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Drifters and the Disadvantaged: An Ethnographic Study of a Small-Town Hotel and its Residents

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DRIFTERS AND THE DISADVANTAGED:
AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF A SMALL-TOWN
HOTEL AND ITS RESIDENTS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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May 2013

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This ethnographic research explored aspects of small town residential hotel life and the perceptions of deviance within the hotel and adjoining tavern. For this study, the researcher resided as a tenant of the Hotel for a period of one year and also observed the tavern ranging in frequency from daily to monthly visits between 2008 and 2012. During the research period, the researcher became a participant observer in order to experience hotel and tavern life, administered interviews, as well as conducted a thematic content analysis of the local newspapers dating back to 1880. The research builds upon social theories and provides data that sets the stage for important spin-off projects of critical importance to small town residential hotels and low-income populations.

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To: Noam T. Stroup

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Employing ethnographic strategies, this dissertation explored the nature of hotel life in a small university town in southwestern Pennsylvania. Focus is placed on a single residential hotel established over a century ago, and one that has served multiple social functions over the years. The hotel is officially named “The Brownstone Hotel” and is referred to simply as the “Brown” by local townsfolk. The research problem is reflected in at least three ways. First, the dissertation examines the history of the hotel to discover how it has changed as a residence for transient persons. Second, this study describes the kinds of people who frequent the hotel. In this regard, the study examines the nature of the sub-culture of hotel folk as they reside in the hotel and interact with outsiders who frequent the hotel tavern. Third, this dissertation describes and explains how the hotel, as a social system, links to the small town and how locals view the hotel as a sometimes deviant or even crime-prone space.

In order to understand the themes relating to this research problem, it is important to understand the context in which the Brownstone Hotel exists today. Throughout its history, the Brownstone Hotel has served many functions within the community. In its earlier years, it was a high-class hotel and restaurant—a place where one could get the best steak in town. Later, it fell on hard times, and acted somewhat as an inexpensive and temporary housing unit for students of the local university. More recently, it has become a rather “worse-for-wear” and unkempt structure that has opened its doors to very low-income persons and even

drifters who seek temporary shelter. The hotel bar, situated on the ground floor, has itself taken on a smoke-filled, saloon atmosphere, where today's customers might only be served a slice of pizza or a greasy hotdog. The local townspeople and even newspaper accounts have described the hotel and its immediate spatial area as a place where various types of social deviance and even crimes are expected and thought to exist. It is these perceptions and this assumed deviant space that give rise to this dissertation.

In order to expand on these themes, the researcher chose to employ methods traditional to ethnography. That is, the researcher actually lived in the Brownstone for a period of time, and attempted to gain as true a subjective understanding as possible of the locale from the vantage point of experiencing the hotel in its natural setting and carrying out in-depth discussion with locals and visitors. It is important to note that a pilot study was conducted at the Brownstone during the summer of 2009 when the investigator resided within the hotel for several months to get a first-hand feel of what the research setting was like and whether or not a more in-depth project was in order. It was quickly concluded that the setting did, in fact, deserve much more attention as an important research topic and setting relevant to social science and specifically to criminology.

Research Questions

This dissertation was designed to answer the following five research questions:

1. *How has the social function of the Brownstone Hotel changed throughout the years and how is it described today?* Utilizing the methods of

participant observation, interviewing, and archival data analysis, this study explored hotel patron's personal perceptions of the Brownstone and how the media and others portray the setting.

2. *How would the Brownstone Hotel be described in regards to types of patrons who frequent the hotel?* For instance, how would hotel residents, as a sub-culture, differ from the hotel bar culture and what is the connection between the two? Additionally, if a distinct social structure emerged within the setting, how did members (insiders) interact with non-members or outsiders?

3. *How have the different subcultures of the hotel patrons evolved throughout the history of the Brownstone Hotel?* Specifically, how has the changing social structure of the region (from a coal mining to a university town) influenced the culture of the Brownstone? Additionally, are there any common themes to be found in the narratives of participants concerning their own individual socialization? How did one's life pattern lead them to the Brownstone?

4. *In what ways has the cultural setting of the Brownstone emerged as a deviant eco-niche in the small town in which it is located?* That is, does classic sociological and criminological theory on urban ecology apply today to the changing Brownstone Hotel situation?

5. *Do perceptions of deviant and/or law-breaking activities associated with the Brownstone Hotel culture correspond with realities as depicted by official police reports?*

Significance of the Research

This research is significant in at least three ways. First, the study will add to the literature on hotel life during the early period of the 21st century. That is, the structure and function of how and why people find a need for hotel residence, whether for short or long-term, has fluctuated over the decades and centuries and continually needs to be documented. Some of the better-known and more definitive studies of hotel life were completed during the earlier part of the 20th century. This dissertation helps to fill a void in the literature by enhancing our understanding of hotel life, particularly as it applies to small towns, and in this case to a small university town in Pennsylvania.

Second, the research is significant because it provides rich, ethnographic detail of the life of hotel residents and other patrons to the hotel setting. Although there is much literature related to bar behavior in general, it is not complete in respect to hotel bars, particularly in relatively poor, small town, university settings. This study generated in-depth case studies of hotel dwellers and hotel bar patrons that are by and large missing from the literature.

Third, this research sheds light on how classic theory on urban ecology, that found its golden era in the 1920s and 1930s, may or may not be relevant today in connection with contemporary hotel life in a small Pennsylvania town. Consequently, the study was significant theoretically to both sociology and criminology by analyzing the relevance of the hotel setting and its culture to the perceived distribution of crime and deviance in the town. Additionally, the study should help to clarify other related themes in sociology and criminology. These

include, but may not be limited to, social learning theory, symbolic interaction theory, urban ecology, and the social construction of deviance or labeling theory.

Definitions of Terms and Concepts

Single Room Occupancy (SRO) - An entire hotel or to a room within such a hotel.

SROs are the most inexpensive types of residential hotels. They are almost entirely residential, offering few, if any, tourist rooms. This style of housing offers tenants one small room and a washroom. No other amenities (kitchen, dining room, etc.) are usually offered to tenants.

Tenant – Any individual residing in the Brownstone Hotel.

Mixed-use Area – Area of land that is used for a variety of reasons (i.e., housing and business).

Social Structure - An organized set of social identities and the expected behavior associated with them. The concept social organization is sometimes used synonymously with social structure.

The following chapter will present a review of the relevant literature for this dissertation and will also discuss how the project is guided by earlier theory, although the door is left open for new theoretical themes to emerge from the ethnographical narratives.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This dissertation is about the changing social structure of a century-old hotel in a small college town located in south western, Pennsylvania. Although the study emphasized hotel life for tenants, it was also clear that much of the study would necessarily address social activity and behavior associated with a tavern that is situated on the ground floor of the old hotel. Substantial literature exists separately on hotel life and on bar behavior. However, the literature is more limited when considering these two social settings as joined in more of a symbiotic relationship whereby the survival of one setting is dependent upon the other.

In order to develop the relevant literature in support of the research questions, this chapter will be divided into three sections. These are: 1. Residential hotel life 2. Tavern or bar culture and 3. Criminological theory. The first section concerns residential hotels as social settings and will emphasize their history, shifting social functions in connection to changing town and urban spaces, and how hotel life has become associated with a number of social ills and deviant lifestyles. The second section will report on pertinent literature regarding bar behavior that is often identified as a potentially deviant setting or subculture. This is important because of the overlap between the bar and the larger hotel setting. The third section will examine several ways that criminological theory applies to this research and how the study may be guided by selected theoretical principles.

Residential Hotel Life

Single Room Occupancy (SRO)

Individuals have been residing in American hotels for the last two hundred years (Groth, 1994). Throughout the history of the United States, hotels have provided dependable living spaces and have functioned to support industry, businesses, and have helped represent the “melting pot” of America. Hotels also have been places that challenged the cultural expectations of housing, while also revealing some conflicts in urban America. Within this section of Chapter II, literature concerning the social history of American residential hotels and their social structure is discussed. This is important because within this dissertation it is necessary that the researcher identify the functions of the Brownstone Hotel throughout its own specific history in order to gain a fuller picture of the research setting.

Groth (1994) identifies three distinct styles of residential hotels, these being: palace hotels, mid-priced hotels, and cheap lodging or “single room occupancy” (SRO) structures. For the purpose of this dissertation, this subsection will primarily concern the SRO style of residential hotel. Single-room occupancy can refer to an entire hotel or a room within such a hotel. As stated above, SROs are the least expensive types of residential hotels. They are generally almost entirely residential, offering few, if any, tourist rooms. That is, the tenants remain longer than is common for a traditional tourist hotel, but for less time that is associated with apartment living. Although the name gives the picture of a single room, many of SROs provide personal bathing rooms. This

was not always the case. Usually, no other luxuries are offered to tenants within their living space. These types of hotels are often three to four stories in height and appear as a typical apartment building while typically housing a local business on the ground floor (Arrigo, 1998). In many instances, this business was a tavern that would be frequented by tenants (Anderson, 1923; Jackle and Sculle, 2009).

History

According to Groth (1994), the concept and function of SROs emerged in the United States during the construction of early cities in a similar fashion to what would be found in Europe. Cities of the time are described as being densely populated with mixed income groups and with housing and businesses all within the same small lots. This arrangement allowed citizens to move about easily during their daily activities and allowed them access to local services without the hassle of timely travel. Much of American hotel housing can be seen as a holdover of this style of living. According to Distasio and Mulligan (2005), the majority of North American SROs were built between the late 1800s and early 1900s. These structures tended to be situated in close proximity to the city's central train station and business district. Distasio et al. as well as Jackle and Sculle (2009) note the relationship between SROs and the train station as important given the popularity of rail transportation at the time. The result was that new arrivals into a given city could leave the station to seek affordable housing, possible employment, and entertainment nearby. Housing near a train station was devalued because of the noise, pollution, and crowdedness, so low-

income travelers did not have to go far to find cheap SROs. Much of the SRO construction reached its peak during the construction boom of the 19th century and has steadily declined in quality and status throughout the last century.

The literature notes that the decline of SRO housing coincided with three historical events. These were the decentralization of modern cities, the Great Depression, and World War II (Fogelson, 2001; Distasio et al. 2005). The first signs of decentralization were observed in the early to mid-1920s when people (upper/middle classes), commerce, and industry fled central urban locations for outlying areas in order to avoid a number of social ills associated with urban living. Much of this flight was documented by social ecology theorists of the time (Park and Burgess, 1921, Park, Burgess, and McKenzie, 1925). A number of social concerns were brought about by the spread of SROs and hotel dwellers in general. These include the undermining of domestic roles, low-density housing, and a general perception that transient, deviant subcultures resided within SROs.

According to Fogelson (2001), around 1880, city planners and commercial leaders in America attempted to build a new type of city. This new type of city was needed in the face of a number of social and physical problems thought to be associated with poor transient populations residing in high density, mixed use areas. The primary rules underlying the development of the modern city focused on the separation and specialization of areas. Groth (1994) notes that this new ideal attempted to separate social classes, while creating more privacy for families within an area that was less densely populated. This new style of city would ensure that each sector would serve its own function and nothing else—shopping,

business, entertainment for either rich or poor. This was very different from the day in which shopkeepers and their families resided in a small apartment above the family owned store. This new city would require a different style of life.

Much of this decentralization and push for a new style of city was based on the perceptions of urban life. Early hotel dwellers were not “as individuals” entirely viewed as deviants. Much like social disorganization theorists, progressive reformers like Jane Adams during the first third of the 20th century believed that the living conditions of hotels were a great deal of the problem and helped to create disorganization between families and communities of all classes, sometimes referred to as environmental determinism (Fogelson, 2001). Both reformers and sociologists depicted scenes of poor immigrant families often comprised of ten to fifteen individuals residing in one small hotel room. Negative perceptions of hotels not only focused on the living conditions of families in SROs but also on tenants within the higher class “palace” hotels (Hayner, 1936).

Hayner (1936) in his book, *Hotel Life*, depicts a number of social ills that are related to the traditional family structure. Hayner depicted children residing in palace hotels as running wild through hotel corridors, with no supervision by their parents or hotel staff. One reason given for this behavior was the belief that parents could not punish their children in a public space without feeling embarrassment—smacking your child in public being frowned upon.

A second issue concerns the traditional view of family dining. In many cases, families within high-class hotels did not eat with each other during meals (most hotel rooms do not offer a separate in-room dining space). Hayner (1936)

notes that within upper-class hotels families generally took their meals at separate times and locations (usually a public space). Much like their counterpart within palace hotels, the domestic style of SRO residents was also questioned. Within SRO districts, social reformers depicted families cramped within one room where they ate, slept, and socialized (Zorbaugh, 1926). Meals in these hotels were often prepared for ten to fifteen individuals on small hot plates and stoves, all done in the same undersized room where everyone slept (Fogelson, 2001). Additionally due to low income of many of these tenants, families were often forced to take in “boarders” off of the street in order to afford the price of rent.

These living spaces were associated with the degeneration of the American family through the breaking of traditional family time. This style of housing was also sometimes linked to a detached population of young, single individuals unwilling to start a family and settle down (Groth, 1994). Groth noted that these upper-class hotel residents were viewed as wasting their lives attending social events and depending on hotel services instead of becoming traditional marital partners. Hayner (1936) depicts females within palace hotels as “women of leisure” (p. 106) due to their reliance on hotel services and seeming disinterest in traditional female gender roles. Hayner notes that in some cases the traditional slogan “everyman needs a good woman” was changing to “every man needs a good hotel” (pg. 211). These thoughts and slogans challenged the traditional ideals of marriage and child rearing for what was being described as selfish individualism. Groth notes that as early as 1906 the conditions of hotel and downtown housing were accused of spreading selfish and self-centered lifestyles

that deter marriage and childrearing. Not only was the housing of single people a threat to traditional family values and marriage, such social styles even raised concerns about the citizenship of individuals.

To make this point, sociologists and criminologist of the period studied the people and spaces associated with SROs as highlighted by the publication of *The City by Park*, Burgess, and McKenzie in 1925. These researchers identified a specific locale of housing blocks designated as “roomers” (See page 55 in Park, et al. 1925). This location of “roomers” was positioned in what they identified as the middle of “zone II” (of five concentric zones) and recognized as the “Zone in Transition” as illustrated in their handwritten map of Chicago. Not only were such specific locales noted in Zone II (roomers, slums, ghetto, underworld, etc.) but later students of the so-called “Chicago School” or “Ecology School” of sociology regularly decried the living conditions and lifestyles of which citizens within these areas were subjected. In his work *The Gold Coast and the slum: A sociological study of Chicago’s near north side*, Zorbaugh (1926) depicts residential hotel life as follows:

The rooming-house is a place of anonymous relationships. One knows no one, and is known by no one. One comes and goes as one wishes, does very much as one pleases, and as long as one disturbs no one else, no questions are asked...Such complete anonymity could be found nowhere but in the city of today, and nowhere in the city save in the rooming house. (p. 75)

Hayner (1936) advanced this rather Durkheimian image of a single isolated individual wondering without any relationships throughout an SRO. Along this same line of thinking, Hayner set forth the following statement concerning hotel life: “Released from the bonds of restraint operative in smaller and more intimate

circles, the individual tends to act in accordance with his impulses rather than after the pattern of ideals and standards of his group (pg. 6).” Issues associated with this Zone of Transition (sometimes called the Zone of Deterioration) also included the decline of downtown retail sales and property values, bankruptcies, and foreclosures (Groth, 1994).

The Great Depression had a large impact on the number of individuals residing within SROs. Much of the overcrowding was attributed to massive migrations of working class young men who left small towns to find work in the city. During this time, housing prices (rent) throughout the country dropped by as much as 30 percent, consequently, managers were forced to require higher occupancy rates to break even (Distasio et al, 2005). Within higher class hotels, the number of tenants dropped dramatically leading to the hollowing out of many flourishing hotel districts. This in turn led to a decrease in basic hotel services and continued the cycle of poverty that was blamed for much of the issues associated with SRO living. Fogalson (2001) notes that during this period many hotel owners were forced to demolish their hotels in order to survive due to the rising taxes. Many of these hotels were replaced with parking garages and open lots. Although this change only led to the destruction of housing for the poor resulting in homelessness, it was as seen by many business and city leaders of the day as a positive since the construction of parking garages reduced the traffic and opened much needed space for parking during the rise of the automotive age.

With the start of World War II, the United States witnessed surges in employment as men and women flocked to urban areas for war-effort

employment. This labor movement overwhelmed every strata of hotel living (Groth, 1994). The SRO market flourished with the arrival of many young, single adults into the city—most without automobile transportation and the need to reside close to factories located within the central business districts of cities.

As suburban life became more popular, so also did the need for the automobile transportation. In order to connect the burgeoning suburbs to the city center, city planners called for new freeways to help drivers enter the city as well as much needed space for parking. In many cases, these new highways and parking facilities were constructed at the cost of low priced SRO housing that could usually be found in the marginal neighborhoods adjacent the central business districts (Fogelson, 2001). Although built to revitalize downtown areas, many of these new freeways only hastened their isolation as they provided commuting suburbanites' an easy way into and out of the city with little consideration for the lower-class communities that were located nearby. The new highways provided an easy way in and out, but in a sense excluded or pushed aside (or isolated) some of the low income, downtown districts as the focus continued to be on transportation and parking rather than the needs of the individuals residing in the effected (transitional zones) districts (Distasio, et al., 2005).

Groth (1994) notes that between 1930 and 1975 officials began to shift from simply creating anti-hotel policies to attempting to eliminate hotels entirely as being one of the causes of urban blight. One attempt to remove hotels from the housing market was the Housing Act of 1949, which provided federal aid for

urban development (Fogelson, 2001). This bill allowed the federal government to help cities clear areas surrounding the central business district. This act forced many hotel and small business owners to sell their lots for below market value, only to be resold (below market value) by the federal government to city business and private realty leaders. A second issue with this act is that it did not require these private speculators to build housing to replace what was demolished. Additionally, although the federal government stated that displaced families should be relocated, this policy was not enforced leaving many homeless. Finally, when new homes were constructed and identified as replacement housing, many of the individuals who were displaced found themselves unable to afford the new form of housing and were forced to seek new housing elsewhere.

During the 1960s, many SRO districts adjacent to the central business district fell victim to redevelopment policies under the veil of urban renewal. Distasio et al. (2005) note that business interests were the primary benefactor of urban renewal as they attempted to bring social classes with more purchasing power back to the downtown areas. Many of these attempts involved the destruction of SROs and displacement of their tenants as these downtown hotel districts were replaced with retail shopping centers and apartment style living designed to draw a wealthy class back to the area.

During the 1960s, the manner in which social services were delivered had a major impact on SROs. At this time, deinstitutionalization policies (Community Mental Health Centers Act of 1963) forced institutions that housed persons with mental illnesses to be released into the public under the idea that appropriate

community support would allow them to integrate into society. According to Wolch and Dear (2005), upon their release from these public institutions, many individuals found themselves moving to inner-city neighborhoods where they could find cheap housing and a number social services. This policy, along with the systemized destruction of SROs, fostered what researchers refer to as an SRO crisis.

Groth (1994) writes that throughout the 1970s the federal government sponsored virtually no hotel-styled housing. During this period, policy makers made the voices of transient, low-income citizens almost unheard. Within many districts, officials did not consider hotel dwellers to be actual citizens. According to Groth, reformers and scholars throughout history accused hotel and SRO dwellers of not voting, and when these citizens did vote it was often under much scrutiny. Managers and owners of some large SROs became known for organizing their tenants to vote for one particular party. Groth notes that in New York City, both political parties were known for using SRO tenants as cheaply paid voters. In many cases, city officials simply did not tally hotel residents as members of the community. With no official record-keeping, no one was ever formally or officially displaced by the destruction of SROs.

By the late 1970s, the policies to remove blight and urban decay had caused an SRO crisis and this SRO shortage led to an increase in homelessness. For the first time in almost one hundred years, policy makers attempted to curb the destruction of SROs. Nonetheless, many downtown hotel owners chose to overcome the problem of managing a hotel by simply closing their buildings. The

Federal Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1981 and the Stewart B. McKinney Bill of 1987 did attempt to improve SROs through the offering of subsidies to families to help with rent. In the years to follow, however, the Reagan and Bush administrations decreased public housing funding by eighty percent making the SRO and housing problem more of a crisis as the poor now had fewer housing options and less aid from the national government (Kleniewski, 2005).

The historical events and social issues discussed above led to the destruction of many SROs. From 1970 to the mid-1980s, an estimated one million SRO units were demolished around the country (Dolbeare, 1996). The demolition of SRO housing was most notable in large cities. For example between 1970-1982, New York City lost 87% of its \$200 per month or less SRO stock; Chicago experienced the total elimination of cubicle hotels; and Los Angeles had lost more than half of its downtown SRO housing by 1985. San Francisco lost 43% of its stock of low-cost residential hotels; from 1970 to 1986, Portland, Oregon lost 59% of its residential hotels; and from 1971 to 1981, Denver lost 64% of its SRO hotels (Hoch & Slayton, 1989). The loss of these structures became an obvious crisis for low-income persons. According to Green and Hay (1994), this is so because the inner city locations made these areas well-suited for commercial use rather than reconstructing affordable housing. As land values increased, more profitable market activities emerged leaving many SRO tenants homeless. In many other cases, the units were lost to fire or closed due to building condemnation.

As noted throughout this section, social reformers blamed much of the overcrowding problem on un-American housing standards driven by immigrants from southern Europe who were often characterized as large families living in one or two rooms. City planners and business officials wanted to use scientific methods and precision to create the ideal modern city in which different aspects of life were separated (business, residential, and entertainment districts). Officials wanted to remove low-income individuals from the inner city's densely populated hotels in order to reduce the social decay believed to be spread within the urban areas where private and public spaces intertwined. For example, one of the many reasons why individuals dwell within residential hotels was due to their proximity to other key services. Also, Siegal (1978) observed that residents resided in particular SROs because of their proximity to their place of work. Additionally, many hotels did not offer personal dining spaces or food storage. This required tenants to have access to restaurants that could be located in the area if not on the bottom floor of the hotel itself.

A developing problem was that these SRO tenants and families, should they be displaced, would lack traditional social involvement. These groups (both upper and lower classes) were often transient and did not own homes. They had no need for large amounts of material possessions (or could not afford them) and many young adults residing within hotels remained unmarried for an extended period. This lifestyle pushed the boundaries of what reformers believed was the type of lifestyle and housing appropriate for American families. Groth (1994) quotes one social reformist writer: "Whatever home means for us it means for

others (pg. 204).” In many cases this style of home was depicted as single-family homes consisting of three to four separate rooms located on the periphery of the city.

Progressive thinkers and business leaders of the day believed it was important to help families build communities by assisting them in obtaining mortgages in an attempt to move the poor out of the inner city and into the suburbs where local businesses were searching for a stable employee base—rather than a transient base seeking seasonal employment. In essence, reformers were stating that if we want to better our society and help families reach the “American Dream” they must first be lifted out of residential hotel living and into a single family home (Fogelson, 2001).

SRO Social Structure

As stated above social structure refers to an organized set of social identities and the expected behavior associated with them. The concept social organization is sometimes used synonymously with social structure. There are a number of studies that portray the lifestyle and social structural makeup of urban SROs (Pharr, 1971; Siegal, 1978; Winberg and Wilson, 1981; Kozol, 1988).

These authors discuss the social groups of tenants, employees, and managers.

Tenants

Although tenants are only one group within the SRO social structure, a number of different groups of tenants have been identified within the literature. Tenants generally fall into three overlapping categories: elderly (Winberg and Wilson, 1981), mentally ill/addicts (Spradley, 1970; Linhorst, 1991; Arrigo,

1994), and single people (Anderson, 1923; Siegal, 1978). For many of these individuals SRO housing is a necessity. Often living on fixed incomes or low wage labor, SRO housing offers cheap lodging without the burden of providing first and last month's rent. This style of housing affords individuals the ability to rent week-to-week. According to Hoch and Slayton (1989), this type of transience is one in which individuals remain in one location for a short period of time (two to four months) and simply leave. These individuals do not own many personal possessions and depend on the location of their living quarters to survive—access to menial work, inexpensive food suppliers, laundry, etc.. Additionally, many of these individuals depend on the services provided by the next group within the social structure, the hotel staff.

Employees

When referring to employees of SROs, Siegal (1978) uses the term “inside work,” referring to the custom of managers of hotels hiring residents as maids and handy men within the building. These tenants are usually given a small stipend and reduced rent. Researchers have found that at times these tenants can earn some social status within the building for being an employee. It is important to note that not all SROs provide these types of services. Siegal claims that much of the tenant and employee social structure depends on whether or not an SRO was considered open (overlooking behavioral infractions) or closed (being a stickler for the rules). This behavior pattern is further discussed in regards to the owner/manager.

Owners/managers

Previous research has found that most owners of SROs also manage the buildings themselves. Some owners do employ others to manage their SRO hotel (Siegal, 1978; Winberg, & Wilson, 1981), although this feature is rarely noted in the literature. Siegal notes that SRO managers generally have the closest ties to the larger community. This is simply because they are property owners and are thus stakeholders in the larger social system. Managers are in a sense “gatekeepers” by deciding who does and who does not become a tenant. Siegal writes that SROs known for being “open” generally are headed by managers, which allow or tolerate a certain level of deviance from their tenants (i.e., alcoholism, drug addiction, prostitution). These managers were also known for withholding maid and handyman services to tenants that further led to the negative perceptions and deterioration of SROs. Siegal further claims that “closed” hotels are those in which managers enforce and keep up to date on codes and make some attempt to disallow unruly groups into their building.

The literature reflects a mixture of descriptions of behavior patterns characterizing SRO residents. Some of the earlier research projects of the 1920s distinguish SRO tenants as socially withdrawn, knowing no one outside their room, and suffering from life within an anomic or disorganized lifestyle (Park, et al. 1925; Hayner, 1936). On the contrary, Siegal (1978) and Winberg and Wilson (1981) depict the subculture as organized and not necessarily socially isolated.

This dissertation builds on these earlier studies through the examination of the social structure of a contemporary, small town SRO and will explore the

activity patterns of tenants. Also, this dissertation explored how tenants interact with each other and with the larger community. This study is unique from previous urban-based research because it describes the social life associated with a small university town “Single-room occupancy” hotel in which it is the only structure of its kind, in a sense making it more isolated than those found within urban environments. This dissertation’s research questions are among the first to be explored within a small town setting. This project also differs from past research because the SRO targeted for study appears to serve multiple functions within the community.

The Tavern

Not only does the Brownstone Hotel provide housing for low income persons, it also provides a tavern frequented by the larger community. The relationship between these two hotel functions and how SRO tenants and tavern customers intermix is important and an aspect of one of the research aims of this study. Because tavern culture seems to have become such an integral part of this SRO research setting, it is appropriate to review some of the literature on bar/tavern social activity. However, it must be reiterated that this dissertation is not meant to be a study of bar behavior per se. Rather, it appears from preliminary observations of the hotel setting targeted for study that much interaction plays out between the hotel residents and employees and the first-floor tavern culture. It may be impossible to disconnect these two sub-systems. It has also become clear that whereas a sizeable amount of literature does exist on tavern culture and bar behavior in general as a generator of social deviance, the

literature is sparse on specific linkages between hotels and bars. Having said this, it is felt appropriate to cite a few examples of earlier work on tavern culture that will predictably apply to this dissertation.

The study of bars, pubs, taverns, and lounges has been of interest to criminologists, sociologists, and anthropologists for years. This is due in large part to the diverse types of subcultures, human interactions, and accepted amount of deviance (alcohol related) the bar scene facilitates. Past researchers have noted bars to be places where patrons have an “open right” to engage in interactions with others whether they are acquainted or not (Cavan, 1973). The research reviewed within this section will be helpful in later chapters when it may be necessary to clarify points pertaining to the behaviors and atmosphere present within and around the first floor tavern of the Brownstone Hotel.

According to Spradley and Mann (1975) in their classic work, “*The Cocktail Waitress: Woman’s Work in a Man’s World*”, three groups are identified that make up the social structure of bars. These are: customers, employees, and managers. Building on this, Kativich and Reese (1987) identified four distinct types of patrons: regulars, regular irregulars, irregular regulars, and non-regulars. Also, they describe the process whereby these four groups negotiate status and territorial space within the single tavern they observed. The *regular* is considered the most influential customer within the bar. Regulars gain this status within the culture by not only frequenting the setting often, but also by interacting with others (i.e., patrons/bar staff) and participating in traditional bar activities. Due to their higher status within the bar, regulars are usually given privileges that are not

offered non-regulars such as free drinks. Their participation within the community not only involves alcohol consumption but also involve activities such as assisting with training or socializing new staff, working the bar (bar tending), filling in for sick employees, and running errands for bar management. Regulars often referred to the bar as a community. At times, the researchers depicted regulars referring to the bar as “my” or “our” place. It is the use of this type of language when referring to the bar, and their participation within the culture, that separates regulars from the rest of the subculture.

The second patron group identified by Katovich and Reese (1987) is the *irregular regular*. This group consists of individuals who are accepted by regulars, even though they do not frequent the bar on a regular basis. In many cases, “irregular regulars” are individuals who at one point were regulars, but had left the area. These patrons are referred to by regulars as “home-comers.” The researchers note that members of this group generally share many of the same privileges as regulars and are considered to be on the same status level.

These two types of high status regulars differ from the third type of patron group identified by Katovich and Reese (1987)—the *Regular irregular*. This group consists of patrons who frequent a bar just as often as regulars. However, these patrons often drink alone and remain separate from the regulars and other groups. It is within this group that a “pretender” may often emerge. According to Katovich and Reese, the pretender is a patron who knows about a bar culture and would appear to be a regular to any non-regular. This position is often taken

when no one identified as a regular is present within the bar and the pretender is able to offer insight to those new to the setting.

