

Territoriality

Distortions in some popular treatments of territoriality (Ardrey, 1966) have led many people to think of territorial behavior as something bad that causes conflict and aggression. In fact, exactly the opposite is true. Imagine, if you can, a society with no system of territorial behavior in which every person has equal access to every location. Strangers could wander freely into your bedroom and bathroom, evict you from seats in public places, and drive your car whenever they chose. Fences would not exist, burglary would not be a crime, and locksmiths would become an endangered species. You would have no legal right to inherit your parent's possessions, and there would be no sure way to locate people you wanted to find. In short, such a society would be chaotic, unworkable, and unable to survive.

Unlike personal space, which moves with the person and expands and contracts according to the situation, a territory is a fixed geographical location. Territoriality refers to those behaviors a person uses to exert control over the activities that occur in that space. Researchers have

proposed over a dozen definitions of territoriality, all differing in the emphasis they place on observable behaviors such as territorial marking and defense (Becker, 1973; Sommer, 1969) as opposed to more affective or cognitive reactions to space that are less directly observable (Altman, 1975; Brower, 1980; Malmberg, 1980). While all the definitions are useful, a definition similar to one Sack (1983) proposed comes closest to the way the term will be used in this chapter: Territoriality refers to the attempt to influence or control another's actions through enforcing control over a geographic area and the objects in it.

Territoriality and Privacy

The concept of privacy is closely related to the concepts of personal space and territoriality. In fact, these ideas are so intimately linked that it is sometimes impossible to say which is the most inclusive (Taylor & Ferguson, 1980). Like personal space and territoriality, privacy helps us manage our social interactions to maintain order and avoid conflict with others. Insufficient opportunities for privacy have been linked to antisocial behavior and aggression in a variety of settings, including prisons (Glaser, 1964) and naval ships (Heffron, 1972).

Privacy is commonly thought of as being away from other people, but Altman's (1975) definition captures more precisely the spirit of the term as it is used by environmental psychologists: **Privacy** is the selective control of access to the self or to one's group. Therefore, privacy is not just shutting others out. It is a boundary control process through which individuals control who they interact with, and how and when these interactions occur. Maintaining some degree of control over interactions with others is crucial to most people's psychological well-being. Different mechanisms are used toward this end. In North America, the physical environment is manipulated with doors, windows, separate rooms, and other architectural props being the primary means of regulating privacy. Miller and Schlitt (1985) offer an excellent summary of the relationship between privacy and the physical environment. (The problem of privacy is central to many of the design concerns discussed in subsequent chapters on built environments.) Nonverbal communication and the observance of social customs (for example, not calling your psychology professor after midnight) are important supplements to environmental regulators of privacy. People are more likely to pursue privacy aggressively and ask unwanted others to leave them alone when such cues in the physical or social environment clearly support the legitimacy of their claim to privacy (Haggard & Werner, 1990).

Westin (1967) describes four different states of privacy that individuals must regulate at one time or another. **Solitude** refers to the commonplace notion of privacy—the opportunity to separate oneself from others and be free from observation. However, other forms of privacy are

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also quite important. **Intimacy** is the freedom to be alone with others such as friends, spouses, or lovers without interference from unwanted others. **Anonymity** describes the freedom to be in public but still be free from identification or surveillance by others. Anonymity is the kind of privacy that public figures such as movie stars, politicians, and professional athletes find increasingly difficult to achieve. A fourth type of privacy, **reserve**, occurs when the individual's need to limit communication about himself or herself is protected by the cooperation of those around them.

According to Westin (1967), privacy serves a number of functions. It is necessary for intimate communication with other people, and it allows us to maintain a sense of control, autonomy, and self-identity in our lives. It also allows for an emotional release that might be inappropriate under nonprivate circumstances. Lewis (1961) provides a touching and extremely insightful portrait of what life can be like with too little privacy in *The Children of Sanchez*. The book describes the lives of low-income Mexican families who live with as many as nine or ten family members in a single room, where simple functions such as getting dressed or using the toilet become a struggle against a daily routine dictated by the needs of others.

Many things affect our perceptions of the amount of privacy we have. Personal characteristics such as age, sex, and cultural background undoubtedly play a part, as do our privacy experiences while growing up and our expectations about the privacy to which we are entitled (Marshall, 1972; Smith, 1982; Walden, Nelson, & Smith, 1981). Privacy is difficult to measure empirically. Several questionnaire measures of privacy have been developed (Westin, 1967; Marshall, 1972; Pedersen, 1982), but these have not become sophisticated enough to be very useful in applied settings.

Societies vary tremendously in the degree of privacy they allow and in their assumptions about the amount of privacy individuals need. Hall (1966) explored these differences in his description of North European and Mediterranean cultures. According to Hall, Germany represents one extreme of the privacy continuum. In Germany, visual and auditory privacy is extremely important, and office doors are rarely left open as they are in the United States. It is considered rude to look into rooms or to move furniture even slightly. In Mediterranean cultures, on the other hand, there is little visual or auditory privacy in public, and eye and body contact with strangers is frequent. In fact, there is not even an Arabic word for privacy!

