SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS OF
SPATIAL CATEGORIZATION IN
MIDDLE CLASS AMERICAN HOMES, 1950-2010

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SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS OF

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Abstract: Domestic interior design, specifically in the form of home floor plans, represents an interesting topic for research that is seldom examined in depth despite its rich potential to reveal societal trends when studied in tandem with other historical data. This study begins to fill the gap in historical design research that exists due to a lack of attention to spatial trends in residential design and an overabundance of information regarding architectural style and decor. Spatial categorization within American homes has evolved over time just as styles have changed, and like aesthetic trends, these changes in arrangement of space reveal information about the people involved in teaching about, designing, and purchasing homes of a given era.

The purpose of this study was to examine spatial categorization in the "average" (three-bedroom, single-family) American home (United States Census Bureau, 2012) designed between 1950 and 2010 and to evaluate the resulting trends as valid indicators of cultural change. The public areas of the home or those most often used for socializing (e.g. kitchens, dining rooms, living rooms) were the primary focus. A solid theoretical basis was established to outline the socio-cultural background of the home itself before discussing spatial elements in relation to categorization and territories. It was the author's aim to identify and examine spatial trends through the unique perspectives of three groups or agents instrumental in the design of housing: educators, practitioners, and middle class consumers.

To represent the respective outlooks of these agents, selections from three source types were analyzed: residential planning/design textbooks, home floor plan books, and popular magazines about home design. This content analysis yielded both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative information in the form of both text and images was gleaned from textbooks about educators' spatial categorization philosophies. Similarly, magazine text and images provided qualitative evidence of middle class consumers' design ideals. Floor plans yielded both quantitative data in the form of square-footages and percentages of total area and qualitative data in the form of room names/labels. Trends in the categorization of space during the latter half of the 20th century and beginning of the new millennium were thereby assessed in an attempt to form an overall impression of the social landscape in America during that period.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Domestic interior design, specifically in the form of home floor plans, represents an interesting branch of material culture that is seldom researched in depth despite its rich potential to reveal societal trends when studied in tandem with other historical data. The superficial knowledge of residential design concepts and trends possessed by most Americans veils the need for further research and understanding. Thanks to design historians, real estate experts, and the media, many aspects of the ever-changing home have become general knowledge. Not surprisingly, homes in the United States have generally increased in square footage over the past 50 years (Housing and Household Economic Statistics, 2011). Likewise, even the casual observer of television programs and magazines devoted to interior design can attest to the current popularity of an "open concept" home that lets in copious amounts of natural light and is suited for entertaining.

This type of knowledge, as previously stated, is elementary at best, perhaps because literature on design history has more heavily concentrated on the origins of and trends in the visual aspects of *residential* design while giving more credence to spatial/usage trends in *commercial* design. Spatial categorization within American homes has evolved over time just as interior and exterior styles have changed. Like aesthetic trends, changes in the arrangement of domestic space reveal information about the people involved in teaching about, designing, and purchasing homes of a given era. It was the author's aim to identify and examine spatial trends through the unique

perspectives of three groups or agents instrumental in the design of housing: educators, practitioners, and consumers. The term, "consumers," refers to members of the middle class who reside in or at least have vested interest in single-family homes; the defining characteristics of this group will hereafter be described in depth.

The purpose of this study was to examine spatial categorization in the "average," that is, three-bedroom, single-family American home designed between 1950 and 2010, and to evaluate the resulting trends as valid indicators of cultural change. To clarify, the researcher's rationale in designating three-bedroom homes as "average" relates to U.S. census data on the number of bedrooms in single-family houses built between 1973 and 2011. These data illustrate that the percentage of newly built and existing homes with *three* bedrooms has been greater than the percentage of homes with any other number of bedrooms ($\leq$ 2 bedrooms or $\geq$ 4 bedrooms) with very few exceptions. The most notable exception to this trend has been in the Northeast. In this area from 2000 to 2011, the percentage of homes built for sale with four or more bedrooms was greater than or equal to the percentage with those with three bedrooms (United States Census Bureau, 2012). This anomaly occurs mainly outside the time period of interest in this study and is not a significant deterrent to viewing the average American homes as having three bedrooms.

Within the average home, the areas most often used for public functions or socializing (e.g. kitchens, dining rooms, living rooms) will be the primary focus. A solid theoretical basis will be established and the socio-cultural background of the home itself will be outlined before discussing spatial elements of the home in relation to categorization and territories. Key points regarding the respective influences of the three aforementioned agents will also be presented.

Selections from three source types were studied: residential planning/design textbooks, home floor plans found in plan books, and magazine articles about home design. Content analysis yielded both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative information in the form of both text

and images was gleaned from textbooks about educators' spatial utilization philosophies. Similarly, magazine text and images provided qualitative evidence of middle class, design consumers' ideals. Floor plans yielded both quantitative data in the form of square footages and percentages and qualitative data in the form of room names/labels. Once again, trends in categorization and usage of space during the latter half of the 20th century and beginning of the new millennium were thereby assessed in an attempt to evaluate home floor plans as valid indicators of social change.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Integration (Integral) Theories

Several existing theories inform this vein of research and will be presented as the basis for the following study. Integration or integral theories, the overarching system of ideas under which all proceeding concepts will fall, come from the field of environmental psychology. This group of more specific models including interactional theory, transactional theory, and organismic theory, provides a means of understanding complex human-environment relationships. Interactional theory states that people and their surroundings while separate in identity are forever enmeshed in constant interaction. Transactional theory characterizes the human-environment relationship as patterned and "mutually supportive" while organismic theory sees the same relationship as weakly delineated and interdependent (Kopec, 2006, p. 20). Interactional theory will be given preference in this case because it is the most simplified of the three integration sub-theories and offers great depth in that many other relevant concepts align with interactional constructs.

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism naturally flows from interactional theory in its examination of social processes that work together to produce a coherent society (O'Brien, 2006). This theory is

concerned with the meaning of everyday life that emerges from social interaction (Marshall, 1998). Within these interactions humans function as "social actors" to express their ideals and beliefs within their environment (O'Brien, 2006, p. 57). Objects are used as props to facilitate negotiation of relationships. The social actors may utilize props physically (e.g., constructing a wall with gated access around a neighborhood) or symbolically (e.g., building a home with the front entrance facing away from the street) (Gibbs & Davis, 1989).

The symbolic meaning of complex props such as housing is extremely nuanced; the same object or concept can be ascribed different meanings by individuals, families or groups, and cultures. Therefore it is crucial to specifically identify one's population before attempting to draw any conclusions about the meaning of symbols. Every social group is composed of and defined by the characteristics of its respective communities, households and individuals (Doyle, 1992). It is this fact that allows the present study to draw meaningful conclusions about the culture of a nation as a whole (e.g., the population) from seemingly individual sources of information.

A few dimensions of housing as a symbol include: social organization (interaction of behavior and built environment), social status (conveyance of impressions of wealth and family roles), and economic/legal status (possession of citizenship in a community or family) (Marshall, 2003). These dimensions of meaning are connotative rather than denotative. For example, when a houseguest forms an impression of their host as having high social status after viewing the home's gold-plated bathroom sinks, they are making an inference rather than a judgment that the object they viewed is in fact a gold-plated sink. In reference to domestic architecture and interior design specifically, one dimension of symbolic meaning is particularly intriguing: pragmatic meaning. Pragmatic meaning relates to interpretation of style, that is, what a specific style means to an individual or group (Nasar, 1989). Again, the importance placed on the aforementioned dimensions either separately or collectively will differ widely among cultures and individuals as well as over time (Rapoport, 2000).

Material Culture

The study of material culture provides a still deeper understanding of the human-environment relationship by emphasizing the link between artifacts and the behavior and lifestyle of members of the culture from which objects originated. A culture's artifacts can take a wide variety of forms (e.g. books, artwork, tools, furniture) and are the physical props used in social negotiation. Individuals and artifacts are dynamic forces in the shaping or manipulating of culture. In sum, the artifacts a society produces are both reflective of the group's culture as well as being instrumental in maintaining or altering that culture through social interaction (Gibbs & Davis, 1989). The importance of studying material culture should not be underestimated; Tilley, Keane, Küchler, Rowlands, and Spyer (2006) were so bold as to state "that there are dimensions of social existence that cannot be fully understood without it" (p. 1).

Structuration

While the concepts of material culture are general and apply to many fields of study, structuration is a particular facet of material culture that looks at the dialectic negotiation and reproduction of culture specifically in relation to architecture or the built environment (Goss, 1988). Tilley et al. (2006) described this ongoing state of change in "life and landscape" as "the process of *becoming*" (p. 306). According to structuration theory there are two primary elements at work in the process of becoming: agents (people) and structure (architecture). The friction caused by changes in each of these elements fuels the becoming of society as a whole (Tilley et. al., 2006). Pred (1984) emphasized the way in which ever-changing demands on a society's time and space can create the need to modify or eliminate certain activities so as to free up time and space needed for new activities.

Architectural Sociology

An additional narrowing of aforementioned theories can be found in the discipline of architectural sociology. Architectural sociology is defined as "the study of how socio-cultural phenomena influence and are influenced by [the] designed physical environment" (Smith & Bugni, 2006, p. 123) and possesses a strong link with symbolic interactionism. Three foundational principles of symbolic interactionism inform architectural sociology:

- the bilateral influence of the self and the built environment
- the built environment as a container/communicator of symbols and meanings
- the active role of the built environment (in addition to objects) in shaping human thought and actions.

Here, as in structuration theory, the built or physical environment refers to architecture in general including public and private buildings, monuments, and even neighborhoods. This definition can be extrapolated to mean housing in particular without diluting any of the theories' conceptual potency. In the home, personal culture and values are embodied and control can be exerted on an individual basis as well as on a societal level. A unique quality of evolving architecture is its capacity for being simultaneously an *agent* of change or social reform and an observable *indicator* of that change (Smith & Bugni, 2006). That is to say, the home is both a means and an end in the progress of society, an influencer of and a reaction to socio-cultural phenomena (Beaman, 2002).

Architectural Geography

The burgeoning field of architectural geography combines the traditions of cultural and historical geography for the purpose of studying the built environment (Lees, 2001). Goss (1988) states that the goal of architectural geography is to "explain architecture as a social product, as the

spatial configuration of the built environment incorporating economic, political, and ideological dimensions" (p. 394). Architecture is viewed as having both representational and performative qualities, meaning that the built environment is simultaneously a *product* that communicates meaning and a *practice* through which spaces are consumed, inhabited, and restructured. The concept of embodied practice or "living out architecture" connects architectural geography to previously discussed theories by affirming the reciprocal nature of the human-environment relationship (Lees, 2001; Llewellyn, 2003).

Some of the concepts related to structuration, architectural sociology, and architectural geography are repetitious in that they were presented in previous theories. However, each theory possesses original value and specific application to the built environment. First, structuration is unique in its connection to material culture as well as its emphasis on friction, process, and negotiation of the physical environment. Second, architectural sociology is indelibly linked to symbolic interactionism and presents a more personal or individual perspective on the relationship between culture and architecture. Lastly, architectural geography has economic and political undertones which, despite being only partially addressed in this study, are key components of any society.

