

EXTENDED-STAY HOTEL AS HOME: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

by

TERRI WINGATE LEWINSON

(Under the direction of June Gary Hopps)

ABSTRACT

Housing plays an important interpersonal and sociopolitical role in American culture. Perceptions of personal achievement and life satisfaction in adulthood are often determined by the ability to maintain a career, purchase a nice home, raise a family, and afford the extra luxuries of life. In American culture, housing size, type, and location has always held deeper meanings about one's societal position and importance. Residents' experiences and relationships with a dwelling place have effects on psychological and social wellbeing. These relationships also influence residents' perceptions of their living space as home. Despite the importance of a home, daily struggle for housing affordability is an unfortunate reality in American culture.

Today, many of America's working poor live transient lives doubled-up with relatives, in shelters and hotels, and in extreme situations, on the street. Low-income residents living in hotels as a housing solution are culturally invisible in society. The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the relationships existing between residents and their extended-stay hotel dwelling places through descriptions of home. Ten participants were asked (1) How do extended-stay residents describe their hotel dwelling as home? (2) What aspects of the extended-stay living space contributed to or detracted from achieving a sense of home? And, (3) what strategies do hotel residents use to shape their environment to meet physical, psychological, and

social atmosphere of a home? In addition to interviews, respondents also took photographs of their dwelling place and described in detail what about the selected places related to feeling like home. Findings of this study indicated that the hotel was only considered a temporary home while other housing arrangements were being planned. There were physical, psychological, and social aspects of the hotel that contributed to and detracted from the place feeling like home. Finally, residents either adapted their behavior or adjusted the environment to create a home at the hotel. Implications based on these findings were presented and future research recommendations were made.

INDEX WORDS: Home, Extended-Stay hotel, Affordable housing, Housing design, Person-environment relationships

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by

TERRI WINGATE LEWINSON

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MSW, University of Georgia, 2001

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TERRI WINGATE LEWINSON

Major Professor: June Gary Hopps

Committee: Maurice C. Daniels
Patricia M. Reeves

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
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DEDICATION

To my mom, the Late Bettye Louise Cooke Wingate for leaving with me the important message
to “get your education because no one can take that from you!”

To my dad, Walter Wingate for continually reminding me “if it was easy, everyone would have a
PhD.”

To the ten families who participated in this study. I admire your will “to make it.”

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to understand the relationships existing between residents and their extended-stay hotel dwelling through descriptions of home. In this chapter, the background of the problem is introduced by reviewing various perspectives on the social history of housing and its impact on housing affordability. Also, a statement of the problem under study is discussed and research questions specific to this study are outlined. The significance of this study is also highlighted.

Background of the Problem

On March 27, 2000, the United States Census Bureau counted 170,706 people living in emergency transition shelters, which included hotels (A. C. Smith & Smith, 2001b). The southern region followed the northeast and Midwest regions, respectively, accounting for 42,471 people in this count (A. C. Smith & Smith). New York (18%) and California (16%) carried an overwhelming representative percentage of the number of people in emergency transitional shelters. In Georgia, nearly 3% or 4,774 people were counted in this demographic (A. C. Smith & Smith). Of this 4,774 people, 3,736 resided in Metropolitan Atlanta (A. C. Smith & Smith). These numbers only represented a snapshot of individuals with housing problems (Sommer, 2001). Only people who were using emergency and transitional shelters during the survey on March 27, 2000 were counted. And those residing in other types of accommodations, such as battered women shelters, doubled-up households, or living on the streets in a transient lifestyle were not tallied in this enumeration. Neither were homeless people afraid to use emergency and

transitional shelters due to the associated victimization in such facilities (Development, 2004). Families struggling with housing stability are many in America, and it is important to understand how stressors, such as limited finances and few housing choices, affect personal and family well-being.

Housing problems are central issues in people's lives. The home environment should provide safety, shelter, and a stable base for meeting other living needs. When the dwelling conditions cause stress, there can be a disruption in the positive functioning and well being of individuals and their families because housing and health are related in several ways (Byrd & Clayton, 2000; Fullilove & Fullilove, 2000). Housing provides shelter, storage for essential items, a setting for household communal life, protection from diseases, injuries, and other exterior hazards (Anderson et al., 2003). Stone (1993) stressed the need for recognizing how the financial burden of high housing costs affects many other aspects of people's lives. Due to these high housing costs, the ability to purchase healthy foods, healthcare, recreation, and other needs becomes compromised.

Despite the importance of a house in the lives of its inhabitants, a home sets the stage for restorative psychological and social well-being. A house can be defined as a physical dwelling to meet a shelter need. However, a home is a place, space, or feeling created by its inhabitants. Joseph Rykwert (1993), an architect, found home in the fire-burning hearth of a house, metaphorically pointing to the center of life in the concept of home:

“House” means shelter, and implies edges, walls, doors, and roofs—and the whole repertory of the fabric. “Home” does not require any building, even if a house always does. You can make a home anywhere: a little tinder, even some waste paper, a few matches, or a cigarette lighter is all you need. In our technically advanced civilization, it

can be secured with less trouble (but a great deal of equipment) by a VCR tape, which will make flames leap up on your television screen at the push of a button. (p. 50)

A domestic space has sociopolitical, psychological, physical, and emotional relationships with its residents. Historically, a person's interpersonal and social sense of worth has been determined and regulated by housing type, size, and location. Also, people place a stamp of identity on their living spaces and often develop emotional attachments to the objects and places within. Further, the physical character of the built environment can influence and foster feelings of "comfort, safety, and productivity... [or] feelings of powerlessness or stress" (P. A. Bell, Greene, Fisher, & Baum, 2001, p. 372).

Housing in America has played a significant role in the social lives of Americans (G. Wright, 1981). In the process of establishing a new nation and accumulating wealth, housing has been used to establish a national identity, set moral codes for society, and define personal worth (Howe, 2002; G. Wright). Architecturally, American housing has also been an expression of cultural norms, customs, and fears that have shifted through various design traditions and political climates (Howe; Kunstler, 1993). Although a variety of design options are available to many families, some families have not been able to afford houses that express personal identity due to financial constraints, legal and non-legal restrictions, and regulations (Bobo, 2001; Hanchett, 2001). Most relevant to this study was how the continuing trend of increasing housing costs has made buying or renting shelter out of the reach of low and medium income families (Chakrabarty, 1996; Coalition, 2004). Housing costs remain a critical concern for many American families and have implications for individual and family well-being and stability (Anderson et al., 2003; Bobo, 2001; M. Stone, 1993).

In 1981, Gwendolyn Wright, an architectural historian, presented a richly narrative essay on the development of residential design and domestic architecture in a social context. Her essay brought awareness to how the history of housing in America has played a significant sociopolitical role in the lives of Americans. Entitled, *Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America*, this essay examined how residential architecture encouraged certain cultural traditions and influenced family and societal customs. According to her paradigm, historically, social, religious, and political leaders used housing as an instrument to conform people to a higher societal standard, or more accurately, a strong work ethic.

Wright (1981) pointed out that because of the large demand for labor to build a nation and accumulate wealth, people who were societal prominent used housing to reward the hardworking and motivate those considered lazy. During the days of the Puritans, priests and persons of high religious positions would make decisions about the moral codes of society. People who worked hard and conformed to those standards were rewarded with land and housing, with the exception of Indians, slaves, and indentured servants. The various housing types allocated symbolically represented a person's worth in society.

Although no section of the country was exempt from this master-servant approach to housing, this imbalanced housing division was most prominent in the colonial south. Slave masters had large, comfortable homes that sat at the front of the property, whereas slaves, who were perceived as sub-human and unworthy, lived in substandard and decrepit housing structures located out-of-sight in the back of residences (Du Bois, 1971; Vlach, 1993). This hierarchal arrangement of housing was also apparent among business and factory owners who lived in large homes that signified their importance, but provided their laborers smaller living quarters that signified their subordination. According to Wright (1981), housing designs became more

responsive to the tasks of female homemakers and firmly shaped the societal role of women as caregivers.

According to professor of Architecture and American Studies at Yale University, Dolores Hayden (2002), today's American "houses and neighborhoods form an architecture of gender unsuited to twenty-first century life" (p. 29). Although designers built housing during wartime that supported the role of women as both industrial workers and caretakers, the single-family detached dwelling that is prominent today represents a shaping of women's roles as homemaker. For the male breadwinner, the home is a haven to rest and recuperate. However, for the woman, home is a domestic workplace and training ground for her children. Hayden asserted that this model of the "dream home" supports a housing crisis that marginalizes various household types including single parent, young couple, and single-person and senior families. She called for a "search for more satisfactory patterns of housing" (p. 31), an identification of "the deepest needs and desires associated with the ideal of home" (p. 31), and an examination of "the relationship between better housing design and public space" (p. 31).

Housing historian Lawrence Vale (2000) also provided a historical perspective of housing's socialization role for American families. He asserted that housing poor families has been a concern since the time of the Puritans. Vale used the concept of "public neighbor" (p. 8) to convey both the social obligation (public) and the spatial proximity (neighbor) to set up his argument on the historical ambivalence of the polity to meet the needs of its poorest constituents. The strength of support from this public obligation is based on whether you are a citizen or non-citizen and, further if you are a worthy or unworthy individual (Vale).

The idea of housing as a privilege was also discussed in a qualitative ethnographic study by Alisse Waterston (1999) of women living in a transitional housing program. As a criticism of

the sociological practice of categorizing people, she pointed out how society often characterizes the chronic and transitionally homeless people as a homogeneous group who are lazy and undeserving of better housing choices if they have not worked hard for these choices. The misperception is that homeless people do not work hard, when in fact they often work more hours per week than the average middle-income wage earner (Waterston). Further, she pointed out that American society exploits this population for income accumulation and then blames them for their exploited condition. Therefore, people perceive the conditions of the homeless and those at-risk for homelessness as personal failures. The implicit message here is that these people are social deviants, and their housing struggles are a result of their inability to plan and manage money appropriately.

Political housing advocate Michael Stone (1993) provided a systemic explanation for why families struggle with housing costs. Beginning with an examination of the economic struggle of many Americans to maintain their basic household needs, he contributed the concept of shelter poverty¹. Some families are housed but live in shelter poverty because they are unable to afford the other necessities of life. Stone pointed out that many Americans contribute far too much of their income to housing costs and are, therefore, left to neglect other needs such as proper nutrition and medical care. In fact, the Department of Housing and Development (HUD) and Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) estimated that in 2000, janitors spent 51% of their income on housing costs. Other vocations were over the suggested 25% income ratio also (e.g., retail salespersons - 50%, nurses – 29 %, bio-technicians- 28%). In addition, the Joint Center tabulations of the 1999 American Housing Survey reported that households who were

¹ According to Stone (2006), housing costs are not flexible, therefore, shelter poor households are those that “cannot meet its nonhousing needs at some minimum level of adequacy after paying for housing” (p. 44).

moderately or severely financially burdened paid between 30% and 50% of their income for housing (Studies, 2002).

Further, policy analyst, Benjamin Bobo (2001) credited the free housing market with the inaccessibility and un-affordability of housing for African-Americans and also with maintaining racial segregation in residential settings. According to his perspective, the supply and demand of economic resources regulates the free market, which systematically creates a locking out effect for African-American buyers due to the legacy of civil injustice and economic disparity between white and black Americans. In essence, “the exclusion of people from certain areas brings into focus the locking effect phenomenon” (p. 14). This process occurs by the “the power of the market mechanism to separate people spatially into zones and to virtually take away their ability to move freely among the zones” (p. 14). In practice, the free market overbids many who could or would otherwise purchase a home out of the competitive house-buying activity. In addition, Bobo asserted that African-Americans are locked out of other suitable housing options due to regulations on minimum housing lot sizes, public zoning, and lender apathy. Whereas larger minimum lot sizes are too expensive for African-Americans, smaller minimum lots, which may be more affordable, are in less desirable neighborhoods. Public zoning policies may effectively restrict low-income housing or apartments in particular where residents in private subdivisions resist them. Discriminatory practices among mortgaging lending institutions have also scrutinized African-American applicants more stringently and avoided investment in business ventures in these same communities, therefore encouraging blight and neighborhood decline.

Given the impact of these Jim Crow Era practices on economic disparity, African-Americans cannot fairly compete in a free-market system that will always respond to the desires of those who have more financial resources. Current research on the rates of black isolation and

segregation in neighborhoods has supported Bobo's (2001) assertions; these inequities remain high despite federal programming, such as Section 8 and down-payment assistance to low-income families, to dissolve this housing accessibility problem (Abramson, Tobin, & VanderGoot, 1995; DeRango, 2001; Massey & Denton, 1993).

Converging various perspectives on the social history of housing begins to draw a picture of why housing is unequally distributed in America and out of reach for some (Coalition, 2004). Primarily, leaders used domestic architecture as a tool to forge a national identity and set societal standards of the model family type and member roles. These leaders denied access to preferable housing for those members of society they perceived as standing outside of these standards and allocated less desirable housing to these deviants. There has been a hierarchical arrangement of housing types, styles and quality based on a person's perceived worth in society. Wealth and societal prestige afforded one with housing that represented one's standing. If you were poor, you were not worth much, and your housing allocation was at the whim of the socially and politically prominent. Another common strand across the literature on American housing history is that there has always been a concern about how to house poor and oppressed individuals and families. Some of the responses to this question have been institutional in design, including slave quarters, almshouses, settlement housing, tenements, and high-rise or low-density public housing (Vale, 2000; Vlach, 1993; G. Wright, 1981). In addition, to make housing more decent and affordable, local and federal governments implemented policies, subsidies, and specific building standards. However, despite these architectural responses and federal programs²,

² There are a number of funding streams that are tapped into from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to assist local governments and states in community projects promoting affordable housing for Georgia residents. These funding sources are Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME), and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA). These annual grants

ownership of housing is still out of reach for many families (Coalition, 2004; Colton, 2003; M. Stone, 1993).

Even in the post-Depression period, families have sought make-shift temporary and long-term housing in hotels to avoid being homeless and remain sheltered (Groth, 1994). The hotel as a family home is not a new phenomenon in American history, but it has received only scant attention in academic scholarship (Baker & Funaro, 1955; Belasco, 1979; Hayner, 1930; Hooker, 1936; Jakle, 1981; Jakle, Sculle, & Rogers, 1996). However, recently there has been scholarly attention paid to hotels and motels as a historical landmark and cultural icon (Groth, 1994; Jakle et al., 1996; Witzel, 2000). Motels as an integral part of the hospitality industry are making a strong financial showing in the market, and franchisers are beginning to recognize the importance of retaining consumers long-term in extended-stay accommodations for stable profit-making (Alisau, 2002; Salomon, 1996). Long-term residents are important to the extended-stay establishment. What are the perceptions of the environment, as home, to residents?

It is tempting to assert that the environment of extended-stay hotels, as commercial entities, cannot adequately meet the needs of individuals seeking a home because of the cookie-cutter spatial design, transient resident movement, and concerns about privacy, safety, and individual expression. However, the design of hotel rooms often mimics the comforts of traditional home decor so residents can feel “at home” (Jakle et al., 1996). Throughout the history of hotels, specifically motels, designers have attempted to find the perfect balance of travel accommodations and homeliness (Jakle et al., 1996).

provide funding for community infrastructure, acquisitioning land, building or refurbishing homes, public activities and services, and economic development/job creation plans. In addition, there are initiatives to strengthen neighborhoods such as America’s Renewal Communities, Urban Empowerment Zones, and Enterprise Communities Initiative (RC/EZ/EC), which provide tax incentives for resources and economic support to low-income neighborhoods (HUD Website, 2004).

Home as a concept speaks to a relationship with place, and a hotel is a type of place (Jakle et al., 1996). Therefore, how would residents in extended-stay hotels describe their home? How do residents achieve a sense of home inside extended-stay hotels? In addition, what kinds of relationships are built between residents and their extended-stay hotel environment?

Statement of the Problem

Some families are unable to establish a home in houses or apartments because of the lack of accessible or affordable housing. Even with the variety of housing affordability programs serving low and moderate-income families, there are still individuals who fall short of housing stability. However, some families may have the opportunity to double up, meaning one or several members residing together, with extended family members or live in hotels. Unfortunately, common complaints about extended-stay hotel living are that these weekly rate rooms provide little space for families and the facilities are inadequate for meeting personal and family needs, and can be potentially dangerous due to criminal behavior of guests (Ramage & Moss, 2004). The importance of a home environment on individual and family well-being cannot be understated. However, little is known about how residents establish a sense of “home” in extended-stay hotels.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to understand the relationships existing between residents and their extended-stay hotel dwelling places through descriptions of home. Specifically:

- How would these residents describe their hotel dwelling as home?
- What aspects of the extended-stay living space contribute to or detract from achieving a sense of home?

- What strategies do hotel residents use to shape their environment to meet the physical, psychological, and social atmosphere of a home?

Significance of the Study

Americans must become more aware and cognizant of the living conditions of our nation's low-income families. This study will provide valuable insight into the lifestyles of this population of people. Politicians and community workers can learn from a study like this how they can better serve families that fall under the United States median income range³ (Figure 1) but have not yet fallen into chronic homeless conditions.

Another benefit of this study is the opportunity for participants to give their own voice and face to the conditions in which they reside. Participants become visible to the community and their needs become communicated to planners, politicians, and practitioners who develop policies and practices in an effort to improve the living conditions of this population.

This research inquiry originates from a belief in housing as a basic need for people. Maslow (1968) identified a Hierarchy of Needs, which stated that deficiency and growth needs must be met before a person can self-actualize and act unselfishly. These needs are: physiologic, safety, love, esteem, and actualization (Green, 2000; Gwynne, 1997). From his perspective, as long as people are motivated to meet deficiency and growth needs, they will continue to grow into self-actualization. A premise of this perspective is that in order to reach higher-order needs, an individual must adequately meet lower level needs. Therefore, before individuals can be

³ Median Income has been defined by the United States Census Bureau as “the point that divides the household income distribution into halves, one half having incomes above the median and the other having incomes below the median. The median is based on the income distribution of all households, including those with no income” (Bureau, 2006, p. 2).

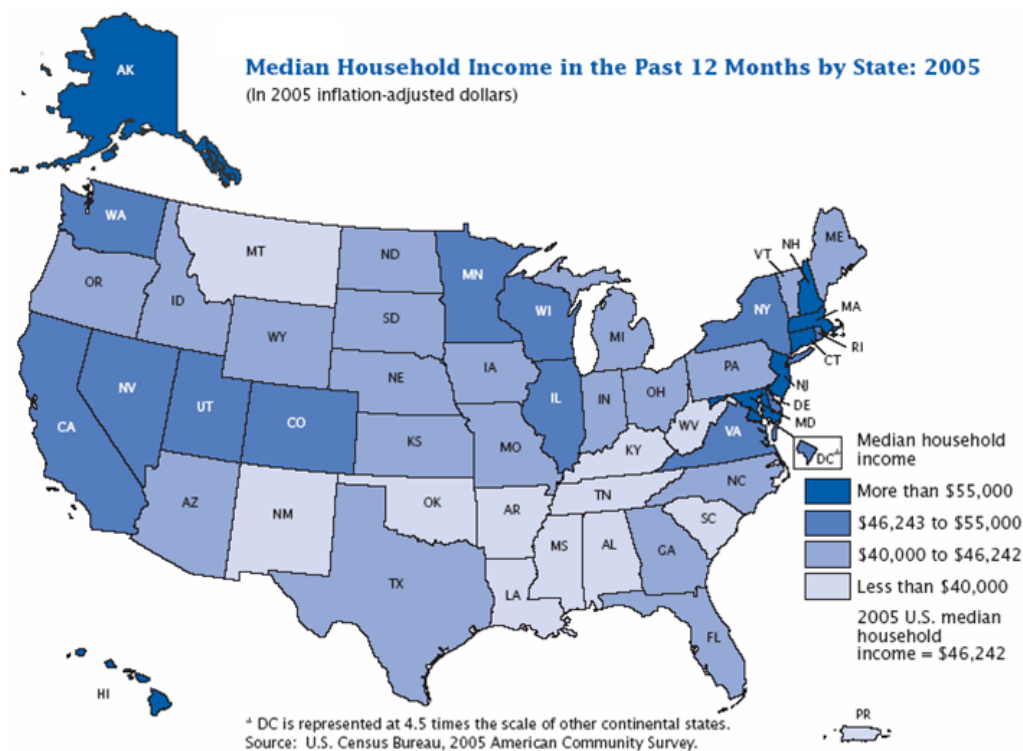


Figure 1: United States Income Median by State

motivated to satisfy a safety need, such as a sense a security, they must be able to meet physiological needs like eating, sleeping, relieving pain, and maintaining shelter. Similarly, before individuals can be motivated to improve self-esteem they must have reached levels of satisfaction in basic physiologic needs, safety needs, and social needs (feeling as though they are loved and respected) (Gunter, 2000). Housing plays an essential role in providing the context for which families work to get needs met (Gunter, 2000). It is a key component, as “safety needs refer to the drive to obtain a secure, predictable, habitable, non-threatening environment in which to live. We need to feel free from physical or psychological harm. Establishing a home represents a central aspect of satisfying this need” (p. 8).

Environmental psychologist, Toby Israel (2003), built on Maslow’s self-actualizing model by proposing a home self-actualizing model. In this model, housing needs are identified

in Maslow's pyramidal mold to "emphasize the vital role of the environment as part of the very foundation upon which future satisfaction is built" (p. 55). According to this perspective, there are four hierarchical levels before reaching self-actualization of housing needs:

- Home as shelter for safety and protection
- Home as psychological satisfaction for self-expression and sharing love and belongings
- Home as social satisfaction for privacy, independence, freedom, dignity and participating in a community
- Home as aesthetic satisfaction for appreciating beauty (p. 56)

On the most basic level, finding protective shelter is of great importance, especially to those who are homeless. However, housing that only meets this most basic need is shortsighted and will not nurture the wholeness of a person's unique potential; hence the failure of the high-rise public housing solution of the mid-twentieth century (Israel, 2003, pp. 58-59). Housing must also help one express individuality and identity for psychological satisfaction. To achieve a sense of social satisfaction, the home environment must provide some level of personal space and privacy, with attention to interior/exterior space and social distancing as territoriality is important in everyday interaction with friends and acquaintances (Israel). The aesthetic qualities of home provide a place for personal creativity and for individuals to rest, restore, rejuvenate, and engage in personal creativity while appreciating the beauty of their surroundings.

It is important that social workers are able to recognize unmet needs of clientele in order to assist these individuals in maximizing personal potential and reaching higher levels of self-actualization. Also, given the person-in-environment orientation of the profession, social workers must be competent in assessing how housing environments affect client well-being,

behavior, and relationships (June Gary Hopps, Pinderhughes, & Shankar, 1995; Maluccio, 2000).

In addition, housing concerns may influence social work assessments in clinical and community work. Some of the relevant issues in considering clinical intervention might center on how the family's home environment affects behaviors, relationship dynamics (dyads, triads), member roles, family rules, coping mechanisms, etc. Such questions might be:

- In a small living area, how do children find the space necessary for recreational and creative play?
- Does the livable space accommodate socialization with peers, friends, and extended family members?
- Can the family achieve feelings of security and permanency in a transient hotel environment where residency depends on meeting weekly or nightly fees?
- In a one-room hotel space, how do residents create privacy and needed personal space to avoid crowding and yet maximize positive family interactions?
- In community practice, how can social workers engage in discussions and collaborate with planners and architects to understand how the hotel environment designs can accommodate the living needs of its longer-term residents?
- How can the hospitality industry enhance this transient living environment to avoid social isolation, external safety problems, and personal space violations among long-term residents?
- How can external physical structures be designed in the community space to enhance community cohesiveness, recreation, and safety?

In Chapter Two, a social and design history of American housing and the affordability crisis will be outlined, and an examination of the concept of home, its characteristics, and the dimensions of a sense of home will follow.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand the relationships existing between residents and their extended-stay hotel dwelling places through descriptions of home. This study sought to understand: (1) how these residents described their hotel dwelling as home. (2) What aspects of the extended-stay living space contributed to or detracted from achieving a sense of home. And, (3) what strategies did hotel residents use to shape their environment to meet the physical, psychological, and social atmosphere of a home.

This chapter reviews the influences of culture and sociopolitical climate on housing design, as well as, the use of interior home spaces in a historical context. There is also a discussion of problems accessing and affording traditional housing and the use of hotels as an alternate housing option. After reviewing the literature on the meaning of “home,” this chapter concludes with a theoretical framework for understanding the relationship between behavior and environment and factors contributing to one’s “sense of home.”

American Housing: A Social and Design History

The social history of American housing design is quite compelling. From the time of the Puritans, politicians, community shapers, and planners have used housing design to set cultural values and norms representing the dominant ideologies of the time (G. Wright, 1981). In addition, architects, builders, and planners have designed housing styles based upon perceptions of the people who would be residing in these structures. A nation of indigenous people and

immigrants, the continuing evolution of styles has placed a multicultural stamp on American housing (Howe, 2002; Upton & National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States., 1986).

Housing design has always been a reflection of the security and identity of a nation (Howe, 2002). Along with shelter, houses define private space and provide a public face to the world representing specific values (Howe). As such, there has never been a single identification of American housing; only housing that can be understood in terms of the various people who have incorporated traditions and values across this diverse land (Howe).

Pre- Colonial America: Prior to Late 1600s

Before the European settlers arrived in America, about one million Native American people belonging to nearly two hundred nations inhabited the land and utilized natural materials to create complex housing traditions reflecting many spiritual and social ideals (Handlin, 2004; Waldman, 1999). For Native Americans, housing was communal and the centerpiece for passing on customs for multigenerational family members. Home design was simple but functional and the location and arrangement allowed a multiplicity of tribal groups to maintain their distinct cultural lifestyles.

Native American housing design was a function of climate protective needs, available natural resources, and communal living patterns and customs (Carley, 1994). Longhouses (multifamily dwelling), built in the tree-dense Northeast by the Iroquois, Algonquin and Mohawk tribes were long rectangular structures of wood and woven tree-bark mats, which provided central tribal cohesion for non-transient extended families. The Algonquin tribe also constructed smaller wigwam structures made from bent wood and shaped like a dome for traveling away from their villages (Upton & National Trust for Historic Preservation in the

United States., 1986). The wigwam housed a central fire ring and a sleeping pallet. There was also a smoke hole in the top for ventilation and a window opening on the side of the structure for remaining aware of the outside activity (Howe, 2002).

Pueblos, built in the scorching southwest by Navaho, Hopi, Apache, Acoma and Zuni tribes, were sun baked adobe clay structures with flat roofs of many levels. These energy-efficient housing structures absorbed the sun's heat during the day and redistributed the warmth into the interior of the house at night (Carley, 1994). Tipis, most widely associated with Native Americans, were cone-shaped transient housing structures used by semi-nomadic buffalo-hunting tribes of the Plains such as Cherokee, Sioux and Blackfoot tribes. The use of skins on the standing wooden poles allowed the structures to have a consistent internal temperature despite climate changes. Also, the Inuit (Eskimo) tribes built snow houses (igloos) seasonally by cutting and stacking blocks of ice which insulated warmth for its inhabitants (Waldman, 1999).

These Native American structures were creative and efficient; some with extended roofs for sun and wind protection and raised platforms to protect them from snakes, pests, and predators. They also used interior/ exterior ladders for reaching higher levels of the structures and for protection from invading tribes. The building practices were so well suited to the land's resources in the south that Spanish settlers later incorporated Native American design into newer buildings that still exist today (Handlin, 2004). Further, many of these "primitive" designs are now being reintroduced into post-modern housing design. One example is the tamped earth homes historically and currently represented in Australia, China, and Turkey (Bechtel, 1997).

Colonial / Rural America: Late 1600s - Late 1830s

Europeans came to America in search of a better way of life (Hayden, 2002). The difficult trip across the Atlantic, as well as the harsh conditions of the land left many newcomers

sick and struggling with poverty (Trattner, 1999). Among the first colonists in the new world, Puritan priests and persons of high religious positions designed and arranged housing to reinforce prevalent moral codes of society. People who worked hard and conformed to those standards were rewarded with land and housing. Perceptions of a person's worth were symbolically represented in the style and size of a house and land that one was allocated to have (G. Wright, 1981). Puritans in New England hoped to create "a city upon a hill" and Quakers in Pennsylvania sought to create "a city of brotherly love" (Hayden).

Colonial houses were more conservative in tradition and built more for function than fashion. The earliest European housing structures were English wigwams and dugouts that provided necessary shelter. Later, families lived in smaller cottages of one and two rooms, but these spaces provided little in comfort or décor. As diverse immigrant groups inhabited various areas of America housing types mimicked homes from their native homelands. These early homes had solid frames with big hearths in the middle of the unit for cooking and keeping warm. Builders constructed the interior and exterior walls from simple wattle and daub materials to clay and thatch. Ceilings were low and the windows were small and few. These housing units sometimes had one and a half to two stories to provide storage space and sleeping quarters (Howe, 2002). The spaces in these early houses were used to reinforce the ideal that people existed only in a social context and that individual privacy was often not recognized within the family unit (G. Wright, 1981). The following excerpt describes the close space usage of family members in the typical colonial household:

In the seventeenth-century colonial house plan, there were rarely more than two downstairs rooms. The hall, or keeping room, was the center of the family's waking life: the place for cooking, eating, making soap and candles, spinning yarn and weaving

homespun cloth, sewing shoes, repairing tools, keeping accounts, and reading Scripture. Women and men, children and servants, worked together, under each other's watchful eye...The parlor was the other downstairs room in a typical two-room house. Here bodies were laid in state, honored guests were received, and the family treasures...were proudly displayed... [This room also] contained the parents' bed. (p. 15)

These early settlers built communities based on the values of mutual economic and social dependence, as well as, the balance between personal and social space and responsibility (Hayden, 2002). Generous neighbors initially assisted people who were too sick or too poor to provide for themselves and their families. However, as the colonies grew in size, a system of poor relief based on the 1601 Elizabethan Poor Laws was put in place to provide for the needy colonists (Trattner, 1999). According to the Elizabethan Poor Laws, the local community should provide assistance for local residents. This relief for poor people took many forms including receiving financial and material donations, staying with other families, tax abatement, receiving medical aid, as well as apprenticeships for poor children, work for the able-bodied, and outdoor (at home) or indoor (institutionalized) care for "incapacitated, helpless, or 'worthy' poor" (p. 11).

During the time of the American Revolution, there was a change in thought about the poor and public aid. Instead of understanding poverty as a natural phenomenon in society for which those afflicted deserved help, Americans began to conceptualize poverty as an individual fault and any man who was able-bodied and poor was considered weak and undeserving of help, with the exception of war veterans.

Due to this shift in the perception of poverty, there was also a move from outdoor relief toward indoor institutional relief for disabled individuals, widows, and veterans considered worthy of help in the early 1820s. Those able-bodied poor who were unworthy of assistance

were also institutionalized in workhouses “where their behavior not only could be controlled but where, removed from society and its tempting vices, they presumably would require habits of industry and labor and thus prepare themselves for better (i.e., self-sufficient) lives” (Trattner, 1999, p. 57). Increasingly, support for poor individuals transferred from the town to the county to the state. Along with this transfer of responsibility came less control of the localities in determining who could reside in the community (Kunstler, 1993). The care of individuals also went from neighborly concern to cruel treatment:

Into many [institutions] were herded the old and the young, the sick and the well, the sane and the insane, the epileptic and the feebleminded, the blind and the alcoholic, the juvenile delinquent and the hardened criminal, male and female all thrown together in haphazard fashion. Nakedness and filth, hunger and vice and other abuses such as beatings by cruel keepers were not uncommon in many of these wretched places, vile catchalls for everyone in need, defined by one contemporary as “living tombs” and by another as “social cemeteries.” (p. 60)

The colonists relied on almshouses for indoor relief for poor people who were considered worthy (i.e. widows, disabled, elderly, orphans, or mentally challenged) as well as those considered unworthy (i.e. criminal, able-bodied and unemployed, prostitute, and vagabond) (Vale, 2000). Attached to the almshouses were workhouses “intended to force public employment on the able-bodied poor” (p. 28). Better kept almshouses served as temporary refuges for individuals during life crises. From the almshouses/ workhouses came a movement into more specialized institutions for poor people: orphanages for children, asylums for mentally and physically handicapped individuals and jails for criminals (Trattner, 1999).

Strangers were not well received and were often “warned out” (Vale, 2000, p. 12) of the local community if they were perceived to be a potential dependent on the established residents. For those who were allowed to stay, residency requirements of three months were implemented in 1642 to determine entitlement to poor relief and distinguish “‘inhabitant’ or ‘resident’” (Trattner, 1999, p. 20). Strangers had to get permission from local authorities to buy land in the community and residents who brought strangers to the settlement were responsible for any assistance these needy strangers might later require (Trattner).

In the seventeenth century, immigrant settlement in America was very regional. British immigrants settled on the northeastern seaboard. The homes they built in New England were rural farms or village houses. These houses had steeped pitched roofs making it practical for inclement weather. The interior had undifferentiated spaces as the rooms were used to serve various functions including a place to gather, sleep, eat and receive visitors (Howe, 2002).

French immigrants settled in Canada and Louisiana. The design of these early immigrant houses were one-story units with steeply pitched ceilings and many narrow French doors, along with paired French shutters. In rural areas, houses also typically had raised porches (McAlester & McAlester, 2002).

Spanish immigrants settled in Florida and the southwest. These Spaniards incorporated much of the Native American architectural styles into their communities and culture. These styles included building techniques utilizing adobe clay Native American roofing methods (Handlin, 2004).

Swedish and German immigrants settled in Delaware and the Dutch settled in New Amsterdam, which is now New York. Dutch home design was commonly one-story with one door separated into an upper and lower half. The houses were constructed of wood in urban

areas or stone in more rural areas (McAlester & McAlester, 2002). Each of these immigrant groups were rival and competed with each other based on cultural differences and traditions (Howe, 2002). However, during the eighteenth century, growing cultural consolidation and ties to European architectural styles heavily influenced housing design.

After a massive influx of warned out people, seamen, and immigrants pushed into the colonies and exhausted local resources, the colonists appealed to the colonial treasury and was granted the introduction of state aid for the poor (Kunstler, 1993; Trattner, 1999). However, such aid was not afforded to Native Americans or African Americans who were considered savage and uncivilized by the white colonists (Trattner). Native Americans were forced onto the worst land and their poverty was ignored while African Americans were enslaved and also denied assistance (Trattner).

By the American Revolution Era, the levels of poverty had become so gross from economic depressions, war, overcrowded conditions, and continuous settlement, that private charitable organizations were called upon to assist the needs of the poor in the late eighteenth century (Trattner, 1999). Several charity societies answered these calls with widespread humanitarian efforts to address many community ills. However, as the poverty levels heightened evermore, people questioned poor laws and doled charity. As a result, planners built specialized forms of institutions to house the needy. These institutions were workhouses, penitentiaries, orphanages, and asylums to differentiate the various types of dependents:

What began in Boston in 1662 with the construction of a single almshouse as an undifferentiated repository for the indigent became transmuted, by the middle third of the nineteenth century, into a broad-based attempt to classify the various types of dependents,

to reform them, and to move them to various parts of town where their presence least threatened public and private development interests. (Vale, 2000, p. 36)

At the end of the eighteenth century, Thomas Jefferson created the National Land Survey which provided a schematic spatial representation of national democracy (Hayden, 2002).

Thomas Jefferson believed housing style was an important societal standard representing the fairness of the new republic in meeting the housing needs of its citizens (G. Wright, 1981). This survey took the form of a grid used to ration land in a systematic way to promote national cohesion and provide model citizen home guidelines.

Jefferson's survey [of land], drawing upon a familiar Enlightenment concept, presupposed that the environment actually had a strong effect on human beings. For him, it took on the quality of an active force, a formative influence over the individual and the larger society. The right surroundings were considered one of the proper conditions that allow men and women to think and behave rationally; they were a necessary part of a democratic republic. (p. 22)

The new republic needed good examples of architecture as well as politics, and Jefferson sought to create buildings which would improve the public taste and sense of design, and perhaps also create better citizens. (Howe, 2002, p. 30)

The grid idea was considered "rational, mathematical, ... democratic, fair and square, and easy to understand" (Kunstler, 1993, p. 30). As a result of Jefferson's National Land Survey and the six by six mile lot allotments in 1785, people expanded west with the hope of finding equal, independent homesteads and ease of buying land. However, much of the land was already purchased by a small number of investors making it difficult for farmers to afford the purchase prices (Hayden, 2002). Another problem was that the grid plans did not take into account the

topology of land which meant a family's allotment may have been interrupted by a swamp, river, or hill (Kunstler). Therefore, settlement patterns and housing was scattered and not uniform as the grid intended. Instead, the expanding westward migration left the landscape scattered with "untutored dwellings, occupied for only a short time by restless homesteaders" (G. Wright, 1981, p. 73).

In an effort to build national cohesion and identity, early colonial values of commonwealth living were embraced, and leaders introduced model homes to shape and maintain rural family traditions (G. Wright). There would soon be many types of model homes introduced in American housing. However, for the farmer the model home was the rural cottage. These farmhouses, known as the National housing design, were not large mansions, but small cottages that supported new values of independence after the American Revolution. Prior to the grid land allotments, people thought of public land in a community context. However, after the westward expansion and creation of fee simple land ownership, which gave title to land for cash payment and permission to build freely, there was a shift from the family in a community context to family independence (Kunstler; G. Wright). The rural cottage became an icon for this ideal (Kunstler; G. Wright):

...home and "outside world" came to be posed as separate spheres. True, the familiar communal festivities of the barn-raising, the quilting bee, and other less formal gatherings took place in the homes of any small village. At the same time, the private home was becoming the locus of a sentimental search for meaning and security... Duty to husband involved adorning the home in the image of a private haven, rich in simple beauty and her own homemade ornament. Even more consummate was the woman's power as a mother. (G. Wright, p. 77)

This model cottage housing type for rural farmers, expressing values of personal independence, social family pride and self-sufficiency, were typically of four rooms, including a parlor, family sitting room, workroom, and bedroom along with a hall, porch, pantry and closets (G. Wright, 1981). Housing designs became more intricately designed and modeled after European influences from newly immigrated architects. These architects even circulated home building patterns for builders to use as templates of authentic European styles (Hayden, 2002; G. Wright).

An architectural style of housing known as “Georgian” became popular for builders on the east coast. The time of the Georgian design was also the time of a great emphasis on architectural prowess and the immigration of many professional architects (Howe, 2002). This style was the beginning of homes placed on a platform or basement. Earlier homes sat right on the ground (Morgan, 2004). The large plantation homes of the south are great examples of the Georgian designs that provide a strong similarity to the England architectural designs (Morgan). These homes became very popular throughout the early American colonies as their strong symmetrical layout fit within the traditional value of discipline and order.

In the New Republic, American home design saw the revival of Greek, Gothic, Italian, and Victorian styles. During this nineteenth century European influence, housing style was very ornamental and deliberately paid tribute to the historical traditions of Europe. The Greek revival, known as the first national building style, could be used easily in the construction of homes and commercial buildings (Howe, 2002). Whereas the Georgian style was domestic, the Greek revival style was public and monumental. Civic buildings were often over scaled houses and allowed the American public to establish a national identity that paid respect to democratic Greece (Morgan, 2004).

Just as values of conformity and lawfulness were representative of early colonial times, individuality and freedom were represented in Gothic architecture (Howe, 2002). The Gothic style also helped Americans reconnect to nature by the inclusion of expansive porches. With the Gothic design imitating popular medieval literature, owners believed the richly decorated houses of this time reflected their character and demonstrated that one's home is one's castle (Howe, 2002).

Also in the nineteenth century, Italianate décor came in strong with cube-style elegance; typically asymmetrical and often L-shaped. The Italian country houses featured high towers to take in the landscape views, smooth stucco walls, and a piazza (porch) which wrapped around two or three sides of the home and encouraged indoor/ outdoor living and interaction (Morgan, 2004).

Black America: Pre-America to 1900s

In 1897, WEB Du Bois⁴ conducted a social study of marriage, economics, and home life among 4742 black individuals in 1137 black families to investigate the condition of black Americans in the country, village, and city (Du Bois, 1971). In this study, Du Bois provided detailed accounts of the development of housing and home of black people from before the slave trade until the presentation of his findings in the early 1900s. According to the report, African hut homes grouped in circular settlements to provide cohesion within the tribe and defense from other tribes. The type and size of the huts varied depending on the tribe and regional location. The architecture of the huts was usually circular and the elevations might have been conical, beehive shaped or even squared (see Appendix C). The hut homes varied in dimensions but had low setting doors and no windows. There were also rectangular huts that lined to form streets and lanes. These “longhouses” (p. 43) were then anchored on each end by rectangular huts

⁴ W.E.B Du Bois is the first sociologists to look at housing and culture for Black families.

considered public buildings. Materials used to construct the huts varied from straw, reeds, and mud depending upon what was available on the land. Also, ditches and stone walls were often built around the units to protect them from being washed away (Du Bois).

For African families, home consisted of the exterior, as well as the interior of the huts. The interior of the huts consisted of one or two neat and orderly rooms typically used only for sleeping and protection from stormy weather. One room functioned as a kitchen or sitting area and the other room was for sleeping. Meals were prepared by women all day in the kitchen area, but the families ate grouped together in the open air outside (Du Bois, 1971):

At night, when the evening meal was served, all [in] this village seated themselves together but grouped by families, in the open air, either on low stools or on the ground, around the basin of vegetables and the little iron pot with fish and nut gravy. Plantain leaves were used as plates, and torches of the gum trees flared and lighted the night.

After the meal, all drank from jugs of water, carefully cleaned mouth and teeth with their fingers, and threw away the plates on the waste heap at the end of the street. (p. 44)

When the slaves were brought to America, they were housed in cabins near the slave owner. Du Bois (1971) described three distinct types of slave housing. The first type of slave homes in America is described as the “Patriarchal Group” where one-room log cabins for slaves were located next to the larger log cabins of the owners. This was a master and black and white bondsmen arrangement. However, white bondsmen were eventually freed and they moved to the south, whereas the black bondsmen were fixed into a system of cruel slavery (Du Bois). Over time, slave children of the white slave owners became house-servants inside the Big House or in larger cabins and the other slaves were housed in slave quarters further away from the home.

Southern plantation owners and slave masters in the new Republic lived initially in log cabins then eventually in larger, comfortable Georgian style houses. Their homes sat to the front of the property, whereas, slaves, who were perceived as sub-human and unworthy, lived in simple and supervised rows of slave cabins and barracks located out-of-sight in the back of residences (Vlach, 1993; G. Wright, 1981). Slave owners marked their domination by acquiring land and constructing a display of their oppressive prowess:

To mark their dominance over both nature and other men, planters acquired acreage, set out the boundaries of their holdings, had their fields cleared, selected building sites, and supervised the construction of dwellings and other structures. The design of a plantation estate was an expression of the owner's tastes, values, and attitudes. (Vlach, 1993, p. 1)

After the invention of the cotton-gin and commercial slavery, the second type of slave housing, "Detached Group" (Du Bois, 1971, p. 47) became prominent. In this phase of slave housing, the slave quarters were situated out of the view of the slave owners in brick houses and were managed by a third party slave group with larger and better accommodations (Du Bois). This second housing phase demonstrated the widening social gap between the slaves and the slave owners. However, this gap was widened evermore when slave housing became more characteristic of the "Absentee Landlordism" (p. 47). In this cruel slave housing arrangement in the height of commercial slavery, there was often no Big House near the slave quarters. These "filthy hovels where they slept" (p. 47) were highly oppressive for field slaves and managed by an overseer who worked slaves morning until night in the fields. The wretched conditions of the slave quarters caused many major health illnesses for inhabitants, as captured in the following excerpt detailing the history of American health disparities for African Americans⁵:

⁵ It is important to note that not all African-Americans have been poor throughout US history. Many have been financially and socially well situated with comfortable housing and adequate healthcare.

Although there were exceptions, most slave quarters were filthy, allowing huge pest and parasitic infestations and promoting diseases associated with poor hygiene at the personal (few opportunities for baths, hair washing, and haircuts) and environmental (unclean beds, unwashed clothes) levels. Impetigo (a skin disease characterized by infection, pus, and ulcers) was a problem, especially in slave children. Rats killed infants in the slave quarters regularly and transmitted diseases carried by fleas (e.g., the bubonic plague, murine typhus, and dog tapeworm). Worm infestations of various types were rife. Ascariasis (large roundworms often passed in stools) caused malnutrition and chronic anemia. Tapeworms compromised already marginal slave nutritional status and occasionally caused intestinal obstruction. Murine typhus (caused by *Rickettsia mooseri*) and scrub typhus (caused by *Rickettsia prowazeki*), transmitted by body lice and rat fleas, often swept through the slave quarters. (Byrd & Clayton, 2000, p. 227)

As for the house servants, their housing situation improved a bit as their slave holders took them along into the nicer homes in town and out of the countryside. The house slaves home and lifestyle was better improved and more refined than the field slaves. The third type of slave homes were better constructed small homes for house slaves with one to two rooms and located behind the large homes of their slave owners in town (Du Bois, 1971).

Of all three types of slave homes, Du Bois (1971) identified five common characteristics: (1) the homes lacked the comfort, beauty, accessories, and refinement of the native African home and the oppressor did not teach slaves their own cultural décor. (2) Unhealthy habits of forced plantation slavery broke African ancestral hygienic practices in their homes. (3) There was little incentive to save in the slave home, as food allocations were certain. (4) The slave household lacked the presence of a father authority to protect and lead the family as the slaveholder raped,

beat, or sold the women and children of the home at will. (5) The slave household lacked the presence of a mother who worked long hours in the field or in the slave owner's home and did not have the opportunity to care for her own children from whom she could be parted easily by the slave owner through reassignment or sale (Du Bois).

After the Civil War, the state judiciary was used to impose newer slave conditions for some black families through a Convict Lease System (Du Bois, 1971). This system unfairly targeted many black families for simple charges to arrest and lease them to southern planters for labor. During this imprisonment, black inmates lived in crowded barracks and stockades that were highly guarded. These housing "quarters were wretched, insanitary (sic) and small, and the death rate of convicts was enormous" (p. 51).

Housing for freedmen varied depending on whether the individual or family resided in the country, village, or city. In the country, freedmen who remained on the plantations sharecropping had only slight improvement of their housing conditions, which were updated slave quarters to board instead of dirt floors and maybe some framing and windows (Du Bois, 1971). Some of the problems with the country home for black families were poor lighting, ventilation, insulation, and food management (Du Bois). Further, there was a lack of adequate sanitation, beauty, privacy, and space (Du Bois).

Village housing for black families was better than country housing. These houses were typically small frame structures of two to four rooms; some had an upstairs room setting atop another and possibly including a kitchen lean-to in the rear. The village house may have included a veranda, cellar, and garden. In these homes, there could have been from two to ten family members residing in the home and the spaces were differentiated by social and preparation functions such as kitchens, bedrooms, and living rooms (Du Bois, 1971). According

to Du Bois, the problem with the village setting for the black family is that this environment differentiates individuals who are successful and those who fail. In the village, families who are successful either stay in the neighborhood or move to the city and those who fail contribute vice to the community or wind up returning to the squalid country housing (Du Bois).

There was a difference in housing type for the black city dweller according to Du Bois (1971). The black family of poorer class lived in isolated wards off alley roads in poorly constructed two-room dwellings. These homes were crowded and poorly lit, ventilated, and sanitized. Du Bois described the worst kind of housing, located in Atlanta, Georgia, as “the one-room cabin with sidings of unfinished boards running up and down; no ceiling or plastering, no windows, no paint, an open fireplace, and the whole of this cheerless box set directly on the ground, without cellar or foundation” (p. 58). There was little furniture and although there may have been a backyard, the surrounding environment of the homes was poor with inadequate paving and sewage problems.

For the better-classed black family in the city, housing was “scattered among other [white] homes” (Du Bois, 1971, p. 64) and segregated from other black family homes. These homes of the early 1900s, also described from the Atlanta, Georgia lot, were equal in size and construction to the homes of whites. The homes of these black families had seven or more rooms with differentiated functions (kitchen, dining room, bedrooms, etc) along with decorative accents such as paintings, furniture, and accessories. These city homes were also of adequate size, condition, and comfort for the well-to-do black families identified as professional teachers, merchants, and college graduates (Du Bois).

Du Bois’ (1971) study of the development of housing for black families is an important work that sets the stage for a greater understanding of the continued problems of isolation,

segregation, and racial clustering still prevalent in housing for black families. Continued investigations in housing settlement patterns report that there are still wide gaps in housing choice and availability for black families. Such housing disparities are still prevalent today for some black families.

According to research on residential segregation, many black families continue to be segregated from white residents, isolated and clustered in black communities, and concentrated and centralized in urban cities (Massey & Denton, 1993). Despite trends toward housing integration in the 1970s as black families moved into the suburbs, research in the 1980s still found a great deal of housing segregation:

Whereas an average of 71% of northern whites lived in suburbs by 1980, the figure for blacks was only 23%. Although rates of black suburbanization were higher in the south, the contrast was equally stark; only 34% of blacks in southern areas lived in suburbs in 1980, compared with 65% of whites. The classic pattern of a black core surround[ed] by a white ring persisted throughout the 1970s. (p. 67)

A number of factors have contributed to housing segregation since slavery and freedmen housing, most prominently was discriminatory laws during the Eric Crow Era, postwar ghetto formation, restrictive covenants⁶, redlining⁷ practices by lending institutions, and continued racial turnover in communities to avoid black neighbors (Massey & Denton, 1993). These factors have left “clear demarcations between rich and poor and between black and white” (James G. Banks & Peter S. Banks, 2004, p. 1). Such racist practices and isolation has also

⁶ Restrictive Covenants are agreements made by property owners pledging to bar certain racial and religious groups from communities by not selling property to these groups ("United States," 2007).

⁷ Redlining practices by lending institutions included denying banking services or inflating the cost of these services to individuals and businesses located in ethnically diverse communities because of racial bias or unfounded perceptions of investment risk.

contributed to serious health problems among the residents of these communities (James G. Banks & Peter S. Banks).

Industrial America: 1840s – 1920s

The pattern of western expansion was reversed when an economy of agriculture shifted to industrialism and poor farmers and immigrants flooded New York for work opportunities (Hayden, 2002). Industrialists often boarded their factory workers in small villages or mill towns. The housing provided to factory workers was small, uniform rows of housing. Row houses expressed the commitment of the nation to citizen equality. These uniform homes supported early republican values in the post civil war era calling for social and economic equality among citizens (G. Wright, 1981). However, these homes were also criticized for being very narrow and space inhibiting (Cromley, 1990b).