Even though privacy norms differ from place to place, all societies have developed social conventions that permit individuals to control access to themselves in some way. This is true even in societies that appear to allow very little opportunity for individual privacy, such as Gypsies (Yoors, 1967) and the Pygmies of Zaire (Turnbull, 1961). One

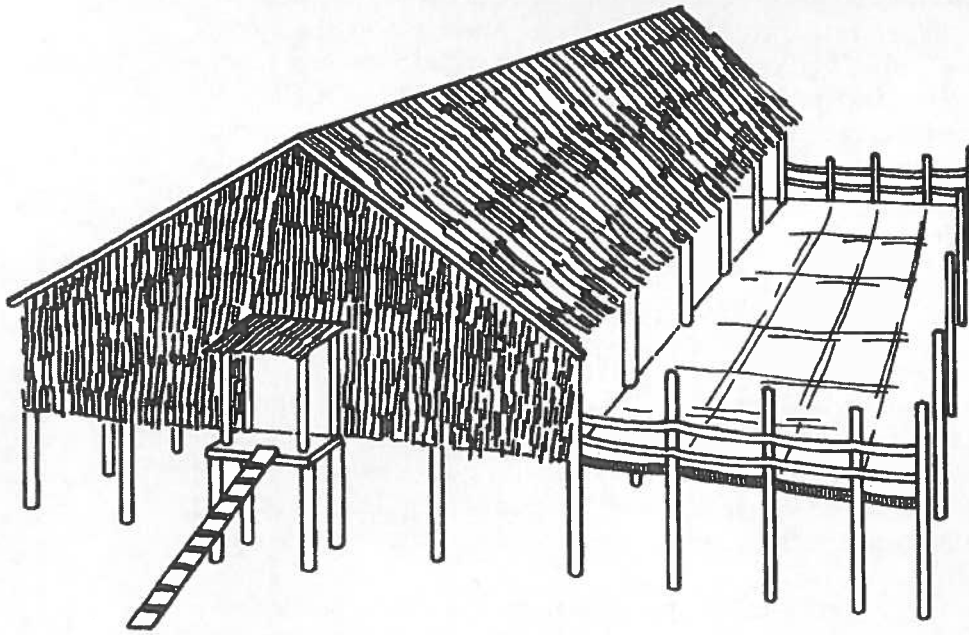


FIGURE 6-1 An Iban longhouse (Source: Patterson & Chiswick, 1981)

such society is the Iban people of Indonesia and Malaysia studied by Patterson and Chiswick (1981). The Iban live in elevated communal structures called longhouses (see Figure 6-1), structures that range from about 20 yards long that are occupied by as few as three families, to 300-yard-long buildings that accommodate more than 40 families. A typical family consists of parents, four or five children, and a grandparent or two. The longhouse has a thatched roof and a large open porch that runs the entire length of the building. Each family occupies a single rectangular room (approximately 20 feet by 15 feet) that serves as a kitchen, bedroom, and living area. Each room opens onto a common gallery area that is semipublic, as is the open porch. These living arrangements result in high density, no auditory privacy (thin partitions between rooms readily transmit noise), and little visual privacy since many activities occur in the public gallery and porch areas.

The high level of social contact in the longhouse permits little privacy in the Western sense of the word, but the Iban have adopted norms that help to compensate for this. Whenever possible, relatives occupy adjoining rooms. There is a rigid division of labor according to traditional sex roles (the men farm and fish; the women cook, keep house, and look after children), and there is great freedom to disassociate one's self

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from family or to dissolve friendships without negative sanctions. It is considered impolite to ask personal questions of strangers, and criticizing or disciplining other people's children is forbidden. At night, public areas become semiprivate and individuals do not wander freely throughout the longhouse as they do in the daytime. The headman of the longhouse mediates disputes and has the power to impose fines for the violation of norms. Each Iban family is a self-contained unit that is economically independent of its neighbors. Within the family, norms about changing clothing and sex-segregated sleeping arrangements for unmarried people over the age of 12 afford some degree of privacy.

Privacy and the integrity of personal space are crucial to the lives of individuals, and territoriality is the primary mechanism that ensures that these are protected. It is hard to overstate the importance of territorial behavior in the day-to-day organization of our lives. In fact, territoriality serves a vital function in the organization of social behavior throughout the animal kingdom, and much has been learned about territoriality by studying animal behavior.

TERRITORIAL BEHAVIOR IN ANIMALS

Origins of Animal Territoriality

Some animals such as impalas, ants, and redwing blackbirds are so intensely territorial that their entire social organization revolves around territories. Other animals (for example, mice) are more flexible in their territorial needs and are able to adopt other ways of organizing their social world when conditions preclude the efficient defense of territories. While there is agreement that territorial behavior is widespread throughout the animal kingdom, scientists still disagree about how much of this behavior can be thought of as biologically based instinct.

The first scientists to study animal territoriality seriously were ethologists who took an explicitly evolutionary approach to their work (Lorenz, 1966; Wilson, 1975; Wynne-Edwards, 1962). These researchers invariably describe territorial behavior as being shaped by evolutionary forces, appearing in its current form as a function of the selection pressures faced by the species throughout its evolutionary history. Thus, animals inherit a predisposition to behave territorially because individual animals who did so in the past survived and reproduced more successfully than animals who did not. This position is much more controversial for environmental psychologists because they still cannot agree on the origins of territoriality. Taylor (1988) is comfortable with the evolutionary perspective on the development of territoriality in humans as well as animals, while Brown (1987) argues that animal territorial behaviors are



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extremely flexible and based on learning and that the notion of a "territorial instinct" is too simpleminded to be acceptable.

The position taken here will be similar to that taken by sociobiologists such as Wilson (1975) and Barash (1982): Territoriality is a system of social behaviors that evolved because it has been adaptive. Individual members of territorial species may vary in the strength of their genetic predisposition to behave in a territorial fashion, but all members of the species share a biological basis for these behaviors.

Functions of Animal Territoriality

While maintaining and defending a territory costs an animal time and energy, there are very clear advantages to a well-defined system of territories for individuals and for the species as a whole. For example, by clearly marking the boundaries of their territories and signalling their presence to other members of their species, animals minimize the number of encounters that might result in fighting. Howler monkeys and songbirds continually advertise their location with vocalizations that carry over great distances, giving themselves ample opportunity to avoid confrontation. Wolves and many other carnivores urinate and defecate at key locations on the perimeter of their territories, and bears stretch to their full length to scrape the bark off trees, conveying information about the size of the territory holder as well as the boundaries of the territory.