Culture

Culture has thus far been mentioned numerous times but only in general terms. However, the concept merits closer inspection and definition because it is such a central theme. In discussing the theory of symbolic interactionism we established that it is through the lens of our social environment and personal history (i.e. our culture) that we as humans experience an environment and subsequently ascribe meaning to that experience (Nasar, 1989). In this way, culture provides the overarching context through which humans encounter, interpret or evaluate, and react to the world around them, specifically the built environment. Such a broad concept can undoubtedly be defined in many ways, but in this case the three following definitions of culture are most useful:

- A “system of schemata” (Rapoport, 1989, p. xii): “The total of the inherited ideas, beliefs, values, and knowledge, which constitute the shared bases of social action” (“Culture,” n.d.).

- A “way of life” (Rapoport, 1989, p. xii): “The total range of activities and ideas of a group of people with shared traditions, which are transmitted and reinforced by members of the group” (“Culture,” n.d.).

- A “tool kit” (Swidler, 1986, p. 273): the resources (e.g., symbols, practices, ideas) necessary to build one’s social paradigm used to function in society and “cop[e] with the ecological setting” (Rapoport, 1989, p. xii).

Rapoport (2000) conceptualizes culture as a filter through which individuals make judgments about and develop preferences for qualities of the built environment (see Figure 1). As both a facet of evaluating one’s environment and an ideological backdrop for action, culture is exceptionally complex. This complexity can be seen in the designation of “not feasible” applied to the theoretical link between “culture” and “built environment”.

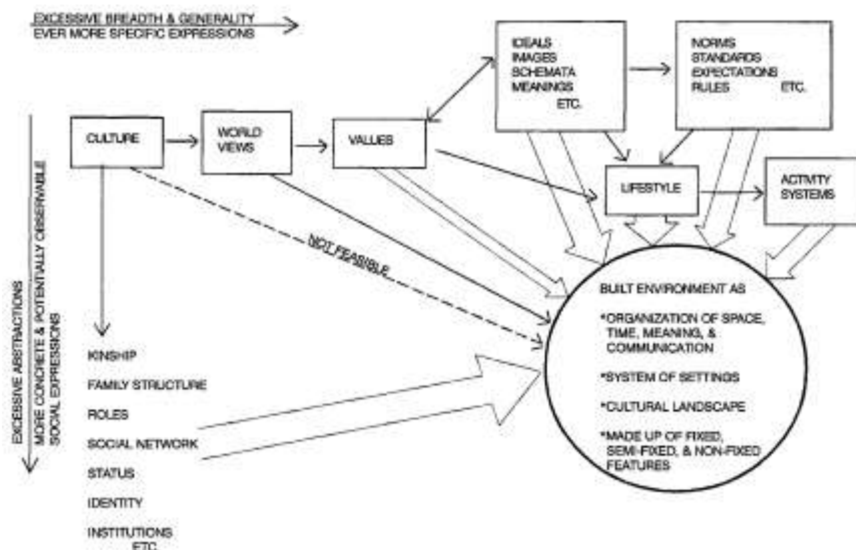

Figure 1. Model of evaluative process. This figure illustrates the process of evaluating the quality of the built environment (Rapoport, 2000).

Guidelines for effective research emphasize the need to condense complex theoretical components into the smallest possible units before attempting to test them (A. Petrova, personal communication, January 25, 2012).

Fortunately, Rapoport takes this into account and offers a “dismantled” model of culture and its effects on people’s perception of the built environment (see Figure 2).

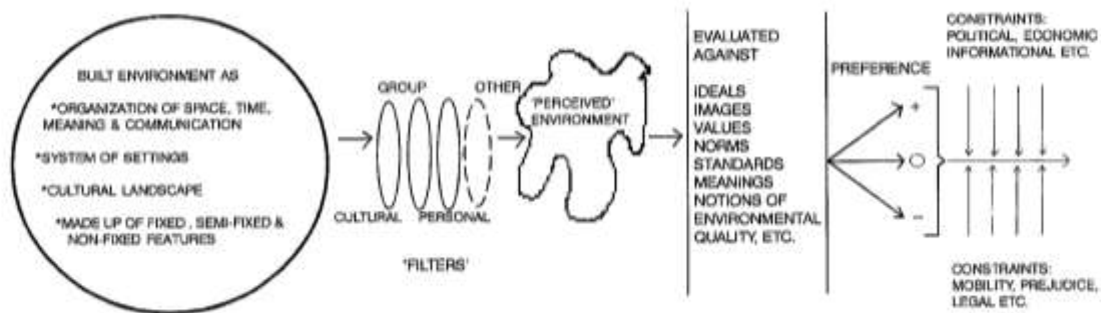

Figure 2. Model of “dismantled” culture. This figure illustrates the elements of culture and their effect on evaluation of the built environment (Rapoport, 2000).

When viewed together, these models depict the cyclical relationship of the built environment and culture that has hitherto been outlined. This cycle consists of three main actions or phases:

1. Culture dictates a person’s acceptance of the built environment as a reflection of lifestyle.

2. Lifestyle involves active manipulation of material culture that either supports existing or creates new social norms.

3. Norms are adopted as part of the collective culture which in turn influences people’s preferences for and acceptance of build environment features (Rapoport, 2000).

Lifestyle

A person's lifestyle is an expression of their cultural values which can be seen as a profile that is continually formed and updated through an individual's "choice process" (Rapoport, 1989, p. xvi). The choice of living environment is a salient part of this process especially in the context of this study. Ideally, the housing environment supports or is congruent with the inhabitant's lifestyle and, by extension, their cultural values. A lack of congruence between environment and lifestyle creates dissatisfaction which must be resolved either by adjusting the environment to match lifestyle or altering expectations to fit the existing surroundings. Again, the harmony of lifestyle and environment is present in an *ideal* situation; in reality, people frequently encounter constraints such as limited funds, time, availability, etc. when making housing-related decisions (Rapoport, 1989).

Changes, first in lifestyle and then in environment, occur because of such constraints. Priorities (i.e. values) must be rearranged as the demand on any resource is increased. Making room, whether literally or figuratively, for new and expanding demands in one aspect of life usually requires placing less importance on one or more other aspects (Pred, 1984). For example, when a child is born the parents' lifestyle changes greatly because a new demand has been introduced. They must alter the spatial organization of their home to accommodate the baby; in the absence of unclaimed space, this could mean that a craft room or office is replaced by a nursery.

While the previous example relates more to an *individual's* choice process and balancing of resources, the overarching concepts therein can be applied on a larger scale to society in general. That is, just as personal values shift throughout one's lifetime, so too the cultural values of an entire society evolve with the passage of time. The remainder of this study will focus on the broader interpretation of lifestyle which encompasses the ever-changing ethos of American culture.

Built Environment

Based on all the preceding information the reader should have a clear sense of the interactive nature of the human-environment relationship, the ongoing interplay of culture and physical space. As space is manipulated through social activity and vice versa, the idea of place emerges. Conceiving of place as a process allows us to see changing spatial arrangements as socially and culturally significant (Pred, 1984). Again, our practices and everyday lives are reflected in and altered by the built environment that surrounds us.

Space, however, is only one of four variables that are organized in the design of the built environment; time, meaning, and communication are also crucial elements of this construct (Rapoport, 1989). Meaning and communication in relation to the built environment were previously discussed as components of material culture and symbolic interactionism theories. Space, followed by time, will be addressed below as environmental variables which are instrumental in designing the built environment, specifically in the design of housing.

Spatial Organization

In discussing space as an environmental variable, we can see a reference back to the theory of architectural geography which has been aptly defined as, "The study of the spatial order of places, their character, and their manifold interaction with other places and areas at various scales" (Keiffer, 1994, p. 10). This notable connection to previously presented constructs facilitates our transition from discussing strictly theory to applying ideas that, while still based in theory, are more easily related to the tangible built environment. Here we shall examine some concepts that are central to spatial organization within the home.

Giuliani (1987) presents three theoretical models of the home based on spatial naming and usage patterns that are supported by the cultural, socio-economic, and lifestyle characteristics of the residents. First, the "Bourgeois Traditional" home type clearly separates spaces designed for

receiving guests and those for private, family use. Rooms typically serve only one function and are used for a single activity. Second, the “Modern” type is characterized by multifunctional spaces that minimize the distinction between public and private by removing controls on who can use given rooms. Hallways are largely eliminated because they are viewed as a waste of space. Personalization becomes more important to defining territories within the home since public and private spaces overlap. Third, the “Popular Traditional” type reflects the lifestyle of working-class families encompassing homes ranging in layout from simple and rural with only a kitchen and bedroom to slightly larger and more urban with the addition of a dining room. Popular Traditional homes separate public and private domains giving more space and importance to social areas at the expense of individual space (Giuliani, 1987). While these models are primarily based on Italian examples due to a lack of comparable American studies, the first two home types (Bourgeois Traditional and Modern) prove relevant to residences in the United States as well.

Just as Giuliani (1987) observed various systems of spatial organization in *Italian* housing, so Kopec (2006) drew conclusions about housing in *America*. Kopec (2006) observed that the level of segmentation (i.e. separation) of interior space reflects cultural complexity, stating that “the more complicated the society, the more complicated its structures” (p. 123). Figure 3 illustrates the changing separation of space in typical homes from the late 1800s to the 1990s. The Victorian era home has very segmented, task-specific spaces while the 1990s home lacks separation especially in the public spaces (e.g. kitchen, dining, and great room).

Figure 3. Progression of typical U.S. homes. This figure illustrates the progression from segmented to open floor plans (adapted from Kopec, 2006).

Kopec (2006) also identifies five continuums along which the spatial organization and perception of home falls depending on residents' personality, cultural background, and other individual factors:

1. Permanent versus temporary
2. Homogeneous versus differentiated
3. Communal versus noncommunal
4. Identity versus commonality
5. Openness versus closedness (p. 125)

Of these five continuums homogeneous/differentiated, communal/noncommunal, and openness/closedness hold the most relevance to this study and will be topics of further discussion.

Spatial Categorization

Categories of domestic interior spaces are typically defined by two main elements: the activities being performed and the people involved in those activities (Agan, 1956; Merrill, Crull, Tremblay, Tyler, & Carswell, 2006; Oseland & Donald, 1993). Sebba and Churchman (1983) identified four main types of areas or territories in the home based on the primary user(s) of the space:

- Individual - belonging to only one person (i.e., child's bedroom)
- Shared - belonging to a family subgroup (i.e., parents' bedroom)
- Public - belonging to the family as a whole (i.e., living room, bathroom)
- Jurisdiction - used by entire family, but primarily belonging to the one person (i.e., kitchen)

Zoning is another space planning technique that, unlike territoriality, takes into account both the user and the activities performed in a space. The three primary zones include the following:

- Public zone – where non-family members are allowed and entertaining/socializing activities are performed (i.e., foyer/entry, living room, dining room, possibly the kitchen)
- Work zone – where activities to support household are performed (i.e., kitchen, laundry area, garage)
- Private zone – where activities such as sleeping and grooming are performed by household members (i.e., bedroom, bathroom, possibly den/family room, etc.)

Because of multifunctional nature of many spaces in the home, these zones may overlap. The modern kitchen is an excellent example of a dual-zone as it is often used for both work activities

such as food preparation and public activities such as entertaining guests (Merrill, Crull, Tremblay, Tyler, & Carswell, 2006). Again we see that the practices of planning and categorizing space in interior design are functions of the attitudes and social behavior patterns that occur (or are intended to occur) in the built environment (Kopec, 2006; Sebba & Churchman, 1983).