In Industrial America, hierarchal arrangements of housing was also apparent among business and factory owners who lived in large homes, while laborers were allocated smaller living quarters. Laborers quarters were uncomfortably crowded:

...the household would retire to sleeping quarters, which offered no privacy and little in the way of comfort. Many cottages had a single bedroom to the rear of the dwelling, and sometimes another in a cramped half-story above. A few cottages may have had as many as three designated sleeping areas, if they proved many workers to the mills, but even this was seldom sufficient. The kitchen and any other family room doubled as bedrooms; but with households of between six and ten people, including unmarried adult women, elderly relatives, and unrelated boarders, crowding was always a problem. Parents usually kept the younger children in their bedroom. The others then divided up by sex rather than by age or relation...Inadequate sanitation facilities, poor ventilation, and

dampness – most houses were built directly on the ground – meant that the living conditions were quite uncomfortable (G. Wright, 1981, p. 64).

Multiple-unit architecture was a new idea in New York City. Parisian architects and immigrants had long settled in New York and created “French flats” (Cromley, 1990, p. 2) that were not well received because of a contrast in values (Cromley). Americans believed Parisians lived too publicly in glass houses with strangers living above and below violating personal privacy (Cromley). These early apartments were cramped and indecent. However, middle-class families, due to the impracticality of planners to build private houses in New York, lived in these apartments. However, American values were clear; good multi-unit dwellings were considered to be middle-class, private, and American as opposed to working-class, public, and foreign (Cromley).

There were three types of row houses: first-class, second-class, and third-class row houses (Cromley, 1990). The first-class row houses were expensive and private single-family dwellings of up to five-stories, such as the New York brownstones, available for the most prominent in the city. The second-class row house tenements were less exclusive, but also relatively spacious for the families residing in the units. Up to four-stories tall, these second-class row houses “each housed three or four families” (p. 66) and “had a parlor, dining room, kitchen, three bedrooms, a bathroom, and a water closet, and included the water and gas fixtures, perfect for an ‘ordinary family of moderate means and desires’” (p. 66). The third-class tenement was the most crowded of the three types of row houses. Inside the typical tenement, there were at least two apartments on each level of the four or five story buildings (James G Banks & Peter S. Banks, 2004). These buildings were often built in a dumbbell shape “where

each floor had two apartments in front, two in back, and a narrowed center with stairs and water closets” (Cromley, 1990, p. 67) to house ten families or more.

Housing for poor families and immigrant families have always been approached with the ambivalence of social obligation and spatial proximity to those who were middle-class or affluent Americans, and therefore deserving housing (Vale, 2000). Poor and immigrant workers inhabited urban tenements in the bustling cities. In 1864, there were 495,692 people living in 15,309 New York City Tenements (James G Banks & Peter S. Banks, 2004). The tenement apartments in New York were often in horrible condition, missing windows and lacking sufficient heating, plumbing and running water (Hayden, 2002). As immigrants and migrant workers poured into the city, conditions became crowded and substandard, thereby creating serious health and safety risks (Cromley, 1990b).

“The overcrowding of the tenement houses renders them nurseries of vice and crime,” asserted a middle-class observer of 1886. “Children of all kinds are thrown together, and learn vicious ways, which develop as they grow older into worse traits. Privacy is impossible, and the various families may be sent to live almost in common.” The occupation of tenement districts by immigrants incited a xenophobic panic in middle-class observers, to whom tenements became a symbol of all that was opposite to a proper home. (p. 55)

In 1867, the Tenement House Act passed in New York to improve regulations for cleaner and safer conditions, but an even stricter tenement law in 1901 also required architects to include courtyards in their housing designs to permit socialization among residents. Model tenement designs were created to improve the dangers of fire, poor ventilation and inadequate sanitation realities of the tenement houses (Davis, 1995, p. 8). During the late nineteenth and early

twentieth century, the settlement house movement focused on many of the poor conditions of the tenements and urban slums.

The settlement house movement consisted of young, professional, and educated men and women who settled into the slums and tenements of the urban cities to understand the plight of the poor families residing in the area. These settlement house workers focused more on reform and policy than individual moral behavior often the focus of the charity organizations movement of the time. During the settlement residential tenure, workers advocated for social and economic change. According to this movement, opportunistic industrialists' exploitation of people in the urban core created poor urban conditions, not individual inadequacy. Reformation was not only considered an individual concern, but a neighborhood issue affecting all residents inside the urban core and beyond, and was therefore a policy issue (Trattner, 1999). The settlement house movement was responsible for several social policies affecting poor families, including kindergarten programs for children, improved factory conditions for workers, and improved building conditions for tenement residents. By the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, apartment design shifted to a modern infrastructure of diverse style to accommodate various types of families (Cromley, 1990).

Victorian Suburban: 1870s – 1900s

Population growth and disparate city conditions created a demand for more comfortable homes and architects answered the call by creating suburban bungalows that boasted of happy living (Foster, 2004; Hayden, 2002; G. Wright, 1981). The Eclectic period of design spans the time prior to World War I and just after World War II. During this period, architects focused on re-creating authentic copies of earlier period designs. William Levitt in Long Island, New York planned one of the first of these communities. The homes in Levittown were for returning white

veterans who had earned ribbons in war and wanted stay-at-home wives to nurture their needs and the needs of their children. These houses emphasized privacy that differed from the communal bustle of wartime. The architecture of the homes was featureless but small and affordable (Hayden, 2002).

In Levittown, nothing is on a straight line. Roads curve to lead the eye around the corner, but every road is lined with identical houses...Each new Cape Cod house is designed to be a self-contained world, with white picket fence, green lawn, living room with television set built into the wall, kitchen with Bendix washing machine built into the laundry alcove. Every family is expected to consist of male breadwinner, female housewife, and their children. (pp. 24-25)

The design of suburban housing was responsive to the perception of women as homemakers and men as breadwinners. The home was managed by women, but represented a man's castle, and reward for hard-work (Hayden, 2002). Architects initially built largely proportioned suburban homes for affluent families. However, in this second wave of suburban homebuilding, mini-mansions, much smaller than their European models allowed middle class families an affordable and desirable home. Also, new technological gadgets and machinery were marketed to women promising aid for housework, such as the use of "privately owned clothes washers, clothes dryers, toasters, blenders, electric ovens, food processors, vacuum cleaners and electric brooms" (p. 95). Home life was the work of women:

Beyond the house and the immediate neighborhood, home life included the management of extensive relationships with stores, banks, and other commercial service facilities, and with public institutions such as schools, hospitals, clinics, and government offices. Part

of homemaking involves seeing that each family member's myriad personality needs are fully met. (p. 83)

During the Progressive Era of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, modern homemaking became more efficient, regulated, and professional. Young girls and women learned proper homemaking skills in home economic courses at schools, colleges, and universities. Cleanliness was essential to avoid the diseases often associated with the cities. Also, settlement houses taught women how to keep a clean home (G. Wright, 1981).

Excessive Victorian knick-knack décor gave away to design of simplicity, cleanliness, and practicality. During this same time, the arts and crafts movement, as a response to rigid industrialization introduced the popular Craftsman style home, also known as the Craftsman bungalow, with simple and efficient design (Morgan, 2004).

Every detail was simpler and looked more functional. Plain rectilinear screens replaced the elegant curves and minute carvings of the Victorian stairway balustrade. Built-in convenience abounded: bookshelves and cabinets in the living room; fold-down tables, benches, and ironing boards in the kitchen; medicine cabinets in the bathroom; and more closets throughout the house. Venetian blinds replaced curtains in many houses. Rows of simple casement windows with small leaded panes eliminated the need for curtains, as the leadwork obscured the view of the interior. Where draperies persisted, they were of almost transparent materials and barely covered the window sills, since anything sweeping the floor seemed dirty. (Wright, 1987, p. 160)

This move to décor simplicity was likely a product of the public health movement of the time. During the public health movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, people were being introduced to the idea of spreading germs and diseases through human

transmission (Trattner, 1999). Prior to this time, there was little understanding about public sanitation and the need to clean up the filth of the factories and cities to avoid human illness.

The conditions of the cities were putrid:

American cities were disorderly, unsightly, filthy, foul-smelling, disease-ridden places. Narrow, unpaved streets became transformed into quagmires when it rained. Ricketty tenements, swarming with unwashed humanity, leaned upon one another for support. Inadequate drainage systems failed to carry away sewage. Pigs roamed streets that were cluttered with manure, years of accumulated garbage, and other litter. Outside privies bordered almost every thoroughfare. Slaughterhouses and fertilizing plants contaminated the air with an indescribable stench. (p. 140)

In an effort to avoid the serious disease plagues of that time (i.e., tuberculosis, diphtheria, syphilis), sanitation laws were formed and enacted (Trattner, 1999). Public response in suburbs was to become as clean as possible to avoid the terrible conditions of the urban cities. After all, the suburbs were supposed to be a garden of Eden, a retreat from the conditions of the city (Kunstler, 1993). Therefore, clutter and disorderliness was antithetical to the suburban idea; uncluttered décor was not only a testament to the peaceful conditions of the home in the suburbs, but also a testament to the cleanliness of such a restful and civilized place (G. Wright, 1981).

Public Housing: 1930s – 1970s

Early public housing projects were large buildings with courtyards added for social needs, ventilation, and improved lighting. Some architects built two story apartments with courtyards and inexpensive single-family dwellings. In the early history of public housing finance, industrialists sponsored building projects often resulting in towns with privately rented and utilized row houses for employees (Davis, 1995). In 1937, the Wagner-Steagall Housing

Act was passed to allow federal funding of housing projects thereby giving government a role in housing (Davis). During the New Deal intervention, goals of housing reform were “new model communities, rural assistance programs, and urban slum clearance” (Davis, p. 11). Concern with clearing slums began during the post-Depression period:

The first fully subsidized project, called First Houses and built in 1936 in New York... was created by reworking a block of existing tenements, removing some and reconfiguring others. The complex knitted itself into the block, and the entries were moved from the street to the interior courtyard, which was replete with artwork. Also included were several social services. Because such projects were undertaken by the government to improve the economy, budgets were irrelevant – indeed, the more spent, the better. The high-quality design, in stark contrast to tenements, attested to the goal of improving the cities (p. 11-12).

Such intervention stimulated the economy during the depression (G. Wright, 1981). Helping the poor was only a minor aspect (G. Wright). The Public Works Administration (PWA) led the slum clearance projects, but also maintained a system of segregation between white and black public housing residents.

The PWA allocated half its housing for blacks, stipulating that this would not change existing relationship between the races. If a neighborhood was white, no blacks would be admitted into the public housing; if it was mixed, new housing would follow the existing proportions. (p. 225)

In 1949, the government passed a Housing Act that supported a “decent” home for everyone. Under this law, government paid two thirds of the cost of rebuilding deteriorated urban areas. The problem was that the area only needed to consist of twenty percent of blighted

conditions. Therefore, many homes were destroyed in the name of renewal (G. Wright, 1981). This renewal often consisted of the construction of luxury apartments out of the financial reach of previous public housing residents. Social workers and civil rights activists helped organize tenant organizations for displaced residents (M. Stone, 1993). However, social workers, as well as architects, also tried to impose life standards on public housing tenants through the architecture of the units (G. Wright):

Apartments contained no storage space for such large objects as bicycles or suitcases as these purchases represented a more comfortable life than the tenant was supposed to enjoy. Closet doors were left off in an effort to reduce costs and encourage neatness. The parents' bedroom was purposefully small so as to eliminate the practice of infants sharing the same room as the adults. The principle considerations in the individual units were those of the turn of the century reformers: sanitation, ventilation, privacy, and order. (p. 232)

By the 1940s and 1950s, the generous financial attention to public housing had changed. Popular attitudes included beliefs that the high-quality amenities in public housing were too extravagant and that the public's responsibility was simply to provide the basics for those in need. As the government cut budgets for public housing design, large towers were erected to contain costs and approach public housing more boldly (Davis, 1995; G. Wright, 1981).

Although the larger high-rise buildings were supposed to be a testament to caring for the poor, in effect, these massive structures isolated, as well as, concentrated poverty in mass. One popular high-rise building, often the icon of social housing failure, was Pruitt Igoe project in St. Louis, Missouri. The poor design of this building included several stories of small apartments without "viewable, controllable, and accessible play areas for children " (Davis, 1995, p. 6), but

“alternate-floor elevations...dark hallways” (G. Wright, 1981, pp. 236-237), and “unlivable” (Hayden, 2002, p. 168) conditions. By the 1960’s, these high-rise buildings were in extremely poor condition and were generally considered a failure of the government in its efforts to provide public housing. The conditions of these buildings were deplorable:

First, there is a display of broken glass, tin cans, and abandoned cars covering the playgrounds and parking lots. Some of the building windows are broken; others have been boarded up with plywood. Inside, you smell the stench of urine and garbage. The elevator is in disrepair, and the presence of feces indicates it has been used as a toilet. Next, you notice that plumbing and electrical fixtures have been pulled out of apartment and hallway walls. When you come upon a resident and ask her about Pruitt-Igoe, she says she has no friends there; there is “nobody to help you.” She also tells you that gangs have formed and that rape, vandalism, and robbery are common. Since crime frequently took place in elevators and stairwells, the upper floors have been abandoned. (P. A. Bell et al., 2001, p. 357)

According to Keating (2000), are four major problems that have diverged on public housing: (1) Due to federal legislation, there is an increase in the number of families living in poverty and public housing. (2) Since most of public housing was built before 1980, much of the existing stock was physically deteriorating. (3) The crack cocaine epidemic had left many families in public housing in devastating conditions, and (4) Between 1980 and 1998, HUD had experienced a large budget cut in annual appropriation for housing issues.

Modern Housing: 1930s - Current

Because of the devastating effects of the Depression on housing in the early 1930s, the National Housing Act of 1937 passed giving the government a role in housing. During this time,

there were “one thousand foreclosures per week... [and] residential construction had plummeted (sic) to 93,000 units, down from 937,000 in 1925” (G. Wright, 1981, p. 241), figures referring mostly to housing for the wealthy. As a result of the newly formed Federal Housing Administration, larger home mortgage loans over extended repayment periods with better interest rates assisted building and financial institutions in the private housing market (G. Wright).

World War II brought on a new style of housing design – wartime housing. During wartime, housing responded to the need for women to work in wartime production as welders and riveters. Housing for “Rosie the Riveter” was affordable for various types of households and provided for the childcare needs of working mothers. However, after the war, questions about a woman’s place in the home and workplace affected housing design as men returned from war and needed jobs and homes (Hayden, 2002; G. Wright, 1981).

Hayden (2002) identified three strategies of housing design that responded to these questions of gender roles: the haven strategy, the industrial strategy, and the neighborhood strategy. The haven strategy sought to glorify women as homemakers, separate from men who would navigate the difficult industrial workplace. Within this strategy, women would be proud of their roles as nurtures to their husbands and children and also train their children to maintain these gender roles.

In *The American Woman’s Home*, [Catherine] Beecher suggested that the housewife devote more of her labor to becoming an emotional support for her husband and an inspiring mother for her children. Self-sacrifice would be her leading virtue. The home, a spiritual and physical shelter from the competition and exploitation of the industrial

capitalist society, and a training ground for the young, would become a haven in a heartless world. (p. 87, italics in original)

The industrial strategy abolished the private domestic sphere of women and put homemaking tasks into factories. Following an industrialist model, factory kitchens and laundries would provide home cooking and cleaning for sale on a massive scale. In this industrial strategy:

...factory kitchens would prepare dinners, and large state bakeries would bake pies, [and] mechanical laundries would wash clothes and cities would provide central heating. Children would be trained in the public institutions from their earliest years. Women would take up industrial employment outside the household, and the household would lose control of many private activities. The effects of industrialization would be general, and women would share in the gains and losses with men. (p. 89)

The neighborhood strategy fell in between the haven and industrial strategies. In this model of domestic reform, material feminists argued that women would continue specializing in their domestic skills, but also be paid for it. The belief was that women were already contributing to the industrial society by preparing their husbands for work and maintaining a comfortable place for him to rejuvenate. Therefore, men would compensate women for their work, which would take place in a well-equipped neighborhood context. In this model, "Women would send the freshly baked pies, the clean laundry, and mended garments back to their own husbands (or their former male employers) for cash on delivery (Hayden, 2002, pp. 91-92)."

Although these strategies were modified some, Hayden (2002) found that current housing trends had been greatly influenced by these three trajectories in building since post-World War II. In light of the haven approach, suburbanites have sought single-family, detached dwellings

that provide privacy and independent living in homes that pay tribute to eclectic European revival styles, such as the Victorian, French Mansard, Italianate, Romanesque, Gothic, and the ever so popular Colonial styles. Modern suburban home building has continuously incorporated a smorgasbord of older housing designs that reinforce the values of patriarchal gender roles where home is haven for men, a workplace for diligent wives, and a training ground for children to develop into responsible citizens. However, this model of housing design has been accused of secluding women from the market economy and isolating them inside their homes (Hayden).

The failed tenement and high-rise public housing in the urban areas during the 1950s and 1960s is an unfortunate example of the industrial strategy in housing design. However, there have also been successes in mass-produced collective housing: hotel apartments and multifamily apartments. In 1970s and 1980s, social scientists and architects began to recognize and build for the needs of various household types and one's developmental needs as a child, a teen, an adult, or a senior adult. However, as a whole, the industrial designs have centered on mass production, bureaucratic control, and tight efficiency, as well as, women working both in the industrial world and at home (Hayden, 2002).

The neighborhood strategy is a village approach (Hayden, 2002). For this approach, home exists in the context of the community, such as housing cooperatives built with shared gardens, courtyards, and kitchens. Park-like landscaping with pedestrian access to these places allows residents recreational zones and opportunities to socialize. Courtyard housing provides the collective arrangement of various households sharing a common space. Examples of the neighborhood approach in modern American residential architecture are Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) as low-rise, high-density, attached housing, as well as, condominiums. There is also a recent housing movement, New Urbanism, which supports families living,

shopping, working, and engaging in recreation in the same neighborhood space led by architect, Andres Duany. In addition, in early twentieth century, Scandinavian apartment hotels and family hotels were believed to be great examples of the neighborhood strategy and collective housing (Hayden). Could this also be true for American motels that are low-rise, high-density, and attached with included common areas for socializing? Are American extended-stays a possible solution for the current housing affordability problem as apartment hotels were after the Depression? The next session provides a brief discussion of housing affordability, the extended-stay hotel, and concepts of home.

Affordable Housing

According to the Habitat for Humanity (2007), over 30 million United States families are cost-burdened, overcrowded, or living in physically inadequate homes and there are not a sufficient number of affordable rental units. Despite the need for these families to receive services, much of the government subsidies go to middle-class homeowners in mortgage tax breaks:

Of the 30 million households with housing problems, 14.5 million qualify for government aid, yet only 4.1 million are actually receiving any... In fact, most of the U.S. government's housing subsidies do not benefit the poor. For example, in 1995, homeowners earning more than \$100,000 per year received a total of \$28.9 billion in federal income tax deductions on mortgage interest payments. By comparison, the entire 1999 budget of HUD was only \$25 billion (Humanity, 2007).

Vale (2000) pointed out this cruel irony when he wrote, “what is called ‘subsidized housing’ actually receives the least amount of government subsidy” (p. 7). Instead, “about three-fourths of wealthy Americans, many living in very large homes, get housing subsidies from Washington

in the form of tax breaks” (Dreier, 2006, p. 105). Despite this disparity, public housing programs are more often the subject of debate (Dreier; Vale).

All over the country, there are families doubled-up in crowded housing units due to the affordability issue. Crowded conditions may have an effect on the mental well-being of individuals (Hartman, 2006). It is necessary to refurbish older homes in urban communities for affordable housing because of the expense and limited space for newer housing. Urban communities are struggling with economic opportunities and the ability to purchase homes or have access to affordable rental units. Rural communities need assistance with community infrastructure, job creation, affordable rental units, homeownership programs, and programming to meet the unique housing difficulties of migrant farmers, people of color and women.

Currently, housing accessibility and affordability are pervasive problems for poor families (Clampet-Lundquist, 2003). For a great number of low-income families in the United States, housing is simply out of reach financially. Housing prices have risen and fallen since the 20th century as Figure 2 depicts (Shiller, 2006). Currently, there are debates about whether the US housing industry is in an economic bubble, moving from the long boom to an expected bust. However, the modest decrease in housing costs caused by the slowly declining market may not affect low-income families. According to Barbara Lipman, Research Director at the Non-Profit Center for Housing Policy, “For the low-to moderate-income individuals that we're talking about, they're not going to be helped by marginal declines in home prices” (Stern, 2007, p. 1). Further complicating housing availability low-income families are increasing rental rates. As Table 1 illustrates, Fair Market Rental (FMR) rates for a one-bedroom apartment in Gwinnett

County, Georgia have increased from \$610 per month in 2000 to a reported \$834 in 2005⁸ (Research, 2006).

A History of Home Values

The Yale economist Robert J. Shiller created an index of American housing prices going back to 1890. It is based on sale prices of standard existing houses, not new construction, to track the value of housing as an investment over time. It presents housing values in consistent terms over 116 years, factoring out the effects of inflation.

The 1890 benchmark is 100 on the chart. If a standard house sold in 1890 for \$100,000 (inflation-adjusted to today's dollars), an equivalent standard house would have sold for \$66,000 in 1920 (66 on the index scale) and \$199,000 in 2006 (199 on the index scale, or 99 percent higher than 1890).

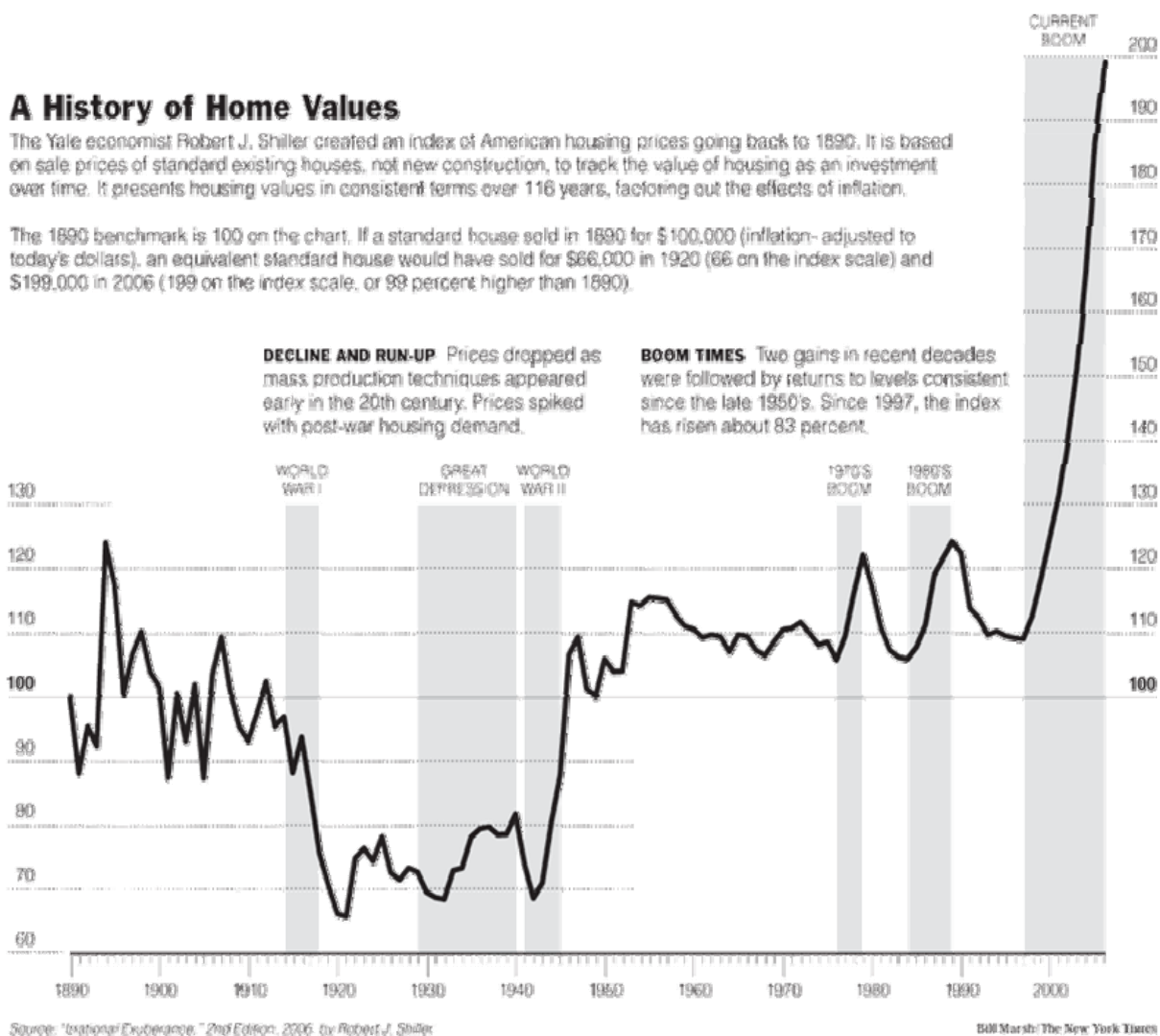


Figure 2: Shiller (2006) History of Housing Price Increases

⁸ Final reports for 2006 adjusted the 2005 FMI to \$750 (Research, 2006).

Table 1

Fair Market Rents by Unit Bedrooms

2005 – 2006, Gwinnett County, Georgia

FMR Year	Efficiency	One-Bedroom	Two-Bedroom	Three-Bedroom	Four-Bedroom
FY 2000	\$549	\$611	\$712	\$949	\$1,148
FY 2001	\$647	\$720	\$839	\$1,119	\$1,353
FY 2002	\$677	\$753	\$878	\$1,171	\$1,416
FY 2003	\$714	\$795	\$927	\$1,236	\$1,495
FY 2004	\$727	\$810	\$944	\$1,259	\$1,523
FY 2005	\$769	\$834	\$928	\$1,150	\$1,295
FY 2005 Revised Final	\$691	\$750	\$834	\$1,034	\$1,164

Office of Policy Development and Research,
US Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2006

In this country, a person working for minimum wage cannot afford housing at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Fair Market Rent (Coalition, 2003). According to an executive summary report published by the HUD, Office of Policy Development and Research, on the Worst Case Housing Needs in 2003, there were 5.18 million unassisted renters who earn less than 50% of the local area median income (AMI), pay more than half of their income in housing costs, and live in substandard housing conditions. This population represents nearly five percent of American families, which has been the trend since 1997. Of

this population, 77% are extremely low-income earning less than 30% of the AMI. Over 30% of these households are families with children and 22% are elderly. Families with non-elderly members make up 10% of the worst-case population.

There have been shifts in perceptions of why people have housing needs and appropriate solutions. In Vale's (2000) account of the early history of this country, it is clear that housing needs were perceived as an individual's personal deficit. These individuals were considered lazy, immoral, or insane and housing solutions made for them were institutional. After immigrants populated the United States, housing solutions, again made for them instead of by them, aimed to reform and Americanize these groups. During the tenement and settlement house movement, oppressive community structures and institutions contributed to resident poverty, housing problems, and neighborhood decline (Vale). After the failure of earlier designed public housing that segregated the poor in isolation and concentrated poverty in blighted high-rise apartments, urban renewal projects further victimized these desperate families by uprooting communities at will to meet the needs of new well to do families to create a more favorable neighborhood environment to the business sectors (Vale; G. Wright, 1981). Only after residents started fighting back did the early community projects begin (Coulton, 2000; June G. Hopps & Morris, 2000).

Political writer Jane Tanner (2001) summarized several reasons why housing is unaffordable. These explanations include: a decrease in the public housing stock, low income wages, high income to rent/mortgage ratios, increased work travel, gentrification, larger home designs, increased housing costs, and slow growth regulations. Further complicating matters are higher land cost and the resistance of community residents to build affordable housing in their own communities.

As a reaction to the failed high-rise, high-density public housing programs of the past, HUD has demolished 61,000 of these older public housing units but only replaced them with 42,000 new mixed-income units. Even in these new units, developers were encouraged but not required to include subsidized units. The shortage of these units may cause displacement of many families (Tanner, 2001). In addition, low-income wages has not allowed some residents to compete fairly in the housing market. These individuals had to choose from whatever options their incomes could accommodate. This is not only a problem for the chronically poor, but also for those earning 120% of the median income like teachers, salespersons, construction workers, etc. Moreover, many low-income families spend over 30% of their income in housing costs. Since this 30% has been set as a benchmark for affordability standards, it is clear that many families must struggle to make rent and mortgage payments with insufficient income (M. Stone, 1993; Tanner).

Many employees commute long routes from their own housing and cannot afford to live in their work locations. This inability to live where they work is a result of the high prices of housing in those areas. These expensive areas typically have very few affordable housing units (Tanner, 2001).

Gentrification is another issue contributing to the lack of affordable homes because higher income residents buy up the available housing stock and increase its worth. This purchase and consumption behavior by wealthy investors and homebuyers decreases the number of homes available to low-income and fixed-income residents (Tanner, 2001). Along with the consumption of the land, spacious designs of homes are becoming much larger than in the past. Americans today are requesting floor plans that exceed their need. This increase in housing size

also raises housing prices. This impacts young couples particularly as starter homes have become unaffordable because of their size (Colton, 2003; Studies, 2000; Tanner, 2001).

Economic prosperity at the end of the 1990's and beginning of 2000's also caused a rise in housing prices. Therefore, the market has had tremendous growth and this boom placed the housing market out of the reach of many low, moderate, and middle-income families. Moreover, as many states and municipalities are trying to control sprawl, they have taken on the position of slow growth in some areas. Although the aim is positive, this reduces development and provides a disincentive or restriction for high-density apartments and structures. This slowing down therefore decreases the number of units available for affordable housing (Tanner, 2001).

Sherry Ahrentzen, Professor of Architecture at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee, added that housing is unaffordable because the single-family detached housing model has been the preoccupation of housing developers despite the fact that it does not fit well with all family household types. When various housing types are developed that allow families to have real choices in housing, the market will be enhanced (Ahrentzen, 1999).

Low-income families with limited financial resources have turned to government programs for housing needs. However, since the 1980's, the federal government has dramatically cut back funding for low-income housing assistance (Clampet-Lundquist, 2003). Between 1981 and 1988, the Reagan administration cut funding for affordable housing from \$4.2 billion to less than \$600 million and housing units from 18,000 to just over 3,000 (Squires, 1994).

Governmental response to the affordability problem has been addressed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through shelter programs, rental subsidy vouchers (Section 8), and local community building projects. Although these programs have had

some successes, the magnitude of the problem undercuts the effectiveness of these solutions (Anderson et al., 2003). Reformed shelter programs of the 1980s have increased capacity, but struggle with questions of the role of shelters in their purpose and utility (Bogard, McConnell, Gerstel, & Schwartz, 1999; Culhane, 1992; Weinreb & Rossi, 1995). For example, should shelters provide specialized treatment for the health concerns (depression, drug addiction, etc) of residents or focus solely on reintegrating individuals back into the community? How long should homeless residents be allowed to stay? Should they pay for time using the shelter?

Section 8 voucher programs are tenant-based subsidies that allow recipients to choose rental housing and pay only 30% of their income while federal monies finance the remainder of the rent. This program has been very successful overall (Kennedy & Finkel, 1994), but is criticized for geographic clustering and a concentration of poverty in particular areas of a community where rental properties participating in the program are prevalent (Anderson et al., 2003; Popkin & Cunningham, 1999; Turner, 1998; Turner, Popkin, & Cunningham, 2000). Ironically, this is the problem it was created to remedy. In addition, the voucher programs are limited in their ability to help because many families in homelessness or at-risk of homelessness are turned away or put on extensive waiting lists.

Although the federal government provides rental assistance to about 4.6 million extremely low and low income renters, more than twice as many (9.7 million) such households receive no federal funding. (Anderson et al., p. 49)

A popular affordable housing project at the present time is mixed-income housing communities which are supported by the \$5 million HOPE VI program purported to improve the living standards of families in distressed housing by relocating them to communities that are not concentrated with poverty (Cunningham, Popkin, & Burt, 2005). Typically, these programs seek

to transform existing run-down public housing projects into functional housing communities where low-income residents live among middle-income residents to restore a socioeconomic balance. Although this program takes into consideration the social and economic needs of low-income residents, often high-capacity public housing units are torn down and only a small portion of those low-income families are able to remain in the revitalized community (Cunningham et al.). Therefore, a massive number of families have been displaced from their communities without available resources or adequate income to simply pick up and secure housing in another location. Further, some of the families that are relocated are “hard-to-house” residents who may be elderly, previously incarcerated, recovering substance abusers, disabled or in large families (Cunningham et al.). Options for these families and other working-poor families include relocating to other blighted public housing apartments, doubling up in housing, seeking temporary shelter assistance, living in budget extended-stays, or falling into homelessness. Barbara Ehrenreich (2001) pointed out:

The shocking thing is that the majority of American workers, about 60 percent, earn less than \$14 an hour. Many of them get by teaming up with another wage earner, a spouse or grown child. Some draw on government help in the form of food stamps, housing vouchers, the earned income tax credit, or – for those coming off welfare in relatively generous states – subsidized child care. But others – single mothers for example – have nothing but their own wages to live on, no matter how many mouths there are to feed. (p. 213)

The affordability problem worsened in the 1990’s (Bratt, 2003) and is currently the largest housing challenge facing the country (Colton, 2003; Hartman, 2006). In fact, in 1999, HUD reported a loss of housing units affordable to extremely low-income renters (p. 31)

Therefore, while some Americans have reached homeownership, in pursuit of their American Dream, there are still large populations of people living on the brinks of homelessness or homeless. These individuals may stay in shelters or group homes, abandoned buildings, with family and friends, on the street, or in extended-stay hotels (Bergsman, 1999; Hombs, 2001; T. Wright, 1997).

The history of housing interventions in this county has systematically excluded residents from participating in the planning and empowerment of their communities (Vale, 2000). Neighborhood organizing has become a part of rebuilding. In some communities, residents are sitting at the table with planners and private developers to help make decisions about neighborhood designs that meet the needs of people. Although this is great progress, it is time to go to the next step. Residents must be prepared to lead their neighborhoods in the ownership, maintenance, rehabilitation, and further development for their continued well-being.

Coulton (2000), in Hopps & Morris (2000), identified a current housing and neighborhood strategy that recognizes the need to consider both person and place in housing and neighborhood revitalization efforts are Comprehensive Community Initiatives and Community Building (CCIs). These community programs focus on building the capacity of the neighborhoods by creating economic opportunities and family resources through resident driven, comprehensive, collaborative, asset oriented, and sustainable strategies. However, concerns such as urban sprawl and concentrations of poverty may be too challenging for CCIs (pp. 192 –206).

Along with these local neighborhood approaches, organizations have addressed the housing crisis. Habitat for Humanity has been the icon for creating alliances, bridging resources, and organizing communities and residents to take responsibility for the improvements of their own lives and their communities with respect to the conditions of housing. However, there has

been some critique of the cookie-cutter types of houses that are created without regard to resident preferences and a call for better designers to respond to the needs of habitat homeowners (B. Bell, 2004).

The National Low-Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) is another organization providing education to the public on the inability for even the hardest working American residents to afford housing at fair market rental rates. The mismatch between the living wage and housing wage has not only been exposed by this organization, but also other organizations such as the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) and National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH). These organizations use consensus, social planning, and social action strategies to confront powerful and exploitive land developers, planners, and business opportunist in the fight for preserving and creating decent and affordable housing resources for families.

Hartman (2002) acknowledged that there has been some (although not enough) legislative and regulatory success in housing issues. He asserted that although the United States has created some entitlements for American people like social security, public education, Medicaid, Medicare, food stamps, and earned income credit in the name of basic rights, “there remains no entitlement to any of the direct government [housing] programs: Section 8, Section 202, and so on” (p. 285). However, he listed some “quasi-rights” to housing that currently exists for Americans, including housing codes, regulations, protections, and tax deductions.

Specifically, he identified:

- Local housing codes that set guidelines for decent housing
- Rent control
- Nuisance statues to protect a level of aesthetic quiet

- Discrimination laws
- Foreclosure and eviction procedures
- 30% rent limitations for Section 8 recipients
- Veteran loans
- Community Reinvestment Act opening up financing options to all geographic areas
- Homeowner's tax deductions (pp. 286-287).

Hartman (2006) strongly proposed that there should also be a basic right to decent, affordable housing since it is clear what the negative impacts on both the individual and community have been when such a standard is not in place. In his argument, he noted that “there are practical, cost-benefit reasons to advocate for a right to decent, affordable housing. For those living in inadequate housing conditions, they include, at a minimum, the multiple health and safety problems that arise...” (p. 177). Further, that “overcrowding (apart from the physical condition of the space) can produce or exacerbate stress and family tensions as well as disease (Nossiter 1995)” (p. 177). And affordability problems, “clearly have an impact on diet and, as a New York Times headline puts it, for poor Americans, there is ‘A Growing Choice: Housing or Food’ (DeParle 1991)” (p. 177).

Recently, alternate housing types have been and are continuing to be the focus of architectural designers. Mobile homes are considered a low-cost solution as they are relatively easy to manufacture and accessible to very low-income families wanting to own their homes (Bechtel, 1997). However, the safety and durability of mobile homes has often been questioned and many do not perceive this housing type as an appropriate home (Bechtel). Attention to the international community on low-cost housing solutions may bring new designs and revisions of

old designs such as collective housing (co-housing), single-room hotels, and a host of energy-efficient designs for low-income families (Bechtel, 1997; P. A. Bell et al., 2001).

The Extended-Stay Hotel

Hotel living is not a new phenomenon. People have been living in high, medium, and low-cost hotels for over two hundred years (Groth, 1994). The enjoyment of luxuries offered at hotels depends on the cost. Higher priced hotels will afford more luxuries and comfort than lower priced hotels which may be more dangerous and less desirable (Groth). Despite the continuum of comfort that hotels may offer, people who live in residential hotels are often negatively stereotyped:

Hotel people are supposedly all friendless, isolated, needy, and disabled; all elderly; all on welfare; all elderly men; or all welfare mothers with three young children. All are presumably socially marginal, all mildly psychotic, all alcoholics or drug addicts, all drifters and transients who never live anywhere more than a few months; they are thought to be people whose homes cost taxpayers millions of dollars because of corruption and bureaucratic waste...the most pervasive misconception about today's hotel residents is that they are all poor. (p. 10)

A hotel is a place where both food and lodging are available for public guests. Hotels may be commercial, semi-commercial, residential, or transient establishments (Dembrick & Bomko, 2001; Pickett, 2000). The commercial hotel establishments that are located in metropolitan areas and provide services to business travelers for conferences and meetings typically offer large rooms, various dining options, shopping, guest activities, and amenities (Dembrick & Bomko). Semi-commercial hotels differ from commercial hotels in that they are typically, "maintained by organizations such as the YMCA" (Hotel, 2004, p. 1). A hotel is

designated a residential hotel if tenants are allowed to stay beyond a month (Groth, 1994).

Residential hotels typically offer meal, maid, and valet services to tenants (Dembrick & Bomko).

A motel is a type of transient hotel (Hotel, 2004). Specifically, it is “[a]n establishment that provides lodging for motorists in rooms usually having direct access to an open parking area” (Pickett, 2000, p. 1). The motel has also been described as a “generic descriptor labeling a wide variety of highway-oriented accommodations” (Jakle et al., 1996, p. 18).

The word “motel” is derived from the words “motor” and “hotel” (Pickett, 2000). Motor hotels, or motels, were established in the early 1900s (Dembrick & Bomko, 2001) as a reaction to advent of the Model T Ford, affordable automobiles, and increased auto camping, tourism, and vacationing (Witzel, 2000). As motorist traveled further from home, they needed lodging conveniently available off the highway. Therefore, motor hotels, and motels provided these accommodations (Witzel). Hotels could not provide such accessible accommodations particularly well because of their central locations in cities and lack of necessary parking provisions (Jakle et al., 1996).

Motel historians, Eric Jakle, Keith Sculle, and Jefferson Rogers (1996) have researched trade journals to document the changing interior designs of *The Motel in America*. These historians have found that motel interior design has shifted throughout its history from a simple place to stay off the streets provided by mom and pop establishments to a franchised, prepackaged, and standardized accommodation commodity (Jakle et al.). During the early history of the motel in the 1920s and 1930s, motel interior design mimicked that of the comfortable yet simple trend in housing design, as well as, the preoccupation of private space that was congruent with upper-middle class values (Jakle et al.). Early motel room sizes and

shapes also varied; some being octagonal and rectangular kits for homeowners to prop up and rent out (Jakle et al.). These early minimalist rooms were:

One plan ...was for a ten-by-twelve-foot cabin with a bed, chair, folding table, and a bench to hold a camp stove. Windows at all four corners were lumberyard stock originally intended for barns. Wire screens replaced windows and the front door to keep out pests in warm weather. (p. 235)

By the early 1930's, through an influence of advanced architectural attention and increasing competition in tourism, kitchenettes were included inside motel room designs to appeal to the long-term lodger and provide "all the comforts of home" (Jakle et al., 1996, p. 238). Motel décor became a model for what buyers were shopping for in permanent homes. Overall, the upgraded room décor had more diverse designs:

Each room measured approximately twelve feet by twelve feet. Closets, rather than wardrobes or racks, distinguished each room. Partitions separated the washbowl, toilet and shower in the ... smaller cabins, and running water and baths were available only in...bigger cabins. All had three windows for ventilation, electric heaters when needed, varied color schemes (green, white, yellow, and mahogany), a writing table, twin beds, and wall lamps. (p. 240)

From the 1940s to 1960s, motel décor shifted from homelike to less-homelike (Jakle et al., 1996). In the 1940s, motel owners focused on providing efficient comfort and convenience for consumers while also continuing to upgrade the motel design with central air conditioning, carpeting, and improved lighting to increase profit making. In addition, the size of motel rooms increased to approximately 20 feet by 13 feet and included separate room areas: a bedroom, kitchen and bath (Jakle et al.). However, in the 1950s, trade publications directed motel owners

to allocate smaller spaces of approximately 16 feet by 16 feet for the motel room furnished with metal-type furniture, including beds with no headboard or footboard; thereby making the unit easier to clean and maintain (Jakle et al.). Further, these accommodations, generally less home-like, had “asphalt tile or wall-to-wall carpeting... metal door and window trim... shower stalls instead of shower curtains” (p. 244) for efficient maintenance. Kitchenettes were temporarily abandoned for coffee shops (but later returned due to consumer demand), and swimming pools were added as a motel amenity during this time (Jakle et al.).

Pools were a magnet for tourists, and motels exploited the feature to the hilt. Inviting pictures of pools and the activities related to them became an integral part of commercial advertising and travel brochures. (Witzel, 2000, p.146)

Planning in motel design became a science for efficient and low-cost construction that was easy to maintain and yet still provide comfort to consumers, even if this comfort was not homelike (Jakle et al., 1996). From the 1960s to the present, motel rooms have become a fully packaged commodity among a number of franchises. Motel rooms of a more corporate décor have been the result of a focus on first impressions and functionality. Standardization and design by trade show modeling has been the trend (Jakle et al., 1996). However, despite the diversified room styles of the 1980’s, motel rooms have become fairly generic, prefabricated, and suited with the same kind of supplies to best predict cost and profit (Jakle et al.).

The work of Jakle, Sculle, and Rogers (1996) provided a great historical context for the changing room characteristics of motels. However, even though these historians sought to “assume the lodger’s point of view” (p. 231), they admittedly conceded that their knowledge and descriptions of motel rooms came from trade literature, instead of the lodgers themselves and that “such materials rarely dwell on what was wrong in specific cases” (p. 231).

Car culture historian, Carl Witzel (2000) documented a cultural change in motel room service. In the early history of motels, rooms were rented for shelter to families traveling around the country at leisure. However, by the 1970's motel rooms were not only rented to nuclear families, but also rented to couples in the midst of a cultural sexual revolution:

As long as you had a driver's license, a credit card, or a pocketful of cash...[f]or a single hour, two hours (and in a minority of cases, the entire night), liberal-minded motel customers could check in-with nary a single bag of luggage-and enjoy the anonymous comforts of a motel room. Later, when their recreational needs were satiated, they merely left the key on the bed stand (the bill was settled up in advance), slipped into their automobile, and motored down the road, unnoticed. With the mattress still warm, maids rushed in to perform a quick once-over, change the sheets and the pillowcases, and prepare the bed chambers for the next flock of lovebirds. (pp. 159-160)

Paul Groth (1994), Associate Professor of Architecture History at the University of California, Berkeley, also described the culture of motels and the contrast between the higher quality establishments and the motels catering to low-income families:

At the more expensive examples are salesmen on temporary assignment and construction workers in town for a season. There, the system works. Elsewhere, residential motels often shelter very low income residents. Families unable to afford other housing and recent immigrants sometimes fill whole motels that have the worst management... Even the wealthiest counties can have serious residential motel problems. The citizens of Westchester County, north of New York City, refuse to build adequate affordable housing but pay \$3,000 per month for each of hundreds of residents in miserable motels where the maids steal medications and a reputed 80 percent of the residents use crack

cocaine. Often without cars, parents cannot reach jobs or take their children to school.
(p. 292)

In an effort to understand what it is like to get by on low-wages from an insider's perspective, Journalist Barbara Ehrenreich (2001) embarked on a journey that allowed her an opportunity to learn from her own experience and the experiences of other residents what it was like to live in a motel. She commented:

There are no secret economies that nourish the poor; on the contrary, there are a host of special costs. If you can't put up the two months' rent you need to secure an apartment, you end up paying through the nose for a room by the week. If you have only a room, with a hot plate at best, you can't save by cooking up huge lentil stews that can be frozen for the week ahead. (p. 27)

Ehrenreich (2001) also described the residents of a motel she stayed in, as well as, their occupancy and living arrangements. The long-term residents are:

Blue-collar people... [m]ostly...couples with children...crowded three or four into an efficiency, or at most a one-bedroom apartment... A middle-aged woman with a three-year-old granddaughter in tow tells me, in a comforting tone, that it is always hard at the beginning, living in a motel, especially if you're used to a house, but you adjust after a while, you put it out of your mind. She, for example, has been at the Blue Haven for eleven years now. (p. 70)

These academic and professional descriptions of motel environments and domestic living open a window to the realities of residing in a motel and beg the question of how these families would describe their experiences of motel as home, in their own words. There are many unheard stories among people living inside the growing extended-stay motel industry.

With the exception of wartime, motels have had an impressive growth in the United States typically mimicking the growth of car registrations (Jakle et al., 1996; Witzel, 2000). The number of motels grew from 3,000 in 1928 to well over 40,000 in 1987 (Jakle et al.). In 1990, the extended-stay motel was developed for guests renting rooms for more than five nights and in 1998 these motels accounted for 40% of planned motel construction (Hotel, 2004). In 1999, Atlanta, GA had the most extended-stay rooms in the entire country – reportedly 12,000 (Bergsman, 1999). In fact, Gwinnett County, GA imposed a moratorium on continued construction of extended-stay rooms because of extensive overbuilding and other problems associated with the more inexpensive motel establishments (Bergsman, 1999).

Marina Peed, President and Executive Director of The Impact Group located in Lawrenceville, Georgia and considered the premier low-income housing organization for Gwinnett County described the county as “the extended-stay capital of the world”; having the most extended-stay units in the country and throughout the international community (Peed, 2005). The Impact Group works with low-income families in the county who are homeless or near homeless to find housing solutions. Often, this organization helps facilitate vouchers for families to pay for time in extended-stay hotels.

These extended-stay hotels often house many low-income families who have migrated to the area in search of work. The extended-stay hotel can be the only option for families that find themselves in the transitional position of finding available work opportunities before getting into housing. However, due to the problem of low-wages and high housing costs, these families find their stay extended for long periods of time (Peed).

News coverage of motels often reports tough living conditions in motels. The following newspaper excerpts document the harsh conditions of motel residents’ environments:

- Since the Southards' Saratoga unit lacked a kitchen, they prepared meals on a hot plate or in a crockpot. Dirty dishes were stacked on the toilet, washed in the bathroom sink and put in the bathtub to dry. (Greenberg, 2001, para 25)
- Although she had helped him rid his room of cockroaches at the Southwest Side motel - - she filed a complaint with Madison Public Health Department- - it was still a "horrible" place to stay. "People in the middle of the night, drunk, would bang on his door and try to get in his room," said Grunke, 38. "The walls were dirty, the bed was really old. The carpeting was disgusting and the refrigerator stunk... It doesn't have to be a four-star hotel, but it doesn't have to be disgusting and scary." (Schuetz, 2004, p. A1)
- The room is a little musty, and dark. There's not much light in the green-tiled shower either, and one might call the pink bedspreads garish. For most of Flagstaff's tourists, a room at the Red Rose Inn on East Route 66 would be out of the question. But for some Flagstaff locals, it's a warm, safe place to call home -- at least for now. With limited public housing in Flagstaff -- and lengthy waiting lists for what's available -- many living below poverty level find housing at one of about 33 cheap, yet historic motels along East Route 66. "Living in a motel is not the best option," said Wenda Meyer, senior program coordinator for Coconino County Community Services. "A significant number of the families who come in to see us can only afford to live in a motel." Paying about \$165 a week for a single-occupancy room is easier than pulling together \$1,500 or more for a month's rent, a month's deposit and a utility deposit for an apartment. For these people, the cheap motel rooms, which can be paid for by

county housing assistance vouchers, serve a legitimate purpose. (R. Peterson, 2005, para 1-5)

Even safety and security are in question in budget motel establishments as newspaper continually report violence, as in these newspaper excerpts:

- Still reeling from the violent loss of their mother five years ago, Shannon Davidson's family was searching for answers Wednesday in her brother's shooting death at an Adams County motel where three fugitives recently were captured. (Gutierrez, 2005, p. A27)
- A 44-year-old man who held police at bay for nearly 22 hours while holed up in a Richards Boulevard Motel 6 was flushed out with a form of tear gas late Tuesday...Richard Davidson crawled out and was arrested about 5:20 p.m. after officers fired three chemical-agent projectiles into his room.... (Brown & Sanchez, 2005, p. B2)
- The motel has a history of violence and tragedy, including a death by overdose in late December and the murder...last month. The incidents at the Best Value Inn are not isolated, according to Wilmington Police Department statistics. In just more than two years, Wilmington officers have responded to roughly 3,400 calls at 20 motels between the 2000 and 5000 blocks of Market Street, one of the city's most traveled roads. That averages about four calls a day, statistics show... includ[ing] minor offenses such as 911 hang-ups and traffic stops, and more serious crimes such as armed robbery, drug offenses and now the recent homicide. Since the beginning of 2003...police received 677 calls regarding incidents at the Motel 6... "People are

looking for a place to get their drugs; a place to do their drugs,” Mr. Newton said.