When confrontations do occur, territorial systems provide other safeguards against the serious injuries that can result from fighting. Perhaps the most important of these is a phenomenon known as the **prior-residence effect**. This occurs when animals in their home territory display dominance over intruders in that territory. If you have ever observed a small dog chase a much larger one from its yard, you have witnessed this phenomenon. Whether the animal is a robin or a dog, there is a definite advantage inherent in being on one's own turf. A chicken is more likely to peck a strange bird in its home cage than in the stranger's cage (Rajecki, Nerenz, Freedenburg, & McCarthy, 1979), and a fish in a familiar aquarium invariably assumes dominance over other fish that are introduced later (Figler & Evensen, 1979). When two members of a species of territorial fish are introduced simultaneously into an aquarium, each will take over some portion of the tank as its own territory. Apparently there is an easily recognized territorial boundary between the two areas (easily recognized by the fish at least) because when a fish strays into its partner's space it is immediately attacked and chased across the boundary. However, during the chase, the attacker often goes too far, suddenly finding itself in the other fish's territory. At this point, the fishes change directions; the formerly fleeing fish becomes the attacker, and the chase goes back and forth until the two fish finally settle

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face-to-face on either side of the boundary line, "glowering" at each other, each secure and dominant in its own territory. Thus, territoriality does not increase aggressiveness, but actually decreases conflict by keeping animals from running into each other unexpectedly and also by giving such a clear advantage to the animal in its home territory that serious fighting seldom occurs. Recent research lends support to the notion that the prior-residence effect may also occur in humans. For a description of this research, see the box below.

The only time that territorial behavior seems to be associated with increased aggression is in those animal species that have a lek system of territoriality in which aggressive encounters between males for possession of territories is a prelude to mating (Davies, 1982; Gould, 1982). A **lek** is the location where the males gather to compete for territories. While many animals exhibit this form of territorial behavior, antelopes of

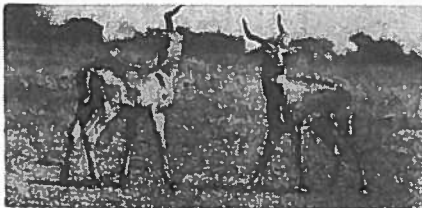
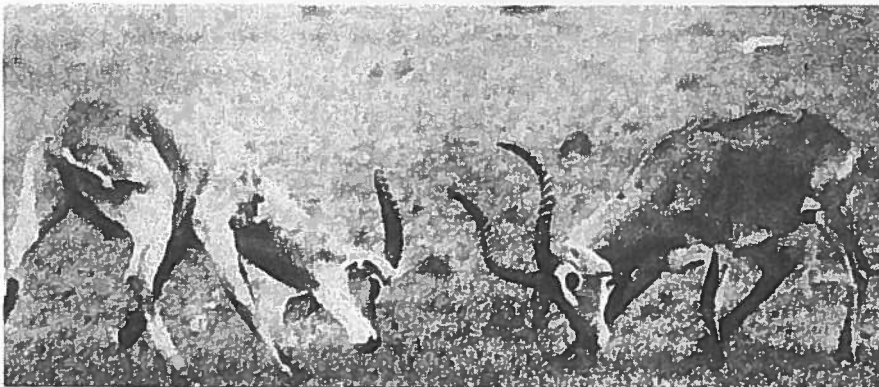
The Prior-Residence Effect in Human Beings

There is long-standing evidence that animals in their home territories have an advantage in confrontations with other animals, but only recently have psychologists confirmed that this may also be true for humans.

Research consistently shows a relationship between the length of time people have occupied a space and the degree to which they feel ownership and control of it, which leads to greater feelings of security and dominance. Subjects in experiments on the prior-residence effect are often undergraduate students engaged in a task or conversation in their own or someone else's room. In their own rooms subjects almost always feel more relaxed, are more successful on tasks, and dominate the conversation more than those visiting the room (Conroy & Sundstrom, 1977; Martindale, 1971). Taylor and Lanni (1981) discovered that residents who were normally low in dominance even tended to dominate discussions among three people if they occurred in their own rooms. Harris and McAndrew (1986) found that people could resist signing offensive petitions better when approached in their own rooms than when they were approached somewhere else. Finally, Taylor (1988) has noted that even in the story

of Peter Pan, the only place where Wendy was able to resist Peter's suggestions was in her own room.

Many studies show that home teams have a distinct advantage over the visitors in competition. This is especially true for indoor team sports like basketball (Greer, 1983; Schwartz & Barsky, 1977; Silva & Andrew, 1987). A recent study of the results of over 2,000 high school wrestling matches indicates that this also happens in individual sports (McAndrew, 1992). While the strength of this home advantage depends to some extent on factors such as the length of time the visiting team has been travelling (Courneya & Carron, 1991), the effect is clearly due to the fact that one of the teams is playing in a familiar setting. Athletes have more intense feelings of control and dominance when playing in front of a supportive crowd. However, when the pressure to win becomes extreme, as it does in a championship game, playing in front of one's own fans actually may hurt performance. Teams play more poorly at home during the championships than during the regular season (Baumeister & Steinhilber, 1984; Heaton & Sigall, 1989).



PHOTOS B-1A, B, and C The Uganda kob on the lek

the African plains, such as the Uganda kob, provide the best example of how this system operates. Just before the females begin their estrous cycle, the males leave the bachelor herds they live in the rest of the year and gather at traditional communal display grounds (the lek). The males then begin highly ritualized fighting as they attempt to stake out and defend territories, which are usually small bare areas of ground seldom more than several meters in diameter. The fighting that occurs for these territories involves much horn locking, pushing, and noise but rarely results in serious injury to either of the combatants. The winners stand victoriously in their territories, while the losers either leave the lek or move on to challenge other animals. The females visit the leks to mate, and they gravitate toward the males who hold the central territories on the lek. Thus, only males who have a territory will have any contact with females, and the males with the most desirable central territories will have the greatest number of opportunities to mate. This system ensures that the healthiest, strongest males will mate most often, and the highly ritualized rules of fighting ensure that few injuries or deaths occur. This system also helps to preserve the young, inexperienced animals for future mating (Alcock, 1984).