Chronology

All the preceding information and theories hinge on the concept of change, especially change over time. Here chronology plays a particularly important role in the present study as a delimiting factor. The time frame of 1950-2010 was established in the study's introduction, but a rationale for this decision has not yet been presented. Three approximate time periods divide the 20th century in terms of housing and cultural trends: Pre-Modern (c. 1900-1916), Transition (c. 1917-1956), and Modern (c. 1957-2000) (Doan, 1997). Extending past the work of Doan (1997), the term "post-modern" could potentially be applied to the post-millennial era, 2001-present. There were several benefits in choosing to the year 1950 as a beginning point for this study; not only did that year provide a convenient half-century mark but it also represented the opening of a completely new chapter in American culture and design. Margolin (1989) recognized the significant change in design theory and writing at the close of World War II that "mark[ed] the commencement of a new historical phase in which many of the forces that shape our present economy and culture became dominant" (p. 265). The 1950s, post-war culture fully adopted the values of individualism and privacy evinced in the "American Dream" which was most powerfully manifested in owning a single-family home and filling it with the appropriate, status-building consumer items (Archer, 2005; Keiffer, 1994).

As for the close of this study's time frame, it can simply be said that entering a new millennium presents a great psychological shift and thereby a great cultural shift. While one might not expect

much deviation in culture in a single year, a notable change in ethos seemed to have occurred from 1999 to 2000 if for no other reason than people thought that the appearance of a new millennium *should* bring about a change. A prime example of this expectation is the “Y2K” scare which predicted that at “the stroke of midnight on Jan. 1, 2000…entire computer networks would crash, causing widespread dysfunction for a global population that had become irreversibly dependent on computers” (Romero, 2011). Studying the first decade of the new millennium provided a look at nearly current events and trends and also allowed for the millennial shift to solidify into cultural patterns.

It is necessary to note what factors did *not* influence time frame selection. Stylistic eras of architecture and interior design, (i.e., Queen Anne, Arts and Crafts, Modernism, etc.) while critical to the study of design history in general, were not be utilized as the primary division of time in this instance because of the great degree of chronological overlap among periods and the emphasis placed on elements of the built environment other than floor plans (i.e., façades, materials, furniture, etc.) (Harwood, May, & Sherman, 2009). These period styles served as purely supplementary sources of information in the examination of various trends and preferences represented in American housing from 1950 to 2010.

Trend Model

The following theoretical model was developed by the author as a compilation of the all the preceding information for the purpose of illustrating the process by which housing – the social product – is created. Figure 4 can be viewed in three sections: the conditions, agents, and product. First, the conditions are shown as “raw materials” entering the metaphorical “factory” and refer to the societal landscape in which all members of that culture operate. Culture, geography, and history were chosen as relevant examples of these conditions but do not represent an exhaustive list of all possible conditions. Economy, politics, and religion could, for example,

replace the pictured conditions with no significant detriment to the meaning of the model as a whole.

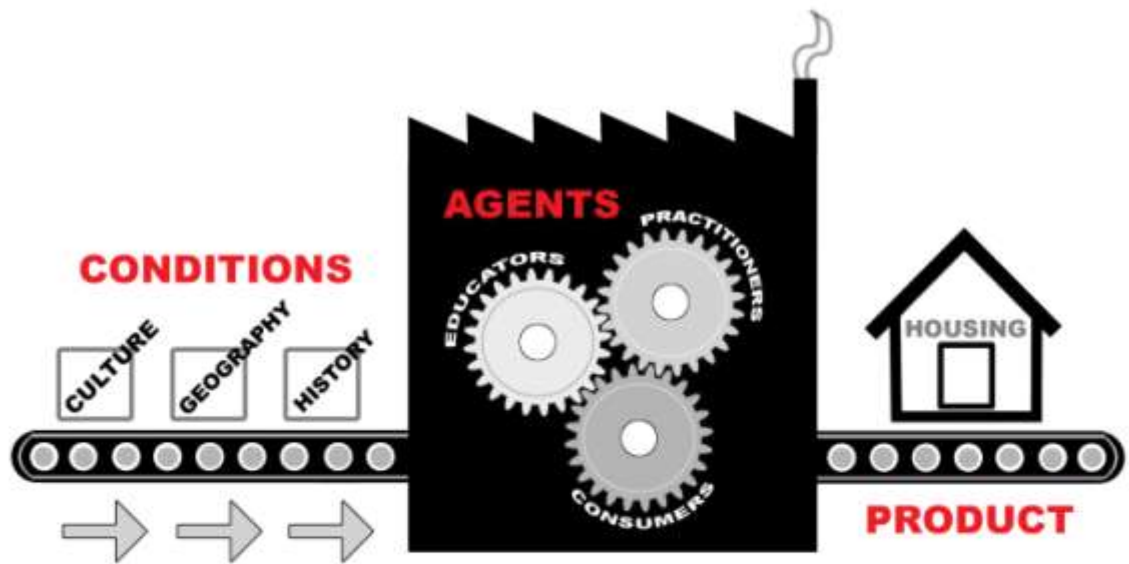

Figure 4. Proposed theoretical model of housing trend production. This figure illustrates the influence of conditions and agents on housing as a societal product.

Second, agents are depicted as “gears” which turn within the “factory” and processing the “raw materials” and maintaining the progress of operations; these agents include educators, practitioners, and consumers. As previously mentioned, the goal of this study was to present trends in spatial categorization from the perspectives of these three agents. Thus, each source type was chosen to represent one of the three points of view. The perspectives of educators who study and impart knowledge to others about the built environment were inferred from the review of residential design textbooks. Home floor plans were used to represent the perspectives of practitioners, those who design and produce the built environment. In the same manner, the views of middle class consumers who purchase/rent and inhabit the built environment were represented through popular magazine articles. Third and finally, the symbolic “product” leaving the “factory” is a simple illustration representing housing and its trends.

Class Divisions

At this juncture, it is imperative to define the "consumer" agent group by clearly explaining the descriptive term, "middle class." Before discussing the middle class specifically we must understand the general concept of social classes. A social class is defined "as a grouping of individuals with similar positions and similar political and economic interests within the [social] stratification system" (Kerbo, 2003, p. 13). That is to say, one's class is their perceived rank or level in society. Class divisions, those criteria that differentiate one class from another, are based on three main societal structures:

- occupation,
- authority, and
- property (Kerbo, 2003).

The relationship between these three structures and each of the five social classes is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1
Social Classes by Occupation, Authority, and Property

	Upper Class	Corporate Class	Middle Class		Working Class	Lower Class
Occupation Position	High	High	Medium – High		Low – Medium	Low – None
Authority Position	High	High	Low – Medium		Low – None	None
Property Ownership	High	Medium	Medium – High		Low – None	None
Occupation Example(s)	Major corporation owners	Executives, Board members	Upper: Doctors, Lawyers, Managers	Lower: Office workers, Clerks, Sales-people	Skilled/ unskilled manual laborers	Unemployed

Adapted from Kerbo, 2003

The “middle class” is aptly named as it represents the mid-range of each of the three societal structures. Because this study was both preliminary and exploratory in nature, the middle class was an attractive choice for the population of interest. Future, more in-depth studies could help to balance the body of knowledge by addressing both classes above and below the consumers in question.

The author would be remiss to imply that “upper,” “corporate,” “middle,” “working,” and “lower” are the only five classes. Scholars differ in their definition and appellation of social classes; this can be seen even within the work of a single author, as Kerbo (2003) lists “upper” and “lower” as sub-divisions of the “middle class” (see Table 1). Despite this variation, the presented information believed to represent a balanced, centrist perspective.

Objectives

From the proposed model above and the preceding review of literature, one can see that social and cultural change is closely related to change in the built environment. In further examining the relationship of lifestyle and home configuration, the following objectives are set forth:

- Identify spatial categorization trends in home floor plans published in plan books between 1950 and 2010.
- Identify spatial categorization trends in residential design textbooks published between 1950 and 2010.
- Identify spatial categorization trends in popular magazine articles published between 1950 and 2010.
- Compare spatial trends from three source types and draw conclusions about American culture during the studied time period.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Measures

To meet the study objectives, three main source types were analyzed: popular periodicals (magazines), plan books, and textbooks. Both the visual and textual content of selected magazines and textbooks were examined; primarily visual analysis was performed on plan book contents with the exception of room labels and square footages which were textually analyzed. Each source type will be discussed in turn, highlighting both sampling and data collection techniques.

Before continuing, however, the process used to select the years from which magazine articles, floor plans, and textbooks would be sampled must be described. For each source (and in the case of magazine articles, each subject) three years were selected out of each of the six studied decades, meaning a maximum of 18 years were selected. The 18 years from which textbooks would be sampled were selected first because the selection of textbooks was the most limited of the three sources. In selecting the sampling years the author first looked at years during which *any* textbooks were available followed by the location of the available book; when possible, books available at a branch of the author's university library were chosen over books that would require retrieval from the library's annex building or another library. Seventeen of the desired 18

years yielded available textbooks meeting these criteria: 1951, 1952, 1953, 1957, 1958, 1963, 1967, 1968, 1972, 1976, 1981, 1990, 1991, 1992, 2003, 2008.

Sampling years for plan books were chosen next due to the source's moderately limited selection. Again, three years per decade between 1950 and 2010 were selected: 1952, 1954, 1956, 1961, 1965, 1967, 1970, 1972, 1977, 1980, 1984, 1985, 1991, 1992, 1996, 2001, 2005, 2007. The author attempted to select 18 years which had not been chosen for textbook sampling, but was slightly limited by availability and therefore was required to use four overlapping years.

Magazine article sampling years were chosen last due to the relatively few limitations on availability. All 18 sampling years were selected with no years overlapping with either the textbook or plan book selections: 1950, 1955, 1959, 1962, 1966, 1969, 1971, 1975, 1978, 1982, 1986, 1989, 1993, 1997, 1999, 2002, 2006, 2009.

Magazines

Four American periodical titles were studied: *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Good Housekeeping*, *House Beautiful*, and *Ladies' Home Journal*. All of these titles fall into the category of "shelter" publications, meaning they are magazines "with an editorial focus on interior design, architecture, home furnishings, and often gardening" (Shelter Magazines, 2013). These sources were deemed particularly relevant to this study because of their long publication history, sustained readership, and home-related subject matter (see Table 2). Because this study used magazines to represent the perspective of *middle class* housing consumers, the reader demographics of these four titles were considered appropriate. Table 3 demonstrates the link between readers of the four selected magazines and members of the middle class. As previously mentioned, social class is based on the combination of a person's occupation, authority, and property (Kerbo, 2003). Here the high percentage of home ownership as well as the above average median income and home value

indicate that the readership of the selected periodicals are most likely members of the middle class.

Table 2
Periodical Publication Information

	Better Homes and Gardens[1]	*Good Housekeeping*[2]	*House Beautiful*[3]	*Ladies' Home Journal*[4]
Publisher	Meredith Corp.	Hearst Corp.	Hearst Corp.	Meredith Corp.
First Published	1922[5]	1885[6]	1896[7]	1883[8]
Readers/Yr. (2013)	39,993,000	20,909,000	5,493,000	10,805,000

[1]Meredith Corp., 2013a [2]Good Housekeeping, 2013a [3]Hearst Corp., 2013 [4]Meredith Corp., 2013b
[5]Better Homes and Gardens, 2013 [6]Good Housekeeping, 2013b [7]House Beautiful, 2013 [8]Ladies' Home Journal, 2013

Table 3
Periodical Readership and National Demographics

	Better Homes and Gardens[1] Readers	*Good Housekeeping*[2] Readers	*House Beautiful*[3] Readers	*Ladies' Home Journal*[4] Readers	U.S. Population[2]
Median Age	50	54.8	55	58	47
Owns Home	76%	77.6%	76%	83%	68.6%
Median Household Income (HHI)	$65,784	$61,694	$69,326	$64,902	$56,026
Median Home Value	$197,884	———	$256,586	$198,794	———
Female/Male Ratio	80 : 20	89.2 : 10.8	80 : 20	91 : 9	51.6 : 48.4

[1]Meredith Corp., 2013a [2]Good Housekeeping, 2013a [3]Hearst Corp., 2013 [4]Meredith Corp., 2013b

Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature.

