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**REGULATIONS ON USE****Stephen C. Levinson and Asifa Majid**

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#### 4. Pilot Questionnaire to Investigate Social Uses of Space, especially as related to 1) Linguistic Practices and 2) Social Organization

Elizabeth Keating, with thanks to David Wilkins and Eve Danziger

The following questions are meant to explore relationships between space, language, and social structure in various cultures. The goal is to better understand how space is organized generally and to investigate the extent to which it is also used as a model for reproducing social forms. This includes actions and activities (including language) in relation to spatial configurations.

Comments and suggestions as well as additions are welcome (thanks to David and Eve already).

##### STATUS AND SPACE (social valuing of space)

Is there a relationship between vertical height and status?

- a) at public events (e.g. are high status participants on a raised platform)
- b) at private gatherings (e.g. do superiors sit in chairs or on mats while others sit on the floor)
- c) is bowing or other body lowering practiced towards "superiors"?
- d) are the dwellings of those of high status higher on the hill? or conversely, lower?
- e) in language: do concepts like "high" and "chief" appear together. What is the term for 'leader', 'grand mother/father'? Are diminutives used? For whom?

Is there a relationship between horizontal location/direction and status?

- a) what is the seating arrangement at meals
- b) what is the seating arrangement at public gatherings (e.g. in Mopan church meetings women sit on the left and men on the right)
- c) is horizontal spatial distance maintained between certain social groups (e.g. Arrernte fathers-in-law and sons-in-law)? When and how is this observed?
- d) is there a directional location associated with status? (e.g. a certain side of the house, etc)
- e) is there a relationship between lateral dwelling location and social status? (e.g. in American usage "the wrong [i.e. low status] side of the [railroad] tracks")
- f) are the back/front/sides of boats, trucks, cars and other conveyances marked for status, e.g. who sits in the front or back of a vehicle
- g) is there a preceding/following status relation, e.g. the higher status person precedes the lower status one in walking?
- h) is there a relation between "nextness" and status, e.g. one's nearness to high status persons or locations

Are vertical relations e.g. body parts transposed to horizontal (e.g. in the American usage of "the head of the table" meaning the high status seat; another example is "uptown" based on social status)

##### Subquestions

- a) Is there a relationship between size of space occupied and status?
- b) are social differences "built into" the built environment? (building types for human activities, compounds, plazas, streets, sites)
- c) is there a relationship between amount of land and status? amount of riverfront, lakefront?
- d) in language: how is the leader's space/dwelling described? low status space/dwellings?

### Entering and Exiting Space

- a) can a woman/man enter all spaces; are there gendered spaces? if so, how are these referred to in language?
- b) do visitors bow when they enter spaces? if so, what is this bowing called?
- c) what is the body position on entering or leaving the camp/house/building/group
- d) which is observed first when approaching another's house/dwelling/camp: proper body position or greeting? What is the relationship between these two?
- e) how does one get/ask permission to enter another's house/camp
- f) where are visitors welcomed, and told to sit/recline
- g) if a man and woman approach a house together, who enters first or is this specified
- h) who leaves first, or is this specified
- i) Can children walk freely across socio-spatial boundaries until a certain age? if so, what age?
- j) who can violate enter/exit prescriptions?
- k) do certain people come through certain doors?
- l) is there a notion of "open" vs. "closed" space?

**Words said upon entering/exiting/passing by (by speaker and addressee(s)):**  
(to an interlocutor located at the place)

- a) a house
- b) another structure (e.g. meeting house)
- c) a gathering of people
- d) on the road
- e) in letters

### SPACE AND ACTIVITY

If the same space is used for multiple activities, how does the arrangement of participants in space constitute an event as one type or another? What role does language play in effecting this recontextualization?