The final and fourth group identified within Katovich and Reese's (1987) social structure is the *non-regular*. These individuals are those who do not frequent the bar on a regular basis, and are not accepted by regulars (i.e., regulars do not buy them drinks or speak to them). This group consists of "drop-ins", university students, and one-night-stands (people who appeared to be on dates). Within this social structure, this group is considered to represent the lowest status members. Similar social structures have been discussed by Fox (1987) in relation to punk bars, and LeMasters (1975) in relation to a blue-collar bars. Surely, the social structure discussed here does not encompass every group that may enter a bar. Nevertheless, the social structure discussed by Katovich and Reese is insightful and should furnish a guide for observations in this dissertation's hotel-bar interactions.

Theoretical Rationale

Several theoretical rationales logically emerge from the literature that underscore the research questions and should work to inform the findings. These are (1) Social Ecology/Social disorganization, and (2) Social Reaction or "labeling" theory). Importantly, this dissertation is not designed as a specific test of these theoretical perspectives although the door is left open for the findings to help add conceptual clarification to the perspectives (See, for example, Merton , 1949:171). As well, it may be found that in the data collection and analysis stage

of this research, other theoretical perspectives may surface which would be discussed in the last chapter of this dissertation.

Social Disorganization/Ecology Theory

Social disorganization/ecology theory rather naturally comes into view with this dissertation because most of the early research on SROs and associated social deviance has, in fact, been conducted by sociologists and criminologists who self-identify or have long been aligned with these theoretical perspectives. In a real sense, this dissertation is at least in part a replication (in theory) of some of the earlier research conducted on hotels and other urban areas in the 1920s. Unlike theories that focus on “types of people” as an explanation for crime, social disorganization theory and social ecology focuses on the types of places, such as neighborhoods that create conditions favorable or unfavorable for crime (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003). This perspective interprets city life and forms as an extension of the processes of the natural world. That is, the most important assumption of human ecology is that the city is like a living organism that consisted of interdependent parts (McKenzie, 1968; Kleniowski, 2005).

Early social disorganization research has shown that any increase in crime rates generally has little or nothing to do with the group of people moving into an area (Park, Burgess, & Mackenzie, 1925). This research focused on early 20th century Chicago, growing immigrant populations, and the impact of the industrial revolution. Social ecology emphasized what researchers referred to as concentric zones or areas within a city where crime rates (and other examples of decay or social disorganization) could be identified as rising or falling depending on the

nature of the social organization within a particular zone rather than the types of people dwelling within a particular zone.

Social disorganization was also associated with an anomic condition of the community or a lack of commonly valued norms brought on by high mobility or transience seen in some urban areas more than others (Shaw and McKay, 1942). Modern social disorganization research has shown that areas lacking in “collective efficacy” or low levels of community spirit tend to reflect higher crime rates (Sampson and Grove, 1989; Sampson, Raubenbush, and Earls, 1997; Veysey and Messner, 1999). Collective efficacy according to Sampson, Raubenbush, and Earls pertains to a neighborhood’s ability to maintain order in public spaces, when neighborhood residents take overt actions to maintain public order. This research has shown that areas comprised of poverty, residential instability, and ethnic heterogeneity often experience higher rates of crime and delinquency. Social disorganization research pertains to larger metropolitan cities (populations above 500,000) but also rural communities (populations no more than 2,500) (Osgood & Chambers, 2000).

Rodney Stark’s ecological writings (1987) carefully identify numerous patterns that predictably persist between spatial areas and behavior. Three of Stark’s propositions appear to be most relevant to this dissertation. These propositions concern mixed land use, high residential mobility, and dilapidation. Stark notes that areas serving multiple purposes, in this case a bar and housing, would tend to experience a higher rate of deviant behavior or at least the perception of deviant behavior associated with the space. As noted earlier, much

of the criticism brought forth concerning SROs and taverns relate to their locations and mixtures of different activities. Social and spatial locations within the communities were found to be important as deviancy generating features. SROs have been associated with social and physical decay of urban cities, while taverns and bars have been associated with public drunkenness and aggression.

Labeling Theory

Labeling theory, as the name implies, focuses on the formal and informal stigma (label) that is applied to an individual or behavior by the larger society (Becker, 1963). Labeling theory asserts that the assigning of an individual as deviant or criminal is not always determined by whether or not they have actually committed a deviant act. Labeling theorists assert that in many instances deviant acts committed by less influential groups (poor) are more likely to be labeled or stereotyped as deviant or criminal compared to the same act committed by a more influential group (rich). In this sense, the assigning of a deviant label is the result of who the individual or group represents in the minds of the observer or audience, rather than the actual act being committed. Thus, the actual assigning of a label may often be seen as the result of a lack of power on the part of the actor being stereotyped. According to labeling theorists, the justice system represents the interest of the dominant (upper/middle classes) as opposed to those of lower class standing and minority groups (Becker, 1963, Kubrin, Stucky, and Krohn, 2009).

Labeling theory can be viewed as an important aspect of this dissertation because it stresses that the designation of a deviant label does not require that an

individual or group actually commit a crime or deviant act. Additionally, labeling theory notes the difference in power between the labeled and those doing the labeling and how power relates to these differences. The literature review has shown how individuals in positions of power identified SROs and hotel life in general as a threat to society and such places were often defined as disreputable places.

Both social disorganization (to include social ecological perspectives) and social reaction theory (labeling) will become appropriate guides for this dissertation as they relate to the social construction of deviance within the setting being researched. Throughout this literature review, it has been demonstrated how SROs and taverns are associated with crime and deviance as a spatial area or ecological niche. Labeling theory has been identified as an allied theoretical backdrop for this dissertation because within this dissertation the researcher has attempted to discover if the Brownstone Hotel has become identified as a deviant and crime-prone space that also impacts on the people dwelling within.

Additionally, it must be added that although it is anticipated that these theoretical perspectives will pertain this dissertation's findings, the door was left open for other perspectives to emerge as relevant and even unexpected theoretical themes. The following chapter will outline the methodology used to collect data for this dissertation. Some of the methods that were employed mirror those used in similar studies of past years (Park, Burgess, & Mackenzie, 1925; Siegal, 1978; Katovich and Reese, 1987).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH SETTING

This chapter incorporates a variety of sub-topics. These include a discussion of the research setting, origin of the research idea, the research questions, the sampling procedures, and an outline of the data collection processes. Also detailed are a summary of the analysis plan, several strengths and limitations of the study, and a discussion regarding the protection of human subjects.

Research Setting

In order to understand the relevance of this topic, it is important to recognize the historical context of the Brownstone Hotel. Throughout its century-old history, the Brownstone Hotel (referred to simply as “the Brown”) has served diverse functions within the community. At one time, it was a “high class” hotel and restaurant. Over the past decade, and on occasion, it has also served as a residence for college students looking for temporary but inexpensive housing. Today, it is a relatively rundown structure that functions as a rooming house for disadvantaged transients and drifters who sometimes also frequent the hotel bar that is identified by community locals as a smoke-filled saloon atmosphere where deviant activities “reportedly” can be found. It is this often heard suggestion of the old hotel as a now deviant locale that first motivated the researcher to consider investigating further the changing social structure of the Brownstone as a significant object of study that would be relevant to criminology and to social science generally.

The Brownstone is located in a town in Southwestern Pennsylvania about an hour's drive from Pittsburgh. It is a university town with a population of about 40,000 which is reduced to a population of about 30,000 when the local university students are absent. Like many Pennsylvania towns, this setting is rather typical to the region, with rolling hills and many still standing old homes built just after the Civil War. The county suffers from relatively high unemployment and is toward the bottom of counties in Pennsylvania in regards to average income (State Data Center, 2004). The local university is the economic driving force of the town today. However, in earlier decades, it was a thriving coal mining region of Pennsylvania which still flourishes today on a reduced scale. The town is surrounded by numerous farming communities, many specializing in the growth of Christmas trees sold throughout the nation (Wood, 2001). Yet, of central focus in this study is how the Brownstone Hotel changed in function over the years to evolve into what is popularly perceived by locals as a deviant if not criminal atmosphere.

Origin of Research Idea

The Brownstone Hotel emerged as a fascinating locale for promising research during the early years of the researcher's graduate study. The old hotel was only a few blocks from campus and the first-floor tavern was occasionally a gathering place for a few venturesome graduate students. After a short period of time, the social character of the hotel with its "drifter" appearance and seamy character could not be overlooked. Much of this character was generally portrayed by individuals (peers and co-workers) within the community who

questioned the reasons why anyone would be associated with the establishment and the people within it. Because of this, it appeared as a natural stage-setting for ethnographic inquiry. It was decided that a brief stay of several months as a resident of the hotel might reveal whether or not the setting would be appropriate for more in-depth scrutiny as a dissertation project. A room at the Brownstone Hotel was rented and the researcher moved in during the summer of 2009. Approval was gained from the hotel owners and also from the Institutional Review Board. The researcher conducted preliminary inquiries of hotel activities. This initial examination emphasized the general nature of hotel life and included rudimentary observations of hotel and tavern patrons. After this initial assessment and over the subsequent semesters, it was decided that a more in-depth research project was justified. Based on these initial inquire and a short time of living at the hotel, a number of research questions were constructed for this dissertation's more exhaustive exploration of the Brownstone Hotel as an ecological niche relevant to criminology. As such, this initial inquiry can be seen as "pilot" observations for this more in-depth dissertation research.

Research Questions

The dissertation was designed to address five research questions.

1. *How has the social function the Brownstone Hotel changed throughout the years and how is it described today?*
2. *How would the Brownstone be described in regards to types of patrons who frequent the hotel? Do different sub-cultures exist at the Brownstone, and how*

- would these be described?* For instance, how would hotel patrons differ from the hotel bar culture and what is the connection between the two?
3. *How have the different sub-cultures of hotel patrons evolved throughout the history of the Brownstone Hotel?* Specifically, for example, how might have the changing social structure of the area (from coal mining to a university town) influenced the culture of the Brownstone?
4. *In what ways has the cultural setting of the Brownstone emerged as a deviant eco-niche in the small town in which it is located?* That is, does classic sociological theory on urban ecology apply today to the changing Brownstone Hotel situation?
5. *Do perceptions of deviant and/or law-breaking activities associated with the Brownstone Hotel culture correspond with realities as depicted by official police reports?*

Data Collection

Following ethnographical traditions (Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2006), this project incorporated at least five techniques of data collection. These included direct observation, limited participant observation, listening, seeking responses to pre-arranged and open-ended questions and a thematic content analysis of historical archives related to the Brownstone Hotel. Each of these is discussed separately. Discussion of the reliability and validity of the findings will be provided throughout the chapter. First, a few words are in order in regards to the sampling procedures.

Sampling

Potential subjects were identified using a snowball method of sampling. This form of sampling allowed the researcher the option of adding to the sample whenever the opportunity arose. The ethnographic approach to this study required the researcher to be open to on-the spot decisions concerning subject's participation (Phillips, 2002). According to Maxfield and Babbie (2007), a snowball sample, sometimes referred to as a "network" sample, begins by identifying a single subject, or small number of subjects, and, after their involvement in the project as interviewees, asking them to refer the investigator to others who may be willing to participate in the research. That is, after discussing a resident's perceptions of their experiences, they were asked to identify others who would be knowledgeable and willing to shed some light on the topic. This process continued until the investigator felt that a point of saturation or redundancy had been reached, or no new information appears to be forthcoming.

The sampling procedure began with the obtaining of what Maxwell (1996) refers to as "formal consent" or the written permission to conduct the study by the owners of the Brownstone Hotel. The owners of the hotel were known to the researcher because of earlier contact made with them at the beginning of the earlier exploration period. In essence, the owners of the hotel themselves became critically important interviewees and began the initial string of interviewee subjects in the snowball sampling strategy. Written, formal consent has been acquired from the hotel owners for this dissertation research. It is roughly estimated that a sample of hotel patrons numbering 54 comprise the study sample.

Some respondents did provide greater detail of information than others and some very knowledgeable subjects were interviewed on multiple occasions. This issue is discussed in more detail in subsequent pages.

The researcher guided the snowball procedure by asking interviewees to suggest participants who are particularly knowledgeable of the hotel and tavern settings. Additionally, the researcher was also sensitive to the issue of including as many subjects as practicable in the sample to include both male and female participants, both youthful and the more elderly, and those who are employed and unemployed. Also, efforts were made to include patrons who are local to the area as well as those who are drifters, or just temporarily passing through the area. The purpose was not to gain a sample that was significant in a statistical sense, but to work toward a sample that provided a comprehensive and subjective understanding of the setting.

Direct Observation

It is sometimes difficult to separate direct observation from participant observation; the two can overlap. However, there are times when the researcher was standing/sitting alone, and from a distance, observed personal or social activities within the Brownstone. To the extent that such direct observations are not a function of participation in some kind of social activities with patrons, the observations are referred to as direct (Berg, 1989). On occasion, such direct observations also were helpful in clarifying responses to particular research questions. In these instances, the researcher did not identify himself as a

researcher to those individuals being observed, as this information is understood to be public knowledge.

An important aspect of direct observation is the amount of time the researcher spends in the research setting. Berg (2007) refers to this as “prolonged engagement in the field.” For this study, the researcher resided as a tenant of the Brownstone Hotel for a period of one year in total. A four month period between April 2008 through July 2008, and again for eight months from August 2011 through March 2012. The researcher also observed the tavern throughout the period of 2008 through 2012 ranging in frequency from daily to monthly visits. This time spent in the field has an effect on both the reliability (would similar methods produce similar findings by other researchers) and validity of the study. Lewis (2009) notes that in order to enhance reliability of observations, researchers should vary the time and places those observations occur. As a tenant of the Brownstone Hotel, the researcher had access to the setting at all times throughout the day and night. This extended observation period allows the researcher to become an insider and will assist the researcher in gaining informal consent within the hotel’s various subcultures. Importantly, when the researcher becomes an accepted insider, the issue of having undesirable effects (i.e., “reactivity”) on what is being observed is lessened (Lofland, Snow, Anderson, and Lofland, 2006).

Participant Observation

The researcher often visited with tavern patrons and residents in the actual confines of the Brownstone Hotel and experienced first-hand the living

environment of the individuals residing there. Expectedly, in some cases, the researcher visited with patrons in their private living quarters within the hotel. In these instances, the researcher self-identified as a researcher. In addition, the researcher sat at the bar with patrons and spent time with them in various recreational areas such as the game room, live music area, music festival/concerts, farmers markets, etc. Consequently, this technique of understanding patron/resident life by the researcher is deemed as full or near-full participant observation. Importantly, because the investigator was actually experiencing life at the Brownstone, he himself was able to acquire some personal understanding and meaning of what a particular respondent may be trying to describe because the experience or stimuli is shared by both respondent and interviewer.

It is important to discuss the researcher's membership role within the study. Adler and Adler (1987) outlined three membership roles adopted by field researchers. In this dissertation, the researcher adopted what Adler and Adler refer to as "peripheral membership roles" (PMR) and "active membership roles" (AMR) within the hotel setting. PMR is related to the method of direct observation, as in observing the sub-culture from the edge as discussed earlier. AMR is more clearly identified with participant observation. By becoming a tenant of the Brownstone Hotel, it can be argued that the researcher is becoming an active member of the social setting. The researcher will mix both the PMR and AMR roles.

Asking Questions

A straightforward way to gain an understanding about what was going on in the Brownstone was to ask questions of those individuals living and frequenting the setting. Asking questions ranged from formally structured interviews, to offering a greeting or making a comment on the stoop and gaining a brief but perhaps very meaningful response from the passerby. In this project, the researcher memorized a small number of semi-structured questions that he used to illicit information from patrons either at pre-arranged meetings or as the opportunity arose during participant observation activities. In some cases, the researcher actually met with patrons/residents and sat down at a table/stoop, bar, or apartment. Unless forbidden by interviewees, these interviews were recorded onto a digital recording device (Sony MP3 IC Recorder) and transcribed upon their completion.

Importantly, was expected that some informal interviews would attract other patrons of the setting and a “group discussion” would spontaneously evolve. This rather natural process was encouraged. In a small group setting, one member may have motivated another to respond or remind another of information that had perhaps been buried or forgotten. In these situations, a more “focus” group process is approached that may furnish deeper insight than sometimes gained by individual responses. This project was not constructed in a strict sense as an “interview” study or an attempt to arrive at a specific number of interviews in the style of a face-to-face questionnaire survey. Rather, based on months of residence in the Brownstone Hotel and of getting to know patrons through full participant

observation, the researcher will spoke to as many patrons/residents until new information is no longer forthcoming.

It is important to emphasize that because personal, in-depth narratives were sought, it is not critical that the exact same questions are asked in a prepared order to a pre-set number of respondents. It was fully anticipated that extended case-studies would emerge which would, for instance, elaborate on how one participant came to be where they are. One respondent may have been very vocal and after a single question may speak for thirty minutes providing a variety of scenarios from which the researcher would be able to extract information relevant to the research questions. The researcher may have opted to return to a particularly enlightening respondent on multiple occasions. In such cases, some respondents may actually become what field researchers refer to as “expert informants” (Schwandt, 2007). Other participants might have been less forthcoming and the researcher may have to probe more deeply to gain personal, subjective accounts and consequently ask more questions. Much of the data collected for this project emerged from open-ended questions asked of patrons of the hotel. According to Fetterman (1998), open-ended questions allow the participant a greater range of interpretation. These types of questions helped the researcher to gain detailed information and open doors to new questions to be explored—furthering the interview process as each response lead to further questioning.

The researcher had an informal guide prepared for interviews, containing questions that could be asked of each participant. Many of these questions were

memorized. However, questions were asked as topics arise while talking with a participant. Some questions were asked in order to gather certain types of information important to the issues being faced by the patrons and employees of the Brownstone Hotel. Issues of concern included friendships within the subculture, patron socialization to the subculture, and how all of these topics relate to the perceptions of life at the Brownstone Hotel.

Questions included the following which in some cases purposefully overlap:

1. *How did you become a resident of the Brownstone Hotel?*
2. *How you were first introduced to the Brownstone Hotel?*
3. *Why do you live here (Brownstone Hotel)?*
4. *What is it like living in the Brownstone?*
5. *Do you feel that this is a friendly place? What makes you say this?*
6. *What do you think about this town?*
7. *Do you have a job in the area? How do you pay the bills?*
8. *Would you say living at the Brownstone is safe? Why do you say this?*
9. *Do you ever hear that this neighborhood is a rough or bad area? Why do you think people might say this?*
10. *How important is the bar to your life here in the hotel? What do you mean?*
11. *Do the police seem to come here to the Brownstone often? Why do you say this?*
12. *How has the Brownstone changed since you have been coming here?*
13. *What would you say the townspeople think of the Brownstone?*

By asking these and any number of other open-ended questions, the researcher can gain both reliability and validity. By asking participants the same or similar questions at different periods, the researcher was able to enhance reliability in the questioning strategy. That is, do the participants respond in a comparable fashion to related questions? Lewis (2009) notes how this is similar to the “test re-test” and “split-half” method used by quantitative researchers. Additionally, the open-ended strategy of questioning should enhance validity of the findings if as the researcher is able to gain increasingly rich description (Berg, 2007).

Informal Listening

Much information was gained from simply listening to patrons as they mingled in and around the Brownstone Hotel. Here, reference is made to information that does not derive from investigator questions to the patrons. Yet, conversations, or other sounds overheard can be helpful in adding to the overall understanding of the climate of the research setting. This was referred to by the anthropologists Strickland and Schlesinger (1969) as “lurking” behavior. This information was documented in field notes but not audio recorded. It is anticipated, for instance, that just sitting at the first-floor tavern of the Brownstone Hotel will allow substantial overhearing of routine conversations (unintentional eavesdropping) of hotel guests and bar patrons.

Archival Records

According to Lofland et al. (2006), archival records include a range of materials from newspaper articles, personal documents (diaries, journals, letters),

or public documents. This type of data collection is unobtrusive. For this study, the researcher will conduct a thematic content analysis of the local newspaper dating back to the 1870s. The researcher has subscribed to *Digital Archives of the Indiana Gazette* (Website, 2010). With this subscription, the researcher conducted a thematic content analysis concerning the Brownstone Hotel's portrayal in the local media and police crime logs. In total, the researcher discovered 203 publications within the local newspaper related to the hotel. Additionally the researcher gathered information concerning the Brownstone Hotel housed at the Indiana County Historical Society and the Indiana Free Public Library. As archival evidence, this strategy helped in exploring the perceived function of the hotel, and how it has changed over the years. It also helped to understand how some participants gained their perceptions of the hotel. Finally, the use of still photography of the hotel, both within and without, will further augment understanding of the setting. The researcher recognizes the ethical considerations of using photography as it relates to participant confidentiality and will not take photographs of participants.

Field Notes

For this study, it was important that detailed field notes be maintained on a strict daily basis. The field notes consisted of results of all forms of data collection witnessed or experienced by the investigator, and included outcomes of participant observation, listening, and direct observation. Two journals were maintained during the research period. One reflected interview summaries. With this journal, the researcher gathered his initial beliefs and viewpoints pertaining to

an interview. This journal was also used to keep memos and future questions. The second journal recorded descriptive data concerning the research environment and the stimuli that is experienced by the researcher. Information within the first journal will contain no identifying information. It will simply concern the researcher's initial thoughts relating to interviews and memos taken during the observation period. The second journal simply contained the descriptive minutia and off-hand comments about the immediate research setting.

Obtaining member checks, concerns reviewing collected data (field notes/interviews) with members of the subculture (Berg, 2007). Allowing participants to review data allowed members to clarify points and misinterpretations. This is important because it gave the respondent a second opportunity to respond to a question (enhance reliability). Additionally, it helped the researcher with descriptive validity. Descriptive validity refers to the researcher accurately depicting an event or an interview the way it occurred. This includes the words spoken and the setting in which it took place. Occasional member checks can help to ensure that the researcher is accurately describing the setting from the perceptions of the individual. Member checks also help to ensure interpretation validity. That is, did the researcher accurately interpret the meaning of an event or narrative found within an interview? This will help the researcher to better understand the perception of the group setting of the hotel and tavern to minimize researcher bias.

Analysis Plan

All fieldwork data was transcribed into computerized hard-copy format. The researcher will employ a thematic coding technique, whereby the researcher will scan for themes and subtopics embedded within the field notes. First, the researcher followed an initial coding procedure by analyzing each line of text. Notes were written beside each line describing what is being expressed at the time, or the topic of the conversation or themes. A second review took place after themes have been established in order to ascertain patterns found among the initial themes. It was expected that various terms, concepts, and themes emerged from the data were arranged into table format to illustrate patterns and any relationship to theory.

Within field notes and any subsequent analysis, participants were identified with a letter and number. In order to prevent confusion for the reader, participants were labeled with the first letter of the role in which they play. For example, a patron visiting the first-floor bar would be labeled PB-1 or an actual resident of the hotel will be labeled PR-1. This precaution was taken during the field note stage of the research assuring the confidentiality of identifying respondents. Throughout the project duration, the researcher reviewed responses (simply repeating the participant's response back to them) with participants in order to assure a complete account of the participant's experience or narrative. Coding took place between observation periods (the evening of data collection, or as soon after as possible). This allowed the researcher to assimilate the data soon after it was collected and also allowed for new interview questions to be

generated based on the on-going data gathering process. A second coder who was not involved with the subculture but knowledgeable of the topic (fellow student) was engaged to code field notes along with the researcher. This limited researcher predisposition or bias and allow for a more precise and truthful evaluation of the data.

Field notes were transcribed onto a Kingston thumb drives using the researcher's personal computer. The researcher will maintain security of the portable external drives which will only be used for the project data. All data and consent forms will be kept for three years in a locked filing cabinet located in the researcher's office following IRB guidelines. Only the researcher and his advisor have access to this material. Interviews that are electronically recorded will be transcribed into hardcopy format and also transferred to a computer drive.

As a second check of field notes, the researcher has downloaded *NVivo* provided to students at Indiana University of Pennsylvania's research lab. *NVivo* is a qualitative analysis software package designed for researchers using in-depth interview data (Research Lab Website, 2011). This software is designed to help the researcher sort and code data. This form of data analysis may also help limit any researcher bias that may be present. All field notes were typed (or recorded) onto a computer in which the program was downloaded.

The final use of field notes is related to what Lewis (2009) refers to as an audit trail. An audit trail provides documentation of the decisions made by the researcher. This audit trail concerns daily activities related to the study, dates and times of observations, and decisions concerning financial matters related to the

study (i.e. rent paying by residents, etc.). The researcher and the dissertation adviser will have had access to the audit trail which will be kept in a locked file cabinet along with field notes and other data collected for this study.

Human Subject Protection

Punch (2005) argues that research needs to address the following areas concerning ethical considerations: informed consent, confidentiality, ownership of data, use of results, honesty, and harm/risk. The researcher used the human subject participation booklet given to researchers at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Participants of this study were made aware of all ethical considerations in a letter (Appendix B). Individuals willing to participate in the study received one Sheetz (local convenience store) coupon worth up to \$7.00. If the researcher was unable to provide consent forms (unforeseen circumstances that may arise during observation) the researcher obtained verbal consent from participants. Furthermore, the identities of participants will remain confidential. Other than noted on consent forms, participant names are not found within the finished project or the field notes. All participants were made aware of this and participation was voluntary. All participants were at least 18 years in age.

Ethical Concerns

A number of ethical concerns can be raised when studying deviant subcultures or conducting ethnographic research in general. It is important that these concerns are brought to light, and strategies for limiting these concerns are established. These concerns pertain to participation of female members of the

subculture, illegal behavior, participation by individuals who may be under the influence of illegal substances, and illegal substance use by the researcher.

In these modern times, it is important to discuss the issues that may arise when a male field researcher seeks information from female members of a subculture. The input of female members of this subculture is important to this study. Women may have different reasons for participation in the subculture and these differences need to be noted (or they may be the same as males). However, for protection against claims of any type of unethical behavior, female participants were only interviewed in public areas and in plain sight of others.

The participation in illegal behavior by the participants is a second concern that can arise from this research. Illegal behavior is predictable within this type of subculture and is a common topic within the fields of criminology and sociology (Anderson, 1923; Becker, 1963; Spradley & Mann, 1975; Duneier, 1999; Venkatesh, 2008; Bourgois & Schonberg, 2009). The researcher will not report illegal behavior (for instance, public intoxication) to the authorities that is not viewed as excessive or endangering others. Only major crimes would be reported if observed.

A second issue that arises with this type of research concerns participants being under the influence of drugs while participating in the study. The researcher attempted to speak with as many sober patrons as possible throughout the research process. However, it is possible that some patrons will be under the influence of illegal substances without the researcher's knowledge. The ability to act sober even while under the influence of drugs was noted by Becker (1963),

when he discussed musicians performing while under the influence without the knowledge of those in the audience or others in the band. By spending a large amount of time in the field and attempting to interview participants on multiple occasions the researcher can limit the amount of instances in which the individual interviewee is intoxicated (5:00pm compared 1:00am).

An additional concern is the issue of drug use by the researcher. If participants insist the researcher, “take a hit” the researcher will refuse. It is imperative that the mental state of the researcher not be called into question by the participants. It is important to note that not all issues can be predicted at this time and thus will require on-the-spot decision making by the researcher.

A final ethical concern related to this study is the issue of poverty and ethnographic research. Previous research relating to settings that are similar to the that of the Brownstone Hotel have shown that poverty is generally an issue within such populations (Anderson, 1923; Hayner, 1936; DiFazio, 2006). The researcher must ensure that he is in no way taking advantage of these individuals. As noted, the researcher will offered a coupon for food at a local convenience store in exchange for participation in the study.

Implications

This dissertation’s methodology was designed to respond to specific research questions. The methods discussed throughout this chapter add to the reliability of the techniques and validity of the findings. The researcher has made attempts through the use of triangulation, audit trails, member checks, multiple methods of coding, and prolonged field observation to ensure that the study is

sound. The researcher acknowledges however, that ethnographic and qualitative research in general requires flexibility in order to handle the constantly changing social setting under study.

CHAPTER IV

HISTORY OF THE BROWNSTONE HOTEL

In order to understand current perceptions of the Brownstone Hotel it is important to understand its past. In this chapter, the history of the Brownstone Hotel will be discussed. The main history of the Brownstone that is discussed here begins around 1957 (simply because these people are still alive). Although the researcher attempted to gather as much historical information as possible through traditional routes (Historical Society and local newspaper), the main source of historical data emerged from the narratives of owners, employees, and patrons. As noted earlier the local newspaper archive was utilized. This allowed the researcher to examine articles and gather information dating back to the hotel's construction in 1876. Much of the historical discussion relating to the time period before 1957 originates from this data archive.

Within this chapter, I will discuss the history of the Brownstone Hotel as constructed through interviews with town locals and a thematic content analysis of the local newspaper. This chapter is divided into sections according to time periods that have been identified using the name of the building during the specific period discussed (i.e., The Clawson House). Data collected from the thematic content analysis has is divided into different themes identified as business, location, public space, pride, and deviance. Articles coded as business related to those stories, in which the different business aspects of the Brownstone Hotel are being discussed (i.e., advertisements and applying for a liquor license). Articles coded as locations are those in which the location of Brownstone Hotel is

highlighted as a positive or negative within the newspaper's story or advertisement. Articles falling into the public space theme are those in which the article highlights the environment in and around the hotel as one used for community purposes (i.e. auctions and political headquarters). The next theme identified within the content analysis is referred to as pride. These articles are identified as those in which the hotel was depicted as a place townsfolk should be proud of (i.e., article highlighting important guests or events). The final category identified is referred to as deviance. Articles identified in this category relate to those where the hotel is mentioned in relation to a deviant act that took place either in or around it (i.e., bar fights, domestic dispute, arsons, etc.).