Specific issues of these four periodicals were sampled from the population of titles published between 1950 and 2000 using the Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature. The Readers' Guide is a comprehensive index of articles published in 472 general-interest magazine titles. One or more volumes exist for each year beginning in 1900; within the volume, articles are categorized by subject headings which are listed alphabetically. Most categories contain more specific subheadings as well as a "See also" section that includes alternative topics located elsewhere in the same volume. After each heading and/or subheading, article citations are listed using the following format:

> Article title. Author [if given]. il [if illustrated]. Abbreviated Magazine Title. Volume Number: Page Number(s). Date

These citations can be used to find corresponding full-text articles (Salem Press, n.d.; Anderson, n.d.).

It is necessary to note that the collection of physical *Readers' Guide* volumes belonging to the university library consulted by the researcher ended after 2001. The existence and/or availability of any full-text articles from the four magazine titles published in the year 2002 or after had to be determined from the ProQuest online database. The university subscriptions accessed through ProQuest did not include *Ladies' Home Journal* and only included *Better Homes and Gardens* through 2003; full access to articles published between 2002 and 2010 was available for *House Beautiful* and *Good Housekeeping*. Sampling techniques for these articles were different than those used to obtain articles from the *Readers' Guide* and are detailed in the following section.

Sampling.

For this study, articles listed in the 1950-2010 volumes of the *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature* under the subject headings "Living Rooms," "Dining Rooms," and "Kitchens" were selected from *Better Homes and Gardens* (BHG), *Good Housekeeping* (GH), *House Beautiful* (HB), and *Ladies' Home Journal* (LHJ). Three different years were selected per decade from 1950-2010 (with a total of 18 years) from which the titles and number of articles pertaining to each of the three subjects were recorded in a spreadsheet. Figure 5 depicts an excerpt from this spreadsheet for the year 1962 and the subject "Living Rooms." Again, only articles published in the four previously mentioned magazines were taken into account.

1962 Living Rooms	**p. 1121**
Article Title	**Magazine Title**
Could this be your basement?	HB
Family rooms	BHG
Family rooms all through the house	BHG
Furnishings alone can transform a tract house	HB
Livingest room in the house	GH
Personality rooms	LHJ
Rooms America loves	LHJ
This room changed an entire house	HB
This room just looks big	BHG

Figure 5. Magazine article list by year and subject. This figure illustrates an excerpt from the full article list for the year 1962 and the subject "living rooms."

After recording article titles and grouping by year and subject, magazine articles were then randomly sampled for analysis. Each article was assigned a number between 0 and 1 using the spreadsheet program's random number generator function. As illustrated in Figure 6, the article assigned the lowest random number was selected for analysis. This process was repeated so that for each of the three subjects a maximum of 18 articles were selected for further analysis.

v. 23	1962 Living Rooms	p. 1121
Random #	**Article Title**	**Magazine Title**
0.3934400599	Could this be your basement?	HB
0.8132755142	Family rooms	BHG
0.3370058653	Family rooms all through the house	BHG
0.3142471868	Furnishings alone can transform a tract house	HB
0.1764116222	Livingest room in the house	GH
0.6543800314	Personality rooms	LHJ
0.0078974185	Rooms America loves	LHJ
0.9631455601	This room changed an entire house	HB
0.5773960724	This room just looks big	BHG

Figure 6. Magazine article sampling table by year and subject. This figure illustrates an excerpt from the full article sampling table for the year 1962 and the subject "living rooms."

As was mentioned previously, articles published in 2002 and after had to be sampled from an online database rather than from the *Readers' Guide*. Using ProQuest, the author searched first for the magazine title then searched within that title for articles with the keywords "living rooms," "dining rooms," or "kitchens." Results for a single publication year were viewed and sorted by relevance with the subjects "interior design" and, when available, "houses" selected as search criteria. With these settings in place, a maximum of five of the first listings were entered into the author's spreadsheet and the selection process was repeated for each of the magazine titles. Once article titles from all magazines, subjects, and selected years were collected and entered into the spreadsheet, the same random sampling procedure described above was utilized to select each digital magazine article.

Plan Books

Sampling.

A purposeful sample of home plans was taken so that all plans met the criterion of having exactly three bedrooms. As previously discussed, the three-bedroom home represents the "average" for American housing from 1973-2011 according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau (2012). Two databases were primarily used to obtain the initial sample of 18 home plan books, (three per decade from 1950-2010): Oklahoma State University (OSU) Library Catalog and WorldCat. The

OSU Library Catalog provides students, faculty, staff, and alumni of the university access to over 40,000 scholarly journals and periodicals as well as more than 3.5 million volumes of books among other resources (Johnson, n.d.; OSU, 2011). WorldCat is "the world's largest network of library content and services" (Online Computer Library Center [OCLC], 2012). With members around the globe WorldCat allows users to access via the internet the holdings of thousands of libraries both digitally and through interlibrary loans. Books, journal articles, music, photographs, and videos are some of the many types of data available through this database (OCLC, 2012).

The aforementioned databases were used in descending order of content accessibility. Because its resources were the most readily available to the researcher, the OSU Library Catalog was consulted first. A search was performed on the library's website for books published in the United States between 1950 and 2010 under the subject heading of "Architecture, Domestic Designs and plans." The list of search results from a given year were visually scanned first to cull out any irrelevant listings (of which there were many), then the relevant listings were exported to a list in PDF form. WorldCat was only consulted if the OSU Library failed to yield at least one plan book for selected years.

In the event that more than one relevant publication was available for a given year, each plan book title from that year was recorded in a spreadsheet and assigned a number between 0 and 1 using the program's random number generator function. The random numbers were then sorted in ascending order; the first entry (i.e., the title assigned the lowest number) was selected. This process was repeated for each year of the 18 selected years between 1950 and 2010 that yielded more than one usable plan book.

Once the 18 plan books had been selected all of the three-bedroom plans contained in each book were recorded by plan title or number in a spreadsheet. The floor plans were randomly sampled

by using the spreadsheet program's random number generator function to assign each plan a number between 0 and 1. As illustrated in Table 4, the random numbers were then sorted in ascending order; the first entry (i.e., the plan assigned the lowest number) was selected for analysis. This process was repeated so that a maximum of 18 plans was selected for further analysis.

Data Collection.

Plan books were visually analyzed with respect to names of rooms/spaces, presence/absence of rooms/spaces, and zone proportions; this information was recorded for each floor plan in table form (see Figure 7).

Year 1985	**Source** 180 Affordable Home Plans				
	Length (ft.)	**Width** (ft.)	**Area** (sq. ft.)	**Total** (sq. ft.)	**% of Total***
Private					
Bedroom (1)	12.000	16.000	192.000		
Bedroom (2)	10.000	14.000	140.000		
Bedroom (3)	11.000	15.166	166.826		
				498.826	24.93%
Public					
Recreation Room	13.000	21.000	273.000		
Living Room	13.166	22.000	289.652		
Dining Room	11.166	15.000	167.490		
				730.142	36.49%
Work					
Kitchen	11.166	14.000	156.324		
				156.324	7.81%
Other					
				615.708	30.77%
Total Livable Area					
				2001.000	100.00%
*Rounded to 2 decimal places					

Figure 7. Floor plan analysis table by year. This figure illustrates an excerpt from the full plan analysis table for the year 1985.

The plan's room/space labels were recorded and used to categorize each room/space into one of four zones: "Public," "Private," "Work," and "Other." Single rooms labeled for multiple purposes with at least one suggested purpose being a bedroom were counted as bedrooms. Using dimensions provided on the plan, the area of each room was calculated in square feet. The total area of each zone was then calculated followed by the zone's percentage of total livable area (TLA). The formulae that were used to calculate the percentage of total area for the "Private," "Public," "Work," and "Other" zones, respectively, are as follows:

$$\text{Private zone \%} = \frac{\text{Bedroom 1 area} + \text{Bedroom 2 area} + \text{Bedroom 3 area}}{\text{Total livable area (TLA)}}$$

$$\text{Public zone \%} = \frac{\text{Kitchen area}^{1} + \text{Living area} + \text{Dining area}}{\text{Total livable area (TLA)}}$$

$$\text{Work zone \%} = \frac{\text{Kitchen area}^{1} + \text{Study/Office}^{2}\text{ area} + \text{Laundry Room}^{2}\text{ area}}{\text{Total livable area (TLA)}}$$

$$\text{Other zone \%} = 100\% - (\text{Private zone \%} + \text{Public zone \%} + \text{Work zone \%})$$

[1]Categorized as belonging to either the Public or Work zone depending on configuration and adjacency. Refer to text.
[2]These are examples of *possible* Work zone rooms. The author's findings may or may not have included these or other spaces.

Please note that in the context of this portion of the study the term "area" is used in the *geometric* sense (i.e. length x width) rather than the *spatial* sense (i.e. calling a designated dining space within a kitchen an "eating area"). The number of square feet representing the TLA is almost always included with the plan information and excludes the square footage of unconditioned spaces such as the garage, porch/deck, and any other spaces used for ancillary purposes. Space indicated as being allotted for future construction or optional additions, such as basements that were not included in the total livable area, were not recorded.

As previously discussed, some spaces could be categorized into multiple zones due to the variety of functions performed therein; the kitchen is one such room. For the purposes of this study, the kitchen was categorized as a work zone if it was a predominantly enclosed space, that is, if the only means of access into the room was through a doorway(s). In contrast, kitchens were considered a part of the public zone if they were predominantly open to the surrounding areas, meaning the room was accessed through an opening larger than a typical residential doorway. In addition to access, adjacency was also considered when categorizing kitchens as either "Work" or "Public." For example, a kitchen opening to a family room or hallway was more likely to be deemed a "Work" zone than a similar kitchen which opened to a living or dining room.

Textbooks

Textbooks were deemed applicable and chosen for this study based on the following list of basic criteria:

- Focus on residential (rather than commercial)
- Emphasis on space planning (rather than furniture arrangement or décor)
- Concentration on *design* of new homes or *usage* of existing homes

It should be noted that the use of the term "textbook" is not intended to imply that only physical, printed volumes were sought. E-books or digital versions of instructional texts were not excluded from the author's search; however, no such materials were found and were therefore not considered.

Sampling.

Just as in the sampling process for plan books, textbooks were primarily sampled from two databases: the Oklahoma State University (OSU) Library Catalog and WorldCat. The Google Books search engine (http://books.google.com) was also consulted as a tertiary database after the

OSU Library Catalog and WorldCat search results were exhausted. "Google Books" became a particularly valuable resource in finding eligible textbooks because of its "Related books" function. This search engine was also used to limit lists of possible textbook (when more than one relevant title was available for a selected year) and to verify the applicability of "questionable" titles. Textbook titles were entered into "Google Books" and judged for relevance based on book description results. This process limited the probability of selecting textbooks for analysis which might, upon closer inspection, be deemed irrelevant.