(Bostram, 2005, pp. 1A, 4A)

As alluded to previously, despite the negative reports, a benefit to families considering motels as a housing option is not having to accumulate a lump sum of money for a security deposit or down payment to get into an apartment or house (Bergsman, 1999):

It turns out that some low-income persons and families, living hand-to-mouth and lacking credit and savings, have found that they can move into a lower-tier extended-stay hotel without forking over security deposits or rents for the first and last months of a lease, as required when renting apartments. (p. 41)

The difference between the various types of hotels and motels have become more faint as motels have continued to mimic the services that other types of hotels offer, such as public facilities (i.e., restaurants, laundry facilities) and a range of personal services (Jakle et al., 1996). Motels have even competed well in the hospitality industry profit-making (Jakle et al.). Nevertheless, even with upgraded amenities and soaring profits, can a motel⁹ be considered a home? There has been some skepticism about identifying the accommodations of a hotel as a home. Sociologists, Mary Douglas (1991) asserted in the following essay:

Home certainly cannot be defined by any of its functions. Try the idea that home provides primary care of bodies: if that is what it does best, it is not very efficient; a health farm or hotel could do as well. (p. 262)

Further, Douglas considered hotels to be non-homes when she wrote, “happiness is not guaranteed in a home. It is possible to be happy in a hotel or a transit camp, but they are non-homes” (p. 263).

⁹ Extended-stay establishments have interchangeably been labeled “motels” and “hotels”. Throughout the remainder of this document, these establishments will be referred to as “extended-stay hotels”.

Also, Sixsmith (1986) conducted an exploratory study to explore the meaning of home among 22 postgraduate university students. During the interview, each participant was asked to describe as many different places thought of as a home and places not considered a home. Analysis of the responses indicated that temporary accommodations and ‘digs’ (rented bed and breakfasts) were never mentioned as homes and of the 22 participant responses, nine identified these types of dwellings as non-homes.

It is probable that these “non-home” designations of hotel accommodations were based on references to commercial hotels with concierge, bellhop, and valet services. These establishments typically cater to short-term vacationers or businesspersons. But what about the extended-stay hotel establishments equipped with kitchenettes and marketed for longer-termed stays? Can the atmosphere of a home be created within an extended-stay hotel environment? Leanne Rivlin, an environmental psychologist, asserts “Whether they are squatters, people in shelters or in temporary, limited quarters, people do make attempts to create homes for themselves and their families...” (Israel, 2003, p. 230). In a discussion of the mobilization of homeless people, author, Wright (1997) agreed with this assertion that people will create a place for home as necessary when she wrote:

As active agents it is clear that poor people, like all people, attempt to reassert their “place” in society, to establish a “homeplace” in the midst of deprivation, humiliation, and degradation. The contesting of what constitutes a legitimate “place,” both socially and physically, is often what social struggles are about. (p. 5)

In the history of American housing, there have been families that choose hotel housing to establish their home (Groth, 1994). Although initially frowned upon as a housing choice because of the design, residential hotels became a big hit in the cities for well-to do individuals and

families benefiting from a residence with the conveniences of hospitality amenities (Cromley, 1990; Groth, 1994). Hotel housing also became an ad hoc solution for low and middle-income families who needed homes:

At the same time that struggling middle-class families found converted houses the only feasible places to live, wealthier families demonstrated their fondness for hotel life. Hotels, historically serving visitors and transients, and built for that purpose, came to serve as ad hoc homes.... (Cromley, p. 18)

Hotel housing is not considered as popular an American tradition as the large single-family detached houses. Influenced by multicultural designs, this form of housing has largely dominated as ideal dwellings for homes (Hayden, 2002; G. Wright, 1999). Since motels were created as a response to the short-term accommodation needs of traveling motorists (Jakle et al., 1996; Witzel, 2000), how well are these commercial dwellings, as “ad hoc homes” (Cromley, 1990, p. 18), meeting the needs of individuals in the wake of America’s affordable housing crisis, when many people are not able to choose other housing options? To consider the question of extended-stay hotel-as-home further, one must first determine what makes a dwelling a home. What are the characteristics of a home atmosphere? And, how do people perceive of and develop a sense of home?

Home

Home has been described as one of the most important and primary environments from which people come to orientate themselves in the world and come to understand self (Cuba & Hummon, 1993b; Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983). “Home is where one starts from” (Rykwert, 1993, p. 47). It “is considered to be the ‘place’ of greatest personal significance in one’s life – ‘the central reference point of human existence’” (Relph, 1976, p. 20) . Home is also

essential to one's emotional and physical health (Diez Roux, 2003; Fullilove & Fullilove, 2000; Tuan, 1977).

The popular adages *home is where the heart is* and *there's no place like home* are proverbial phrases that convey the emotional connections that people have to dwelling places. These phrases refer to sentimental and personal connections to places that are favorably experienced and long remembered. However, "home" as a concept encompasses more than a positive sentimental feeling, but special characteristics that are beyond only the recollection of a static dwelling. Home, as a concept, is complex, dynamic, and broadly defined across various disciplines.

In a critical review of the literature, Mallett (2004) found various meanings attributed to the word "home." In the literature, "home" has been described, linguistically, as a beloved place to lay one's head (Hollander, 1991), and a reference to a homeland or family estate (Hollander; Rykwert, 1993). Politically, home is understood as a symbolic expression of economic and cultural privilege by capitalists and a potential site of workplace oppression of women by feminists (Dupuis & Thorns, 1996; Gurney, 1997; Manzo, 2003). Architects and historians conceptualize home as an expression of prevalent cultural and societal norms based on domestic designs, spatial organization, and perceptions of the ideal physical space (Rybczynski, 1986; G. Wright, 1991, 1999).

Home has also been described as a social construction based on particular social interactions within specific locations; therefore, one's understanding of home is affected by historical experiences with home (Jackson, 1995; Rapport & Dawson, 1998). Home can be experienced as a private, peaceful haven for some and an institution of abuse and confinement for others (Ahrentzen, 1992; Bruner, 1987; Darke, 1994; Manzo, 2003). Ahrentzen (1992)

suggests that home must be understood not only by what is happening within the dwelling, but also outside the dwelling in the larger sociopolitical culture.

Fox (2002), a lawyer, summarizes the interdisciplinary discussions on home in four broad categories: “home as a physical structure, home as territory, home as a means of identity and self-identity for its occupiers, and home as a social and cultural phenomenon” (p. 581). This author contributes the conceptualization of “home” as a legal entity to the research discourse in terms of land law, owner-occupied capital interests, family and beneficiary rights, and creditor/occupier disputes. Douglas (1991), a social scientist, suggests that homes are not fixed locations, but spaces with regular routines, structure in time, aesthetic and moral dimensions, held memories, and a place for self-organization and coordination of personal resources. Home is often considered a special or magical place, an “archetypal landscape” (Manzo, 2003, p. 49) whether conceived of as a static entity or a journey (Riley, 1992). Home might also be thought of as one’s birthplace (peaceful or violent) where family interactions take place or a place to leave and come back to (Case, 1996; Fassad, 2001; Moore, 2000).

Swenson, in the nursing field at Indiana University School of Nursing (1998), conducted a qualitative study to understand the meaning of home for five elderly women. These women, ages 75-84, lived independently in their own homes and were “‘in charge’, competent, and independent” (p. 382). She asked respondents to tell the story of their lives in their homes and her analysis revealed respondent’s understanding of “home.” Swenson found that these women consider home to be the center of self, caring, and reach. Their homes provided a nurturing base for activities that reinforced self-identity (Swenson). Stories and objects personalized the home territory. Respondents described home as a place where they could care for themselves and their

families. Home also provided a base from which these women could reach outside their home and interact with the world around them before returning to their own dwelling place (Swenson).

Social scientists have studied the essence of home for many years to understand how home environments shape and are shaped by the individuals who reside in them. For example, Gunter (2000) finds the significance of home within the context of meeting basic human needs, as identified by Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. From this perspective, home provides an anchoring place where we associate early learning of survival skills (biological needs) and establish safe personal and family territories (safety need). A home place also fosters socially nurturing relationships (social need). In the home, one can boost self-esteem by projecting aspects of unique personality through décor and housing choices (esteem need). Further, homes offer a place where skills can be optimized (self-actualization need).

Home is related to cultural, socio-demographic, and psychological dimensions (Lawrence, 1987). In studying the cultural dimension of a home, it is important to examine daily activities. It is in these common daily activities, like eating and sleeping, that researchers can compare meanings of home and its uses across cultures since all societies participate in these activities. In a study of 60 households in England and Australia, Lawrence (1982) found that a room designated as a kitchen may be considered suitable for food preparation, eating, and laundering clothes in England. However, a kitchen in Australia would not function as a laundry room because of the cultural perception that people would not clean clothes in the place where food is prepared and eaten. Therefore, in Australia, building codes for housing include requirements for separate laundry room to be included in housing design for health reasons (Lawrence, 1982).

In addition to cultural factors, an examination of ideologies among people in society about how home interiors should be used is also important (Lawrence, 1987). Society contains values about what social roles that household members should play out within homes. The way a home is decorated, shared, or used by its residents or visitors reflect social values; including personal statuses, family customs, and domestic roles. For example, one historical socio-demographic value in American homes is that the kitchen is the woman's domain, as there are expectations that a women's domestic role includes preparing and serving food (Hayden, 2002; Lawrence, 1982; G. Wright, 1981).

On the psychological dimension, "home serves as a means of communication with oneself, between members of the same household, [and with] friends and strangers" (Lawrence, 1987, p. 161). Objects within one's home communicate information about personality (Gunter, 2000). Further, the decoration and arrangement of home interiors is related to past residential experiences and personal preferences and goals (Gunter; Israel, 2003; Lawrence).

Therefore, in a social science framework, home "is best conceived of as a kind of relationship between people and their environment. It is an emotionally based and meaningful relationship between dwellers and their dwelling places" (Dovey, 1985). This relationship with a home environment can be understood by evaluating behavior with respect to deeper psychological and social connections with place, such as, place identity, place attachment, and place dependence (Altman & Low, 1992; Cuba & Hummon, 1993b; Gunter, 2000).

Making House a Home

"A home is not the same as a house which is why we need two different words" (Rykwert, 1993, p. 47). Whereas 'house' refers to an object, 'home' refers to a meaningful relationship (Dovey, 1985). House denotes a public sphere concerned with physical and spatial

parameters, but home denotes a personal sphere concerned with behavior and emotion (Tagnoli, 1987). According to Gunter (2000), “a home can be distinguished from a mere dwelling place by the special meanings that are attached to it by its occupants [and] ... its ability to gratify higher-order or growth needs” (p. 17).

Gunter also finds that the key to transforming a house into a home is personalizing one’s territory, thereby sending messages about the identity of the resident, the way the space is used, and the boundaries established in interacting with others:

...home dwellers place personal marks on their territory to let others know where their boundaries begin and end. It also entails putting a personal stamp on a space and its contents... Obviously, our first concern is usually going to centre on making our home physically comfortable. Beyond that, however, we need to feel ‘psychologically’ comfortable with it, and confident enough in it that we are prepared to use it as a central feature of our social lives. This means exposing it to the gaze and inspection of other people, particularly people whose opinions we value. We need therefore to be sure that our home will create the right impression, both inside and out (p. 58).

In a study to determine which aspects of a house made it a home, Smith (1994) interviewed 23 people, asking them to identify the attributes of a home and non-home. Her results identified seven characteristics: centrality, continuity, privacy, self-expression and personal identity, social relationships, warmth, and a suitable physical structure.

- Centrality – home is a primary dwelling that can be controlled by its occupiers. It is a place where one can be anchored, leave, and return to (Dovey, 1978; Hayward, 1977; Seamon, 1979; Sixsmith, 1986; Tuan, 1980).

- Continuity – home provides a level of security, stability, and permanence (Tagnoli, 1987).
- Privacy – home provides the ability to retreat from society and exterior social interactions into one’s self and internal family socializations. This retreat allows one to experience feelings of relaxation and a place to be at ease, regenerate, and become refreshed (Gunter, 2000; Sebba & Churchman, 1986; Tagnoli).
- Self-Expression and Personal Identity – the home is a place where one can self-express likes/dislikes, values, and ideas. The home becomes a symbol of oneself. Personalization of the home by décor, arrangement, and objects communicate identity (Gunter, 2000; Proshansky et al., 1983).
- Social Relationships – home provides an environment where social interactions take place. In a home, residents can communicate with one another. A home also provides a place for extended interactions with friends, colleagues, neighbors, and extended family members (Gunter, 2000; Hayward, 1977; Lawrence, 1987; Sixsmith, 1986; Tagnoli, 1987).
- Warmth – a home provides an atmosphere of friendliness and support (Gunter, 2000; Seamon, 1979).
- Physical Environment – the physical environment of a home provides shelter and protection. It is an environment where social roles can be played out. The home, as physical structure, also provides one with functional elements, such as lighting, heating, and lounging; characteristics, that contribute to feelings of comfort and satisfaction (Gunter, 2000; Hayward, 1977; Sixsmith, 1986).

In this same study, Smith's (1994) respondents also identified characteristics associated with non-homes. One characteristic was dissatisfaction with the physical environment such as being "too dark," "no window," or "only good for sleeping." Dissatisfaction with social relationships in the household (such as being alienated, "feeling like a slave," and being interrogated), as well as, outside the household (i.e., overbearing landlords, unfriendly neighbors, transient and unstable communities) also made a dwelling feel like a non-home. On a personal level, non-homes were thought to lack privacy ("not having a place to relax and be yourself"). Non-homes were considered to have stifling, intrusive, and restrictive atmospheres in dwellings that could not be personalized and lacked a sense of safety, security, and sometimes ownership (S. G. Smith, 1994, pp. 40-41).

Rented bed and breakfasts were also in the category of non-homes in the above study. However, hotels and motels were considered home to a number of long-term residents during the history of motels (Jakle, 1981). Since hotels "represent a kind of place, albeit one defined on the scale of the retail business establishment" (1996, p. 21), the next section will explore place-based relationships to help determine what type of relationships residents of hotels can have in terms of establishing a home.

Place Relationships

Environmental psychologists have studied environment-behavior relationships extensively over the last three decades to understand human interaction within the physical world (P. A. Bell et al., 2001). Because of environmental stimulation (e.g. noise, heat, crowdedness) people are aroused to a behavioral response. People also shape their perceptions and feelings about where they live based on the unique relationships that emerge during interactions within those places.

Sense of Place

Place is “a psychosocial setting and web of situated life episodes” (McIntyre, 2003) composed of a history of ongoing interactions between person and environment. This means that place is a backdrop for everyday interactions with people, objects, and conditions. To understand one’s perception of home, it is important to consider “sense of place” as a concept that “refers to the manner in which individuals relate or feel about the places in which they live” (P. A. Bell et al., 2001; Hummon, 1992; Nanzer, 2004). Sense of place refers to the “rootedness people feel for certain places” (P. A. Bell et al., 2001, p. 50). An individual’s “sense of place” can be assessed through three subconstructs: place identity, place attachment, and place dependence (Hay, 1998; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Nanzer).

Place identity refers to the dimensions of self-identity that are developed as a result of interaction with the environment (Proshansky et al., 1983; Proshansky, Ittelson, & Rivlin, 1970). Place attachment refers to the bonding one has with the environment (Altman & Low, 1992). Place dependence refers to the strength of bonding between a person and a place (Stokols & Shumaker, 1981). Taken together, sense of place is a construct comprised of a cognitive dimension (place identity), an emotive dimension (place attachment), and a behavioral dimension (place dependence) (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001). Researchers can measure sense of place quantitatively with Likert-type surveys by participants rating strong or weak agreement with statements like, “This place means a lot to me” (Place Attachment). Qualitative investigators can explore sense of place with in-depth interviews. For example, Hay (1998) explored residents’ and out-migrants’ sense of place with regard to place in Banks Peninsula, New Zealand. In this study, 270 respondents participated in informal interviews to determine the development of sense of place among residents.

Place Identity

Place identity is self-definition based on understandings of the physical environment. It is the “interpretations of self that engender a sense of being at home” (Cuba & Hummon, 1993a, p. 548). Place identity involves one’s development of self based on positive and negative cognitions as a result of interacting with the physical world (Proshansky et al., 1983; T. Wright, 1997). For example, entering a room that one believes is too cluttered would help identify for that person what a comfortable room arrangement is for them; perhaps they may identify as a minimalist preferring uncluttered, uncomplicated decor. Mixed in with these clusters of cognitive experiences that an individual has collected during interactions with the environment are understandings of the social definitions of these physical places (Proshansky et al.). Such definitions may be that a bedroom is a quiet place to sleep or a beach is a place to wear a bathing suit. These social values and meanings attached to place are then impacted by cultural aspects (race, gender, social class, etc.) that create a context for an individual’s experience of place (Proshansky et al.). For example, a beauty parlor is a place where women generally congregate for the benefit of hair and skin improvement and a barbershop is a place for men to receive similar services. Although both places are hair styling facilities, gender is often a mediating cultural factor. Similarly, a country club is typically a place for the well-to-do and a shelter a place for someone without a home. “Like other forms of identity, place identity answers the question – Who am I? – by countering – Where am I? or Where do I belong?” (Cuba & Hummon, 1993b, p. 112).

In essence, environmental places provide backgrounds or contexts for which people come to understand who they are (Pennartz, 1986; Tuan, 1971). The cognitive clusters that comprise place identity contain individual perceptions of place based on collected experiences, social and

socio-cultural definitions of place, and societal norms and values about interpersonal needs such as privacy, personal space, crowding, and territoriality. These place-based clusters are generally out of a person's awareness. However, they form the foundation of a person's evolving experience with the changing environment which can be transformed (adjusted) by the individual to accommodate a more positive interaction (Proshansky et al., 1983).

People display objects in their homes and private territories that represent who they perceive themselves to be. In this sense, place identity is also a smaller component of one's social identity based on place (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). In terms of this study, respondents could be asked: What objects are present in your hotel room and how do these objects represent who you are? Alternatively, how have you decorated your hotel room? What about these objects/decorations make them important to you? In addition, to understand respondents' affiliations with their hotel space and feelings of the place being "really me" (Cuba & Hummon, 1993b, p. 113), this study could probe for information with questions relative to: What about your hotel room makes it belong to you? What makes your room familiar to you? How is your room different from other rooms in this hotel? How comfortable are you here?

Further, Cuba and Hummon (1993a) suggests that place identity is affected by mobility, the life cycle, and demographic factors. Although researchers typically agree that mobility affects one's ability to identify with a place, there has been considerable debate on whether this effect is negative by breaking affiliations with previous homes, or positive, suggesting that objects and identity symbols are also mobile and therefore can create home in another location (Cuba & Hummon). In addition, from a study measuring place identity among migrating residents of Cape Cod, Massachusetts, across the life cycle, these authors found that younger migrants and older migrants developed a sense of belonging through different types of

affiliations. Older migrants perceived the move to Cape Cod as more permanent and affiliated with dwelling-type activities (home ownership, placement of personal possessions) rather than self affiliations (feeling comfortable), family affiliations (being near family), or friend-related affiliations (socializing with people); which were important to younger migrants who perceived the move to Cape Code as short-term (Cuba & Hummon, 1993a). During this same study, these researchers also found that women, more so than men, identified with place based on dwelling-related factors (Cuba & Hummon, 1993b) . The implications of these results when applied to this current study are that older residents may have a stronger identification with the hotel and personalize the space as a long-term housing solution. For these residents, the hotel may be perceived of as a permanent housing situation. However, younger residents may perceive the hotel as a short-term solution and readily report experiences of comfort and ability to socialize with others in the unit and in the larger hotel environment. Further, these results suggest women may be more disturbed than men if the space is difficult to personalize or the household feels unsettled at the hotel.

Place Attachment

Place attachment is the affective bonding of an individual, group, or culture to particular environmental contexts with respect to interactions within that environment and time (Altman & Low, 1992). One can be attached to small, midrange or large landscapes or cityscapes (the countryside), objects or possessions in places (pictures), memories of and inside places (grandma's home), functions and protections of places (domestic violence shelters), rituals of places (surfing at the beach), as well as, community and neighborhood places (the Southside) (Altman & Low). In effect, to be attached to things of our surroundings is "to make them a part of our extended self" (Belk, 1992, p. 38) when the basis of the attachment is emotional.

According to Sartre (1943), one becomes attached to objects when one can control or master the object, create it, or know it (Belk, 1992). Having control over a physical space with the liberty to mold and manipulate the space is critical for positive self-identity (Marcus, 1992). Such control allows one to adjust the environmental conditions to be congruent to personal preferences (P. A. Bell et al., 2001). Also critical to attachment, is one's ability to achieve a sense of environmental continuity where one can reflect on past experiences with people and places in the current environment and hold on to environmental memories (Marcus).

Place attachment is important across the life course (Rubinstein & Parmelee, 1992), but particularly in childhood development because the bonding contributes to the quality of a child's life and affects who they will become based on perceptions of the past interactions with place (Chawla, 1992). For children, places have the capacity to provide security, social interactions, and creative expression. They also allow opportunities for self-identity development by providing a context for trying out social roles and providing undefined space that can be uniquely defined and created (Chawla). Place attachment in childhood also contributes to one being able to reminisce and remind one of "where we came from, of what we once were, or of how the environment nurtured us when family dynamics were strained. Whatever befalls us in later life, those memories remain; it is as though childhood is a temporal extension of the self" (Marcus, 1992, p. 89).

Place attachment is a bond between a person and a place; however, that bond can either be positive or negative (Ahrentzen, 1992; Manzo, 2003). Whether an individual has a positive or negative bond will depend on the person's actions and experiences in that place and societal perceptions and norms about these actions and experiences (Ahrentzen). Therefore, to understand "home" for women, is to understand the meaning of home within the larger

sociopolitical atmosphere of this place; perhaps, by examining women's work in the home (Ahrentzen). If a woman perceives that homemaking is her place or a contribution to taking care of her family, it is likely that her attachment to home will be strong. However, home might also be an abusive place where she is beaten or oppressed. She may be attached if she perceives no other housing alternative or not attached if she desires to get away from the situation.

In the context of this study, the affective transactions between the hotel space and a resident may be examined by questions such as: What are some of the emotional connections you have with where you live? Describe some of the feelings you have about your hotel room. Have you always held these feelings about your room? If these feelings have changed, what happened in the room environment to make them change?

Place Dependence

Whereas place identity is the development of one's self based on interactions with the environment and place attachment is the emotional bonding of one to place, place dependence is the strength of the association with place. In research inquiry, place identity asks if there is an association: "Do you feel at home here?" (Cuba & Hummon, 1993b, p. 112) or how does this place represent who you are? Place attachment asks about the nature of the association: What attachments do you have with this home? Place dependence asks how strong the associations with place are: How attached are you to this place?

With attention to the transactions between person and environment, environmental psychologists suggest that place dependence is impacted by the functional orientation of place, household composition and organization, and objective/subjective relationships with the place. In addition, place dependence may be influenced by whether the available resources in the place

support personal goal attainment and whether the person perceives comparative alternatives (Stokols & Shumaker, 1981).

Functional orientation of place. Places can be irregularly occupied or regularly occupied, oriented for individuals, groups (interacting interdependently), or aggregates (utilizing a space independently), single or multiple-functioning, and geographic or generic (Stokols & Shumaker, 1981). Places may also be occupied by the same type of people or variable types (Stokols & Shumaker). According to these categorizations of place functions, a hotel place is:

- occupied regularly by rental residents continually checking in and out utilizing the space.
- oriented for individuals, groups, and aggregates. Rental of rooms to one or more persons demonstrates individual and group activity. Aggregate activity is characteristic in hotel lobbies, amenities, and parking lots where residents utilize the space, but are not necessarily interacting with each other in the same environment.
- focused primarily on a single function by providing short-term and long-term residential accommodations.
- varied in consumer reach; serving various types of people like vacationers, workers, disaster victims, sponsored shelter-less families, and low-income families who cannot afford other housing options.
- described as geographic since an extended-stay hotel within Gwinnett County will be utilized to collect data. If this study were using extended-stay hotels without attention to area, then the focus would be on a generic characteristic of hotel place.

The implications of these functional orientations of place to one's meaning of the place, according to Stokols and Shumaker (1981), are that various types of people utilizing specific

places rather than generic, irregularly used places can obtain more complex, detailed descriptions. Further, those descriptions will be more valid from those actually experiencing the place than others who have only been told about the place (Stokols & Shumaker).

Household composition and organization. Normally, individuals associate with an environment based on continued interactions in that space and the socio-cultural values inherent in that place. However, in groups, there are added dimensions of interacting with others and negotiating privacy, resources, and space (Stokols & Shumaker, 1981). For this study, respondents could be asked: How many people reside with you? How do you find privacy in your hotel room? How much space do you have for yourself? Where do you sleep? Who cooks? How long are family members allowed to leave the television on?

Objective and subjective relationships. Objective relationships consist of the specificity, frequency or number of times visited, and endurance or duration of time associated with a place (Stokols & Shumaker, 1981). For this study, specificity may be determined by asking the question: Is this your primary residence or do you have another place to live also? To assess frequency, respondents could be asked: How many days per month do you live at this hotel? Questions related could be: How long have you lived here? Responses suggesting that the hotel is the primary or only residence that is occupied frequently over an extended time period will place stronger dependence or association with the hotel living space rather than a hotel space that is secondary and infrequently used over a short period of time (Stokols & Shumaker).

A subjective relationship with place involves one's perceived quality of the place, as well as, one's perception of the quality of comparable places (Stokols & Shumaker, 1981). Respondents could simply be asked: How do you like living here? If you could move to another place, would you? And, since relationship to place can be impacted by various current and

historical circumstances (Stokols & Shumaker), respondents may also be asked: Where did you call home before moving here? Was it a positive move or the result of a bad situation? If you had to leave here, would you have another place to call home? If respondents perceive that their place is of better quality, given comparable alternatives and personal circumstances, they will have a stronger attachment to place (Stokols & Shumaker).

Meeting personal goals. With respect to this factor of place dependence, respondents could be asked: How comfortable are you in your home? On a scale from one to five, how important is privacy (space, entertaining, cooking, decorating, raising family, etc.) to you, with five indicating very important? How well does your space meet these important needs? Is there anything else that you wish you could do in your space?

Comparative alternatives. People can achieve place dependence even if they are not satisfied with their place if alternative options do not appear to be as good or possible (Stokols & Shumaker, 1981). With regard to comparative options, respondents may be asked: What other types of housing are you aware of? Have you ever resided in other types of housing? What other types of housing can help you meet your needs and personal goals? If money or ability were not an issue, what type of other housing might you consider? What are some characteristics that would make these housing alternatives better at being a home? Is it possible for you to move to one of these other alternative housing options? Further, since place dependence can be influenced by temporal considerations, respondents may be asked: How long are you planning to live here? When you moved in, how long did you plan to stay? Do you have plans to move to another place soon? (Stokols & Shumaker, 1981)

Residential Environment and Behavior

Residential environments have been studied in a variety of disciplines across topics such as restorative qualities and affordances of home (Clark & Uzzell, 2002; R. Kaplan, 2001; Korpela & Hartig, 1996; Wells, 2000), crowding (Evans, Saegert, & Harris, 2001; Evans, Schroeder, & Lepore, 1996; Sinha & Nayyar, 2001), relocation (Harris, Werner, Brown, & Ingebritsen, 1995) and impacts on health (Diez Roux, 2003; Fullilove & Fullilove, 2000). However, there are two major areas of interdisciplinary foci: (1) inquiries into the difference between house and home as discussed previously in this chapter, and (2) inquiries into resident adaptation, adjustment, and optimization (Tognoli, 1987).

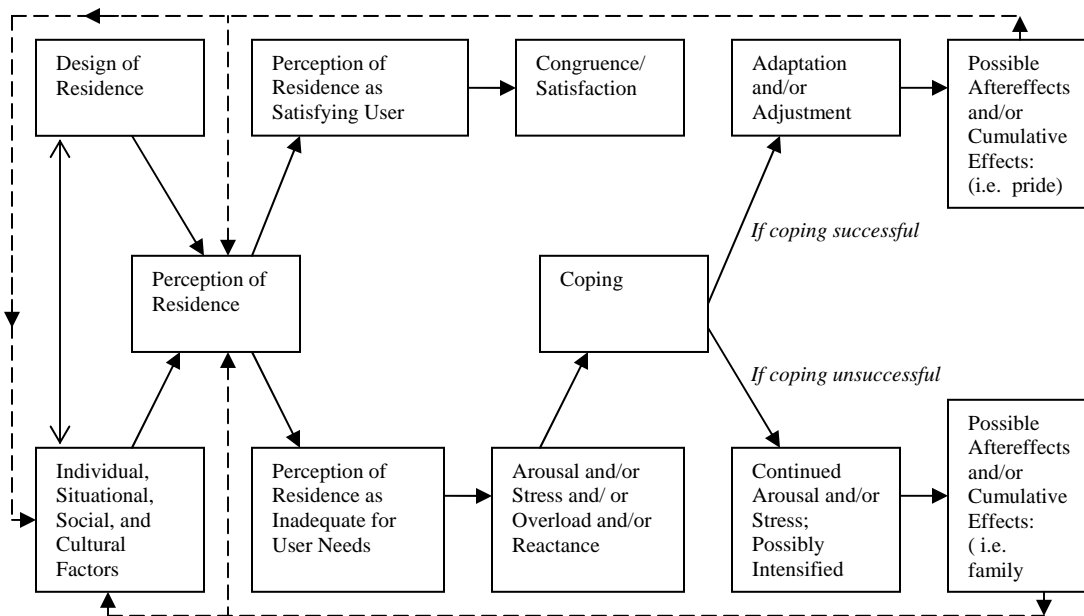
Adaptation-Level Theory provides a handy perspective for understanding home in its cultural context by describing the connections between behavior and the environment (P. A. Bell et al., 2001; Tognoli, 1987; Wohlwill, 1974). Adaptation-Level Theory poses that people must receive an optimal level of stimulation from the environment for great behavioral performance. To manage environmental stimulation, people will either adapt to the environmental condition or adjust the environmental condition to meet their needs (P. A. Bell et al.). Therefore, one's perception and reaction in a particular environmental context will greatly depend on how much that environment deviates from one's ability to adapt. These concepts are examined closer in an environment-behavior model of residential settings (P. A. Bell et al.).

Environment-Behavior Model of Residential Settings

In terms of the home environment, a person's perception of the home will depend on how the home environment stimulates and how one adapts behavior or adjust to the dwelling unit conditions as described in Bell, Greene, Fisher, and Baum's (2001) Eclectic Environment-Behavior Model for residences (Adapted version in Figure 3). For example, if a person believes

that the current residence meets a need for space or privacy, based on socio-cultural factors such as the number of children, then the dwelling place is congruent with the housing needs.

However, if the person perceives that the two-story home (with bedrooms upstairs) does not meet the spatial layout needs of a disabled son, then the home environment will cause stress and the individual will need to cope with the situation. The individual may be able to cope by adjusting to the dwelling structure (perhaps, by turning the downstairs office into a bedroom). This individual may eventually be able to find enough congruence in the home to develop a sense of pride in the place. However, if the individual is unable to cope, stress will continue and may become intensified. The possible aftereffects of this situation may be family conflict or feelings of being stagnant in personal goals.



Adapted from (P. A. Bell et al., 2001, pp. 402-403)

Figure 3. Eclectic Environment-Behavior Model in Residential Settings

Design of Residences

As described earlier in this chapter, housing types and designs have changed over time. There have been many design traditions based on architectural, societal, political, and cultural influences. Also, categories of housing may be described as single-family, duplex dwellings (where single-family dwellings are attached and owned, such as row houses or town homes) or multi-family dwellings (such as apartment buildings) to accommodate the needs of residents. Further, housing type may be described based on what is available to individuals and families based on income and regional availability.

According to the literature on housing history, single-family units have been an icon of reaching the American dream and a symbol of economic and societal success. Living in an apartment is often perceived as a step toward homeownership. Although, a fairly stable housing option, it is not considered as ideal as homeownership. In American culture, homeownership is valued and considered to be supportive of positive self-esteem, more prominent social status, and increased life control and satisfaction (P. A. Bell et al., 2001; Rohe, 1994). Federal policy advocating homeownership has been implemented based on the premise that if people owned their own homes, the quality of their lives would be improved. In a study of the effects of homeownership on the self-esteem, perceived control and life satisfaction of low income people, only life satisfaction appeared to be improved by owning their own home (Rohe). Self-esteem was impacted by the condition of the home and possibly by other factors such as income, education, or occupation (Rohe). Perceived control over life events was unsupported in the research because when people own their homes, they still may not control other factors such as job security, family relationships, or even foreclosure of the property after difficult economic times. Rohe's longitudinal study of 171 low-income homebuyers and 101 low-income renters in

Baltimore did find that homebuyers reported more life satisfaction after purchasing their home than renters reported.

Individual, Situational, Social and Cultural Factors

One's perception of a place is based on individual, situational, social and cultural factors that affect being comfortable in an environment. An individual's ability to manage environmental stressors will determine the types of places that are either conducive to comfort or disruptive of comfort. A noisy environment may be pleasing to an individual who prefers high environmental stimulation or frustrating to a person who prefers a low level of environmental stimulation. Further, one's ability to adapt to the environment would also play a role in the comfort level with an environment. If one individual prefers quieter places and is more capable of tuning out a noisy environment than another, then the adaptation level of the first individual would be more comfortable even when the environmental stimulus is not optimal (P. A. Bell et al., 2001).

Also, situations may influence an individuals' perception of a place (P. A. Bell et al., 2001). Such situations may be the amount of space needed in a home to accommodate a large family or the condition and safety of the exterior space of the home for child recreation. There may also be temporal considerations. An environment may be appropriate for short-term accommodations, but unacceptable for longer-term accommodations.

Social and cultural factors that may affect perceptions of home (P. A. Bell et al., 2001) could be based on the need for friends and family to interact in the adequate space and the ability to utilize the space as socially constructed. Social construction of a space may mean kitchen and laundering spaces for the domestic house person to carry out member roles and tasks. Another construction based on cultural factors may be the need for separate bedrooms for boys and girls

due to beliefs about gender roles and appropriate distancing. In addition, favorable assessment of a place may depend on one's ability to achieve privacy or project images of unique personality.

People bring into environmental places wants, needs, and expectations for the usage of spaces. The ability to meet these needs will determine an individual's perception of that place. With regard to housing, a family recognizes needs for privacy, space, safety, accessibility, and any other factors that will accommodate the unique characteristics of its members. Without restraint, a family can choose an appropriate place to live to meet its needs. However, housing type and style are often not so easily accessible due to housing costs and availability. Therefore, experience in a residential space based on individual, situational, social and cultural factors will create impressions or perceptions of how well the environments fits with the family (P. A. Bell et al., 2001).

Home Satisfaction and Congruence

As described previously, several characteristics make a place feel like a home by allowing inhabitants to meet basic living needs. To recap, these characteristics are centrality, continuity, privacy, self-expression and personal identity, social relationships, warmth, and a suitable physical structure. In addition, if a residential place meets the functional needs intended and allow sufficient completion of daily tasks, the resident will experience greater levels of satisfaction. Residents, who perceive that they have comparatively better residential units than other available units, will experience greater satisfaction. Perceptions of social control in the home environment and in the outside neighborhood are also important for achieving home satisfaction. Residents need to be able to build social ties and feel safe while interacting with neighbors (P. A. Bell et al., 2001).

Coping: Adaptation and Adjustment

Insufficient qualities of a residence create stress for individuals and families (Gunter, 2000). The stress is created by the inability to meet basic needs and complete daily tasks necessary for well-being (Gunter, 2000; Israel, 2003). To reduce the stress created by the environmental condition, the resident must either adapt behavior to cope inside the existing environmental condition or adjust the environment to meet the need (P. A. Bell et al., 2001). At times, the incongruence between the environmental condition and personal need is not enough to cause a great deal of stress for the resident. For example, if an individual moves into a residential unit that has a smaller bedroom than the previous residence, the person can resolve the problem fairly easily by leaving out some of the furniture, perhaps housing it in storage, repurposing it in another room, or giving it away. In this instance, the individual has adapted to the smaller living arrangement. However, some environment-need incongruent conditions are more significant and may require substantial adaptation or adjustment, such as continuous crime in the neighborhood, which disturbs the sense of safety and peace of mind of the resident. Such dissatisfaction with the residential unit may spark the resident to look for other accommodations. However, if the resident cannot easily move, then coping with the situation may be very difficult.

Behavioral After Effects

Satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a home and the ability or inability to cope may create behavioral aftereffects for residents (P. A. Bell et al., 2001). Residents who are satisfied with their home display pride in their dwelling and neighborhood. They may engage in cohesive relationships with neighbors. Satisfied residents may also become territorial of their home and the surrounding neighborhood investing a personal stake in the continued positive experience of the environment.

Residents finding their home incongruent with their needs may not invest time or attention in the upkeep of the property. These residents may also experience domestic conflict as the home environment continually disrupts familial customs, traditions, and family roles. In addition, residents may develop negative perceptions of their own personal abilities and potential due to feeling entrapment in a dissatisfactory living environment. Within these possible after-effects, the mutual transactions of environment on behavior and behavior on environment are clear (P. A. Bell et al., 2001). Environment and behavior are closely intertwined and interactive. To understand the meaning of home for families, it is important to seek description within the environmental context of the inhabitant.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, a historical context for understanding housing styles and choices was highlighted. Recognizing housing within this context is important for understanding the socio-cultural perspectives about what a structure communicates about its inhabitants. Some housing structures, like wigwams and high-rise public buildings, are anachronistic. These structures (as cultural artifacts) represent a time in history when these building structures were socially considered adequate for particular inhabitants based on accepted beliefs about the needs of the people who lived there.

Not all housing types are equal, even if the same building materials and architects are used to build them. The size, color, layout, and location of the house portray images in one's mind about its inhabitants and their social life. A small rural cottage in the west may be equal in size to a slave quarter in the south or a French flat in the city. However, society constructs meaning about the appropriateness of these housing types based on race, ethnicity, and

socioeconomic status. Society also constructs meaning about gender roles inside a housing structure.

Housing as home is also socially constructed and personally conceived. The way space is used or objects are displayed communicates to others who lives in a space and how that space accommodates the needs of its inhabitants. A person's perception of a place as a home is based on what they have been traditionally taught by societal mores and folklore to be an adequate home (i.e., single-family dwelling with a white picket fence) and also based on the characteristics of the place that either hinders or encourages fulfillment of perceived personal needs (privacy, style, etc.).

Housing type and home communicate who we are to society by representing cultural values and social status and provides comfort and confirmation of who we are to ourselves. Housing type represents a cultural expression. Home is a personal perception.

The assumptions clearly inherent in this type of inquiry are that (1) hotels are not typically defined as long-term housing choice, (2) the hotel environment and people who reside there long-term mutually interact to form unique relationships, and (3) that long-term hotel residents can communicate these unique relationships to the researcher. The next chapter on methodology will outline the methods used in this inquiry and the justification for the chosen approaches.

CHAPTER THREE:

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the methodology that was used to understand the relationships existing between residents and their extended-stay hotel dwelling places through descriptions of home¹⁰. This qualitative approach to research inquiry sought to answer the following questions: (1) How did these residents describe their hotel dwelling as home? (2) What aspects of the extended-stay living space contributed to or detracted from achieving a sense of home? (3) What strategies did hotel residents use to shape their environment to meet the physical, psychological, and social atmosphere of a home?

This chapter provides a description of qualitative research along with the approaches and rationale for sample selection, data collection, and data analysis selections for this study. Also, this chapter includes an outline of the methods used to increase the trustworthiness of this study's findings. Finally, this chapter concludes with a discussion of this study's limitations as well as the researcher's bias and assumptions.

Design of the Study

Qualitative research is an approach to studying individual and group constructions of reality (Merriam, 2002). It is defined as "research that produces descriptive data based upon spoken or written words and observable behavior" (Sherman & Reid, 1994, p. 1). This approach captures the context of significant factors involved in a phenomenon and allows researchers to gain subjective meaning and rich descriptions within the complexities of life (Sherman & Reid).

¹⁰ See chapter 2 for a description of home in the context of this study.

This research is also holistic, looking at the particular in the context of the larger, whole picture (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000a; Shaw & Gould, 2001).

Qualitative research contains a family of traditions for investigating how people experience a particular phenomenon, providing insight into questions such as, what is the process of grieving for older women? Or, what is it like to be homeless? The family of qualitative research traditions includes many methods, such as grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), phenomenology (Giorgi, 1994; Moustakas, 1994), ethnography (Goodall, 2000; Schensul & LeCompte, 1999; Wolcott, 1994), case studies (Crabtree & Miller, 1992; Stake, 2000), and basic interpretive studies (Merriam, 1998), along with many other methods across diverse disciplines (Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000a; Merriam, 2002; Patton, 1990; Rubin & Babbie, 2001; Tesch, 1990).

Across various traditions of qualitative research approaches, methods typically involve immersion in everyday life situations, attention to the holistic cultural context, “giv[ing] voice to the normally silenced and ... illuminat[ing] what is typically masked” (Greene, 1994, p. 541), and the inductive production of new concepts (Rubin & Babbie, 2001; Shaw & Gould, 2001). Further, qualitative research methods include the following characteristics across various designs:

- Understanding the meaning people make of life experiences. In qualitative inquiry, the researcher seeks to understand “how different people make sense of their lives” (Bogdan & Bicklen, 1992, p. 7).
- Using the researcher as the primary data collection instrument. As an instrument, the researcher must “have the ability to observe behavior and must sharpen the skills

- necessary for observation and face-to-face interview” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000a, p. 386).
- Discovering theories by use of an inductive process (Padgett, 1998). The end product of qualitative research is the result of “exploring, then confirming... to discover important patterns, themes, and interrelationships” (Patton, 2002, p. 41) among the data.
 - Yielding rich, thick descriptive data about the studied phenomenon. Researchers use keen interview and observation skills to collect data that depict what is going on in the lives of participants. This “process of discovery” (Lofland, 1971, p. 4) allows the researcher to understand what is happening according to the perspectives of those being studied.

Merriam (2002) identified three types of qualitative approaches to inquiry: interpretive, critical, and postmodern. An interpretive approach seeks to understand a phenomenon. Critical qualitative inquiry investigates the construction of reality among individuals. Research taking a postmodern approach deconstructs perceptions of reality to understand the way people construct reality. Since this study sought to understand the phenomenon of living in an extended-stay hotel as home, using a basic interpretive design is the most appropriate of these approaches.

Creswell (1998) identified eight reasons for choosing a qualitative approach for study:

- (1) Qualitative research allows the researcher to investigate how or what happens in a particular topic of interest;
- (2) It allows for an exploration into a topic for which variables regarding the phenomena are not clear. Although there have been recorded histories of people living in hotels and motels (Groth, 1994; Hayden, 2002; Jakle et al., 1996; Witzel, 2000), little is known

about how these individuals would describe their living accommodations as home. As such, a qualitative research approach is most suitable for the investigation of this phenomena for which little is known (Rubin & Babbie, 2001);

(3) A qualitative approach yields a detailed view of the problem under study;

(4) Individuals may be studied in their natural environment so that the problem is understood within its cultural context. This naturalistic approach means “the research takes place in real world settings and the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest” (Patton, 2002, p. 39);

(5) A qualitative approach brings the researcher into the study by use of a first-person literary writing style;

(6) It is appropriate for researchers who have sufficient time and resources to engage in the site to gain rich textual data;

(7) The appropriateness of qualitative research to a study requires that the audience of the research be accepting of this approach; and

(8) The researcher may be an active learner telling the story of participants from their perspective and experience.

Qualitative research is also suitable for investigating the lifeworlds of individuals (Berg, 2001). An individual’s lifeworld includes “emotions, motivations, symbols and their meanings, empathy, and other subjective aspects associated with the naturally evolving lives of individuals and groups” (Berg, pp. 10-11). For the above reasons, a qualitative approach best fits the aim of this study -- to understand the relationships existing between residents and their extended-stay hotel dwelling place through descriptions of home.

Sample Selection

Non-probability¹¹ or purposeful sampling methods are more appropriate in qualitative research because they elicit information-rich cases from which much in-depth information can be drawn (Patton, 2002). In this study, I used a purposive sampling method to recruit respondents. Although there are many types of purposive sampling approaches (Patton, 2002), I used snowball and key informant sampling methods in this study. The purpose of snowball sampling is to recruit respondents, through referral, who would have rich information about the topic being studied. Snowball sampling entails initially identifying and interviewing several people with characteristics of the phenomenon under study, then asking them to refer other people they know who may also meet the qualifications for participation in the study (Berg, 2001). In particular, two participants recruited four other participants for interviews. A few participants indicated interests and signed up for interviews after picking up recruitment flyers (see Appendix D) at the front desk of the hotel. In addition to the snowball method of sampling, hotel personnel were key informants and often referred hotel guests they believed would be appropriate for this study. Given the position of hotel staff and their tenure, they were able to identify families that had been living at the hotel for an extended period with ease. This method of sampling was very effective and resulted in the recruitment of six participants.

During the first phone contact, I screened participants for eligibility and scheduled them for an interview. Participants picked up their pre-interview packets from the hotel front desk prior to the meeting. The pre-interview packets contained a consent form, photo release form, a

¹¹ Sampling in qualitative inquiry differs fundamentally from quantitative research sampling. In quantitative research, various types of probability sampling strategies are used in an effort to make inferences about larger populations based on data collected from representative samples (Berg, 2001). Since probability (or random) sampling in quantitative research is primarily concerned with “how much” and “how often” a phenomenon occurs, and qualitative research is primarily concerned with the meaning of a phenomenon, random sampling makes little sense in qualitative research (Merriam, 2002).

disposable camera, and an instruction sheet. In the pre-interview packet, there were instructions to participants for completing the forms and taking photos of places that made the hotel feel like home, including their room if they desired. Participants returned the forms and the camera back into the envelope, sealed it, and left it at the front desk. A few days before the interview, I picked up the envelope and developed the film at a local film processing facility.

Immediately before conducting the interviews, I explained the purpose of the study and reviewed the consent forms (see Appendix E) with participants. This was an important step since it is ethically important for them to understand “that they are being research[ed], [have] the right to be informed about the nature of the research and [have] the right to withdraw at any time” (Ryen, 2004, p. 231). Participants kept a copy of the consent form and I filed the signed copy for my records. The length of the interviews varied from 52 minutes to 2 hours and the average interview was approximately 80 minutes.

At the conclusion of each interview, participants were compensated \$20.00, with the exception of one respondent who was compensated \$25.00 for a 2-hour interview. Compensation of interviewees could be perceived as putting a price on the participant responses if conceived in a marketing sense (Ryen, 2004). I believe it was fair to recognize their participation in my study and showed by compensating them \$20 for their time.

After completing the interviews, participants were asked to refer other people who might be interested and met eligibility requirements for the study. Two participants were paid an additional \$10.00 for each completed referral interview. Given that short- and long-term residents come and go within the commercial nature of an extended-stay hotel, long-term residents and hotel staff (as key informants) were considered the most knowledgeable about other families living at the hotel as their only residential dwelling. Two hotel staff were highly

motivated to find participants for the study. They were each paid \$30.00 for six recruited residents.

Participant Criteria

It was essential to first establish participation criteria for the study before engaging in purposive sampling methods (Merriam, 2002). To participate in this study, individuals had to:

- Be at least 18 years of age;
- Be able to engage in conversational English;
- Report net incomes of no more than \$33,360 annually for the household;
- Reside in the selected Gwinnett County extended-stay hotel as their only residence for at least two consecutive weeks; and
- Be open to at least one follow-up interview (with \$20 compensation).

The experience and description of home varies across age groups based on developmental needs (Chawla, 1992; Clark & Uzzell, 2002; Hay, 1998; Pennartz, 1986; Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). In this study, I was interested in the ways that adults perceived and described home. Therefore, participants had to be at least 18 years of age and capable of giving consent. Obtaining informed consent from participants is an ethical tradition in research to respect individuals' rights to make decisions about inclusion in a study based on full understandings of the nature of the inquiry and any foreseeable risks involved (Christians, 2000). All participants were consenting adults. The youngest was 19 and the oldest was 51 years of age.

Both men and women were eligible for participation in this study. There were three male and seven women participants. Six participants are African-American, three Caucasian-American, and one is Latin-American. Their households varied from two to five people with six families having children at home at the hotel. Six respondents were married. Half of the

participants worked, but only two of the households had dual incomes. These household incomes ranged from a little over \$11,000 to \$32,000 annually. Occupations reported were carpenter, irrigation installer, pre-school teacher, warehouse employer, auditor, nurse, homemaker, and student. At the hotel, all of these families lived in one room, but four families had dual beds in their rented space. The others only had one bed. Most of the families lived at the hotel less than four months. However, two families had been there over six months. Although it would have been optimal to interview a maximum variation of people with respect to gender, ethnicity, and educational factors, this study sought to learn from the experiences of people who represented a unique sub-sample of the hotel resident population. The people sought for this study were those who considered the hotel as their only place of residence. As such, sampling in terms of variation was difficult for such a distinct situation since data collection only occurred at one selected hotel site.

Since the qualitative interview is a purposeful conversation to understand the intricate meanings individuals gave to a particular phenomenon (Kvale, 1996), clear communication was essential. Cross-cultural interviewing is often difficult because, “it is tricky enough to be sure what a person means when using a common language, but words can take on a very different meaning in other cultures” (Patton, 2002, p. 392). I did not use a translator or interpreter. Therefore, only respondents who could comfortably engage in conversational English participated in this study.

Respondents had to report a net income of no more than \$33,360 annually for the household. This was the income considered necessary to afford a one-bedroom apartment at fair market rental (FMI) rate (an amount considered fair for a landlord to ask for in rent) in Gwinnett

County and Metropolitan Atlanta in 2004, which was set at \$834 in 2006.¹² Study participants reported incomes from \$11,220 to \$32,000. The estimated median rental income of residents in Atlanta is \$39,238 and in Gwinnett County it is \$46,339 annually (Coalition). Therefore, families with incomes below \$33,360 annually are more likely to be those who have few, if any, housing choices other than an extended-stay hotel. Since the rooms of extended-stay hotels typically have open floor plans within the space of one room, a one-bedroom apartment seemed somewhat comparable. However, it is also important to note the differences between a one-bedroom apartment and a single hotel room. One-bedroom floor plans are typically larger than extended-stay hotel rooms. These apartments also have a partitioned off room for the bedroom, whereas hotel residents do not have the privacy of a partitioned bedroom (excluding the bathroom).