Centennial Hotel (1876-1880)

Located on the corner of 6th and Water Street, the Brownstone Hotel is neither a hotel nor is it the color brown. Constructed in 1876 by Mr. J. R. Reider, it has gone through many changes throughout its long history (Wells, 1993; Wood & MacGregor, 2002). For example, when constructed the hotel was one of at least nine other residential hotels within Indiana Pennsylvania. Some of these other hotels were the Kline House, West Indiana House, Farmers & Drovers Hotel, and the Union Hotel. Of these nine hotels, the Brownstone Hotel is the only one operating to this day.

First known as the Centennial Hotel, named after the national centennial that occurred that year (Wood & MacGregor, 2002), the building replaced a hotel known as the Hines House that stood on the same location. Before becoming the Centennial Hotel the building was also believed by many regulars and bar

management to be a stopping point for the under ground railroad during the Civil War era. Evidence of this can be found in the basement where escape tunnels still run into the middle of 6th street.

The Centennial Hotel was constructed during a time of expansion in Indiana. An example of this expansion is the buildings construction only a year after the opening of the Indiana State Normal School (Wood & MacGregor, 2002). The building was constructed with the purpose of being a central public space, even being noted in a later advertisement as having a “superior location” (The Indiana Democrat, 1/4/1899). Constructed behind the courthouse and only a few blocks from the local train station (constructed in 1850) the hotel was a prime location for travelers to area.

Not only did the hotel provide housing for the growing community, it was one of only a few licensed (allowed to serve alcohol) hotels/taverns in the community. This additional attraction drew local residents to the building as a recreational spot creating an environment which allowed locals, coal miners, and visitors to the area an opportunity to interact. Not to overlook, the building created a potential space for disgruntled court goers or recently bailed visitors of the local jail a place to relax and have a dinner and a drink. In addition to the Centennials’ location, the building was also significant for its unique roof which is an Italianate style jerkin head cross gables, incorporated into the hipped-roof construction design (Historical Society Website, 2010). This means the roof does not gently slope to a point; instead, it appears to be clipped and sharply declines. This unique design made the Centennial a visual attraction as well as functional

one. The name Centennial (celebrating the country's birthday) itself indicates the buildings importance to the town as a symbol of both the growth of the country and community. Although the original name may have been given in an attempt to show pride in the area, it did not last.

Finally, only one mention of the Centennial Hotel could be located during the conducting of the thematic content analysis and it fell into the category of deviance or public space (i.e. a place to congregate and unwind). This article is dated October 12, 1876 and refers to an incident involving "bad whiskey",

There was quite a lively time for a few minutes at the Centennial Hotel on Thursday night last. A young man, full of excitement and bad whisky amused himself throwing stones through the glass in the front door. The arrival of officer Jack Sherman caused a cessation of hostilities and prevented any serious damage. (Indiana Progress, 10/12/1876)

Reider's Hotel (1880-1882)

Three years after its construction, owner J. R. Reider changed the name of the hotel to Reider's Hotel, not surprising since the building was located a few blocks from the local distillery also owned by A.J. Reider. This was the name for only a short period of time (1880-1882) and could not be identified within the thematic content analysis. Only one article could be located concerning this time period reflected in a news story related to the buildings historical significance in the area (Indiana Evening Gazette, 1980). During this time period the hotel was part of a larger collection of bonded whiskey warehouses and distilleries owned by A.J. Reider. These properties were located on either side of north 4th street and helped to create a central hub for Mr. Reider's businesses as well as gathering place for citizens. Much like its previous namesake the designation Reider's Hotel only lasted for a period of two years, this being the shortest length of time

for any of the structure's names. Other than the single news story, no publications were discovered pertinent to this era.

Gompers House (1882-1891)

After a period of two years, the name of the hotel switched from Reider's Hotel to Gompers House, although the Reider family still owned the building. The change in name occurred because the Reider family, although owning the building, hired a Mr. Charles Gompers to become the building's landlord. Apparently, for nearly a decade (1882 through 1891) the hotel became so identified with the landlord that a change in name was accepted.

Mr. Gompers would remain the landlord at a wage of \$400.00 a year from 1882 through 1891. The thematic content analysis uncovered twenty articles mentioning Gompers House. Each of these articles fall into one of the common themes (see table). Seven of the articles from this period related to business, six to pride in establishment, and four to deviance. As presented here, events will not necessarily be depicted in the order in which they occurred; instead, they will be depicted as general events falling into the different themes.

Business

The most prevalent type of articles discovered pertaining to the Gompers House related to the business aspect of the hotel (i.e., business and services offered to clients). Articles related to the business of the hotel fell into two separate types. The first relating to the services provided by the hotel and the second concerns public sales held at the hotel.

The first type of article falling into the business theme was related to the kind of services provided by Gompers House. These included housing (for both short and long periods) and dining. The hotel was advertised to a variety of customers ranging from students, coal miners, traveling salesmen, veterans, and visitors to the local courthouse/jail. The following are examples these types of advertisements:

Persons attending court, who desire a quiet, home-like place to rest after the worry of the day, and where they can get the best meals and all at the lowest rates possible, will find no hotel in town better adapted to their taste than the Gompers House. (The Indiana Progress, 6/3/1886)

Teachers attending institutes will find it to their advantage to shop at the Gompers House. (The Indiana Progress, 12/28/1888)

This first type of theme indicates that the structure was used to serve variety populations within the area. These articles depict the services as being of high quality but also in the case of housing, the “lowest rates possible.” In the first example concerning individuals attending court, this population would likely be a regular clientele for the hotel because the courthouse/jail was directly across the street (i.e. the back door to the courthouse/jail opened to the front door of the hotel across the street).

The second type of news items that fell into the business theme differs from the first because these could also fall into the public space themes. These articles depict the hotel space as one that drew outside businesses to the community and also one that was a common gathering place for public events (auctions). An example of this occurred on October 30, 1889 in the *Indiana Progress*:

Friday, Nov. 1, at 1 p. m.—At the Gompers' hotel, Edmund Hughes will offer at public outcry the following property; 8 head of good horses, 1 black horse, (well- bred) 1 sorrel horse, (a daisy and good blood) a lot of buggies, carts, harness and rope.

This type of article was identified four times while the structure was known as the Gompers House. During this period, the building attracted outside business or traveling salesmen specializing in a variety of areas. These included farm tools, and domesticated animals (horses, mules, etc.). These types of events were advertised in an attempt to draw large numbers of citizens from all around the area to the community (i.e., drawing both extra business and using the hotel location as a public space).

Pride in the Establishment

A second type of theme identified within the content analysis related to community pride in the establishment. While known as Gompers House the newspapers within Indiana published six articles depicting the hotel space as one in which citizens should take pride. These publications ranged in topics from noting the establishment's hospital nature, change in appearance (coat of paint), appetizing food, and finally labeling Mr. Gompers as an excellent landlord within the area. An example of each of these themes was published on July 29th, 1886 in the *Indiana Progress*:

The Gompers House has received a new coat of paint, which adds greatly to its appearance. Mr. Gompers is anxious to keep up the good reputation this house has already attained by making it cheerful and inviting both outside and in.

During this period, it appeared that the Gompers House was a well-respected establishment within the community. Articles noted that Mr. Gompers was able to keep the establishment occupied in terms of both tenants and

restaurant patrons. Mr. Gompers was congratulated for his performance during the week of the county fair (*Indiana Progress*, 10/14/1886), and by serving up to 75 meals a day during a busy week of court (*Indiana Progress*, 12/23/1886). It appears that during this period the hotel was perceived to be a popular establishment within the community. The local newspaper depicts Mr. Gompers as being a capable and respectable landlord. This type of positive media continued through the period when Mr. Gompers was responsible for the hotel. This is despite a number of reported crimes that occurred in the hotel.

Deviant Behavior

Interestingly, the two earliest news articles that surfaced during the content analysis were related to deviant behavior. The first mention of the Gompers' House pertained to a series of burglaries that occurred in the hotel.

A couple of accomplished Pittsburgh sneak thieves succeeded in robbing the money drawer at the Gompers house, in this place, of eighty dollars, mostly in silver, on the day of Allison's execution. (*Indiana Progress*, 3/1/1882)

While known as Gompers House the building experienced at least three separate burglaries between 1882 and 1891. On other occasions, two rooms were burglarized as was the building's pantries (*Indiana Messenger*, 1/29/1890 &, 10/19/1887). Even though these events fall into the deviance category, it is important to note that in these stories and instances the hotel/subculture is depicted as the victim.

The fourth and final article related to deviance (also the last news article in which the building is called Gompers House) is one in which the character of the building ownership (Mrs. Reider) is questioned by the current landlord (Mr.

Charles Gompers) during the attempted leasing of the hotel by Mr. W. H. Clawson. This dispute and eventual compromise was given front-page attention in two separate Indiana newspapers. The Indiana County Gazette published this article on April 18, 1891 shedding light on the dispute between the parties:

The Gompers House changes hands after a Compromise.

Who would be proprietor of the Gompers House for '91 was in dispute last week, and was not settled until Monday. The trouble was in this shape: Mr. Charles Gompers, the occupant, claimed that he had rented from Benjamin Junker, the authorized agent of Mrs. Reider, the owner of the property, and that his lease did not expire until April, 1892. Mrs. Reider was of a different opinion, claiming that Mr. Junker was not her agent and the time had expired. On this theory, she had rented the hotel to Mr. William Clawson at \$550 per year, while Mr. Gompers had been paying \$400.

Last Wednesday morning Mr. Clawson drove up to the hotel with a load of furniture and demanded possession, but Mr. Gompers refused to vacate. Mr. Clawson then withdrew. After considerable discussion, a compromise was brought about by Mrs. Reider paying Mr. Gompers \$125 damages. Mr. Clawson took charge of the hotel Monday.

This final case of deviance is interesting because it notes the transitional point between the changing of landlord of the building (the firing of Gompers and the employing of Mr. Clawson). It also was the first and only time the buildings management or subculture's character was called into question while Mr. Gompers was the landlord. As noted above, much of the published media related to the hotel during this period was positive and generally favorable of Mr. Gompers performance. Mr. Gompers did not even appear to have any knowledge of the contract negotiated between Mrs. Reider (building owner) and Mr. Clawson (new lease). As the news article noted, Mr. Gompers believed his contract ended in 1892 (one year later). Not only did he not know about the contract, he had been paying/negotiating with a Mr. Junker who claimed to be an agent for Mrs. Reider (she denied this claim). This episode calls into question the management

abilities of each of the parties involved. The article does not go into detail as to how the confusion between the parties came about and the true relationship between Mrs. Reider and Mr. Junker. It does note that Mr. Clawson was willing to lease the building for \$150.00 more a year than Mr. Gompers. Although there is still some confusion relating to this event and eventual settlement, it does make an interesting transition into the period in which the hotel became known as the Clawson House.

The Clawson House (1891-1915)

As noted in the previous section, Mr. Clawson became the landlord of the building under strange circumstances. The name Clawson first appeared in the *Indiana Messenger* on February 4, 1891, when the paper stated that he was in town for the sole purpose of leasing the building. Outside of the article previously noted relating to the leasing of the building (published in the *Indiana County Gazette* on April 18, 1891), this article published in the *Indiana Progress* was published on the same day notes only Mr. Clawson's takeover of the building:

It is the 'Clawson House' now. The Gompers House changed landlords on last Monday morning. Mr. Charles Gompers retiring, and being succeeded by W. H. Clawson. It is not necessary for us to give the present landlord an introduction to our people, for who does not know W. H. Clawson? All say "W. H. will make a good landlord." It will be his aim to make it a pleasant home- like place for persons to stop at when visiting in town. Step in some day and hang up your hat, and try the old reliable house under the management of the new proprietor.

Although this article gives a glowing impression of Mr. Clawson, it is important to remember the circumstances in which Mr. Gompers retired (a dispute requiring a \$125.00 settlement). While known as the Clawson House, the

building was mentioned in the local media for a total of fifty-eight occasions (between the years 1891 and 1916). These news articles were also categorized into the general themes of business/location (seventeen), pride (fifteen), and deviance (twenty-five). Some articles fell into two themes. Within this section, these themes will be discussed. Not all the articles will be discussed in the order in which they were published. Rather, it is the intent of the researcher to simply reveal a pattern (although the attempt is made to help the reader understand transitional moments within the buildings history).

Business

The initial article related to the leasing of the hotel by Mr. Clawson was published in the year 1891 and the next mention of the Clawson Hotel was dated January 4, 1899 that concerns the sale of the building by Mr. Clawson. This article highlights a number of different aspects of the buildings structure, location, and business potential.

This is a large three-story brick building excellent repair and within 1 min. walk of the courthouse. It has long been used for hotel purposes, enjoys an excellent patronage, is one of three licensed hotels of the town, and its convenient, large and airy rooms, ample facilities and superior location make it most desirable. Connected with the hotel property are various outbuildings, including two large stables, sufficient to accommodate nearly 100 horses; good icehouse, etc. there is room on the lot, which is 80 feet by 175 feet, for a large addition to the hotel should its purchaser desire to add to it. (*The Indiana Democrat*)

This second publication is important as it relates to a variety of themes related to the business/location aspects of the building, each adding to the potential of the space. First, the article stresses the buildings location in relation to courthouse as well as simply stating that the building is located in a “superior location.” In addition, this article also stresses a number of structural/environmental factors

that make the hotel an attractive structure to purchase (i.e. large rooms, various outbuildings, stables, etc.). Also noted are other services the structure is licensed for such as the sale of alcohol, a restaurant, and use lodging. An important aspect of this article is that it is in relation to the building's sale. Within this section, I will discuss various topics that arose within news articles categorized as business. These articles fell into three separate categories, including sale/purchase of the property, attracting other business, and general services provided.

Sale/Purchase of Property

While the building was referred to as the Clawson House, it was sold a total of three times. The hotel changed hands in 1902 (sold by Mr. Clawson to Mr. C.M. Wortman), 1913 (to a Mr. T.M. Moore for the price of \$38,000.00), and 1916 (to Mr. D. M. Brown). The buildings lease changed hands (i.e., new landlord was placed in charge of the building) on a total of three occasions: 1902 (Mr. McGinley leased from Mr. C. M. Wortman), 1908 (Mr. Wortman become landlord and owner), and 1913 (Mr. T. M. Moore leased the building to Mr. D. M. Brown). Although not all of these transactions were relevant to content analysis, at least four of them were. These fell into two types: disputes (three) and non-disputes (one). These will be presented under the sub-section of "Deviant behavior" later in this chapter.

In order to save the reader confusion the relevant new items pertaining to "business" are discussed in the order in which they were published. While the building was owned by Mr. C. M. Wortman (1902-1913), the hotel was leased to a Mr. C. McGinley (1903-1908). Mr. McGinley was a successful landlord of the

Clawson House until 1907 when the following news article was published February 13, 1907 referring to his closing of the building,

Clawson House Closed

Charles McGinley, landlord of the Clawson House, closed the hotel to the public on Saturday evening. Mr. McGinley was refused license last month and since his bar is closed he claims that the receipts from the hotel are far less than his expenses. The property belongs to M. O. Wortman of town, but Mr. McGinley is responsible for the rent until April 1908. (*The Indiana Progress*)

The Clawson House remained closed to the public until it reopened in early 1908 due to Mr. C. M. Wortman taking charge of the building (owner/landlord). Much of the circumstances related to the reasoning of the closing and eventual reopening will be discussed within the section concerning deviance during the Clawson House period. However, the reopening of the Clawson House to the public did draw attention from two separate newspapers within Indiana,

Clawson house to re-open January 1. C. M. Wortman will have entire charge of first ward hotel. New furnishing coming. Six thousand dollars will be spent in making the place modern.

After the indirect result of a sale consummated on Thursday, the Clawson House will be re-opened to the public shortly after the New Year. The hostelry will be personally conducted by C. M. Wortman, owner of the building. Mr. Wortman's decision to reopen the house followed the sale by him of his brick residence on the southwest corner of Sixth and Water streets...The consideration was \$7,500. When the Clawson House again welcomes guests, the hostelry will present a new and natty appearance throughout. From cellar to dome, new furniture and equipments will be installed. About \$6,000 will be expended in furnishings alone. Mr. Wortman will apply for liquor license at the next license court. The Clawson House has been closed for some months as Charles McGinley, the leaseholder, decided he could not conduct the hotel after he failed to secure license. When Mr. McGinley left Indiana, he sold all the furniture in the hotel. (*The Indiana Evening Gazette*, 12/13/1907)

These two articles indicate that the Clawson House was closed to the public for a period of around eleven months. Although both newspapers promoted the opening as an important event within the community, emphasizing the spending

of \$6,000.00 and furnishing of the structure, the opening was controversial as it involved the breaking of the contracts/lease between Mr. Wortman and Mr. McGinley.

These articles are important to this section as they relate to the impact deviance had on the owner's business while the structure was known as the Clawson House. It is important to remember that during this eleven month period the hotel had no guests of any kind (previously noted the case of Mr. and Mrs. E Mahaffey) and potentially could have lost tens of thousands of dollars in profit.

Despite these articles relating to negative aspects of the hotels closing and eventual reopening, Mr. C. M. Wortman was able to eventually open the Clawson House and obtain a liquor license. He would run the hotel until November of 1913 when he sold the structure (also transferring the liquor license) to a Mr. T. M. Moore for \$38,000.00. This sale occurred on November 19, 1913 and falls into the non-dispute type of news article because it relates only to the normal transaction taking place between the two parties.

New Landlord in Charge.

Mr. T. M. Moore, of Punxsutawney, who recently purchased the Clawson House, assumed charge on Monday when a transfer of the license was granted by Judge S. J. Telford. Mr. C. M. Wortman, the former landlord of the hotel, and Mrs. Wortman may spend the winter in Florida. As noted in the Progress two weeks ago Mr. Wortman received \$38,000 for the hotel property and furnishings, although the garage on Water Street was reserved. (*The Indiana Progress*, 11/19/1913)

Mr. Moore would lease the property to a Mr. D. M. Brown. The transferring of the liquor license to Mr. Brown from Mr. Wortman was noted in an article related to the granting of a license to Mr. Brown for the first time. The article noted that "all applicants had been passed upon in former years except Mr.

D. M. Brown (*The Indiana Evening Gazette*, 1/28/1914). Documenting these themes is important because they help to lay out a general ownership pattern during this period. This information relates to all aspects of the hotel (i.e., individuals responsible for drawing business or conducting ethical business).

Other Business

Much of the archival information discovered related to the hotel's general attraction to other businesses in the area between the September 27, 1899 and April 4, 1907. Five advertisements note a variety of business were drawn to the Clawson House. There were two types of announcements that were revealed with these five advertisements. The first type of news item and the most common (similar to those mentioned in previous sections), relates to instances in which the hotel brought extra business into the community. An example of one business drawing upon customers at the Clawson House was Madam May:

Madam May Is Here

Madame May, the famous palmist, by request can be seen a short time at the Clawson House. Consult her and become successful in business, love and marriage. Come daytime all who can. Half price today and tomorrow only, 50 cents. (*Indiana Progress*, 10/22/1902)

Other advertisements encouraged purchase of local food and farm animals (horses and goats). Each of these news items appeared between 1899 and 1902. Mr. Clawson owned the hotel until around 1902.

The fifth news article related to the topic of attracting business is different from the other news items, in that it related to a business's change of venue from the Clawson House to another hotel in the community.

At the Central Hotel Mrs. W. E. Mahaffey of the Exclusive Optical firm known as Mr. and Mrs. E Mahaffey, of Pittsburgh, is now at the above

hotel and will remain until Thursday April 25th. NOTE-Owing to the closing of the Clawson House, where we have had rooms ever since our first visit here, the above change in hotel was made necessary. (*Indiana Evening Gazette*, 4/4/1907)

This article is curious because it relates to the moving of a business away from the Clawson House. It also notes that this business (optical firm) had occupied space within the Clawson since its arrival in town and was leaving due to the buildings closing. This is an important note because there was a significant time period (between 1907 and 1916) when no articles were uncovered that related to extra businesses being attracted to the hotel. Much of this may be related to other issues faced by the hotels management during the Clawson House era (to be discussed later within this section).

General Services Provided

Four of the articles within this section related to the services provided within the hotel itself. Importantly, there was a large gap (1903-1911) within the content analysis when no news articles were published relating to these aspects (two articles published before 1903 and two after 1911). These advertisements or articles highlighted services such as free transportation from the local train station, and such things as fine dining, and building expansion.

Improving the Clawson House

Extensive repairs are being made and an addition built. C. M. Wortman proprietor of the Clawson house is having extensive improvements made on his hotel. An addition is being ' built, which will include a kitchen, laundry, and bedrooms. The dining room has been remodeled and is now one 'of the most attractive hotel dining rooms in town. Mr. Wortman expects to have the office enlarged and a new plate glass front put in, which will face Sixth Street,

The work is being done by contractor, T. J. Swan, of Kane, Pa. Mr. Swan has just completed remodeling and enlarging the house on Water Street belonging to Mrs. S. E. Nicholson. (*Indiana Gazette*, 7/8/1911)

The author notes a variety of improvements to be made within the hotel structure to improve the business aspects of the building.

Despite a period between 1903 through 1908 in which the hotel was closed, much of the Clawson House era, publications relating to the business aspects of the hotel appeared to be quite positive in nature and involved a variety of functions. These functions included providing a public shuttle to the train station, and attracting large public auctions. While owners/landlords of the building, including Mr. Clawson, Mr. Wortman, and Mr. Moore were depicted as respectable business men. Mr. Clawson was even able to purchase a new hotel in Indiana and named it the “New Clawson House.”

Pride in the Establishment

Fifteen articles were discovered that depicted the Clawson House as a business/structure that the community should take pride in. A few of these articles were similar to those discussed about the Gompers House era (i.e., hospital nature, change in appearance, appetizing food). An example of each of these themes was published on January 2, 1901,

The editor is under obligations to Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Clawson, of the Clawson House, for a finely dressed fowl which served us for dinner yesterday. Mr. Clawson said the chicken was hatched during the latter part of the last century and was as young and juicy as it looked. He was not mistaken, and if Clawson House guests are fed on this kind of birds there remains no wonder why they look so sleek and hearty. (*The Indiana Messenger*)

A second common theme relating to pride pertains to a tradition that originated within this same time period. This was the traditional reunion of sheriffs that began February 28, 1900 (this theme can overlap with the public use

theme). The following event was described in an article published on February 28, 1900,

Reunion of the Sheriffs
Pleasant Gathering of Ex-County Officials at the Clawson House. On Thursday evening every living exsheriff of the county, except one, was present at the reunion held at the Clawson House. Landlord Clawson served an excellent supper to his guests, and later in the evening an organization was formed by electing M. F. Jamison, president, and James McGregor, secretary. Messrs T. S. Neal, D. C. Mack and H. P. Lewis were appointed a committee to fix time and place of next reunion, which will hereafter be held annually. The only absent member was H. C. Howard, of Fort Collins Col., who sent a letter of regret, which was read at the meeting. All of the ex-county officials were accompanied by their wives. (*The Indiana Progress*)

These types of events are important, as they are examples of the hotel being used as a gathering space for organizing official/informal meetings (i.e., organization of public offices, businesses, unions, and mourning's of death).

Each of these articles shows the Clawson House as a place where people can meet and of which they can be proud. Many of the articles relating to the theme of pride were dated between 1881 and 1903 when Mr. Clawson was both the owner and landlord. This is important because this theme (gap publications) was also discovered within the section related to business during the Clawson House era. Shortly following Mr. Clawson's sale of the building in the early 1900s, much of the press related to the hotel begins to shift from generally positive into negative.

Deviant Behavior

The most common theme of the content analysis relating to the Clawson House time era pertained to deviance (twenty-five articles). These articles are categorized into three different groupings. These are: 1. The Clawson House as

victim, 2. The Clawson House as deviant, and 3. The Clawson House as associated with deviance.

The Clawson House as Victim

While known as the Clawson House the hotel structure and the people within the building were portrayed in the local newspapers as victims of crime more often than any other depiction. Between the years 1891-1915 the Clawson House (or patron/employee) was identified as a victim of a crime on twelve occasions. These instances of victimization included one burglary three cases of domestic abuse (one, in which the Clawson House was shelter for an abused wife), two fires, and three instances of fraud.

The earliest article related to the Clawson House related to the poisoning of a recently hired landlord. The article published in the *Indiana Democrat* reported of a “scoundrel” who poisoned a number of people leaving candy covered with croton oil on a parlor table (2/22/1899). Not only did the incident make news, the symptoms displayed by the landlord Mr. Clawson were also published days later on February 1, 1899.

1899 February 1

Stove polish does not work

...landlord Clawson ate a half of one of the infected lozenges, but was able to conceal the effects of it for a time. But Saturday, when all the other sufferers had fully recovered, Mr. Clawson suffered a relapse. He was noticed acting queerly, giving directions to the hostler to grease the politician, Clerk McAdoo to kalsomine the boardwalk leading through the lot, and other freakish remarks. But when he went up the street and bought a box of stove polish and put a bright shine on his new shoes, it became apparent that he would have to be closely watched... (*The Indiana Democrat*)

These articles are thought-provoking because they represent the earliest publicity that could be identified within the content analysis identifying Mr. Clawson as the

landlord. This is in addition to the controversy related to the previous leaseholders agreement with the owner of the building Mrs. Reider. It should be noted that the four earliest articles related to the transition between the Gompers House and Clawson House pertain to deviant behavior in some way. In addition to this series of articles, Mr. Clawson is quoted in a later news item threatening the life of a group he believes to have burglarized the hotel on three occasions during the previous weeks (*Indiana Messenger*, 10/31/1900).

A second important set of victimizations relates to a series of forgeries taking place at the Clawson House between 1912 and 1916. These acts occurred under the watch of both Mr. Wortman and Mr. D. M. Brown, the latter being discussed in this article published June 17, 1916,

A bold attempt was made this morning to victimize D. M. Brown, proprietor of the Clawson House. Early this morning William S. Smith, a Negro of Punxsutawney, came into the office and inquired of the clerk, Mr. Simpson, as to the whereabouts of the proprietor. He was told to wait, as Mr. Brown was busy. While waiting he asked the clerk to cash a check for 825.50 for him. The clerk refused, but said possibly Mr. Brown would cash it for him. When the proprietor appeared, Smith asked him for a job as a bar porter. He was told to call later.

A short time after this he appeared at the Deposit Bank and had a check for \$25.50 cashed and bearing the endorsement of D. M. Brown. It was made payable to Wm. S. Smith and was signed William E. Ellwood, Harless Shop, Someone in the bank noticed the signature looked peculiar and

Mr. Brown was called and asked if he had indorsed the check, He replied he had not, The police were notified and a short time Chief Harris located the Negro in Brody's Department store where he was busily engaged in getting rid of the money. He was quickly placed under arrest and will be given a hearing tomorrow, All the money was recovered. (*Indiana Evening Gazette*)

Even though there were many instances when the hotel/patrons were depicted as victims of a crime, the type of crime/victimization appears to vary depending on

the time period or during the tenure of a particular owner/landlord. For instance, this seems to not have occurred when Mr. McGinley was the hotel landlord.

The Clawson House as Deviant

Although there were nine news items related to instances that described the hotel in a deviant light, seven of the eight articles pertained to the same incidence, and two involved the illegal selling of alcohol. The first illegal sale resulted in the eventual closing of the hotel. The incident that appeared to have the largest impact on the establishment was given front-page attention with the headline “Rumors Flying Thick and Fast: Who’s going to be Prosecuted Next?” (*Indiana Gazette*, 3/7/1906).

This incident involved the sale of alcohol to minors while Mr. McGinley was landlord of the hotel. The final verdict took place over course of a number of hearings but ended in eventual closing of the hotel. The content analysis revealed a total of seven articles related to this case.

Opinion Handed Down In the McGinley License Case

On Monday an opinion was handed down in the Superior Court at Scranton A reversing the decision of Judge Telford in revoking the license of Charles McGinley, landlord of the Clawson House.

The license was revoked July 31, and Mr. McGinley's attorneys appealed to the Superior Court which issued an order of supersedes. The appeal was argued in Philadelphia last' October, and the main reasons given by McGinley's counsel was that the license was revoked on' alleged violations of the liquor laws occurring prior to the license and against the good-faith instructions of Charles McGinley, and also, because a hearing was not granted. (*The Indiana Progress*, 2/27/1907)

This is an important case because it resulted in the eventual closing of the hotel for eleven months, and the relinquishing of the contract between Mr. McGinley and Mr. Wortman. Although the hotel was eventually opened and Mr. Wortman ultimately received a liquor license, it did cost him around \$6,000.00 to reopen

and furnish the hotel. Mr. Wortman almost lost his liquor license again in January of 1912 when he was accused of the same crime.

The Clawson House as Associated with Deviance

The third type of common theme emerging from the content analysis relates to how the hotel became associated with persons who must be described as possessing a deviant if not law-breaking past. On three separate occasions the hotel was identified in news articles as a previous place of employment for individuals subsequently facing serious criminal charges (i.e., assault, murder, and arson). A first case pertains to the shooting death of a fourteen-year-old boy by a former clerk of the hotel, and a second case involves the arrest and eventual trial for arson of the building's namesake and one time owner, Mr. W. H. Clawson.

The first news article is important due to the nature of the crime. The accused (a storeowner) was reportedly burglarized. The following night, in an attempt to stave off another burglary, Mr. Bucher stayed in his store overnight and armed himself with a 38 caliber revolver. Around 5am when he heard a sound at his front door he "crept up and fired at the person whom he could see but dimly." The person at the door (fourteen-year-old Daniel M. Peer) ran to his house (with Mr. Bucher in pursuit) where he collapsed and died from the gunshot wound on his families back porch. The article noted that Mr. Bucher claimed to have been burglarized on three separate occasions within the last month and had decided to wait for them to come back. Mr. Bucher claimed that he did not intend to shoot the person at the front door but intended only to scare them. He also claimed to have not been able to identify the person at the door due to the time of morning.