The search criteria for textbooks were far more varied than those used to find plan books. This was necessary, in part, to meet the intended quota of one textbook for each of at least 3 years per decade from 1950-2010. Even with the use of three search engines, the target was not met. OSU Library holdings were densest in the 1950s and '60s and grew progressively sparser from the 1970s to 2010. WorldCat searches revealed that the holdings of other libraries were also limited during these decades, especially from the 1980s to the 2000s. The years from which the final 17 textbooks were sampled reflect this imbalance.

In addition to using varied search criteria for the purpose of meeting the quota, some flexibility was also necessary due to the changes in terminology (and therefore textbook subjects and titles) that occurred from 1950-2010. For example, the terms "interior decoration" and "interior decorating" were more commonly used in the 1950s through '70s, whereas "interior design" became standard terminology in more recent years, even as early as the 1980s. These differences were taken into account during the search process, and all keywords were selected accordingly.

Because textbook listings were so few for many of the selected years, it was rarely necessary to take a random sample from the list of relevant titles published in a given year. When this situation did occur, the same sampling process described previously was utilized (see Figure 8).

Year 1957	Source OSU Library	
Random #	Book Title	
0.2991912491	Elements of interior design and decoration	
0.3396285172	Good housekeeping book of home decoration	
0.7119640284	New creative home decorating	
0.4262165902	Guide to interior decoration	

Figure 8. Textbook sampling table by year. This figure illustrates an excerpt from the full textbook sampling table for the year 1957.

Analysis

Qualitative.

Conventional content analysis was used to study the selected popular magazine articles and textbooks. This qualitative method is useful in analyzing both textual and visual data and is characterized by open observation with the goal of describing some phenomenon (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), in this case the evolution of spatial categorization in American homes during the latter half of the 20th century and beginning of the new millennium. Each article and textbook passage was read carefully and key points were recorded. The goal of the first reading and notation process was to gain a sense of the texts and images' general themes. Subsequent review of the author's notes as well as digitally scanned images focused on dissecting information gleaned from each individual document into a set of key categories or concepts called codes. Codes were then organized into more general trends or clusters based on common relationships. This method of analysis has a very fluid nature which is evidenced in the continual shaping of codes and categories that occurred during data collection (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Traditionally when conducting content analysis, a total of 10 to 15 clusters is considered ideal; this allows for sufficient thematic breadth to encompass a large number of codes (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Due

to the specific, somewhat narrow nature of the researcher's topic, fewer than 10 clusters or trends were identified in either articles or textbook excerpts.

Quantitative.

Both the square-footages from the sampled floor plans and numerical information from the magazine articles were analyzed using quantitative, statistical methods. For each of the 18 selected plans, the following seven plan variables (Pv) were entered into the statistical analysis software package, IBM SPSS Statistics:

- Pv1: Year of publication
- Pv2: Total livable area (TLA) in square feet
- Pv3: Percentage of TLA allocated to the "Private" zone
- Pv4: Percentage of TLA allocated to the "Public" zone
- Pv5: Percentage of TLA allocated to the "Work" zone
- Pv6: Percentage of TLA allocated to the "Other" zone
- Pv7: Percentage of TLA allocated to the "Work/Other" zone

Because the "Work" and "Other" zones of some plans were indistinguishable, the final variable was created. Any plans with a percentage listed in the combined "Work/Other" zone category did not have any data entered in either of the single "Work" or "Other" zone categories. In the event that a plan did not have any square-footage allocated to one or more zones, the cell(s) for that variable was left blank.

Similarly, data from the *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature* search results was entered and analyzed in SPSS. This data included not only the sampled articles but also the titles which were

previously recorded but not chosen for content analysis, with the exception of articles from selected years during and after 2002. As previously discussed, no physical volumes of the *Readers' Guide* were available after 2001, which led the researcher to adjust sampling methods (see page 23). The following eight magazine variables (Mv) regarding data for the selected 18 years were analyzed:

- Mv1: Year of publication
- Mv2: Number of articles within "Living Rooms" subject
- Mv3: Number of articles within "Dining Rooms" subject
- Mv4: Number of articles within "Kitchens" subject
- Mv5: Number of *Better Homes and Gardens* articles
- Mv6: Number of *Good Housekeeping* articles
- Mv7: Number of *House Beautiful* articles
- Mv8: Number of *Ladies' Home Journal* articles
- Mv9: Relevance of sampled "Living Rooms" article
- Mv10: Relevance of sampled "Dining Rooms" article
- Mv11: Relevance of sampled "Kitchens" article

The correlation between Pv1 and each of the other plan variables was studied. Likewise, the researcher studied the individual correlations between Mv1 and Mv2 through Mv8. Frequencies were also generated for variables Mv9 through Mv11 to identify how many of the sampled articles within each subject (i.e. "Living Rooms," "Dining Rooms," and "Kitchens") fell into the

relevance categories “No Article,” “Irrelevant,” and “Usable.” As the label implies, the relevance category “No Article” denotes that no article from the selected year(s) was available in a given subject. Sampled articles which were deemed inconsequential to the study after review were labeled “Irrelevant.” Finally, all other magazine articles which were both available for review and considered to possess relevant content were categorized as “Usable.”

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

For the sake of clarity, this study's findings, which will be discussed in the following pages, were organized by method of analysis and presented in an order similar to the preceding "Measures" section. First the results of qualitative analysis were examined followed by the quantitative analysis results. These findings were further subdivided by the information source type. For example, data collected from periodicals were presented separately from textbook data.

Qualitative

Textbooks.

In performing content analysis on the sampled textbooks, eight clusters or general categories of information were identified:

- Purpose
- Audience
- Spatial Categories
- Trends: General
- Trends: Living Rooms

- Trends: Family/Recreation Rooms
- Trends: Dining Rooms
- Trends: Kitchens

As previously discussed, these clusters served as general groupings for more specific concepts and trends called "codes." Not every sampled textbook produced data that fit into all eight of these clusters, but information falling under the heading of most clusters was found within each source.

Between 1950 and 2010, the purposes of the analyzed textbooks, both those that were stated outright and the purposes that were inferred by the author, changed from being *inspirational* in tone and focused on *self expression* to being *instructional* in tone and focused on *technical training*. Similarly the intended audience was originally comprised of homemakers and members of the general public but evolved into a group which included home designers, architecture/design students, and trades-people. This shift in purpose and audience mirrors the changing terms used in textbook titles discussed on page 30.

Table 2 shows a summary of the spatial categories and examples of rooms or spaces that would fall into the categories; the data is organized by year.

Table 4
Spatial Categories and Examples by Year

1963	Living and Entertaining Areas	Service and Housekeeping Areas	Rest and Sleep Areas	Recreation Areas
	Entrance hall, living room, powder room, den, library, dining space, terrace, patio	Kitchen, service or laundry room, sewing equipment, utilities, outside service and	Master bedroom, children's rooms, guest room, maid's room,	Inside and outside recreation spaces, other spaces for child supervision

		drying areas, garage, extra toilets	bathrooms, additional rooms for family or infant care		
1972					
	Living Function	Eating Function	Sleeping Function	Multipurpose Function (Entertainment and Play)	
1976					
	Living Areas	Sleeping Areas	Service Areas		
	Living room, dining room, recreation or family room, den or study, special purpose rooms, foyer, outside patio, guest bathroom		Kitchen, laundry, work center, utility, garage, storage		
1981					
	Living Areas	Sleeping Areas	Service Areas		
	Living room, dining room, recreation or family room, den or study, special purpose rooms, foyer, outside patio, guest bathroom		Kitchen, laundry, work center, utility, garage, storage		
1990					
	Community Component	Privacy Component	Ceremonial Component	Functional Component	Outdoor Component
	Family room, kitchen, informal eating space, breakfast area	Library, den, bedrooms	Living room, dining room, entry hall	Basement, garage attic, other practical areas	Front and rear yards, building elevations
1992					
	Social Zones	Private Zones	Service/Work Zones		

	Living, dining, entertaining	Sleeping, dressing, hygiene	Food preparation, laundry, storage, mechanical
1994			
	Social Zones	Private Zones	Work and Support Areas
	Greeting guests, conversation, reading, quiet games, audio-visual entertainment, active indoor entertainment, outdoor entertainment, children's activities, dining		Kitchens, utility spaces, laundry facilities, sewing areas, workshop and garden rooms, general storage
2008			
	Living Areas	Sleeping Areas	Service Areas
	Living room, dining room, foyer, recreation room, special-purpose rooms, sunroom, home office		

With minor variations, the three most common categories and their respective functions or activities are:

- Social (living),
- Private (sleeping), and
- Work (service).

These categories align well with the zones used by the author (Public, Private, Work, and Other) to group spatial data collected from the sampled home floor plans.

General trends identified regarding the use and division of space included the rise in popularity of multiuse spaces and the increasing informality of American lifestyles. Figure 9 illustrates two images with captions, one taken from a 1951 textbook (left) and the other taken from a 1957 edition (right) of the same title.

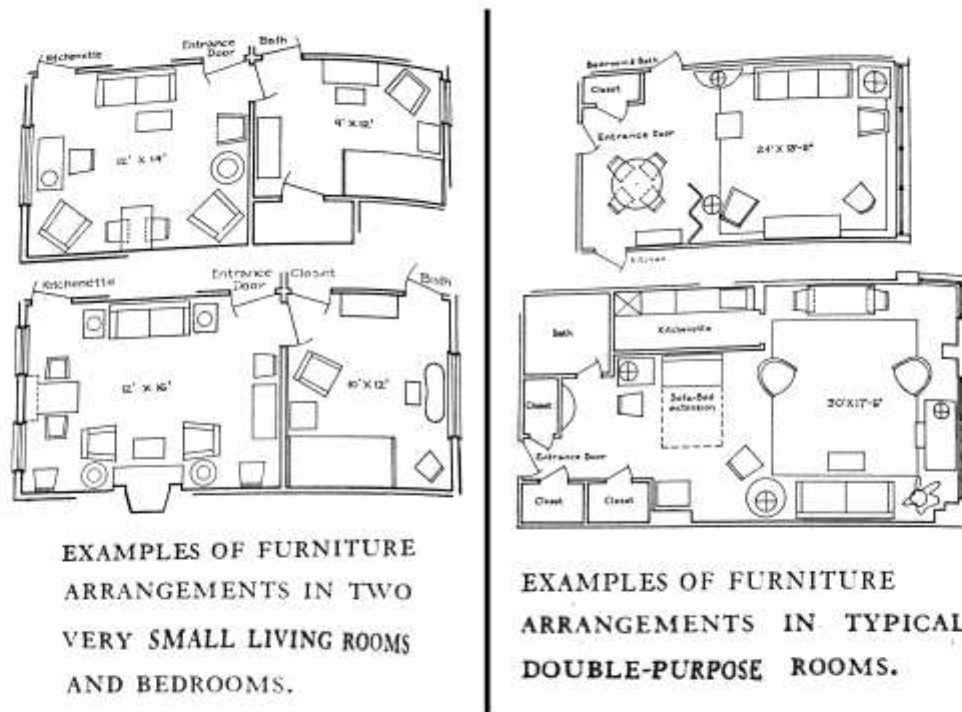

Figure 9. Trend towards multiuse spaces. This figure shows images and captions from two editions of the same textbook (adapted from Whiton, 1951 and Whiton, 1957).