Residents had to have resided in hotel housing for at least two consecutive weeks and also report Company Suites as their only residence. This tenure requirement attempted to screen out residents who had not resided in this type of housing arrangement long enough to describe interactions in the hotel culture. Also, the requirement gave residents time to have settled into the home environment and personalized the space, if they so elected. In setting this criterion for the hotel being an only residence, I am reminded of my husband who often spends weeks and months at a time living in an extended-stay hotel because of his work in reconstruction after horrific natural disasters around the country. Although he is staying at the hotel for an extended time, the hotel never becomes his primary residence. He does not personalize the space with objects that are meaningful to him or decorate the interior in ways that reflect his identity. As long as there is running water, cable television, and a bed with clean sheets, he is content because his primary residence contains the artifacts of his life (such as the British flag hanging in his

¹² The FMR for 2007 has decreased to \$700 per month for a one-bedroom apartment.

office which represents a claim to his private domestic space, and an allegiance to his country of origin). In contrast, for this study, I was only interested in interviewing individuals who identified the hotel as their primary and only residence-- a place where they established home, a place where their artifacts of life (e.g., pictures, trophies, flags, etc.) resided.

Initially, one 19-year-old young woman did not appear to meet the criterion of having the hotel as her only home. She lived at the hotel with her boyfriend, but many of her personal items were still at her parents' home. However, she explained that although she could possibly go back there, family conflict prevented her from doing so, and she did not feel welcomed enough to return. Therefore, I allowed her to complete the interview.

An important consideration in sample selection is gaining entry into a selected site to recruit participants (Creswell, 1998). Depending on the study purpose, samples may be sites, programs, or people (Creswell; Patton, 2002). For this study, my interest was in how individuals described home, so individuals were selected as the unit of investigation. Also, it was important to determine if the sample of individuals would be recruited from one site or multiple sites because studies about populations of people may require mobility to multiple sites (Padgett, 1998). Since it was important to choose participants who were in an accessible setting related to the phenomena under study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000b; Silverman, 2005), I selected only respondents who resided in Company Suites extended-stay hotel at the time of the study. This hotel is a commercial establishment with open accessibility to the public. Aside from both time and budget constraints, my choice to interview participants from only one hotel was influenced by what I consider the wise words of qualitative researcher, Harry Wolcott (1994):

- “Seasoned researchers are as vulnerable as newcomers...sometimes proposing huge multisite, multiobserver studies based on seemingly blind adherence to the maxim that more is better” (p. 181);
- “Fieldwork that must be conducted at two sites does not guarantee twice as good a study; rather, it diminishes by half the total attention that can be devoted to either” (p. 182); and
- “The risk in conducting fieldwork at multiple sites is to forgo the opportunity to produce one well-contextualized qualitative study in the course of producing an inadequate quantitative one” (p. 182).

Site of Research

Gwinnett County, Georgia. Research participants were recruited through flyers at a Gwinnett County extended-stay hotel, Company Suites. Gwinnett County is a large county in Northeast Atlanta that has shown trends in continued population growth. According to the county’s website, the population is currently 676,000 and is projected to reach 1.2 million by the year 2025 (“About Gwinnett,” 2003).

Gwinnett County is recognized as one of the more affluent communities in Metropolitan Atlanta. The median income is just over \$60,000 annually. Employment fields fall among the following categories: management or professional services (39.7%), sales or office work (30.1%), construction and maintenance occupations (10.1%), production or transport (9.6%), and service work (10.4%). Among those employed, 84.7% receive private wages or salaries, 9.7% are government laborers, 5.5% are self-employed and only .2% are unpaid family workers (U.S. Bureau of Statistics, 2000 Summary File 3).

Gwinnett County is considered a county with affordable and available housing for a variety of household types ranging in price from \$90,000 to over \$1,000,000 in single-family housing costs ("House and home: Get real!," 2005). The average new home price is estimated to be \$140,000 (Congress, 2005) which was "significantly higher than the median value of homes in Georgia and the United States (Census 2000, 2005, p. 11). In 2000, Gwinnett County community statistics reported 209, 682 housing units, comprised mostly of suburban neighborhoods of single-family homes (75%), multi-family apartment complexes (22%), mobile homes (2%), and a small number of unaccounted for other types of dwellings such as boats, RVs, and vans (1%). Most of the residents live in their own homes (71%), and renters comprise 29% of the population. Homeowners (20%) and renters (33%) spent more than 30% or more of their household income on housing costs. Among these 217,000 households, 29% of the residents are under 18 years of age, 66% are ages 18 to 45, and 5% are over age 65. In addition, 73% are White, 14 % are Black, 11% are Hispanic, 9% are Asian, about 1% are Native American, Native Alaskan, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 4% comprised other races. Of these residents, 58% are married, 24% are in other families or living alone, and 8% are in non-family living arrangements. Finally, the average household size contains 2.84 people (U.S. Bureau of Statistics, 2001 Summary Report).

The Gwinnett County school system is the largest school system in Georgia. Students consistently score at the top of state testing requirements in Georgia and have been represented among many of the state and national awards for academic success (Commerce, 2005, para 5). This county also has the largest Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) in Georgia and spends over one billion dollars on its students (Commerce). Per capital cost is projected in 2007 to be \$7,250.00.

Company Suites Hotel. Company Suites extended-stay hotel was one of the lowest advertised weekly hotel rental sites in Gwinnett County at the time of site consideration and was a factor in its selection for this study.¹³ This franchise of extended-stay hotels targets long-term residential guests and is considered the leading economy chain. The mission of the franchise is to be the “premier operator of budget extended-stay hotels” (“Extended-Stay Website,” 2001, p. 2). According to the corporate website, each Company Suite room:

...includes an apartment size kitchen with refrigerator, two-burner stovetop, full size microwave, in room coffee maker, dishes, & utensils, and a well-lit kitchen table/work area. There's also plenty of cabinet space! Within each room you'll find a comfortable living area with a relaxing chair and ottoman, remote control cable TV with free HBO, and personal voice mail service and high speed internet access. Outside, you'll find a clean, well-lit property with beautiful grounds and plenty of free parking. Our average room has over 280 square feet of living and relaxing space specially designed for your comfort. (“Extended-Stay Website,” p. 1)

Many Company Suites locations have exterior corridors where the door for each unit faces the outside parking lot. However, the selected Company Suite hotel had interior corridors where the door to each unit is within a hallway beyond the lobby and front desk in the interior of the building. The hotel is located in a busy commercial and residential area in the city of Duluth near the Gwinnett Place Mall and off an exit of the busy Interstate 85 highway north. Within a half mile, there is a Publix shopping center.

Location was carefully considered as Creswell (1998) instructed that proper conditions for an interview include a quiet place where audio recording can be optimized. At Company

¹³ Admittedly, other extended-stay hotels in Gwinnett County are in less desirable condition and may have been more accurate in capturing the home-like environment for extremely low-income families. However, these facilities did not have the optimal conditions for interviewing respondents in this study.

Suites hotel, the general manager provided use of the facility to collect data and rented, at a discounted rate of \$275, a private conference room to interview participants. Management also allowed flyers to be posted in the elevator and stacked at the front desk. Anyone interested in the study called me directly for a prescreening interview. If the resident met eligibility criteria, I scheduled an interview, which was later conducted on site in the conference room.

Sample Size

Sample size in qualitative research may range from one case study to “as many as the researcher needs” (Padgett, 1998, p. 52), depending on the purpose of the inquiry. If the researcher sought to understand the unique situation of an individual, then a sample of one would be appropriate. In this study, I could have spent an extended amount of time with a few participants to collect an in-depth account of their experiences of home in a hotel. I would use interviewing and journaling over a specified time period, then compare the “home” experience over temporal dimensions, such as “home across the seasons,” or understanding “home” in terms of life transitions, such as “home after a divorce,” or “home after the birth of a baby.” However, given the typical transience of the population of people living in hotels as their primary residence coupled with time considerations in the conduct of this study, such foci were not feasible. Therefore, this study sought an understanding of “home” from participants during a snapshot of time at one extended-stay hotel.

Sample size also depends on whether the researcher has reached saturation (or redundancy). Saturation occurs when data collection yields no new information (Padgett, 1998; Patton, 2002) and is a goal of qualitative research. I met saturation after interviewing seven participants and the data collected yielded very little new responses. However, I completed three more interviews to be confident that saturation had been reached. In total, 10 participants were

interviewed in this study. Since the goal was to gain an in-depth understanding of the extended-stay home experience from a limited pool of possible participants, I believe 10 participants were adequate for this study.

Data Collection

In qualitative research, there are three major methods for collecting data: interviews, observations, and documents (Merriam, 2002; Padgett, 1998). The products of these methods include: “field notes, interview transcripts, transcribed recordings of naturally occurring interactions, documents, pictures, and other graphic representations” (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 4). According to Patton (2002), qualitative data “consist of quotations, observations, and excerpts from documents” (p. 47) that “capture and communicate someone else’s experience” (p. 47) through descriptions and tell the story of phenomena. For this study, I began my inquiry observing the hotel environment to develop a sense of the place from first-hand experience and to observe the experiences of others in the hotel place. These observations prepared me for subsequent data collection through in-depth interviews with participant residents at the hotel. For example, during my stay, I found food shopping and preparation a challenge due to the limited space in the refrigerator and freezer. Therefore, I was interested in how other guests managed these tasks. My experiences helped form the types of questions I subsequently asked of participants and allowed me to understand their perceptions of the hotel environment. For example, respondents’ descriptions of the freezer size were clear to me because of my own personal interactions within the hotel space. This information gathered from in-depth interviews was further enriched by photographs taken by residents depicting their perceptions of the hotel place as home.

Observations

There are four roles that researchers may play as an observer in research: complete participant, participant-as-observer, observer-as-participant, and complete observer (Rubin & Babbie, 2001). As a complete participant, the researcher is highly engaged in the studied environment. The respondents are unaware of the researcher's role. The benefit of this approach to collecting data is the decreased risk of respondents modifying behavior or responses simply because they are being studied. However, the risk of this approach is that by participating the researcher may affect the natural social context since the researcher is now interacting in the environment and affecting change.

In the role of participant-as-observer, the researcher would still fully participate; however, respondents would be aware of the researcher's role and study aim. The benefit of this approach is the avoidance of deceiving respondents. However, the risk is that respondents may modify natural behavior while being observed (Patton, 2002). Taking the approach of observer-as-participant, the researcher primarily observes the setting, but may also spend some time in the setting, participating minimally. However, as complete observer, there is no participation in the setting at all. The researcher does not interact in the environment, and those studied may not even know they are being observed. To comply with the requirements of the University of Georgia Institutional Review Board, I did not enter the hotel rooms of participants. Therefore, direct observation of the actual units was not possible. However, in order to take the reader "into the time and place of the observation [to be able to] know what it was like to have been there" (Patton, p. 47), I took on the role of observer-as-participant at the extended-stay hotel for seven days and six nights.

During my stay, I tried to experience the environment as residents experienced the hotel. My activities included checking into the hotel at the regularly advertised weekly extended-stay rate of \$253 on Saturday, March 18th at 11:00AM with sufficient clothing and toiletries for my stay, which ended on Sunday, March 24, at 10:00AM. I did not bring groceries to the hotel. I purchased food available in the nearby grocery shop on the second day. While shopping, I was cognizant of buying food items that could be accommodated in the storage spaces and be prepared by the available appliances in the hotel room. Along with recording observations of my own perceptions while experiencing my room and the outside hotel environment, I also recorded observations of other residents interacting with each other and within the hotel environment. Further, I recorded my conversations and interactions with residents or staff during the week of data collection. These recorded field notes were dated and analyzed.

My goal for the first week of data collection was to experience the environment and become aware of the general atmosphere of various places at the hotel including my rented room, as well as the parking lot, front desk, corridors, and outside grounds. Another benefit of these observations was becoming aware of the interactions among residents, staff, and other visitors to the hotel setting. Such awareness contributed to the depth and appropriateness of interview questions asked of participants during the seven weeks of data collection. It was not my aim to create a sense of “home” from my perspective at the hotel. According to Merriam (2002), the observer records the physical setting, participants in the setting, activities and interactions, conversations, subtle factors (such as non-verbal communications), and one’s own behavior. In essence, my field notes were meant to be “the eyes, ears, and perceptual senses for the reader” (Patton, 2002, p. 23).

Interviews

The qualitative interview is a construction site of knowledge where two people interchange views about a topic (Kvale, 1996). The purpose of an interview “is to obtain descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena” (Kvale, p. 6). Interviews offer “the opportunity for an authentic gaze into the soul of another, or even for a politically correct dialogue where researcher and researched offer mutual understanding and support” (Atkinson & Silverman, 1997, p. 304).

I chose to use interviews in this study because I was interested in the participants’ perceptions of the hotel dwelling. Also, since I was interested in the particular relationship with their home environment, the interview allowed me to be “flexible and sensitive to the specific dynamics of each interaction” (Mason, 2002, p. 64). Further, an interview was appropriate for my topic because I asked for perceptions of the hotel-living phenomenon for which “people’s knowledge, views, understandings, interpretations, experience and interactions are meaningful properties of the social reality” (Mason, p. 63) and can be constructed and reconstructed in dialogue during the interview process (Kvale, 1996; Mason, 2002). The interviews for this study were completed over ten weeks beginning on Sunday, March 26th and ending on Sunday, May 28th. Hand-recorded notes and tape-recorded data were transcribed and analyzed. All of the professionally transcribed data were checked for accuracy, and I also listened to the tapes repeatedly to become familiar with the data. Since it was not possible for the interviews to be professionally transcribed immediately after the first interview of the day, I listened to the completed interview prior to completing the second scheduled interview¹⁴ for the day in order to inform the interview process as is the recursive nature of qualitative data collection.

¹⁴ A maximum of two interviews were completed per day.

Creswell (1998) suggested preparation for an interview includes good recording instruments, an interview guide, a quiet location for optimal audio recording, consent for the interview, as well as, good time management and listening skills. Each interview was conducted with the use of an interview guide (see Appendix F) to assist with staying on the topic of interest (Mason, 2002). An interview guide is a document listing questions to be asked during an interview session. This guide “ensure[d] that the same basic lines of inquiry are pursued with each person interviewed” (Patton, 2002, p. 343). The interview guide also helped me manage the limited interview time. Patton identified three approaches to preparing for an interview, two of which include interview guides of varying detail:

- **Informal Conversational Interview** – This approach to interviewing is considered unstructured and offers maximum flexibility during the interview process. Questions are generated during the course of the interview conversation. This approach works well when researchers spend extended time in the research setting and have opportunities for repeated and ad hoc interviewing.
- **General Interview Guide** – Using this approach, researchers would create a checklist of basic topics to be explored during the interview process. Within these basic topics, “the interviewer is free to explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject” (p. 343). The benefit to this interview approach is the ability of the researcher to interview various people in a more systematic and focused way. Within this interview framework, the number of topics is limited; however, each included topic can be explored comprehensively. The use of this type of guide would also allow researchers to add topics that may emerge during the interview that are important to the study and have been identified by the respondents.

- Standardized Open-Ended Interview Guide – Flexibility is limited in this structured approach to interviewing. Using this approach, the researcher expects to take “each respondent through the same sequence and [ask] each respondent the same questions with essentially the same words” (p. 342). This approach allows the interviewer greater control of focus and time management in the interview process. Also, this approach minimizes variation in interviewees and responses to be analyzed.

For this study, I used a general interview approach to draw in-depth responses to a limited number of topics from multiple respondents. One approach to preparing a general or semi-structured interview guide is to first identify the major questions that are entrenched in the research purpose, then break each question into mini-questions that probe responses pertaining to the major question and that may be explored during the interview (Mason, 2002). The interview guide for this study consisted of three major questions: How would extended-stay hotel residents describe their home? What aspects of the extended-stay living space contribute to or detract from achieving a sense of home? How well does the hotel environment meet residents’ physical, psychological, social, and aesthetic needs as home?

Documents

Documents are data sources that are ready-made (already present) or researcher-generated to furnish descriptive information of the phenomenon under study (Merriam, 1998). For this study, respondents contributed researcher-generated documents, in the form of photographs of their interior hotel rooms and other areas of the hotel they selected. After the pre-screening telephone contact to determine eligibility, participants were given disposable cameras in their pre-interview packets and encouraged to take photographs inside their hotel rooms and in other places they frequent alone or during interactions with other residents, guests,

and staff. I developed the film and brought the photographs to the interview to facilitate a discussion about the content of the pictures at the conclusion of the in-depth interviews. These photographs provided the only real visual image of the room interior since I was unable to enter their personal dwellings, per the Institutional Review Board's requirements.

One limitation to using documents is the possibility that the documents are not authentic (Merriam, 1998). I asked participants to refrain from altering the condition of the extended-stay room interior. Unaltered room conditions may provide visual depictions of space usage in their rooms. For example, pictures may show multi-purposing of the kitchen or bathroom areas as a method of space negotiation (i.e., cluttering). However, I had no way of knowing whether they had "doctored" (Padgett, 1998) up the room to avoid embarrassment. In addition, since photographs are snapshots in time, they do not capture the dynamic unfolding (Merriam) of situations, such as being crowded or preparing a meal in a kitchenette. Similarly, a photograph cannot capture noise or smell disturbances, thereby providing an incomplete picture (Merriam). However, some advantages of this type of data collection method are: increased stability and reduced reactivity, less time-consuming data collection, and typically being less emotionally taxing (Padgett). In addition, documents are relatively inexpensive to collect and "a product of the context in which they were produced and therefore are grounded in the real world" (Merriam, pp. 126-127).

Data Analysis

Data analysis refers to the process of "transforming and interpreting qualitative data in a rigorous and scholarly way in order to capture the complexities of the social worlds we seek to understand" (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 3). Qualitative data analysis begins during the process of data collection as researchers continually record and track analytic insights as part of the

fieldwork experience (Patton, 2002). These insights “for making sense of the [emergent] data” (Patton, p. 436) are used to confirm the initial hypothesis or seek alternate explanations while still in the process of data collection.

In order to take my collected data from “the raw to the cooked” (Padgett, 1998, p. 72), I used the constant-comparative technique of data analysis (Merriam, 2002). This approach to data analysis was originally introduced by Glaser and Strauss (1967) for grounded theory research methods. However, this data analysis technique has been used across various approaches to qualitative research, including basic interpretive qualitative research.

In constant comparative analysis, “units of data deemed meaningful by the researcher are compared with each other in order to generate tentative categories and properties” (Merriam, 2002, p. 143). For this study, I conducted a preliminary analysis of data after each interview was transcribed (Merriam, 1998; Tisdell, 2000), as it is recommended that analysis in qualitative inquiry be concurrent with data collection (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). The constant comparative technique began with open-coding the collected data by the “examination of minute sections of text made up of individual words, phrases, and sentences” (Creswell, 1998, p. 302). From this process, I identified preliminary categories about the phenomenon under study (Creswell). Linkages between these categories and their subcategories were then found during a process of axial coding (Creswell; Merriam; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). As newer categories were formed, *in vivo* labels were given to the categories that were descriptive of the data inherent within them, such as “feeling boxed in” and “wanting to leave but cannot.” Labeling in this fashion included the language of participants used during the interview, but also my own creative ideas as the researcher. Selective coding followed axial coding. This process consisted of “selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships [by

searching for confirming and disconfirming examples], and filling in categories that need[ed] further refinement and development” (Strauss & Corbin, p. 116). Although there are various types of software available to qualitative researchers to analyze data, in this study, I coded the data using a simple Microsoft Word method described by Ruona (2005) to personally manipulate and remain close to the data and also to maximize organization of the data bits. This messaging of data allowed me to recognize patterns and themes that emerged.

In addition to finding the emergent patterns and themes in the recorded observations, field notes have the additional component of analytical insight (Patton, 2002). Analytical insights are “ideas for making sense of the data that emerge while still in the field” (p. 436). These insights constitute the beginning of analysis and produce another source for organizing the field data (Patton). In this study, analytical insights informed both the data collection and the coding process. Thoughts and ideas that emerged while experiencing the hotel environment and documented in field notes often lead to deeper questions about how and whether residents shared the same interactions with their environment. For example, while at the hotel, I came to understand how the small freezer in the kitchenette limited my ability to purchase the type of ice cream I wanted because of space considerations. As I listened to other residents’ descriptions of the kitchenette space, I was able to identify with limitations reported about storing frozen foods, and I listened for the commonality of this limitation across each interview.

For the photographs, qualitative content analysis methods are recommended for interpreting documents and visual data (Merriam, 1998; Padgett, 1998; Silverman, 2005). Researchers can analyze the photographs by questioning the content and variability of captured images (Sharples, Davidson, Thomas, & Rudman, 2003; Silverman). Since I instructed participants to take photos of the interior and exterior of the home environment, as well as

pictures that included interactions with others at the hotel, I knew that categories for this study would likely include spatial images (living area, bathroom, kitchenette, bed area, etc.), artifacts (pictures, dishes, clothes, toys, decorative items), furnishings (lamps, chairs, hotplates), and people residing in, working at, or visiting the dwelling. I anticipated that the photographs would document the way space was used within the extended-stay hotel room and how residents used the space to create a sense of home. However, it was interesting to discover through analysis which items were chosen to represent home at the hotel and why those items were important to the respondent.

Trustworthiness

In qualitative research approaches, research findings can be considered trustworthy “to the extent that there has been some accounting for their validity and reliability” (Merriam, 1998, p. 198). We strive for rigor in methods to create legitimate knowledge to share with the research community and to create responsible and scholarly contributions to policy and practice (Myers & Thyer, 1997; Padgett, 1998). Rigor exists in the careful preparation and design of the study. Also, research must be ethically conducted to be trustworthy (Merriam, 2002). Issues concerning validity and reliability are considered in following sections.

Internal Validity

The internal validity of a study’s findings “deals with the question of how research findings match reality” (Merriam, 1998, p. 201). For qualitative inquiry, Merriam has identified six basic strategies for enhancing internal validity. These strategies are: triangulation, member checks, long-term observation, peer examination, participatory research, and a statement of researcher biases. In this study, I used both triangulation of data methods and sources, member checking, peer examination to counter threats to internal validity and a statement of my biases.

Researchers may use multiple investigators, theories, sources of data, or methods to triangulate the study's findings (Merriam, 1998, 2002). Research studies using "only one method are more vulnerable to errors linked to that particular method...than studies that use multiple methods in which different types of data provide cross-data validity checks" (Patton, 2002, p. 248). In this study, I triangulated by employing different methods of data collection with the use of observations, interviews, and documents. I also triangulated with multiple data sources by "the inclusion of more than one individual as a data source" (Mathison, 1988, p. 14) and by observing the extended-stay hotel at various times of the day in different areas of the setting. These triangulation methods effectively reduced respondent reactivity and bias as well as researcher bias which are threats to internal validity (Padgett, 1998).

Member checking is a strategy of inviting participants to provide feedback on the interpretation of the data. This allowed me to check whether my interpretations of the data "ring true" (Merriam, 2002, p. 26) for the participants. In this study, I intermittently checked preliminary and emergent interpretations with three of the participants in the study to "fine tune" (p. 26) my understanding of the information collected. These were used because other participants were either unavailable or had checked out of the hotel.

In peer examination, colleagues review emergent findings to determine if these findings are consistent with the collected data (Merriam, 2002). Peers who are familiar or unfamiliar with the research being conducted may conduct this strategy. Debriefing with my doctoral committee and two research colleagues about my analysis of the data helped guard against my own bias and kept me "'honest' throughout the study" (Padgett, 1998, p. 99).

Clarifying my biases at the start of my study also helped guard against internal validity. Awareness of my own preconceived notions helped me avoid misinterpreting or transposing my

ideas and thoughts with those of the respondents. This type of self-monitoring allowed me to maintain objectivity when analyzing data.

Reliability

In keeping with the nature of qualitative research, the dynamic realities of human behavior and interaction are not static phenomena, as will be shown in this section. Conditions of human behaviors and interactions constantly change and there can be various interpretations of the same behaviors and interactions; therefore, qualitative researchers do not seek to replicate study findings (Merriam, 2002). Reliability in qualitative research refers to “whether the results are consistent with the data collected” (Merriam, 1998, p. 206, emphasis in original).

Reliability can be enhanced in qualitative research by using triangulation or peer examination strategies, producing an audit trail and using my investigator’s position (Merriam, 1998, 2002). In this study, I used triangulation and peer examination strategies as outlined in the previous section. I also produced an audit trail, which documented my data collection and analysis activities.

An audit trail in qualitative research is an authentic account of what was done to understand “how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry” (Merriam, 1998, p. 207). During data collection in the field, I kept a journal to document detailed field notes. Over seven days, I documented my observations, thoughts, and impressions about staying at the hotel. I also listed items used and sketched a loose visual representation of some of the places I saw. This field note journal along with professionally transcribed transcripts, photographs, and Microsoft Word documents demonstrating data analysis progression are all available for viewing.

External Validity

Generalizing research to a larger population in a statistical sense¹⁵ is not the goal of qualitative research (Merriam, 2002). Instead, to achieve external validity, the researcher thinks of how “what can be learned from an in-depth analysis of a particular situation or incident... can be transferred to another situation” (p. 28). There are three strategies for enhancing external validity: providing rich, thick descriptions, describing a typical category of a phenomenon, and using maximum variation as a sampling method (Merriam, 1998). To assist the reader in transferring findings from the study to an applied situation, the researcher provides the reader with rich, thick description so that the reader can compare the contexts of the findings (Merriam, 2002). Also, the researcher may describe “how typical the program, event, or individual is compared with others in the same class” (Merriam, 1998, p. 211). Further, maximizing the variation in participants or sites, allows for various types of context-based comparisons to be made by the reader.

For this study, I have used rich, thick descriptions to depict the hotel environment through field notes and the accounts given by participants during in-depth interviews. In addition, readers have the visual ability to observe the data collection context through photographs taken on-site. As described in an earlier section on sample selection, I could not use maximum variation sampling because of my interest in interviewing people who call the extended-stay hotel their only home due to financial necessity. This important screening requirement made the pool of potential participants too small to sample based on various characteristics (i.e., age, race, gender, religious denomination, etc.) therefore I had to take whatever variation was available in the hotel setting.

¹⁵ External validity in quantitative inquiry is a question of generalizability.

Researcher Bias and Assumptions

A strong bias I hold is that everyone deserves to be housed – comfortable housing that contributes to health and well-being. I find it deplorable that there are families who are homeless or who do not live in adequate housing. Although I am rather passionate about the social consequences of inadequate housing, my interests have been focused on functional home design and aesthetic décor. Given this initial preoccupation with the physical structure of housing, as well as my own upbringing in a comfortable single-family detached home, my perception of the extended-stay hotel as a suitable home living space was influenced by contemporary American cultural stereotypes of a home. I was convinced that appropriate housing was single-family housing, either in a detached house or in an apartment. It was a house occupied by a single family, with separate bedrooms for parents and children, and a private place surrounded by a green lawn. The idea of living in a hotel for an extensive time, especially while raising children, seemed an unfortunate situation for any family because of the importance I placed on space and privacy.

I realize that I had bought into the American Dream concept of the single-family detached home as the optimal family dwelling, popularized after World War II. Therefore, housing options that did not fit this model or even come close, I had conceptualized as alternative housing options or temporary living arrangements. For this study, I had to become conscious of the fact that there are many home settings that differ from this dominant cultural stereotype but nonetheless have been very nurturing and supportive of individual and family development.

Before conducting this study, I thought my race and gender, as an African-American woman, might be both a help and a hindrance in collecting data from these individuals and

families. Given that many of today's working poor and homeless are Black and female, my race and gender may be familiar to this population of people interviewed. Four of the respondents were Black females and I did feel like there was an informal comfort level established. One of the respondents, reported feeling as though she were just talking to another girlfriend. However, this relaxed atmosphere was also experienced with the two Black men, one White male, as well as, one Latina and one White woman who participated. Only one participant, the youngest White female, appeared nervous and hesitant about engaging in conversation.

Since some of these families identified as single-parent households, I felt my role as a mother might also be helpful in understanding the stresses of family, and particularly child caretaking. However, I also recognized that I might only be able to relate to participants by these characteristics in a limited capacity since raising children in a hotel alone is sure to be different from raising children in a single-family detached home with a spouse. Therefore, I left room for understanding the uniqueness of respondents' descriptions of their experiences of these roles/characteristics and how these experiences might have influenced housing options.

Finally, Waterston (1999) pointed out the reality that often these families are targeted for social science research. In her critique of this trend, researchers accumulate capital and even prestige by probing and prodding the most disadvantaged Americans to develop theories and advance knowledge. I agree with this perspective and felt some guilt about the power I had, with an institution behind me, exploring the private lives of already "overwhelmed" (June Gary Hopps et al., 1995, p. 1) people. To defend my researcher role, I believe that this population is often ignored and short of advocates. However, the presumption that living in hotel housing is a problem is a subjective bias. It might have been true, although I doubted it, that families found

comfort living in a hotel. Given, the alternative of a shelter or the street, their perceptions could have been that hotel living was not altogether different from apartment living.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand the relationship existing between residents and their extended-stay hotel dwelling places through descriptions of home. Specifically, I sought to answer the following questions: How did extended-stay residents describe their hotel dwelling as home? What aspects of the extended-stay living space contributed to or detracted from achieving a sense of home? What strategies did hotel residents use to shape their environment to meet the physical, psychological, and social atmosphere of a home? After outlining demographic characteristics of participants in this chapter using brief autobiographical sketches and a summary table, the major findings are presented.

Participants

Thirteen individuals met the criteria for participation in this study (see Participant Criteria). However, one eligible male participant was evicted from the extended-stay facility prior to the interview date. Another participant changed her mind due to objections about taking photographs of her room and signing the consent form thereby declining to participate. Finally, one person decided against participating after having difficulty scheduling the interview around her erratic work schedule. Of the 10 participants (see Table 2) who completed the interviews (0), seven are women and three are men. Six of the participants are African-American, three are Caucasian-American, and one is Latin-American. Ages of the participants ranged from 19 to 51.

Table 2

Respondent Demographic Information

Resident	Age	Ethnicity	Gender	Marital Status	Children at Hotel	Work Type	Annual Household Income	Months in Hotel	Suite Type
1. Ashay	49	AA	F	M	0	Licensed Nurse/unemp	31,000	12	1
2. Dell	47	CA	M	S	0	Carpenter	30,000	4	1
3. Bobby	31	AA	M	M	2	Irrigation Installer	18,000	4	1
4. Barbara Ann	51	AA	F	W	3	Student	11,220	1	2
5. Dee	51	AA	F	S	1	Preschool Teacher	12,000	1	2
6. Jennifer	37	LA	F	M	2	Homemaker	12,000	1	2

Table 2 continued

Resident	Age	Ethnicity	Gender	Marital Status	Children at Hotel	Work Type	Annual Household Income	Months in Hotel	Suite Type
7. Kevin	28	AA	M	M	0	Warehouse Worker	22,000	6	1
8. Jessica	19	CA	F	S	0	Homemaker	25,000	2	2
9. Harley	47	CA	F	M	1	Homemaker	22,000	6	1
10. Mary	34	AA	F	M	2	Auditor	32,000	1	1

The household size ranged from two to five people who lived in one room, an average size of approximately 330-340 square feet. Six respondents are married and were living with their spouses at the time that the interview occurred. One of these spouses left the relationship and the hotel within one month of completing the interview. Two respondents lived in the hotel with their significant others (meaning, an intimate mate); and two lived in the hotel without a spouse or significant other. The latter two respondents lived with their adult children. Of the 10 respondents, six had young children living in the hotel room with them. Two families had children who lived outside of the hotel with unidentified others. Two respondents reported not having children at all.

Five of the participants were employed in the following fields as carpenter, irrigation installer, pre-school teacher, warehouse employee, and auditor. One person was unemployed and looking for work as a licensed nurse. Four were unemployed and not looking for nor exploring opportunities for work. One respondent described herself as a student, and three respondents characterized themselves as homemakers.

Annual household income ranged from \$11,220 to \$32,000. Of these 10 households, only two reported dual incomes. However, in both of these dual income households, the respondents' roommates had unstable and sporadic earnings. Eight of the respondents reported one-income earning households.

Six respondents rented single-bed rooms, and four rented double-bed rooms. All respondents met the eligibility criteria of living in the extended-stay at least two weeks. The range of time living at the hotel was from three weeks to one year. Most of the respondents (7) resided at the hotel for four months or less. However, two families had been there for six months and one respondent reported being at the extended-stay hotel over a year.

Ashay

Ashay is a 49-year-old African-American woman of slim stature, often draped in colorful African Kente attire (a colorful patterned garment), with her long brown hair locs wrapped with an African scarf around her head. She speaks very softly, but confidently, and is cordial and talkative.

Ashay is married and has been living with her husband at Company Suites for a year. She has three children and “about ten” grandchildren, but she only talks about the two children and four grandchildren whose photos are displayed on her wall. She is originally from Florida, but moved to Georgia to find more work opportunities. However, she has had great difficulty finding a job in what she described as her field of nursing.

Prior to living at the hotel, she and her husband rented a three-bedroom home in Lawrenceville. According to Ashay, they were evicted for being unable to pay the rent after she unfairly lost her job. Ashay believes she was a victim of worksite racial discrimination after she tried to speak up for a patient against a white co-worker. This initial disagreement escalated and soon thereafter Ashay was fired from her position. Believing she had been blackballed in her career field, Ashay stated, “[racial discrimination] took a hold of my life in such a way that it brought me to this place.” Ashay wants to leave the hotel, but feels she cannot do so until she can save up enough money for a down payment on a home or some type of housing of her own. She and her husband are considering a return to Florida if she continues having trouble finding work in Metropolitan Atlanta.

Living at the hotel is no picnic for Ashay as she finds the noise in the hotel annoying and the size of her room “too tight.” Ashay has been very depressed and feels hopeless about

her living condition. She feels stagnated at the hotel and voiced worries about the psychological effect living there may be having on her husband.

On the wall in her room Ashay has posted a hand-drawn rendering of her career dream to “open a community center that would be an asset to the community to bridge the gap between Gentile and Jews, the Jews and Gentiles.” The rendering is of a very large community center where all types of people can come in for services and women can rehabilitate while staying in a resort-type planned area, if needed. In addition to this dream, Ashay would like to live in a five-bedroom home someday.

Dell

Dell is a 47-year-old Caucasian-American male, standing nearly six feet tall in worn, light-blue denim jeans and a t-shirt. He speaks with a deep, raspy, southern drawl. During conversation, he is very humorous and social. He is single, without children and describes himself as a carpenter by trade but likens himself to a cowboy with a skillet. Dell grew up in rural areas of Georgia and Alabama. He says he “came from the country.”

Dell owned homes and rented apartments many times in his life. His father and brother currently live in a house valued at a quarter of a million dollars. Dell lost his last house while trying to help a friend save her house. He chose the hotel for temporary housing while in search of a roommate to rent an apartment with him. He has been living at Company Suites for four months. Dell has lived in other extended-stay hotels, but believes that this current hotel stay is much better than the other “crack whore hotels” he stayed in before.

Dell is not married, but shares his hotel room with a live-in girlfriend. Although he finds the hotel to suit his lifestyle currently, he wants to move out, but is waiting for his

girlfriend to make a decision. He would like to live in an apartment, but he is uncertain how long it will be before he moves out. For work, he is often in million-dollar neighborhoods everyday, but he is not interested in those types of houses. He just wants a small country home where he can “piddle around.” Ideally, Dell wants a country house

that's gotta barn out back, a couple of pigs, some chickens, two or three dogs and a cat and a little garden... a wrap-around porch 'cause I would like to have some, ya know, flowers and some plants, be able to sit out there and eat, and that's it. That's it. That's all I want... that's not asking too much. A lot of people ask for more, but I don't.

Bobby

Bobby is 31-year-old African-American married male wearing blue jeans, and a casual short-sleeve shirt. Bobby smiles often and talks animatedly while describing his experiences at the hotel. His infrequent smile is wide and infectious. He is an irrigation installer and has lived in the hotel with his wife Angie, and two young children for four months. Bobby's daughter, Brandi, is nine and his son, Benjamin, is just over one year old.

Bobby came to live at the hotel after his family was evicted from their apartment. Angie was put on bed-rest and could not work while pregnant with their son. Consequently, the family lost her income. In addition, Bobby was “sold a dream” by his employer on a career opportunity before unexpected plans fell through on the job. However, he had already relocated to Georgia from North Carolina. He and his family had moved several times to accommodate his work constructing “Costco buildings, in different cities, different states, and everything [was] paid for” by the company. However, Bobby believed poor planning by his company changed his family's situation. “We were only supposed to be here temporarily

but we came here two years ago to build a Costco in a place called Alpharetta, Georgia,” he said. “Got here and something political with the property value and the people around...these supposedly rich people that lived there didn't...you know, you had to go through all this stuff to start building something and it got delayed.” The company did not pay employees during the construction setback. After a year of waiting, Bobby felt, “I was stuck [and] had to kind of either sink or swim” while waiting for a full-time job to open up at Costco. In the meantime, he “had to just settle” with living at the extended-stay hotel when his daughter Brandi became school-aged and needed to be enrolled. Bobby has asked for financial assistance from family members, social services, and churches but found that no one nor any group organizations would give him a chance. He believed the situation he and family members were in was his responsibility since, as the father, he should have been able to provide as the case was when he was growing up. He is frustrated and worried that Angie seems to have given up hope. Bobby reported that living at the hotel caused strain on their marriage because Angie is miserable the whole day while at the facility, constrained and taking care of the children.

Although he would like to leave the hotel, he believes his credit history, which contains a few different evictions, keeps him from getting into an apartment because landlords and apartment complexes will not take a chance on him. In fact, he expressed he had “throw[n] away hundreds of dollars in application fees just to get denied.”

Bobby believes he may have a chance to move out of the hotel after he receives his income tax check, which can be applied toward a large downpayment on rental fees and a security deposit. Although he hopes to move into an apartment next, his ideal home is a house of his own.

Barbara Ann

Barbara Ann is a 51-year-old African American mother and grandmother of one daughter, Erica, one granddaughter, Tasha, and two grandsons, Michael and Dante. She is a heavy-set woman who huffs while she walks and talks, always appearing tired. At times during the conversation, she often appeared distracted. Barbara Ann, who described herself as a student, used to be an executive housekeeper at a large hotel. After the death of her husband, things went bad for Barbara Ann:

He passed in 2000 and I don't know if I was sad, was a state of shock that I went in or whatever, but it caused me to go through a lot of different changes. And 2004 was really when I can say that I feel like I was coming back to reality. And during that period of time, I did make a lot of wrong decisions. And, uh, wasted a lot of ties, made a lot of mistakes so, therefore, that cut my finances real bad.

Barbara Ann, along with her adult daughter and her three grandchildren used to live in an apartment in a nearby community, but got behind on their rent and finances and had to move out of the apartment and into the hotel. They all have been living together at the hotel for a month. Barbara Ann finds the hotel room to be “a real nice set up” and “basically...it's really...in a sense like bein' at home.” She does not want to live in the hotel for a long time. She prefers to live in a house and not an apartment because “in your house, you have just your family up under one roof, you know, and you can do whatever.”

Barbara Ann worries about how unsafe neighbors in an apartment might be. If the neighbor left the water running or stove on, it would affect her family. She is afraid of this and hopes to save enough money with Erica to buy a multi-room house so “we all have our

space...won't nobody be on each other's nerves and, you know, to have space to do what you gotta do.”

Dee

Dee is a 51-year-old African-American woman wearing a floral blouse and pair of blue slacks. He wears her dark brown hair in loose curls. Initially, she is very quiet and cautious, but eventually opens up to be very talkative. Her facial expression appears worried during most of the interview. However, bursts of laughter surprisingly interrupt her responses at times, along with a few moments of teary-eyed accounts of sadness about her 18-year-old son leaving home.

Dee moved into Company Suites with her son a month ago because her son was given a job at the previous extended-stay hotel where they used to live. Family members of employees were not allowed to stay at that extended-stay so she moved to Company Suites to avoid the conflict of interest rules. However, shortly after the move to Company Suites, Dee's son quit the job and also moved out of Company Suites and in with a friend some distance away, over 30 miles. Dee has been devastated by her son's actions because she is now in a financial bind as Company Suites is more expensive than the previous hotel. Without her son contributing half the weekly hotel rate, she is uncertain how she will pay his share of the rental fee.

Dee has had a very unstable housing history. Due to her financial situation, she has been unable to afford renting an apartment alone. However, just as her son left with little notice, many of her roommates were also unreliable. With no place else to live she was allowed to stay in the home of an employer and a friend, but both of those situations ended when her employer sold the home, and her friend forced her to leave the residence. Prior to

staying in an extended-stay hotel, she was living in a friend's occupied office, in a difficult situation. She described the problem:

So a friend of mine had an office space and I went to live in the office space because there was nothing else I could do, and it was...wasn't the best circumstances because it's an office. I mean, it was some comfortability in there. Of course there was no bed but there was a TV. There was a kitchen area in the office so I could...but it was restricted because I could only cook when no one else was around. I had to get up early before people came in the office because they don't allow, you know, people to live there. Even though they pay rent and it's their own office space, you're not allowed to have people live in it as a residence. So people were very watchful. So I had to work around all their schedules. So there were times that I would be up at 5 o'clock and sitting in my car, 'cause I had a car at that time, and just waiting to drive to work because I didn't even start in the mornings at that time. I was starting at noon. So it was a very hard... life.

Even if Dee cannot afford to remain at the hotel, she does not want to move back into the office space because "it undermines your self-esteem." She struggles with how to afford a housing solution. She works as a preschool teacher and would like to go back to school for her certification and degree. However, it seems that just as she tries to put "everything in place" and "stay stable" to "feel normal again," her plans fall through. She does not know if she will remain at the hotel, although she wishes not to return to the office. She is uncertain, however, of what other housing options are available to her.

Jennifer

Jennifer is a 37-year-old Latin-American female wearing a light blue jean skirt and beige t-shirt. She has long, curly light brown hair pulled back with a barrette. From the outset, Jennifer appears very outgoing and comfortable with the interview. She remains talkative, casual, and friendly while responding to the questions. When she speaks, her words carry a strong mixture of New York and Spanish-sounding accents.

Jennifer is originally from “the Bronx” New York where most of her family still resides. Although she loved residing in the New York area, she moved to Georgia to rejoin with her husband who had relocated earlier for work opportunities after the September 11 tragedy affected his ability to commute to work in New Jersey and “things just got really crazy for him.” The family had decided to try to buy a home in Georgia instead of continuing to rent an apartment in New York. However, when they realized the financial burden of daycare, since Jennifer’s mother was not there to help with the children, they decided that it might be better to return to New York. In the meantime, they are waiting for their 14-year-old daughter, Mindy, to finish school here in Metropolitan Atlanta. Jennifer also has two “little ones,” a son, Aiden, who is 2-years-old, and another daughter, Lisa who is 3-years-old. As a mom and homemaker, Jennifer spends her day caring for her children and running the kids around to keep them busy.

Prior to living at the hotel, the family was renting a house to see what it would be like since they had always rented apartments. However, when her husband was laid off, the property owner allowed them to break the lease one month early, and they moved into the hotel. They have been living at the hotel for one month, and the plan is to leave in June after the school year has ended.

Kevin

Kevin is a 28-year-old African-American man wearing a pair of blue jeans and a grey t-shirt. He is very soft-spoken and appears to have a quiet demeanor. His face displayed an inquisitive expression throughout the interview and his responses were short and to the point. Kevin works in a warehouse. He has lived at the extended-stay hotel for the last six months with his wife Doris, and their daughter, Tiffany who was spending the entire summer away with her grandmother.

Kevin and his family came to live at the hotel after Doris injured her leg and could not climb the stairs in their townhouse using her crutches. They broke the lease where they rented the townhouse and the couple did not know where, in town, they wanted to live, so they decided on moving into the hotel during her recovery. Kevin says his family's next step will be to move into another flat-level townhouse in Duluth.

According to Kevin, the hotel is an adequate accommodation at this time. He enjoys the services offered at the hotel, but finds the weekly payment schedule a bit inconvenient. He would prefer to pay monthly but the manager told him he could not pay in this manner. Kevin and Doris would like to move out of the hotel as soon as possible because he believes being in the hotel for a year or more is too much. Kevin misses having access to his things in one location "because I have quite a bit of clothes and shoes. So, I like, right now, have some here and some in storage." He also finds that Doris and Tiffany are frustrated living at the hotel because it is not how they are accustomed to living. His ideal living situation would be a house in a undecided location.

Jessica

Jessica is a 19-year-old Caucasian-American female wearing a white t-shirt and khaki pants. She has long, blonde and brown-streaked hair casually pinned atop her head.

Throughout the interview, she was obviously uneasy and often paired her responses with a short nervous laughter. In addition, she handled difficult questions with body shifting and cautious sarcasm.

Jessica has lived at Company Suites for one month with her boyfriend, boyfriend's mother, and her boyfriend's mother's boyfriend. This situation alone is often the target of her sarcasm. Jessica came to live at the hotel with her boyfriend after he was released from prison. Prior to staying at the hotel, Jessica and her roommates lived in another extended-stay facility and felt very unwelcome because the hotel staff "called us every day complaining about something." Therefore, they moved and have had a better experience at Company Suites.

Jessica's room is still available at her parents' house, but conflict within her family keeps her from returning home. She painfully described that both parents are alcoholics and have a volatile marriage. In addition, their father favors Jessica's brother, who abuses drugs. She sorrowfully expressed that she felt ignored and often engaged in strained interactions with this parent.

Jessica describes herself as a homemaker. During the day, she spends most of her time with her boyfriend's mom cleaning the room and awaiting for the men to return from work. Jessica finds favorable services at the hotel, but is often frustrated with the crowded living condition with her roommates. She reports that her next housing step is moving into a small apartment with her boyfriend. However, ideally, she would like to have her own small house.

Harley

Harley is a 47-year-old Caucasian-American woman wearing a v-neck summer top and blue jean shorts. She has an energetic and extraverted personality. She is talkative, friendly, and demonstratively expressive. She speaks very quickly and loudly. The people who referred Harley to the study warned, “She is a trip” and wished me good luck during my interview with her. From the very beginning, Harley was bursting to tell her story of staying at the hotel.

At the time of the interview, Harley had lived with her husband and step-daughter at Company Suites for six months. Prior to living at the hotel, she and her family lived in an apartment complex. However, she had great difficulty with the maintenance of the space and the property owner’s cooperation. When she withheld payment, the proprietor evicted her from the apartment. She was unsuccessful in court and felt the judge unfairly ruled against her without fully hearing her side of the story or allowing her to show pictures of the condition of the apartment unit. Instead, the prosecuting lawyer and judge “just set there and made fun.” Harley is confident that she does not want to rent another apartment again because of this experience.

Harley has made great friends and “family” among the staff and residents at the hotel. She has had wonderful experiences with the services and she finds the hotel to be an adequate place for her family to reside while they prepare to move on into their own house. Initially, Harley was worried and uncertain about moving into the hotel, but after decorating the space to taste, she finds it much more to her liking.

Mary

Mary is a 34-year-old African-American woman wearing a blue blouse and brown pants. She has straight dark brown hair pulled back into a ponytail holder. During the

interview, Mary appeared tired and frustrated. She also appeared angry when talking about her husband and the life situations that brought her to the hotel. Mary was very comfortable in the interview and even commented that she felt like she was just talking with one of her girlfriends.

Mary has lived at Company Suites with her husband Rodney, son Dontavius, and daughter Leah, for one month. She left California after being informed of her terminally ill Lupus condition and when a job transfer became possible. With the news of her health situation, she sought to move closer to her family here in Georgia. She also chose to leave her husband in California, because he was verbally and emotionally abusive. After he threatened her once, she called the police and a felony judgment was made against him. He now blames her for not being able to get work. Mary believes this felony has affected his life: "He did used to have good jobs, but he can't because of his felony." His inability to get and keep a job is frustrating for Mary.

Mary moved into an apartment here in Georgia and felt financially stable for a while before moving into a larger unit when her husband followed her and insisted on getting back together for the children's sake. Mary allowed her husband to rejoin the family and that set off a series of evictions from apartments as she could not afford to pay the rent and her husband continued his pattern of unstable work. With the last eviction, Mary moved into the extended-stay hotel. Although she finds the space adequate for her family at this time, she would like to move into an apartment and eventually into her own house. Mary is uncertain whether she will remain in Georgia because she is very disappointed with the accessibility of social services here. Angrily, she exclaimed, "No, they don't have [homeless programs] here in Georgia. They'd rather you just live on the street. They could care less! They could care

less!” It frustrates Mary because she believes, “If I was back home [in California], it would be so easy to get out this situation, so much easier. The services are in place.” Further, she asserted that Georgia was unlike California because even if there were services for financially strained Georgia families, “they don’t tell you about it.”

Overview of Findings

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the relationships between residents and their extended-stay hotel dwelling places through descriptions of home. Specifically, the research questions guiding the study were: How would extended-stay hotel residents describe their home? What aspects of the extended-stay living space contributed to or detracted from achieving a sense of home? What strategies did hotel residents use to shape their environment to meet the physical, psychological, and social atmosphere of a home?

The findings for this study are reported below in three sections corresponding to the three research questions listed above. The first section’s findings relate to how residents described home. In this section, respondents described home as a “home for now” and an “in-between place.” The second section’s findings relate to what residents identified as characteristics of the hotel that made it feel like home or detracted from the place feeling like home. In this section, physical, psychological, and social aspects were identified as themes among responses. Finally, the third section of findings describes the strategies residents used to shape their environment into a home. Two themes were identified: Residents adjust their behavior to accommodate available space, and residents personalize the space to meet individual and family needs. Table 3 highlights the categories and properties for the three research questions.

Descriptions of Home

Participants were asked to describe home at the hotel. Responses were analyzed and two themes were identified: “home for now” and an “in-between place.” These two themes represent respondents’ common perception of the hotel as a temporary and transitional housing phase that they were just “passing through” and do not plan on remaining for a long period of time.

Home for Now

Home at the extended-stay hotel was temporary. Respondents lived at the hotel just until they could sort things out through planning and waiting. All of the participants wanted to leave the hotel eventually. Most considered staying too long was unacceptable and believed it was important to leave the hotel. Further, they considered staying at the hotel a long time when one wants to leave a failure. Respondents tried not to get too comfortable at the hotel. They were just waiting to leave.