The article notes that the employee was very well respected within the community,

...is well and favorably known...About 10 years ago he was clerk at the Gompers Hotel, now the Clawson House, and was regarded by all as a quiet, law-abiding citizen who was always anxious to do any kindness in his power to the guests of the hotel or to anyone who called upon him. His friends hereabouts will be loath to believe that he acted with any malevolent feeling in the sad occurrence and will hope for a speedy acquittal on the ugly charge against. (*The Indiana County Gazette*, 11/8/1899)

The second case is pertinent as it involves the former owner of the hotel Mr. W. H. Clawson. This case is also interesting because shortly after Mr. Clawson sold the Clawson House (to Mr. Wortman), he purchased another hotel in town and named it the New Clawson House (*Indiana Evening Gazette*, 2/24/1909). While the proprietor of this new hotel, Mr. Clawson was brought to court on charges of assaulting a railroad boss (10/20/1909), as well as an attempted arson of the New Clawson House in order to collect on the insurance money. The following is an article published on the front page of the *Indiana Progress* concerning the event,

Aged hotel man is charged with arson. Mr. W. H. Clawson alleged to have fired property.

William H Clawson, the aged hotelkeeper of this place was held for court trial on a charge of arson at a preliminary hearing before Justice of the peace James A. Crossman on Thursday. The arrest of Mr. Clawson resulted from the investigation of the cause of a fire at the Clawson House early Monday morning of last week by deputy state fire marshal Harry Senior of Washington Township. At the hearing on Thursday fire Chief H. C. Christie testified that following the fire now a quantity of shingles and paper which had been soaked with oil in the vicinity in which the fire started. Frank H. Learn the east Philadelphia St. grocer testified that he sold a quantity of oil to Mr. Clawson previous to the fire. Frank F. Brown a border at the Clawson House substantiated the testimony of Mr. Christie it was also testified that a quantity of waste and an oil can partly filled with oil were found in the house. At the conclusion of the testimony, Mr. Clawson was held for court trial and gave bail for his appearance at the March term. Mr. Clawson who is aged about 70 conducted the Clawson house on N. 6th St. for a number of

years. He retired, but recently used the old Kinter House on E. Philadelphia St. remodeled and opened under the name of the New Clawson House. (1/21/1914)

This situation is interesting because the purchasing and naming of this hotel the New Clawson House could lend to some confusion for individuals within the town and readers of the local newspapers (the researcher for one found this confusing). Within multiple articles related to the two hotels, the newspaper rarely distinguished between the new or old Clawson House. Therefore, a brawl at the New Clawson House would be published as a fight at the Clawson House with little distinguishing between the two, and therefore causing confusion. These two examples of previous ties to later (as in 1890s through early 1900s) deviant actions are interesting as they draw the Clawson House into behavior that actors within the hotel had nothing to do with but were still associated with. This connection to deviant behavior pertains to the theme of the Clawson House as associated with Deviance.

As noted earlier, the most common overall theme emerging from the content analysis (related to the Clawson House) pertained to deviant behavior (twenty-seven publications). Despite the majority of these articles portraying the hotel/staff/patrons as the victims of some crime (burglary, domestic assault, arson, etc.), the news reports of deviance depict the hotel as a place where illegal activity is often found. Other than various kinds of victimizations, the hotel itself or owners were also involved in a difficult transition from the Gompers House to the Clawson House with negative publicity pertaining to at least three instances of illegal sale of alcohol, and one occasion of cruelty to animals.

While known as the Clawson House, the establishment was described as serving a variety of social functions (both deviant and non-deviant) depending on the building's owner or caretaker. Even with the instances of deviance found in the content analysis, a number of news articles discovered presented the Clawson House in positive light. During most of the period when Mr. Clawson and Mr. Wortman were owners, the hotel enjoyed positive press. During Mr. Clawson's era, the building became the site for the annual sheriff's dinner (12/12/1900) and was often noted for being inviting and having "a cheery dining room" (1/30/1901). The only period when the hotel or overall cultural setting was shown in a negative light was the period when the bar was closed for an eleven-month period due to the sale of alcohol to minors (while Mr. McGinley was the landlord). It is also important to note that while much of the press related to the hotel after this event is positive, the association with this event and other deviant or law-breaking activities (usually with the hotel or patrons as victims) may still lead some to perceive the hotel residential setting as a irregular or rough place.

Brownstone Hotel (1916-Present)

Despite being purchased by Mr. T. M. Moore and having Mr. D. M. Brown placed as landlord in 1913, the hotel did not become the Brownstone Hotel until 1916 (*Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey Form*). Though a search of the name Brownstone Hotel in the local newspapers data base does not give the name "Brownstone Hotel," until October 21, 1926, in reference to two "small neat furnished apartments" being for rent in the hotel (*The Indiana Evening gazette*). This section concerning the period in which the structure was known as the

Brownstone Hotel is broken into two parts. The first section relates to period of time when the Brown family owned and operated the hotel (1913-1957) the second concerns the period when the current owner's family purchased the hotel (1957 – present).

Brown Family (1913-1957)

As noted, D. M. Brown took charge of the hotel around 1913 (*The Indiana Progress*, 1/28/1914) and sold it to the current owners in 1957 (*Indiana Evening Gazette*, 4/4/1957). The content analysis revealed twenty-six publications related to the hotel during this period. These news articles are sub-divided into the following themes: deviance (five), business (nine), and public place/pride (twelve).

Deviant Behavior

The first theme to be discussed within this section is deviance (five publications). This type of theme is being discussed first because four of the five publications were dated 1913-1917. Much like previous sections, there were two types of publications relating to deviance, a discussion of the hotel as victim (four) and the hotel/subculture of as deviant (one). The hotel was shown as a victim of burglary, fraud (forgery), fire, and an alcohol induced auto accident. Interestingly the only publications whereby the subculture is depicted as deviant, has a positive quote within it and was still known as the Clawson House.

The Clawson House, D. M. Brown applicant was next on the list. His petition had 166 voters 63 voters opposed Charles Ewing was called and testified as to the applicant's fitness. Sheldon Smiley, an engineer in the employee of the B. R. & P. and who boards there testified. He said Brown ran a good house and was a fit man to have a license. On cross-examination he said he didn't drink himself.

John Killsniney a traveling man of New Kensington was called. He said Brown ran a good house. He also believed that better service could be had if the house had a license.

Mr. Brown applicant called in his own behalf told of receipts last year and claimed to have lost money. On cross examination, he denied mixing drinks and selling it as whiskey. Asked if he had sold by the bottle the last week, Objected by Addie and objection sustained by Judge exception granted. (*The Indiana Evening Gazette*, 1/28/1916)

Even with a tenant's positive testimony of the hotel's management, this publication also makes public two serious issues regarding the ability of Mr. D. M. Brown to manage the hotel. First, he was able to own and manage the hotel for over two decades after this publication; therefore, the hotel appeared to be successful despite losing money at one point. In addition, notwithstanding accusations of illegally mixing alcohol, Mr. Brown did not appear to lose his liquor license. Although containing these two negative representations, the positive descriptions given of the hotel and Mr. Brown within this publication appear to be a more common type of press during this period as is now discussed within the business and public space sections.

Business

A second common theme concerning this period related to the many business aspects of the hotel. The content analysis revealed three types of business news items pertaining to general services provided, and business attraction. One interesting advertisement related to services provided within the structure related to a barbershop located in the hotel during prohibition.

Gerald Henry, former barber in the Point Store Barber Shop, now located with Mr. Shank in the Brownstone Hotel. Prices: haircuts 35c, shaves 20c, children's haircuts 25c, except Saturdays, 35c. (*The Indiana Evening Gazette*, 9/4/1931)

The chairs used within this barbershop can still be found in the basement of the hotel. Other advertisements related to general services provided were similar to those uncovered in relation to other periods in the hotel's history, like room vacancies, fine dining, alcohol distribution, and transportation. It is important to remember that within a previous news article, guests of the hotel believed Mr. Brown ran a "good" hotel.

Public Space

The third theme relates to the Brownstone as a public space (between 1916-57). This type of news story was the most common to be found during this time. These news stories fell into two different types: Discussion of the hotel as a gathering place, and sale of building.

A common theme related to the hotel was its use as a gathering place for community activities. During this time, two types of advertisements for community meetings surfaced. These related to aiding striking coal miners, and supporting Roosevelt and the Democratic Party within the county. The following is example of this type of news story.

ROOSEVELT-GARNER CLUB ORGANIZED

At a meeting held last evening in the Brownstone Hotel, H. W.T. Fee, Democratic County Chairman, organized the Roosevelt-Garner Club of Indiana County. Officers elected for the Democratic club were: S. H. Browning, president; L. F. Sutler, first vice president; Clyde Bath, second vice president; D M. Brown, treasurer; Clyde Bath, secretary. The next meeting of the Roosevelt-Garner Club will be held next Saturday at 7:30 o'clock In the Brownstone Hotel. (*The Indiana Evening Gazette*, 10/7/1932)

This article is important not only because it notes the hotel as an official meeting place for the party, but because it also indicates that the owner Mr. D. M. Brown was actually the treasurer of the party. It was also noted later in his obituary that

Mr. Brown was a “prominent member of the party” (*The Indiana Evening Gazette*, 7/18/1934). The content analysis reveals the hotel was mentioned as an official meeting place and headquarters for the party on six occasions. These functions are important because they indicate that the building was an establishment being used for legitimate public purposes whether it be supporting a major national/community political party or striking coal miners fighting for their rights in the workplace. This role as a community gathering place was incorporated into the eventual sale of the hotel which is the final event depicted within the local press concerning the Brown family and the hotel.

As noted, the Brown family owned and operated the Brownstone Hotel from 1916 to 1957. During this time the hotel was operated by three different members of the Brown family. The final member of the family to own and operate the hotel was Mr. L. Brown the son of Mr. and Mrs. Brown. Mr. L. Brown assisted in the operation of the hotel for years before it was willed to him by his mother in 1947 (who had inherited it from her husband in 1937). Their son Lynn operated the hotel after the mother’s death in 1947, until he sold the hotel in 1957. The sale was advertised within the local press as a community event. The following is an article inviting community members to participate in the auction and tour the hotel.

PUBLIC AUCTION SALE OF THE BROWNSTONE HOTEL

101 N. 6th St. Indiana, Pa. Wednesday, April 3- 2:00 P.M.

You are invited to look through the building before sale day by contacting Sam Lyons, 59 N. 6th St.—Phone 5-4770. This is your opportunity to buy a *going* business that has had almost all rooms occupied since last July . . . , and a brighter future, with Indiana growing, an existing shortage of houses, and new industries coming into the area.

TERMS: \$5,000 Cashier's or Certified Check made payable to Sam Lyon at time of the sale. Balance on delivery of deed. If you need any

mortgage money see Sam Lyons, Auctioneer and Broker 2 N. 6th St., Indiana, phone 5-4770 Residence Saltsburg, 34915 (*Indiana Evening Gazette*, 3/27/1957)

Members of the community were also drawn to the sale by the giving away of a large frozen turkey. The sale of the hotel appeared to be a community event within the county. Residents were invited to tour the historic building even if they were not interested in purchasing the hotel. This type of press, like much of the other news articles related to the structure while operated by the Brown family, appeared to be positive in nature.

While owned and operated by the Brown family, the hotel was not only described as a community gathering place, but the owners were depicted as respected community leaders. In addition to this positive press, the researcher only found five publications related to deviance. Only one of these publications depicted the hotel as a deviant place, and even within this publication, two patrons/residents describe the hotel positively. The content analysis revealed an image of the hotel and its subculture/ownership as well respected within the community. The hotel was owned and operated by the Brown family for 43 years before being sold on April 3, 1957 by the uncle of the current owners, Mr. Bill Tormli (*Indiana Evening Gazette*).

Tormli Family (1957-present)

The Tormli family first became involved with the Brownstone Hotel in 1957, according to Michael Tormli, son of the former owner Frank Tormli. Michael's Uncle Bill bought the Brownstone Hotel on April 4, 1957, for \$44,250 at a public auction from former owner Lynn L. Brown (*Indiana Gazette*, March 22, 1957). At that time, Mr. B. Tormli owned another hotel in the community

called the Union Hotel. According to his nephew Vincent not only was an experienced hotel owner, but he at one time ran a speakeasy in the community during prohibition.

My uncle owned a speak easy when he was seventeen. He was making big money, easy money. Then when prohibition stopped he had a club called the Falcon Club, which was up where the housing department now is. There used to be house there. That was were the speak easy was and the Falcon Club was. The housing development on the east end of town. Well he wasn't making the kind of money liked. So I think it was 1931 or 32. He went up to were Wolf's Den Bar is now. There used to be a jewelry store. He bought it. And he put the bar in there. Vince T. Owner

Despite this supposed dabbling in the illegal liquor trade of the prohibition era, Mr. Tormli was able to purchase and operate at least two legitimate hotels in the community. The following is a publication describing the auction of the hotel to Mr. Tormli.

Brownstone Hotel Is Auctioned At \$44,250
Brownstone Hotel, one of Indiana's old landmarks located at Sixth and Water Street, got a new owner at a public auction conducted yesterday afternoon. Samuel Tormli, operator of the Union Hotel on Philadelphia St. became the new owner with his bid if \$44,250. Lynn L. Brown, the previous owner, said the sale included a small lot in the rear of the hotel. The sale was conducted by Auctioneer Sam Lyons. The hotel has been operated by the Brown family for the past 43 years. Mr. and Mrs. David Milton Brown, parents of the previous owners, operated the business for many years before Lynn assumed control. The brick and frame building, four stories in front and three stories in the rear, has 25 rooms, dining room, a bar and seven apartments. (*Indiana Evening Gazette*, 4/4/1957)

This period of ownership will be sub-divided into three sections each related to the hotel's varied functions during period reviewed. These are, The Red Onion Lounge (1957-1981), upscale restaurant (1981-2000), and bar/hotel (2001-present). Two sources of information were used to reconstruct these periods of the hotel's history. A content analysis of local news reports unveiled a total of seventy publications related to the hotel since the Tormli family took

charge of the hotel. These reports are categorized into themes of business (twenty-seven), deviance (twenty-eight), and pride/public space (twelve). A second data source is in-depth interviews with a variety of respondents (e.g., owners, employees, and residents).

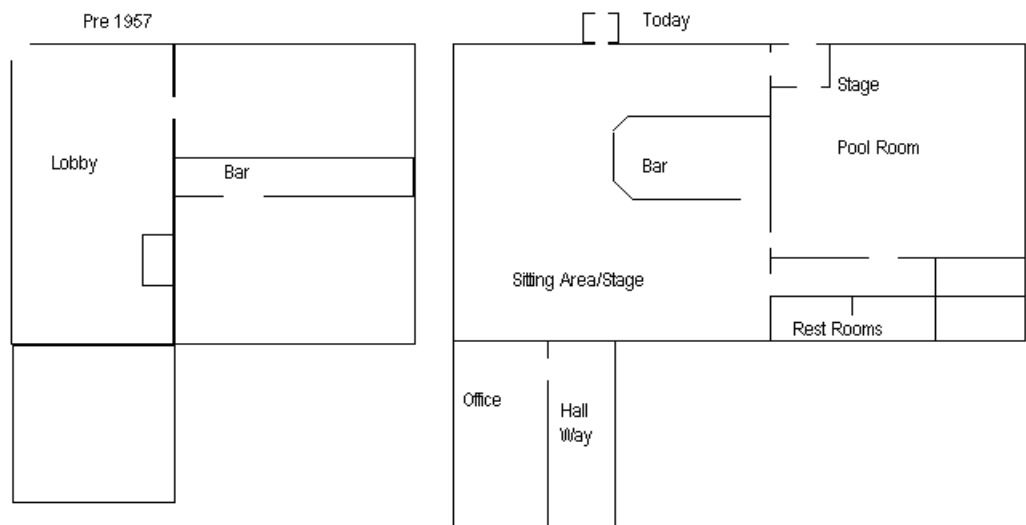
The Red Onion Lounge (1957-1981)

A total of sixteen publications were found concerning the hotel relating to this time period. The bar did not become known as the Red Onion until around 1972 when the current owners father Frank Tormli took over the operations of the facility from their uncle. Publications related to the period before 1971 pertain only to business and, in particular, were five publications related to the leasing of the property to two landlords (on separate occasions). The first landlord appeared to gain some popularity as the coach of Indiana's one time defunct amateur football team (*Indiana Evening Gazette*, 12/5/1957).

According to one of the current owners (Mr. Michael Tormli), his father (Frank Tormli) took control of the establishment around 1972, and around 1976 remodeled the bar and lobby area in order to create a larger gathering space. At that time, the bar was half the size that it currently with only enough room for about six patrons to sit at a time. Once the bar was remodeled he renamed it "The Red Onion Lounge." According to Michael, between the 1970's and the early 1980's, the bar "experienced some rough nights."

Figure 4.1

Outline of the Brownstone tavern area before.



The content analysis showed a total of ten news reports where the Red Onion Lounge was in some way tied to a deviant or criminal event. This total is misleading because these ten reports relate to only two instances. One of these two cases involved the murder of a 56 year old woman and the man accused of stabbing her to death. Although the murder did not occur at the hotel, the Red Onion Lounge was the final place where the couple had been seen. The incident made front page news of the *Indiana Gazette*.

A 40-year-old Wilkinsburg man, Sanford Emery Edwards, has been ordered held for court following his preliminary hearing on charges that he stabbed to death a 56-year-old Indiana woman. Edwards is charged with criminal homicide and murder in the death of Edith Mae Morford, 1890 Saltsburg Avenue Indiana, whose nude body was found in her mobile home Thursday, Feb 22 by her daughter, Cora Ondo, Indiana. According to the autopsy report Morford died of multiple stab wounds A kitchen knife was found embedded in her body just above the left breast. Antonio Arroyo, bartender at the Red Onion, Sixth and Water Streets, Indiana testified that the victim and the defendant were drinking at the bar together from about 9-9:30 p.m. Wednesday. He said that Edwards eventually bought a six-pack of Strohs beer and he heard the couple talking about where their cars were parked. Arroyo said he did not see the two leave together though when he turned around on one occasion,

both were gone. He was not specific about what time he noticed they were gone but said it was sometime during the television show he was watching, "Roots." The bartender also testified that he helped police to identify Edwards' car, a Buick Riviera, and on Thursday morning at approximately 6:45, he pointed out Edwards himself outside the defendant's quarters at College Motel, Wayne Avenue. (Santus, 3/10/1979)

This is a significant case due to the hotel's important association with such a crime. As noted within the publication. The bartender not only was one of the last individuals to see the couple, he also identified the accused, Mr. Edwards, outside his apartment at the College Motel, and was an important witness in the case. This association of the hotel with criminal activity is important for two reasons. First, the association would be noted in multiple news reports throughout 1979-1980. Also, it is a case where the hotel's connection to crime was not depicted as a motivating factor, but rather only as a key piece to solving the case. Although this may be perceived as constructive association, this relationship to this type of event could still lead some to have a negative perception of the hotel.

A perception of deviance associated with the hotel during this period was not only discovered through the content analysis, but also in interviews with the owners, local patrons, and residents. One lifelong resident of the community and now ten-year resident of the hotel described her perceptions of the hotel as a child.

...It used to be The Red Onion. I have known of it ever since I was a kid. But we were also told don't come around the Brownstone. Cause it was a bad territory. You know we would walk home from school, "Do not go around the Brownstone. The Tormli owners will break your legs." That is what we were told. So we were scared. My generation was scared...It was the reputation of the bar. You know, like the Wolf Den (local bar) up there, you know there is going to be a fight up there every weekend, well that is what The Red Onion was like. At that time The Red Onion was known as just a rowdy bar. People drinking. People fighting. People kicking butt. That kind of place. - Dianne Resident

Although the owners contend that they would not have someone's legs broken, Michael T. did confirm that during this period, the bar could be a pretty rough place.

At that time the Brownstone was a place where everyone from business people, bikers, to hippies congregated. A lot of shooting pool and a lot of rowdy times...Then it was known as a rough place. I mean it had its moments. However, my brother (Vincent) of course used to nip it in the bud. It was a happening place.

Each of the accounts of the hotel describe it as one where fights could occur on any given night. Dianne's narrative is important because, as a child, she and her peers were told specifically to not go around the hotel. This kind of warning helped to create a perception of the hotel as a dangerous place.

The data collected relating to this period often portrayed the hotel as a deviant place, or as being associated with irregular, inappropriate, or deviant behavior. In fact, only one news report noted the hotel in a positive light. This article simply stated that a popular local journalist enjoyed his time as a resident above The Red Onion (*Indiana Evening Gazette*, 10/6/1979). It appears that the hardships of operating a hotel bar with a rough reputation began to take its toll on the owner Mr. F. Tormli. This led to the second time-period of the family's ownership that was linked to the purposeful development of an "up-scale" restaurant within the hotel.

In 1980, he decided it was enough fighting the wars every night with the bikers. He decided to change it to an upscale restaurant. So, we got rid of the pool tables the jukebox, and the Pac-Man machines. That is a time when the bikers came to the bar they would look around and leave. That is when he decided to have an upscale restaurant. Not gourmet, but upscale. - Michael T. Owner

The Red Onion era officially ended on October 2, 1981 when a one-line publication was printed informing the public that the name of the hotel bar was being changed from The Red Onion Lounge back to the original name the Brownstone Hotel (*The Indiana Gazette*). It is around this period when the hotel began to change from simply a tavern, into a “fashionable restaurant.”

Upscale Restaurant

Between 1981 and about 2002, the Brownstone Hotel combined an upscale restaurant with a residential hotel. This transition occurred after the owner, Mr. F. Tormli, became frustrated running the hotel lounge as a tavern known for its rough atmosphere. Thirty-two publications were found coupled to this era. These news reports can also be subdivided into the themes of business (twenty-three), public place (two), and deviant behavior (three).

Business

The majority of the publications relating to this era of the hotel pertain to the different business aspects of the structure. Much of this press described the hotel and its subculture in a positive light. This type of positive press began with the hiring of Mr. John Mitchell as head chef from Pittsburgh. A graduate of the Culinary Institute, Hyde Park, N.Y., head chef John Mitchell had been associated with gourmet restaurants in both Atlanta, Georgia and Pittsburgh, (*Indiana Gazette*, October 2, 1983). According to hotel patrons and staff of the time, the Brownstone Hotel was home to the best steak in town along with the finest seafood and pasta. For dessert, patrons could dine on an item called the “snow ball,” which is prepared by rolling ice cream in toasted coconut, topped with

chocolate, rum, or butterscotch sauce. On some occasions, patrons would receive a complimentary glass of champagne with every meal (*Indiana Gazette*, February 9, 1985). In a 1983 article found in the *Indiana Gazette*, the mother of current owners Michael and Vincent Tormli was quoted saying this about the meals, “These meals are cooked specially for people. And although this may mean a slightly longer wait during peak dining hours, the result is well worth the wait.” Along with the food, patrons of the Brownstone during this heyday also enjoyed the atmosphere.

Many publications of this time highlighted the musical entertainment provided by the restaurant. One of the current owners, when discussing this era, also highlighted the entertainment that ranged from pianists, violinists, and guitarists. These attractions created an atmosphere that allowed the hotel to attract a wider number of groups to it as a meeting place. This includes the ongoing meeting place of the Democrat Party (*Indiana Gazette*, 3/26/1982). This type of press reached its peak as underscored in a news article dated May 22, 1992 when the hotel was the gathering place for a local tourism board excursion. The lead party member was quoted referring to the Brownstone Hotel,

Tourism mines county's golden attractions
Mrs. Bradley visited the area recently. She said she discovered a "gold mine" of pleasant opportunities for tourists. It could also be a gold mine for local businesses benefitting from visitors. The question most commonly asked by clients is 'Where can we go that's different?' said Mrs. Bradley, dining at Brownstone Hotel, Indiana, after a full day of touring the county. 'Now I have an answer.'" (*Indiana Gazette*)

Although one may question the use of the term “different,” the quote also references the hotel as one place among others referred to as a goldmine of opportunities for tourist.

During this era, the Brownstone served between three to four hundred dinners a week. At the time, the bar was run by head bartender Tony Wang. According to past patrons and employees, Tony was the classic bartender, jovial, courteous and full of humor, and helped to create the pleasurable atmosphere. He was Filipino and had worked at New York's Cococabana club. According to Michael C. Jr., "...talk about the classic bartender, he was the ultimate when it came to knowing what every returning patron drank—he was the man, everyone loved him." Much of the press and personal communication with community members in relation to this era was quite positive.

It was in this fashion that the Brownstone retained its image until Valentine's Day, 1993, when an electrical fire broke out on the fourth floor (attic apartment) of the hotel. According to Carl Kologie (1993), managing editor of the *Indiana Gazette*, the dining area of the Brownstone was near capacity when the fire was discovered by an off duty fire fighter who had just left the restaurant moments before at approximately 7:30 pm. According to one patron, when the fire caused the lights to dim, "I thought they were adding Valentine's Day atmosphere (Carson Greene Jr., Quoted in the *Indiana Gazette*, February 15, 1993). No one was injured during the incident even though there were initial concerns over resident Ralph Trunzo, a tenant of the fourth floor room where the fire originated, but who was found later that evening. Ruth, a member of the present day bar tending staff had this to say about the fire:

I had only been working (waitressing) here for three weeks when the fire started. I guess I was just bad luck for the place. It was scary for us here when it happened. We couldn't find Tony; he also lived in the attic at the time. I felt terrible for him, though. This was the only place he had and in that one night, he lost everything.

In all, twenty-one residents of the Brownstone Hotel were left homeless that Valentine's Day night (Graff, 1993). Fifteen tenants of the hotel at the time of the fire had lived there from three to seventeen years. According to Graff, the American Red Cross made arrangements for those residents with nowhere to go. There was only one injury that night when a Salvation Army employee slipped on the wet sidewalk serving fire fighters coffee (Kologie, 1993). Interestingly, this was not the first (although the most serious) of fires to occur at the Brownstone Hotel in its history. The content analysis revealed eight instances of Brownstone Hotel fire since its construction.

4.2

Photo of the fire.



The total loss for the fire was greater than \$70,000.00 (Hastings, 1993). In all, the fire destroyed the entire fourth floor and attic; there was some damage to

two of the rooms on the third floor, along with extensive water and smoke damage to the rest of the building. It took seven months for the Brownstone Hotel to reopen in early August 1993. Along with a new roof and refurbished interior, the Tromli's also hired a new head chef, Gary Lambert (Hastings, 1994).

Public Space

Shortly after the fire, the hotel and its new chef did receive national press in the *Chicago Tribune* (Hastings, 2/5/1994). The local press noted that the hotel was itself a landmark within the Indiana community although this was not the topic of the article. The news report was written in order to publicize the growing number of trained chefs in the United States and it highlighted Lambert's success at age 42.

Lambert, who says 'cooking was a matter of survival,' saw his maintenance planner's job dry up at R&P Coal Co. Inheriting a family interest in cooking (he was a short-order cook while in high school), he made a bold move and entered IUP 's Academy of Culinary Arts at Punxsutawney where he graduated as both valedictorian and 'most popular' in his class of 23...Thus far it has been a success for both Gary and the Brownstone, with the cozy dining room attracting 50 to 60 diners most nights, and some nights 120 or more.

Despite such positive press, the fire had appeared to have a heavy impact on the hotel's business. Just after this event, a number of news reports emerged that shed a negative light on the hotel. This includes the high profile assault of a cameraman documenting a party after the election of state senate candidate Jim McQuown being hosted at the Brownstone Hotel (Szakelyhidi, 11/8/2000). In addition to this incident, news reports regarding the restaurant services begin to advertise reduced meal prices, even highlighting the non-smoking aspects of the dining room (now popular for its smoky haze). The current owners explain that

the closing of the hotel after the fire was not the only reason they decided to scale back their dinner operation.

And basically for the last three years after that till my father passed in 1995 we just kept scaling back the type of restaurant we had until we decided to just make it a bar. I mean we had the dinner crowd before the fire and the people were with us for about three months and then after awhile they just got tired of waiting I guess. They moved onto other places in town and it was just not the same. Due to the fact, we just couldn't make any money out of it. Times were changing with drinking laws and other restaurants came in. In the 1980's there were only a few places to go to eat. But in the 1990's a bunch of restaurants came around. Another problem was the advent of fast food industry and the pizza places that just took over. And we never got our clientele back after the fire. We just stopped fighting the war. - Michael T., Owner

Michael's brother Vince (co-owner) explained the rationale simply when he stated "Food spoils. Booz doesn't."

Deviant Behavior

Even with the difficulties of the 1990s, this time-period of the hotel's history appeared to remain relatively positive with the local press. During much of this decade, the hotel was regularly praised by the local media and by voiced by individuals during interview. Only two of the articles revealed in the content analysis related to deviant behavior. These cases are interesting because, once again, the hotel or its residents were depicted as the victims of a crime. The first involves the break in of a resident's room by an intoxicated teenager who was unaware of her location (*The Indiana Gazette*, 8/21/1982). A second case (noted earlier) concerned the assault of a local newspaper photographer. This latter episode is historically significant because it is the final news's report found whereby the hotel was mentioned as a meeting place for the democratic political party. This incident occurred toward the end of the hotel's time as a high-class

restaurant, and points to the end of the era as the owners shifted away from the restaurant business.

2004-Present

With the drawback of the dinner crowd and the changing atmosphere in the community (i.e., increase in restaurants), the owners decided to run the lounge strictly as a tavern and eliminate the restaurant. This begins the final era of the hotel to be discussed in this chapter. A total of thirty publications were discovered significant to this time-period. Within this section the thematic sub-categories to be discussed are business (nine) and deviant behavior (twenty).

Business

News reports concerning business during this period generally acknowledge and reflect the changing atmosphere of the hotel. This shift resulted from the giving up on trying to attract an evening dinner crowd to strictly catering to a “whiskey and beer crowd.” The ownership noted this as well. In order to draw this crowd they believed it was important to advertise to the growing number of college students living in the area. According to a former employee, it was Tony Wang, the earlier celebrated bartender, who encouraged college students to come to the Brownstone by suggesting the placing of an advertisement in the “*Penn*” (local university-based weekly) to target the areas university students). Also in some ways, it was the respondent’s belief that this advertisement may have been one of the reasons the dinner crowd left the Brownstone.