A distinct change is demonstrated after just six years revealing the growing importance of multifunctional rooms and the waning use of segmentation within American homes. Evidence of this trend was seen throughout all of the studied decades, and its cause as well as its perpetuation was unanimously attributed to economic factors. Having a single room for each individual activity was frequently sited as an expensive and impractical luxury (Whiton, 1951; Townsend &

Dalzell, 1952; Obst, 1963; Harling, 1967; Alexander, 1972; Wentling, 1990; Kilmer & Kilmer, 1992; Nissen, Faulkner, & Faulkner, 1994).

As multipurpose spaces have become more prevalent, so too has the informal American lifestyle. Nissen, Faulkner, and Faulkner (1994) made the following observation:

> As modern life became less marked by formality, elaborate social rituals, and rigid distinctions, so our homes changed in response to these demands. People with active, mobile, informal lifestyles today often find a combination of the two plans, with one part of the home more open and another more closed, most responsive to their needs. (p. 282)

Wentling (1990) also noted the salience of consumer lifestyle and priorities in spatial trends, stating that "quality of space is being emphasized over quantity of space…This gradual shift in design…reflects a fundamental change in priorities. Lifestyle values are taking precedence over ease of construction" (pp. 3-4).

The analyzed textbooks portrayed the living room as a centrally important element in the home calling it "the show room of the house" (Townsend & Dalzell, 1952, p. 354), "the hub of the house" (Bradford, 1968, p. 123), and "the center of activity" (Kicklighter & Baird, 1976, p. 83). Following the trend of homes in general, living rooms were multifunctional spaces. While living rooms served to accommodate the largest number and most different types of users foot-traffic through the space to other parts of the home was discouraged, and authors debated whether the front door should open directly into the living room or into an intermediate space.

Closely related to but distinct from the living room is the family or recreation room. Nissen, Faulkner, & Faulkner (1994) best described the differing roles of living rooms and family rooms:

> For many homes today, two separate group spaces seem the only way to meet the needs of differing ages, activity groups, and household types. The first, of course, is what for

> the last century has been called the living room - a portion of the home intended as the main social area. But in the second half of the century the need for a second discrete social space came to fore. Originally considered as a device to keep the living room neat and clean, such areas (called family rooms, playrooms, recreation rooms, media rooms, multipurpose rooms, or great rooms) have increasingly become alternative spaces for group living. As a rule they are informal and easily maintained. (pp. 228-229)

As early as 1958, the family room was recognized as beginning to usurp the role of the living room as the home's main gathering space (Clements, Hahn, Hendrickson, & Flodin, 1958). A decade later, the concept of a combined kitchen-family room or a kitchen that functioned like a family room was introduced (Bradford, 1968). By the 1990s, the living and family rooms were identified as becoming completely enmeshed and renamed the "great room" (Wentling, 1990). Because of its informal function, authors even made concessions about traffic circulating through the family room (Nissen, Faulkner, & Faulkner, 1994). Entertainment, although changing in its form, was the near constant and singular purpose of the family or recreation room throughout the studied decades; authors in 1981 stated that "the basic purpose of a family recreation room is to provide a place where the family can play or pursue hobbies" (Kicklighter & Baird, 1981, p. 109).

Dining rooms have been shrinking if not disappearing since at least 1951; dining *spaces* or *areas* have become the dominant alternative to dining *rooms* and are often connected to or a part of the living area and/or kitchen. Some residual resistance to the concept of eating in the kitchen existed during the earliest sampled years (Clements, Hahn, Hendrickson, & Flodin, 1958), but the widely-held belief that it was "unfashionable" to eat in the kitchen was noted as being a convention of three to four decades prior to the studied time period (i.e., the 1910s though '20s) (Townsend & Dalzell, 1952, p. 9). By the late 1960s to mid-1970s the dining room was said to be "popular again" (Kicklighter & Baird, 1976, p. 95) and "coming back with a boom" (Bradford, 1968, p. 95). This predicted trend did not wholly persist, however; by 1990, there was a striking

disunity of opinion regarding the dining room. For some households “the dining room plays only a vestigial role in daily life,” while other “buyers have again begun to demand a ‘real’ dining room” (Wentling, 1990, p. 67).

The previously discussed shift towards multipurpose spaces for economic reasons applies to the movement away from entire rooms designated only for dining. Cost reduction was noted as an early and pervasive motivator for “the modern tendency of subordinating dining space” (Whiton, 1951, p.760). Responses to the more casual nature of American lifestyles and the “increasing interest in flexible space” also contributed to this trend (Nissen, Faulkner, & Faulkner, 1994, p. 222). Most recently, the perceived entertainment value of including guests in the food preparation process has solidified the move away from segregated dining space (Mitton & Nystuen, 2007; Kicklighter & Kicklighter, 2008). This trend will later be discussed in more detail as it relates to the spatial dynamics of the kitchen.

Perhaps the most apt description of the kitchen’s evolution was offered by Wentling (1990) who stated that, “Within the last half-century, the kitchen has evolved from a small, strictly utilitarian space to the most important room in the house” (p. 21). Kitchens of the 1950s were planned in detail with the aim of minimizing space and maximizing efficiency (Townsend & Dalzell, 1952; Trilling & Nicholas, 1953) but were later criticized for their “sterile, laboratory look” (Bradford, 1968, p. 75). By the 1960s, “the family kitchen” became the prevailing trend (Obst, 1963, p. 92), and some of the “Most Popular Sales Features” in the late 1950s included an “open kitchen” and a “kitchen eating place” (Clements, Hahn, Hendrickson, & Flodin, 1958, p. 15). Kitchen trends of the 1970s and 80s were less clear as textbook authors acknowledge kitchen types ranging from “the small efficiency unit” to “the open-plan style” (Alexander, 1972, p. 199). From 1990 to the end of the studied period, textbook authors were in more agreement on the state of the modern kitchen. The presence of or at least potential for multiple cooks in a single kitchen was presented as the norm (Wentling, 1990; Kilmer & Kilmer, 1992; Mitton & Nystuen, 2007) as was the

inclusion of some eating space within the kitchen. The latter trend even merited its own section entitled "Kitchen Eating Areas" in Kicklighter and Kicklighter's 2008 textbook.

The ever-present issue of rising costs in addition to the more recent influence of advancing technology contributed to the compression of homes' entire work/service zones with the notable exception of the kitchen area (Kilmer & Kilmer, 1992; Mitton & Nystuen, 2007). While the amount of space allotted to laundry facilities, utilities, and equipment storage was identified as being on a downward trend, the kitchen was said to be potentially immune to this slump depending mainly on the priorities and lifestyle of consumers. If, like authors of textbooks in the 1990s, homeowners viewed their kitchen as the "center of family activities" and "the heart of the home," they would be much less likely to sacrifice space from this area than from service areas with emotionless functions such as storage (Kilmer & Kilmer, 1992; Nissen, Faulkner, & Faulkner, 1994).

Not only was familial interaction a factor in the kitchen's growing social importance, but the emergence of the kitchen as a "status symbol" also played a crucial role (Kilmer & Kilmer,1992; Mitton & Nystuen, 2007). As previously discussed, food preparation took on entertainment value in the late 2000s, and kitchens were more commonly designed to allow "family and guests to join in" (Mitton & Nystuen, 2007, p. 109). This encouragement of socializing in the kitchen stands in stark contrast to the near hyper-vigilance exerted by homeowners of the past to conceal "all sight of meal preparation and service" (Clements, Hahn, Hendrickson, & Flodin, 1958, p. 29). The relative infrequence of use may be the reason kitchens were opened to guests; Americans were reported as eating away from home more than four times per week on average in the year 2000 (Mitton & Nystuen, 2007). Presumably the kitchen took on an air of novelty as it was not often being used for cooking.

Articles.

Because magazine articles were sampled by subject (i.e., living rooms, dining rooms, kitchens) it was not necessary to further group the contents as was done with textbook excerpts. However, some information gleaned from articles on one subject was found to be applicable to one or both of the other topics. Due to this overlap in subject matter and for the sake of clarity, trends identified from magazine articles will hereafter be relayed in chronological order rather than by topic.

In 1950, authors described the disappearance of specialized, single-purpose rooms and the growing popularity of multifunctional spaces; these multi-purpose rooms were often subdivided using storage walls (Hazen, 1950). The eat-in kitchen, a prime example of the ideal multifunctional space, was praised for both saving time and simplifying serving meals (Prather, 1950). Five years later, kitchens and family rooms began to be connected, but pass-throughs and sliding doors were parts of even the most "open" kitchen ("Kitchen combines beautifully," 1955; "Planning around," 1955). Similarly, doors were suggested in 1959 to shield the living room from views of the dining, laundry, and kitchen areas ("Threefold luxury," 1959). Family rooms, on the other hand, required less separation from utilitarian spaces because they were intended to serve as informal gathering places for residents and casual guests ("Fine ideas," 1959).

Family rooms persisted in popularity during the 1960s and represented the pinnacle of the multi-purpose trend with the possible inclusion of everything from an entertainment center to a second kitchen to guest accommodations ("At last," 1969). Unlike the family room, dining rooms proved to be the source of a perennial debate about "the question of dining room versus dining area" ("No cliché," 1962, p. 214). Even with a variety of "accepted versions of dining arrangements," the choice of whether or not to integrate multifunctional ideals into one's eating space proved difficult and highly subject to personal taste ("No cliché," 1962, p. 214). A similar dichotomy of opinion concerning visibility into the kitchen became apparent during the 1960s.

Depending on the level of formality and intended type of user in adjoining rooms, seeing the kitchen could either lend an air of "sociability" ("Kitchen combines beautifully," 1955, p. 83) or expose unseemly "mess or activity" ("No cliché," 1962, p. 221). A view of the kitchen from an informal space such as the family room was approved, but leaving the kitchen visually open while in the more formal dining room was discouraged.

At the beginning of the 1970s, the concept of "a living room kind of kitchen" or "a family room kitchen" was introduced (Nirenberg & Hauser, 1971, pp. 44-45). Such a room was to include all the comforts of the family and/or living room (i.e., T.V., fireplace, sofa) within a usable kitchen. Even if the family room was not *combined with* the kitchen, it was at least frequently *adjacent to* the kitchen (Lewin, 1975). Likewise, breakfast areas were often used in connection or combination with kitchens to facilitate quick, informal meals ("Great living," 1978). Kitchen designs of the 1970s were encouraged to be reflections of the users' lifestyle rather than strict adherence to formulas for creating ideal spaces (Nirenberg & Hauser, 1971; "Easy, energy-saving kitchens," 1978).

Despite the waning number of available and relevant articles (see discussion on pages 47-49), several points of interest were gathered from sampled periodicals published in the 1980s. First, the "family-room kitchen" concept was carried from the previous decade ("GH's grand kitchen," 1986, p. 148). Second, it was reported in 1982 that "65% of all [kitchen] renovations include adding an eating area" (Tully, 1982, p. 137). Lastly, Figure 10 illustrates the ongoing relationship between the kitchen, breakfast area, and family room. Note that the kitchen was remodeled to open to the new breakfast area (previously the family room) rather than to the dining room ("Made to measure," 1989). Here, just as in the 1970s, the kitchen was more associated in

function and zone to the family room than to the dining room.

