11. Ibid., p. 18. 12. Loc.cit. 13. Barker, ibid., pp. 18-19. 14. Ibid., p. 16, beginning "It is not easy, at first, to leave the person out of observations of the environment of molar behavior . . ." 15. Ibid., p. 8. 16. Barker, loc.cit. 17. Op.cit., p. 24. 18. Op.cit., p. 8. 19. Op.cit. 20. Howard Boughey, "Time, Space, Occasion: An Analytic Scheme for the Study of Timing and Spacing Acts," Unpublished paper presented at the Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Assn., St. John's, Newfoundland, 1971, p. 12. Professor Boughey is at the Univ. of British Columbia, Dept. of Sociology-Anthropology. 21. Ibid., pp. 14-27. 22. For his explanation of this archaistic usage see ibid., p. 14. 23. Ibid., pp. 14-34. 24. Unpublished papers, Interdisciplinary Symposium, Mental and Physical Well-Being in the City, Roslyn Lindheim (ed.), University of California, Berkeley, 1969, p. 16. 25. The phrase is Damon Runyon's. From the musical "Guys and Dolls." 26. St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, Black Metropolis, New York: Harper and Row, 1962, Vol. II., pp. 416-417. 27. New York: Schocken edition, 1967, pp. 309-321. 28. Op.cit., p. 105. 29. Loc.cit. 30. Op.cit., p. 183. 31. Op.cit., p. 20. 32. Op.cit., pp. 77-78. 33. Goffman, op.cit., p. 24.