Aside from its role in decreasing aggression and regulating mating, territoriality provides other benefits for animals. It may spread animals out so food supplies and other resources do not become overloaded; it helps localize waste disposal; and it reduces the rate of spread of disease.

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HUMAN TERRITORIAL BEHAVIOR

While many political scientists might disagree, Taylor (1988) asserts that human territorial behavior can only be discussed meaningfully in relation to individuals and small groups, and not on a larger scale such as nations. This is especially true if it is discussed within an evolutionary framework, which presupposes that human territoriality as it exists today has been shaped by biological and cultural evolution over millions of years. This approach does not demand that we think of human territorial behavior as being completely fixed, inflexible, and biologically determined, but only that we have an innate tendency to exhibit territorial behavior in some form because it has proven beneficial in the past. A more detailed discussion of the evolutionary origins of human territoriality can be found in Malmberg (1980) and King (1976a, 1976b).

Different cultures vary widely in the types of privacy/territory problems they face, and therefore the specific forms that territoriality takes in humans living in different societies may be quite dissimilar. Nevertheless, all societies have some way of recognizing boundaries, punishing transgressors, and negotiating territorial rights. This has been true throughout human history.

The ancient Greeks and Romans were extremely sensitive to the boundaries separating private properties. In fact, the Romans had a deity named Terminus who was the god of land boundaries. **Termini stones** had his likeness carved on them and were used to separate fields and define ownership boundaries. Those who tampered with these stones were punished harshly according to religious as well as civil laws. For example, farmers in ancient Rome who plowed under a Terminus stone were burned alive along with their plow animals (Stilgoe, 1976). In Western cultures, annual ceremonies were often held to serve as reminders of the location of town and private property lines. These ceremonies eventually gave way to fences, surveys, and land filings. Some of our current holidays, especially Halloween, are thought to be remnants of these early pagan and medieval boundary customs. In fact, some think the jack-o'-lantern is "the ghost of a long-ago remover of landmarks forever doomed to haunt boundary lines" (Stilgoe, 1976, p. 14).

Today, many of our most popular spectator sports reflect this strong human territorial orientation. Football, soccer, basketball, and hockey all require the successful defense of a primary territory (the goal) against invasions by the opponents. The language used to describe the action in these sports (for example, possession, stealing, control, offsides, neutral zone, and, in football, "territory") makes the sports-territory metaphor explicit. Even in baseball, teams battle for control of the basepaths, with the most important area of the diamond referred to as "home."

Given this brief background on the early roots of human territorial behavior, let us examine the way that it operates today.

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PHOTO 6-2 The jack-o'-lantern represents the ghost of those who tampered with territorial markers, forever doomed to haunt boundary lines.

The Functions of Human Territories

One of the major functions of territorial behavior for humans is the preservation and regulation of privacy. Having a place where the individual can regulate privacy and exert control over other activities seems to be an essential part of healthy, normal functioning for most people. The inability to maintain such a place can result in stress and other problems (Lyman & Scott, 1967). In most societies, being "homeless" is one of the greatest misfortunes a person can experience, and it immediately places that person at the bottom of society's status hierarchy. The ability to recognize certain objects and places as "belonging" to one's self is an important stage in the social development of every child (Furby, 1978), and there is evidence that one's attachment to territories intensifies with age (Rowles, 1980). Research consistently shows that people develop a sense of "ownership" over certain places where their activities regularly occur, and that these feelings of territoriality increase with the amount of time the person spends in that place. Sommer (1969) reported that when a person seated at a snack-bar table for 5 minutes was approached by a stranger and asked to move, he or she always did so, often with an apology. However, when people were approached after being seated for 25 minutes, they invariably refused to move. Similarly, Edney (1972) conducted a study to see if there were any differences between people who displayed aggressively **territorial markers** at their homes and

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those who did not. These aggressive markers might include signs (for example, No Trespassing, Beware of Dog), fences, or other warnings. He found that people who displayed aggressively defensive territorial markers had lived in their homes longer than homeowners who did not display such aggressive territorial behavior, that they planned on living there longer in the future, and that they even answered the doorbell significantly faster!

Given the importance of territories for exerting control in our lives, it is not surprising that psychologists have found that people quickly move to personalize and preserve space for themselves in a variety of settings. Several studies on people dining in restaurants showed that diners touch objects more when there is a need to establish territorial ownership, and that these touches serve no other apparent purpose (Taylor & Brooks, 1980; Truscott, Parmelee, & Werner, 1977). Specifically, these studies found that a person was more likely to touch a plate in a territorial fashion when it was being claimed from another person, when the plate was full rather than empty, and when the diner was a stranger to the restaurant and did not already feel a sense of control in that setting. In a series of similar studies, Werner, Brown, and Damron (1981) found that this same kind of touching behavior is used to claim machines in a video-game arcade, and that the touches are especially lengthy and obvious after an intrusion or the threat of an intrusion by another person.

Territories also allow people to manage and communicate their sense of personal identity. The **personalization of territories** is probably even more important when that territory is going to be a long-standing part of a person's life. When a person moves into a new office, house, or apartment, among the first things unpacked and displayed are highly personal possessions or decorations associated with the permanent places in that person's life. There is evidence that this personalization of territories may sometimes predict other aspects of a person's behavior. Hansen and Altman (1976) conducted a study that showed that the amount and the kinds of room decorations used were actually related to the likelihood that a university student would stay in school! They visited newly enrolled first-year students at the University of Utah during the second week of the autumn quarter and photographed the walls above students' beds. The volume of decorated space was measured, and seven categories of personalization were examined. These categories reflected decorations related to personal relationships; political, religious, or philosophical values; areas of personal interest; reference items; entertainment; or abstract/artistic decorations. The researchers found that students who left school by the end of the year were less likely to decorate their walls than students who stayed in school; those who left covered less space with the decorations they did use and were much more likely to use decorations that reflected a strong connection with their personal lives away from the university. Pictures of boyfriends or girlfriends back home, family pictures, or