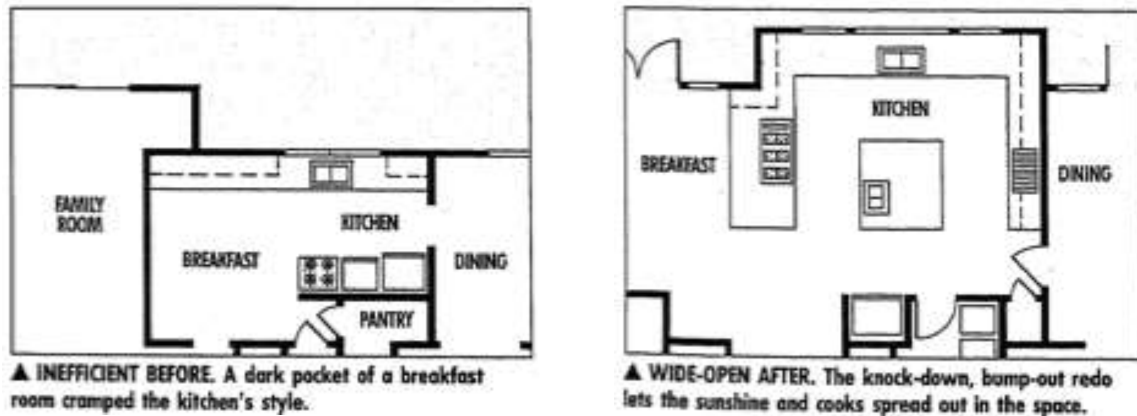

Figure 10. Kitchen, breakfast area, and family room. This figure shows kitchen area plans from before and after a renovation (adapted from “Made to measure,” 1989).

No relevant information regarding living rooms or dining rooms was sampled for the 1980s or the following decade; the only relevant information from sampled articles was about kitchens. Kitchen articles from the 1990s revealed a continuation of trends established in the ‘70s and ‘80s. Kitchens, family rooms, and breakfast areas remained connected if not combined (Mumford, 1997; Nolan, 1999) and the use of an eating area in the kitchen “for everyday meals and informal entertaining” persisted (“GH editors’ kitchens,” 1993, p. 125).

The only relevant information gathered from sampled magazine articles published between 2000 and 2010 was very general and grouped under the “Living Rooms” subject heading. In an interview with Lebanese interior designer, Mona Hajj, Penelope Green (2006) sought the designer’s meaning in using the phrase “the American way of living” (para. 8). Green suggested that the American lifestyle lacks “separation between public and private in a house” (para. 9) but Hajj explained that she intended to reference the stress level in American culture and people’s preferences for a “welcoming” atmosphere when they come home (para. 10). Here both the perspectives of the native interviewer and the foreign interviewee demonstrate unique qualities of

residential design in the U.S. as well as highlighting the differences in perception and interpretation of American culture.

Plans.

As is standard practice, room labels were utilized by the creators of each sampled plan and served to identify the rooms or areas within the plan. Table 5 lists the room labels present in the "Public" and "Work" zones of the sampled plan from each selected year. Please note that according to the author's criteria (see page 30), the single plans sampled from books published in the years 1965, 1992, 1996, 2001, and 2005 did not have any rooms or areas that could be categorized as belonging to the "Work" zone.

Table 5
Room Labels by Year and Zone

	Public Zone	Work Zone
1954	DR, GR, LR	K
1956	FR/DR, LR	K, L
1961	DR, LR	K
1965	LR/DR/K (combined)	
1967	DR, LR	K
1970	DR, FR, LR	K
1972	DR, FR, LR	K
1977	DR, FR, LR	K
1980	DR, FR, LR	K
1984	DR, FR, LR, N	K, L
1985	DR, LR, RR	K
1991	DR, GR, B	K
1992	DR, FR, K, M/S	
1996	B, DR, F, GR, K	
2001	B, DR, FR, K, LR	
2005	DR, E, K, LR	
2007	B, DR, FR, LR	K, L

Legend

B – Breakfast	DR – Dining Room/Area	E – Eating Area
F – Foyer	FR – Family Room	GR – Great Room
K – Kitchen	L – Laundry	LR – Living Room/Area
M/S – Media/Study	N – Nook	RR – Recreation Room

From the information presented in Table 5, we can see that among the sampled floor plans the presence of a general living area (consisting of a living room, family room and/or great room), a dining room or area, and a kitchen has been ubiquitous. Breakfast nooks or eating areas appeared in 1984 and were present in five out of seven of the following selected years. The kitchen's movement from the "Work" zone to the "Public" zone from 1992 to 2005 suggests a trend which could potentially continue into the future. Because the kitchen was again categorized in the "Work" zone in 2007, further research would be required to determine if the plan from this year marked the end of the previous trend or was merely nonrepresentative of a perpetuating trend.

Quantitative

Plans.

Utilizing IBM's Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, correlations were run among the year of publication and each of six other variables (see Table 6). None of the correlations were found to be significant.

Table 6

Correlations Among Plan Variables

	Year of Publication	Total Livable Area	Private Zone %	Public Zone %	Work Zone %	Other Zone %	Work/ Other Zone %
Year of Publication	_____	.435*	.205*	.318*	-.446*	-.168*	-.351*

* p = n.s.

Articles.

For the quantitative data regarding magazine articles, correlations among the year of publication and each of seven other variables were determined using SPSS (see Table 7). Only two of the seven correlations were found to be non-significant, while all five of the remaining correlations were significant at the $p < 0.01$ level. The significant correlations were all negative; this suggests an inverse relationship between the two variables. For example, the number of articles published about dining rooms has *decreased* as the number of years elapsed since the beginning of the studied time period has *increased*.

Table 7
Correlations Among Magazine Variables

	Year of Publication	# of Living Room Articles	# of Dining Room Articles	# of Kitchen Articles	# of *Better Homes & Gardens* Articles	# of *Good House-keeping* Articles	# of *House Beautiful* Articles	# of *Ladies' Home Journal* Articles
Year of Publication	_____	-.778**	-.754**	-.795**	-.819**	-.093*	-.502*	-.821**

* p = n.s.
** $p < 0.01$ level.

The frequencies of the three article relevance variables were also calculated. Table 8 illustrates the frequencies of the three relevance categories ("No Article," "Irrelevant," and "Usable") under each subject heading ("Living Rooms," "Dining Rooms," and "Kitchens").

Table 8
Article Relevance Frequencies by Subject

"Living Rooms" Relevance

	Frequency	Percent
No Article	3	16.7
Irrelevant	10	55.6
Usable	5	27.8
Total	18	100.0

"Dining Rooms" Relevance

	Frequency	Percent
No Article	6	33.3

Irrelevant	7	38.9
Usable	5	27.8
Total	18	100.0

"Kitchens" Relevance

	Frequency	Percent
No Article	---	---
Irrelevant	3	16.7
Usable	15	83.3
Total	18	100.0

Availability and relevance of articles varied significantly not only among the three subjects but also across time. Figures 11-13 illustrate the relevance category associated with the sampled article for each selected year. The data are divided by subject, and the years in which usable articles were sampled are noted.

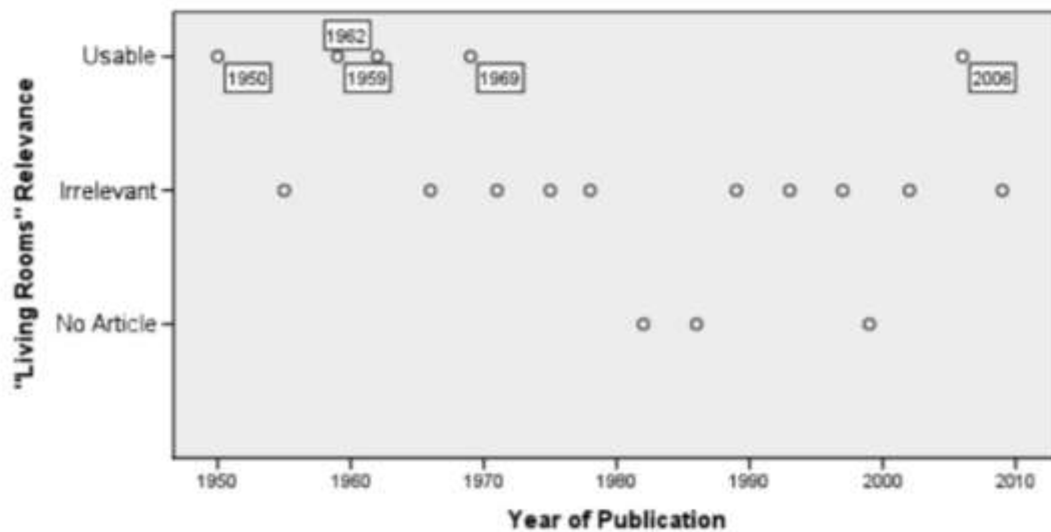

Figure 11. Scatter plot of living room article relevance by year.
This figure shows the relevance of sampled magazine article by year of publication and highlights the years in which usable articles were found.

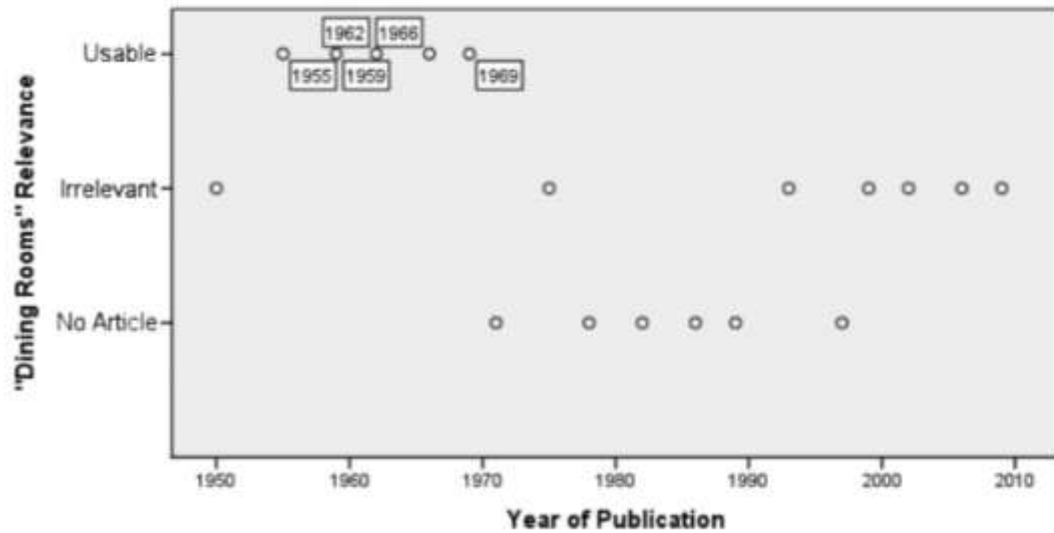

Figure 12. Scatter plot of dining room article relevance by year.
This figure shows the relevance of sampled magazine article by year of publication and highlights the years in which usable articles were found.

