



6.11 What does the visitor do here when not given any clues by the office occupant (sitting at 'X')? Sit in isolation against the wall at A, move a chair up to the desk at B? Or perhaps even perch on the corner of the occupant's desk at C? Does this offer a useful spatial version of a personality test, as the original occupant argued? (after Amos Rapoport)

for example, was the door to the front, to the side or behind? Where was the window? Where was the visitor's chair? And so on. He analysed his results into a number of basic arrangements, and found that these were correlated with job occupations. He found that in all the government offices and virtually all the commercial offices he studied the door was visible from the chair behind the desk. However, only a quarter of academics used this arrangement. In a study I did of tax inspectors' offices I found the most common arrangement used the desk to block off space, which clearly became the occupant's exclusive territory into which the visitor was not invited. The desk was a veritable barrier. The tax inspectors would typically sit with the window behind them or at least over their shoulder. Of course this affords good light on the desk surface, but it also puts any visitor seated opposite at a distinct disadvantage (Fig. 6.12).

One of my students did a study of the way in which university lecturers arranged their offices, using similar techniques. In simple terms, the seniority of the lecturer was clearly reflected in the room arrangements. The more junior lecturers, perhaps only recent graduates themselves,