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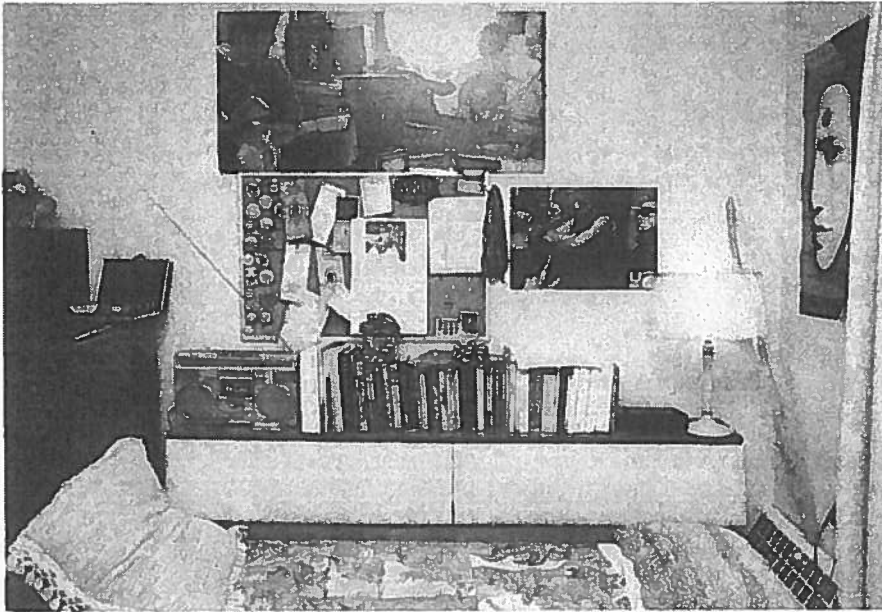


PHOTO 6-3 The decorations used in dormitory rooms often reflect the interests of the student as well as how strongly committed that person is to the college environment.

clippings from hometown newspapers are items that fell into this category. A follow-up study at the same university failed to find that the amount of decorated space was related to staying in school, but it did confirm that dropouts showed less diversity and commitment to the university setting with their decorations than "stayins" did (Vinsel, Brown, Altman, & Foss, 1980).

Werner, Altman, Oxley, and Haggard (1985) proposed that decorating the outside of one's home might be a way to increase contact with neighbors and deepen attachment to the neighborhood. Brown and Werner (1985) confirmed that Halloween decorations on a home do indeed predict the number of social contacts homeowners have in the neighborhood and how strongly attached to the neighborhood they feel. These decorations not only increase neighborhood cohesiveness but also may serve as cues to elicit visits from neighbors. In a similar study Werner, Peterson-Lewis, and Brown (1989) found that college students could make accurate judgments about the sociability of homeowners based partly on the nature of the Christmas decorations displayed on their homes.

Greenbaum and Greenbaum (1981) determined that homeowners personalize their residences with markers more than renters do. Brown (1987) noted that the very act of personalizing one's territory may increase feelings of attachment to that territory, and the personalization



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PHOTOS B-4A, B, and C The style and decoration of a house reflect the lifestyle and personality of its owner. What differences might you expect to find among the owners of each of these homes?

also may foster impressions of one's self in others that may or may not be accurate. A series of studies by Cherulnik and his colleagues clearly demonstrate that people are judged by the places in which they live and work, which makes the personalization of home and work territories a valuable strategy for making good impressions on other people. Cherulnik and Souders (1984) asked college students to make judgments about the traits and occupations of the residents of 24 different neighborhoods depicted in slides of street scenes. Not only did these students agree about the probable occupations of each neighborhood's residents, but they also often agreed on the personality traits of the residents. For example, residents of lower-status neighborhoods were often described as gullible, irresponsible, and lazy. In another study, people photographed in upper-middle-class residential neighborhoods were judged to have more desirable traits and more prestigious occupations than the same people shown in a lower-middle-class setting (Cherulnik & Bayless, 1986). Other studies confirm that subjects make similar judgments about people based on individual houses as well as neighborhoods (Nasar, 1989; Sadalla, Vershure, & Burroughs, 1987); the standards that are used to judge the status of homeowners appear to be quite consistent over time as subjects accurately judged the socioeconomic status of the original owners of houses built in Boston 100 years ago (Cherulnik & Wilderman, 1986).

As with animals, territoriality also plays a crucial role in the organization of human social systems. Without coherent ownership, occupancy, and control over various spaces, human interaction would be chaotic. Territories are used to support and clarify social roles, to regulate interactions, and to minimize conflict. Clear, unambiguous territories have been found to decrease aggressive behavior in groups of retarded boys (O'Neill & Paluck, 1973), juvenile delinquents (Sundstrom & Altman, 1974), and street gangs (Ley & Cybriwsky, 1974). Research on pairs of sailors living in small, isolated rooms found that the pairs who established clear territories during the first day or two of the study performed better while working, showed less stress, and were able to endure isolation longer. Less territorial pairs were disorganized and could not tolerate isolation as long (Altman & Haythorn, 1967; Altman, Taylor, & Wheeler, 1971).

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Types of Human Territories

Altman (1975) provides a very useful way to distinguish among different types of human territories. Territories differ according to how important they are in the lives of their owners; some territories are much more central than others. Centrality refers to the amount of security and control that an individual experiences in a territory. Altman proposes that most human territories fall into one of three categories: primary, secondary, and public territories.

Primary territories Places in which the owners feel they have complete control over access and use most of the time are **primary territories**. They include homes, offices, or bedrooms that are central to the lives of their users. Primary territories are owned and used exclusively by one individual or group and are clearly recognized as primary by other people. The law recognizes primary territories as such, and usually it is considered justifiable to use force in defending them.

Primary territories such as homes are often complex combinations of "mini-territories" controlled by different individuals. Sebba and Churchman (1983) interviewed 185 adults and children in a middle-class neigh-

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How Territorial Is Your Family?