When I asked participants how long they planned to stay at the hotel, they expressed plans to leave as soon as possible. Jessica, the youngest respondent and homemaker, elucidated this point when she explained that her family was planning to leave “as soon as we can get some money... save up some money since he’s [her boyfriend, recently released from jail] started working and everything, we’ll be gone as soon as possible.” Ashay, who desperately seeks a nursing job, also made plans for a short stay, but found her time at the hotel to be much longer than expected. When asked how much longer she planned to stay at the hotel, she responded, “Well, I don't know how long, because I hadn't purposed this long.” Short-term plans to leave the hotel have been delayed for Mary who is working hard to raise her children while suffering with a lupus condition. For her, mid-July was the earliest time

Table 3

Categories and Properties

Research Questions	Categories	Properties	
Descriptions of Home	Home For Now		
	In-Between Place		
		Contributing To “Home”	Detracting From “Home”
Affecting Sense of Home	Physical Aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Convenient Location</i> ▪ <i>Useful Resources</i> ▪ <i>Reasonable Rental Rates</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Confined Space</i> ▪ <i>Small/Inadequate Appliances</i> ▪ <i>Expensive Laundry Facility</i>
	Psychological Aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Feeling Safe and Secure</i> ▪ <i>Feeling Independent</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Feeling Guilt, Depression, and Embarrassment</i>
	Social Aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Finding Personal Retreats</i> ▪ <i>Engaging in Guest Interactions</i> ▪ <i>Enjoying Staff Friendships</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Missing Private and Intimate Times</i>
Strategies to Shape Environment	Adapt Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Compensating For Restrictions</i> ▪ <i>Creating Personal Spaces</i> 	
	Adjust Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Improving Functionality</i> ▪ <i>Adding Comfort</i> 	

she could leave the hotel as she declared, “That's my peace date.” In July, she will leave her unemployed husband who she described as controlling. Dell, who lived with his girlfriend and actually enjoyed his place at the hotel, also wanted to leave the hotel soon. He said, “I'd rather be out of here, to be honest...I could be out of here next month, but it probably won't happen.”

Some residents felt that staying too long would be an uncomfortable situation. It would be uncomfortable because over time the stay at the hotel would not be ideal for meeting family needs. Jennifer, homemaker and mother of 3 children, wanted to leave in the next couple of weeks because “I think for us to stay here, like for three, four or five months... would be too much. I think we would just pull our hairs out, but since it's going to be just for a short time...” She has heard of people staying for years and that was okay if they lived alone, but with a husband and children, “it would be totally unhealthy.” Harley, a married homemaker caring for her teenage stepdaughter, had made good friends and she was fond of living at the hotel, but even she would not stay long, “because I wouldn't want to just live in that little room forever.” Most respondents rejected the possibility of staying at the hotel as a permanent housing solution. Reasons for the rejection centered on the need for more space, having a place of their own, finding privacy, and living in a place without restrictions.

Whereas some participants worried about becoming uncomfortable living at the hotel for a long period, a few worried about getting too comfortable while living there. Getting too comfortable, for these respondents, meant not making progress. For Kevin, a quiet warehouse worker, “it's just time to go. It's nowhere that you want to get too comfortable

and, like I said, try to live for a year or... longer.” To avoid getting too comfortable Kevin refused to decorate his room:

I chose not to do it really because I did not want to have myself get too comfortable just being in one spot. And I'm afraid that's what some other people might do and then that's how they get so comfortable and then maybe it's so long before they move out of an extended stay.

The same was true for Dee, who used to live secretly in an office space. She did not put out any pictures at the hotel because “right now I’m just kind of packed up still because it’s temporary and I didn’t want to get too comfortable because the goal was to move on, you know, as soon as possible.” Bobby, an irrigation installer, used the same tactic and prevented Angie from settling in too much because he always wanted to be ready to go. This aggravated his wife who remained in a constant state of unease because she needed to get comfortable. However, he would not allow it. For Bobby, settling in would be giving in to failure. He explained:

...for me to decorate or for me... to put something up, or even to hang something up... would be my kind of my resolving to the fact that I think I'll be here for... even longer than what... I will be. I think for me to do that... would be resolving to that and ...I just wouldn't feel comfortable doing that... No. Don't get too comfortable. Leave those bags like that, 'cause we gonna be going... so... sometimes that frustrates her.

Like Kevin and Bobby, Ashay agreed that staying too long might distract a person from getting ahead. She stated, “I think if a person lives in these types of facilities too long, they become too institutionalized...” For Ashay, people who became comfortable living at that

hotel were just satisfied with their living situation. However, she was not satisfied because “being here is just like I'm stuck and I'm not making any progress.”

While respondents hoped their stay at the hotel would be short-term and temporary, they waited for some financial, employment, health or other situation to change before they could leave. For many, the next housing type was an apartment, if only they were able to save the down payment or find a job paying enough to afford the expenses. Some waited on things out of their control to happen before they could move out. So, for now, they were just waiting.

Ashay was waiting for a nursing job so she could increase her household income, afford a deposit on an apartment, and pay rent. However, Dell only waited for his girlfriend to make a decision about where she wanted to live. He wanted to move into an apartment across the street from the hotel because he liked the notion of remaining in the same community. For Dell, his wait could be three weeks or three months. He did not know. And, just as Dell waited on his girlfriend to make a decision, Dee waited to find out if her son who just moved out to live 30 miles away with a friend would return to help her out of a current financial bind. If he had decided not to return, Dee planned to ask her brother about helping her get into an apartment by co-signing the lease – upon his anticipated arrival to town (Metropolitan Atlanta) in a few weeks.

Like Ashay, Bobby was waiting on time to pass for his credit to improve and/or for a creditor to give him another chance so he could move into an apartment. His pending income tax return check might also help him with an apartment deposit. Originally coming from a very large home, Jessica only wanted a small apartment, but big enough for her and her boyfriend to live in alone, if only they could save the money. However, Harley was

adamant that she never wants to live in an apartment again because of all the problems she has had with landlords. Instead, she also waited while saving up money in hopes of owning a house someday where she could garden. Kevin and Doris were on the verge of moving out of the hotel. However, he had to wait for their townhouse to get its finishing touches and, also for her injured leg to heal.

Many residents expressed the need to wait for things to happen that were out of their control, especially Mary and Barbara Ann, the grandmother of three who was living with her daughter Erica, the children's mother. While Barbara Ann was waiting to see if she would be granted disability benefits, Mary was waiting for "peace." She was waiting for God to straighten things out because even when she lived in houses and apartments in the past, there was so much chaos in residing with an abusive and non-working husband, along with her terminally diagnosed Lupus condition, that she was just not at peace. God would fix the situation for them by giving her husband his workman's compensation check so that he could afford to live on his own while she and her kids move on without him. Mary rationalized why it was necessary for her to wait, when she stated:

And me, I'm saying that the Lord is doing this for a particular reason...because he's trying to sort some things out. And so when he ... sets forth where I'm supposed to go from here, it's supposed to be where I'm supposed to be at that time when that time happens. So, I'm just being patient because there's a lot of things in the air that needs to be cleared up. And I think that's what he's trying to do is make sure those things are cleared up. So that's when my children and I move on and get our place, and he blesses us with our new place ... we will be at peace. Because every other place we've been, we haven't been at peace. Even though the neighborhood was

nice, the home was nice, the turmoil inside the house wasn't at peace and that was just too much.

Even Mary's son begged his older sister to be patient when he explained to her, "at least we're not on the streets, so mommy not gonna have us here too long... we have to wait."

Other residents understood this need to wait for something to happen, especially to wait on God before leaving the hotel. For example, even though Angie had lost hope, Bobby warned his wife strongly to keep her faith because "with the help of God ...hopefully we'll figure ... a way out of here one day." Also, in frustration of feeling trapped at the hotel, Ashay prayed, "God help me get out of here...." Harley also accepted the stay at the hotel when she rationalized, "if we were supposed to be doing something else, God would have us doing something else, but this is exactly what God wants us to do right now, because we're doing it."

Residents believed that when the situations they were waiting for came to pass, they would be able to move on to something perceived as better. Therefore, the longer they had to wait, the more they felt inhibited or trapped from moving on. Further, the absence of progress in this regard was perceived as a failure of plans. For most residents, the obstacles to progress were at the hand of someone else or some other system. And these stumbling blocks were frustrating. It is "as though I've been black-balled," said Ashay who found it difficult to believe there were not any nursing jobs out there for her. Jennifer also believed work opportunities were restricted for her husband because "they wouldn't hire him."

Mary depicted her husband as her nemesis. He refused to work, and he contributed significantly to her housing dilemma because "...every place we lost... we lost when he wasn't working." Mary's husband was still not working or contributing to the family's

income. Further, Mary found fault with the inaccessibility of services in Georgia as opposed to California where she was from. She believed, "... there's tons of services in Georgia but they don't tell you about it." Barbara Ann complained of the time it was taking for her to get assistance: "It's taken them for so long to get my Disability started... you know, it's taken them over a year to get that started. So all this here was constantly going on." Bobby, too, understood this type of complaint as he also found social services lacking in Georgia:

...it's more frustrating to me, you know, turning to these organizations. I feel there are some good ones out there, but the ones I have come in contact with just haven't had any kind of... They'll tell you, "well, you should try private owners" or you know... and another thing about being here is this... is that they charge...it seems like it's designed to where they charge just enough to where you have a hard time getting out of here because.... if you're paying \$247 per week to stay in here, I mean, it's hard to save money for a deposit to put somewhere. And, you know, it's a very vicious cycle. It's very frustrating.

It was because of these roadblocks that residents believed they could not get out of their situations. Feeling trapped made residents suffer frustration, inconvenience, sadness, and hopelessness. These emotions further reinforced the need to leave and the unacceptability of living at the hotel long-term. Ashay summed it up when she remarked, "About living in this place here? It's OK, but again, it's for someone who is passing through."

In-Between Place

Along with the temporal dimension of staying at the hotel, there was also a linear dimension in the descriptions of hotel as home. Living at the hotel was considered an "in-

between” or a “pause” in housing history for respondents. They described the hotel as a place to call home now, even if the hotel place was not the type of home that they were accustomed to in the past or a place that was dreamed of for the future. The hotel was a refuge from previously negative housing situations, and although residents did not want to live in a hotel room forever, it was important for them to have a place to call home now. Perhaps, Bobby said it best when he stated that it was, “not so much as if this is a bad place, but it's just an in-between.”

If considered on a housing continuum, hotel living would fall somewhere between what participants had experienced in the past and how they hoped to live in the future. They communicated that a hotel was not a place in which they were accustomed to living. Further, the respondents all had hopes for moving from the hotel into a different type of housing in the future. They were all thinking of a place of permanency.

Residents’ pasts played an important role in perceptions of their hotel spaces. What they grew up knowing as home or what they had experienced as an adult provided references for comparison to the hotel spaces. Most described their previous housing types as single-family detached houses, apartments, or townhouses. They recalled memories of growing up in homes with their families, and none reported these homes to be in hotels. It was difficult for Bobby to accept the hotel as a home because of prior living standards:

...when you lived in a home before...a home, what you consider a home and then to come here, to try to even attempt to make this home is...it's rough for me. It's rough for me to do ...because, it seems like I want to make it so temporary that I don't even like to put myself in that home state of mind being here. But, you know? I have to. You know? I'm kind of forced to... but... You know, I kind of struggle with that.

The hotel space was also very different for Kevin who commented that, “it's too much being like secluded to just one area, one room, and it's hard on me and my wife because we're not used to that.” Jessica was also not used to thinking of the hotel as home. In fact, this was laughable to Jessica who was surprised by the question when asked about the characteristics that make Company Suites a home. Behind a nervous laugh she responded, “I don't really -- I mean, what are you asking, like, 'cause you walk in and it's a hotel.” Further, the place did not really reflect her personality or what she would have chosen as a home because “I'm not used to staying in places like this... all the people -- that's something I'm not used to... and then the space. ...you're in one room all day. So it kind of gets a little crowded and claustrophobic.” Instead, she was used to living in a very nice, three-floor, \$350,000 house on a golf course with a bar, pool table, and home theatre--her parents' home that she grew up in. Mary echoed the same sentiment. The hotel room was “[m]uch smaller than what I'm used to, much, much smaller than I'm used to. The size of the rooms is actually just like the size of the master bedrooms that I'm used to having.” The size was not the only difference for Mary. The type of home was also different, as she explained, “I've rented out town homes, so that's all I'm used to. You know... big town homes.” Harley also found “... it was a big change. It was a big change for us all, you know, because we were used to having all this room and our own washer and dryer.” The difference in living after relocating to Atlanta from Memphis for Barbara Ann was, “we had houses ... and everything.”

From these responses, it was clear that residents recalled what they had in the past, measured those housing experiences with the hotel, and found that what they currently have now falls short. However, for Jennifer, even though the hotel was different than what she was used to, she believed that people would always miss what they used to have:

... when you leave...when you leave a place, you're always like, you know, "I miss what we used to do over there," like when I had the house. It was like, "Damn, honey, I miss going to...the house and pulling into the driveway and, you know, opening the garage door." And like, I miss all that. So ... I would probably tell him, "yeah honey, I miss just going...you know ... using the key, the credit card key, and just...you know, just walking in and..." You know? I mean you're gonna miss a little bit of everything because that's where you called home for... a while.

Not only was the hotel unlike what respondents were used to in the past, it was also not the type of dwelling they hoped for in the future. When asked about their ideal home if there were no money limitations, no respondent identified the hotel as an ideal home. Several described their ideal home as a big house with several rooms partitioned for family activities. They described the importance of having their own bedrooms, living rooms, front porches, and lawns. Ashay, for example, believed she and her husband needed:

...at least one... two... I would like to have something like a five bedroom... because I love space. And I want my exercising room, a room...another room, for like, my hobbies, because I love to work with arts and crafts and I love to sew and I love to make things with my hands. So I want a hobby room. And then I want the guest room. So when the children come down, you know, they will all sleep in there. But I want it big enough at least so we can throw in some blow-up beds and that kind of a deal.

Similarly, Kevin's ideal home was a fully furnished "four-bedroom, three-bath, double-car garage, with a pool and with a patio." For Jennifer, a separate room for her children was important. She also wanted, "my sanctuary with my husband... Have a family

room where we could all gather and have our, you know, special moments. Have a formal dining room where I could have family come over and just, you know, family dinners.”

Barbara Ann’s ideal home would be:

...a large house where everybody can have their own room. I would say we need... it's five of us, so we need at least a five-bedroom home with a guest bedroom. So six bedrooms... And we need at least two full-sized baths and maybe a half... but at least two full-sized. So we need a pretty big house.

Bobby also wanted “a big house, a big yard, a finished basement, and a two-car garage. That's what we've always considered, you know, to be an ideal home for us. You know... not anything too much over the top.”

Some of the residents also described how the rooms would be decorated. Their dream or ideal places reflected needs for privacy, space, leisure, and comfort. Dee dreamed of a huge house and not an apartment, but, even more, her ideal place was more in the details of design. Her home would feature a canopy bed of rich-looking, darker cherry wood and candles in a bedroom painted with warm colors, a comfortable and cozy living room with pillows, a bright kitchen with plants, and a pink and white painted Victorian bathroom with flowers and nice art.

Ashay also paid attention to detail in her spacious ideal home by choosing the appropriate room décor for her bedroom and her husband’s separate bedroom. She described, “In order for him to keep his individuality, I like him to have a man-looking room. And me, I like the curtains and the drapes and all that kind of stuff. You know... make it look girly, you know.” On a tour in Mary’s future dream home, we would find:

Oh, hardwood floor! Come through that door... pretty glass door -- come through that door, go up the stairs. The stairs are right there out in my main lobby. To my left is my family room. To my right is all my kitchen and grand room. Upstairs are all my bedrooms -- my bedrooms... Not a lot, but just a little backyard. I don't need a lot. My children are growing up. But I want their rooms to be special and unique for each one of them, you know.

A couple of residents were somewhat modest in their ideal home descriptions, like Dell's "little white house with a wrap-around porch out in the country," Harley's three-bedroom house with a garden on a riverbank where she would fish, and for Jessica, just any kind of house as long as it was "a small house, not a big house. A nice one, but, you know, not -- not a \$350,000 house." Even though these homes were not as grandiose, they were still houses, not apartments or even condos, and certainly not hotel rooms. All of the residents believed an ideal home place was a house with separate rooms for individuals to have their own specialized space.

In summary, the hotel was a "home for now" and an "in-between place." It was not like the houses, apartments, and townhouses that residents had lived in before, and it was not what they dream of in their future lives. When compared to these previous or future places it was not the same size or type. However, from this in-between place, residents hoped to move on to the next step or move into their ideal home. Although the next step might be an apartment, their ideal homes were individually-owned houses. For most, they were big with separate rooms for various family functions and activities. Respondents described these ideal houses with characteristics that were very different from the small, privacy-limited, confining rooms at the hotel.

Affecting a Sense of Home

Participants in this study identified physical, psychological, and social aspects that had both contributed to and detracted from the hotel space feeling like home. Physically, residents found that among available housing options, it was the more practical choice to stay at the hotel but they were restricted by space. Residents also found psychological ease in the security of the hotel, but struggled with negative feelings associated with not being able to get out of the hotel. In addition, residents found that living at the extended-stay hotel provided opportunities to interact with friendly staff and family members socially. However, there were some social limitations, such as finding private spaces for intimacy with significant others or just being alone.

Physical Aspects

Living at the extended-stay hotel was very practical for residents. The positive perceptions of physical hotel dwelling included a convenient location, facility resources, and a reasonable rental rate. However, respondents also noted negative characteristics, which included confined room space, inadequate storage, small/missing appliances, and an expensive laundry facility.

Physical contributions. The location of the extended-stay hotel was very convenient for residents. It was located in a central area of town near a shopping center and local mall. Residents had access to clothing and electronics stores, two large farmers' markets, grocery supermarkets, fast-food and dine-in restaurants, movie theatres, and many discount shops. The hotel is located off a very busy major highway, and the area bustles well into the evening. In addition, there are business parks interspersed among the shopping arenas, as well as apartments, townhouses, and subdivisions of single-family detached homes nearby.

The central location of the hotel was attractive to residents. Many conveniences were within walking distance, which was helpful for residents who did not want a long commute or those who did not have access to a car. Dell summed it up best when he stated,

I like the location. I mean this is an excellent location. I won't be able to get anything as centrally located when I move. I could move across the street to Barrington Apartments... [because] this is a good central location. You are within everything right here. Anything in the world you could ever want, from five-star restaurants... to the mall... to virtually everything, so it is a great central location.

Jennifer echoed a similar assessment of the hotel's central location. The nearby stores provided some entertainment for the family:

I like the area. I like the fact that we have a lot of stores. I mean my daughter... and I took the kids... put them in the stroller and decided to walk from here to Target... I do like the area because of the fact that the stores are nearby. You know, you could just go window shopping. You don't have to... have money, but we can go window shopping and ...it's just something to entertain us... and walk around... you know, to get...especially now, when it is getting warmer... you know, and nice, and we want to try to get some color and...so, you know ...I like it. I really do. I like the area.

Harley liked the location for the same reason. "What do I like about living here is that I'm close to all the stores. We can walk anywhere we want to go." This benefit is not available everywhere as Jessica described: "Well, you know, my parents live in Dacula. It's kind of country so it's... you can't just walk to the store [or] basically anything you want to walk to." The scenery of a place and being able to walk to what you need was also important for Mary. She recollected that one of the things she liked best about her first apartment back

in Berkeley, California, was the ability to “just walk. You know, I could walk. There were sidewalks. You could walk.” Of particular interest was the accessibility of places for shopping, having fun, enjoying the trees, and meeting family needs within the neighborhood. She described how it was back in California:

Across the street I had the big grocery store. Then I had Thrifty Drug store, which is like a big Walgreen’s or Eckerd’s here. Then we had Berkley Bowl, which is this big ‘ole store that you could get... everything in there’s organic. I was just used to that. I loved it. And then I could just walk downtown. And you know you have the school which is not too far. It’s just up the hill. You can walk. The trees... just the sidewalks... the trees... I could [put] my baby in a stroller and just go. Around the corner was the skating ring, the ice skating ring. And across from that was the park. And then away from there down on the same square block was my daughter's first school. Oh my gosh! Around the corner, a block-and-a-half away, I could go straight to the dentist's office. If I go three blocks to my left... no my right, I’m down at the Ashley Fire Station where they had, the flea market. So everything was convenient. Everything!

At Company Suites, employment opportunities were also available in the area. Some residents walked to and from work due to the close proximity. This benefit was important for Dell who stated, “...that's why I'm here, because my job is right down the road. I can walk...” Ashay also found the location helpful in her job search:

I do have a computer and I sign on and see what jobs are opening within the area and I go from there to seek employment by setting up appointments with these said

companies and faxing the proper information seeking employment, and then other times, if it's in walking distance around...within the area, then I would walk.

However, beyond convenience to her, the extended-stay was chosen because of the benefit to her husband. Ashay stated, "So, that is why he chose... this place because it's convenient for him... getting him close to his job. He works in this area of Duluth, the area of Duluth... so, to make it easier for him to transport."

There were also aspects of the facility that made living at the hotel worthwhile. Residents felt the facility was aesthetically pleasing and had great resources. They believed the attention from the staff made them feel very welcomed.

Residents liked that the hotel was kept clean. According to Barbara Anne, "The rooms are... you know, they be clean. So, I like it." Dell was also impressed. He stated, "Well, they keep the place clean, I mean they say they're cleanest in town. They've got three types of staff over here, and they do." During the interview, Dell continually referred to the cleanliness of the hotel. He recalled, "Every day I leave, they have people cleaning besides the maids and everything else. They maintain this place pretty good." With her eyes wide and excited, Harley also expressed her appreciation for the conditions of the hotel when she asked, "Have you noticed that when you come in here, how clean...?" Bobby also appreciated the cleanliness of the bathroom despite the size: "the bathroom is clean, you know, it's small, but it's clean and, you know, you don't feel bad about puttin' your kids in the tub or whatever 'cause it's clean."

My impressions were not consistent with what respondents reported. For example, on the first day at the hotel, I was immediately cognizant of unkempt, unclean, unattractive, unsanitary spaces in the hotel corridor, elevator, and suite. Captured in my field notes was

the sense of discomfort and disgust I felt while interacting in these spaces. The first instance was just before loading my bags in the elevator on the day I checked-in. I wrote:

I pushed the one button available and only waited about 30 seconds before the door slid open for the right-side elevator with the small interior compartment. My eyes were immediately drawn to a trail of stain droplets on the ceramic tile elevator floor. I wondered what the spill was, but rolled over it, nonetheless, with my rolling briefcase because the stain was dried and appeared to have been there a while.

Another instance when I questioned the cleanliness of the hotel was after the second unload of my car on the first day. I experienced a putrid odor in the hallway and then a disturbing sight in my room:

On this second trip upstairs, I became aware of the cigarette smell that lingered in the hallway. There was also a faint smell in my room. All of a sudden, I thought of inhaling cigarette smoke and the back of my throat seemed to be dry... [When back in the room taking pictures] I truly thought I already wanted to go home. As I looked at the bare essential bathroom and stained-with-I don't-know-what chairs, I began to get weary... \$253.00 a week for this? ... My husband and two daughters came to visit me in my room. Their faces said it all. My daughters looked a little scared and uncertain. My husband was encouraging as he explained, "it's not that bad" while looking around.

My observations of the room also included a description of the carpet as having "a few stained areas" and the bathroom floor was "sticky to the touch," even with slippers on. In addition, I also captured one disturbing situation regarding the shower. Just before stepping in, I noticed, "a small hair/lint clog on the shower floor." It took me at least two days to get

used to these unsanitary conditions. Within the first couple of days, I bought several disinfectants, two air fresheners (spray and a wall plug-in), and chair pillows to make the room more acceptable for my stay. I also found it essential to leave the air conditioner running since the stale cigarette-smelling air was suffocating.

Cleanliness was an interesting and important theme raised by most residents as well. In addition to talking about the cleanliness of the hotel, they also described the importance of their own cleaning activity. Harley, Jennifer, and Jessica spent a lot of their time in their hotel rooms cleaning. Although it was a chore, there was a sense of pride attached to the interest and ability to clean their places. Jennifer liked “it clean. I like to ...organize and everything, [even] on weekends... because I mean, [even though] I worked at the time, too...on weekends... It was my day to clean... you know, do my cleaning and everything.” Harley also spent a lot of time cleaning and she described herself as “one of them people, when you come in there’s, like, tile in the front, you take your shoes off to walk on my carpet, you know, because I’m funny like that. I like a clean house.”

Although cleaning was available as a service at the hotel, Ashay chose to clean her own room because it kept her busy. Dee would “clean up in between the housekeeping because I like to do my own cleaning.” Kevin and Doris also cleaned. Kevin explained, “We don't [ever] get room service because we clean the whole room.” In fact, that was one of his wife’s complaints about staying in the hotel instead of the townhouse. She was used to coming home and cleaning her place after taking her nap. Bobby also liked that his wife cleaned. He found it a blessing “to have a clean woman who... she keeps thing clean and she, you know, is very meticulous when it comes to cleaning, and I appreciate it.” With a big grin, Dell humorously stated that if his girlfriend “would get up and clean” he would be able

to sit on his sofa instead of just using it as a storage place. Unfortunately for Jessica, cleaning was her major daily activity. She cleaned out of responsibility and boredom:

Clean! That's it. That's all I get to do. I'm so bored and that's everything right now, yeah... I clean. Try to clean all day to stall, you know, to distract my time until I get tired... so, 'cause it's kind of boring, you know, just sitting there all day and...I clean -- there's always dishes, always dishes. I don't care if I did them 10 hours a day, there'd be dishes. So I just clean, you know, sweep and mop the floor, and do whatever I can basically do to not be bored.

Jennifer also cleaned out of boredom, but not from lack of things to do; instead, she was tired of looking at the same furniture arrangements. She noted, "... but then I get bored... of seeing the same thing all... like, the same thing all the time."

None of the interview questions asked specifically about cleaning. However, all respondents expressed how important cleaning and cleanliness was for them. Even Mary, who did not mention anything about cleaning her own room, communicated during our interview that the difference between her and her siblings was how she "loved cleaning up them houses with my mom, cleaning up our house." It was apparent that cleanliness was very important for the residents in this study, and they were appreciative of what they perceived as a clean hotel environment.

Residents also identified specific aesthetic conditions of the hotel that made it comfortable. Jessica believed the hotel "is a nice place here, very nice compared to some of them that I've seen." Harley noticed the way management changes the flowers in the front of the building. These flowers were also attractive to Ashay, who took a photograph of the well-manicured area. Glancing at the picture with a smile, she explained, "I love flowers. So

I try to illuminate the flowers and the trees, the colors, the beautiful coloring. I thought that was real beautiful.” Dee liked:

...that [the hotel is] located where you can look out and see some kind of, you know, vegetation or there’s the wooded area out there, even though it’s on a busy street.

Um, didn’t have that at the other place. It was just all parking lot and you’d have to walk to see anything like that. I could see that from my window.

Like Dee, several respondents noted the landscaped property, especially the area just outside the lobby. At the front entrance to the hotel, there were benches for guests and visitors to enjoy. Reflecting upon my observations, I noted:

Around the building and on the lot, the only seating present are two outdoor benches of wood and green-painted wrought-iron that flanks the beige front door walkway.

Each bench has a combination trash/ashtray stand sitting two feet on each side.

Behind the benches are more landscaped islands of bushes and small winter flowers in vibrant purple, lavender, and yellow colors- pansies, I think. The front walkway is covered by a large white cement veranda sitting on four thick block pillars. The entrance to the walkway is decorated with large-leaf green holly plants.

This front seating place is a favorite for one guest. Kevin likes this area of the hotel. He expressed, “I like to go outside sometime and just, you know, get some fresh air, sit up front sometime on the benches. That’s really about where I say my favorite spot is ...outside on the benches.” Other respondents also identified favorite places at the hotel. Mary enjoyed the lobby area where she could lounge while talking with the staff. “We’ll talk and we’ll sit right here on the couches. This is our lounge. You know, so we can lounge.” She also liked the small area in front of the elevator that felt like her space: “This is my area that I look at

every morning by the elevator on the second floor... they have a plant on a table and back there is a mirror. I always check myself there every morning.” Jennifer identified this same area on the third floor. Scrunching her shoulders with a smile, she commented, “I found that it's nice and cozy, as soon as you walk out of the elevator it makes it homey. It looks like a, you know, like a foyer, doesn't it?” Although it is a public space, Jennifer found the area to be “welcoming me home.” For Barbara Ann, the layout of the room furniture was attractive:

The layout is very simple. Everything is really just hands on, you know. If you want to go to the kitchen, well there it is right there...If you want to sit down, go to that side...If you want to lay down, just go right there and lay down. And at night I have to get up to go to the bathroom a lot, and it's right there, so, everything is really easy.

Residents were also comforted by the easy access to needed items provided upon their request by the hotel. They liked being catered to and receiving immediate attention to their needs, especially since many had prior antagonistic relationships with former landlords or mortgagees, and requests went ignored. At Company Suites, when the families expressed needs, these requests were met with courtesy. For example, the hotel staff had been very accommodating to Ashay by allowing her to change rooms because she did not want to be in-between two rooms, but rather desired an end room. Also, Harley was allowed to switch furniture from room to room. She also found the staff to be very supportive when she was unable to get the items she needed on her own:

Like, if I don't have -- just say I don't have dish detergent, okay? Say we're having a short week this week, you know, and I don't have dish detergent. They will give me dish detergent. Okay? Once we had, a really, really short week. It was right after Christmas and I needed laundry done, and I didn't have any money to -- to just, you

know, wash a load. Not a load! They let me wash my color clothes. You know?

And then dry them. And, you know, it did not cost me anything.

Dell had been accommodated, too with getting extra garbage bags, towels, and borrowing the vacuum cleaner immediately after he asked for these items. In fact, Dell's hoarding of hotel towels is humorous. He stated, "The extra towels they give me? I hide. I probably got enough extra towels to start my own Wal-Mart... I might need it one day. As long as they give 'm to me, I'm going to take them." Barbara Anne was allowed to keep the hotel ironing board until someone else requested it. These courtesies of the hotel staff were invaluable to long-term guests who were already struggling financially. Mary summed it up aptly when she stated:

Yeah, they're like, brother, sister, cousins, whatever you want to call it. That's what you need when you have the situation at extended living hotels and suites where families are here and they're already feeling down. You need to have a staff that's gonna lift them up.

Even though the hotel employees were courteous and accommodating, residents were still cautious about situations that involved difficulty paying their rental fee. These residents felt that if they could not pay their bill they would be put out. Bobby quickly and casually stated that if he could not pay his rental fee, "Oh, they would lock me out, no question." He had learned from experience, "...when the money stops, the compassion stops." Residents recognized that the extended-stay hotel is a business. They knew that there had been many people at the hotel facing hard financial times and told management of their troubles but they were also aware that management could not make exceptions to the rule. If she had difficulty paying her rental fee, Barbara Ann knew, "They'd probably kick me out." However, she also

recognized, “they really can't have any understanding 'cause they are a business.” Therefore, respondents accept the hotel’s policy as “just the nature of the business.” Eviction was a real possibility for the guests. Ashay knew that eviction could be a simple matter of her husband getting sick and missing one day of work. Even in this situation, she conceded, “...people should be given a chance... but then again I'm not the owner of this institution.” Kevin had never been in the situation where he did not have his rental fee, but if this was ever a problem for him, he believed management would not be harsh:

I believe they would be pretty good, considering. In other words, I'm saying, if we didn't have the money one day and we told them we'd have to wait until the next day, that they would give us a break. They wouldn't just like try to throw us right out.

Difficulty paying the rental fee was certainly a possibility for these long-term residents but they did find comfort in the reasonable rate for what they were getting at the hotel. They also believed that considering other housing alternatives, the hotel was still the best option financially. Residents typically paid between \$900 and \$1000 per month to rent their room at the hotel. This may seem to be a great amount of money, but residents reported that once they factor in other expenses, it was actually cheaper to stay at the hotel than to pay rent in an apartment or a mortgage in a house. Dell stated, “by the time I get an apartment, pay on my utilities, pay all them other bills and deposits, this ain't bad right here.” Jennifer also noted this benefit:

...it's pretty decent for the money you're paying and for the fact that, you know, you have the cable...you have the TV with the cable. You have your AC. Heat... if you're cold. You know, it comes with... the little, you know, kitchen and the refrigerator.

Harley only paid about \$880 per month but recognized, “if you were to move out of here... by the time you add your gas, your cable... and just basic cable’s 50 something dollars, you know, and you can’t -- you could not live in a home.”

The other benefit in paying the rental fee at the hotel was that after 90 days, guests became residents and the taxes on their rental fee dropped. These tax-free residents enjoyed the benefit of a lowered weekly fee, and this may have been an incentive to stay in place at the hotel. In fact, Dee was weighing her options for returning to a previous hotel or staying at Company Suites. However, after doing her research, she found it would be more expensive to go back because the taxes would be added again to her rental rate. She remarked, “I started researching last week going back to the other place but you can’t pick up where you left off because once you check out, that’s it. You start the whole time thing over.” Bobby had also reaped the benefits of being a tax-free resident. His rental fee dropped from a little over \$1000 to a little over \$900 per month. Getting “past taxes” had also made things easier for Harley’s family:

It was kind of hard with paying taxes, but now we got it down to where we don't have to pay the state or the local tax. We just pay for our room and ... and it's much better. Harley currently paid \$224 per week and Mary was “down to... like \$270 a week.” Barbara Ann was paying \$263 per week and Kevin’s weekly rental rate was \$234. However, one resident, Ashay, did not reap the benefit of being tax-free. She checked into the hotel on a special rate and was paying about \$900 per month, but now the special had ended and she was back up to \$1000 or more per month even with the taxes removed. Despite Ashay’s disappointment, reduction in rental fees by removal of taxes was clearly an incentive for most of the residents to remain at the hotel rather than move around from hotel to hotel.

Physical detractors. Along with the positive characteristics, there were also some negative physical characteristics associated with the hotel that detracted from the sense of home. In particular, some of the respondents described the hotel room as small and confining. According to Bobby, the hotel room “feels like a box, kind of like a cell is what it feels like... it's pretty confined.” The perception was similar for Kevin. Even though the room accommodated his essential needs, he found being at the hotel was “like just being secluded in just one room.” Many respondents noted that the space was “just too small.” Limitations of the room size were poignant for Mary, who found the space restrictive of her daughter’s activity: “My daughter dances like no other. So when she dances, she needs room to dance. She can’t dance in that room. She can’t move around and about so everything has been limited and it’s just hard.” Ashay also felt confined to the point where she had to get out of the small space. She stated, “A lot of times... I have to get out of the apartment and go outside because I'm just boxed in. I can't stand being boxed in. It makes you feel like you are in a matchbox.”

In addition to the overall size of the room being limited in space, respondents also believed the appliances and storage units were too small, as well. The most frequent complaint was regarding the refrigerator and its capacity. Storing perishables was difficult. Ashay explained, “You cannot store meat, a large quantity of any kind of meat in the refrigerator. It is just too small.” Dee also felt the refrigerator was “very small. It’s one step above, um, a bar refrigerator, maybe two steps. It’s like, it’s small...it’s bigger than a college fridge but not too much more than that. Just a little bit bigger.”

The freezer was also reported inadequate by most residents. As Barbara Ann described her problem with the freezer:

That's another thing. Now, the canned goods is not problem, but when it gets down to buyin' the frozen food, you just can't buy nothin' hardly 'cause there's no room. The freezer is absolutely too small Uh, if you get two family packs of chicken. You can't get anything else in there but maybe just a stick of ground beef, but that's about it... 'cause it's real, real small.

With a chuckle, Harley shared a story about what happened when her husband went grocery shopping and there was not enough space to store the perishable items. She recalled:

He got... those frozen biscuits that you get, the jumbo. He knows I like to do those sometimes 'cause I don't feel like making a biscuit, okay? He got a big old pack of those. He got all kinds of meats. He got frozen juice. He got frozen pizza. Well, now he knew we didn't have room for this, okay? The biscuits ruined. I'm serious! 'Cause, you know, they can't sit down in the bottom unless you're going to cook them right away. The pizzas thawed... He had bought ...double chickens in a pack, whole chickens, you know... They were on sale. He got two of those. Okay, so here we was rotisserie-ing chicken. And hamburger -- he got that big thing of hamburger. Well, now where you going to put it?

Harley described her family's situation as "hilarious." However, this family's experience highlights a common problem for other residents. They find the refrigerator and freezer to be insufficient to store the family's grocery and food items. Although the residents appreciate having a full kitchenette and not just a hotplate on a counter, they would like the space and appliances to be larger and more accommodating. Bobby did not describe the lack of freezer storage as hilarious. Frustrated, he stated:

That's rough because there is no freezer really. There is a little cold space above the refrigerator, but it really won't keep anything frozen. It's just like a little open space and it's supposed to be a freezer, I guess, but there's no... It won't keep things frozen.

Disappointment with the refrigerator space was common among respondents. In addition, a few residents felt the stove could be larger to allow easier cooking, and most residents really missed not having an oven. All of the male respondents reported enjoyment with cooking and felt food preparation was limited by either too small of a stove or the absence of an oven. Dell's comment represented most residents' perspectives: "I would love for there to be a stove and a full-size refrigerator. Dishwasher? I can do without. I don't mind doin' dishes, but yeah, they are two things I miss and that's it."

But, that was not it for everyone. Three residents also had a problem with the small closet space. Ashay complained, "You can actually barely put your clothes into the closet. It is just very limited for a long-term resident." The closet was particularly annoying to Barbara Ann who commented:

they need a little more closet space and I really would recommend that they didn't have this... the rack they got up there for you to hang your clothes... whatever that is... that rack! It's nerve wracking tryin' to hang two sets of clothes on there, unless if I'm hangin' it the wrong way and I don't see me hangin' it the wrong way.

Bobby also found "this frustrating little space" a representation of the sad story of his family downsizing to the hotel. For Bobby the closet space was "probably the most depressing part of the room... I look over there and I see our little suitcases and a little stuff hanging up and some stuff folded on two of the little racks...." So, the closet became a metaphor for all that he had not provided for his family. It was also a reminder of his bad experience of defaulting

on a storage unit payment and having his family's precious and irreplaceable belongings, such as wedding albums and baby pictures, auctioned away for \$60. He had been one month late in paying the storage rental fee.

Another complaint of the hotel was the expense of the laundry facility. Bobby believed it was too expensive, given that management knows "most of the people are in here because they are strugglin' financially." Although Ashay found the laundry facility to be convenient for her weekly laundering, she had been at the hotel long enough to remember that the dryers at one time cost less and ran longer. She recalled, "...they charged \$1.75 with the washer and the dryer now is... It was \$1.25 for like seventy minutes. Then it went up to a \$1.75 for less minutes which is fifty minutes." Kevin used the hotel washer and dryer only now and then, sometimes monthly, when he did not feel like toting clothes to the neighborhood Laundromat. Although it is more expensive, he yields to the close accommodation. He explained, "I know I save more by going to the Laundromat, but there's sometimes that I be like, oh well, I'll just go ahead and pay the \$1.75 for the washer and the \$1.75 for the dryer." However, the option to use the laundry room was not exercised by Jennifer and her roommates who remarked, "It's too expensive. We don't. We wash clothes by hand." The size of her check for the week dictated Mary's ability to wash clothes. She commented during the interview that she dreaded needing to do laundry because her check was small and she was already too short to pay her rental fee. She declared, "I need \$1,000 [and] to get a \$500 check. Like I said, I'm just... this is gonna be a funny week. It's gonna be quite interesting, because I have a ton of laundry to do." Despite the expense, when Mary was able to use the laundry facilities, she had found a way to get the most out of the dryers that other respondents were not aware of. She explained, "If you check your clothes before

your last five minutes, you can drop another quarter in there and get eight or nine minutes.” Dell also found enjoyment in knowing that “[y]ou gotta know what you're doin' to get the most amount for your money.” With a smirk, he let on that getting the most for your money was a matter of being aware that “[i]t makes a difference what buttons you press as far as whites or colors, how long you can actually get on the machine. It could go anywhere from... from eighteen minutes to forty-three minutes.” Proudly, he stated, “I already figured that game out.”

In summary, at the extended-stay hotel, the physical aspects of the place that made it feel like home included the convenient location, facility resources (i.e., landscaping, friendly employees, clean environments, delivered accessories), and reasonable rental rates. However, the confining space, small and/or absent appliances (i.e., freezer, oven), as well as, the expensive laundry facility detract from the sense and feeling of a home-like environment.

Psychological Aspects

Respondents also identified psychologically positive aspects that contributed to home at the hotel. The hotel was a place where they could feel safe and secure, as well as a place where the nuclear family could maintain a level of independence when moving in with others was not desired or possible. However, there were some negative psychological impacts detracting from home as well. Respondents reported feeling guilty about the inability to provide for family. Some experienced depression and frustration about their family's situation.

Psychological contribution. Many of the residents felt the hotel was safe and this was very important for them. Dell adamantly stated the difference between the “crack whore hotel” he moved from to the current hotel. According to Dell, “I needed to get out of there. I

just felt way uncomfortable, I did. I'm way safer over here.” Further, he felt good about his decision to pay an extra \$30 a week to stay at a better hotel to avoid “riff-raff.” He explained, “I try to do better in my life, and I moved from one place I thought was bad and I needed to get out of ...to a better place... that place ...over there. It was a bad place, I needed to get out of there.” From Dell’s perspective, Company Suites hotel houses a better clientele and does not have dangerous and inappropriate adult activities occurring. Respondents did not elaborate about what behaviors were appropriate. They were discreet and circumspect. However, inappropriate adult behaviors were also a concern for Bobby, who was trying to provide the safest place for his daughter, Brandi to grow up in despite his financial struggles. From Bobby’s perspective:

...the environment around here is nice..., I don't see a whole lot of stuff goin' on outside that I wouldn't want my daughter around. You're gonna see some things. That's just life. That's anywhere you go. But I can't say that it's a bad environment... It has actually been a blessing as far as that goes because that could also add to your sense of urgency of leaving is if you have ... a big reason like... look out the window and there is something goin' on out there. You think, *oh gosh, I gotta get outta here.* But I can't say that. You know, we can open our window and look out, and it's not bad.

Safety was very important to Jennifer as well. She felt she could stay at the hotel as long as safety was not an issue. She remarked, “This is our little home right now, a temporary home... as long as my kids feel that they're safe.” Like Jennifer, concern for her children was also paramount for Mary. Although she reported feeling safe, she was still cautious for her children’s sake. She pointed out:

I feel safe, but I still have to have my guards up because I might feel safe of this environment, but [the hotel] still [has] tons and thousands of -- hundreds of people coming in and out of here, so I have to be protective of the children.

These comments from residents demonstrated that despite being stressed, people who were financially struggling still considered safety standards a priority for themselves and their families. Company Suites was not considered the best hotel, but it was a good choice among other hotels in the Metropolitan Atlanta area that might have been available to them. Even though it was more expensive than other hotel alternatives, the safety and peace of mind one felt was worth the money. Ashay's comment is an example of this common perspective:

Well, I've been to a place that was a little bit less... but the area wasn't as safe. I wanted to like, stay in that area, but my husband said "no." The place that we were going to move in before we came here, someone had just got shot in that particular building when we were getting information to get in there, so my husband said, "no, no, no."

As noted above, respondents felt the hotel was more secure than other hotels they had lived in before. In particular, they liked interior entranceways, room security locks, security cameras, and having the hotel's front desk staff and other people (i.e., guests, maids) around to help. These measures made the facility feel secure. For example, Dell declared, "I'm safe here. It is secured access. People that work here know me..." His relief was apparent when he made clear, "I'm not worried about anything... it is nice to have that key card access. [And] there is always somebody here." Like Dell, having people around also comforted Dee. She said, "I feel more secure in these places because there's always someone that can help

you. And when you live on your own there's not always that opportunity 'cause neighbors are... you know, you know how it is." Dee, did not like the interior entryways, but she still felt safe. She commented:

I feel safe because you got the latches and ...it's secure. I feel secure here. It's different kind of security 'cause, like I said, [at the other hotel] you controlled your coming and going in whereas here there's more entrances. But I feel there's a peaceful environment here and feel safe, even though there's more entryways here.

Unlike Dee, Mary did not worry about the entryway and hallway security. From her experience, she had found that these places were "locked down" and secured. In fact, there were times when the security at the hotel had been so tight that it even inhibited her. She recalled:

'Cause I leave here at 6:00 in the morning sometimes and I can't get out of the door. I'd be like, "oh, wrong side"... and then your key sometimes won't work to let you in, in the morning time, So it's just that when the staff leaves, don't worry about it. Ain't nobody getting through your doors.

The security cameras were a decided benefit reported by respondents, especially since staff from behind the front desk monitored these cameras. Two residents shot photographs of the security cameras to describe their home at the hotel. Dell took pictures of the back door at the hotel. As we viewed the photo during the interview, he explained:

...that's the very entrance where I come in most of the time. They have two cameras on it. On the screen down there, they have twelve shots on it at all times. So, like I said, it is pretty safe and secure. I mean, you know...that's a picture of the front desk just showing they have someone back there.

Jessica described her pictures in terms of appreciation for the consideration of security by the hotel. She commented, "That's a picture of the cameras. Surveillance - - safe! Well, you know it's safe because ... they have the cameras and stuff. So they care."

During my first few days residing at the hotel for observation, there were a few moments when I did not feel safe. The first feeling of uncertain safety was on Day One when I was unable to lock the front door. I noted in my journal:

When I turned to lock the door, I realized that the knob wouldn't lock into place. So, I slid the metal sliding lock over, checked the peep hole and decided to check on the lock apparatus later.

Another instance was more disturbing. After standing outside taking photos of children getting on the school bus one morning, I felt my personal safety was threatened as I continued to take pictures of places around the exterior of the hotel. My journal entry regarding the situation reads:

It was 8:06 am... I took a few pictures of the [school] bus, then continued around the building taking pictures of signs for the hotel. While taking a picture of the largest sign, a van pulled out of the back parking lot and came to a stop at the crossroad. It sat there in that spot and the man driving began to watch me take pictures. I continued taking pictures while watching out of my peripheral vision. After about two minutes, the man drove away...

Taking pictures around the hotel seemed to attract a lot of unwanted attention. After walking deep into the far corner of the hotel, I was frightened even more by three other men watching. However, the third watcher instance was the most frightening. Of this incident, I wrote:

I turned my attention from that red car to another large van. This van was grey colored and also departing from the lot. However, the driver stopped, rolled down his window and mouthed something I did not hear. I was walking with my camera in hand on the left side of the parking lot heading away from the garbage dump and toward the busy street and hotel exit. The grey van was stopped between me and the hotel, so I was a bit nervous about my positioning. The man leaned farther out of his van and asked, "What are you doing?" I replied, "I'm taking pictures of the trees." To which he said, "Come take some pictures of me." I asked, "You want me to take a picture of you?" I began walking again in the hopes of getting closer to some parked cars and near the back door. He asked, "What are you going to do with those pictures?" I shrugged my shoulders, smiled, and said, "I'm not sure." He smiled back and looked away from me and into his car. I looked around him and saw another man wearing a grey conductor hat. The passenger said something to the driver who turned around and asked, "Are you traveling?" ... Before I could answer, he said, "How long will you be visiting?" I did not reply. He continued, "Do you have a number?" I smiled back and said, "I have a *husband*." He smiled back and further asked, "Is he *here*?" I said, "Yes." He turned to the man in the car and said something then drove away. That ended my picture-taking.

From that point on, I felt nervous about the parking lot. However, safety inside the hotel did not concern me, and this perception was consistent with what respondents said in their interviews.

Another benefit to calling the hotel home reported by guests was the ability to keep the family independent. Staying with family members and friends was an option for some

guests. However, they chose not to double up this way because they did not want to impose on other people's households. Ashay's children struggled with finances related to housing but they were not living at hotels or homeless. She reported, "My son, he has...he has his own house, but my daughter is still renting and she's a single mom with two children." When asked why she and her husband do not go to live with their children, she responded, "Well, I could do that, but Mommy doesn't want to impose." However, if need be, Ashay felt welcomed to go to live with her son. Resigned and slowly nodding her head in a "yes" motion, she unreadily conceded, "but if I just had to do it and had no choice, he would take me in. In fact, he has given me that opportunity to come... and I have turned him down."

The ability to move in with a family member (sister-in-law) was also available to Jennifer and her family. However, Jennifer felt her family dynamics would impose on her sister-in-law's lifestyle. She rationalized, "we don't really have any other place to go besides my sister-in-law's house and she's very particular about her things and she's not...she's not child friendly." Further, Jennifer saw her children's activity being a potential problem.

According to Jennifer:

...my kids are very active, and they like to put their hands on the walls, and, "oh, what's this?" [pretending to reach for an item] You know? And, and I... I don't want to have to end up disliking my sister-in-law because we have a good relationship right now. So I just... you know? Because when we used to go visit her, she would always be like, "OK" [as a gentle warning], and my...my kids would try to go to the sofa... She'll get a sheet and put it over the sofa. You know? Things like that, you know.

Staying at her sister-in-law's was not desirable. In fact, it was clear how adamant Jennifer felt about not going there when she stated, "I mean, it's either here [the hotel] or under a bridge."

Like Ashay and Jennifer, Mary also did not want to impose on someone, a friend in her case. She often allowed Leah to stay at her friend's apartment, but Mary did not go because, "I'm not to the point of -- I feel everyone needs their space. And I'm not gonna invade somebody's space unless it is absolutely necessary." The same was true for Barbara Ann, who had a cousin living in the area. She commented, "I have a cousin here. I mean if it's just, just necessary, if I had to, 'cause I wouldn't want to... (Shook her head "no" at the notion)."

The choice of staying with friends and family members was also dictated by past experiences. During observations at the hotel, one guest returned to the hotel because of a bad experience staying with her mother-in-law. This woman's story was captured in my field notes on Day 3:

... A white woman came up to the front desk. She wore a pair of jeans and a white sweater. Her blonde hair was cut stylishly and she seemed in a little rush. She appeared to be in her late 20s, early 30s. I looked at her as Tiffany [the front desk clerk] ... asked the woman, "Good morning, how can I help you?" The woman answered, "Yes, I need to pay our rent." She handed three one hundred dollar bills to Tiffany. Tiffany knew the woman because she said, "Oh, I didn't know you were back." ... Then the woman responded to Tiffany with an exasperated look, "Yeah, we're on the third floor. We just got back. We tried staying with my mother-in-law for a few days, but that didn't work out. That woman!" She looked at me as I smiled

and she shook her head. She continued, “I should have known... why do mother-in-laws have to be like that?”

Dee told another example of a situation when doubling-up did not go well. She wanted her own place because staying with a roommate in the past had also been difficult.

According to Dee:

I came into extended stays... because the roommate situations were just not working out for me. I had situations where I was promised one thing and it didn't pan out, and I was always on the short end of the stick because of course when you're living with someone else you fall under their guidelines.