...in a few weeks, the college kids started coming in. They were not the same types of kids that are in here now. These kids were rude to the dinner crowd; they would eat people’s food (pick food off of the patron’s

plate), and start problems with the people trying to eat their dinner. No one wants to have to put up with that. So they just stopped coming. - Jane, Former Brownstone Hotel waitress

It was at this time that the management established an atmosphere catering to individuals interested in live entertainment and music, instead of persons looking for the perfect steak dinner. According to one regular, the beautiful photographs and artwork that at one time adorned the walls, were replaced with Pittsburgh sports memorabilia, beer signs, and posters of bands from the classic rock era. One current tavern regular spoke of an art show sponsored by the hotel: “At one time the Brownstone Hotel held a show for local artists, displaying local art throughout the building. That’s not going to happen again.” The gourmet steaks and seafood were replaced with hotdogs, nachos, and slices of pizza. The content analysis revealed that even with this shift in atmosphere, organizations continued to use the hotel as a gathering place for events. The establishment appeared especially attractive to local theatre groups which published multiple news articles relating to upcoming events.

Rough Space Theater Company presents a Variety Show and Artists’ Carnival from 1 to 9 p.m. Saturday at the Philadelphia Street Playhouse. The event will include live music, comedy, acting, a silent auction and indoor garage sale to raise money for the company’s future production of “Antigone” Aug. 1 and 2. An encore show will be held at 10 p.m. at the Brownstone Hotel where Endless Mike will host an open mic. For more information, go to www.roughspaceantigone.blogspot.com. (*The Indiana Gazette*, 7/3/2008)

One interesting point related to the business theme was the owner’s decision to become a “smoking bar” after the state banned smoking inside public places in 2008. The law did give twelve exceptions (i.e. private clubs) that included the Brownstone. This change in policy was noted in the local press when the

Brownstone and several other bars were identified as establishments where it was still acceptable to smoke (Kusic, 8/23/2008). The local media also highlighted the building as a positional growth opportunity for the community due to its historic appeal. In spite of this positive press about the hotel's potential to help spur economic growth of the community, the changing atmosphere within the hotel and tavern coincided with a discernible shift in the type of press the hotel and its associated resident and patron subculture received.

Deviant Behavior

After the turn of the millennium, the type of press related to the Brownstone Hotel began to change. Before the 2000, a search for news reports about the Brownstone Hotel finds hundreds of articles pertaining to dinner specials, catered events, snowman building contests, and even rumors of the building being named to the national historical registry (Wells, 1993). Shortly after the millennium (around 2004), the tone of the local news coverage began to change. Much of the earlier positive press was replaced with reports of drug use, public drunkenness, and physical assault. These news reports began to portray the hotel and subculture as victim (three) and as deviant (eighteen). One current tavern regular noted that during this period "I wouldn't have come here back then. I don't think any respectable businessman would. But things have changed since then so I feel much more comfortable being here (Mr. Smith)."

This shift in press was emphasized through a series of news reports regarding substance abuse within the local community. The following story

highlights the deviant activity linked to the Brownstone Hotel and the immediate area.

The Brownstone Hotel, Indiana

Since late 2004, police arrested no fewer than seven people in connection with drug activity in their rented rooms and in the parking lot at Brownstone Hotel. One of the suspects was a woman who was hospitalized for treatment of an overdose of fentanyl that she took in a man's room in October 2005. Two other men were arrested on drug paraphernalia-possession charges in December 2004 after borough police watched them exchange something with a pedestrian in a parking lot near the Brownstone Hotel. In court papers, police wrote that the activity took place in the 500 block of Water Street, "a high crime area related to drug use." (Ross, *Indiana Gazette*, 10/9/2006)

In this report, two types of deviant activity are stressed, those occurring inside the hotel and those just outside of the building. In order to help clarify the events alluded to within the Ross report; two subsequent news stories provide more detailed discussion.

The first example (March 30, 2004) describes a series of crimes involving the victimization of three individuals (two residents of the Brownstone Hotel) by a previous resident. The defendant in this case claimed that two of the victims owed him money for drugs they had purchased from him and his friend.

Police charged that M. Donahue, a former tenant of the Brownstone Hotel in Indiana, collected drug debts in blood and stolen property. Monday, Indiana County Judge William Martin ordered Donahue, 21, to pay his debt to society by serving up to 10 years in a state prison. Donahue, of Shelocta, also was ordered to pay more than \$4,000 in fines and court costs. He was given jail terms that would extend 18 years if served one after another but was allowed to serve them concurrently. According to court records, Donahue savagely beat J. McMahon Jr. in the Brownstone Hotel early on Nov. 26, 2002.

McMahon was treated for 19 days in the intensive-care unit at Allegheny General Hospital in Pittsburgh and then spent three months at the Harmarville Rehabilitation Center before being discharged to a personal care home, according to Indiana Police officer Wesley Hite. Donahue's roommate, S. Wilson, told police that Donahue said to him before going to McMahon's room that "If he hit J. twice, his \$70 debt would be erased." McMahon, a disabled veteran living on a pension, told police the last thing he remembered was Donahue talking to him about how he

needed to start paying the money he owed. McMahon woke up in a hospital with numerous broken bones in his face and injuries to his head that resulted in brain damage and memory impairment. McMahon, 50, has not returned to Indiana, Hite said.

On Nov. 27, 2002, Brownstone Hotel resident J. McNaughton said he awoke to find Donahue and Wilson ransacking his room. The men stole two guitars, a cable television control box and remote control, \$100 worth of prescription tranquilizer pills and four packs of Camel cigarettes. According to borough police, Donahue surrendered the stolen goods after McNaughton sent officers to his room. Wilson told police that they took the property as collateral for a friend who claimed McNaughton owed him \$70 for drugs, court records show. While Donahue was free on bail awaiting trial on theft and assault charges, Power City Borough police named Donahue in the theft of a debit card from D. Steffey of West Indiana Street. Steffey told police she loaned her card to Donahue on June 15, 2003, and told him the PIN so he could purchase a pregnancy-test kit for his girlfriend. After Donahue returned the card two days later, Steffey learned that he used it for 13 purchases and cash withdrawals totaling \$715. In a plea bargain, Donahue pleaded guilty to one count of receiving stolen property and was given 6 months to two years in prison. An Indiana County Court jury convicted Donahue on Jan. 13 of burglary, criminal trespass, theft and receiving in connection with ransacking McNaughton's room. Donahue was given three to six years on the burglary conviction.

According to court records, Donahue pleaded guilty to aggravated assault, simple assault and reckless endangerment for the attack on McMahon after investigators sent his bloodstained clothing to a crime lab for DNA analysis. In addition to a 5-to-10-year prison sentence, Donahue was ordered to pay \$2,565.00 for the lab tests. (Ross, *Indiana Gazette*)

For these crimes, Donahue was sentenced up to ten years in a state prison and was forced to pay a \$4,000.00 fine. The report also noted that the prosecutors withdrew drug paraphernalia possession in exchange for the plea (pipe found at his apartment the Townies Motel). This series of cases was reported on multiple occasions in the local newspaper. They are important due to the detailed coverage of the criminal conduct and their headline grabbing content. In addition to the series of crimes discussed by Ross, two other incidents cited within this article actually occurred on the same day and involved a police stake out of the general area of the hotel.

Emil Johnston, 40, of Winding Lane, White Township, and Monte McMan, 32, of Maple Street, Indiana. Borough police saw Johnston's vehicle pull into a parking lot at 9:32 p.m. Dec. 8 near the Brownstone Hotel, then watched as a man approached and 'some type of transaction occurred,' police wrote in criminal complaints. Patrol officers then followed Johnston as he left the 500 block of Water Street, which they described, 'is a high crime area related to drug use,' and pulled him over for a traffic violation in the 1300 block of Oakland Avenue, the complaint stated. Johnston and McMan, a passenger in the vehicle, gave different answers when police separated them and asked where they were going. According to the complaint, a crack pipe fell onto the roadway when McMan exited the vehicle and a second pipe was in plain view under the driver's seat. Police charged both men with possession of drug paraphernalia on Jan. 18 and charged Johnston with driving under suspension.

Mark Sheeling, 26, of Chrisfield, Md. Investigators staked out the Brownstone Hotel at 103 N. Sixth St. at 11:07 p.m. Sept. 17 and saw a hand-to-hand transaction between a man on foot and the driver of a van in the parking lot, according to court papers filed Jan. 18. Police approached the van, found Sheeling in the front seat smoking marijuana and confiscated a pipe and a bag of pot from him. Sterling has been charged with possession of a small amount of marijuana and possession of paraphernalia (*Indiana Gazette*, January 30, 2005).

In a response to the article describing events like this inside the hotel or near the hotel, the current owners, Michael and Vincent, wrote a letter to the editor of the local newspaper in which they highlighted a number of issues with the reported crimes.

On Sept. 10 there appeared in your paper an item highlighted in bold print concerning drug activity in and around the Brownstone Hotel in Indiana. We are not interested in speculating whether this was positive or negative publicity. We would, however, like to add a few comments to this. Our building, due to its age and design, does not attract the "carriage trade" as residents. Most of them are low-income people. On at least two occasions we had residents who were not totally competent financially. At their request we cashed their Social Security or welfare checks for them, kept the room rent and saw to it that they paid any other bills that came to them in the mail. Most hotels do not offer these services.

On another occasion we had a roomer whose brain was totally fried by drugs and sought a room at our hotel. He had to live somewhere. He spent the rest of his days at our hotel. One of our employees one night observed the borough police accosting, chasing and apprehending a drug user in the parking lot of a commercial

enterprise north of our property. Later in the police reports it was written that this took place in the Brownstone Hotel parking lot.

If a crime is committed on private property elsewhere in the neighborhood, there is no need to identify it as being near the Brownstone Hotel. This is guilt by proximity, and only in one case were the suspects' residents here. The Brownstone Hotel has no parking lot. We do not monitor the parking lots near our property. There is a small service area east of our building where trucks pull in to make deliveries, and we as owners, often park our cars there.

We do not allow drug pushers or users to live in the hotel. A case in point is the young lady who overdosed on Fentanyl and ended up in the hospital. On her return to the hotel we gave her a two-week eviction notice; her family at the end of a week removed her and her belongings.

This is not to argue that we have never had any drug user living here without our knowledge. Rumors are cheap, and we have heard most of them. But (we continue) working toward a prosperous and tolerant community (10/10/2006).

The publication of this letter is noteworthy because the owners bring to light some significant points. They cite that it is damaging to the hotel's reputation when the location of the crimes being committed are then simply cited in the press as being in proximity to the hotel (i.e., parking lot across the street). Also, the owners claim that many of the individuals being cited within the news reports had nothing to do with the hotel. As hotel owners, they could not always control the behaviors of their tenants (using drugs without their knowledge), but were in no way promoting drug use and, in fact, evicted those who participated in it.

This issue relating to drug use by tenants is critical because the owners also note that the population attracted to the hotel is not the "carriage trade" population. Rather, the hotel residents are often poor, handicapped, or previously dependent on drugs. Within the article they note that, as owners, they often help residents cash social security checks and pay their bills if the resident is not

physically capable and also they simply provide an affordable place to live for those who cannot afford other types of housing. During interviews, the owners of the hotel regularly represented themselves as “pillars of the little guy.” The claims they made in their response to the *Indiana Gazette* article regarding the economic status and mental health of some of their residents, appeared to be a recurrent theme. During a meeting with the hotel owners, they volunteered the following about past residents of the Brownstone hotel,

There should really be pictures of all of the characters that have walked through these doors. We grew up in this town and were told to be nice to people. The guys that live here, we understand they may come across as different to some, but we were brought up to be nice to the people who may be mentally retarded or just out of prison. We would have these guys living here and working at our father’s Christmas tree store. We just believe we should treat people with respect and that’s how we try to treat our tenants and patrons. - Michael T. Owner

In some cases, it appears the hotel owners believed they were conducting a public service through the offering affordable housing for those who may be considered different, unusual, or even unacceptable to others. One previous employee of the local housing authority noted that the authority would usually cite the hotel as a place that welcomed the underprivileged population and usually referred them to the Brownstone Hotel. The owners did suggest a rationale other than conducting a perceived public service for disadvantaged persons. One of the owners noted that such a population was usually a safe renting class of persons because many received social security which allowed them to pay rent on time. Their checks would arrive in the mail which the owners sorted and passed out to tenants. This allowed the owners to know the exact date a tenant would be able to afford their rent.

The owners' letter to the editor appeared to have a response within the local media when on November 5, 2004 the Gazette published a favorable article in which the hotel was depicted as a respected and historic space. The publication also reviewed the plight of the owners as they struggled to operate the restaurant after the fire in 1993.

But it wasn't quite the same. In the time we were off for renovation, a lot of our customer base had stopped going out to dinner or found new locations. That hurts the most, that we never recovered some of our old trade. We were saddened, but I couldn't blame them. - Vincent T. Owner

Although this article appeared to be an attempt by the local media to publicize positive press relating to the hotel as a reaction to the owner's letter to the editor, this type of positive press was only discovered one other time in the content analysis after this date. Many of these more contemporary news reports continue to pertain either to the themes of business or deviance activity going on in or near the hotel.

In the last couple years, news reports concerning drug use at or near the Brownstone Hotel have tapered off, although publications relating to other styles of unsavory and illegal activity remain common. Interviews with numerous persons of the community who are not residents or patrons of the hotel continued to believe the Brownstone hotel a dangerous place. One commenting it is "full of dirty people and drugs." The Brownstone Hotel has once again found itself for sale, this time for \$500,000. Making things difficult and even adding to questionable activity is that a scandal was reported in the local news media involving a potential buyer of the hotel, a one-time bar and apartment manager of the Brownstone, reportedly being connected to fraudulent activity (J. Steffey).

The offender in this case was at previously a staple the bar during the mid-day shift (J. Steffey), was accused and convicted of defrauding the hotel owners of \$23,000.00. Steffey admitted to forging a check for \$10,561.61 as well as collecting money for rent and keeping it for himself (*Indiana Gazette*, 8/1/2009). This incident is important not only because of the negative press, but because it also appears to have forced the owners to once again become managers of the hotel establishment and not simply owners. This is the time period when the ethnographic methods for this dissertation began.

Conclusion to Chapter IV

Within this chapter, the researcher has attempted to reconstruct some of the history of the Brownstone Hotel in order to better understand its current situation. Throughout its history, the hotel has been associated with a variety of positive events. The building appeared to fit the general history of many SROs depicted within the literature review. Much like other SROs, the Brownstone was often highlighted for its central location, making it an ideal for large community auctions and gatherings. It appeared that throughout much of its history the hotel has been associated the labor movement (acting as a meeting place for striking coal minors) and the democratic party. To this day, the owners depict themselves as individuals fighting to help the little guy when discussing their interactions with some tenants.

It seems, however, that over the past decade much of the Brownstone's history of gourmet cuisine along with the "suit and tie" atmosphere has been replaced in the eyes of many outsiders. The once "classiest restaurant in town,"

as many locals remember it, has reached a point where many interviewees perceived it to be a “dive bar, or skid row” establishment. This deviant perception is corroborated by the content analysis that reveals news reports clearly related to deviant behavior with a shift from fine dining to live entertainment and alcohol. It is after this transition (2008) that the researcher began conducting this study of the hotel and the culture surrounding it. The findings related to this period in the field are discussed in the following chapters in which I describe the current state (i.e., social structure and norms) of the hotel and tavern. Chapter five covers a wide range of issues relating to the subculture of the hotel. This is important because throughout the research period, it appeared to be individual initial perceptions of the hotel, that lead many to perceive the establishment as a deviant place.

CHAPTER V

THE HOTEL

This chapter presents findings on what the Brownstone hotel was like during and after the fieldwork portion of the research. The chapter includes two main sections. First, is a description of the physical structure of the hotel with attention to the housing conditions of tenants, and how the building has lost its original luster a century after it opened to the public. Second, this chapter describes the social interactional patterns and daily routines of the tenants as they come and go, and reside within the hotel. Consequently, this chapter responds, in part, to research questions # 2 and # 4. Research question # 2 asks: How is the Brownstone hotel described in regards to types of patrons who reside at the hotel? Research question # 4 asks: In what ways has the cultural setting of the Brownstone hotel emerged as a deviant eco-niche in the small town in which it is located.

Physical Description of the Hotel

The dozen or so transient, drifter, or socially marginal people who resided at the hotel are discussed in subsequent pages. First, however, it is necessary to describe the hotel itself.

Hoch and Slayton (1989) refer to establishments similar to the Brownstone Hotel as “single room occupancy” settings, or SROs. The Brownstone is an SRO although the rooms today do have individual restrooms. Only a few rooms have a meager kitchen facilities. According to Ferrell and Hamm (1998), this type of housing is different from other forms of low rent housing in that the buildings,

such as the Brownstone, appear similar to small apartment buildings or rooming houses. Early in the 20th century, residences like the Brownstone Hotel replaced the earlier “Barrell-houses” that consisted of a bar or lounge area with single rooms on the floor above them where men could stay after a night of drinking (Anderson, 1923). Such rooms were often cubicles six to eight feet in width and eight to twelve feet in length—roughly the size of some of the rooms within the Brownstone.

The main entrance to the Brownstone Hotel had been relocated to the back of the building. This area is out of sight to most individuals passing by the hotel because of the building’s “L” shape that wraps around the corner of sixth and Water Street. Behind the Brownstone is a small parking lot used by employees to park their cars while on their shifts. Hotel residents must park elsewhere.

5.1

Photo of the back parking lot and hotel entrance.



There are three doorways entering the back of the building. As shown in photo 5.1, on the far right is a doorway leading to the kitchen area allowing staff to enter and exit the tavern through the back door. A middle doorway leads to the basement area of the Brownstone. This makeshift door is fact only a large piece

of plywood. The guest entrance to the hotel area is at the left corner of the outside wall.

Once a resident enters the hotel through the back entrance, they come upon a flight of stairs leading to the second floor of the building. There is a short corridor leading up to this flight of steps with doors on either side of this small hallway. These lead to the kitchen area, the hotel bar, and an office, each door remained locked through the duration of the study. The hallway walls are a dingy green color. Large holes remain in the walls as if someone had punched through the plaster. The gray tiled floor is in disrepair throughout much of the hotel, forcing individuals to watch their step. The hallways and guestroom areas smelled of stale, musty air due to the building's age and lack of ventilation. Residents attempted to relieve this problem in warm months by placing fans in the corridor and opening a door that led to a balcony over the tavern. The corridor with rooms on either side appeared unkempt at all times. Random wrappers, cigarette butts, and other trash seemed always on the floor or window ledge. Once, tomato peels remained in the stairwell for a week. Much of the shabbiness of the hallway was due to the chipped paint that had fallen to the floor, and the warped floors, woodwork and doors. It was at times difficult for one to keep their footing while walking the hallway.

Residents lived in separate rooms dispersed to all four stories of the building. Two rented rooms were on the ground floor of the building along Water Street, but most of the occupied rooms were on the second and third floors, with one resident staying on the fourth floor. The fourth floor also served as an attic

space for storage. In order to get to their living quarters, residents made their way down one main corridor with a flight of steps leading to the third and fourth floors. The hotel has no elevators. Doorways appear rather haphazardly along the corridor. Some led to living quarters, and others covered with plaster or plywood and painted in a failed effort to match the walls of the hallway. Some doors appeared locked at all times, apparently used for storage or just vacant at the time of my residency. Some of the doors, however, had been forced open by crowbar, as residents found these spare rooms as storage space. This was an offense punishable by eviction from the hotel and loss of property if discovered by the owners.

5.2

A door that had been forced open.



At one point during the researcher's residency, the owners placed a letter on all of the doors stating a hotel policy.

July 10, 2009

To: Brownstone Hotel Tenants

From: Brownstone Hotel Management

Subject: Empty rooms

Dear Brownstone Hotel Tenants,

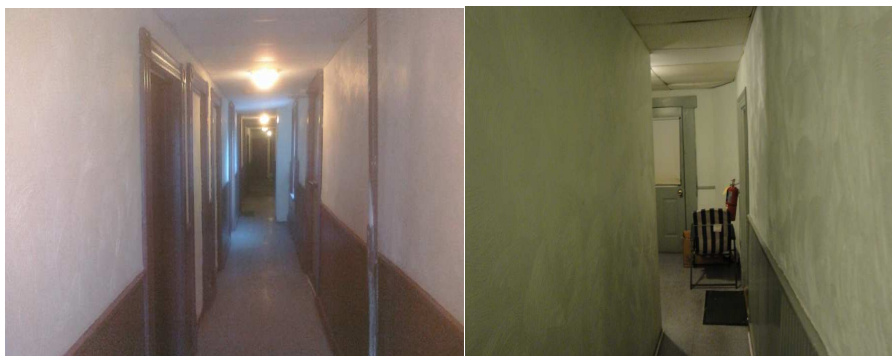
Please note that you are not permitted in the empty rooms or use them as storage without permission from Michael, Vincent, or Shirley Tormli. If you are caught, your door will be booted at a random time and anything you leave in the room you were caught in will be thrown out. Our housekeeping staff has kept all of the rooms in good order and we would like it to stay that way.

Thank you,
Brownstone Hotel Management. (Letter posted on residents' door)

In addition to these issues, the room number plate attached to the doors to identify tenant's rooms appeared placed at random. For instance, when the researcher moved into the building during the pilot study, his room number was 'number three,' and before he had moved out of the room at the end of the pilot study, the number changed to five. There was also no established style of door number plate. In the Brownstone, different types of room number plates appeared on each door. Some rooms were numbered with an ink marker, while other doors had plastic numbers screwed to them. The researcher's room door had a plastic number 3 screwed into it. At the end of the fieldwork, the plastic three was replaced with a five written with ink marker. Many of the doors showed signs of multiple number changes as some showed many holes left from screws and nails continuously removed over the years.

5.3

The second floor corridor.



At each turn in the corridor, residents had placed objects in the small area between the stairwells and corner that lead to them. On the second floor, one resident had placed a lawn chair in front of the doorway that led to a small patio above the main entrance to the tavern below. The view from this patio was blocked during much of the research period with a large sign hanging from the outside of the hotel reading “property for sale.” On particularly warmer nights, residents would sit in this chair with the door open and a fan in the hallway blowing out the hot air. One finds a similar scene on the third floor, with an old wooden chair placed in a similar manner. Here, adjacent to the chair is an old broken stereo that sits gathering dust beside a heating duct with the cover removed exposing inside coil mechanisms.

Living Quarters

At different times during the fieldwork, the researcher lived in two separate hotel rooms. These rooms were located on the second floor of the building, but they differed in design and gave the research the advantage point of residing in two of the three styles of hotel quarters. One room selected was centrally located in the corridor directly across from the main stairwell leading to the entrance of the building and passed by all residents going to their rooms.

The room appeared quite similar to others in the Brownstone, though perhaps a little smaller. The room was rectangular and about twelve feet by ten feet. It was indeed an old, one room hotel space, created to sustain a single person for only a short time. The room itself came equipped with a small twin bed, dresser, large black television stand, a small refrigerator, and a microwave.

A grimy, reddish colored carpet was unhygienic with old nail clippings scattered around the floor.

A window looks out onto Water Street. When the researcher arrived as a new resident, no shade or blind covered the window. Eventually, a window blind that opened and shut with small plastic clips, was provided by management. The window itself would at times fall out of the window frame regularly obliging the researcher to push it back into position. The researcher would often arrive at the room to find the window fallen against the timeworn television.

5.4

Researcher's living quarters during the first observation period.



Electrical outlets situated around the room hung loosely on wires from the walls. The outlets themselves remained detached from the wall because the material around the outlets had deteriorating over the years leaving large holes around each fixture. The only light source was ceiling bulb, burned out upon arrival to the room. A ceiling fan, part of the light assembly, shook violently when operating; forcing the researcher to keep it off for fear that it may fall out of the ceiling onto the bed.

The furniture in the small room appeared quite old, and fabricated from cheap particleboard reminiscent of a college dorm. A twin bed was covered with a plastic sheet itself covered with a layer of dust. There were no chairs in the room when the researcher arrived. Separating the bathroom from living quarters was a plastic door that slid along a railing. The improvised door, however, did not fully close or would constantly pop open. The bathroom appeared to be at one time another small bedroom split in half and installed with separate bath facilities for adjacent hotel rooms. The warped floor created a dip in the floor where water would settle from a leaky shower.

5.5

The bathroom within the researcher's first living quarters.



On first glance, it was clear the toilet in the room remained stained and grubby. The paper dispenser was broken, fixed by the researcher with large paper clips.

Faucet water from the sink shot out quickly and frequently sprayed onto the floor, and always dripped—a sound habitually heard during the fieldwork.

A large gap between the shower and wall provided a hidden place where past residents would drop cans of shaving cream, moisturizer, and other objects.

At least three bottles of shaving cream were found behind the shower and difficult to reach. The plastic shower walls had small dried pieces of soap still on a shelf or stuck to the shower floor, from previous tenants. In the corner of the shower, a small container was attached in place bottles of shampoo where were found an assortment of rusty nails, screws, and cigarette butts.

Next to the shower was a closet with no door and a shelf and rod for hanging clothes. There was no kitchen area in the room, which was common throughout the hotel as only three rooms contained kitchens. One resident informed the researcher of a communal kitchen on the floor. Likely, this was a room the tenants were told to stay clear of, and no other tenant ever confirmed the presence of a communal kitchen. A personal microwave was used during the fieldwork. Otherwise, the researcher would visit a local gas station that sold “sub” sandwiches.

Since there was no kitchen area, there was no suitable place to wash dirty dishes. This also limited the types of food one was able to eat. In most cases, food that came in disposable containers and involved little or no clean-up was the best choice. Food storage was also a problem. There were no cupboards, which forced the researcher, or other tenants in similar rooms, to use the dresser for storage.

Room 8

During the later and lengthy fieldwork at the Brownstone, the researcher once again resided on the second floor of the building—a room assigned by the proprietor. Room 8 was located at the far end of the second floor hall and led to

the back entrance of the hotel. Before entering room 8, the first thing one notices is damage to the door around the doorknob, as if someone at one time attempted to break into the room, a suspicion later confirmed.

Room 8 was much larger than the researcher's original room (room 5). The room was in fact one of the few full apartments maintained in the hotel, apparently at one time three single guest rooms were combined into one large apartment. Room 8 consisted of a kitchenette, bedroom/living space, and bathroom. Walls are painted different colors of orange, yellow, light blue, and white. An old blind with many of its plastic strips missing and with a thick layer of dust gave the blinds a grayish tint. All of the blinds in the apartment, would fall from the windows if one attempted to adjust it. With little or no house cleaning, the linoleum covering the kitchen floor was scattered with food crumbs.

5.6

The kitchen and living space within the researcher's second living quarters.



This kitchenette consisted of a sink found to be the origin of a fruit fly problem. Also, stuck in the sink drain was large pile of cigarette butts. A crock-pot, the only item in the apartment for cooking, replaced the absence of an oven. The living room of bright orange clashed with the green carpet, also covered with

food crumbs. The room had two windows with the same rickety blinds as earlier described. One window-sill appeared stained black from dust. A bulb centered in the ceiling provided light as well as a functioning ceiling fan. An additional lamp in the room did not work.

A number of items were found in the living space upon the researcher's arrival, these include a wooden bookshelf and a queen size mattress and box spring. The shelf stood at least five feet tall and much like the window sills had a thin layer of gray dust covering its surface. Of the four boards originally placed onto the stand to act as shelves, only three remained upon the researcher's arrival. It appeared as if someone had taken one of the shelves out with a hammer in order to place a television on. The mattress supplied by the hotel was itself a bare mattress with multiple holes.

5.7

The bathroom within the researcher's second living quarters.



Found at the bathroom sink were empty shampoo containers and a box of Tampax. All the lights were burned out in the small unstable medicine cabinet above the sink. The researcher spent much of the first two days as a resident

cleaning. A number of other items were found, including a knife, an old metal marijuana grinder, an unopened condom, and a pipe used for smoking marijuana. Surprisingly, despite the grungy conditions the researcher had very few encounters with insects during the stay. This was a worry when the researcher first arrived as some town locals described the hotel as a “cockroach hotel.”

6.9

Pipe, knife, marijuana grinder, baby pin, and condom.



Hotel Social Structure and Subculture

Hotel Social Structure

Managers/Owners

As noted within the literature review, individuals placed in charge of a hotel (managers) may not own the hotel. Such is a common scenario in the history of the Brownstone. For example, just before the researcher’s first fieldwork at the hotel, the Tormli family placed Mr. J. Steffey in charge of the building, who was later convicted of laundering thousands of dollars from the hotel. Consequently, the Tormli family themselves took over daily management of the hotel throughout the research period. Three individuals of the

owner/management family took this on these responsibilities. These were: Michael T., Vincent T., and Shirley T. (Michael's wife). Michael T., the oldest of the brothers is a tall Caucasian standing around 6'2" weighing around 260 pounds. Outside of co-owning and operating the Brownstown, Michael also works for a local bank. Michael had a cheerful nature around the researcher, though the researcher was informed that he did have a temper.

Vincent, the younger of the two brothers, stands around 6'00" tall and also weighs around 260 pounds; he was a pleasant individual throughout the research period. Vincent is admittedly not a healthy individual, claiming to have a serious case of "drop dead syndrome." He has suffered from at least one heart attack, occurring when attempting to pull a tree stump out of the ground by hand. He admits that he likes the hotel activity but that it has been stressful for him. The final member of management was Michael's wife, Shirley. Apart from assisting in the managing of the Brownstone, a local university employs Shirley in food services. Shirley was always good-natured during the research period. Although these three did act as landlords during much of the research period, Vincent seemed to be responsible for much of the daily running of the hotel. Despite being responsible for much of the day-to-day work, the owners did employ a few of the hotel tenants as maintenance workers.