Most of the day-to-day behaviors that maintain smooth territorial functioning in a home go unnoticed by family members. Think about the norms that have developed in your own family and compile a list of behaviors that might be considered "territorial." Here is a series of questions to help you think territorially; however, these are only a beginning. You will probably be surprised at the length of the list you can generate.

1. Do the members of your family lock the bathroom door?
2. Do people sit in the same chairs at the table for every meal?
3. Do family members knock before entering each other's rooms?
4. Does your family close bedroom doors at night when they are sleeping?
5. Are there any special rooms at home (for example, a den, an office, a workshop) that are used only by one individual?
6. Is there a chair that "belongs" to one individual in the living room or TV room?
7. Does anyone in your family have his or her own telephone or television?

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borhood in Haifa, Israel. These interviews revealed that individuals within each family fully agreed to territorial classifications inside the home. Some areas such as living rooms, hallways, and bathrooms were public areas that were not controlled by any one family member. Bedrooms and studies, on the other hand, were individual areas that were considered to belong to one person (or more if the bedroom was shared); usually the "owners" of these areas felt very strongly that these places represented them and were places where "nobody disturbs you." Interestingly, everyone used kitchens but usually the family classified them as belonging to the mother since she was responsible for all that took place there. Other studies confirm that the territorial division of the home reflects the activity patterns of family members, and these patterns are affected by other factors such as the employment status of the mother (Ahrentzen, Levine, & Michelson, 1989). To help you think about territoriality in your own family, try it (see box How Territorial Is Your Family?).

Secondary territories Less psychologically central to the lives of their users, less exclusive, and less under the occupants' control than primary territories, **secondary territories** have a blend of public availability

8. Do people freely use each other's possessions (for example, bicycles, stereos, clothing) or must you ask permission first?
9. Does your family share hairbrushes or combs?
10. Is it acceptable in your family to eat food from someone else's plate or to drink from their glass?
11. When there is a dispute over which television program to watch, how is it resolved?
12. Does the same person do the outdoor and indoor cooking?
13. If you have a garden, does everyone in the family have equal responsibility in caring for it?
14. Are visitors to your home entertained in a different area from that usually used by the family?
15. Do the adults in the family have equal control over what decorations are used in the home?
16. When the family travels together by automobile, does the same person always drive?

and private control and serve as a bridge between primary and public territories. Examples of secondary territories include a neighborhood bar, the street in front of a person's home, or seating areas in a cafeteria or lounge. Because they are usually more difficult for outsiders to identify, the potential for misunderstanding and conflict over the use of secondary territories is great. For several years, my family and I lived in an apartment in a college dormitory where we served as dormitory directors. This building was our home, and in the summer we were the only people living there. Just inside the front door of the building between two staircases was a space large enough to store two bicycles. We quickly adopted this space as a secondary territory and regularly kept our bicycles there. When the students returned in the fall, however, they took the space as soon as we moved our bikes for even a brief time. Since we had enjoyed exclusive daily use of the space for so long, we had developed a sense of ownership over the space and felt violated and angry whenever someone else took it away. Knowing, however, that from the students' point of view this was a public area that we had no more right to than anyone else, we usually kept our discontent to ourselves. Disagreements over secondary territories are especially likely to occur when these areas are not under frequent surveillance, when they are difficult to personalize, and when they do not appear to be owned. These areas lack what Newman (1972) called **defensible space**, and we will see in later chapters that the lack of defensible space can result in very serious problems for the residents of some neighborhoods and buildings.

Public territories Places that are available to anyone on a temporary, short-term basis—provided they do not violate the rules associated with their use—are **public territories**. Common sites for public territories include telephone booths, tennis courts, space on public beaches, or seats in libraries, parks, or shopping malls. Individuals use these territories for brief periods of time to achieve some short-term goal. They are not central to their users' lives, and they are not associated with the same feelings of ownership and control that are typical of primary and secondary territories. If a public territory is used repeatedly by the same person, eventually it may function more as a secondary than as a public territory (Cotterell, 1991). On university campuses, students often choose the same seats in a library or the same shower stalls in a dormitory, and if they find someone else using them and are forced to go elsewhere, students experience a bit of discomfort. In classrooms, students tend to sit in the same seats day after day even when they are not assigned by the instructor; if students are unable to use the same seat, they usually will sit as near to it as possible. Even so, most of the times we use public spaces, they fit the description of a public territory better than any other type.

The research evidence to date indicates that Altman's distinctions between these three types of territories is valid, since people do in fact exhibit greater control in primary territories than in secondary and public



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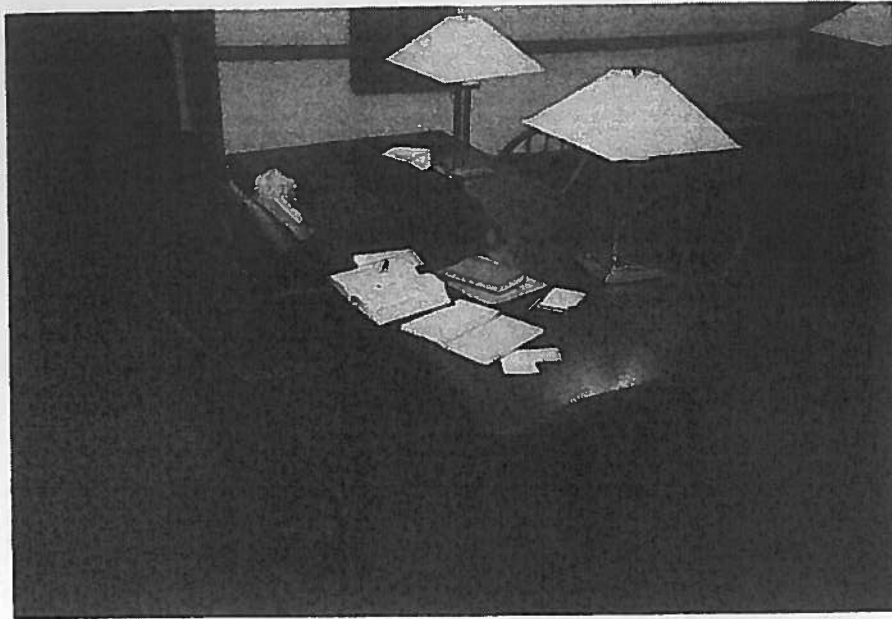