A few residents did not feel supported while staying with family members because of past interactions. Mary considered staying with her father, but changed her mind because of their past relationship. Now, an adult, she recalled her father failing to care for her as a child:

Me and my dad didn't have a close relationship. My mom raised us. My father raised my brother from a second marriage. He's right after me, born after me, and then he didn't even take care of my two younger sisters. When their mother sent them from Ohio to my dad in San Francisco, he told their aunt, “you can put them back on the plane and take them back... 'cause I'm only raising my son. I'll send child support for them girls. You know, girls need to be with their mothers and my son needs to be with me.” So, no, I wouldn't live with my dad. I mean his -- being older, he's humbled. His personality is different, but never will I do that. Uh uh.

Mary believed she must make it on her own because she also did not trust going to live with her husband's family. She worried, “then I'll be in the... what do you call that? ...mercy of [his] family” and staying with her mother was also not an option because “she's not set.”

Unlike Mary's mom, Bobby's family was financially stable, but they would not help him. Bobby wanted to maintain his independence, but needed help from them to get on his feet -- help he could not get. He was aggrieved by the fact that his father, stepmother, and brother spent money lavishly on material things while knowing he struggled. With a disappointed, angry, pouted face and elevated voice, Bobby described his family's abandonment:

And you know, to us it's frustrating and we thinkin', "man, you all livin' nice, you know, you goin' to conventions and you drivin' Cadillacs. And, you know, you doin' good, but you want to turn a blind...." And I have a brother who works for the government and he lives in D.C. And I called him, I think, when I first got into this financial bind. I called him and said, "You know, I really could use some help if you could..." and he made a comment to me that I would never forget in my life and I haven't talked to him since then. I mean, I just can't get past it. He told me, he said, "lack of preparation on your part does not constitute an emergency on my part." And that blew my mind just coming' from my own flesh and blood, from my brother who I always looked up [to]... I was just like, "man, that sounds like it was comin' from somebody like some big executive somewhere that didn't know me from..." You know? I mean I hear it in my head all the time, and it just bothers me that people can actually - and I call it cruel, I mean, people can actually be that cruel to even... I wouldn't say that to anybody, much less to a family member.

The situation was different for Harley. She felt sure that her mother would allow her to come stay although she would not because, "see, they have just so much room and they're two hours away." In the past, she had asked her mother to send money to help her when she was financially short, but she did not like to call for help. She explained:

Cause you feel like, when you grow up and you get out of the house, you should not have to call and say mom, I need a couple of dollars. I need. You know? You don't do that. I think it's a pride thing. Pride, you know.

Pride had not kept Jessica from asking for help or returning home. Instead, family stress hindered her from these options. Jessica described her family as wealthy, living in a large home. However, she also described her family as highly dysfunctional. Both of her parents were alcoholics. Her brother also drank and used drugs, as well. According to Jessica, her father, who no longer spoke to her, favored her brother. However, the most stress for Jessica came from witnessing the mistreatment of her mother by her father. She could not understand why her mother had remained in the relationship. At 19 years of age, she just could not handle the abusive environment. Adamantly, she stated:

I just don't want to go home. I just don't want to go back. You know, it's just the -- see, it's one thing to know it and not to be around it all the time. But to know it and be in there ... and, you know... it's just I can't -- I can't deal with it if I'm there. I can't handle it.

As the above comments illustrate, when staying with family and friends was not desired or possible for respondents, the extended-stay hotel provided a place for families to try to anchor themselves and maintain some independence while rebounding and getting back on their feet from difficult situations. Dell, for one, felt a sense of continuity in living at the hotel. This was obvious from his comment, "once I pay my bill, I know I got a place to come to." The same was true for Bobby. Although he did not want to get too comfortable at the hotel, he also recognized the importance of maintaining his residence there for stability. He remarked, "I mean, as much as I would like to be not here, there is also a big part of me that's

thankful that we are here because, I mean, this is home for us.” And although he had made several declarations like “we’ll be gone next week or the week after” he also recognized that “it is important to maintain this place.” In fact, Bobby had an interesting way of looking at his experience at the extended stay. After reflecting on what his parents told him in the past, he seemed to feel blessed. He looked at his stay through the words of his parents:

You sowed a bad crop of seeds, some things you may have done early in life or from some misjudgments or mistakes you made, you know. You’re getting back a bad crop. And you’re putting in better seeds now, so just look forward to the things that are going to happen to you better in the future.

Psychological detractions. Respondents also noted some negative emotions related to staying at the hotel. It was important for Bobby to reframe his understanding of living at the hotel because some of the negative effects of staying there, for him and other residents. These uncomfortable emotions included feelings of guilt, depression, and embarrassment. Bobby demonstrated the weight of these emotions by his tone, slouched shoulders, and melancholy expression when he explained how he felt he had failed to provide for his family like his father had done for him. He blamed himself for his family’s misfortune. While comparing himself to his father, he sadly commented:

I feel especially responsible just because...I mean, in my household, my father was the...he made more money than my mother made. He was just pretty much, you know, he took care of everyone and he was the head of the house and, you know, where he would lead us, we pretty much would follow and he never let us down. That I can recall. He never led us in the wrong direction. Or if he did, then we didn't feel it or we didn't know it. You know? And I feel responsible because I am...I

married her. And, you know, I took responsibility for her. And then we had children. And... and I do feel like it's my responsibility to lead us out of here and... And to get us to, you know...stability.

Bobby's guilt appeared unrelenting as he explained how badly he felt about times when Brandi created drawings in school of a pretend bedroom and party sleepovers that she does not and could not have. With his head bowed in shame he described, "I want to cry out but...I'll look at her and I won't let her see me... [But] that just bothers me to no end." The inability of her daughter to handle living at the hotel also bothered Mary. She described this difficulty when she stated, "My daughter hasn't adjusted. [She] spends very little time here. She's always with my girlfriend and her daughter, or she's at one of her girlfriend's house. She's 14 and can't handle it. Mentally it's just too much for her."

Respondents also reported the psychological discomfort experienced by their spouses. Along with managing his own emotions, Bobby had to consider his wife, Angie's psychological state as a result of staying at the hotel. Bobby believed she "is sometimes losing her mind and I pray for her and I talk to her. That may work for that day, but then the very next day she is feeling the same thing over again." The stay at the hotel had also been difficult for Kevin's wife. Kevin explained that for the last month or so, "it's been like really aggravating her. She was saying, 'Oh, I can't wait to get out of here!'" Ashay, who worried about how her husband was faring at the hotel, also expressed this concern. Her husband needed more space and did not have it. Ashay observed, "It is just like mentally I think it has even begun to show on him, you know?" She further explained, "I don't know. It just seems like if a person is boxed in long enough their mind just... I don't know. They begin to crack or something. It is like 'just gotta get out!'" She understood how her husband felt because

“I feel like I am trapped, Yeah, I feel like I am trapped in this place... it seems as though I can't get out of this situation... [And] you gotta get out, mentally.” As a result of not being able to “get out,” Ashay reported experiencing severe depression, even suicidal depression since being at the hotel. She stated:

I have been through very severe depression in the two years and actually suicidal. But it has been by just that little string of hope in me and faith in my God that has kept me from actually going over. ‘Cause I have been severely depressed in which I was hearing voices and even seeing hallucinations. But I have never, thanks be to God, taken a Paxil or psychotropic drugs. And that's the miracle part about that for me.

Although not as severe, depression was also experienced by Harley and her stepdaughter because they initially could not bring themselves to accept the idea of living in a single room. During the interview, Harley recalled:

... Got so depressed in this room, I did. I really got depressed to where I wouldn't come out of the room. And I just got up one morning and I looked around, and I was like (big sigh). It's because this is theirs and I don't feel like I got a home... because there was none of me there. Okay now... not that the room was bad looking. Because, see, they had just painted my walls, just put new carpet, new curtains, new spreads. Everything was all new, cabinets, everything, but it just didn't have a personality.

Harley's husband was also depressed about being at the hotel. Like Bobby, his depression emanated from feeling as though he had failed to provide for his family. Harley stated, “I think it depresses him because he feels like... that he let us down.”

In addition to guilt and depression, people seemed to be embarrassed about living at the hotel. Barbara Ann did not understand this shame. She stated:

I just wonder why some peoples like... they don't want peoples to know that they live in a place like this... I mean, you have to do what you have to do, you know. I'm for sure that those homeless people would wish that they could have a place to lay their head... so I consider it to be a blessing, you know, because it could be worse.

Bobby also found that people who were residing long-term were so ashamed about staying at the hotel that at times they were dishonest about why they were there. He believed they masked the real reason for being there to avoid talking about it and to protect the privacy of the situation. When he asked guests why they were at the hotel, instead of being honest, they would say, "we're waitin' on a house to be built or, you know, my apartment got flooded or... just different things like that but... then, you still see them next month." Unlike Bobby, Dee did not ask people why they were at the hotel. She might have known that the guests were long-term and maybe even the reason why. However, Dee resisted invading their privacy. She explained:

I don't get into their business with asking them questions. I feel everyone deserves a little privacy. And sometimes your situation is your privacy especially when the face of it is evident of what it is. But let you keep your life as private as you possibly can.

Bobby did not mind telling others about his situation. For him, it was simply a financial dilemma. He stated, "I'm beyond the point ... if somebody wants to know...if I happen to talk to somebody about [this]...you know, it doesn't bother me to tell people what my situation is." However, although Bobby considered himself open about discussing his

situation, he also appeared ashamed about letting people at his job know where he lived. The shame became apparent when he commented:

I met a lot of people there [at work], but just ... I felt like I couldn't let these people know what the home side of my life is after leaving out of there. Some of them just would have never known, you know, where I lived or what I did. They would have just never known. You know, they would just assume I have a home just like they do or an apartment or whatever, and I just would always cut it off.

Although privacy was also important to Dell, he was not embarrassed about his co-workers knowing where he lived. He felt strongly that his move from the prior hotel to Company Suites was a “step up” and that people who knew him would recognize the hotel as a respectable place. He explained, “I get rides to and from work from a lot of different people. I'm comin' back to a place that is clean and a place that is nice and a place that is respectable.”

Like Dell, Kevin did not mind others knowing where he lived, but he would not invite others to his place because doing so would violate his Doris' privacy. When asked if he would invite a friend over to see a movie, he responded:

No, I probably would tell him it would be better for me to come to his place because our area is too small. And I feel like I'd be invading my wife's privacy when she wants privacy. So, I wouldn't offer our guest to come over to watch TV or nothing like that.

In these statements from participants, it is clear that the shame and needs for privacy had implications for interacting with others.

In this section, psychological aspects that affect the hotel feeling like home were discussed. Overall, respondents felt safe. The hotel felt secure and residents appreciated measures taken by the hotel management to make the place feel guarded against undesirable behaviors and crime. These measures gave respondents a peace of mind that cost a little more but was well worth it to ensure the well-being of family members. In addition, residents liked having a place that allowed them to maintain an independent household and avoid imposing on family members and friends while they were going through difficult personal and financial times. However, the confining conditions of the hotel room and the inability to move out as planned made several residents experience feelings of guilt, depression, and embarrassment. For a couple of residents these feelings affected interactions with other people in their lives. Kevin avoided inviting others over because of the lack of privacy in the room. Bobby delayed coming home to his wife because of the guilt he felt leaving her in the hotel all day while he worked.

Social Aspects

In addition to physical and psychological aspects in living at the hotel, there were social ones as well. Social aspects centered on the need to find personal space and regulate interactions with family members, other guests, and hotel staff. Space restrictions in the room created the inability for respondents to find the necessary personal areas to retreat from social interactions with others and relax alone and beyond the room. However, the hotel spaces outside of the room provided places for respondents to get away. The restrictions of the room also inhibited couples from engaging in intimate interactions. Despite this inconvenience, respondents were able to interact positively with family members in the room space. In addition, identification as a long-term guest affected interactions with other

similarly situated people, but also provided opportunities to enjoy new friendships with hotel staff.

Social contribution. A strong social aspect contributing to a sense of home at the hotel was interactions with staff members. Respondents reported interacting with staff at the front desk. They spent extended time talking with the friendly staff people who respected them. Harley said of these staff members, “Yeah, and they're respectable to you... and that means a lot to somebody. I don't know how you feel, but if you make me feel less than you are... I am going to buck you every time.” This relationship of mutual respect sparked good friendships between the staff and the respondents. Harley went on to say, “But, if you give me the respect that I'm gonna give off to you, then you and I are gonna be friends.” And, friends they have become at Company Suites.

Most of the residents had formed close friendships with the front desk staff and often occasioned standing in the front lobby chatting and laughing. These front desk clerks were considered friends, and one resident even considered them family members. When asked about what they would miss when they left the hotel and moved on to other housing arrangements, most participants responded “the people,” specifically, the staff people. Barbara Ann clearly stated, “Who would I miss? Eric, for one.” Eric was the staff member mentioned most by respondents. They felt Eric was very open and friendly, and residents liked interacting with him. For example, Kevin reported, “Like me and the guy, Eric, who works at the front desk, we always talk and hold pretty good conversations.” Jennifer chose to stay at the hotel after interacting with Eric. She stated, “We went in here, and Eric, he was very nice.” Jessica also liked Eric. She described him with a warm smile when she said, “He’s funny. He’s cool.” She spent time everyday talking with Eric and other staff at the

front desk. When asked why, she stated, “They’re friendly, very friendly. They act like they like for you to sit down here and talk to them. And they always... you come down here and say ‘hey’, they’ll start a conversation.” Harley had the closest relationship with the staff.

She had lived at the hotel a long while and amusingly recalled:

Like, if we don't hear from Eric or them [other staff] for very long, you know, say a month, if Eric don't call our room and tease with me, you know, we'll run down the hall. I'm serious, to spark somebody to just complain so Eric has to call us or the neighbor will call us, you know, but nobody calls normally. That's depressing, you know, because they will not call. If we go from one end of the hall all the way to the other, and when we lived on the second floor, well see, the second floor is right above this floor and Laurie calls and she says, "I bet that was you. I know that was you with Taylor running down the hall, wasn't it?" “No.” “Don't you lie to me, I'm coming up there.” I'm like, “good.” Yes, you know, because [I] -- truly like these people.

For Harley, the staff was considered her family. She reported a great deal of joking and playing around with individual members of the staff. She considered them a part of her household and often would cook enough food to feed them as well. She talked disappointedly about how one of the staff members would be leaving soon. She said:

You know, and Eric, like, we tease, we cut up, you know? And Tiffany, I call her my lover because she just got married and she’s going to leave us. And I hate that so bad, and I’ll miss her. Now I was telling her... I have been there so I was telling her all the neat places to go because that’s my family. That’s -- that’s part of our household.

Characteristics of the staff that made them respected and considered friends were their openness to conversation, approachable demeanor, and ability to joke around with the

guests. Residents also felt the staff were professional and delivered on what was promised, with the exception of one night staff person. Bobby felt disrespected by this particular employee who he believes would have been more accommodating if he had been a short-term rather than a long-term guest. During the interview, he described the interaction with an abhorrent expression on his face:

You know, there's one lady here I notice at night time... I asked her for some sugar for coffee, you know? We like to drink coffee at nighttime some times. And, you know, she came up one time, and she told us she didn't have any, which I knew better, because they give it to me everyday. [Other employees] ...a lot of times ... tell me to go get it myself. I came a second time the other day and I asked them for some. And she brought back a paper cup and it had, I mean, enough for, not even a teaspoonful in the bottom of it. You know? And so I went down the hallway and I got a little frustrated. My wife was like, "you know, why don't you just give that back to her?" So, I walked back down. I said, "you know what? If this is all you got you probably better keep this for the guests in the morning when you all serve coffee," 'cause they serve coffee down there everyday.

Aside from Bobby's irritating interaction, the respondents felt they were highly respected and that the friendships with employees were reciprocal. In fact, most of the participants took photos of the hotel workers to depict that the staff at the hotel made it a home. Mary strongly felt that the staff made the hotel home for her. She commented:

I was trying to get a picture of Tiffany. Couldn't get one of her but I know I got one of Eric. Because they make this place. Whether corporate knows it, the manager know it, I'm sorry. These people don't put you on hold and tell you don't come back.

If you need something here...It's done. They're getting it. Now, I can't say the same for the maintenance guy, 'because he's forever. But as far as that Tiffany and Eric? Those I can highly speak of.

Along with time spent with staff, respondents also reported enjoying recreational and family activities at the hotel. Watching television was a favorite past time for relaxing and enjoying time together. Most residents reported watching television as the main type of family entertainment in the room. In fact, a great thrill for Dell was the swivel action of the TV. He was happy with this feature because "I can swivel the TV, take my bubble bath, and look at the TV... [Also] sit in bed and eat [and] watch the TV while I sit there... because I got the swiveling TV deal going on." The swivel bonus was not a common feature in every room. However, all the rooms had televisions, and the residents enjoyed having this accessory. In fact, Bobby was proud to report on the great hotel service that was extended to his family when their television was on the blink. The maintenance person gave them a new 19-inch TV so Angie could watch her soap operas.

Jennifer and Harley brought in an extra TV so that the adults and younger children could watch shows separately. Although she liked having it, Jessica was not too happy with the location of the television in her room. She was disturbed because "in a room with four people ... it's kind of crowded and gets annoying when they want to watch TV and you want to go to sleep." Ashay labeled her husband a couch potato because of how much he enjoyed watching TV. She described it as his "soother":

He loves watching television so, you know. He's into the sports ... so, whatever it takes for him to sort of soothe down after a hard working week, the TV is the thing that works for him... but, it doesn't always work for me, of course.

Other individual and family activities took place in the hotel. Respondents studied homework, read books, participated in religious worship, wrote letters to family members, worked on the computer, job searched, relaxed in bubble baths, cooked, and exercised on a portable stepper. The other major family activity reported was playing with children to keep them busy and happy at the hotel. Adults tried to avoid their younger ones bothering other guests (sometimes). Harley described how she kept her stepdaughter entertained at the hotel:

I get in the kitchen and now that we have the oven we start baking. You know, whether it's cookies, cakes, whatever. Uh, we paint ceramics. I used to own a ceramics store in Pennsylvania and I have a lot of them left over, and just to keep her busy, you know, we'll do that or she loves to play Rummy, or Spades, or Hearts, you know. And whatever it takes to keep her smiling.

Harley also explained that when she and Taylor got too bored, they would run up and down the hallway to aggravate the other guests and wait for them to call the front desk. This gave them a laugh.

Jennifer was much more considerate of how her children's activities affected others. She took her kids out of the room to keep them busy to avoid them from bothering their working dad and other guests at the hotel. She explained:

... we'll go to a little park and, you know, let them run around because, I mean, there is [only] so much space we have that they don't really, you know...I don't want them to knock anything down or disturb any other... guests ...in the hotel.

Barbara Ann also spent time playing with her grandsons in the hotel. However, she was careful because "you can't play quite as much as you would if ... in your own home." The children might become too carried away and laugh a lot so she worried about the noise

level. This was a concern for Dee also. She allowed her son and grandson to put up a basketball rim on top of the door and shoot baskets with a Nerf ball. However, “I have to limit that ‘cause they get carried away and when it gets quiet, too quiet in here, and it’s getting time for people to go to bed, I’m like, ‘Sorry guys, you can’t play anymore.’”

Bobby also played with his children. However, his child’s play was more about making the space acceptable for his children than accommodating others. He allowed his daughter to play board games or watch whatever she wanted just to “keep her mind from being boxed in like mine is.”

Social detraction. Most respondents reported fun spending time with their family members. However, there was also a concern for finding and maintaining personal space. All respondents in this study lived with someone else in the hotel and the activity of negotiating private space was reported by most. Of the participants, Dell was the only one who reported that his girlfriend did not live with him at all times but left to stay at her mother’s home often. In addition, Dee’s son moved out on the day of her interview. With the exception of Dell and Dee, every other respondent reported some difficulty finding a private space to retreat and for couples to engage in intimate interactions inside their hotel rooms.

Bobby reported that he felt guilty, but also relief that he could leave the hotel to go to work and get away even though work was tough. According to Bobby, “I do feel relieved to get out of here, since when I go to work, even though I’m working like a dog... but, I’m still like, I wish I could go ahead and work a few more hours.” His guilt came from knowing that his wife wanted to get out too. However, she was stuck at the hotel with the baby and with

no relief. When Bobby returned home, he found private space in the front reception area of the hotel on a bench.

Like Bobby's wife, Barbara Ann also needed relief from caring for her grandchildren "...cause it irritates my nerves too bad." She was unable to find a place to herself in their room when her family was present. So, Barbara Ann found a peaceful retreat in the conference room. She explained:

...this conference room is [a favorite place] 'cause I can get away. I come in here so I can do my studying and get away also. That's my favorite place... It's quiet and it's away...you know, I can...you know how sometimes you just have had all you can take and you just need to get somewhere where you can unwind and...so sometime I come here with my books and I could just get lost in my books and nobody bother me.

Mary certainly understood what it is like to be irritated with family members and have a need to get away. During the interview, she noted several times that she and her husband get in arguments when he becomes verbally and emotionally abusive to her. She was bothered by the fact that she could not escape from him and the arguments the way she used to when she lived in a townhouse. The hotel room restricted Mary from retreating from her family when she needed to relax or recover from an argument. Her options were limited. Annoyed, she explained:

Like the other night there was an argument. The room was too... See, we need space 'cause I need space. Whew! 'cause see when I have people get on my nerves, I go take me a long bath with some candles... Play some music. Girl, please, I can't do that here 'cause [of] the crack underneath the door just a little bit, you know, and I

can still hear the TVs and stuff. See back, you know, all the places we lived, I could go upstairs, close the master bedroom and bathroom door, put some candles in the big bathroom. Just relax. Turn some music on and I could sit and listen to Mary J and Janet Jackson all day long. You hear me? All day long! Can't do that here.

When really pressed for alone time, Mary created her retreat in the "laundry room, that's my place, right there." It was her spot. It was the "room [that] makes it easier, where you still feel like you're still in the comforts of your home. That's my laundry room."

Like Mary, Jessica felt that finding private space was nearly impossible, given that she lived in one room with three roommates. For her, being crowded was inescapable most of the time. In fact, this was the most significant aspect of living at the hotel that made it unlike home for Jessica. She emphatically stated, "It's just that four people in one room, you know, that's not -- most people don't sleep four people in one room or, you know, do everything, every day with four people in one room." This was an overbearing situation for Jessica and gaining an escape from others was why Jessica wanted to move out of the hotel and into an apartment. She wanted "more space with different rooms instead of just one [for] privacy. If I wanted to get away from somebody I could." Jessica could not find this personal privacy at the hotel because "I mean there's always somebody. I'm never in the room by myself, ever. Not that I mean I really don't mind, but it's just, if you wanted to you couldn't."

Jessica was also unable to engage in couple privacy with her boyfriend because of their roommates. When asked how she and her boyfriend found time for intimacy, Jessica responded, "We don't. (nervous laughter) Don't. It's bad. Very rarely. (nervous laughter)." Jessica did not "find it a problem." However, her boyfriend, "Well, he always -- he

complains. You know guys, they complain about it. But what do you want me to do?"

Jessica and her boyfriend had to become accustomed to the fact that they would have to wait until no one was there or not engage in intimacy at all. Fortunately, she did not find this inability to plan intimacy to be damaging to their relationship. However, Bobby and Angie's marriage was strained by the inability to find alone time. When asked how they planned private moments, he responded:

We don't. We just... (shrugs shoulders in resignation) and that's the honest truth, we just don't. I mean, that's probably a contributor to us straining our relationship. We just, we don't. And my main fear is... my daughter, 7 years old, a little girl. I've just always, ever since she was like 4, big enough to notice what's around her... I've always had this fear of... Lord have mercy, if my daughter ever catches me and my wife, you know, then I'm gonna have some explaining to do (embarrassed smile).

And, you know? It's just not any privacy and that's... you know, that's... I guess that can put a strain on a marriage also. There's just really not any privacy and it's like, now, this week, it's probably going to be the roughest week for us because of Spring Break.

Unlike Bobby, Harley found creative solutions for maximizing the private time with her husband because "We're man and wife so we needed our privacy." Hanging sheets and curtains from the ceiling to separate her bed from her stepdaughter's bed was one such solution for the couple. Harley felt it was important for her 16-year-old stepdaughter to have privacy as well. Moving to the hotel "was a big change for her. She didn't have the privacy she [once] had." When upset with each other, they joked about slamming the non-existent door that should separate her stepdaughter's room from her own room. With a smile, Harley

recounted what an argument with her stepdaughter was like. She said, “She can't get away from me unless she slams them curtains. The door don't slam... ‘Slam them curtains!’ And we tease each other. I say, ‘I'm going to slam my door in your face! No... close my curtains!’”

Jennifer also missed having the ability to shut the door for privacy, but at the hotel she and her husband tried to do the best they could. She commented:

Something that I dislike about living here? OK, the fact that I don't have a door that I can shut. If I had my own bedroom, just shut the door and have some more privacy with my husband... Well, I mean, we try to do as best as we can. I mean, we just basically wait until the kids are asleep. They're unconscious basically. And then we just try to just spend a little...you know, a little time.

Kevin did not express a problem finding private time with Doris. However, like Harley, he was concerned about the fact that both his wife and his daughter could not retreat to their own private spaces. Tiffany, at 14-years-old, did not like to stay at the hotel because “of just not having her own space...” She was used to “just going to her room, closing her door, and doing her homework or listening to music, and just having some space for herself.” Because of this unfamiliar situation, she chose to spend the summer at her grandmother’s home hoping that the family would be moving out of the hotel soon. During the school year, she also had difficulty dealing with the stay at the hotel. In fact, instead of spending time at the hotel, “she'll go to a friend's house until it was time for her to come home and go to bed and get ready for school the next morning.”

Kevin was also accustomed to having his own private time. Before coming to the hotel, he was “used to having ... time to... just go in my bedroom and just be by myself and,

you know, read or whatever I wanted to do. I had that space.” Now, at the hotel, he found his retreat on the hotel benches or “in the car listening to some music.” His wife was attuned to a different relaxation routine than the one available to her now. After returning home from work and cooking dinner, “she likes to go in her room and have time for herself and lay down, take a nap, what not.” However, at the hotel she relaxes by lying across the bed and watching television.

Although finding personal space and time inside their rooms was often a challenge for respondents, they did not have much trouble separating themselves from other guests at the hotel. Families were able to maintain their private lives from other transient guests. Just as the hotel differentiated long-term residents from short-term guests in terms of taxes, respondents also distinguished themselves along these same lines. This separation was apparent in the contact between guests at the hotel.

Participants were asked if they interacted with other guests, and they reported very little with guests overall. However, respondents were more likely to have had conversations with people who were long-term rather than short-term guests. Ashay differentiated herself from the short-term guests when she stated, “Some of the individuals here are long-term, like myself... and then there are some that passes in and passes out.” She does not interact much with the short-term guests because “those individuals just come and go one night.” Similarly, Mary was careful of these short-term guests with respect to the safety of her children at the hotel. She said, “The ones who are short-term are the ones who can cause harm, because they're in and out.” For her, short-term guests were potentially dangerous and noisy. There had been times when Mary called the front desk to report the noisy short-term guests so “they'll hush it up!”

Bobby does not try to interact with the short-term guests because he believed they would be uncomfortable talking with him. He recalled his own behavior before he was a long-term guest, stating, “I can read long faces. I can look at people sometimes, and I can, 'cause I know... I've had that look before.” Dell did not shy away from short-term guests, but typically only acknowledged them with a nice, polite greeting. However, with one long-term guest, he sometimes enjoyed a beer on Saturdays. Unlike Bobby and Dell, Kevin explained that the lack of interaction with short-term guests for him was only a matter of not seeing them as much as the long-term ones. “I don't know them or either I don't see them that much as I see the other guy that's long-term.”

Not only could most respondents distinguish the long-term guests from those who were short-term, they could also identify with other long-term guests. Bobby described the families living at the hotel as people who were “struggling financially... When you deal with these places, I noticed that the majority of people are families that have had problems or people that's, you know, are out without a place to stay in apartments or homes.” And, Bobby identified with the “financially poor.” He explained, “I've been these people. I am these people right now.” It also bothered him to see children of “these people” with clothes that did not appear clean. He said he would remember his situation and these people when he moved on and was doing better financially. Dee found that she could also “sense” the long-term residents by the way they talked with the front desk staff and also by the way they interacted with each other in areas of the hotel, like the laundry room where they chatted about their children. Dee’s “sense” of knowing the long-term guests went beyond the frequency of just seeing the guests, but more to her experience in extended-stay hotels:

I just sense, maybe 'cause I've lived in these places I can sense who's maybe long-term or short-term, especially if I see them all the time. And even not seeing them all the time I just felt like this lady had been here for a minute.

Along with the awareness of differences between long-term and short-term guests comes a realization that there are others who can “pass in and out.” Knowledge of this ability of the short-term guests to leave is a reminder for those who are long-term that they cannot not just as easily do the same. In effect, these long-term guests become the marginalized group – the “these people” or “financially poor” as Bobby pointed out.

In summary, the hotel environment affected social interactions. During their tenure at the hotel, respondents found respect and friendships with hotel staff members. In addition, respondents found comfort in spending time in their rooms watching television alone or with other family members. Adults entertained children to keep them busy and to avoid disturbing other guests. However, inside the respondents' rooms, they felt they were often unable to find privacy for themselves or for intimacy with partners. Although they were able to regulate interaction with other hotel guests, they also became aware of differences between those who were there long-term and those who stayed short-term. Being a long-term, extended-stay hotel guest meant you were a little different from short-term guests because they pass in and out of the hotel and the long-term guests remain.

Strategies to Shape Environment

Given the physical, psychological, and social limitations of the space described in the previous sections, respondents used creative strategies to shape their home environment to meet their family needs. The strategies used were adapting behavior to meet conditions of the setting and adjusting their surroundings to meet personal and family needs.

Adapt Behavior

There were many instances when the environment shaped the behavior of the residents. Due to physical characteristics, such as the size of the room and the availability of appliances, respondents found that they had to change their behavior to compensate for the restrictive physical space and home environment. Residents also had to create and protect private spaces to avoid conflict with other members of the household.

The most prevalent accommodation was the change in food shopping and storage, family dining, and cooking routines of the respondents. The limited space in the kitchen and refrigerator made it necessary for most respondents to shop more practically. They had to purchase smaller amounts of food to fit into the available cabinet, refrigerator, and freezer. Dee was well aware of the need to buy in smaller amounts. She commented, “You can’t buy a whole lot of groceries at one time.” Jennifer’s family shopped twice a week “because we don’t have much room to work with, so we have to keep going back and buying the meats.” Like Jennifer, Kevin also shopped often. He and his wife, “probably go to the store something like every two days...every two or three days because the refrigerator isn’t but so big.” Barbara Ann also felt restricted in her grocery buying. She reported, “Now, the canned goods is not problem, but when it gets down to buyin’ the frozen food, you just can’t buy nothin’ hardly ‘cause there’s no room.” The same was true for Dell who commented:

Well, I gotta small refrigerator, so I don’t buy a lot of that. Barely got a freezer. It is ... a little half refrigerator.” The freezer compartment is only about that big [using his hands to indicate that the freezer was as narrow as the depth of a shoebox], so can’t buy a lot of frozen foods.”

When purchased food cannot fit in the available space, respondents reported a change in meal preparation practices. Harley experienced this change after her husband went grocery shopping. When the frozen pizzas thawed because of the restriction of space in the freezer, she reported:

We ate them anyway. We just pop them in the stove two days later and ate those up first. ...oh my God, this is so funny. We were cooking left and right. Every night we was having big meals, you know, and normally we don't have them every night, just most nights, you know... So we're eating sloppy Joes, fried hamburgers. We're eating meat loaves. It was hilarious!

Like Harley, Mary also knew the trouble of over-buying grocery for the available space. She altered her grocery shopping behavior because, "I don't have enough freezer space, I will only buy enough meats for like three or four days... because I don't want it to turn bad. I was buying like a week's worth and it was -- some of the meat would go bad."

In fact, the freezer was so small that even buying ice cream was a problem. The available freezer space limited residents from purchasing ice cream because they were aware that storing the ice cream would pose a problem. Jennifer was disappointed that she missed a sale on ice cream. "We were like, oh, my gosh, if we had enough space in the freezer, we would have been able to buy the ice cream." Worse still, her son really wanted the ice cream. "It was on sale and he was just begging...he was craving it, but we didn't have room in the freezer to get it." Dee also pointed out this difficulty when she stated, "I can't buy ice cream 'cause it's too small... Not ice cream." Mary also did not buy ice cream because "You can't. The freezer's so small." Instead, Mary went to Baskin Robbins even though it was more expensive. She reported, "Oh yeah. It's more expensive, because I can buy a

gallon for \$2.50 and I spent \$7.00.” Like Mary, Dell also bought ice cream from nearby shops for his girlfriend despite the expense. He recalled:

She sent me out the other night... went to Baskin Robbins. It was \$5.86 for a banana split. Now, we bought two yesterday at Sonic for \$1, but they were little baby banana splits. That one at Baskin Robbins was awesome. It was a good banana split.

The ice cream finding was an interesting one because I also found the same experience during my observation at the hotel. The best way to describe the storing of groceries at the hotel is “interesting,” as the following observation data from Day 2 of my stay captured:

After unloading the groceries from my car, I worried if everything would fit in the kitchenette space... I dropped the bags on the kitchenette floor and searched for the ice cream to quickly place in the freezer. When I opened the refrigerator, water dripped from the frosted freezer underside to the bottom of the refrigerator... I reached under the frost and pulled on the tray that I guess is supposed to catch the freezer drippings. When I pulled on the tray, water splashed to the bottom of the refrigerator. I reached up the counter, grabbed the ice cream box and slid it into the middle of the overfrosted freezer. [On Day Three] After my meal, I decided to have a fudge ice cream bar, but was terribly disappointed when I pulled the melted ice cream bars from the box.

My disappointment during this experience at the hotel was punctuated when Dee later confirmed during her interview, “And to me when you don’t keep the ice cream frozen it’s not a good freezer. I mean it’ll freeze stuff, keep it frozen if you put it in there but the ice

cream gets soft.” However, despite the failed fudge ice cream experience, I was determined to have ice cream on Day 5, as the following passage from my field notes reveals:

After tennis practice, I desperately wanted some ice-cream. I remembered how the fudge ice cream bars melted in the hotel freezer and knew I could not buy a large container of ice cream because it would not fit inside the freezer. And even if it could, it would melt. So, I stopped by the neighborhood Publix supermarket to buy a small container of ice-cream. I’d hoped I could find an individual bar or cup of ice cream that was also sugar-free with few calories... After about 10 minutes, I decided on Edy’s Mocha Almond ice cream, which sounded very appetizing. However, there was not a small container; only a medium-sized tubular shaped container for \$4.49. I told myself that it was likely that most of the ice cream would melt and be wasted. So, I convinced myself that I would keep the ice cream frozen by filling the kitchenette sink with ice from the ice machine to keep the ice cream frozen... [Later, after collecting the ice from the ice machine...] After eating about 1/10th of the carton of ice cream, I...placed it into the sink full of ice. However, the ice only covered the very bottom of the carton, so I decided to put the ice cream carton into the ice bucket and surrounded [the ice cream carton] with ice... I sat the ice bucket lid on top of the ice cream. This should keep the ice cream cold.

Unfortunately, the next morning the ice cream had melted into a foamy froth in the bucket so I threw it away. In his interview, Bobby expressed his understanding of this same situation. He commented about buying ice cream and other frozen perishables:

I don't buy 'em. Like my daughter likes ice cream and stuff like that and those items. If I buy it, she has to eat it right there on the spot because, if not, wake up and it will

be drippin' down the refrigerator in the morning. So, I've learned that first hand.

There's only certain things... We have to limit ourselves as to what we can eat.

Another consideration in the storage of grocery were items that did not require refrigeration or freezing. Although Dell found the cabinet space, "adequate cabinet space for what I want to get," many respondents, including Dell, reported using the small dining table as an area where they store grocery or other items. He described the "little square table" as a place he used to store "a bunch of food." This area was also storage space for Kevin and Doris who found a need for more cabinet storage. He reported, "I use the table, what's in like the kitchen area to put my canned goods on sometimes and my bread and stuff like that." And since Mary's cabinets and counter area were full, she also used the table for food storage. Jennifer's family used the table for various functions due to space limitations.

When asked how she used her dining area, she responded:

For all the junk. No, that's where we put everything... on the table, usually when I cook I do the dishes so I put them, you know, I lay a towel out and put them on there to dry. So, we don't use that area except for coffeepots and toaster oven and dishes.

Use of the table space, then, required some of the respondents to find other places to eat.

Bobby described usage of his dining table for other than dining in this comment:

It's just basically storage, like the table we use in there, it's just for storage. We keep like snacks and chips and things, and my daughter can have access without having to get into the cabinets or whatever, so I pretty much lined up just... with things that she might like to eat, you know, she can go get it herself, and we use it for the coffee maker, but that's pretty much it. We never have [sat] down or ate at that table.

Ashay and her husband use the table space differently, as well. Regarding the table, she stated, “well actually that little space, I put my computer on. So I really don't have a dinette area.” Instead, they had found a different way of dining. She reports, “We hold our plates. We sit in the... what is it called? I guess, the front room area... and eat like that... hold your plate.” Mary’s family found a dining solution that was also common among other respondents. She described, “Oh, we don't have no room on our table, so we just eat... like on the couch or on the bed, because we don't have no room on [the table].” Like Mary, Jessica’s family ate “on the couch or the bed.” Bobby’s family also ate on the bed, and Dell reported, “I sit in bed and eat.” The same was true for Barbara Anne’s family who did not eat at the table, but would “either sit on the bed or sit in the chairs and eat our food.” And just like the others, Harley also reported, “there’s enough room for two people to eat there, but we never eat at that table anyway because there’s three of us, there’s two chairs... and we always just sit on the bed anyway, and we eat our dinner.” Jennifer felt it was important to eat together at the table, but also found the space and available chairs did not allow it. Her comment below illustrates how the family made the best use of available space:

Well, um, like I said before ...there's a small table. OK? ...only my two kids can sit because there is only two chairs there. So, I have my little ones sit there and then what we do is we all... like there is a sofa, so, like, my husband will sit there, I will sit there, and my daughter...my other daughter sits on the bed that's on the floor...that we sat on the floor. So, we all sit there and we watch...we, um, eat and watch TV together, you know, stuff like that.

A couple of respondents found a positive function of the small dining space at the hotel. Jennifer, for one, noted more time spent with her family members. She stated, “When

it's dinner time, you know, we are able to eat together at the same time and still, you know, laugh at whatever's on TV or just talk about what we did." In general, Jennifer believed the "cozy" confines of the room brought her family closer than when they were in the other home and everyone "went to their own rooms, and you know, when it was time to have dinner, then that's when we saw each other." The space restrictions also provided opportunities for Harley to have a closer social relationship with her stepdaughter. This was clear in her comment about the change in interactions based on the lack of space: "because we didn't have a whole lot, so we ... had more time to spend with one another and Taylor couldn't go to her room and be away... We've gotten closer in this little area right here."

Residents also had to alter cooking routines because of the limitation of a small stove and having no oven. For Kevin, this inconvenience was the main problem with staying at the hotel. He commented, "It's difficult to deal with, uh, not being able to cook a big meal really and have oven access too when you're used to cooking and using your oven. "Bobby enjoys cooking and was thankful that the hotel had the cook-top stove. He found that he was still able to prepare meals that his family enjoyed. However, there were times when he felt limited. About preparing meals, he commented:

We eat a lot of vegetables. We like asparagus and brussel sprouts and that kind of thing like that, so I cook a lot of that kind of stuff. We eat a lot of chicken. We eat a lot of hamburger meat. We eat a lot of burgers. You know, just stuff, that's usually our routine, we fix burgers or chicken or just, I really don't get into a whole lot of things that I really like to cook because I don't have the space for it and I don't have, you know, you got two eyes there and you havin' to rotate, so it kind of limits what I can make but it's good.

Jessica also found the two eye burners inconvenient at times. In particular, having to cook one piece of meat at a time on the stove was a challenge. She complained, “here either you have two sides that you can use and ... cooking is like different ‘cause you got to think about, okay, how can I cook this?” It was clear from her comments that she wondered if this was a problem she experienced alone when she stated, “I can’t get used to cooking on these stoves though, ‘cause they’re different and, like, I either burn it... Yeah, it’s crazy. I don’t know what it is. I guess they’re normal stoves but it’s just me.” But, she was not alone. Barbara Anne expressed the same difficulty in her comments about cooking at the hotel, when she pointed out:

The cooking, it's, um...the cookin' is not like it was at home because you don't have that stove. You know, you got the two eyes but you got to cook two pots at a time and...like, we like the cornbread which you don't have an oven to do your bakin' in...to do your cornbread, so you have to cook the cornbread on top of the stove.

Dee also preferred baking food. Her food preparation options at the hotel, which also included using a microwave, were disappointing for her. In the statement that follows, it is clear that Dee had modified her food preparation routine:

There’s no way to bake or, you know, I don’t...I’m not a microwave person. I don’t like cooking food all the time in the microwave ‘cause I think it dries it out. So basically I’ve done, you know, like rice and, you know, um, like stir-fry type stuff or just do microwave meals like Healthy Choice and stuff like that.

Although the cooking options were limited and the kitchenette area was small, Ashay stated that she and her husband made the best of the situation. She mentioned, “it is a very

small area to work in especially when you are cooking like collard greens and stuff like that. But we manage, we manage.”

The experience of cooking at the hotel on the two stove burners was also difficult for me, as reported in Day 3 field notes:

After washing the pan, I placed it on the burner, turned on the cook top knob to “medium” and washed the steak in the sink. I placed the small steak in the pan and applied some seasonings... Within a few minutes, I realized I didn’t hear the meat cooking. I picked up the pan and waved my hand over the burner. I couldn’t feel any heat so I gently and quickly touched my hand to the burner. It was stone cold. I fiddled with the cooktop knob, turning it off and on from low to high. The little orange “On” indicator between the two knobs was on, but the electric burner did not heat. Determined, I turned the knob for the smaller back burner and waited a few seconds for it to get warm. I could feel the warmth so I switched the pan from the front to the back burner. In the cheap pan, the steak began to sizzle and the water from the steak dissipated. The steak started sticking to the bottom of the pan and didn’t make its own oil. As the steak began to burn, I reached up to the left-side cabinet, opened it and pulled out [a] clear glass, put water from the faucet in it and pour[ed] a little in the pan that was burning up my steak. As the water went in, a cloud of steam rose and the brown liquid in the pot bubbled. I turned over the steak and watched it boil in the water. At that moment, I really missed not having a broiler, which is how I usually cook steak... After I finished cooking the steak, I cut it up in bite-sized pieces and put it on one of the white plates from the cabinet. I tasted a

piece and it was bland, but edible. I didn't feel like waiting for green beans to cook because my meat would get cold, so I decided on fresh fruit salad instead.

For the duration of my stay at the hotel, I either ate food that did not require cooking or ate out at nearby restaurants. Kevin reported that he and Doris also ate out often due to cooking difficultly in the room. In his statement, Kevin attributed some of the trouble to the room characteristics:

because my wife said by it being so small it just doesn't, you know, it...the scent doesn't evaporate out the room so good, and it's just not good to be trying to make a whole full-course meal everyday in the room like that. So, we, of course, eat out quite a bit.

Along with changing shopping, dining, and cooking habits, another consideration for guests at the hotel was creating and keeping personal spaces protected. To do this, they had to respect the spaces designated for others in the family. The small room space made it necessary for identification and recognition of boundaries between people's "sides" or "areas" of the room. These boundary identifications were typically made to separate couples and their children. Parents created visible and invisible boundaries for children to have their own spaces and child-appropriate activities. For example, in Bobby's household, the room was divided into areas where each family member kept personal items and spent time. Bobby spent much of his time in the kitchen area because he liked cooking. And, other spaces were designated for family members, like in "the dining area, where I told you we pretty much line up [Brandi's] stuff." Also, his son Benjamin's things were kept in an area on "the opposite side of where [his Brandi's] stuff is on the other side of there." That area was "Benjamin's... some of his little toys and things. He spends a lot of his time over there

in that little space there playing with that stuff. So, this is kind of his area.” According to Bobby, “we've moved stuff around to kind of accommodate each need.”

Identification of children's space was common. In Jennifer's home, the delegation of personal spaces was clear from her description of places in the room:

I make sure [the children] have their own little separate space and then this here, where the sofa... My husband has a table right in front of the sofa. It's... one of those folding tables... he keeps his computer there, and... he does, you know, he works. He does some work there and stuff like that's so that's his little area... That's [dining space] my kids area. This [kitchen space] is my area also, you know, with the cooking, and this [TV space] is our...my daughter, my teenage daughter uses this area more because she likes to watch her videos and, you know, and stuff like that. So, everyone has a little corner.

This same preservation of space was created more visually in Harley's home where personal boundaries were created by hanging sheets from the ceiling to separate the space of the 16-year-old stepdaughter and the married couple. According to Harley, “we took sheets and my old sheets that they had here to divide the room... So, I took those and I just put a seam in it, and I hung them, and we pull them back in the daytime.”

Mary also described her son's space at the dining table as the place “when you first come through the door.” This is where he played with Yugio cards, completed his homework, and stored “all his little gadgets [to] just do his little thing. You know, this is his space. So, it's like his own little room.” And when his father tried to come into his space he said, “Uh uh, dad, this is my space.”

Jessica also reported parental invasions of space. Since she and her boyfriend lived with her boyfriend's mother, they were actually adult children in the household and boundaries were created there between the couple and their roommates. Jessica and her boyfriend's side was the one with the sleeper sofa. To separate the couple's space from their roommates' space, "there's a wall, like, that comes almost to the end of the bed." Jessica found this wall convenient because they did not have such a separation in other hotels they had stayed in before. She explained:

It's better than any other place I've ever -- any other motel I've ever been at 'cause usually they don't have the wall and, you know, it's -- the beds are right next to each other. And sometimes you just don't want to look at, you know, sometimes you just don't want to look at... Sometimes we'll hang a sheet, like, from right here to here so that, you know, to block them out.

However, Jessica complained that usually her roommates violated the space boundaries. For example, her boyfriend's mother would sometimes lie across her bed. Jessica complained, "Well, his mom's always on our side anyway. She doesn't really, uh, mind the sheet or, you know, whatever's hanging." Her roommates would also eat her groceries. So, the couple often hid their food items under their bed to discourage the roommates "'cause they don't keep food." Annoyed, Jessica reported:

Because then they eat all of it. We bought five bags of chips. They were five for a dollar. We bought five of them. I had five chips out of them and they were gone. I was like, "What in the world? There's something wrong here." So yeah, we have to hide our stuff, our drinks.

Adjust Space

There were changes made to the environment by the inhabitants to increase functionality, as well as, personalize the space and decorate for interactions with others. To increase comfort, many respondents brought in personal items to enhance living at the hotel. These additions took many forms and supported former cooking traditions, as well as, maximized space usage. Residents also decorated the space with objects that reflected personal likes/dislikes and feelings about people in their lives.

Adding items to improve functionality was important for guests to strengthen the atmosphere of home at the hotel. Space restrictions, storage limitations, and cooking difficulties created a need for residents to add items to make living at the hotel a bit easier. For example, Ashay found the closet space so lacking that she brought in her own clothes rack. She stated, “You can actually barely put your clothes into the closet. It is just very limited for a long-term resident, so I end up bringing in like extra racks.” Barbara Anne found the same problem with the closet so her family’s solution was bringing in boxes to store their clothes. However, she was not happy with this arrangement. She described the difficulty with this solution when she commented:

Pretty, pretty rough because we have to live out of, uh... those boxes... those big containers for clothes and that's like, every day, you gotta get up and you gotta tear up the clothes in order to find what you want and fold them back up, put them back in there, you know. That's a everyday thing, and if you don't do it the night before, you gotta do it the next morning.

Even though the situation was not ideal, it did give the family more storage space for clothes. Jennifer did the best she could with clothes storage, too. She hung her husband’s

clothes in the closet, but she used suitcases for storing her children's clothes. Pointing to her room sketch¹⁶, she explained, "on this side here, there's another suitcase against the wall and that's where their clothes are." Like Jennifer, Mary also used suitcases and garment bags, which sat on the floor in the closet to store some of her family's clothes.

A couple of residents also brought in items to help with storing food in the room given the refrigerator and freezer limitations. Ashay and her husband brought in another small freezer. She did not know "how other people are managing" but when she came to the hotel, she asked permission to bring in a little freezer and was given the opportunity. The freezer was "kept right in front of the sink area. It is very small. It is not a large freezer." This was necessary for Ashay because she liked freezing gravies and leftovers. She found it very useful. Like Ashay, Harley also brought a refrigerating solution to the hotel: "We have a cooler that we keep a big tea pitcher [in], because I'm a big tea drinker. I'm serious. I am not a nice person without a glass of ice tea." Harley also stored perishable grocery items in her cooler to keep them fresh.

Other additions to the space were specific to cooking and food preparation. Dell enjoyed cooking. In particular, he liked grilling, so he brought in a George Foreman grill and a toaster oven because he did not have an oven and considered himself "kinda like the little miniature Iron Chef. I watch the cooking show two or three hours of the day." Bobby also brought in a toaster oven. He described the benefit of having the toaster oven in his comment:

I bought that at Wal-Mart, which... that was blessing because we were confined to where we couldn't... certain things we couldn't eat because, you know, you have a

¹⁶ At the beginning of the interview, respondents were asked to draw a sketch of their room to help them visualize the space as they described its characteristics.

desire for some things that you usually fix in the oven or, you know, little things but, yeah, I bought that little oven at Wal-Mart, and it makes life easier.

Missing the oven was a common complaint. Harley brought in a rotisserie oven because of the absence of the conventional oven. She found the rotisserie helpful because, "I'm a baker and my husband is a meat and potato [person], but my daughter and I are bread eater[s]. Okay, we can't eat a meal without, like, biscuits or cornbread, you know. So we got the oven." Jessica reported that she used the hotel's microwave for preparing side dishes, but for cooking meat, she used the toaster oven they brought in.

Guests also added entertainment items. Barbara Anne bought a DVD/VCR and attached it to the hotel television for her grandsons to play games on. Mary hung a basketball hoop in the doorway of her room so her son could play basketball with her grandson. In addition, several residents reported bringing in an extra television to the room to allow for different program viewing.