Employees

Next in line in social status to the owner/managers are the tenants hired to work around the building, two in particular. Mr. Phillips, a 53 year old, tall, skinny, Black male resided in a second floor room directly above the tavern. He

had a flat-screen TV in his room, along with an assortment of old hats and video tapes. Mr. Phillips was the building's handyman (i.e., fixing lighting fixtures and filling cracks in the sidewalk). He was also a dishwasher at a local restaurant. In addition to these jobs, he made extra money selling some of his belongings he had collected to local thrift stores. Mr. Phillips fulfilled this role during the first fieldwork period, but later fired after arrested in the hotel bar.

A second and more senior tenant/employee in the hotel was Dianne, an almost lifelong resident of the local community, and ten-year resident of the Brownstone. Dianne was a forty-six year old, thin, white female of average height. Around the hotel, Dianne was generally responsible for preparing rooms for tenants, keeping the hotel and bar clean and occasionally collecting rent. Working at the hotel for most of the fieldwork research, Dianne moved out of the building toward the end of the study. Dianne's apartment was similar to the researcher's second living quarters. It differed in that Dianne's room had a full kitchenette (including oven). In exchange for their labor, these tenants were paid minimum wage and received no reduction in rent or other privileges. If the owners were not in the hotel, these two tenants took charge, and would deal with any problems with tenants—the final group in the hotel social structure.

Tenants

The day the researcher moved into the Brownstone, Michael T. handed him the key and said, "Here you go. Now you are a real "Brownie." The term "Brownie," refers to those individuals residing in the Brownstone Hotel. While the researcher was a resident of the hotel, the number of tenants fluctuated weekly

between ten and twelve persons. Most tenants were single males, though several single women lived at the hotel. Over the months, two couples as well as two families (with small children) resided at the Brownstone. A few had full-time jobs but at minimum wage, others unemployed but living off social security or welfare checks.

Residents of the Brownstone were important members of the subculture by their becoming regular, household figures in their comings and goings within the hotel and tavern. The three tenants that seemed to draw the most attention were Mr. Hughes, Mr. Goad, and Mr. Phillips, the resident handyman. Mr. Phillips acted as a tenant/employee of the hotel but also a regular of the tavern, which tended to influence bar patrons perceptions of the hotel (discussed in chapter six). Yet, the two most prominent figures of the tenant social structure were Mr. Hughes and Mr. Goad.

Mr. Hughes was one of the most respected men around the entire establishment, though he said very little to anyone within the bar. Outside of the hotel, few individuals who spoke to the researcher knew who Mr. Hughes was; although, apparently out of curiosity, he was the first topic of conversation brought up by outsiders when the Brownstone arose in conversation. Mr. Hughes was an eighty-six year old Black male who had been residing at the Hotel for over twenty years. A retired university janitor, Mr. Hughes now spent most of his days sitting on the bench outside the main entrance to the hotel bar, and on the stoop just outside his ground floor apartment.

Mr. Hughes always wore old and worn clothes. Regardless of the season, he sported heavy clothing due to a skin condition. The back of his clothes were darker than the rest of his clothes because he consistently sat with his back leaning against the side of the hotel. He purchased his meals from a nearby convenience store, and was known for his seemingly habitual smoking of a cigar. Mr. Hughes had been sitting against the wall for so long that there appeared to be a worn spot on the wall.

A second renowned tenant of the Brownstone was Mr. Goad. Much like Mr. Hughes, Mr. Goad occupied his day perched on the stoop outside of his room on the ground floor of the building completing crossword puzzles and word searches. A Caucasian male in his late to mid-60s, he sat on a wooden chair that he tied to the railing of the stoop with a shoelace reportedly to prevent its theft. He walked with difficulty due to his weight and a painful foot condition (i.e., his right, big toe bending back over the rest of his toes). Mr. Goad usually wore loose fitting cotton shorts and t-shirts. His usual topics of conversation concerned women, loud music from the bar keeping him up at night, politics, and his health. He often would lure others into conversation by asking them how they felt. Once they responded with a cordial, "Fine, how are you," he would respond by saying, "I am having one of those days." Then he would proceed to discuss his day with the individual whether they wanted to speak with him or not, generally ignoring any social cues to do otherwise. It was quite common to find Mr. Goad sitting on the stoop with several other hotel tenants who were accustomed to his willingness to speak to anyone about any topic.

Pedestrians and vehicle passengers could view these men sitting for hours on stoops at both ends of hotel. These slumbering and peculiar tenants were regularly cited as examples of what the Brownstone area was like by members of the town.

Subculture Behavior Patterns

This section addresses three important themes that respond, in part, to research question #4 (i.e., *In what ways has the cultural setting of the Brownstone emerged as a deviant eco-niche in the small town in which it is located?*). The themes include “Why tenants reside at the Brownstone,” “Complaints tenants had with the hotel,” “Perceptions of deviance within the hotel,” and “Perceptions of the hotel from tavern patrons.”

Why stay at the Brownstone?

In order to better understand the residents’ perceptions of the hotel culture; it is important to understand tenant rationales for residing in the hotel. Interviews with residents revealed multiple reasons why the Brownstone was desirable—payment flexibility and location.

Flexible Payment

Flexibility of rent payment allowed by the owners was a common theme.

All tenants interviewed noted that an important factor in their choice to reside at the hotel was the lack of a required lease and down payment. In addition to this traditional requirement, many other proprietors in the area also required potential renters to pay a security deposit. Each of these two traditional requirements was an issue for each of the tenants interviewed.

Well I think that it is because now most places will do a background check and a credit check. Probably something Sam should do. So it is an easy place to get into. If you want to you can stay a week or two. A lot of places say no you got to sign a lease; you need to be here six months. A lot of people will come and stay two weeks. Just until they get their feet under them. - Dianne Resident

A few points should be highlighted from this account that relates to the absence of a back ground and credit check and required length of occupancy. Although many tenants had been occupants of the hotel for years, many respondents agreed. The lack of a lease requiring residence for a predetermined length of time attracted them to the hotel in the first place. For some, this was due to their circumstances leading up their arrival. As noted by both the owners and Dianne, some tenants were at one time inmates at the local state or county prisons, just before moving into the hotel. Respondents noted that these tenants did not know what their plans would be in the next month and just needed a place to live for a few weeks while “getting their bearings.”

“You know, we found a place but we can’t move in for two weeks”... you can’t find that anywhere. You can go to most hotels but you have to pay a daily rate and not everyone can afford that. - Dianne Resident

Not only was the Brownstone option convenient for many residents, it was also cheaper when compared to paying nightly rates for an extended period at a chain hotel. One resident noted that being able to pay his monthly rent in two installments helped him to manage his finances. The issue of costs, especially upfront cost, was helpful for all residents interviewed.

This is convenient because every two weeks you can do \$300.00 or every month you can do \$600.00. It is just more convenient for me to pay my rent every two weeks. It just breaks up nicer for me because I have something left after every check. If you pay once, you get one check and it's gone. It just works out better for me. Getting groceries and stuff like that. - Justin Resident

These upfront fees could cost a renter up to a thousand dollars or more depending on the apartment or house. This dilemma resulted from tenants working at low wage employment (i.e. delivering newspapers, washing dishes). In addition to this, many older residents survived on fixed incomes, receiving monthly checks in the form of pensions, social security, Medicare, and welfare. Although working long hours and having a steady income, many tenants said they had trouble saving the needed amount to pay a security deposit required at other rental properties.

Transportation and Location

Not only did the hotel offer residents a flexible payment and occupancy expectancy, it also afforded tenants a central location within the town. Tenants noted that the location of the Brownstone was helpful because of their transportation problem. Many residents did not own vehicles and depended on walking or hitching a ride with others. Some residents had no one to turn to for help. Hoch and Slayton (1989) found that persons residing in SROs have very few personal ties outside of those they might have made with other residents. Mr. Goad is an example of this and comments:

John (another resident/car owner) and I want to move to Blairsville (small town located fifteen miles south of town). We have been looking, but can't find anything in our price range. I have friends there that I haven't seen in thirteen years. It would be nice to see them.

Mr. Goad also had very few ties to his family.

I am supposed to go see my family this weekend. My niece is going to be graduating from high school. I haven't seen anyone in my family for almost five years. I got a ride from someone so hopefully that works out.

Though Mr. Goad did mention that he had spoken to his sister on the phone, he rarely met with his family. He also mentioned that even if he could buy a car he would have to take the driver's test again (another potential expense). Because of this, Mr. Goad relied on the few tenants with automobiles to meet with physicians, buy groceries, or visit family. Others walked the streets. Once, the researcher witnessed Mr. Phillips walking back to the hotel, almost three-miles from his destination.

Jason made the following remark concerning the hotel's location:

The location is great if you don't mind walking. If you want to order something for food, Foxes is right there. Anything on Philly Street is close by. I mean that's where all the businesses are. So this is about the most convenient place to be. Because you don't have to worry about the traffic going up and down Philly Street. Plus I work at the Gazette so I can just walk up the street to get to work – Jason Resident

Dianne related the story of a previous tenant who resided in the hotel due to a DUI infraction, which resulted in the loss of his drivers' license.

You get a lot of people that have a DUI that work at the tire place. We had a guy that worked for Tree Monkey and had a DUI. They would pick up every morning since it (Tree Monkey head office) is right there. People who have to go to the Open Door, it is right there. People like it for the location. You know, "I lost my license from a DUI; I can walk to work from here." The location is great. That is what makes it. I can walk to work and be there in five minutes. You can walk to the grocery or to Dollar General.

Dianne thought the Brownstone would only be temporary, stating: "When I moved in here, I was thinking...like a couple of months. That was ten years ago." Despite residents enjoying the hotel for the flexibility of payment and location, they also had problems with the hotel and its surrounding environment.

Problems with the Brownstone

Although the renting policies and location attracted most of the tenants to the Brownstone, some complaints persisted among residents. These mainly concerned the level of noise coming from the first floor tavern, lack of a kitchen area, and the cost of rent.

Noise

The music was greatly enjoyed by those within the bar area of the hotel but was despised by most of the Brownstone tenants. Mr. Goad would often complain that the music from the previous night kept him up. In his case, the researcher believed this to be true since the live music from within the bar carried upward and even across the street. Michael C. (owner) also remarked that the music was a headache for many of the residents. This appeared to be a particular issue for tenants residing on the ground floor and directly above the bar with one noting "...when I lived in the room over the bar it was kind of hard to sleep" (Justin). In addition to noise coming from the bar, some tenants noted they did not appreciate the overall bar culture that hung around the hotel and neighborhood. Mr. Goad appeared to also have problems with intoxicated tavern patrons knocking on his door early after bar closing, though he could not be sure if patrons from the Brownstone were responsible. On the occasions when the researcher remained in his Brownstone living quarters, live music from inside the bar that at times could be deafening and certainly heard from the street, could not be heard in the researcher's room. Dianne who lived in a more secluded location enjoyed living at the Brownstone due to its quiet atmosphere.

Absence of Hotel Kitchen

One issue common for all but several tenants was the lack of a full functioning kitchen or kitchenette for each of the rooms. As noted, neither of researcher's room or apartment contained a full kitchen. The first room had no storage space for food and the second room was limited to a crock-pot. Since there were few apartments within the building with a kitchen, residents were forced to eat meals at cheap, fast food restaurants, or learning to cook using a variety of non- traditional cooking surfaces, and sharing kitchen space. Because the majority of residents had no kitchen area or places to store food they would typically purchased only what they could eat at any one time. Ehrenreich (2001, 158) relates the following:

So I lug my possessions down to room 127 and start to try to reconstruct my little domestic life. Since I don't have a kitchen, I have what I call my food bag, a supermarket bag containing my tea bags, a few pieces of fruit, various condiment packets which say they are supposed to be refrigerated but I figure are safe in their plastic bags.

Similarly, the researcher was forced to keep much of his food in plastic bags while residing in his first apartment. Because of this issue, Brownstone tenants were forced to eat prepared meals (i.e. fast food), or to purchase processed foods that could be stored in open spaces, or in a dresser drawer. If residents wished to eat meals prepared from scratch, they were forced to purchase a variety of cookware.

Mr. Phillips developed a reputation for his cooking. Though the researcher only sampled his cooking (spaghetti) on one occasion. Mr. Phillips loved to talk about his skills over an oven although he did not one in his room. At times, he would take his cooked food downstairs to the bar and allow patrons to

sample it. He used “hot plates” or George Foreman Grills, and had acquired so many of these he gave some to other tenants.

I have two different George Forman grills that he (Mr. Phillips) gave me. It was my twenty-third birthday and I was here and he said “Oh wait it’s your birthday dog? Hold on one second.” He went upstairs and came down with a grill. He even had the cleaning wand in his back pocket. Then another time he asked me if I had a broiler. I said no so he said he would be right back, came down and gave me one.- Thomas Bartender

Not only was food preparation and storage a difficult task at the hotel, keeping dishware clean was an issue as well. The only sink in most hotel rooms was a common one-basin bathroom sink. In the case of the researcher’s sink, standard sized dishes were too large for the sink, and basin drain constantly clogged adding to the frustration. Because of the issues stemming from a lack of storage space and efficient cookware, many single room apartments quickly cluttered. Many of the rooms seemed cramped, with the belongings of the occupants falling to the floor. During the final week of the first observation period, the researcher heard he was considered the cleanest resident of the hotel by the local building borough inspector. This is important because residents could receive fines or evictions if the inspector deemed room clutter the fault of the renter. Brownstone residents were not notified of the upcoming inspections. If the residents were not in their rooms at the time of the inspection, the inspector was still allowed access to the room. Of course, much of this clutter was boxes of food and other food preparation tools that could not be hidden away in a cabinet. In the researchers case, had he not discovered the “drug paraphernalia” in his room upon cleaning his apartment on move-in day, an unannounced borough inspection could have potentially even led to his arrest upon its discovery. The

lack of a proper kitchen space within the rooms also led to a final way tenants adapted to hardships. This was the combining of limited resources.

A common sight around the hotel during much of the fieldwork consisted of a group of three to four tenants congregating around Mr. Goad's ground floor stoop. Unlike others, he had a small, even if makeshift, kitchen area, and tenants would often share his space. This often led to Mr. Goad eating multiple meals a day, as tenants would want him to sample their food as a thank you gesture.

Other residents noted that this was a very common practice and helped to foster a community spirit within the building.

If somebody doesn't have something, they go to your door and they knock on it and they ask for it like a neighbor is supposed to do. It's like a community. You know, sometimes if you don't have a stove and somebody else has a stove you can always ask them nicely if maybe I could borrow your stove for a little bit so I could make something like this. I don't have a stove in my room but there are some rooms that do and some rooms that don't. But what do you expect. - Justin Resident

This lack of amenities helped foster a sense of community as tenants interacted with each other to solve a common problem. Such cooperation usually resulted in some reciprocal exchange either immediately with sharing of food, or in the future when another tenant needed assistance. In the case of Mr. Goad, such a cooperative spirit becomes a tradition that resulted in tenants' gathering around his stoop on a nightly basis. A negative outcome, however, was that Mr. Goad and other tenants sitting on the stoop and sidewalk became frowned upon by some local townspeople passing by the hotel.

Who the hell are those dirty looking people that are always sitting around near the back of the building? Do you know them? I wouldn't want them sitting in front of my apartment. Whenever I see them I just think, don't they have anything else to do than just sit around? – Eric Community Member

Among residents, the lack of basic appliances reaped both positive and negative effects. Although in some respects, this inconvenience helped to foster a

strong community among tenants, a problem for some however as the small rooms became cluttered as tenants, lacking space, were forced to stack things around the room. In turn, this messy appearance could lead to fines by the local inspector. Mr. Goad's altruistic practice was viewed as positive to the Brownstone community. Yet, it was perceived as deviant by locals who questioned why these seemingly unruly groups gathering outside of the old hotel. Nothing good could be coming from it.

Cost of Rent

A third dilemma discussed among tenants related to the price of rent. Although alleged by outsiders as a cheap place to live compared to other rental properties, the Brownstone was considered expensive by most tenants. During the first period of fieldwork, rent at the hotel was \$440.00 a month. During the second fieldwork stay, the rent was \$600.00 across the board. To put this context, the researcher rented a studio apartment that was three times the size of his original Brownstone apartment and included a full kitchen for only \$450.00 a month, prior to the beginning of that research period. According to one resident, this was one of the reasons why residents would be forced to leave the hotel.

Rent when we first moved in here ten years ago it was like \$75.00 a month. And then it went up to \$100.00, then \$125.00, then \$150.00 and now \$600.00. And it just keeps climbing. The local property tax and the price of gas. Yeah I thought he jacked it up a little bit too high too quick. I thought he should have gone up 25-50 bucks I figured we would make it but that is my opinion not his. I give same suggestions and he runs with it or he doesn't. - Dianne Resident

Dianne moved out of the hotel shortly after this interview due to the cost of rent. In addition to rent, residents employed by the owners often noted feelings of frustration paying the full price of rent despite working there.

For Mr. Phillips, as an employee and tenant, his situation was especially unique. He would often walk into the bar and head straight to the owners office to discuss rent and payment for his services. He shared his frustration on one occasion.

I owe them money. They are around every corner of this place asking me for it. I understand that I may be late on my payment at times, but I pay them. Hell, I do a lot of work around here and you think they would give me a break. One of these days, I am going leave and then fuck, who is going to take care of this place? – Mr. Phillips Resident

Despite perceiving the price of rent to be high, according to Vincent most tenants were able to pay their rent on time. Even though on at least three occasions, the researcher walked into the office to find Vince screaming into his phone at a tenant concerning their rent being late. Vince also once noted the following concerning the researchers method of payment compared to other tenants,

A check? From you Brandon? Sure I'll accept a check. I can't do that for most anyone else in this place. Cash only! I can't trust that it will be there. They may write me a check and be long gone before it bounces and then I am fucked. – Vince Owner

These problems lingered on at the hotel over the observation period. Lack of storage space led to clutter. Gathering as a group on the stoop looked strange to passersby. No matter how the tenants reacted to certain issues they seemed to always be viewed as rule-breakers whether the building inspector or townspeople passing the hotel, or the owners. How outsiders view the hotel residents as socially deviant deserves further comment.

Deviance

The hotel itself appeared to draw negative attention by outsiders as was portrayed by the local newspaper publications. Although perceived as a potential deviant space by outsiders, all the tenants interviewed believed the hotel to be non-deviant space.

Types of Deviance

The themes that relate to objectionable or socially deviant behavior in and around the hotel at times pertain to male residents interactions with women. One of the preferred activities among the men congregating around the stoop was to watch women as they passed by, as noted by Mr. Goad:

We (other male tenants) sat here all day watching that woman from the dealership walk back and forth between the buildings. It was quite a sight. She has a great rack. One time she walked past me while I was sitting here and I got pretty good look. Every now and then I will talk to her. She is pretty nice.

It was very common for the men around Mr. Goad's stoop to attempt to get women to speak to them especially if female residents were not around. In many instances, the women would simply say "hello," and walk past. The women had to walk passed the group of men to get to the parking lot just behind the hotel where the car dealership employees kept their cars and only a few steps from Mr. Goad's street side stoop. The men who gathered around Mr. Goad's stoop see their situation as an opportunity to speak and watch women as they pass by. Even when the researcher was not there to witness such interactions, he would hear the men talking while he sat in his second floor room with the window open.

Though Mr. Goad enjoyed speaking to the women on the street, he always seemed to have at least one or two women ("lady friends"), that he considered his

girlfriend(s). Many times these relationships would end quickly. On one occasion, he mentioned that he had stopped seeing his “lady friend” because she was “smoking crack.” It was his belief that she was taking money from him in order to purchase the drug. In many situations, it appeared the women in his life had been taking advantage of him (this according to residents and bar regulars). Mr. Goad would often give these women handouts from his unemployment or social security checks.

Other individuals around the Brownstone believed that the women in Mr. Goad’s life were using him for money. This conversation occurred after Mr. Goad left the bar room one evening, one of the few times in two years he had entered the bar.

I have known him (Mr. Goad) ever since I started coming here (three years ago). I do not think those girls he is always with like him. Since I have known him he has always given his money away to them and there is a different girl every couple of weeks. – Mr. Smith Patron

If these suspicions were true and Mr. Goad was in fact being taken advantage of, it appeared that he was giving away perhaps hundreds of dollars a month to his girlfriends. This case study is interesting because some may have perceived these relationships as prostitution. This was persistent rumor among some tavern patrons. Mr. Goad’s relationships did not seem to fall into this category, but one resident did appear to openly discuss paying for sex.

In many cases, it appeared that rumors of prostitution seemed to base the hotel as the central hub of this location (i.e. the brothel). This, did not seem to be

true, however, it was not uncommon for at least one resident to pay women for sex:

I got about five hundred bucks on me so dog, I am thinking about making some calls to a few ladies. See what I can do tonight...I got some extra cash tonight. I think I am going to get you a lady tonight too dog. That way you can have a good time. Don't even worry, I will set it all up. – Mr. Phillips, Resident

The researcher promptly denied the offer. However, I never was a personal witness to sexual encounters or actual money exchanging hands. This type of behavior (paying for sex) was often implied during some conversations pertaining to the tenant's desire to meet a woman. This discussion is continued in chapter six concerning tavern patrons perceptions of the hotel.

Perceptions of Brownstone Deviance by Media

The hotel and its unseemly subculture were depicted as the location of criminal conduct in almost half of the publications found about the Brownstone. Of twenty-two articles dating to the beginning of the fieldwork, thirteen in some way involved the hotel resident subculture, six related to the hotel tavern, and in three, the hotel was revealed as a location where an event occurred although no hotel or tavern patrons were involved. These publications depict events such as aggravated assault (in response to unpaid drug debts), substance abuse, domestic assault, theft, fraud, making terroristic threats, and child neglect, all committing by residents of the hotel inside of the hotel. In addition to this type of press, some members of the town interviewed for this study saw the gathering of tenants on the various stoops as a sign of social decay. Such negative media depictions and subsequent perceptions even influenced some tenant's original views of the hotel.

A lot of them when they first come here are afraid their rooms are going to be broken into, or that there are drugs going on in here. That they are going to get robbed...It's just the reputation. They are afraid they are going to get mugged, they are afraid they are going to get beat up, they are afraid they are going to get the shit beat out of them...We have no problem with that. No one has ever gotten robbed. Trust me, or mugged that I know of. Whenever I first moved here ten years ago, my mom and dad were scared to death. "Something bad is going to happen, you are going to get stabbed. There are drug addicts, there are drunks there, and it is a bad place to live. When I moved here ten years ago I have never had any problem. – Dianne Resident

Before, I used to view it as a bad place because of the drugs, and because how the paper described it, and because of the fire that broke out in here. I thought the place wasn't even livable. I'm saying it's livable. I mean it's got everything that is up to code. I took my building inspection license. Yeah the floor is a little cockeyed but you know that is every old building. You know it's over a hundred years old. You're going to get that no matter what. It's livable. It is `code as it is supposed to be. – James Resident

In addition to this initial perception of the hotel before becoming a resident, James shared this experience of his first day as a resident.

The first day I moved into room number one. I had a knock on the door. Tap, tap, tap... police, and I'm like oh no! They were looking for the people in room 11. I didn't like that on my first day. I was like what did I do? I didn't make no ruckus no nothing, I was pretty quiet. I kept my music down; I keep things down like my TV game system whatever. There were just two of them though. – James Resident

The Brownstone members do not see themselves as social deviant. Rather, most tenants and certainly the owners, believed the reaction of the local police and media exaggerated. Many respondents described scenes where they believed local police used excessive force when attempting to subdue persons in the hotel. The following are typical comments.

I called the police to report that my car was stolen from a guy in across town. I look out one morning and there goes my car. When I called them to report that my car was stolen, five cop cars show up. For a stolen car! Are you serious? It's because of the Brownstone Hotel. If an ambulance is called here they won't go in the bar or upstairs without an escort from the police. They come in hands on guns and everything. Even for just something stupid. I just don't understand it. I have never

figured out why when they come here they think ‘oh my god we are going to the Brownstone.’ Come on! You are talking about a stupid drunk. The one guy I think the only number he knew how to dial was 911. He didn’t threaten anyone. He just wanted some attention, someone to talk to. But when they come in here, hands on guns. They kick doors in. Come on! This guy weighed 300. They hall him out of here and then another day later he ends up calling again. Yeah. I mean the stolen car they had the place surrounded. The car was stolen from me, I didn’t steal the car. I am like holy crap. This is 4 o’clock in the morning. I just don’t know what the point of that is. – Dianne Resident

Even among the hotel owners, the belief was that the police and local media exaggerated what was going on at the Brownstone, reinforcing a negative perception of the area.

The only other time, the last time, the cops really took somebody out of here was about two years ago there was a girl living in room 11 with her boyfriend. And she is what they call a cutter she would cut herself. And she blamed the guy. And, they came in here and they put him back in jail because he was on probation. He didn’t do nothing and she got off. And then she ended up in the hospital again and she was cutting herself. And that’s just what they do. It took eight guys to get one guy out of here. I went over there to ask them and I thought they were going to arrest me. I said did you send another four guys up there to get him and they say they got have every entrance covered so he doesn’t run. And I’m like, come on, he’s not gonna run I know the guy. And shit, they put them in jail and it took him a month to get out. Yeah, and for nothing. She did it, she ended up in a mental hospital. What does that tell you? – Vince Owner

Despite viewing themselves and the general hotel folk “no one to be feared,” many outsiders continued to view the hotel as a place to be avoided. Some, if not most, tenants admitted that they too had these same thoughts before moving into the hotel. For example, the sight of a group of unkempt tenants sitting on the stoop as they met to cook would generally draw disdain from townsfolk who often saw the Brownstone as a “bunch of crack heads.” Tenants believed such a perception was reinforced by media reports, which in turn heightened police response to what tenants and owners saw as minor infractions. Dianne felt this was simply the hotel’s reputation, and it would most likely remain for a long time.

When you tell people that you live at the Brownstone Hotel, they look at you in a totally different way. Ok, we are not bad people. I am not a bad person. Is this the Ritz? No. Is it the holiday inn? No. But you don't hear on the news people getting caught at the holiday inn with drugs. Does that make them better than us? No. People move here and they are thinking who is knocking on my door? Am I going to get robbed or stabbed? I am like are you serious? So yes, the Brownstone Hotel has a bad reputation even though it is not a bad place anymore. But that reputation is never going to go away. The Brownstone Hotel is the Brownstone Hotel. I don't care if you have new owner or the Tormli's own the place until they both die off and someone takes it over. The Brownstone Hotel will always have a bad reputation. Always! It will never go away. You know it's like you have a family that messes up really bad and you got a brother and sister that go to school ahead of you. By the time you get there, your 'oh god,' you are marked. That's the Brownstone Hotel it will always be marked. I have lived here a long time and drug use and whatnot does not deserve the slamming that it gets. What it was then and what it now is are totally different places. The Brownstone Hotel is not as bad as people think, they say 'I can't believe you are living there!' But you can't convince people that this is a different place.

In general, the hotel subculture consisted of poor or working class people ranging in age from mid-twenties to mid-seventies. Despite living in what many would consider relatively poor conditions, the tenants formed a rather tight-knit subculture, and pulled together to make their life tolerable. Tenants and owners alike believe the Brownstone has an undeserved reputation or community stigma. Much of this negative perception of the Brownstone overlaps onto the first-floor tavern, and it is difficult to separate one from the other as a contaminated space, at least in the eyes of the larger community. The next chapter focuses on the tavern and its special subculture.

Conclusion to Chapter V

As shown in the above narratives, despite members of the subculture viewing the Brownstone as a deviant space when they first arrived, for many of

those interviewed these perceptions seemed to change. As discussed within the introduction to this chapter, the discussion of the hotel is important in order to answer at least two of the research questions being asked in this dissertation.

These are: research questions #2 and #4.

Research question # 2 asks: How is the Brownstone hotel described in regards to types of patrons who reside at the hotel? The hotel residents depictions in many cases appeared to fit some of the general depictions of residential hotel dwellers discussed within the literature review. The majority of the tenants were single middle to older age males, although some single females, couples, and families residing in the hotel throughout the research period. In many cases, residents were of a lower to poor socioeconomic status. Many of the residents were fully employed in the community (in some cases residents held multiple jobs). Some older residents, who did not work, seemed to on fixed incomes receiving income from pensions, social security, veterans benefits, and Medicare. Residents usually chose to reside within the hotel because they could not afford to pay a security deposit as well as be locked into a fixed rent schedule. The location of the hotel within the community also was very important for tenants as many could not afford an automobile and instead must walk or receive a ride from a car-owning friend.

Research question # 4 asks: In what ways has the cultural setting of the Brownstone Hotel emerged as a deviant eco-niche in the small town in which it is located. Within the community, much of the perceptions discovered during the research period seemed to depict the hotel as a deviant space. The majority of the

publications discovered within the content analysis during the research period depicted the hotel community as a deviant space, through either special articles or regularly published police logs. Many locals interviewed depicted the hotel subculture as one filled with violence and drug abuse. Even residents noted that before moving into the hotel they too shared this perception and were told horror stories by family members and locals concerning potential robberies and assault.

Some of the negative perception seemed to stem from the location and condition of the hotel. Some negative publications discovered within content analysis concerning the research period concerned incidences that occurred near the building (i.e., parking lots located across the street). On at least three occasions, the researcher identified these types of depictions in which the hotel cited when referring to the general area around the building. In addition to this the condition of the hotel seemed also stoke these negative perceptions. Many residents being unable to prepare food due to a lack of cooking tools and storage space forced them to congregate within the few rooms in which these tools were located. In some cases these gatherings were viewed by outsiders as deviant episodes. As noted throughout this chapter, this perception is interesting, as residents within the hotel viewed these gathering as a community building tradition. Residents noted that they always felt comfortable approaching tenants with kitchens if they needed wanted to prepare a meal. This is interesting because this apparent negative aspect of the building seemed to help foster a community within the building, in which resident felt comfortable sharing with each other.