PHOTO 0-5 Territorial marking is an effective way of reserving space in public places.

territories. Subjects in studies report that they experience greater feelings of control in more central territories (Edney, 1975; Taylor & Stough, 1978), and while in their own home territories they exhibit more dominance behaviors than visitors in their territory do (Conroy & Sundstrom, 1977; Taylor & Lanni, 1981). In a study by Harris and McAndrew (1986), college students were asked to sign a petition. Half were asked to sign an inoffensive petition about which most students held no firm opinion (increasing the number of hours per week that leaf burning would be permitted in the city where the college was located). The other half were asked to sign a petition requesting an increase in the number of required courses at the college. (Needless to say, this petition was quite unpopular.) Students were better able to resist signing the unpleasant petition if approached in their dormitory rooms than if they were approached in the library or while walking on campus. For the neutral petition, no differences in the rate at which students signed were found between locations since, in this case, students did not need to resist or attempt to exert control over the situation.

Territorial Marking and Defense

An important part of human territorial behavior is territory marking. Brown (1987) points out that primary territories are often marked in ways that reflect the values and personal characteristics of their owners, while secondary and public territories are more often marked in a

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PHOTO 8-8 Graffiti is frequently used as a territorial marker by gangs.

straightforward, conscious, claiming of space. Becker (1973) investigated the way people use markers to reserve territories in public places. People use almost anything available, so that suitcases and coats might be used in a bus station, while books are used in a library. In all locations, territorial markers that are clearly personal possessions are more effective than objects that might be mistaken for litter or public property. Psychologists who studied territorial behavior on beaches found that blankets, radios, and other beach gear are the markers of choice in that setting (Edney & Jordan-Edney, 1974; Jason, Reichler, & Rucker, 1981).

Territorial markers create an effective warning system that allows people to avoid confrontations with others over public space. These markers are almost always respected by other individuals. Sommer and Becker (1969) found that the effectiveness of territorial markers varies with population pressure; that is, when the demand for a space is high, personal markers such as clothing are even more effective than less personal markers. A study of a territorial marker's effectiveness at reserving tables in a tavern indicated that under conditions of high demand, male territorial markers (coats clearly belonging to males) may be more effective than female markers (Shaffer & Sadowski, 1975).

While it is clear that people often mark their public territories, they usually will not defend these territories when they are invaded. Sommer and Becker (1969) found that neighbors would not defend a marked public territory if it was invaded during its owner's absence; Becker and Mayo (1971) discovered that even the territory's owners failed to defend their seats in a college cafeteria when they were taken by an intruder.

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Residents Are Invaded

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McAndrew, Ryckman, Horr, and Solomon (1978) found that territory holders failed to reassert their claims even when the intruder was not physically present. In this study, subjects returned to their seats in a library to find their markers pushed aside and replaced by someone else's belongings. Not a single person ever sat back down in his or her seat. These results are surprising, especially since everyone questioned in a preliminary survey said that they would definitely reclaim their space under these circumstances.

Only a few studies have found any significant defense of public territories by either occupants or neighbors. In one such study conducted at a racetrack (Aronson, 1976), 63 percent of the people sitting next to a seat that was invaded during its owner's absence confronted the invader and defended the territorial rights of the original occupant. You should note, however, that the majority of these "good neighbors" were friends or relatives of the territory holder. Another study indicated that the territory's value to the holder is an important determinant of whether it will be defended. Taylor and Brooks (1980) found that only 50 percent of those who left a marker on a library table asked intruders to move following an invasion, but 100 percent of those discovering an intruder in a previously marked library carrel did so.

Residential Burglary: When Primary Territories Are Invaded

For obvious reasons, most of the experimental studies of territorial invasion have examined public territories. However, a recent series of field studies is beginning to add important data on what happens when an individual's home is burglarized—a clear violation of a primary territory. Brown and Altman (1983) examined the territorial displays of 306 burglarized houses and compared them to nonburglarized houses. They found that certain kinds of territorial displays were much more likely to exist in nonburglarized homes than in homes that had been robbed. These included actual and symbolic boundaries such as fences, walls, alarm systems, and territorial borders. A visible owner's name and address on the property was effective as was other important evidence of the homeowner's presence, such as parked cars, toys in the yard, or yard sprinklers operating. Nonburglarized houses were more visible from neighboring houses, especially those that were immediately nearby. In contrast, burglarized houses were more likely to resemble public territories, show no traces of people's presence, and were visually more secluded. Based on this information, the sketches in Figures 6-2A and 6-2B illustrate the prototypical burglarized and nonburglarized homes.

MacDonald and Gifford (1989) asked 43 convicted male burglars to evaluate photographs of 50 single-family dwellings as potential targets for a burglary. The burglars confirmed that houses easily surveilled were the least vulnerable targets, and that visibility from a road was especially

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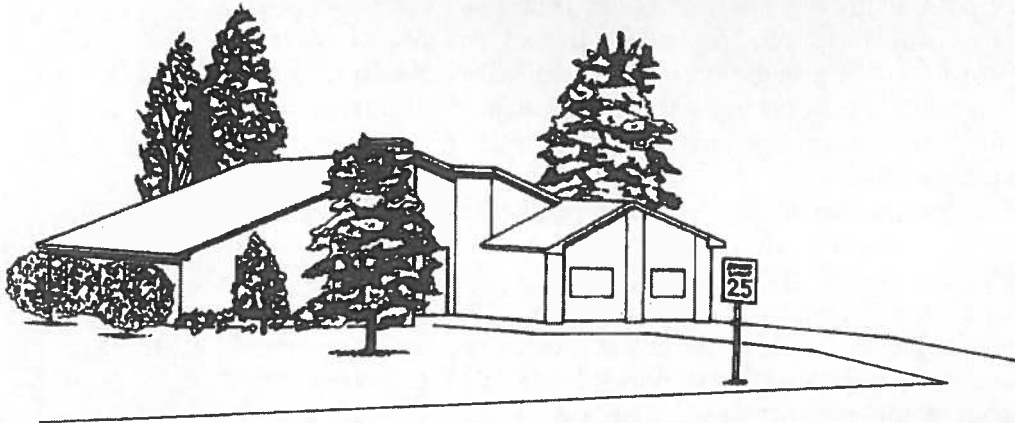