Respondents also wanted to be comfortable in their hotel home, so they added items that helped in this regard. Personalizing the space in this manner was important for respondents. For example, Jennifer put photographs all around her room to keep family members "always close" since her extended family is geographically far away, in another state. She commented, "since, like, they can't be with me right now, they...the pictures are, like, the closest that...that I can feel them, you know. So, if I can just see pictures around." Ashay did the same. It was important for her to add family photos to her space as well. She explained:

Oh, yes. We have our... we have a couple of photos, because basically all of our things are packed away in storage, but I did bring a family photo with all of the

children and him and we're all dressed in African attire and I have, when I went to a mini-vacation, sort of like to a place that looks like Israel, you know... in Florida, but it's real nice and they just remind me of not being so encased into an apartment when I look at it.

Harley also hung pictures in her room to make it feel homier. However, although Dee normally would add photos to her space, she had not done so because she expected her stay at the hotel to be temporary.

In addition to hanging photographs, respondents decorated the space with items that were important to them. For example, Ashay posted her “dream” on the wall to remind her, continuously, of her goals. To personalize the furniture, she threw Kente¹⁷ cloth over her sofa to represent how she described herself. The cloth was special to Ashay because “it illustrates the beauty of Africa that's found in the colors and the combinations of the cloth.”

Plush toys were important to Dell and Jessica. Dell kept a stuffed animal in his room that reminded him of his brother. Jessica's bear hanging upside down on her wall on a hook represented a relationship she had with a previous pet. Proudly, she told the story of her pet:

Me and Josh had a little all white, blue-eyed kitty and we raised it, and I was the only one that could bottle feed it, 'cause we had to bottle feed it. And then when it was done -- when it said, I'm ready to stop bottle-feeding, it tore up all the little nipples on the bottles. That's how we found out. We came home... all the bottles were laying there with all the little things off of it. I was like, okay, we get it. So that's just the little -- the little, uh, Kayla, that's the name, Kayla, 'cause it's supposed to be a little Kayla.

¹⁷ An patterned fabric of African tradition

For Dee, plants and candles were most important in making any place feel like home. They have “been traveling with me. They’re my babies.” She went on to add that you cannot bring too many personal things in because the space is too small. However, it was important for her to “bring a little bit of myself ... [and] if I had an apartment or a normal living environment, that’s something ... I’ve always included in the past. I’ve had plants.”

Harley has also brought her personality in the space. She placed lighthouses around her room to cheer her up about living at the hotel because she loved them. She also changed the bedding in the room to comforters that reflected her stepdaughter’s favorite colors so that the teen could feel more comfortable in her own space. Adding these personal items made the space more acceptable for her stepdaughter. She explained about her stepdaughter:

she even got a little depressed because she wasn’t getting sleep and stuff, but once we put her bed in there and her spread, and her sheets, and her little, uh, you know, her comforter and her blanket, then, you know, she started being like, okay, this ain’t so bad.

Decorating to celebrate special occasions was also important for some respondents. Ashay decorated a section of the lounging area for weekly religious ceremonies with her husband. She and her husband used the room’s ottoman, “that’s usually to rest a foot on,” to display many of the religious artifacts that are used during weekly worship. These items included candles, a canister, and a man’s prayer shawl. Religious worship inside the home was important to Ashay and was consistent with her beliefs about historical methods of worship in “home synagogues” in times past. Calmly, she orated, “And that’s the way it has been done in the past history. You did not have to go to the synagogues or to a building... You worship God within your home setting.”

Another religious event, Christmas, was also celebrated in the homes of a couple of respondents. Dee decorated her room with Christmas decorations for her grandson who came to visit at Grandma's home. She recalled:

It's my home to him, too, so he was the one that inspired me. He was, like, "Grandma, where's your Christmas tree?" And... and I had a lighted, uh, snowman that flashed on and off in the window so I made it real Christmassy. And then for Valentine's Day I had a heart on the refrigerator.

Like Dee, Harley also decorated for these holidays. For Taylor, "We painted our window. We took... and put Merry Christmas, and drew a wreath, you know, and that brightened Taylor's day." According to Harley, Taylor really enjoyed the decorations and was ready to spruce up the place for Valentine's Day which also pleased Harley. She was very emotional as she recalled her step-daughter's behavior:

she's, like, when Christmas was over she was ready to take the little lights out and take the wreath off, you know, and then we were going to paint the window with a heart 'cause Valentine's was coming. But that makes her... whatever makes her smile in a day makes me smile in a day.

Bobby's wife decorated the space for birthday celebrations for Brandi. He recalled, "My daughter spent her birthday in there, so, you know, we had a little party just for us and, you know, she decorated for my daughter up there." However, Bobby conceded that he could have decorated the space more to make it feel "homey" for Brandi, but chose not to do so. Sadly, he commented:

We could have, even to make Bobbie more comfortable, we could have made it feel more like a home atmosphere to her. So, I'm not saying that it's right that we haven't

done that, but it's just us. As parents, we feel that it's... we...we want to make it as temporary as possible, even though we have been here for a while.

In summary, respondents employed strategies to shape their hotel rooms into homes. To deal with the confines of space, they adapted their behavior from previous routines of interacting in other housing situations to new behaviors to fit in the hotel space. In addition, to preserve personal spaces, residents created invisible and visible boundaries with implicit and explicit agreements to maintain these boundaries. Moreover, respondents made changes to the environment where they could be made. They added functional necessities to enhance living in their hotel room. They also personalized the spaces with favorite items and decorated with trimmings when celebrating important events. It was through these strategies that home at the extended-stay hotel was created.

Chapter Summary

Residents described home at the hotel as a “home for now” and an “in-between place.” The characteristics of the hotel were very different from the homes respondents had lived in before and were different from the types of homes they hoped to live in after leaving the hotel. All wanted to leave the hotel as soon as things were put in place, but until that happened, they resolved to wait.

While waiting, respondents experienced physical, psychological, and social aspects of the extended-stay hotel that made living there feel more or less like a home. One of the physical aspects that contributed to the feeling of home was the convenient location of the hotel. The location allowed respondents to easily shop, work, and spend leisure time walking in the area. Residents also felt the hotel management made needed resources readily available for their use. And overall, respondents felt that given the cost of other housing

options, the reasonable rates that the hotel offered made living there the most practical solution, especially with the perk of having all the bills rolled into one. The residents found the small, confining room space and expensive laundry facility a down side to the physical characteristics of the hotel.

Psychologically, residents felt safe at the hotel. They also liked that staying at the hotel allowed a sense of stability while remaining independent from other relatives and friends, since imposition on these groups was a concern. However, respondents also expressed feeling guilty that they could not change their housing situation. Some even experienced depression and shame about their living condition. These feelings affected social relationships with coworkers and friends.

In addition, living at the hotel affected social interactions between household members and other guests at the hotel. Specifically, participants reported difficulty finding private time for themselves and for intimacy with partners. Also, interactions with short-term hotel guests were limited. However, despite these situations, respondents were still able to enjoy leisure time in the hotel interacting with family members and finding favorite exterior spaces to rest and rejuvenate. Along with finding favorite private places, respondents also really enjoyed spending time with hotel staff lounging and talking. They developed friendships with staff members who were considered respectful and genuine.

Despite the above-stated limitations of the hotel as home, respondents coped with the temporary housing solution by adapting their own behaviors to the physical spaces. In particular, respondents shifted their shopping, cooking, and storage behaviors to practices that were more suitable in order to fit within the confines of the space. In addition, they created necessary personal boundaries to preserve functional spaces for each family member

inside the hotel room. Finally, respondents reported adjusting the hotel space to make it feel more like home. These activities included adding accessories, decorating with personal items, and garnishing the home space for celebratory events with family members.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand the relationships between residents and their extended-stay hotel dwelling through descriptions of home. The research questions guiding the inquiry were: (1) how did respondents describe the hotel dwelling as home? (2) What aspects of the extended-stay hotel contributed to or detracted from achieving a sense of home? And, (3) what strategies did these residents use to shape their environment to meet the physical, psychological, and social atmosphere of a home?

To begin this inquiry, this researcher checked into an extended-stay hotel room over six days and five nights to collect detailed field notes of interactions in several areas of the setting. Following this initial phase, ten adult residents of the hotel, seven females and three males, were recruited with flyers, along with snowball and key informant sampling methods for participation in the study. These participants engaged in interviews lasting between 52 to 120 minutes. Study respondents also identified and photographed various characteristics at the hotel (i.e., staff members, outdoor landscaping, and kitchenettes) that made the place feel like home.

The findings revealed that the extended stay hotel was a “home for now” and an “in-between place,” and in all instances different from remembered past homes and hopeful future homes. In addition, residents identified physical, psychological, and social aspects that affected the place, which are those special attributes that contributed to making a feeling

“like home.” These attributes included residing in a convenient location, having useful facility resources (cleanliness, aesthetics, accommodating and friendly staff, and availability of TV, internet, and kitchenettes), paying reasonable rental rates, feeling safe and secure, remaining an independent household, interacting with other guests, and enjoying staff friendships. There were also negative aspects identified that impeded the hotel space from feeling like home. In particular, small and confining rooms, inadequate appliances, limited storage space, and an expensive laundry facility made life at the hotel difficult for some participants. Feeling guilt, depression, and embarrassment for not being able to leave the hotel was also reported by these residents, as well as the inability to find private spaces for personal and couple intimacy, with significant others or for being alone. Finally, this study’s findings also revealed that residents either adapted their behavior to fit into the dwelling or adjusted the environment by personalizing their rooms to meet specific family needs. This chapter presents the conclusions of this study based on the aforementioned research findings. Following this presentation is a discussion of the conclusions as they relate to available and extant literature. Finally, implications for theory and practice and recommendations for further research will be highlighted.

Conclusions and Discussion

Three conclusions were drawn from this study: (1) The extended-stay hotel is considered a temporary accommodation and not an ideal long-term home; (2) There are multiple aspects that affect a sense of “home” at the extended-stay hotel; and, (3) Coping with the extended-stay hotel as home entails adapting or making adjustments to the person-environment relationship.

Conclusion One: Temporary Accommodation, Not an Ideal Long-Term Home

In this study, respondents perceived the hotel home as a short-term solution while preparing for a move to more acceptable housing options. They did not always perceive home at the hotel as a negative situation, but it was consistently understood as a temporary housing experience. All of the respondents chose the extended stay hotel after losing their previous home, making the hotel a necessary and only residence. However, each respondent had the desire to move on to other types of housing, but could not at the time. Most hoped to have homes that were large, single-family, that they owned, but recognized the reality that renting was probably the first step in leaving the hotel. This balancing of the ideal and the practical by respondents was also conveyed in Israel's (2003) comment about the process of planning to move: "The first step... is to think and dream about what this next place will be like. We think about our most basic housing needs. We dream about our ideal home. We then try to balance fantasy and reality." For respondents, apartments and townhouses were considered adequate, but not as desirable as owning a large home. However, before moving on to an apartment or closer to these dream houses respondents had to wait in what they considered a place one "passes through."

Along with describing their hotel room as "secluded," "crowded," and "closed in," they also reported that it was a "confining" space. The idea of a lengthy stay in this "box" was troubling for those who had been in the hotel longer than expected and they described feeling trapped. This was apparent in Ashay's outcry for needing to leave when she exclaimed, "because it feels... like I am trapped, yeah. I feel like I am trapped in this place because of what I've gone through and it seems as though I can't get out of this situation." This strong desire to leave the hotel was also conveyed by an author, Aggie Max (1997), in a

description of her experience living at a transient hotel in Oakland, California. Reflecting in her journal, she wrote:

I don't want to live in this place. It's dirty, depressing, dangerous, and much too expensive. It stinks of despair and desperation. It's a lesson in demoralization. But you are desperate. You are lucky to be able to afford this place. The room is actually not so bad, as rooms go: it has a door that locks, a window that can be opened, running water. Actually you're lucky to have this room. But it's a trap. Anywhere can be a trap. I have no money. Money is a trap. I can't go anywhere. Where do you want to go? I don't know. (pp. 16-17)

One who is trapped feels confined and restricted. Since the residents were all waiting on something to happen that was out of their control, they reported being unable to get out of their situations. Often this inability to leave led to feelings of frustration, worry, and even anger. Max (1997) described this mental anguish when she noted:

The animal trapped by the foot will chew off the foot to escape. What about the one who is trapped by the mind? The mind in a trap can't create, it can only stumble around trying to find a way out. And on freeing oneself from one trap, one may find oneself in another, larger trap. Freedom is relative. The bars of the cage may become harder to define. May [even] become impossible to define (p. 32).

Becoming free from the trap for respondents of this study meant, "making it" to a point of owning a single-family detached home. Along the way, they found an apartment or townhouse to be an appropriate next step. However, it was the inability to "progress" to the next step, which frustrated and depressed respondents. Along with feeling trapped, they felt stagnated, like Ashay, who expressed deep despondence about having to remain at the hotel.

Bobby and Kevin, along with Harley's husband, felt like personal failures because they could not move out into their own homes. Maintaining hotel rental payments and making "home" at the hotel was not considered progress for these respondents. These husbands did not feel proud of being able to keep their families off the streets during a time when other housing was unavailable. Instead, they felt pressure to provide better housing.

Bobby, in particular, offered several reasons why his family staying at the hotel should not be attributed to his personal being, but still concluded that he felt bad about not being able to get his family out of the situation. When asked if loan defaults had been a hindrance in getting other housing, he responded, "I mean, I've explained to people, you know, and told [them], it's just circumstances that were beyond my control." He went on to explain that he has a stable work history without any criminal convictions, but still feels "especially responsible... it's my responsibility to lead us out of here and... to get us to, you know, stability." Like other respondents, Bobby's idea of "stability" is really a single-family dwelling, the "dream home" of American society. However, as Stone (1993) pointed out in his discussion of shelter poverty, owning a home comes with a new set of responsibilities along with the typical concerns and pressures of financially maintaining a mortgage. These worries include mortgage insurance, property maintenance, and a host of other hidden fees and regulations that come with being a homeowner, perhaps the larger "traps" (Max, 1997, p. 32) alluded to regarding relative freedom. These responsibilities are often not considered by families seeking to own homes, even when budgets are already stretched without these additional expenses. All of the respondents of this study earned less than \$32,000 annually. They also paid over 30% of their income for rent (see Table 4), except Jessica whose roommate paid the rental fee in exchange for her boyfriend working for his company. This

strained income/expenses ratio is sure to affect these families' ability to afford the extras (cable, telephone, hobbies), as well as the necessities (gas/electric service, health insurance, food, medicine, clothing) of daily life for a family.

Like Bobby, Harley's husband also seemed to perceive that home-owning is a symbol of being a successful family provider. Harley explained that her husband is a "hard worker" and "not a lazy person," but does not like calling the hotel a home because "I think he--he's like any man. He wants to come home and look, there's a house, there's an apartment, you know. I provide for my family." Ashay reported that living at the hotel had also been stressful for her husband who felt pressure to progress. Concern for her husband was evident when she stated:

Since he has been here, he's just been... I think it has taken a toll on him. I think it has taken a toll out on him because he's not really interested in too much of anything other than trying to get up the next day and make it.

Getting out of the hotel was "making it." Interestingly, although there were characteristics of the hotel that were described as appealing and helpful (i.e., not paying for cable, gas/electric, garbage pickup, application fee, or security deposit) while limited in housing options, the overarching desire to progress toward a "dream home" precluded any hope of accepting the hotel environment as a long-term housing option.

Another concern with the hotel long-term, was that it did not fit with the types of homes they knew from their pasts or the houses they want to have someday. Hence, personal and socio-cultural housing histories influenced residents' perceptions of the hotel home as an "in-between." Personal housing histories included homes in apartments, townhouses and single-family detached dwellings. This idea is supported by author, Winnifred Gallagher's

Table 4

Respondent Monthly Fee and Income Comparison

Resident	Work Type	Race	Number of Beds	Monthly Rental Fee	Monthly Household Income	% of Income	Months at Hotel
1) Ashay	Licensed Nurse/unemp	AA	1	\$1,000	\$2,583	39%	12
2) Dell	Carpenter	CA	1	\$880	\$2,500	35%	4
3) Bobby	Irrigation Installer	AA	1	\$1000	\$1,500	67%	4
4) Barbara Ann	Student	AA	2	\$1052	\$935	113%	1
5) Dee	Preschool Teacher	AA	2	\$836	\$1,000	84%	1
6) Jennifer	Homemaker	LA	2	\$1120	\$1,000	112%	1
7) Kevin	Warehouse Worker	AA	1	\$936	\$1,833	51%	6
8) Jessica	Homemaker	CA	2	\$960	\$2,083	46%	2
9) Harley	Homemaker	CA	1	\$896	\$1,833	49%	6
10) Mary	Auditor	AA	1	\$1080	\$2,667	40%	1

(2006) guidance on what one should think when considering an appropriate home. She stated, “Good house thinking means considering not only our evolutionary legacy and personal requirements but also the influence of our culture” (p. 14). Socio-cultural preferences have shifted over time, and single-family detached homes have grown popular over the history of housing (Kunstler, 1993; M. Stone, 1993; Vale, 2000; G. Wright, 1981). Whereas one-room wigwams communally shared were appropriate during one American cultural and historic timeframe, large multi-room homes owned by individual families have become more prominent since World War II. These dream homes provide the basis of comparison families use to determine what their current housing says about their own societal success (Marcus, 1997; G. Wright, 1981). Since physical dwellings and the objects within communicate to others information about its inhabitants (Gunter, 2000), residents are mindful of the way places represent who they are. Architect and researcher of housing and home, Clare Cooper Marcus (1997) articulated that motives for choosing places to live “are driven by what we can afford, its neighborhood location, and its style and level of upkeep, but also by the symbolic role of the house as an expression of the social identity we wish to communicate” (p. 9). It is clear that these respondents had internalized the idea of personal worth based on their housing type as discussed in social housing literature (Ahrentzen, 1999; Vale, 2000; G. Wright, 1981).

Conclusion Two: Multiple Aspects of the Extended-Stay Hotel Affected “Home”

Earlier research on “home” has identified various aspects of an environment that contributed to making a place feel like home. Pennartz (1986) studied the experience of home atmosphere by asking public housing residents to identify the most pleasant place in the house and describe why this place appealed to them. He further asked participants about

the particular time of day that was most pleasant in their home. Five themes were identified with respect to which spatial interactions at home affected the atmosphere: communicating with others in the home, being accessible to people in the home, being able to relax after work, being free to do what one wanted to do, and being active without boredom at home. Pennartz's work illustrated the importance of physical arrangements and room number, size, and spatial relationships to the resident's perception of home (Bechtel, 1997).

In another study (S. G. Smith, 1994) on the essential qualities of home, participants were asked to describe the quality of their home by identifying what was right or wrong with the dwelling. The major themes that emerged from the study related to physical, social, and personal¹⁸ dimensions of the home spaces. Some of the identified positive physical attributes of place related to the openness of the dwelling and ability to welcome others. The perceived positive social qualities of place were associated with relationships to pets or family members in the home, such as "my daughter and husband, and my love for them... if they weren't there it wouldn't be home" (p. 37). The personal quality (psychological aspect) related to things that were representative of likes/dislikes or objects, such as "attractive paintings" (p. 38) or the story behind personal possessions. In the same categories, participants identified characteristics of places not considered homes. These characteristics were dissatisfaction with the physical environment, marital/family relationships, and external relationships, as well as the lack of freedom/privacy, security, and ownership along with having personal problems, a negative atmosphere, and an impersonal space (S. G. Smith, 1994).

Along with the experience of the home space and essential qualities of a place, relationships with place are important. Utilizing role playing as a data collection method for

¹⁸ The personal dimension described psychological factors.

understanding how residents felt about home, Clare Cooper Marcus (1997) found that it was the emotional relationships with a place that made a house a home. In addition, personalization of the dwelling allowed residents to self-reflect who they were throughout their lifetimes and learn more about themselves in the process. Further, feelings about home shifted for respondents as various events occurred, such as deaths of loved ones or damage to dwellings from natural disasters. This finding also emerged in another study that found life episodes (i.e., birth of a child, getting married) also affected how a place continued to feel like home (Gurney, 1997).

Like these earlier studies, home at the extended-stay hotel was not a fixed concept, but one that was determined by relationships with the environment. For residents, the extended-stay hotel simultaneously felt either like home or not depending on the particular aspects of the environment considered at the time and respondents' needs. For example, all of the respondents in the study were displaced from their previous residences, and some were victim to unkind situations with their landlords or leasing agents. Therefore, the sociability of hotel staff and accessibility of resources contributed to the perceived warmth of their home. However, at the same time, many of the respondents had been living in larger accommodations before being displaced, so the confines of the room and restriction of desired activity reduced a home feeling. Therefore, perception of the place as home was determined based on the residents' particular needs at the time and the ability of the environment to meet those needs. When respondents wanted privacy, the space felt less like a home. However, as respondents contemplated living with other relatives or roommates, their desires for family independence was more prominent, contributing to the extended-stay hotel feeling more like a home.

In this study, many identified aspects of the extended-stay hotel made it feel like a home. These aspects can be understood as environmental affordances. The theory of environmental affordances was introduced in the late 1960s by an environmental psychologist who examined how the environment functions and is used (Clark & Uzzell, 2002). An environmental affordance refers to what the environment provides to an individual in a positive or negative way. By definition, it is “the possibility for action afforded to an observer by an object in the environment” (p. 95). Residents at the hotel assessed their environment based on what it could provide for the family. Some of the affordances, as reported by respondents, were the capacity to cook, ability to use furniture that was provided, availability of an all-inclusive rental rate and payment plan (cable, electric, telephone included), customer service and room cleaning, as well as the means to remain an independent family unit. These benefits of staying at the hotel contributed to family functionality as evidenced by Jennifer who stated, “it has ... what I need: the stovetop, the microwave, the, you know, the refrigerator, which are all the important things for me to keep my food fresh and cook for my family.” She further explained, “I think that's the part that makes it... more homey out of everything else. ...The next part would be the TV with the bed... the kids watch ... cartoons and we can watch... all the shows that we prefer.”

The findings of this study suggest that the determination of affordances in the environment is an individual experience even if others share the perceptions regarding the functionality of the space. For example, most of the residents found that the small, confining room space restricted family functioning. Mary complained that Leah “can’t dance in that room. She can’t move around and about so everything has been limited.” Jessica found the hotel space to be “crowded and ... annoying.” Even Kevin felt inconvenienced by the size of

the room. With only two people in his household, he believed, “it's too much being like secluded to just one area, one room, and it's hard on me and my wife because we're not used to that.” Jennifer’s family was also not used to sharing such a small space. However, her perception of the small space differed from other respondents. She described her room as “cozy” and felt the small space was actually beneficial for her family. She admits that sometimes the space can be overcrowded and loud, but overall her family copes well as she describes in the following quote:

We are cozy. We're always talking. I think it has gotten ...our family closer because we...we're seeing each other. We're actually communicating more than before when we had all the space up there when we were renting a house, because, you know, it was a two-level house and everyone, you know, went to their own rooms, and you know, when it was time to have dinner, then that's when we saw each other. But now, we see each other everyday, every...you know, all times of the day and we argue, we laugh, you know, it's just common family...family stuff, I guess.

It is clear that Jennifer’s assessment of functionality of the same environmental characteristic, room space was different despite having a similar room size as other respondents. This finding is supported in the literature by Clark and Uzzell (2002) who noted that “affordances of an object or environment do not change as the needs of the observer change. Instead, it is up to the observer to perceive the affordances of an object or environment according to his/her needs at the time” (p. 96). Common affordances reported by respondents were categorized as physical, psychological, and social.

Physical

Residents reported that the convenient location of the hotel afforded the ability to shop, work, dine, and engage in leisure activities nearby. The benefit of living where one can walk to community resources is supported by advocates of the New Urbanism planning movement led by well-known architect team, Andres Duany and his wife Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk (2000), and considered smart design for residents. This urban architectural approach is a return to the pre-modern, traditional housing designs which “create an idealized vision of small-town life” (Howe, 2002, p. 405) and promote communities where residents can work, shop, and engage in recreation where they live. In essence, the New Urbanists promote, “pedestrian neighborhoods connected to public transit. They proposed to keep the automobile in its place and build narrower streets, wider sidewalks, and small-scale retail adjacent to housing” (Hayden, 2002, p. 186). This design strategy contradicts the segregated approach of suburban planning¹⁹ where commuting outside of housing areas for these same daily tasks is the goal of maintaining the private residential enclaves. Instead, the beauty of architectural design that utilizes the neighborhood as a critical part of planning and its contrast is captured in Kunstler’s (1993) description of a successful Georgetown community in Washington, DC. He wrote:

The high price of real estate in Georgetown, for instance, has more to do with the charm of the streets than the charm of the individual houses, many of which are quite as banal on their own terms as today’s suburban bunkers. Standing shoulder to shoulder, the row houses of Georgetown create a pleasant streetwall that affords a sense of secure enclosure so that the street seems like an outdoor room. Mature trees

¹⁹ Hayden (2002) suggests New Urbanism as a positive neighborhood strategy for women who are usually marginalized at home in the seclusion of a suburban home far away from an economically- rich urban core. However, New Urbanism models can only work if these designers reconnect housing to economic opportunity and social services in their planning.

in orderly rows along the sidewalk provide additional enclosure as the boughs spread up to form vaulted roofs over the sidewalks and the street. Cars parked along each side of the street provide cushioning for the pedestrians from the moving vehicles. ...Instead, there are the dreary voids we call front lawns and dull exercises in miniature vignette-making known as landscaping with shrubs – but nothing to tie together the individual houses in a coherent scheme by embellishing the street itself (pp. 126-127).

Respondents especially valued the ability to walk to nearby places. Mary recalled that the ability to walk to places was what she missed most about her previous home in California. Her comments echoed Kunstler's (1996) campaign for more tree-lined streets when she favorably reminisced about this former place, "You can walk. The trees... just the sidewalks... the trees." The ability to walk around the community is a treasured asset of a home. "Neighborhoods like Georgetown... are walking neighborhoods. It is not necessary to hop in the car to get an ice cream cone or a bottle of aspirin. You walk to a store," Kunstler explains, "enjoying the felicities of the street as you go—and you are able to see other people along the way. You may even have a conversation with a stranger. This is called *meeting people*, the quintessential urban pleasure" (p. 127, emphasis in original).

Duany (2000) is not proposing a utopian society, but city planning that promotes a sustainable environment. In such an environment, various types of families representing many socioeconomic categories can live together in mixed-use buildings of acceptable architectural design. In the New Urbanism model, shops and offices would occupy first level buildings while upstairs apartments would house individuals and families. Streets would be designed to promote social interaction and pleasurable leisure activities for pedestrians by

use of wide sidewalks and orderly trees. Adequate space will also be allocated for cars to access the areas without allowing traffic to dominate and congest the area. This kind of community will also accommodate various housing types while preserving property values. “Not only is society healthier when its diverse members are in daily contact with one another, it is also more convenient. Imagine living just around the corner from your doctor, your child’s school teacher, and your baby-sitting aunt,” Duany (2000) continues, “Imagine being able to grow old in a neighborhood that can accommodate your changing housing needs while also providing a home for your children and grandchildren” (p. 47).

The ability to walk around the hotel neighborhood to access community resources and entertainment was important to respondents of this study. As discussions continue about ways to improve neighborhoods and decrease sprawl²⁰, qualitative researchers are interested in the voices of community residents. This information will assist planners in understanding “citizens’ visual preferences as a part of the practice of designing better neighborhoods” (Hayden, 2004, p. 13).

The suitability of the facility setting is also an important affordance. Settings that “regulate unpleasant and pleasant feelings to maintain a coherent self-concept and to maintain a favourable [sic] level of self-esteem” (Clark & Uzzell, 2002, p. 98) are restorative environments. Respondents reported that the hotel provided the ability to meet these needs in part, although not in full. For residents, the hotel home oscillated between being restorative and being emotionally taxing.

In its restorative function, the hotel provided spaces that allowed guests to feel comfortable and relaxed. Cleanliness, landscaping, décor and courteous staff supplying

²⁰ Hayden (2004) described sprawl as “unregulated growth expressed as careless new use of land and other resources as well as abandonment of older built areas” (p. 7).

needed accessories were reported as the positive aesthetic²¹ of the hotel that guests believed welcomed them to their dwelling. According to Israel's (2003) home actualization theory, it is important for residents to find their spaces aesthetically pleasing. "Home" he asserted, "... must meet not only our most basic need for shelter and security, for psychological and social growth, it must also satisfy our basic aesthetic need" (p. 115). Researchers expound that aesthetic experiences do not simply exist in an environment, but are created by people based on their knowledge and experience with the space (Averill et al., 1998). In this study, guests conceptualized the hotel home as aesthetically pleasing based on if the personnel were pleasant, whether the hotel environment remained clean and decorated, and the availability of necessary toiletries. Dell felt the hotel was the "cleanest in town" and a nice place because of his regular maid service and other conveniences, like extra towels, soap, and garbage.

To satisfy aesthetic needs, guests retreated to favorite places at the hotel to "get away" from their rooms. Identification of favorite places have been linked to the development of place identity (Korpela & Hartig, 1996) since these areas help provide comfort to guests by allowing the ability to self-regulate emotional experiences with the environment. In essence, spaces that allow residents to rest and be comfortable help them feel they belong there.

Research on restoration and restorative environments have proposed two general approaches to relieving the stress associated with the person-environment interaction: stress reduction theory and attention restoration theory (R. Kaplan, 2001; S. Kaplan, 1995; Korpela & Hartig, 1996; Ulrich et al., 1991). Stress reduction methods (Ulrich et al., 1991) are focused on immediate reduction of stress by presenting a visual scene, typically of a natural

²¹ Aesthetic is an appreciation for something beautiful and sublime (Averill, Stanat, & More, 1998).

setting, that “prompts a shift toward more positively-toned emotional states” (Korpela & Hartig, 1996, p. 223). Several studies have supported the benefit of the natural setting and having access to windows as a restorative element in the environment (Herzog, Black, Fountaine, & Knotts, 1997; R. Kaplan, 2001; S. Kaplan, 1995; Leather, Pyrgas, Beale, & Lawrence, 1998; Tennessen & Cimprich, 1995). Viewing a natural setting from a window is an example of how a calm setting allows an individual to engage in a restorative experience (R. Kaplan, 2001).

In this study, residents reported finding aesthetically pleasing favorite places that allowed them to escape the reality of their rooms. This was clearly reported by Ashay when she commented, “I feel relieved, you know, I have to get out and into the light because after being into the closed area and if you close the window or shadings, it [is] just so dark, it makes it more depressed so you have to get out.” She kept the curtains pulled back on the windows to allow light in and to view “the flowers and the trees, the colors, the beautiful coloring” of the hotel landscaping. Keeping the window uncovered relieved her of the gloomy, murky constraints that she associated with her space. “I have to open [the curtain]. I can't stay in that room and have it closed.” Harley was also impressed with how the manager attended to the landscaping. She reveled in the way “the flowers change as the months do.”

Attention restoration theory (S. Kaplan, 1995) provides a process for individuals to regain extended focus and sustained emotional functioning by the reduction of stress. The process involves four methods: getting away to clear one's head (being away), giving effortless attention to something interesting (fascination), immersing in sustained exploration (extent), and finding a match between personal purposes and environmental support

(compatibility) (R. Kaplan, 2001; Korpela & Hartig, 1996). All of these methods can be achieved by retreating to one's favorite place, and this was apparent among most respondents in this study. Kevin clears his head by listening to music in his car and Barbara Anne retreats to her favorite place in the conference room to focus on her studies. Not being able to get away, outside, to his favorite place was troubling for Bobby, as he described, "outside, I'd say, is probably a favorite place... being here when it was cold was really bad because you didn't even have the escape to go outside and feel some sunlight and ... feel like you're getting away."

In addition to finding favorite places to retreat and relax, residents described an appreciation of the hotel atmosphere. In particular, they felt the hotel was clean and well-kept. Cleanliness was important to most of the respondents in this study as they described their own tendency to keep the room space tidy. According to Marcus (1997), the ordering of things in one's dwelling may be an attempt to take control of the environment and one's life. One of her students postulated that the need to control one's environment may also differ among socio-economic classes. After interviewing California residents about the maintenance of their yards, he found:

...among other things that better-off, highly educated homeowners often had rather wild, "natural," or low-maintenance landscapes around their homes, whereas working-class retired people tended to have yards that were highly controlled—clipped, pruned, raked, ordered. He concluded that those who needed to keep their gardens "in control" seemed to have little control in other arenas of their lives (income, advancement, and so on), whereas those who had more control over their lives—more money, more freedom—could allow their yards to go wild. By pruning

the juniper into the shape we want it to be, by moving the living-room furniture around until it's how we want it to be, we reaffirm our own sense of control in the world... To appropriate space, to order and mold it into a form that pleases us and affirms who we are, is a universal need. (p. 66)

Respondents in this study also reported the need to order their own space. An example is Jennifer, who stated, "I like to organize and, you know, organize and everything" to keep from being bored with the space. She seemed to control time by cleaning until her boyfriend returned home to spend time with her.

Cleaning activity also conveyed how residents wanted to be perceived by others.

Harley described the reason for cleaning when leaving her previous apartment:

I cleaned it all up. I even cleaned the windows on the inside, the window ledges. I'm -- I wanted to leave it nice for the people who came behind me because I knew that when I moved in that place it wasn't that clean, you know. So I wanted the people who came behind me to say, "Well, that lady before was a clean woman." You know, I don't want them to say, "Well that was a nasty hog," you know, because I had already seen how they cleaned the apartment.

Being characterized as a good tenant was also important to Dee and this was apparent in her comment, "I take care of the property. I clean thoroughly. When I leave places, they don't even have to have someone to come in there and clean. They probably do but, I mean, I mop. I do everything."

Harley, Jessica, Ashay and Angie (Bobby's wife) clean because it is considered the responsibility of a spouse and significant other. This cleaning activity as the role of females is consistent with the "dream home" ideal that men work outside of the home in industries

while women stay home and care for the house and children (Hayden, 2002). Doris (Kevin's wife) was unhappy in the space because she was not able to fulfill these tasks. "She's used to basically ... just coming home, cleaning the house, and doing house chores and stuff," Kevin described.

Favorite places and cleanliness were not the only affordances noted by residents. Financial practicality was also a major influence in helping residents feel at home at the hotel. Everyone reported the ease of paying one fee for multiple necessities and indulgences. With one weekly rental rate, residents felt comforted with a place to stay, telephone access, house cleaner service, cable television and free internet access, hot water, electricity, as well as adjustable room heating and cooling. Even more, they did not have the burden of purchasing and moving in furniture, maintenance costs or buying linen, towels, soap, toilet paper, or trash bags. Another benefit to renting at a hotel is the customer service that property owners or mortgage companies often do not extend. These benefits of renting in a hotel were known and commonplace in the late 1800s and early 1900s²² among the well-to-do whose lifestyles were simplified by commercial services that eliminated complex housing tasks (Groth, 1994). Middle-income families also benefited, although not to the same extent, as described in Groth's (1994) account of hotels at during the late 19th and early 20th centuries:

Even with the cheaper European plan prices, to live with hotel advantages people with middle incomes had to give up space. If they had been renting a suburban house or a respectable five-room apartment, they had to accept either a very small suite in a good midpriced hotel or a larger suite in a less elegant hostelry. Hayner writes of a

²² After this time, there was an exodus of many wealthy and middle class families from the urban core to remote suburban dream homes.

family of four, with children aged three and eight, who paid \$650 a month for their large house in a Chicago neighborhood that had lost its cachet; for \$700 a month, they rented a small suite in a hotel on the fashionable Lake Michigan shore. He concluded that for families with incomes of at least \$8,000 a year, hotels were cheaper than houses or large apartments of comparable social status. (pp. 74-75)

Due to this bundling of resources and services, respondents concluded the same-- that hotel living was actually less expensive than living in an apartment or home. Most residents paid over \$800 per month for their hotel room and its conveniences. However, to maintain these same necessities and conveniences in an apartment would require them to manage other bills that would exceed \$1000 per month. Concern with these types of additional expenses would overwhelm families as discussed in Stone's (2006) shelter poverty concept. Stone criticized the current affordability scale that only considers income and housing costs and ignores non-housing costs and household size. His argument asserted that "a household is 'shelter-poor' if it cannot meet its non-housing needs at some minimal level of adequacy after paying for housing" (p. 44). Therefore, what a family can afford must be determined after housing costs are taken into account. Further, what can be afforded must also be determined after taking in consideration household size because as the number of members in a family vary so will non-housing expenses. So, even if Dell and Jennifer's households had identical incomes and housing expenses, Dell's accommodations would still be considered more affordable because his non-housing expenses (depending on lifestyle) would probably be smaller than Jennifer's expenses. Grocery, healthcare, and leisure expenses would be greater for Jennifer's family of four, than Dell's family of two.

Respondents considered the hotel rate a more affordable alternative to renting an apartment or paying a mortgage on a home because it included residential expenses (i.e., cable, garbage pick up) and this rate was reduced after meeting the time requirement for becoming a resident and getting the taxes taken off. “Getting past taxes” was helpful to residents and often led residents to stay in place rather than beginning the time requirement again at another hotel. Most of the residents reported this as a great benefit to living at the hotel.

Psychological

One psychological affordance at the hotel was the ability of residents to feel safe and secure. An important concept in Gunter’s (2000) discussion of home was the ability of residents to establish territoriality. Home is considered a primary territory “which is highly central to the lives of its occupants, affording them a sense of security and control rarely experienced in other locations” (Harris & Brown, 1996, p. 187). In essence, people must be able to control others’ access to their dwelling as home is considered the safe haven into which one escapes from the exterior world. In a comparison to primates who are soothed by the security of their familiar nests, Gallagher (2006) noted:

Like other primates, we members of *Homo sapiens* differ in our temperaments and preferred ratios of home and world, calm and stimulating settings. Like them, we can’t always control external events, but at least we are the masters of our nests. Particularly when we’re under stress, we too are restored by a respite in our safe base, where we’re surrounded with stimuli that invite us to relax and feel at home. (p. 139, emphasis in original)

The ability of residents to keep outsiders out of their environment was an important consideration when choosing the Company Suites hotel over other hotels. Several respondents reported drugs, prostitution, and abusive behavior as commonplace in other, usually lower-priced, hotels. Bobby expressed his frustration with the previous hotel because “it was just too much, just adult things goin' on and stuff you hear and cursin' and people fightin' and, you know, it's just too much.” However, safety and security was felt by residents at the Company Suites hotel because of the screening of visitors' and guests' behaviors by front desk clerks. It was assuring to guests, especially Dell, that “riff raff” was kept out of the hotel. They felt protected with interior door locks and key cards, which kept their families' rooms from being invaded. Further, hotel security cameras and front desk clerks kept the hotel “community” safe and the watchful eyes of parents kept children unharmed from the short-term guests who were perceived as potential threats.

Residents often commented how “nice” the hotel environment appeared, as opposed to previous hotels they had stayed in before, described as “bad.” Dell explained, “I'm comin' back to a place that is clean and a place that is nice and a place that is respectable.” The niceness of the hotel related both to the attention to décor and also the maintenance of safety and behavioral standards. Interestingly, Gallagher (2006) pointed out that “manifesting our territorial feelings about our homes and environs isn't just ‘nice’; it's important to building and maintaining a sound community” (p. 269). Paying attention to proprietary tasks such as decorating and cleaning areas around private dwellings “proclaim to locals and outsiders alike that we have high standards and expect good behavior in our community” (p. 269).

Somewhat related to the idea of territoriality, the ability of families to remain independent was also highly valued among respondents. The finding that these families

chose to live at the extended-stay rather than with other family and friends was unexpected in this study. Although many respondents had been offered shelter in the homes of family members or friends, there was a decision made to maintain the independence of the family by living at the hotel. Reasons for remaining independent included not wanting to impose, needing privacy, avoiding emotionally-taxing family relationships, and feeling responsible for making it without the help of extended family members. Jennifer believed her sister-in-law could not tolerate her children's behavior. Dee had decided she would go and stay with her friend only if things got truly desperate. Although her son extended an invitation, Ashay did not want to impose on her children. Dell's father and brother lived in a large home not far from the hotel, but he chose to live on his own at the hotel for maximum privacy. Harley felt it would be a personal failure to return to her mother's home because adults are supposed to make it on their own. These respondents appeared to have in common a striving to meet the personal goal of being independent from extended family and friends and making it to stable housing by means of remaining at the hotel until financial matters were straightened out.

Perceptions of the hotel as home among respondents of this study were affected by their ability to maintain an independent family unit. Although other housing types were preferred, the hotel was desired because it provided the temporary accommodation necessary to avoid having to double-up in other households. According to Wallenius (1999), a "subjective fit" (p. 132) between the person and the environment is established when the place is supportive of personal goals. Personal goals include projects that "may range from trivial pursuits (such as cleaning one's room) to lofty and far-reaching aims (such as finding a purpose for one's life)" (p. 132). Further, Wallenius denoted that the subjective fit between

person and environment is important when assessing well-being. Therefore, there is a psychological impact on individuals based on their determination of the supportiveness and fit of the environment in meeting personal goals.

The concept of subjective fit also considers the life stage of individuals (Wallenius, 1999). As people progress through life, their personal goals shift and emphasis on certain goals may change. Finding a prominent career may be important for an individual initially. However, if finding employment becomes compromised, the goal of finding a stable job of any kind may take precedence. Finding a job was important for many of the younger respondents who are still in career development stages of their lives. However, one older respondent, Barbara Anne, was more concerned with receiving her social security check and not employment. Similarly, whereas one may plan for a large, private dream home when financial stability is not at issue, settling for a private room at a hotel may become more of a pressing concern when housing stability has been challenged, especially when homelessness is a threat and living with other family members is not desired. Family needs and roles will also determine personal goals. Among respondents who were still child-rearing, there was an expressed need for a large home with many rooms. However, for Dell, Dee, and Jessica who were not raising children, an owned home of any size was desired.

Despite varying life stage goals, all respondents had the common goal of maintaining family independence. These residents described a subjective fit between themselves and the hotel and considered it a “home for now.” They were relieved that they could call the hotel their temporary dwelling. Perhaps Jennifer said it best in her comment, “I mean, it's either here or under a bridge.” Bobby’s comments were also powerful in expressing his

understanding of the paradox in feeling both happy and frustrated about living at the hotel.

With his hands clasped as if in prayer, he emotionally explained:

I mean ...it's two ways I look at living here. One way, it's a blessing because I'm grateful to God that I do have... Because the reason is, when I pray, I say, "God, I know there is..." sometimes I feel big nerve to say, you know, "can you help me and my family out of here?" when there's people on the street; there's people actually laying on the street. There's people in worse shape than what I consider myself in. Then, on the other hand, I say, you know, "God, I'm working and I'm praying and, you know, I'm diligent in what I'm doing to try to get my family out of here. If you could...you know, whatever words I'm supposed to say, or whatever it is, if you could put it in my mind and my heart, you know, I'm willing."

Although there was a true appreciation for being temporarily housed, there was also psychological distress regarding life at the hotel.

Many respondents expressed feeling depressed, frustrated, embarrassed, overwhelmed and guilty. Barbara Anne was frustrated at her earlier decisions about money and now waiting on social security so that she could get out of the hotel housing. She also reported how living in the small space causes the family to "get on each other's nerves." Mary was also frustrated with the inability of getting social service help to move her family out and get the necessary home space her children are accustomed to before the evictions. She has big dreams for her daughter to become a famous dancer, but her daughter cannot currently dance in that hotel space. Bobby's account of how sorrowful he felt about having his daughter in the hotel was heartbreaking and it demonstrated the emotionally taxing reality of their lives there. When Brandi brought her schoolwork home, sometimes he would:

...cry out but...I'll look at her and I won't let her see me, but I'll just look at some drawings that she's done and, you know, she'll draw that room and she'll make up, you know, just things, you know, just pretending that she had her own room and, you know, that just bothers me to no end.

Bobby was not the only resident in despair about his hotel home. A couple of residents like Harley, who recalled the melancholy she felt just after moving into the hotel because she felt the space was not her home and Ashay who had felt so much despair that she was once suicidal, reported depression. Researchers (Lecci, Karoly, Briggs, & Kuhn, 1994; Salmela-Aro, 1992) have linked depression and other psychological problems to the difficulty of personal projects and their low outcome expectancy (Wallenius, 1999). The psychological impact of not being able to achieve stable housing outside of the hotel for residents seemed unrelenting. Residents perceived that the only aspect of hotel living that met personal goals was the ability to retain family independence and avoid doubling-up or becoming homeless. Feeling somewhat anchored in the space, residents were able to plan for their next move toward other personal goals. However, many residents concurrently felt a sense of personal failure in providing better housing for themselves and their families.

Social

All of the respondents in this study expressed a need to find personal space and private time for themselves. Dell based his decision for moving to the hotel on this desire to establish his own space separate from his father and his brother. However, other respondents had to negotiate this need with other family members or roommates. Marcus (1997) explained, "Having some space of one's own in the home is fundamental to balanced relations within a couple or a family" (p. 160). Further, allocated space is important because,

“a person’s own bedroom or study or workplace permits him to seek privacy, to make it clear to others that he needs time alone”(p. 160). Having this type of space allows the resident to develop self-identity through engagement in hobby exploration, decoration, and creative expression. Personal space reduces the feeling of being crowded in an environment and permits privacy for residents.

Privacy has been defined as “both seeking and avoiding contact with others” (Harris et al., 1995). It “is a boundary control process in which an individual regulates with whom contact will occur and how much and what type of contact it will be” (Pedersen, 1999, p. 397). Pederson identified six different types of privacy: (1) intimacy with family, (2) intimacy with friends, (3) solitude, (4) isolation, (5) anonymity, and (6) reserve. The first two types involve shared interactions with a desired other, whereas the latter four are functions of regulating one’s own space needs (Pedersen). Solitude excludes observations by other people. Isolation removes one geographically from others. Anonymity prevents recognition by others and reserve avoids the reveal of personal information to others.

The ability to regulate the desired amount of interface with others was important for residents. An inability to control these interactions can contribute to the perception of crowdedness if too little privacy is experienced or isolation if there is too much contact with others (Harris, Brown, & Werner, 1996). It is also suggested that an ease of regulating privacy contributes to place attachment by allowing residents to control interactions with family members (Harris et al.).

Most respondents raised the issue of either not finding privacy or having personal boundaries violated while at the hotel. To satisfy this need for personal space and privacy, residents made a concerted effort to divide the room by creating and agreeing on visible and

invisible boundaries that marked someone's area or side. This strategy has been successful in interior design when crowding is an issue for residents. Individuals "lose much of their ability to control what happens to them (personal control)" (Sinha & Nayyar, 2001, p. 721) when they are confined in crowded conditions. In particular, the floor-plan layout plays a role in the psychological distress that occurs when residents feel crowded in their environment (Evans et al., 1996). Open floor plans with undefined space restrict the ability of individuals to retreat from and regulate social interactions (Marcus, 1997). When a room is subdivided into smaller units, it significantly improves a person's ability to self-regulate interactions with others (Evans et al., 2001). To cope with these crowded conditions, inhabitants will socially withdraw from one another in an effort to maximize personal space (Evans, Rhee, Forbes, Allen, & Lepore, 2000). Although social withdrawal may be an effective coping strategy for those experiencing acute distress from crowding (Evans et al.), it may also create a "disruption of socially supportive relationships among occupants" (Evans et al., p. 41). Due to the psychological impact, these occupants are also less likely than non-crowded residents to provide support to others who may be experiencing the negative effects of crowding (Evans et al.).

The room design and inability to secure privacy inhibited couple intimacy. In many homes, private bedrooms are havens for intimacy. However, in the hotel space, the bed is the largest piece of furniture taking up much of the room, and typically the center focus of the layout. Respondents reported this limitation in spending private time with their mate to be inconvenient, frustrating, and had contributed to a strain on the marriage of one couple. The effect of the bedroom on emotions was captured in Gallagher's (2006) discussion of this space. She wrote:

The privacy that suits it to be the home's personal sanctuary and romantic getaway also makes the bedroom the likeliest setting for the expression of negative emotions, from loneliness and sadness to the anger that fuels fights and even violence. As the psychologist Susan Painter, who practices design psychology with Connie Forest puts it, "The bedroom is ground zero for intimacy. If it's happening, intimacy happens there, and if it's not, the lack is probably most deeply felt there. There's a profound loneliness in being in a room that's meant for intimacy but not having it." (p. 150)

Along with regulating intimate moments, it was also important for residents to manage interactions with other people outside of the family. Most of the respondents in this study reported that they had very limited interaction with short-term guests and more contact with longer-termed residents. In addition, friendship with staff members was typical among respondents. Often, desk clerks and longer-termed guests engaged in casual conversations in the lobby area.

This finding related to respondents' interactional behavior at the hotel is consistent with the highly researched topic on "sense of community" (McMillan & Chavis, 1986) rooted in the community psychology literature. "Sense of community" has been defined as "the tie that links people and their community of residence" (Tartaglia, 2006, p. 26), where community can refer to a "set of people with some kind of shared element" (Obst & White, 2007, p. 77), such as a place to live. There are four domains related to sense of community: membership, influence, fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection (Chavis, Hogge, McMillan, & Wandersman, 1986).

Membership refers to identification and sense of belonging to a place. The influence domain has two components. First, residents must feel that they have some level of influence

and control over the environment. Second, the cohesive community must have some influence over its members. The perception that residents' needs can be met in an environment defines the need-fulfillment domain of attaining a sense of community (A. N. Peterson, Speer, & Hughley, 2006). Finally, residents must share an emotional connection with the place based on their history and experiences there (A. N. Peterson et al., 2006).

Group membership at the hotel was acknowledged by respondents' identification of their status as long-term residents. They readily differentiated themselves from the short-term guests who "passes in and out" and might be unsafe. Long-term resident identity, by contrast, meant that you were one of the guests who stayed longer, struggled financially, preferred hotel-living over doubling up, and engaged in friendships with other long-term guests and hotel staff. Clear identification with this subgroup of people was evident in Bobby's comment, "I've been these people. I am these people right now." Respondents also felt respected by the hotel staff. They felt confident that the hotel would provide necessary resources when needed. They were also assured with the maintenance of appropriate behavioral standards by the facility and their ability to call on management to "shut up" the noisy short-term guests. In the same respect, these residents were also careful to control their own family's noise levels and potential disturbances of other guests. And, although these respondents only had sporadic contact with other long-term guests, the interactions were considered mutually receptive. Dell enjoyed a beer with another long-term guest. Jessica and Harley occasioned a few casual room visits during their stay. Also, Ashay, Dee, and Barbara Anne had shared some friendly conversations from time to time in the hotel conference room. However, the deepest emotional connections were reported between the residents and the staff. Guests reported feeling a mutual friendship and acceptance between

themselves and the staff. Many respondents reported that the most missed aspect of the hotel after leaving would be their interactions with the staff; those often considered “like family.”