Although there appeared to be some deviance occurring within the hotel as cited by police arrest records and the presence of drug paraphernalia within the researchers second apartment. Residents seemed to perceive the hotel as a safe place to reside, with many noting their interactions with local police to be the tensest moments during their residency, and believing the police to use excessive force when interacting with hotel residents. Residents and management felt that this use of force seemed to assist locals' negative perceptions of the hotel, as the sight of four squad cars surrounding the hotel could possibly alarm passersby.

This discussion of the hotel subculture is important within the broader context of this dissertation because it seemed that the perception outsiders held of hotel residents, translated into negative perceptions of the tavern subculture, as many outsiders believed the tavern subculture to be made up of hotel residents. The subculture discovered within the tavern is the topic of the next chapter six. Much like chapter five, chapter six will concern the taverns social structure, subculture, and perceptions of deviance.

CHAPTER VI

THE TAVERN

This chapter describes and assesses the hotel tavern during the research period. This chapter is subdivided into two sections. The first section offers a physical portrayal of the bar setting with attention to the physical condition of the establishment. Second, this is followed by a description of the subculture found within it describing the social structure and perceptions of those participating in subculture. This chapter is important within the dissertation as it appeared throughout the research period, that the perceived deviance within the hotel (by locals), had a residual effect on the perceptions of the tavern subculture.

As in chapter five, this chapter responds to research questions #2 and #4. Research question #2 asks: How is the Brownstone Hotel be described in regards to types of patrons who frequent the hotel? Research question #4 asks: In what ways has the cultural setting of the Brownstone emerged as a deviant eco-niche in the small town in which it is located? This chapter is important as it appeared throughout the research process that outside perceptions of the bar were generally similar to those of the hotel, despite patrons perceptions of their subculture. These findings result from participant observation, in-depth interviews, and local media publications.

Physical Description

The tavern of the Brownstone Hotel is located on the ground floor and is open Monday through Saturday from 4:00 pm to 2:00 am. Patrons gain access to the bar through the front door situated at the corner of Sixth and Water Street.

Upon entering the tavern, the heavy smell of cigarette smoke can be detected and seems to be present at all times, with the aroma of tobacco clings to patron's clothes. Depending on the time of day and day of week, a layer of cigarette smoke can be observed floating in the air just beneath the dark green ceiling tiles. The carpet is dark gray, and during the daytime when the sun shines through the window at just the right angle, thousands of cigarette burns are revealed covering its surface. In the evening these burns are not as noticeable.

The walls of the tavern are covered with a wide variety of framed posters and pictures. Many depict musicians of the classic rock era (e.g., The Beatles, Elvis, Jimmy Hendrix, and Janis Joplin). Others reflect a mixture of Pittsburgh sports posters and memorabilia, and beer advertisements. Large mirrors are fastened to the walls around the room allowing patrons and employees to see activities going on behind their backs. Other items adorn the walls including an antique wall telephone, a washboard, and old-fashioned lighting fixtures, which seem to be relics of a time long ago when this area of the Brownstone Hotel was more than just a bar. The phone hangs besides the entrance to the bar. In this immediate area the night doorman will sit and gather cover charges and check IDs. The only other remnant suggesting the bars early history is a now dysfunctional doorway in the corner of the tavern just to the right of the entrance. This doorway now leads only to a wall, but at one time was the original entrance to the lobby of the hotel. The pictures and antiques try to conceal the rough and rather dark wooden paneling that make up the walls of the room. The tavern does have windows along one side of the room near the entrance. Beige plastic blinds

cover the windows that are usually adjusted to allow patrons to see outside onto a four-way intersection and a Honda Dealership with its adjacent new and used car lots.

Most of the tavern's lighting comes from Christmas lights hanging from the ceiling. These many colored twinkling bulbs are hung around the bar and down the main supporting beam of the bar that at one time braced a wall that separated the hotel lobby from the tavern. There are old ceiling fixtures that offer some light, but are usually quite dim. Two old, no longer in use, brick fireplaces are located along the back wall of the tavern. Today, instead of fire, the owners placed plastic logs with light bulbs inside of them that give the appearance of burning coals. Large neon clocks and beer signs also decorate the bar. The only natural light enters from windows located beside the entrance, and along the wall to the right of the door that allow patrons and bartenders to watch passersby along the sidewalk outside the tavern.

The bar is located directly in front of the main entrance door. It is horseshoe shaped which allows patrons sitting at the bar to easily speak with patrons on opposite sides of the bar. Many regulars prefer to sit at the area of the bar facing the main entrance. This area of the bar is also, where the bartenders are able to take breaks. A small stool sits beside the bar that is only used by bartenders when service is slow. There are usually anywhere between twelve and sixteen brown leather bar stools situated along the bar. The surface of the bar counter itself is dark green. A padded wooden railing curves around the entire bar allowing patrons to rest their elbows on something other than the hard bar surface.

Patrons sitting at the bar usually have easy access to one or two ashtrays. On some evenings one ashtray may sit directly in front of each chair around the bar, thus giving each patron at the bar access to their own personal ashtray.

Behind the bar, patrons are able to view the different types of liquor that are available on any given night. This liquor is located on an island in the center of the bartenders work space. During the researchers fieldwork at the hotel there were only four types of draft beer available on tap (i.e., Pabts Blue Ribbon or PBR, Yuengling, Straub Special Dark, and Coors Light). These were the cheapest beers that patrons can find at the bar; PBR starting at \$1.00, while the others are \$2.00 each. A cooler located along the wall that divides the main bar from the game room holds much of the Brownstone's bottled beer and different types of wines. Beverages found within this cooler range from imported bottled beers such as Becks to more expensive domestic bottles like Blue Moon. A small variety of non-alcoholic beers can also be found within this cooler. One bartender joked that this non-alcoholic beer has been in the cooler for years, and that he may be tempted to give it away as a gag to one of the patrons. This cooler also holds all of the glasses for the draft beers. A second smaller cooler located along the inside of the bar hold other domestic bottled beers such as Iron City and Budweiser.

Patrons can read the specials of the night on a chalkboard located to the left of the main door. A type of food special for the night is also noted on the chalk board. Depending on the bartender at work on any given day, this chalkboard may be adorned with pictures or brief witticisms. On most nights,

however, a peace sign can be found on the chalkboard. At one time bartenders would write the specials backwards or perhaps in a different language. This amusing custom was halted shortly after the sale of the bar fell through and the Tormli family once again took over management of the bar. Underneath the chalkboard is a shelf running along the wall. Usually three or four stools are positioned near the shelf. When no other seats are available, patrons sit on the stools, place their beer on the shelf and play video games or poker. However, this is only the case if other patrons have not already relocated the stools to other areas of the bar

6:1

Tavern chalkboard.



To the right of the entrance is a large open area filled with tables of different sizes and shapes. It is within this area that musicians and performers periodically set up stage. All of the tables in the Brownstone Hotel are dark black with an ashtray at the center of the table. During live bands or other

entertainment, employees re-locate one or two of the larger tables into the game room in order to make room for the musician's equipment or the small stage area.

The back wall of the main bar room consists of two tables, a dartboard, and a corkboard used to advertise future shows. Some regulars only sit at the two tables located in this area of the bar. Generations of regulars have passed this popular area of the bar over to younger generations of regulars as one group replaces the next. Sign of this passing of guard can be found on the fireplace where a loose brick can be removed from the fireplace on which is written the signatures of present and past regulars to the bar, as well as, names of bar employees. Apparently, these bricks have been considered treasured because several have been stolen. Generations of bar goers have sat at these two tables due to their easy access to the bar. Even bartenders on break will congregate here to participate in the dart game of cricket (older electric model dartboard). This area allows full view of customers and bar activity. Many bar clientele will sit at the horseshoe bar and turn around to watch dart games or shift their focus from the television set to the dart game during commercials. Silver duct tape has been placed across the floor in order to mark the distance required for darts (cricket being the dart game of choice in the Brownstone). This taped marker usually extends underneath one of the two tables or a chair, which must be moved in order to play darts. A shelf in the back corner holds two cups containing darts and extra dart tips.

A narrow hallway splits the back wall leading to two offices. One office appears to be a storage room for musical equipment, and old chairs. This storage

room is also used by one of the bar managers as a make-shift office. The main office is located at the end of the hallway. It is in this office where the hotel owners deal with the tenants of the hotel and other bar related business. An ATM machine is also situated in this hallway just to the right of the main office door, but has never worked during the researcher's several years of participant observation. A piece of cardboard hides the neon ATM sign hanging over the hallway entrance in the main bar. A third door located on the left side of this hallway leads to the hotel rooms. This door is usually locked in order to keep individuals from sneaking past the door-man by entering through the back of the hotel.

Doorways toward the back of the tavern lead to restrooms and hotel kitchen area. The restrooms are small, no larger than an eight foot by nine-foot area. The walls are a beige color with imperfections and stains from years of misuse. The floors are a grayish tile. The bathroom stalls, unlike modern-day public restrooms, remain of longstanding wood. During the winter months, the restrooms tend to be unheated. It is possible to see one's breath due to the cold temperature of the small rooms. There is no soap dispenser. Instead, management places a bar of hand soap beside the single sink in the washroom. In the men's restroom, the single sink is located only a few inches from a urinal with no divider between the two.

A second doorway situated to the left of the back wall leads to the game room. The game room is the only area of the Brownstone that has bare hard wood floors and is about three-fourths the size of the main tavern. The walls of the

game room are bluish-gray. An old cigarette machine sits in the corner. Here customers can play pool, fuss-ball, and darts, although most patrons playing darts use the dartboard in the main bar room. Patrons are able to order drinks through a large rectangular hole in the wall dividing the game room and main bar area. Tables have been placed along a large window that allows view between pedestrians and gamers. At times, plants are seen along the windowsill and in the corner of the game room. A television set also hangs from the wall allowing game-room patrons to watch without the need to constantly walk back and forth from the game room to the main bar area.

The game room is also used for a stage area when bands play at the Brownstone. During these times, employees cover the pool table and move it into a corner of the room. The game room is not sound proof and employees cover the large outside windows with large pieces of plywood in an attempt to keep some of the noise from reaching the nearby residential area. Game room visitors can enter the bar through a door located to left of the large window. This doorway leads to a second doorway and out to the street. This door is commonly used for bands bringing in equipment. The door is usually locked from the inside in order to prevent under-age youth from sneaking into the bar without the door-man seeing them. At times, however, customers have been caught attempting to let friends in through this game-room door.

6.2

The game room.



Other sources of entertainment at the Brownstone consist of two television sets in the main bar area and a couple of video game machines situated to the left and the right of the main entrance. All of the television units found in the Brownstone Hotel are of an older model (not flat screen). They range in size from twenty-four inch screens to thirty-inch screens. Television viewing in the main bar is mostly for sporting events, with patrons sometimes gathering around one of the sets. They generally gather only around one TV because the smaller of the two sets is very blurry and with the audio playing about five seconds ahead of the other set—a confusing situation with sound coming from only one set.

Tavern Social Structure and Subculture

Tavern Social Structure

The group that gathers on a nightly basis around the bar of the Brownstone Hotel is a very diverse. On any night, a patron could speak to a wide variety of individuals differing in gender, age, race, or social class. Although these groups tended to congregate around the Brownstone at different times during any given day, they were generally able to interact with one another without much friction.

The following section explores the different types of groups that gathered at the Brownstone and how these distinct groups help to create and perceive the hotel social atmosphere.

This scrutiny of bar room social structure benefits from the work of Spradley and Mann (1979) and Katovich and Reese (1987). Their studies suggest a social structure within taverns logically consisting of managers, employees, and bar patrons. They also suggest that within each of these categories can be found a number of subcategories. For example, the grouping of employees can be broken down into bartenders and bouncers. Katovich and Reese structure bar patrons into regulars, irregular regulars, and non-regulars. Some adjustments of these categories were necessary for this dissertation's findings. The formal social structure of Brownstone's tavern is categorized into three distinct groupings: The management (owner), the employees, and the tavern patrons. This section will review not only these sub-groups but also some the key participants within them.

Owner/Management

The highest-ranking members of the tavern's formal social structure are the owner/manager brothers Michael and Vincent T. Together with the help of Michael's wife Shirley, the brothers are able to operate and manage the tavern and hotel. As managers of the hotel, these individuals were in charge of opening the tavern, ordering alcohol, as well as taking responsibility for the general oversight of the tavern. With the assistance of several employees, the three managers shared the duty of closing the hotel on nightly basis. The owners appeared to only take part in closing the tavern on Friday and Saturday nights, the busiest nights.

The three alternated this responsibility with Shirley acting as the head manager on these nights for much of the research period. She was generally greeted by patrons in the tavern with hugs and was usually found surrounded by regulars while she watched the tavern. Vincent has recently taken over this responsibility as acting manager, and regulars could usually be seen gathered around him while he watched the bar. Despite the appearance of Vincent taking over this role, it is still common to see the other three managers overseeing the tavern.

Employees

At the Brownstone, tavern employees are divided into three categories: Bartenders, doormen, and musicians. Seven employees who appeared to be important in the social structure of the hotel/tavern are described. These employees span each type of employment within the tavern. Several other individuals that were employed during the research period and are not described here but may be noted later in a case study. During the observation period, the hotel employed a total of eleven different bartenders. Bartenders are most clearly categorized by gender, with eight male and two female bartenders. Bartenders were expected to not only serve drinks, but replace empty kegs, open and close the bar, socialize with patrons, act as a front desk host or hostess to potential hotel guests, and generate promotional events for the tavern (musical acts, and drink specials, etc.).

The most senior member of the bartending staff and one of the more popular bartenders is Ruth. Ruth is a middle aged (early fifties) Caucasian female who has been employed at the Brownstone since 1993 when she was hired as a

waitress. Ruth was usually greeted by regulars with cheers and hugs when she entered the bar to begin her shift and has a reputation for telling risqué jokes. These jokes tend to surprise newcomers to the bar as Ruth appears as wholesome and grandmotherly like. In addition to bartending, Ruth also worked a second job as a waitress at a local restaurant. The second of the female bartenders was Kelly. Kelly, a young, mid-twenties Caucasian female was employed at the tavern for almost year. Her time within the bar appeared to be a difficult one. Although liked by most regulars, especially males, Kelly earned a reputation for being unreliable. Staff regularly complained when working with Kelly about her not being on time for work, usually arriving thirty minutes to hour late.

Most of the bartenders at the Brownstone were male. When discussing the reasoning for this with owners and male staff, two reasons were identified. These included, strength needed to lift heavy objects (i.e., beer kegs, audio amplifiers), and the ability to work the door. Male tavern employees regularly participate in both bartending and door duties and some also acted as musicians. Some of the bartenders also became regular drinking customers of the tavern. In fact, in every case, male bartenders were simply tavern regulars who after years of patronizing the pub were asked to become doormen, and then slowly transitioned to bartending as their tenure as employees lengthened.

The most senior male of the tavern staff, and the only male bartender to be employed by the tavern throughout this ethnography, was Frank. Frank is a Caucasian male in his mid-forties. Frank began his employment as a doorman and became a bartender shortly around 2009. During the research, Frank acted

mostly as a doorman and bartender although since 2012 he has also been placed in charge of coordinating musical/entertainment events. In addition to being a bartender, Frank also completed a Masters degree in counseling during the course of the research. Frank was a one-time heavy drug user (cocaine, marijuana, alcohol) while living in Los Angeles and San Francisco during the 1980s and 1990. He believed that as a recovering addict himself he would make a good drug and alcohol counselor. Frank is generally popular around the bar and is known for his story-telling about his time in California and other earlier diverse interests: pool playing, gardening, and disc-jockeying at a local college radio station.

The second most consistent male employee of the tavern subculture was Dave. Dave is medium sized Caucasian who was distinctive due to his full beard throughout much of the research period. He served in all work roles during the study. Dave began his employment, as a regular musician at the tavern after being invited to participate in an “open mic” night by his uncle and one hotel bartender. After playing a number of gigs at the tavern (as well as turning 21), Dave was able to become an official employee of the tavern as a doorman and eventual bartender. As an official employee, Dave also served as event coordinator during much of his time at the hotel, hosting “open mic” nights and scheduling shows. Serving as both a bartender and musician required Dave to hold dual roles during many of his shifts (i.e., set up the stage, participate in the act, and serve drinks). In addition to his role in the Brownstone’s social structure, Dave also earned a number of business certificates and also managed grander bars in Pittsburgh.

Thomas was another important employee of the subculture also serving all three tavern functions, and was known for his ominous appearance. He stood round 6'4" fashioning a large afro, patchy facial hair, brown sweatpants, and bare feet. He admits he could appear to somewhat intimidating to outsiders. Generally described as a friendly individual within the bar, he also was a popular pianist within the bar setting, playing usually funk, jam-band, and classic rock era music. Much like Dave, Thomas's role as musician placed him in a dual role during his work shifts, often being asked to double in a musical act and tend bar at the same time. Thomas served as an employee of the tavern until the fall of 2009 when he was fired after being sentenced to serve three years in prison for drug distribution.

The final two male bartenders highlighted in this chapter are important because they represent transition to the current group of the hotel/tavern social structure. That is, these two bartenders, Trevor and Corey, both started work shortly after Dave and Thomas were fired and have remained as bartenders at the Brownstone since 2011. Joseph, a six foot tall and slender Caucasian, has long hair stretching to his tailbone whereas Corey is the same height with short black hair. Both are students at the local university as well as hotel bartenders. As with the other male bartenders, they also started their employment as tavern customer regulars before being asked to "watch the door." These two differ from the previously mentioned staff because they are not musicians and instead attempt to use other mechanisms to draw in customers apart from live entertainment (beer club). This beer club was created in order to supply patrons with a wider variety of expensive beers. In order to be member of the club patrons would pay a

monthly rate. By paying this rate the club member contributed to the purchasing of a variety of expensive beers both domestic and foreign. Once this alcohol is purchased, these patrons are able to purchase it at a discounted rate (since they contributed), while non-club members were required to pay a higher rate.

Patrons

Patrons comprise the third category identified within the tavern culture and are sub-divided into regulars and non-regulars. Although the term “regular” patron of a tavern social structure might imply that persons are of a similar demographic, such was not the case. Basically, they are identified as regulars because they can be found at the tavern at least four to five days a week. Most in this sub-group, whether elderly or youthful, patronized the tavern at regularly scheduled hours and could be at times found sitting in the bar from opening to closing. Often, and on a daily basis, they would be positioned in the same seat. The regulars within the social structure were typically characterized as either townies or hippies. Individuals identified as townies resided in the municipality for an extended period of time and in some cases were born in the region. Otherwise, they migrated from elsewhere but were attracted to the Brownstone. During the research period, eight patrons were identified as regulars who could be categorized as townies. Despite often being situated around the bar for entire shifts (4:00pm—2:00am), most townies congregated at the Brownstone between the hours of 4:00pm and 8:00pm. They were referred to as “day-bar” townies by employees. The eight townies included two university professors (one retired), five businessmen, and one hotel resident.

Townies

Dr. Gray was a rather short and slender, elderly man, who had been employed at the local university for over thirty years before retiring in the mid-2000s. Dr. Gray could also fall into the category of hotel resident because he moved into the hotel shortly before the end of the research period. Dr. Gray was very much respected by others and hotel staff. He was the only regular identified within the study to be permitted to run a tab at the bar. Management allowed Dr. Gray to pay his bill (usually consisting of white wine, Jeager bombs, and boxes of Marlboro Reds) in one lump sum toward the end of each month. Although Dr. Gray was, and continues to be, a common sight around the bar on Friday or Saturday nights, he could usually be found in the tavern shortly after opening (information gathered from overhearing his day-to-day conversations with renters in the hallway while the researcher was residing in one of the hotel rooms). He usually appeared to be intoxicated before entering the bar, but slow movement and slurred speech could have also been due to his age and not intoxication. Dr. Gray was most well-known within the subculture for always being accompanied by a different, generally attractive, younger woman almost every time he entered the bar. Because of this, Dr. Gray was considered a legend around the Brownstone, though many of the stories pertaining to his many “conquests” were never confirmed. Some regulars who had known Dr. Gray for years mentioned that he had been married multiple times, at least five. Others noted that although he (Dr. Gray) may enjoy the rumors surrounding these young women among bar patrons, these young women were, in fact, hired aids for Dr. Gray after

responding to a local newspaper advertisement. One of Dr. Gray's "dates" quoted this ad as saying, "Aged, one time university professor seeks female student assistance."

In similar fashion to Dr. Gray, Dr. Smith could usually be found at the bar during the day. Dr. Smith is a tall, thin, Caucasian male who was usually found alone and conversed with only a few individuals at the bar. When Dr. Smith did interact with others his conversations were limited to a few topics, these included any school issues being faced by Thomas (bartender), or other students, gardening, and music. He could usually be found reading an article pertaining to agriculture, or in the corner of the bar watching television.

The second category of regulars were individuals who fell into the businessmen category and who themselves were divided into two separate groups—car salesmen and older/retired businessmen. If there was any group patronizing the Brownstone that was recognized by all at the bar (due to their outspoken nature), it was the car salesmen (Mr. Williams and Mr. Banks). Both were rather heavy set, Caucasian men in their mid to late 40's. The salesmen always stuck together at the bar. If they did not enter together, they arrived only within a few minutes of each other. It appears that once they finish work at the car dealership, the Brownstone was usually their first stop before heading home. A conversation between the two generally revolved around car sales, women, politics, or Pittsburgh sports. Most of their conversations were laced with profanities. On at least five occasions, the researcher identified non-regulars being so offended by the salesmen that they left the bar. Employees and

management tolerate the loss of business, however, since the salesmen are regulars are easily controlled if asked to quiet down. If the salesmen got too noisy it was usually due to the differences in political opinion between the two friends, with Mr. Williams pushing a conservative ideology and Mr. Banks being more left on the political spectrum. In addition to these two, there is also a secondary group of car salesmen that occasionally join Mr. Williams and Mr. Banks.

The second group of regulars identified as businessmen consisted of three older men. The three regularly sat near the manager brother who happened to open the bar that day (Vincent C. or Michael C.). Of the three patrons, Mr. Jones had been a regular at the Brownstone for almost thirty years and is one of the most tenured regulars to be found. Mr. Matthews and Mr. Smith have both been regulars for around three years each. Mr. Matthews is a retired local businessman and Mr. Smith is a retired university professor from Michigan. The three always sit in the same location, facing the tavern entrance to watch those entering the tavern. Often they sit and listen to the conversations taking place on the opposite side of the bar. The three have often joked that the group of “characters” that sit on the opposite side of the bar would make a “great Broadway play.”

The final type of sub-group found within the “townies” was the residents of the hotel. Throughout the research period, residents of the hotel were a common sight within the bar. However, of the hotel residents to patronize the tavern only one resident was considered a regular. This was Mr. Phillips, a skinny, Black male (age 53). Mr. Phillips was the most popular tenant of the Brownstone Hotel among bar patrons. He would often be found with a box of

J.A.C.K.S (cheap cigarettes) and a glass of Pabts Blue Ribbon (\$1.00 draft) on nights when he was not working. One characteristic that makes Mr. Phillips interesting is that during many of his conversations, he would sing his sentences to those speaking with him. Within the bar social structure, Mr. Phillips was liked by some and at least tolerated by most and his antics will be detailed later. In addition to residing in the hotel Mr. Phillips was also employed as a janitor/handy-man in the hotel, as well as, being a dishwasher/handy-man for a higher-end restaurant located just minutes away from the Brownstone. Toward the end of the research period, Mr. Phillips did move out of the hotel and stopped patronizing the bar.

Hippies

If there is one dominant group within the Brownstone Hotel, it was the group referred to by many as “the hippies.” This label likely originated with some of the older 1960s crowd of regulars who frequented the tavern. Though referred to by many around the bar as hippies, not all those who fell under this category would appear on first sight to be so. At the Brownstone, the term hippie, in most cases, referred to a collection of musicians, homosexuals, and artists. The hippies were a regular fixture within the Brownstone. There are few nights of the week when one would not see a small group of hippies gathered around a table within the Brownstone, and these few nights usually coinciding with local music festivals in the area. Two of the key individuals identified with this group were noted earlier (Dave and Thomas), and their importance to this subculture will be highlighted throughout this dissertation.

Non-Regulars

The final type of patron revealed in the tavern social structure was the non-regular. Much like previous research related to bar culture, non-regulars were considered those individuals who were either new to the bar scene, or simply those individuals who might patronized the tavern once (i.e., tourists). Non-regulars occupied the lowest rung of the social structure. One common type of non-regular discovered was referred to as the “dinner crowd.” The dinner crowd consisted mainly of tourists (often university alumni) and senior citizens who would at times enter the bar thinking that it was still a fancy restaurant only to discover that the steak special had been replaced with bar drinks and hot dogs. Most of the dinner crowd customers performed the same ritual of walking around the bar searching for a host to seat them only to discover that the restaurant they remembered from their past had been replaced. Once coming to this recognition, the dinner crowd patrons would usually depart the bar without saying a word to anyone. It is important to note that upon witnessing this frequent ritual, neither employees nor regulars attempted to help or speak with the dinner-crowd visitors. In many cases, regulars and staff would even stop talking to each other in order to watch these customers wonder around the bar area until they left.

Tavern Subculture

With this discussion of the social structure of the tavern, it is now appropriate to discuss the atmosphere that these groups create. This section is divided into four parts: Day-bar, night-bar, after-bar, and general perceptions of the tavern. Attention is given to the normative patterns (rules and regulations) of

the tavern and the common forms of norm-breaking or deviation associated with the tavern throughout the day and night.

Day-Bar

The Brownstone Hotel opens for business at 4:00 pm Mondays through Saturdays although for much of the research period the bar was closed on Mondays. The starting shift of the day is generally referred to by employees and regulars alike as “day-bar.” Most bars in the area consider this time of the day “happy hour” and usually offer daily drink specials. At the Brownstone, however, these specials are non-existent or simply not advertised. This is because the Brownstone’s regular drink prices (draft beer ranging from \$1.00-\$4.00) match the prices of drinks offered during “happy hour” at other bars in the community. The crowd that gathers during “day-bar” is made up mostly of regulars. However, the general makeup of the patrons did fluctuate depending on the bartender working on any given day. Hippies tended to only frequent the tavern during “day-bar” if their hippie peers were bartending.

Seating

A common theme within much of the literature related to tavern culture pertains to the seat selection of patrons. The Brownstone tavern is no exception, and patrons also showed that seating within the tavern was important. In general, seating or the idea that a chair in a particular location belonged to one specific customer, was significant to those identified as regulars. It was only these regular patrons that were able to claim rights to specific locations of the bar. Each of the separate groups of previously identified regulars (excluding Mr. Phillips)

appeared to have claimed specific locations of the tavern as their own (See seating chart). Of these groups of regulars, the older businessmen and hippies revealed the greatest control over their preferred seats.

The individuals identified as older businessmen could always be found located along the far end of the bar next to the chair belonging to the manager who opened the tavern for the day. These persons favored their favorite seat locations for a variety of reasons. They were prime location situated next to the beer taps and restrooms, or they afforded them the opportunity to see everyone as they entered the bar without turning around. Such prime locations also gave the vantage point of visual access to almost all areas of the main bar. This was essential simply because it was a preferred past time of the group to simply watch and listen to the conversations of other patrons as if other patrons were actors in a play put on only for the older regulars. One of the retired patrons, Mr. Smith, noted that as a regular of the bar for three years he had just recently been accepted into the group and therefore given permission to sit in his chosen location.

I first started coming in here about three years ago. At that time, I used to sit over there (opposite side of the bar). I would come in, drink my beer and leave. I hardly spoke to anyone. These guys would kid me saying things like, "who the hell is this guy?" But, as time went by, I started to slowly move over one chair. Every couple of months I would move over another chair. After a while I was sitting over here. Now this is the only spot that I will sit at. - Mr. Smith Regular

The second group that appeared to have a strong hold over one particular area of the bar was the hippies. As noted in the seating chart, hippies tended to congregate around one table located along the back wall of the main barroom. This table was referred to by many as the "head table," not only because of the

large number of patrons that could usually be found gathered around it, but also because throughout much of the research period the night manager Shirley (and at times Michael T. her husband) could be found at the table surrounded by and interacting with the hippies while they managed the bar. This area of the bar appeared to be selected for a variety of reasons. First, the sheer number of hardcore individuals (at least ten) belonging to this hippie group forced them to congregate around a table rather than the horseshoe bar. And, of course, the horseshoe bar was occupied by longer tenured regulars. Hippies did not object to the table because of its proximity to the bartender, restrooms, dart board, television, and stage. This last item is important as many individuals in the hippie group were also considered musicians giving them access to the stage if they wanted to play a song. They could play or sing a song and keep their drink on the table while performing.

For patrons and employees alike, seating around the bar seems to be an important and constant feature. Once someone has become an established figure around the bar during the day, their place is essentially saved for them. If the positioning of the regulars was in any way thrown off, it was usually noted by the bartenders and other regulars alike. This usually occurred when a non-regular entered the bar before a regular and without realizing it took their seat. In the majority of instances, once the non-regular left the bar the vacant seat was quickly filled by the regular, reclaiming their seat without any commotion.

Slow and Busy Shifts

Few bartenders actually want to work the day-bar shift. This was simply because the bar could be very slow during the day resulting in fewer tips. Day-bar shifts during the research period were split among three bartenders, Frank, Thomas, and Dave. Often, the employee working the bar during the day had an impact on the type of crowd to patronize the tavern. It was quickly observed that the normative structure of the bar varied depending on how much business came through the door and perhaps what bartender was on duty.