FIGURE 6-2A Prototypical burglarized home (Source: Brown, 1979)

important. On the other hand, the burglars did not feel that homeowners' territorial behavior decreased vulnerability, and the use of symbolic barriers actually seemed to encourage these men to consider the house as a target for a robbery. MacDonald and Gifford surmised that the burglars often assume that occupants who take care of their house's exterior probably possess goods that make the house a profitable target.

A few studies have focused on the homeowners' reactions to a burglary. The emotional impact goes far beyond the amount of monetary loss the homeowner experiences. Most burglary victims express deep feelings of shock, victimization, disorder, and defilement. Many compare it to rape, highlighting the central importance of primary territories in their lives (Korosec-Serfaty & Bolitt, 1986). These effects linger after the burglary and can result in permanent fears of entering or being in the home alone (Waller & Okihiro, 1978). Brown and Harris (1989) found that these negative reactions become even more extreme when property damage and ransacking accompany the burglary, or when goods high in sentimental as well as monetary value are taken. Ransacking and the loss of very personal objects underscore the victim's loss of territorial control, making the experience even more unsettling.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Territoriality refers to influencing or controlling another's actions through enforcing control over a geographic area. Territorial behavior is widespread throughout the animal kingdom, and in many species it is the basis of mating and of social organization in general.

Privacy is closely related to the concepts of personal space and territoriality. It is the selective control of access to the self or to one's group. Privacy is the process through which individuals control who they interact with and when and how these interactions will take place. Westin

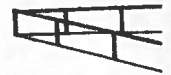


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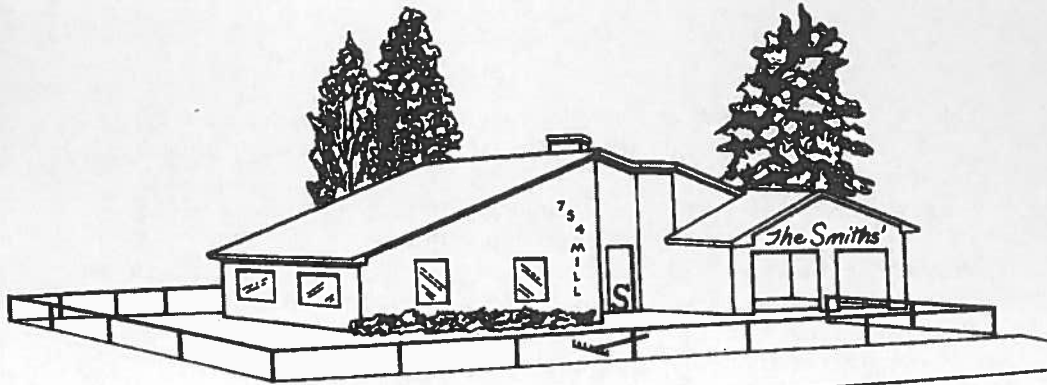


FIGURE 8-28 Prototypical nonburglarized home (Source: Brown, 1979)

(1967) described four different states of privacy: solitude, intimacy, anonymity, and reserve. Each of these aspects of privacy is important in its own right; too little privacy can seriously impair a person's sense of well-being and his or her ability to function effectively. Although different societies have different privacy needs and norms, all have developed social conventions that permit individuals to control access to themselves in some way.

Territoriality serves to reduce conflict and contributes to the smooth regulation of social interaction. Humans personalize their territories to increase feelings of ownership and advertise this ownership to others.

Altman (1975) provides a scheme for distinguishing among different types of territories. Primary territories are places in which the owners feel they have complete control most of the time, as in their own home. Secondary territories are less central in the lives of their users and less under their control but are still important. They have a blend of public availability and private control. Public territories are available to anyone for temporary, short-term use. Research clearly supports the idea that people experience greater feelings of security and control in more central, primary territories. The invasion of a primary territory, as in a home burglary, is an extremely unsettling, highly emotional experience. The invasion of public territory seems much less aversive, since most people do not even defend their public territories when they are invaded.

GLOSSARY

Anonymity A form of privacy in which the individual can appear in public and be free from identification or surveillance by others.

Defensible Space An area that readily lends itself to territorial control.

Intimacy A form of privacy in which an individual is free to be alone with friends, spouses, or lovers without interference from unwanted others.

- Lek** A communal display area used by many species of animals. Males compete for small territories on the lek, which are necessary for attracting females and mating.
- Personalization of Territory** Decorating a territory to increase feelings of ownership and advertise this ownership to others.
- Primary Territories** Places that are central to the lives of their owners and in which the owner has complete control over access and use most of the time.
- Prior-Residence Effect** The advantage enjoyed by the owner of a territory over visitors or intruders in that territory.
- Privacy** Selective control of access to the self or to one's group.
- Public Territories** Public areas that are available to anyone on a temporary, short-term basis.
- Reserve** The form of privacy in which the individual's need to limit communication about himself or herself is protected by the cooperation of others.
- Secondary Territories** Less psychologically central than primary territories and less exclusive, these have a blend of public availability and private control.
- Solitude** The opportunity to separate one's self from others and be free from observation.
- Termini Stones** Stones with the carved likeness of the god Terminus used by the ancient Romans to separate fields and define territorial boundaries.
- Territorial Defense** The active attempt to reassert territorial control following an invasion.
- Territorial Markers** Items used to indicate that a space is controlled by an individual or group.

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