The physical characteristics of the dwelling also affected the social interaction of respondents with others. Many reported not inviting others to their rooms because the space was either too small or devoid of necessary privacy. Researchers have documented in the environmental psychology literature, the effect of spaces on neighboring behavior and interactions with others. According to Skjaeveland and Garling (1997), there are functional and appearance aspects that affect an individual’s perception of a space and the ability to interact with others. Functional aspects include “qualities that permit... intended activity [like] driving, walking, standing, sitting, and... socializing [as well as, features such as] stairs, sidewalks, benches, yards, verandas, common areas between the houses, pedestrian malls, [and] playgrounds” (p. 182). Appearance aspects include attractive places that invite others to stay in the space and “increase [the] likelihood of meeting others who have similar preferences or needs” (p. 182). These attractive characteristics are usually ample spaces that are, structured, well maintained, and architecturally stylish and proportional (Skjaeveland & Garling).

At the extended-stay hotel, the outdoor landscaping was often mentioned as an aspect that was admired despite insufficient places for guests to gather or socialize and interact with each other. Several guests reported enjoying the pretty trees and flowers around the building, but often they ventured outdoors alone to get away from others in those quiet spaces.

Benches were only placed on the front veranda of the hotel and although the seating was situated for people to face each other, the distance between the seats was not conducive for

close conversation or gathering. There was no playground at the hotel, obliging children to remain inside their rooms since running up and down the hallway was not allowed.

The most frequently reported area used by guests for interacting with others was the sofa area near the front desk of the hotel. Guests sat on the sofa and talked at length with hotel personnel or watched guests check in and out of the hotel. One guest even pointed out the benefit of having that space for receiving visitors formally. Children also used this area to wait on the school bus that stopped in front of the hotel lobby each morning. The hotel also made a concerted effort to promote socialization between guests by providing hot coffee for families to enjoy in the morning before work or getting their children off to school.

Conclusion Three: Residents Cope with the Negative Qualities of the Extended-Stay Hotel by Adapting or Making Adjustments.

To cope with those aspects of the hotel that detracted from the place feeling like home (small space, lack of privacy, etc), residents either adapted their behavior to fit in the environment or adjusted the hotel space to accommodate family routines. There is a difference between adapting and adjusting. According to Bell, Greene, Fisher, and Baum (2001), "Adaptation refers to changing the response to the stimulus, whereas adjustment refers to changing the stimulus itself" (p. 111). Therefore, individuals either change their response (adaptive behaviors) or change the environment (environmental adjustment). Adaptive behavior involves perception of the environmental context and acting on this information by selecting appropriate behaviors that optimize the person-environment interface (Warren, 2006). In this study, respondents adapted to their living conditions by accommodating their lifestyles to the physical environment and identifying personal spaces. Living in such a small space with limited storage, residents changed the way they shopped

for food, cooked, and stored items. They also created agreed upon personal spaces to deal with the lack of partitioned and private areas.

Environmental adjustments for these residents included personalizing the dwelling by adding objects for functionality and for comfort. As a solution to limited storage space, respondents brought in freezers, boxes, and clothing racks. Also, the addition of portable cooking apparatus supplemented for the missed ovens and typical cooking techniques. Further, to provide a sense of comfort, residents “put themselves” into the space by displaying personal objects and decorations that tied to special people or moments in their lives. Personalizing in this manner allows the inhabitants to infuse their own culture into the environmental context. As Ng (1998) pointed out, “culture appears not only in people’s perceptions, beliefs, values, norms, customs and behaviours (sic), but in the designs of objects and the physical environment as well (e.g. homes, cities, public buildings, and roads)” (p. 57).

Adaptations and adjustments are made based on perceptions of the environment. Consistent with Bell, Greene, Fisher, and Baum’s (2001) Eclectic Environment – Behavior model, Potter and Cantarero (2006) posits that “one’s assessment of a place will be dependent on how it is perceived, the attributes of the place, and the standard of comparison against which it is judged (e.g., personal needs, expectations, aspirations, reference group, etc.)” (p. 605). Therefore, where residents perceived the hotel home as lacking, such as inadequate cooking apparatus and storage, stress about these situations was induced. Adaptive behaviors or environmental adjustments were used as coping strategies.

The inability or refusal to adapt and adjust can be disturbing for those living in the dwelling. For example, although Bobby’s family changed their behaviors minimally by

recognizing private areas in the dwelling, they chose not to adjust the environment. Bobby refused to allow Angie to decorate for fear of becoming “too comfortable.” As a result, both husband and wife experienced severe frustration about accepting the hotel as home. Bobby was not proud of his situation, Doris was depressed, and Brandi used drawings to communicate her desire for a different type of home environment.

The refusal to adjust the space was also evident when Bobby did not report to hotel management items in the room that needed repairing. Instead, he ignored them while fixating on leaving.

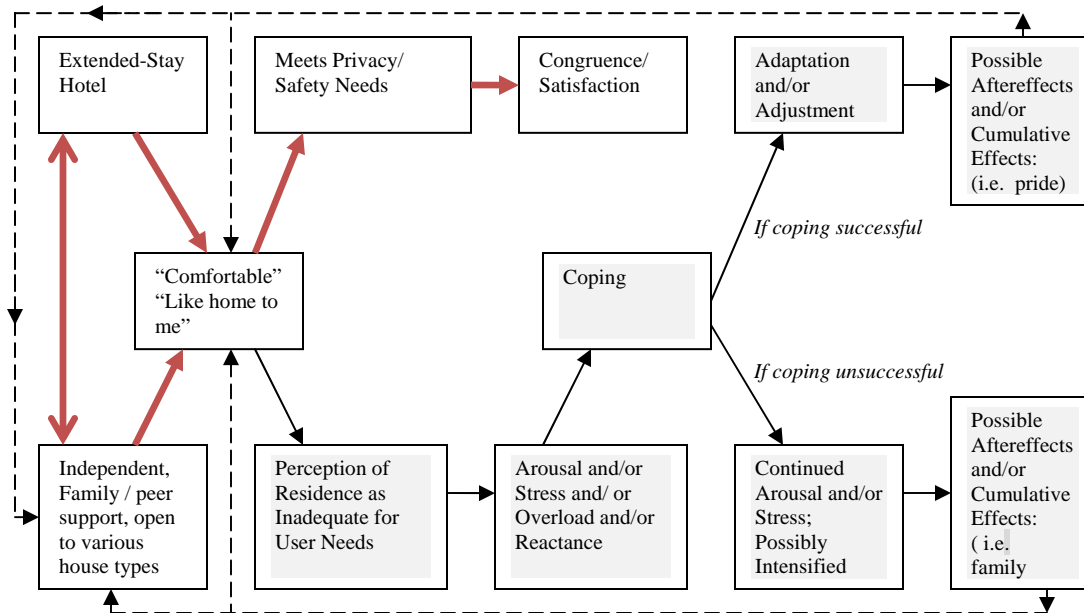
Figure 4 shows a model of Bobby’s perception of the extended-stay dwelling. In this model, the physical characteristics and Bobby’s own personal history interacted and contributed to the hotel feeling “boxed-in,” “confined,” and “not a home.”

He was unsatisfied with the dwelling because it did not fit with what he considered acceptable as a home. For him, a husband and father should be able to provide more for his family, especially as he compared his life to the accomplishments of his older brother who had already purchased a home and attained a high professional status. His personal goals of having a good paying job and securing the “American Dream” type of house for his family had so far been unachievable. This personal failure left him stressed and frustrated. To cope, he made a few efforts to adapt to the environment by identifying and separating out spaces for each member of the household. However, he resisted adjusting his attitude and behavior to the environment even when it meant leaving some family needs unmet. Although he allowed his wife to decorate the space for birthday celebrations or special events, he resisted any long-term personalizing activities. These were forbidden because for him such measures meant that he had resolved to living in what he believed was an unsatisfactory condition. It

strategies encouraged further emotional suffering and led to marital conflict, parental discomfort, and a general sense of failure, which further discouraged any perception of the hotel as a home.

The same model, applied to Dell's experience with the hotel, looks very different. In Figure 5, it is apparent that Dell is satisfied with his living arrangement because his perception of the environment differs from that of Bobby. Although the extended-stay hotel presents the same physical characteristics for Dell, his individual circumstances shed a more positive light on the hotel as home. Dell is not a father or a husband. Although his girlfriend resides with him often, he feels no responsibility for her housing needs. Being in a household of one, the small room space is adequate and provides enough space for his needs. Dell stated that his strongest desire was to live independently so that he could have optimal privacy. The hotel space meets this need. Further, he is comforted by the services and security of the space that was lacking in his previous hotel accommodation. The current hotel space, according to Dell, is an improvement and a "step up." Living independently, with the option of moving back with his father and brother, Dell does not feel the same pressure that Bobby feels to move out as soon as possible. Therefore, the characteristics of the hotel as home are congruent with his current needs. The ability to adapt and adjust in the person-environment interaction is an important coping strategy. The dynamic interplay between environmental stressors and individual coping affects the psychological and emotional well-being as is apparent in the contrast between Bobby's and Dell's experiences.

The findings of this study demonstrate that "home" is a subjective experience that is determined by an individual's perception of a place based on socio-cultural and personal history, environmental characteristics, and personal goals and needs. Some families reside in



Adapted from (P.A. Bell et al., 2001, pp. 402-403)

Figure 5. Dell's Coping Model

extended-stay hotels as homes due to the inability to afford the preferred "American Dream" types of houses or apartments, because of poor rental histories, and/or bad credit. These families find that even though this alternative housing situation is a temporary solution, there are characteristics of the hotel that are of benefit to them including packaged rates, aesthetic décor, safety and security, family independence and friendly staff. However, small confining spaces lacking privacy and limited exterior seating areas, as well as personal expectations for other housing types, discouraged these residents from considering the hotel accommodation as a long-term housing choice. While working on leaving the hotel, these families adapted their behavior to the setting by changing daily routines and by adjusting the environment to meet needs for better-suited functionality and comfort.

Implications for Theory, Policy, and Practice

This study reported on the relationships existing between residents and their extended-stay hotel dwelling places through descriptions of home. The greatest contribution of this study was giving voice to an under-researched subset of low-income people using multiple data collection methods and data sources in qualitative research. The observations, interviews, and photographs converged to describe families struggling to remain housed among a bustling hotel culture servicing a variety of clientele. This study was able to capture the rich realities of the respondents and shed light on the real life dilemmas of un-affordable housing and creating home in a non-traditional dwelling for permanent “home” living.

This study’s close look at the challenges and coping strategies of long-term, low-income, extended-stay hotel residents has implications for social policy in various fields; including, the hospitality industry, architecture, interior design, and affordable house programming. Most importantly, it is essential to understand that even when families are struggling financially to remain sheltered, the ability to create a home atmosphere in a dwelling is important to the well-being of the family. Therefore, in affordable housing design, it is critical to create environments that are both functional and comfortable for people to meet personal goals, as well as, basic and restorative needs. In particular, a place that has well-defined areas, natural settings, and the ability to retreat privately or openly for the purposes of social engagement is conducive to individual and family well-being. Respondents also indicated that appropriate lighting, décor, and safety and security control are of great value in a nurturing home.

In extended-stay hotels, specifically, residents would benefit from the ability to customize the space; perhaps, with hideaway partitions to allow the family to create privacy

as needed. It is apparent from this study, that those aspects that are considered negative, such as small space, can be tolerated if other aspects of that environment can be controlled. Meaning, if the family considers the space too small, altering the space physically, or psychologically can help with coping with this negative aspect. Additions can be made, areas can be assigned, or furniture can be used for various functions. Further, since most of the respondents of this study were paying for additional space in off-site storage facilities, the inclusion of an on-site storage facility with the fee factored into the room rental rate would also be beneficial. Another design option to help these families would be to provide laundry room discounts for long-term residents, entertainment spaces for children (playground, open garden, wading pool, fountain), and a centrally located refrigerator/freezer locker system and general storage to supplement the smaller appliances in the rooms.

The findings of this study also support the argument for New Urbanism design that creates communities where residents can work and play where they live. Many of the respondents reported that work was a reason for moving to the area and the local shopping arena provided desired entertainment for the family. Further, the attention paid to natural settings and restorative landscaping was reported by respondents as an enjoyable feature of a home. Trees were considered beautiful and desirable, and flowers in particular were admired, contributing as they did to the peaceful surroundings of the hotel. For such a concept to gain popularity in the United States, the “American Dream” of a successful family home environment must at the minimum be rethought and altered. All of the respondents in this study want eventually to own a single-family home, despite the enormous pressure and financial undertaking of “making it” by “American Dream” standards. This is a cultural phenomenon that has grown over housing history and affects the self-esteem of people.

Several of the men interviewed or discussed by wives felt they had failed their families because they could not provide large single-family homes. It was not enough that they worked hard everyday and kept their families sheltered. The perception of the hotel as inadequate long-term is even influenced by evolving culture. There was a time when families (mostly wealthy and middle-income families) actually preferred to live in hotels because of the lofty customer services and ease of homecare (Groth, 1994). However, attitudes about hotel living changed during the mass movement out to the suburbs into dream homes facilitated by national housing policy. The first of these “dream” homes was Levittown, the beginning of tract housing, which were described as small two-bedroom, Cape Cod houses on curved streets (Hayden, 2002).

The shifting designs of housing type and their accompanying cultural implications must be addressed in the field of social work. It is important for practitioners, theorists, and policy makers to understand how families are faring inside their home since it is the primary environment where individual and social development takes place. Although consideration of the setting is a critical piece of the person-in-environment approach of the social work practice, it is often the most neglected area of pedagogy²³. To promote societal change requires social work educators to integrate this topic in many of the courses that prepare students for work in the community. From the findings of this study, it is easy to understand why fundamental courses, such as, Human Behavior in the Social Environment, Social Policy and Policy Analysis, Program Development and Community Empowerment, as well as, Direct Practice Methods, Cultural Diversity, and Research Methods, must include housing and the concept of home as important topics that affect individuals, families, and

²³ As a graduate student, I was unable to take any courses on housing or environment in the School of Social Work. These courses were not offered and the topic of housing was only highlighted in a course on policy. Instead, I took these courses in the College of Consumer Sciences.

communities. Economics concepts and their implications must also be emphasized (June G. Hopps & Morris, 2000).

Another implication of this study is the need for social service programs. Although respondents felt hopeful in their efforts to leave the hotel, several expressed the difficulty in saving enough money to get out of the situation due to the continued need to pay the rental fees and other expenses. In light of this difficulty, this study highlights the need for programs that bridge families from the extended-stay facility to apartments or other housing options. Such a program should include education on money management, credit repair, and rental or homeownership responsibilities. Currently, the Impact! Resource Center in Gwinnett County (www.theimpactgroup.org) offers transitional housing services that help families regain financial footing and stable housing. More supportive programs like this organization should be created for people at risk for homelessness. This study confirmed the usefulness of these types of programs in the finding that residents truly valued the hotel staff's responsiveness to family needs. Moreover, relationships with these hotel staff added to the sense of community connectedness that was sought by these residents who had adverse relationships with former landlords, mortgagees, as well as family and friends.

However, when considering supportive housing programs, it is also important to note that those families that wanted help in getting out of the extended-stay hotel believed that the necessary assistance was not available for their purposes. Therefore, the visibility of these types of social service programs must become more evident so families can make requests for help before falling into financial ruin. Further, the availability of programs like the Impact! Group may become more widespread by advocating the "Right to Housing" policy, as previously noted in chapter two on public housing. Given that shelter is a basic need for

people, it seems only logical that everyone have a right to housing. The fact that such programming would be very challenging should not excuse our responsibility to do it. Yes, it would be costly, but Hartman (2006) posed the critical question, “Can we afford not to have a right to decent, affordable housing?” (p. 184). The cost of not doing anything is that we will continue to have families waiting unproductively on two to three year waiting lists to get vouchers for housing assistance. This is unacceptable and irresponsible social planning. There must be additional plans in place to assist families who are not financially ready or who do not want to purchase homes. Homeownership is the focus of current housing policy. However, it will take more than courses on homeownership and downpayment assistance to make a dent in the American affordable housing crisis. Approaches in the twenty-first century must be more diverse. Thinking outside of the box is necessary to address the various types of American families today. Post-modern housing might include new types of communal housing that provide opportunities for asset development. The ladder for economic stability must be reachable by the poorest American families.

What we need is a comprehensive housing plan with a broad recognition of not only families in chronic homelessness, but also families on the brink of it. This country should engage in a housing approach that recognizes the needs of all of its residents. From the starting point, policy makers, community organizers, urban and rural planners, and American citizens must change the negative perceptions relative to lower-income individuals as lazy and unworthy; a group that should remain unseen, unheard and uninvolved. However, most importantly, exploited people must recognize their own individual and group-based worth and power (Pinderhughes, 1995). For this to happen, it will be critical for low-income

residents to organize and become an integral part of any major social change effort (June Gary Hopps et al., 1995; Pinderhughes, 1995; Solomon, 1976).

It is important for all Americans to understand that unaffordable housing undergirds escalating costs everyone. Apart from the social capital cost of families failing to meet their potential because of deficient housing, all citizens will be affected by the detrimental societal realities that are born from the continuous stress, poverty and oppression. The health and economic concerns of these families weighs in on many community resources.

An approach to helping families with housing needs must be collectively strategic, comprehensive, and graduated thereby recognizing that families do not magically become homeless, but that there are systems of oppression that push families to the point of homelessness. With the collective organization and empowerment of people experiencing housing problems, government systems and bureaucratic organizations will have to consider alternatives to the minimum, “trickle-down” approach to solving housing problems. If real change, the kind needed to move families out of poverty, is going to occur one key ingredient must be the collective power of the people.

Planning for low-income families must include resident and community participation, empowerment, and organization. The focus of intervention from this bottom-up, empowered approach should include a continuum of care in the transition from homeless to renter to homeowner that includes, but is not limited to, adequate education, job creation, healthcare, nutritional awareness and other supportive care services. In addition, there must be research done to examine the long-term success of low-income families that transitioned into the private rental market or became homeowners. Questions to ask are: Are they still housed? Are there higher foreclosure rates among this population? Should the goal for home stability

be homeownership? Finally, it will be important to investigate this cohort more deeply by collecting focus group data to better understand, from the collective voice of impoverished families, what their true needs are. In addition, in-depth interviews with impoverished people may uncover their daily struggle in multi-level systems of oppression (June Gary Hopps et al., 1995).

This study also adds support to the extant literature on person-environment relationships, specifically, place identity, attachment, and dependence, as three major components of an individual feeling a sense of home. Although respondents of this study elected not to identify with the hotel because it was not the type of housing they were accustomed to, they did align themselves in the environment as long-term guests. After establishing residency by being at the hotel for an extended period, they differentiated themselves from the shorter-termed guest that “passes in and out.” While living at the hotel, one begins to “sense” other long-term families and accept that they have become one of “these people.” As a result of conducting this study, a unique subset of people are identified inside the hotel arena – marginalized, low-income families that have hopes and dreams of moving out of the hotel, but struggle with feelings of confinement and being trapped due to financial instability.

Attachment to the hotel home was affected by physical, psychological, and social aspects that encouraged or interfered with the hotel feeling like home. The findings of this study were consistent with the literature on place attachment where personalizing the space with objects strengthened the relationship between the resident and the place. An interesting finding of this study was that a place could feel simultaneously like home and not like home depending on the particular characteristic of the environment considered and the needs of the

individual at the time of inquiry. Therefore, “home” was not a static concept, but one that was multidimensional and dependent on various need-based perceptions of the individual. From participants in this study and previous research, it is clear that “home” encompasses physical, psychological, and social dimensions. A place considered “home” has the potential for desired family activity given the physical characteristics of the space. Homes also have qualities and accessories, like positive relationships and meaningful objects that help the inhabitants feel they belong. Emotional connections to the home environment are based on interactions inside the space. In addition to these three dimensions, the participants of this study clearly identified a temporal dimension. Perceptions of the hotel as home were greatly influenced by personal and socio-cultural history. The resident’s personal history contributed remembered past interactions in a space considered a home. These remembered places acted as a basis of comparison for current and future housing. The collective socio-cultural history contributed expectations of appropriate housing type. During the evolution of housing in America, there was born ideals about what various housing types communicated about its residents. Residents internalized these expectations and believed that as an adult certain housing types should be attainable. Frustrated, Bobby communicated his observations of black families have been that once a person reaches a certain age, it is expected that they are able to meet their own housing needs. Similarly, Harley, a white female, implicitly agreed when she commented that she does not ask her mother for help because at her age she should not have to do so. It was also clear from respondents that as one progresses (over time) to a dream home, it is acceptable to take first steps in apartments or townhomes. However, home ownership was the goal for the future. Therefore, for participants in this study, home at the hotel was temporary and a pause during their journey through the housing continuum.

Respondents were dependent on the hotel as home based on the perception that the hotel was a place of quality, a refuge from a previously negative situation, a place where some personal goals could be attained (i.e., saving money, remaining independent), and a place that was better than other alternatives like living in unsafe hotels or with other family members. Overall, most respondents had experienced bad situations that severely limited their housing options, which made it important to maintain their residency at the hotel. Prior poor rental histories, credit problems, and finance shortages restricted the ability to depart easily to other housing solutions even though it was clear that most residents were eager to leave. Respondents considered staying with other relatives or friends, but decided upon the extended-stay as an appropriate temporary housing solution based on budget restrictions and the need to maintain independent as a family. However, residents did not want to be dependent on the hotel due to the belief that renting an apartment or owning a home was better and limitations of the hotel room was only tolerable short-term.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study uncovered the relationships that residents have with their extended-stay hotel through descriptions of home. Specifically, respondents described “home” at the hotel, the characteristics that contributed to or detracted from it feeling like home, and strategies used to create the atmosphere of home. Based on findings of this study, I make the following recommendations for future research:

1. Repeat the current study using a data collection site with the lowest tiered²⁴ extended-stay hotel to include participants needing the most inexpensive room rental rate. Ideally, to reach people who are severely limited in finances, a hotel

²⁴ Lowest-tiered here refers to extended-stay hotels at the bottom of the hotel chain. Typically, these are older establishments with less desirable features in declining neighborhoods.

- with the lowest weekly rate would be optimal. Respondents in this current study had the choice of paying more for increased security and décor. It would be interesting to understand the relationship between families and hotels that are not of mid-range quality. The hotel selected was one that could provide adequate facility resources to accommodate a quiet and private interview atmosphere. First-hand observation of participants' rooms would also add to the descriptive data for analysis. For this current study, the guidelines of the University's Institutional Review Board restricted this possibility. This study could also have been enhanced by a longer immersion in the hotel environment. Although one week of residence in an extended-stay facility contributed a great deal of information about the hotel place as "home," a longer tenure would more than likely yield a deeper understanding of the temporal dimension that was addressed, albeit briefly, in this study. Such an extended time would provide knowledge based on the experience relative to what it is like to live in a hotel long enough to develop extended relationships with other residents and staff or to develop patterned behaviors in navigating the hotel environment.
2. Conduct a mixed-method study to help learn more about the type(s) of families that have turned to extended-stay hotels as a housing option. Such a study should provide demographic data about the individuals, as well as, their reasons and processes for selecting extended-stay hotels. Detailed case studies would also enhance the literature in this area of study and analysis.
 3. Social Work researchers can continue investigating this phenomenon in qualitative research by examining the processes of accessing and using social

- service resources for housing needs. Important questions would be: What was the process of eviction like for residents prior to moving into the hotel? What supportive networks were broken because of leaving previous housing and what systems have been re-established in the new setting (i.e. school changes, proximity to family/friends, work opportunities, leisure/hobby routines)? What institutions did evicted families turn to for housing assistance and what were the responses/impressions? Finally, what resources are currently being accessed by struggling families and how have these resources improved their tenuous housing conditions?
4. Research in housing must become a priority in social work and cognate disciplines. Existing policies have not been sufficiently scrutinized by helping professions, which has resulted in a dearth of useful information relative to how overwhelmed, impoverished, working-poor, and similar cohorts of people make housing choices given limited options. This leads and contributes to homelessness, as well as, a multitude of other social problems. To re-emphasize, outcome studies of housing interventions can provide much valuable insight to practitioners for day-to-day use in best practices. Such studies are also part of the operational loop from research to policy making to practice.
 5. Given social work's orientation to assessing "person in place," it is imperative that the field join into the limited emerging multidisciplinary discussions on "home" and housing. People need shelter. Housing is an important resource for all individuals. It is irresponsible social work practice to address the bio-physiological, social, and psychological domains of well-being without

consideration of the physical environment in which it is situated. The well-being of individuals cannot be separated from the environment in which they are expected to thrive (June Gary Hopps et al., 1995). Social workers have a unique perspective of well-being and functioning due to the impact of the environmental context when working with individuals, families, and systems. Therefore, the field can contribute real case studies to the continued theoretical development of person and environment research.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, conclusions were presented and discussed based on the study's findings. First, home at an extended-stay is considered a temporary housing solution while the family prepares to move on. Secondly, there are multiple aspects of the hotel environment that contributed to and detracted from the place feeling like home. Thirdly, residents used the strategies of adapting their behavior or adjusting the environment to create an atmosphere of home at the hotel. Implications for policy and practice were discussed and recommendations were made for future research studies.

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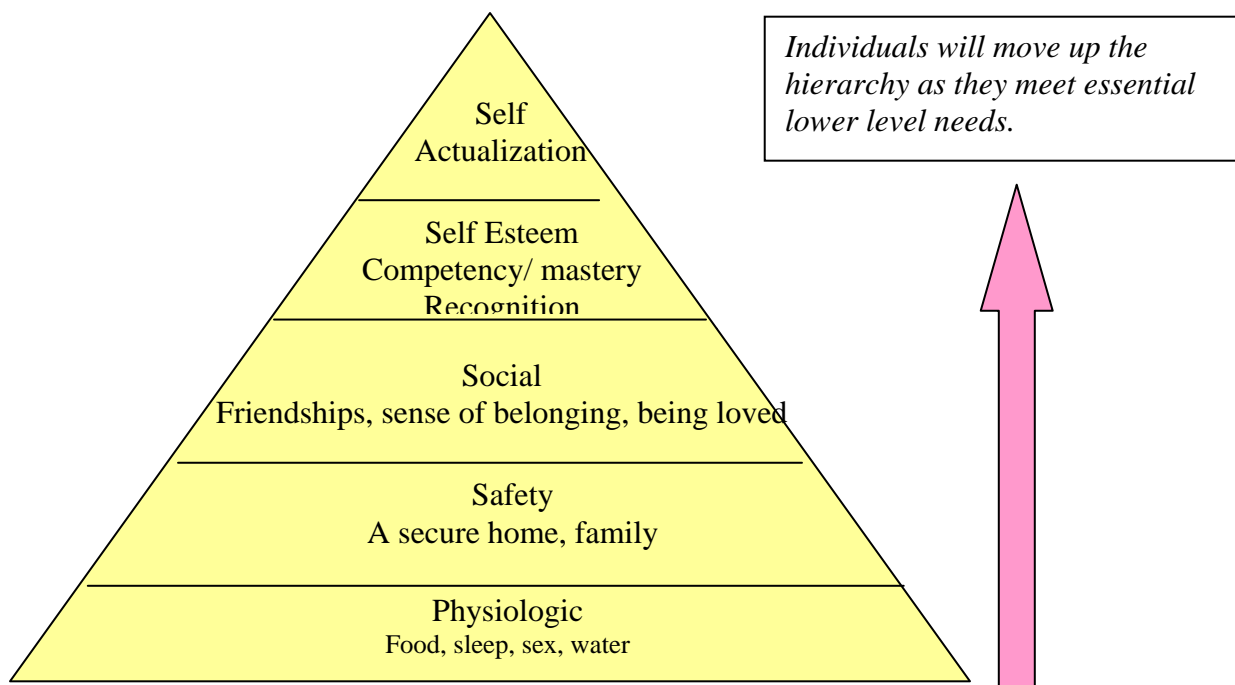
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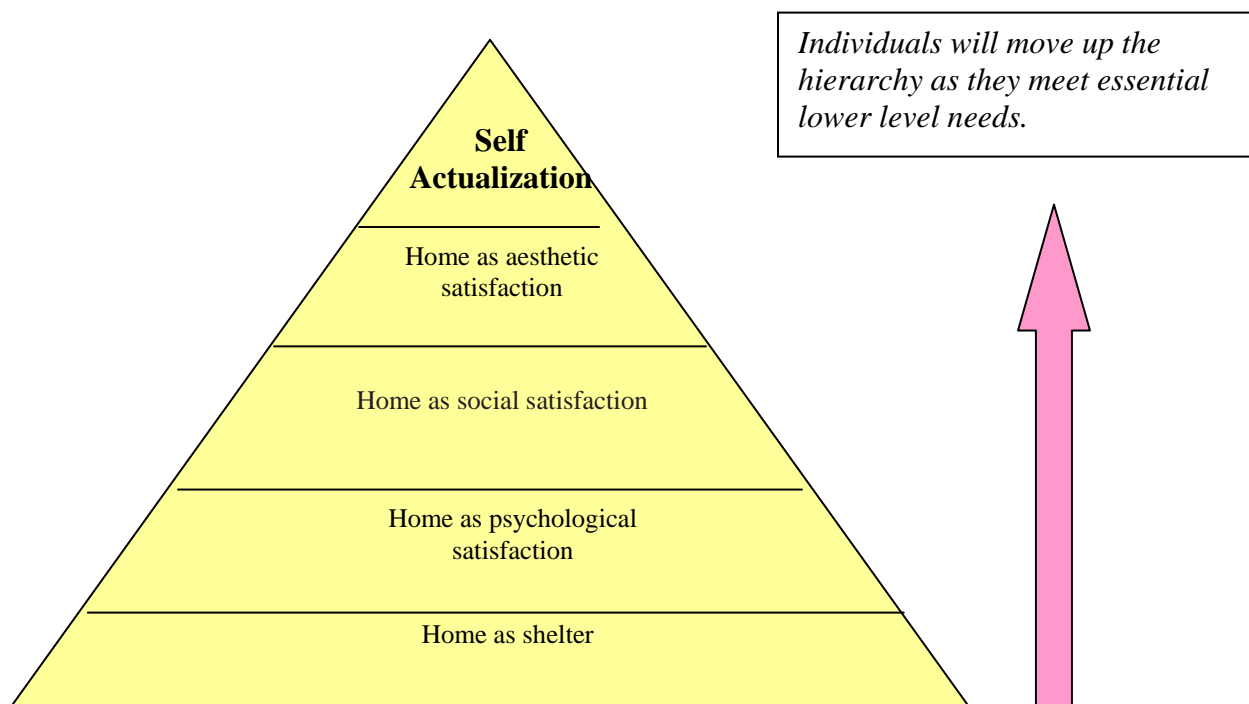
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

MASLOW'S (1968) HIERARCHY OF BASIC NEEDS

Adapted from Gwynne, R. (1997).

APPENDIX B

ISRAEL'S (2003) HIERARCHY OF HOUSING NEEDS

Adapted from (Gwynne, 1997)

APPENDIX C

THE EVOLUTION OF THE NEGRO HOME

Photos 1 – 6: African Housing

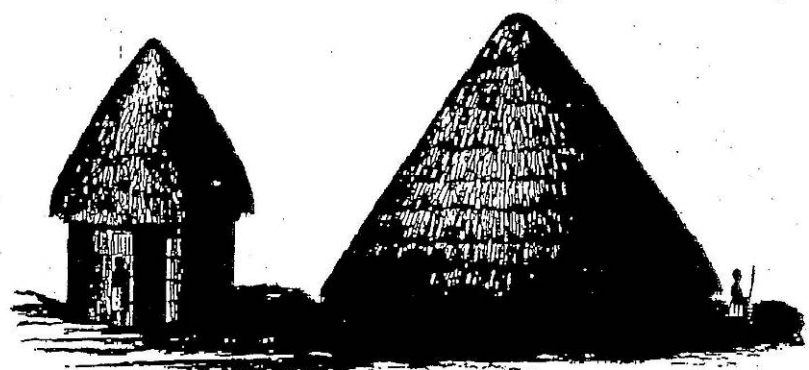
Photos 36 – 37, 40 – 41: Negro Professionals Homes

(Du Bois, 1971, pp. 80-96)

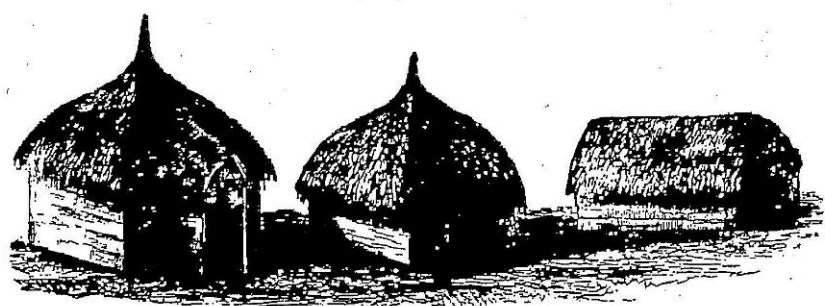
Dubois, W.E.B (1971). The Negro in American Family, Negro University Press: Westport, pp. 80-97

Evolution of the Negro Home

- No. 39—Residence of a Negro working-woman, Atlanta.
- No. 40—Residence of a Negro railway postal-clerk, South Atlanta.
- No. 41—Residence of a Negro contractor and builder, Atlanta.
- No. 42—Residence of a Negro grocer.
- No. 43—Residence of a Negro business man, insurance manager and proprietor of barber shops; now building and said to be the finest Negro residence in the South. It will have electric bells and lights, fireplaces, steam-heat, roof-garden, and 15 rooms. (Photographs 39-43 by Askew).



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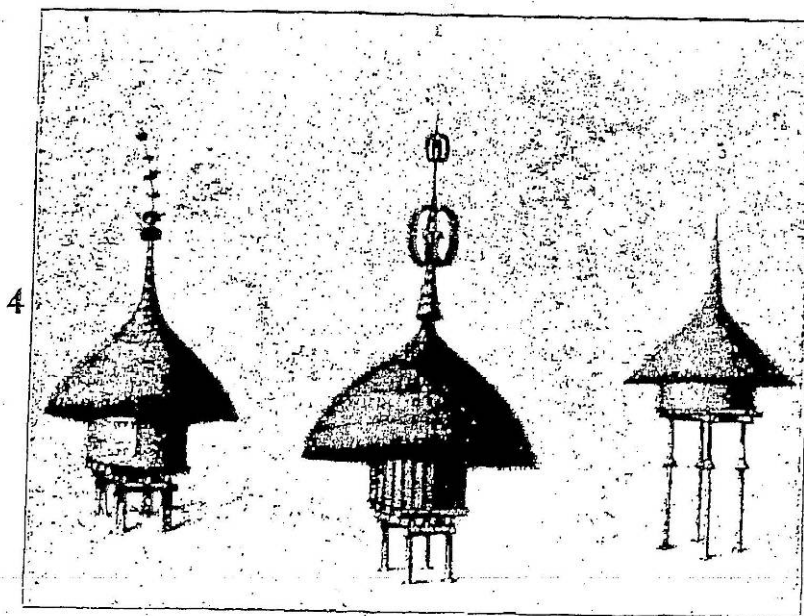
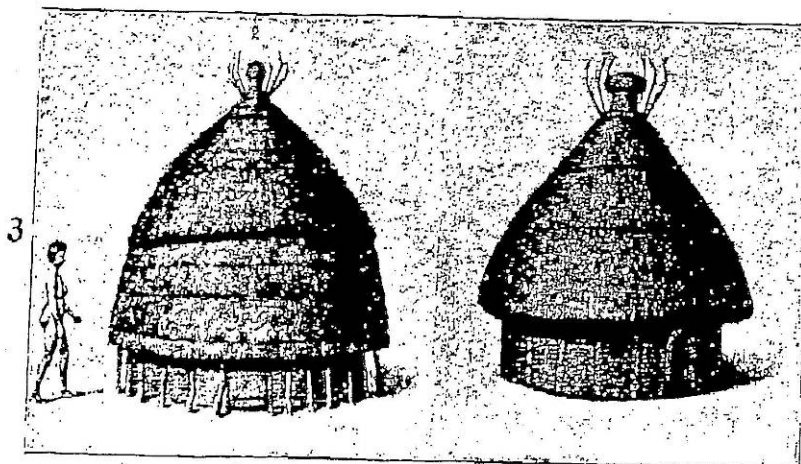


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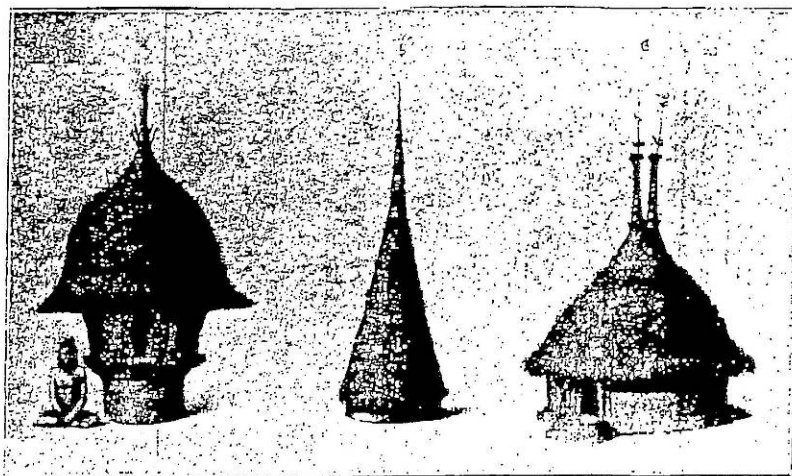


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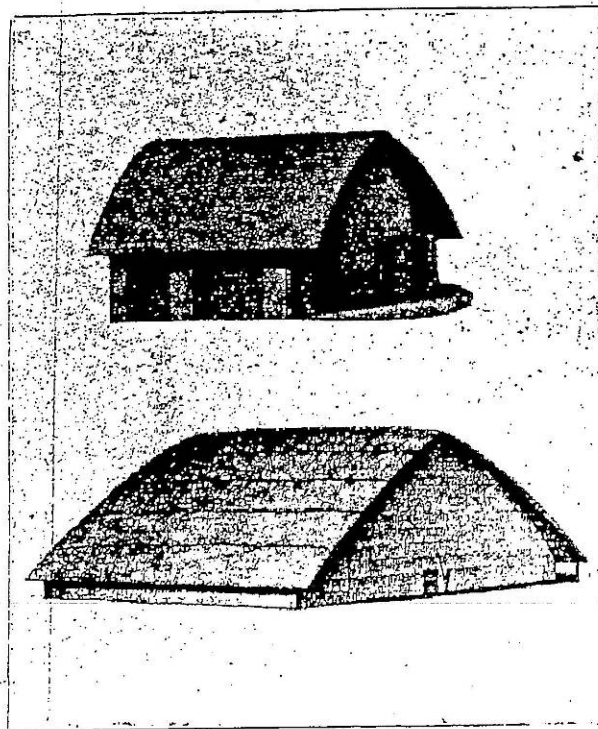
The Negro American Family



Evolution of the Negro Home



5



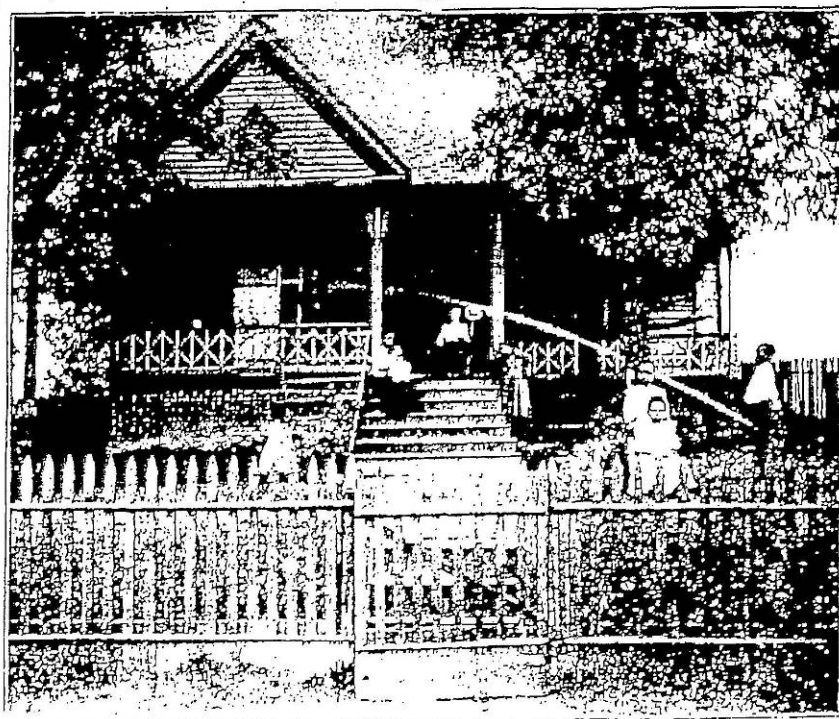
6

Evolution of the Negro Home

36



37

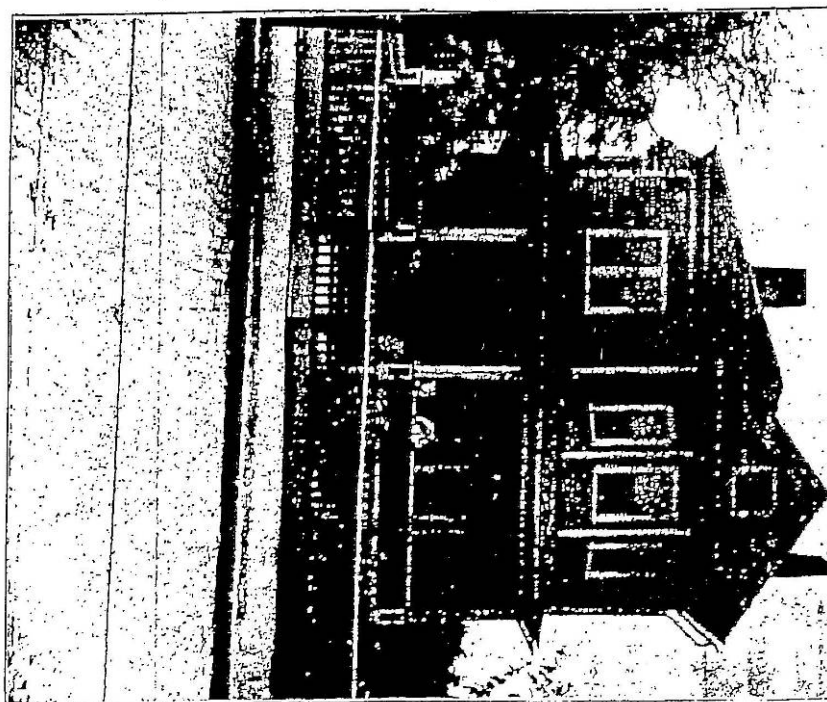


Evolution of the Negro Home

40



41



APPENDIX D
RECRUITMENT FLYER

\$20 for 90 Minutes of Your Time!

My name is Terri Lewinson. I am a doctoral student in the School of Social Work at The University of Georgia. I am interested in talking with you about your experiences living in an extended-stay hotel. Specifically, I am interested in understanding how you describe home.

In order to be a participant in this study, you will need to:

1. Be at least 18 years old
2. Be living in an extended-stay hotel for three weeks or more
3. Be living in Gwinnett County
4. Be able to speak conversational English
5. Be earning less than \$33,360.00 annually as a family

I will drive to where you live for the interview. The interview will take place at a comfortable site for both of us. Your interview will be totally private and confidential and your identity will be protected.

If you are interested in participating in this study, either:

- 1) Call me at (706) 542-3364. Please leave a message if I happen to be away.
- 2) E-mail me at terri_lewinson@yahoo.com
- 3) Send me a note, include the following information, and I will contact you:
 - Your name
 - Phone number (day and evening)
 - Time to contact you by phone

My address is:

Terri Lewinson, Doctoral Candidate
School of Social Work
Tucker Hall
The University of Georgia
Athens, GA 30602

Thank you for your interest in this study. I look forward to your participation.

APPENDIX E
CONSENT FORM

February 2006

Dear Participant,

Thank you for your participation in this study on hotel living conducted by Terri Wingate-Lewinson, Researcher in the School of Social Work, 706-542-3364 under the advisement of Dr. June Gary Hopps, Professor, School of Social Work; 116 Tucker Hall; The University of Georgia; Athens, GA 30602; Telephone 706-542-3364; E-Mail Address: Hoppsjg@aol.com.

This letter is a consent form that explains the expectations for your participation and your rights as a participant. The purpose of this study is to understand the living experiences of men and women residing in hotel housing under working poverty conditions. The benefit for you in this study is that you will have an opportunity to tell your story about daily living in a hotel setting.

If you meet the pre-screening criteria and choose to volunteer to take part in this study, you will be asked to answer questions about your life experiences while living in a hotel, which will take approximately two hours. Also, it is possible that the researcher may need to do a follow-up interview that will take from 30 minutes to two hours. Your answers will be audio-taped and kept by the researcher for up to three years in a locked office cabinet and then destroyed.

You will receive \$20 for answering these questions at the end of the interview. Even if you do not complete the interview, but complete at least 30 minutes, you will receive \$10. If you participate in a follow-up interview, you will also receive another \$10. You may also receive an additional \$10 if a family you refer completes an interview with the researcher.

Possible risks involved in this study might include discomfort or stress while answering questions about daily life stressors. Also, it is important to understand that, as a licensed social worker, the researcher is obligated by law to report instances of abuse and neglect observed at any time or disclosed in the interview. However, you are not obligated to make disclosures of abuse or neglect during the interview and the interview will take place outside of your home in a neutral location comfortable for you and the researcher.

Please understand that only the research team will know your real name. Although, your name will not be used outside the study, your answers may be published and used to complete a paper assignment for a graduate course. Please also understand that no information about you, or provided by you during the research study, will be shared outside of the research team without your written permission, except if it is necessary to protect your welfare (for example, if you were injured and need physician care) or if required by law. You will be assigned a fake name to protect your real name and the real names of family, friends, neighbors, or anyone else talked about during your interview.

The researcher will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the study (770-851-1671).

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu

APPENDIX F
INTERVIEW GUIDE

Participant: _____ Contact Info: _____

Referred by: _____

PRE - SCREENING GUIDELINE

- Be at least 18 years of age
- Be able to engage in conversational English
- Report net incomes of no more than \$33,360.00 annually for the household
- Reside at Company Suites Extended-Stay hotel in Gwinnett County as their only residence for at least two consecutive weeks
- Be open to at least one follow-up interview (with \$20.00 compensation)

Participant :

_____ Meets Eligibility for this Study

_____ Does NOT Meet Eligibility for this Study

PRE- INTERVIEW GUIDE

- Respondent has read the consent form and consents to the interview.
- Respondent has signed a release form for usage of photograph content in the study.
- Respondent has been given a disposable camera and asked to use the camera over the next week to take pictures of their home, as well as, objects, people and spaces they consider important characteristics of the home.

Interview scheduled for: _____

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Purpose: The purpose of this qualitative study is to understand the relationships existing between residents and their extended-stay hotel dwelling places through descriptions of home.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Pseudonym: _____ Date of Interview: _____

Age: _____ Ethnicity: _____ Occupation: _____

Marital Status: _____ Income: _____

Number of Children at home: _____

PART I: INTERIOR SKETCH OF HOME

Respondent Instructions:

On this paper, please draw a picture of your home. Label the spaces that you eat, sleep, bathe, relax, participate in hobbies, etc. Also, label the spaces where you spend time with other people (friends, family members, neighbors, etc.).

PART II: INTERVIEW

Research Question 1: How would extended-stay hotel residents describe their dwelling as “home”?

- 1) Mini Question: What are some descriptors of “home” in an extended-stay hotel?
 - a) How would you describe your home?
 - b) What are some characteristics of this place that make it feel like home?
 - c) What types of activities do you do in your home?
 - d) Where is your favorite place here?
 - e) What makes this particular place a favorite for you?

Research Question 2: What aspects of the extended-stay living space contribute to or detract from achieving a sense of home?

- 2) Mini Question: What is the resident’s affiliation with place? (Place Identity)
 - a) What are some things inside your hotel room that represent who you are?
 - b) What things or decorations in your home are important to you?
 - c) What is it about these decorations that make it home?
 - d) How well does your residence represent who you are?
- 3) Mini Question: What is the resident’s attachment to place? (Place Attachment)
 - a) If you would be comfortable, I’d like to know what circumstances brought you to decide to live in a hotel.
 - b) How do you feel about living here?
 - c) What do you like (dislike) about living here?
 - d) If you had to move from this place what, if anything, would you miss?
- 4) Mini Question: What is the resident’s dependence on place? (Place Dependence)
 - a) How long have you lived here?
 - b) How long do you plan to living here?

- c) How necessary is it for you to stay here?
- d) How important is it for you to leave here?

Purpose Question 3: What strategies do hotel residents use to shape their environment to meet physical, psychological, and social atmosphere of a home?

- 5) Mini Question: How congruent is the hotel living space with your needs/goals?
- a) What are some of the goals that you have for your family?
 - b) What kind of space does your family need?
 - c) How does the space inside your hotel room meet your needs or the needs of your family?
 - d) Tell me about your ideal home?
 - e) What makes the unit you live in comfortable for you?
 - f) Is there anything that you would consider wrong with your unit?
 - g) If so, how has this affected you or other family members?
 - h) How have you changed the unit to fit your needs?

PART III: PHOTOS DEPICTING HOTEL HOME

Respondent Instructions: Together, let's look at the pictures you took of your home. Describe for me what is in these pictures and what makes them important in your description of home.

POST – INTERVIEW GUIDE

- Interview **Complete**
- Interview **Incomplete**
- Follow-up Interview Scheduled for: _____

Respondent Compensated \$ _____ Date: _____

Respondent Compensated due to:

APPENDIX G

PHOTOS: CONTRIBUTING ASPECTS OF HOME

Physical Aspects



Convenient location, aesthetics, facility resources, cleanliness, friendly staff

Psychological



Safety and security and family independence

Social



External personal retreats, family and guest interactions, and staff friendships

APPENDIX H

PHOTOS: DETRACTING ASPECTS OF HOME

Physical



Small spaces that restrict options and limited storage

Psychological



Guilt, depression, and embarrassment, inability to leave or meet financial needs

Social



Restricted intimacy and difficulty finding personal space and privacy

APPENDIX I

PHOTOS: STRATEGIES RESIDENTS USED

Adapt Behavior



Changed eating, sleeping, and shopping behavior, created various uses for furniture, downsized items

Adjust Environment



Added personalized objects, decorations, and household appliances