



6.14 A bar in an English public house laid out as if for a chess competition! Could the arrangement be made more sympathetic to the behavioural setting needed?

could be remembered. In one bar I studied the overall geometry was rather long and narrow, which was in itself not problematic (Fig. 6.14). The bar was doing very poorly, and was dramatically less popular than another bar in the same pub. We discovered that the cleaner was responding to the linearity of the space by arranging tables on a long row with seats on either side as if laid out for a huge chess competition. The density of the arrangement was such that it was hard to move the furniture later, and clearly the setting was unsuitable for most people's needs. Those attracted to it were the solitary types who in turn gave off an air of defiant defence of their space, which discouraged others from coming in. I spent some time watching people look into the bar and then, sensing the unfriendly atmosphere, leave.

One year when discussing these ideas with my students they decided to change the seating arrangement in our departmental coffee bar. Here, seats are traditionally laid out in a very regular pattern familiar to those who attend the typical doctor's waiting room. The students came up with a much more sociopetal arrangement far better suited to groups sitting around chatting, as students do over a cup of coffee. They decided to put theory into practice and re-organized the space. However, the next morning we found that the cleaner had returned all the chairs to what she clearly regarded as their normal position. Since