#### Activities/Practices within and without Spaces

- a) public vs. private space: are these relevant categories?
- b) where do the kids play, couples make love, teenagers hang out
- c) rituals of the space/house/building
- e) who cleans the space
- f) who builds the building
- g) where are meetings held
- h) which way do people sleep (and what is the local explanation for this)
- i) is there a specific orientation to the way people are buried (and what is the local explanation for this)

### COSMOLOGY

- a) Do spirits occupy space? Are they overhearers? How is their space described?
- b) sacred space: are some spaces forbidden to some community members?
- c) most sacredly charged part of the space/house/building

- d) is there a cosmological orientation for the house/building? e.g. east vs. west for the doorway? does the house/building have to be dedicated/blessed? by whom? what is said, done?
- e) is there sacred vs. profane space?

### **SPACE AND LANGUAGE PRACTICES**

Are there spaces where speech is forbidden/constrained (e.g. the side platforms of the Pohnpeian feasthouse where the low status people sit are called *mwengintik* 'little whispers'). Does where one sits at a public gathering correlate with rights to oratory (cf. Samoa)? Are there special language practices related to certain spaces?

#### **Sayings and Idioms related to Space**

e.g. "a man is like the place between the eaves where things of value are hidden" [Pohnpei] (you cannot know another's thoughts, i.e. private possessions)

#### **Metaphorical Associations**

association of ideas with locations in the house

#### **Metonymic Associations**

#### **Names for socially occupiable space (micro --> macro)**

- a) sleeping mat
- b) sleeping area
- c) room
- d) portion of the dwelling
- e) whole dwelling
- f) window(s), door(s), walls, roof, ridge pole(s), post(s), curtain(s), annex(es)
- g) place where dead buried/bones kept
- h) group of houses (of clan, lineage)
- i) community
- j) rivers, water sites
- k) bathing places
- l) animal pens
- m) shed for yams
- n) garden house
- o) food storage
- p) church/worship site
- q) inside vs. outside

Are body parts mapped on to houses (e.g. Dogon kitchen as head)

## **SPACE AND SOCIAL IDENTITY**

Is there an association of social identities with places, (e.g. Place names in Mopan associated with the supernatural)

## **ORGANIZATION OF SPACE**

- a) into rooms or parts
- b) elder brother/sister vs. younger brother/sister
- c) most prestigious place
- d) place for books
- e) cooking place
- f) seasonal variations
- g) sleeping arrangements
- h) eating arrangements
- i) what kind of kin or other group lives together in the same space
- j) how is separateness marked? contiguity?

## **Relation of house/building to Topographical Relations in Space**

- a) sunrise, sunset, hillside, shore, etc.

## **Boundaries**

- a) our space vs. their space
- b) what is the center and what is the periphery (frontstage/backstage)
- c) notions of ownership of house/building
- d) how close are dwellings, e.g. do they share walls
- e) how close does the path pass by the house/building

## **Western Influences/Changes**

- a) Are there modern vs. traditional dwellings/structures?
- b) Is space organized similarly in the modern structures? or are new forms of organization evident? (e.g. cooking done inside rather than outside, inside bathrooms, partitioning of space where there was none traditionally, etc)
- c) Are there new loan words to describe space?

Christian churches and arrangement of space

## **Plans--what is the floor plan/space plan (and named parts)**

(Ideally, it would be nice to have a sketch by a consultant and a sketch done by yourself.)

- a) of the camp/dwelling or other building (cookhouse, outhouse, men's house, women's house, meeting house, church), e.g. square, rectangle, circle, octagonal, triangle
  - (i) ideal vs. typical
  - (ii) reported vs. observed

Drawings:

b) of the family/clan property

Drawings:

c) of the village

Drawings:

d) of the language community's larger geographical borders

Drawings:

e) what is the local account of why space is arranged this way

f) relationships between buildings

### **AFFECT AND SPACE**

a) are particular expressions of affect associated with particular spaces? (e.g. do dangerous powerful places make you feel scared or sick?)

b) when people separate themselves spatially from the group for prolonged periods is this interpreted as expressing affect? (e.g. homesickness, bad feelings)

c) is affect spatially conceived, e.g. in parts of the body e.g. anger in the liver