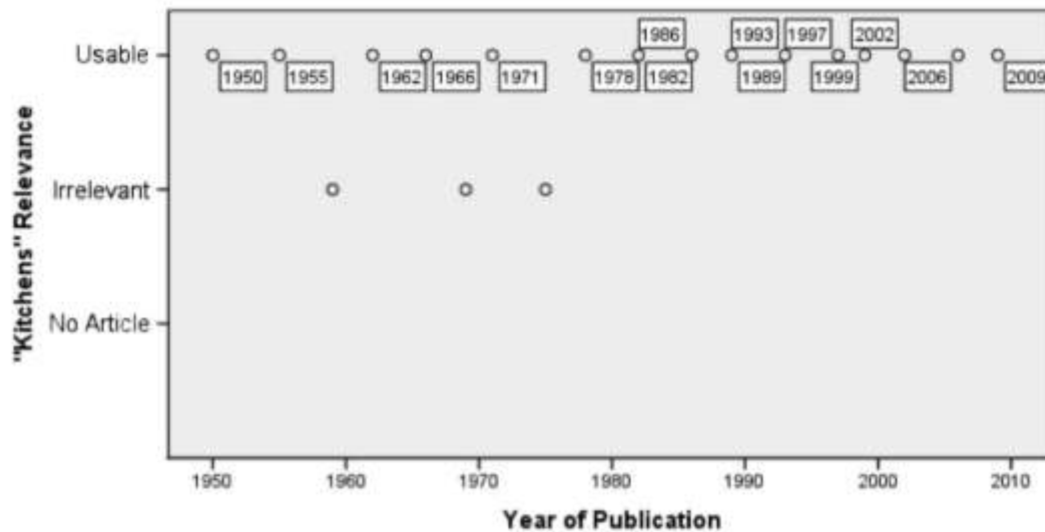

Figure 13. Scatter plot of kitchen article relevance by year.
This figure shows the relevance of sampled magazine article by year of publication and highlights the years in which usable articles were found.

Finally, each article that was deemed irrelevant by the researcher was discarded for one or more reasons. These reasons and their respective frequencies are listed in Table 9. The reason

accounting for the majority (65.2%) of irrelevance was that the article was focused on "Decoration/decorating" rather than spatial categorization.

Table 9
Article Irrelevance Frequencies by Focus

	Frequency	Percent
Decoration/decorating	15	65.2
Furniture placement/organization	3	13.0
Remodeling	2	8.7
Paint colors	1	4.3
A showroom/specific example	1	4.3
A designer/specific project	1	4.3
Total	23	100.0

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Discussion

As a whole, the findings of this study were in strong agreement with the five main theories previously presented by the author. Specific examples of this agreement, particularly resulting from the analyzed magazine article and textbook content, will be discussed in the subsequent paragraphs. In this section, an order similar to that of the "Review of Literature" will be followed.

First, symbolic interactionism was proven to be a relevant theoretical framework for this study as it emphasized the ability of housing to convey the symbolic quality of social status (see page 5; Marshall, 2003). The kitchen was heralded as a "status symbol" by textbook authors in both 1992 and 2007 (see page 44; Kilmer & Kilmer,1992; Mitton & Nystuen, 2007). Rapoport's (2000) study of culture and recognition of the value and meaning attributed to various aspects of home design is also supported by these findings (see pages 9 and 10).

Second, material culture's assertion that artifacts reflect culture (see page 6; Gibbs & Davis, 1989) is evidenced in the changing of analyzed textbooks' intended audience and purpose over time (see page 37). The changes in purpose, from inspirational to instructional, and audience, from homemaker to home designer, mirror the cultural changes that simultaneously occurred

within interior design as a profession. The twentieth century contained the massive transition from interior *decorating* to interior *design* in which the practice of planning and improving the home environment began to be culturally accepted as work worthy of a credentialed professional rather than the jurisdiction of hobbyist and aesthetes ("About Interior Design," n.d.).

Third, structuration as a theory emphasizes the friction created by the interplay of people and the built environment (Tilley et. al., 2006). An example of this conflict is the ever-shifting requirements placed on our time and space by the many activities in our daily lives (see page 6; Pred, 1984). Changing priorities and activities were obvious motivators for change in the spatial arrangement of homes. Magazine article and textbook findings demonstrated the rising popularity of multipurpose rooms (see pages 40 and 45) and information gathered from floor plans revealed the general fluidity of spatial organization, categorization, and usage (see pages 48 and 49).

Fourth, architectural sociology's position as "the study of how socio-cultural phenomena influence and are influenced by [the] designed physical environment" (Smith & Bugni, 2006, p. 123) strongly relates to the authors observations from design textbooks. The phenomena of both changing gender roles and economic conditions supply several examples of the inter-influential relationship between society and the built environment. A shift in social expectations such as gender roles is likely responsible for the increased occurrence/acceptance of multiple household members cooking in the same kitchen (see page 43; Wentling, 1990; Kilmer & Kilmer, 1992; Mitton & Nystuen, 2007). In other words, a socio-cultural phenomenon was followed by change in lifestyle which in turn influenced the design of the built environment, specifically in the kitchen and eating areas of the home.

Likewise, negative changes in the economy were frequently cited by textbook authors as the reason for the disappearance of single-purpose rooms and the increase of multifunctional spaces

(see pages 40 and 41; Whiton, 1951; Townsend & Dalzell, 1952; Obst, 1963; Harling, 1967; Alexander, 1972; Wentling, 1990; Kilmer & Kilmer, 1992; Nissen, Faulkner, & Faulkner, 1994). The acknowledgement of economic issues also ties into the fifth theory, architectural geography (see pages 7 and 8). Architectural geography is unique in its inclusion of economic considerations and, clearly, a relevant perspective. The pertinence of this theory is demonstrated by the substantial number of authors referencing the economy's role in the shaping of built environment.

Summary

The perspectives of three distinct agents in the production of housing trends (educators, practitioners, and middle class consumers) were examined with strikingly unified results. Data gathered from textbooks, home floor plans, and popular magazine articles all point to the increasingly informal nature of American society in which separation of users and activities within the home has become largely obsolete. Lifestyle and personal preferences have trumped convention and rigid cultural standards inside the home while the mounting pressure and expectations of the outside world have made the idea of home as a haven or retreat all the more attractive.

This exploratory study undoubtedly met the objectives of identifying spatial trends in plans, textbooks, and articles published between 1950 and 2010. A further comparison of these trends as well as a discussion of the author's conclusions will be made in the following paragraphs. In addition to comparing trends among sources, it is necessary to discuss the relationship between the findings of this study and the established concepts presented in the literature review. The present study's results were in agreement with the reviewed literature on all points with one notable exception. In 2011, a working paper from Housing and Household Economic Statistics stated that homes in the United States have generally increased in square footage over the past 50

years. While this statement does not seem to merit contradiction, the author's findings did not agree; no significant correlation was found between the total livable area and year of publication of the sampled home floor plans (see page 46). The two attributes of this study that most reasonably explain this discrepancy are 1) the smaller sample size and 2) the limitation placed on the total number of bedrooms.

The work of Kopec (2006) is perhaps most perfectly aligned with the findings of this study. As previously noted, Kopec (2006) made the apt observation that "the more complicated the society, the more complicated its structures" (p. 123); his depiction of three typical home floor plans (see Figure 3, p. 14) – from the late 1800s, the 1950s, and the 1990s – epitomizes this study's results. Likewise, three of the five continuums noted by the same author provide excellent vocabulary to describe the spatial trends identified in this study; on average, American homes have evolved from being "differentiated" to "homogeneous," "noncommunal" to "communal," and exhibiting a measure of "closedness" to being defined by "openness" (Kopec, 2006, p. 125).

Interpretation of Results

While the trends identified from qualitative analysis of magazine articles and textbook excerpts are fairly self-explanatory, the quantitative data derived from home plans and magazine articles may require more interpretation to be fully understood. Surprisingly, there were no significant correlations found among the year of publication and any of the other six plan variables (see Table 3, p. 46). Due to the increasing importance placed on informal interaction spaces such as family rooms and eat-in kitchens, it was the author's expectation that the percentage of total livable area (TLA) allocated to the "Public" zone would have a significant, positive correlation to year of publication. Similarly, the shifting categorization of the kitchen as a public space rather than a work space led the author to expect that the "Work" zone would have a significant, negative correlation to the year of publication. In sum, it was supposed that the amount of space

devoted to public or social activities would increase from in plans from 1950 to 2010 and the amount of space devoted to work or service activities would decrease during that time. Further research would be required to determine the cause of the disparity between the author's expectations and their findings.

The quantitative data regarding magazine articles also call for a measure of interpretation. The lack of significant correlation between the number of *Good Housekeeping* articles and the year of publication as well as between the number of *House Beautiful* articles and the year of publication gives rise to questions of cause especially since a significant, negative correlation existed between the year and all five of the other magazine variables (see Table 4, p. 46). The only attribute unique to *Good Housekeeping* and *House Beautiful* articles was their availability in digital format through the year 2010. As discussed on page 23, the sampling technique changed for articles published from 2002 to 2010 because physical volumes of the *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature* were no longer available. *Ladies' Home Journal* was not available online and *Better Homes and Gardens* was only available online through 2003, meaning *Good Housekeeping* and *House Beautiful* articles had an overall greater potential to be sampled. Whether this fact was a significant influencing factor of the variance in quantitative results is unclear.

Strengths and Limitations

The present study has multiple definitive strengths, including:

- a rich theoretical background,
- a six-decade time span ,
- a multi-methodological approach, and
- a triadic perspective.

Even the strongest study has limitations, however. The limitation which is perhaps the most substantial as well as the most difficult to avoid is that of the perpetual gap between records and reality. The imperative to acknowledge this limitation was eloquently stated by Blunt (2005) who clearly recognized "the connections and disjunctures between idealized designs and the embodied practices of everyday domestic life" (p. 507).

Both a strength and a limitation of this study is the concept of regionalism. On the one hand, identifying trends that apply to an entire nation could be considered a great strength; on the other hand, neglecting the subtleties of regional differences would be an unfortunate oversight and a definite limitation. This study was designed in an attempt to balance the positive and negative aspects of regionalism. The author acknowledges the differences in exterior style and interior décor across regions but has chosen not to concentrate on this element of domestic architecture. Rather, priority was given to spatial trends and the idea that the home with respect to the plan remains relatively constant across regions during a given time period.

Lastly, this study was limited by its singular focus on the middle class and the reliance on "shelter" publications, which, by definition, cater to a mid-level audience rather than focusing on high design or lower income housing issues (P. Hebert, personal communication, November 14, 2013). An expanded selection of periodical sources could have created a more balanced representation of the nation as a whole if publications targeting the upper and lower limits of the social class hierarchy were also studied. Similarly, analyzing publications with a more specific regional focus would have provided a greater range of applicability to the study. In sum, the author deemed the preceding strengths and following implications to more than counteract the detriment of any limitations.

Implications

As is evident in the spatial organization of our homes, the United States has developed and continues to possess a culture of informality in which social boundaries have diminished in relevance or have disappeared completely. In light of this national direction, several groups could take action to remain abreast of the current and potential future residential space planning trends. These groups include but are not limited to the following:

- Interior designers
- Architects
- Real estate agents
- Property developers/managers

Attention to cultural tendencies of the nation as a whole is not outside of the scope of these groups' responsibilities, especially when such information is applied to how their clients function within the environment that they as professionals either created or promoted.

Educators and researchers could be included in the preceding list but for different reasons. Not only could members of academia be more aware of the socio-cultural implications of design, but they could also contribute research on the subject of spatial categorization in greater quantity and depth than was possible in the current study. Recommendations for such research are discussed below.

Recommendations for Future Research

Further research utilizing similar methodology could focus on one or more variations of this study's main theme. Examples of such modified foci include:

- A particular region of the country
- Changes in gender roles
- The influence of technology
- The perspective of upper and/or lower class consumers

Future research could build on the information presented in this study by presenting a comparison of data from other country or by looking at more sources within a narrower timeframe (e.g. including a single decade). Alternatively, a study with a much broader timeline (e.g. including multiple centuries) could also be conducted to show more dramatic changes in spatial and cultural trends. To showcase changes in *usage* of space rather than spatial categorization/organization, one could study changes in the floor plans of existing homes due to renovation or repurposing. Of course, these suggestions represent only a few of the possible directions for future study.

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