Throughout the research period, the day-bar shift was consistently a slow shift. For instance, a slow shift would be when perhaps four to six customers entered the bar in a four hour period which included the researcher. It would not be unusual for the researcher to spend three or four hours alone with the bartender a week during such slack times. This emptiness of the bar bred further sparseness as potential customers would at times walk into and then quickly out of the bar after noticing the lack of patronage. This lack of business during day-bar was quite common throughout the research period and was made worse during months in which the local university happened to be on break. One of the bar owners (Vincent), expanded on this problem and its relation the current state of the business.

If it wasn't for that university this town would be nothing. The town people don't understand that about the university. They should be open year round up there. It should be a trimester deal to keep the economy going. Use those new buildings... Now we are just surviving. Sometimes we barely do that. The summertime is dead. It's like when they get off Christmas 17th of December to 23 January. There's a whole month and a week that there is nobody in town. That hurts me. Damn that just hurts. I mean you pay bills; everybody's got to pay the bills...Because there's just not enough revenue to support it.

It is important to remember that even during these slow periods, regulars would still congregate at the bar. These slow periods of business did offer one commonly observed behavior. Bartenders placed trust in customers to watch over the bar. The role of bartender at times required one to leave the bar for a short period of time in order to replace bottles in the cooler or fulfill other general tasks. Leaving the bar for these chores did appear to be a common occurrence, however on many occasions these trips did not appear to be for common employee related tasks, as they could last fifteen to thirty minutes. On one particularly slow day-bar shift, the researcher was left alone in the bar for a period of thirty minutes.

One bartender who was particularly known for this behavior by regulars was Thomas. Regulars were so accustomed to this behavior that at times Mr. Williams (retired gentleman) would pick on Thomas by claiming that he had just seen Michael T.'s car passing by the bar. When this would occur, Thomas would promptly restock the cooler with fresh bottles of beer. On one occasion, Michael pulled into the back lot while Thomas was in the kitchen area during his shift. Thomas came out to the bar and offered the following account.

I was just in the back and Michael pulled in and yelled at me for being back there. He was like "is anyone watching the bar?" I was like yeah Mr. Williams, Mr. Smith, and (the researcher). I mean if I really thought you guys would rip us off I wouldn't leave you here alone, I'm not an idiot. You cats aren't going to pour yourself a drink, and if someone tried to you guys would stop them. I really don't see the need for him yelling at me.

Thomas's point is interesting because he identifies regulars as a form of social control within the bar. Only regulars could be trusted with oversight of the establishment for extended period of time. It is important to note however that

the researcher recognized this common behavior (bartenders leaving the bar for extended periods) early into the research process (by multiple bartenders), months before the aforementioned incident, and before the researcher was well known by staff.

Employees working day-bar greatly influenced the presence of the largest group of regulars frequenting the Brownstone during the research period—the hippies. Hippies tended to frequent day-bar during the shift of Thomas or Dave. This is because these two employees were, in fact, hippies themselves. During these busy periods of day-bar, a number of noteworthy behaviors were observed. One particularly significant behavior was identified by one bartender as “practicing.”

During much of the research period, it was common to find a small group of patrons (usually hippies) gathered around the head table playing darts at all hours of the day. These groups tended to frequent the bar during these tranquil shifts because some bartenders “practiced” their shot making skills during the shift. This included creating different types of shots and giving them to regulars and other patrons to sample free of charge. As noted, this custom happened when the bartenders also identified as hippie were at work. Bartenders who participated in this behavior rationalized the behavior in two ways; these were “needed practice” and “business sense.” Thomas noted that this behavior was due in large part to a lack of bartending experience. The following account portrays a slow day when Thomas and a fellow hippie spent almost three hours playing free games of darts and drinking alone in the bar.

Dude, I was coming here for probably a year before I started talking to Shirley about working here. And for the next year, I would work the door, but I did not really work here. I didn't even have a uniform. I just would work it if they needed help and would be paid under the table at the end of the night. Then I said all right how about you put me on the schedule. So they started training me to be a doorman. So then, I was like let me train to work the bar. I mean I didn't even know how to make the shots. Cats would just come in here and ask for a shot, and I would straight up tell them I don't know what that is. They would laugh at me but I would get through it with them. If the shot sucked, I gave it to them. I mean I had been working here a year and I just got this (Brownstone Hotel shirt) like a month ago. I never had a uniform. I was wearing sweat pants, a t-shirt, and a hat.

Besides practicing, bartenders also believed that the exercise actually helped to bring business into the bar despite reservations they thought the owners might have had about it.

I understand why Michael and Vince may be pissed off about it. But you have to do something to attract people in here. I am not giving away a ton of drinks. I still charge people for drinks. I figure the customer is more likely to come back and buy drinks if you occasionally give them a free drink. – Dave Employee/Regular

Interestingly, the behavior of giving away free shots did not always appear to be controlled by ownership or bartenders, but on some occasions by regulars themselves. The researcher did note that sometimes the presence of the three older male regulars in the bar seemed to curtail some of this “practicing” behavior, even though, as regulars, they too were offered drinks from time to time (whether from bartender error or generosity). Bartenders also noted that they did not just give shots away. They also believed some patrons who attempted to take advantage of the bartender's generosity or patron status and just demand free shots from them. Bartenders noted that they did not think these patrons were “real” regulars of the hotel. This idea concerning a patron being a “real” regular was also echoed by the individuals who represented the shift from day-bar to

night-bar, the doormen. It is this time of day that is discussed next within this dissertation.

Night Bar

Around 8:45 pm, day-bar winds down with the arrival of the first member of the night shift and the doorman. When day-bar ends at 9:00 pm, the outgoing bartender pours their tips onto the bar from a blue bucket and hands over the keys as a passing the torch ceremony. While this ritual takes place, many of the patrons around the bar will close their tabs in order to tip the departing bartender. Around this time, the car salesmen and the retired regulars have already left the bar. Mr. Williams, however, will stay at the bar till closed. It is around this time that other groups take over the Brownstone Hotel. Regular patron Mr. Jones described these individuals this way during my first conversation with him:

Yeah, the night crowd here they are different from any other bar, and the group you see around here right now, they are freaks (laughs). They have all the piercing and rings and they look like freaks. But you know they are good people. They don't want any trouble and I respect them for that.

Owner Michael T. summed up the groups that gather around the Brownstone late night with these descriptions, "We attract a pretty diverse crowd. We got hippies, businessmen, theatre people, lesbians, gays, we got them all. But we don't want assholes." Michael's description of the regular night crowd within the Brownstone includes a wide variety of groups that mingle without any interpersonal conflict or aggression. In his quote, he makes a point of saying that he doesn't want "assholes." This is because when describing the crowd at many of the bars within the area, Brownstone regulars feel that the bar scene outside of the Brownstone is something they do not want to be a part of

I don't have any beefs with other bars. I just don't feel half as comfortable there as I do at the Brownstone. I mean it's like my home. Going to another bar is like going to another country, I mean you don't know their ways you don't trust their government. – Thomas Employee/Regular

Within this section, the role that both the social structure and environment in which the patrons participate is discussed.

Role of Employees

A first event indicating the shift change between day-bar and night-bar was the arrival of the night doorman. Winlow (2001) describes bouncers in this manner, "Their bodies, bearing, expressions and scar tissue are passing on easily decoded messages to bar and club patrons: do as we tell you and do it quickly." The term "bouncer" itself gives off an aggressive tone. Previous research has focused on the impact bouncers have on aggression within bars (Graham and Homel, 2008). The differences between the Brownstone Hotel night crowd and other bar activities were striking. When one walked into any of the "college" bars located on Philadelphia Street they are often greeted at the door by bouncers. These bouncers appear to be weightlifters or football players.

There are no "bouncers" at the Brownstone Hotel. Instead, there is usually one doorman, who on many nights would not greet patrons at the door, but instead chase them down three to five minutes after they arrived and had ordered a drink. This occurs because the doorman is frequently playing darts or arranging music for customers. On occasion, patron regulars will take over the position of doorman. On three occasions, the researcher was asked to take over the position of doorman, and once was the doorman for an entire shift. This included

collecting a \$3.00 cover charge, checking ID's, and cleaning tables, all general responsibilities the doorman.

The doorman is, in fact, an important position at the Brownstone. The cover charge paid by all patrons, except for hotel residents, goes to the musicians performing that night. One former doorman lost his job and was banned from the Brownstone for taking money out of the "cover charge" for himself (this case study is discussed in detail later). The Brownstone charged a cover every night of the week except Tuesday throughout the research period.

Anyone who has worked the door at the Brownstone knows that at times patrons will not want to pay the cover. Several doormen offered the following:

I hate when people get pissed off about the cover charge. It's like it's going to me, it's going to the musician. At least we have some entertainment. Hell, at other bars, you have to pay the cover just for walking in the door and they have more expensive drinks and no music.
– Dave Employee/Regular

If someone doesn't want to pay the cover, I say fuck them. Fuck them dude, fuck'em, it's three bucks and it's going to help the people playing. If they don't want to pay, I'll let them in anyway just so I don't have to hear them bitch... but those people suck. And they are not Brownstone people. – Brad Employee/Regular

The cover charge at the Brownstone seemed to be an accepted norm within the community. Those that refused to pay the cover were considered outsiders, even if they are allowed to enter the bar. One of the individuals who refused to pay the cover on one of the occasions when the researcher worked the door gave this reason for not paying; "I don't have to pay the cover, I am a regular here." When inquiry was made to Thomas, Dave, and other regulars, the researcher was told that he did the right thing by letting the individual in.

However, others noted that the individual cited in the incident had a history of making this claim, and was, in fact, not a member of the group.

The single most important task of the doorman (in terms of legal responsibilities) is checking ID's for underage individuals attempting to enter the bar. At least four regulars admitted to beginning their time at the Brownstone as underage patrons.

I started coming here when I was nineteen. I mean the doorman let me in and he saw my ID. But, once the owners found out, they kicked me out. They actually banned me three months after I turned twenty-one. But, they let me back, thank God. – Cloey Regular (hippie)

On one evening, I was able to witness a now ex-employee of the Brownstone let an underage individual into the bar;

Two young men walked into the bar on a Tuesday night around 8:00 pm, one carrying a guitar posing as a musician wanting to play at open-mic night. When they were met at the door by T.J., he promptly asked to see their ID's. One of the men handed T.J. his card. After a moment, T.J. handed the card back and shook his head. When he went to take the card from the second man, he was informed that he did not have his ID on him. At this time, T.J. told the two men that he could not let them enter if man number two did not have his ID. The two men turned around and left the bar. About twenty minutes later they arrived at the bar a second time. The first man who was successfully able to show ID during their first visit walked straight by T.J. and to a table. The second man handed T.J. an ID. After inspecting it for a moment he looked at man number two and said this, "What are you guys twins?" T.J. then notified the two that at this time of the night he could not let both of them in the bar (due to the small number of patrons at the bar). He noted that he couldn't give a shit how old man number two was. After a few moments, T.J. informed the two to come back a little later when the bar would be busier and he would be able to let them in without anyone noticing. About an hour later, the two walked back through the main entrance holding their guitar. T.J. inspected both of their ID's as per usual and let them in the bar. Even though the two brought a guitar neither of them participated in open mic night.

Soon after this incidence, T.J. was let go and banned from the Brownstone. T.J. was banned for a number of reasons which are discussed later in this chapter.

Simply checking a patron's id, however, was not always as simple as it may appear as some patrons saw being carded as a sign of disrespect.

To be carded was to be someone unknown in the bar or an outsider. Throughout the research period, regulars were often not carded when they entered the bar. However, individuals who were frequent patrons to the bar, but not regulars within the main group, would at times become upset when Brad (doorman/bartender for a two year period), would ask to see their ID's. These patrons would never voice their frustration to him but would comment to each other and the researcher that they had been "coming here longer than he has worked here," and would note that, "I was just here yesterday and he didn't card me."

The doorman at the Brownstone Hotel play an important role within the bar community. The doorman has an important relationship with the musician or the evening's entertainment, for it is he who holds the entertainers pay for the evening. Musicians needed to be able to trust that the doorman would enforce the cover charge and not skim money off the top. Doorman were also the first line of defense ownership had against serving underage patrons. Bartenders also need to be able to trust that the doorman is checking ID's. If the doorman allowed an underage individual into the bar and that individual was served, it was the bartender or bartenders who served the drink that would have been held responsible for the incident, not the doorman. It is the doorman who, in essence, holds the liquor license of the entire establishment in his hands.

The Music

Music was an important concern to not only the hippie group but the culture and history of the Brownstone. Both Dave and Frank, who on separate occasions have been responsible for booking the bands, have often told researcher, “You got to come this Thursday, I scheduled a great band,” or perhaps would notify the researcher of the nights Dave’s (bartender) band was playing. Within the subculture there appeared to be two types of musicians, volunteers and paid.

Open mic night was always an important event at the Brownstone Hotel. Every Tuesday around 10:00 pm Steven, a heavysset Caucasian male with puffy blond dreadlocks and eye-glasses, would stand in front of the crowd with a guitar and say:

Welcome to the Brownstone, how’s everyone doing tonight? My name is Steven and its open-mic night again as it always is here on Tuesday night. Anyone who wants to come here, play a song, tell a joke, read poetry, or tell a story is more than welcome. I got a list in my head so just come up to me and I can get you on it. I also have a guitar here and some bongos in the back if you don’t have your own instrument so we can probably hook you up with whatever it is you need. Thank you.

Steve was not the original founder of open-mic night. In fact, he was just the current regular of the Brownstone to be given the task. On most Tuesdays, and with the help of Dave, Steven was able to set up all the equipment needed for the show. In addition to running open-mic night, Steven was also a saxophone player, guitarist in a number of bands, and a cook at a local “college” bar located on the main street. Most of the musicians who played their own shows at the Brownstone got their start at open-mic night as volunteers. The following two accounts were shared by Thomas and Dave:

I remember when I first started coming here, I was pretty good at the guitar but I had never played in front of a group before. And one Tuesday night I am here listening to all the people go up there and play and I was just sitting there thinking I should play. Then out of nowhere Loni just gets up there with her bongos and just starts playing with one of the guys. And she was killing it. People here started to go nuts watching her play. She inspired me man. That night I went up there and played. I was freaked out dude I could hardly play. But I went up there because of her passion. And then when I was finished I sat down at the bar and she came up to me and told me I did a great job and come back next week. – Thomas Employee/Regular

I played my first open-mic night when I was nineteen years old. I came in here with my uncle Big Dave, you know him. We were ready to play...I mean we had been playing together for a while; it was just that I was underage. So we went through the hassle of getting me a fake ID to come the bar. The second the door guy asked to see my ID, Dave just lost it. He told the door guy my story and that I just wanted to play and I wouldn't be drinking. You know Dave he didn't want anyone to get in trouble if something happened. It was around this time though that he was taking over the responsibility of running open-mic night. It was started by Clint and Blue and kind of faded off for a bit until Dave took it over. So the manager at the time told Dave not to worry, that it was alright if I wanted to play and no one was going to care. So I am a bit nervous since it was my first time playing and Dave and I start playing "All along the watchtower", and we are playing and I thought we were doing alright when out of nowhere this old dude walks up on the stage with a case. He takes a saxophone out of the case and starts jamming with us. It was wild. It was the best time I had ever had at an open-mic night. – Dave Employee/Regular

Music for Dave and the hippies was a very important issue. The group was so influential in terms of bringing patrons to the bar that on nights when Dave's band played in other towns or in music festivals the Brownstone practically shut down. On many occasions, a music festival held elsewhere would clear the bar for an entire weekend. This was proof of the tightly knit community found within the hippie culture. One semi-regular patron of the hotel describe the group,

I guess when I think about them I have trouble thinking about just one. I just see them all. They are like a collective amongst themselves. They live together, work together...they were always together, just a group of people. – Jessica Patron

Within this section, the subculture of the tavern was discussed as it is related to the types of normative behaviors patrons (regulars) displayed during the research period. This is important within the study because much of the depictions of the bar appeared to indicate that those participating in the hippie subculture (in particular those employed by the owners) set the general tone for the tavern which was generally a relaxed one. Employees and regulars were generally focused on the music scene within the area, differed from those depictions of deviant subculture perceived by locals and depicted in the previous two chapters. Despite this generally relaxed atmosphere there still did appear to be some deviance within the tavern. This is the next topic to be discussed within this chapter.

Deviance/Social Control

During the research period, a number of themes relating to deviant behavior and social control emerged. The themes were identified as patron social control, employee/management oversight, and police intervention. Each is discussed as they relate to the tavern environment and perceptions of the bar.

Patron Social Control

As discussed in the previous section relating to tavern social structure, regulars were able to exhibit some forms of deviant behavior more freely than non-regulars (i.e. the case of the car salesmen). Though regulars enjoyed some leeway concerning deviant behavior around the bar, outsiders were not granted such a privilege. One example of this difference in treatment pertains to a common substance associated with the bar—marijuana.

During the research, many of those who frequented the bar became comfortable enough with my presence (at times five nights a week for at least three hours) to discuss drug use within the bar. Marijuana appeared to be a common occurrence at the Brownstone, even developing as topic of discussion of Brownstone's history. One regular patron commented: "In the past, however, the phrase was 'changing a tire.' This meant we would go to the back lot to roll a joint. That's how was back then. It was just a hip place to be." It appeared that the common feeling around the bar was that as long as no one was hurting others or being disrespectful, some drug use would be tolerated. It seemed the only individuals to have a problem with such behavior were retired customers that gathered around the bar. Management would be concerned if it was occurring in or around the bar. Other than this small portion of the "Brownstone family," the vast majority of patrons and staff accepted drug use and had no issues with it as long as no one was hurt or offended by its use.

Marijuana was also a regular topic of conversation around the bar. On one occasion, a member of the Brownstone music group spoke with me for an hour about why he believed the drug should be legalized.

I think pot is a good currency you know. I will play with it with people that don't even smoke pot. I will hand them some pot. Do you take pot? And they are like that is illegal. I am just like oh fine man just give it back and don't say anything about it. They are like, its illegal....Says who? But, some states they are so chill with it you know. Colorado they don't care. They see you rolling joint they would be like hey take that inside. I am super advocating for smoking. I tell all my professors about it. I am moving out to California to be a farm hand at a medical farm, and my parents know about it. I mean I see alcohol and it's so much worse, so much more worse. Cigarettes, they are known to kill you. Oh that's fine. Then you can get drunk, drive your car and kill a bunch of people, oh that's fine too. Pot!...lock them up. I never understood that. First time I started smoking pot I told my parents instantly. You don't understand it makes me better at music. My mom was like, your just

high, you think your better. But my friend and I would record everything and we were like that's awesome. You're telling me, that's like creativity you know. I am a...I don't know what the word is...an advocate for the legalization of pot. – Thomas Employee/Regular

Drugs never seemed to be an issue around the Brownstone and were never associated with any type of violent episodes. Through my contacts with Brownstone regulars and employees, I was made aware that a number of patrons did in fact use drugs. Pot appeared to be the drug of choice by most patron-users, which most likely added to the relaxed atmosphere of the bar. The term “getting down at the Brown” was first spoken to me in reference to smoking pot at the Brownstone. Almost on a nightly basis the shift between day-bar and night-bar involved a traditional “getting down.” This meant the exiting of the bar by a group of about five hippie-patrons. The researcher was never invited on these trips though on one occasion he was told, “You’re not there yet, but one day you’ll be there. You’re close.” Getting down was such a common occurrence that at times when the researcher was asked to go to another bar with Brownstone regulars, upon return to the tavern, the bartender questioned “Did you just go smoke dope?” Thomas was eventually arrested and sentenced to three to six years in prison. Thomas was arrested in what was depicted as a “four county sweep” in which over twenty individuals were arrested in relation to the sale of a variety of illegal drugs (i.e., crack cocaine, marijuana). The following is a publication depicting Thomas’s sentencing,

Thomas Rinholgs, 24, of Blue Bell, Montgomery County, was ordered to serve three to six years in a state prison and to pay \$15,475 in fines and court costs for delivery of a controlled substance. Investigators charged that Rinholgs distributed 13.6 grams of cocaine in April 2008 at a

residence along Wayne Avenue, Indiana. (The Indiana Gazette, 8/2/2010)

Despite this charge, many of the regulars within the tavern denied Thomas's involvement in the distribution of cocaine (did not deny his involvement in the drug trade though). Many regular recalled Thomas's arrest.

It was like 9:00a on Thursday. You know him. He was sitting on his porch in his sweat pants and no shoes on smoking a cigarette. Just hanging out. The cops fly into up into his yard out of no where. Just crazy. They really didn't need to arrest him that way. I mean he may be a big guy but he is the most peaceful person I know. You need four squad cars to take him down? - Steven, Regular/Musician

Despite this arrest and eventually conviction, Thomas has since been released and was not banned from the hotel for his arrest. The local drug trade was an often brought up discussion with not only tavern regulars but also with some infrequent patrons. In many cases, the researcher interviewed patrons of the tavern who had only visited it on a few occasions. Many of these patrons noted how these few visits changed their view of the tavern compared to other bars in the community.

The following is an example of one female patron's experience.

I used to think that the bar was full of drug addicts and was much worse than it is. There may be some people there who do drugs but seemed like it was just pot. My boyfriend and I spend most of our nights out at other bars and you can get cocaine from just about anybody at a few bars up town. The Brownstone is calm. Its just different...smoky. - Janet Patron

Interviews like these in which participants depicted their associated their experiences within the Brownstone with less deviance than other bars. This was interesting as many non-patrons and locals depicted the subculture has hard-core narcotics users. Despite what appeared to be some drug use by regulars of the hotel, much of this behavior seemed to

be tolerated as long as it was not done in the tavern, some none regulars were often ejected from the tavern for less deviant behavior.

On several occasions, the researcher witnessed non-regulars engaging in acts similar to those in which many regulars engaged (i.e., shouting, cursing, complaining about service). In these instances, non-regulars were asked to leave immediately without being given a second chance. One regular (Travis) shared this story:

This is my bar. I was once having a terrible day and was in trouble with a couple of people. I wanted to have a drink but I knew those dudes would be out that night. So I came here thinking I could have a few drinks and I wouldn't have to see them. Those assholes showed up here like twenty minutes after I arrived. I was pissed; I mean they never come here. Once I saw them, I pointed at them and yelled, "Get the fuck out of here!" Dave looked at me as if I was nuts. I said, "Listen Dave I have been coming here for a while. This is my bar. Those people are just here to piss me off. Can you tell them to leave?" And you know what he did? He walked right over to them and said, "Hey I am sorry but you guys need to leave. Travis doesn't want you here so I am kicking you out." They weren't pleased, but they left. This is my bar you can't come in here and expect to start shit with me. We won't take that. – Travis Regular

This story was also confirmed by Dave:

I just heard him (Travis) yell and I was like, "What is going on?" I talked to Travis and he told me about it. I had to kick them out. They aren't regulars, and I wouldn't want them starting something. I did the right thing. I was looking out for Travis. Something happens he could get into trouble. – Dave Employee/Regular

As a regular, Travis was viewed as central on the social ladder compared to the non-regulars. Therefore, his accusations toward the non-regular were viewed with more weight than the non-regular's accusations toward him. A similar pattern was noted by Katovich and Reese (1987). They found those who were not regulars were considered "drop-ins" and could be removed from the bar for behavior even if similar to regulars (slamming a drink on the bar). Though

some behavior displayed by regulars would have them ejected from other bars (loud swearing displayed by the car salesman), within the Brownstone, due to their social status, this behavior was tolerated if informally controlled. Despite this toleration, some regulars did receive the most severe punishment within the bar, banishment.

Although there were a few instances of aggression to take place in and around the bar, the researcher witnessed only one fight, and it took place outside of the bar between two non-regulars. Such incidents could lead to an individual's banishment from the bar, which meant permanent expulsion from the tavern. During the research period, four individuals were banished by the owners. Two were previously noted in this chapter in the case of Cloey and T.J.. Because Cloey's was reinstatement into the bar, and her offense being one of common occurrence within bars, it will not be described in any more detail. However, two cases of banishment deserve additional discussion, those of T.J., and Dan, both one-time regulars and employees. It should be underscored that it was not a simple task to be banned from the Brownstone if one was a regular or an employee.

Banishment of regulars usually involved a series of events. In most cases, infractions are resolved between ownership/staff and patrons quickly and quietly. Generally, issues were resolved by a member of staff asking someone to cease their problematic behavior (i.e., being loud or using vulgar language). However, instances of aggression, particularly if physical, will lead to an individual being removed from the bar for the night.

T.J. was banned for a variety of reasons. It was common knowledge around the bar that T.J. was rumored to be skimming money off the top when he worked the door. Patrons and employees noted that he was often seen outside standing on the corner counting a wad of cash that he collected during the night. Mitchell, a musician, noted, “Nights that T.J. worked the door you don’t expect to make much. It was almost like the more people that showed up the less money you made.”

It was rumored that ownership had been looking to fire T.J. before he was actually let go. They got their chance shortly after the Tormli family took over the management of the bar (after the sale of the bar to John Steffey was terminated). A meeting was set up to discuss changes that they were going to be implemented now that Mr. Steffey was gone. It was a mandatory meeting and T.J. did not show. He was fired, for this offense. It is important to note that even though he was fired, he was not banned from the bar. In fact, it appeared that some of management’s favorite customers were one-time employees who were previously fired employees. The full story of T.J.’s banishment was shared by Thomas (employee/regular) during a particularly slow day-bar shift.

He has just crossed the line. He lives over the line. Once he was fired, he just kept doing stuff. Well, he has been doing bad things since he worked here. I mean when you work at the Brownstone you don’t really get in trouble for things, the whole shift gets into trouble. They don’t care who did it, they just want it fixed. So, we have this door in the back where employees would go to hang out on their shift. It was locked up for a while and someone kicked it in three times. It wasn’t me and it was not Ruth, she is old. Then when Steffey got sick we had a meeting and they said “if you don’t come your fired” and he didn’t come so they fired him. Once he got fired things started happening and he kept going back in the room and the bosses were just like he is a jerk we don’t want him around here, he is gone, out. I mean the guy is a great friend but that’s what happens. – Thomas Employee/Regular

T.J.'s banishment from the bar meant that he was no longer aloud in the bar. Thomas noted that if T.J. were seen in the bar, anyone who allowed him to stay would be fired on the spot. This warning came from Michael and Vincent T. The researcher had only seen T.J. in the bar on one occasion after this story was communicated to me. Even his presence then was a mystery. He was asked to leave after being seen dancing in the game room for about an hour. No one was fired for the incident but ownership was not happy with it and the incident did appear to create some drama.

Some individuals are temporarily banished several times before they truly are permanently disallowed at the Brownstone. This was the case with Dan, a once regular and well-known figure within the Brownstone. Dan has been temporarily banished on two separate occasions. The first incident took place over an entire night and ended with Dan being arrested asleep in his car.

I guess he got into it with Brooklyn (another regular) when he started claiming that he was going to fuck Brooklyn's girlfriend. Brooklyn didn't do anything though he was just pissed off. Then he told Ruth that he was thinking about going home and getting his gun to shoot up everyone in the bar. At that point, he left to go to a party at Addy's (hippie) house. When he got there, he was yelling at everyone and even kicked her dog. They threw him out of the house. He drove back to the Brownstone and fell asleep in his car with the music blaring. The police arrested him for D.U.I. – Dave Employee/Regular

After this incident, Dan was banned from the Brownstone Hotel for a couple of weeks. He did, however, apologize to the ownership for his actions and was allowed to come back to the Brownstone. After his reinstatement to the tavern, he continued to act up and on one occasion punched another regular in the head while the victim's back was turned. After a series of arguments and an incident in which he threw a glass across the bar almost hitting another patron,

finally lead to the ultimate banishment of Dan. Since his most recent banishment, Dan made a habit of hanging around outside the Brownstone. He phoned the police-accusing Brad, the doorman, of selling drugs. This prompted the police to search Brad's car, but they found nothing. Shortly after this incident, Dan slit the tires of Brad's car while it was parked in the back lot of the Brownstone. This prompted management to enact a policy that no staff could park their cars behind the building overnight.

Employee/Management

A common theme emerging throughout the research period related to bar oversight (i.e., omissions or misunderstandings) about general complaints and issues of patrons and employees of the tavern. Three common themes that seemed to impact on the bar atmosphere was customer seating, running out of alcohol, and staff attempts to attract patrons. These themes are important because they directly relate to the general maintenance of the bar by management.

The first issue pertains to the stools surrounding the bar. Regulars, on almost a daily basis (from 2008-2011) complained of their poor condition. The majority of the stools around the bar were covered with duct tape that was used to try to match the imitation leather material that originally covered the seats. Patrons complained that the tape rolled up once they sat down on it. The glue on the bottom side of the tape would stick to the underside of their pants and often permanently ruin the pants. Only two of the thirteen bar stools around the bar were free of duct tape. Upon entering the bar, regulars would scope out the stools for one in the best condition before being seated. Condition of seats was not the

only complaint heard while sitting at the bar. Once seated, bar patrons were not assured their preferred drink.

Throughout much of the research period, a regular concern of patrons and employees alike concerned the amount of alcohol on hand within the Brownstone. The beer at the tavern tended to become depleted or to “dry up” at least once a week. When this happened, bartenders would place a plastic cup over the tap to signify that “this particular beer is out.” This was a source of tension between patrons and bartenders and between bartenders and management. At times, customers would become frustrated with the tavern’s lack of beer on tap:

You know the special on the board says \$5.00 pitchers, or \$1.00 drafts all night and what happens...they run out of beer on tap by 11:30pm. How does that happen? You would think they would have a room of kegs back there. – Will Patron

This was a common complaint within the bar. During the period when PBR was on tap, the keg was depleted (“kicked”) by 11:00pm almost nightly. This did not bother most patrons and was usually to be expected since it was the cheapest beer on tap. However, on at least three separate occasions bartenders ran out of all four varieties of tap beer before 12:30 am. This forced patrons to drink bottled beer, which is more expensive. Some patrons openly complained about the problem to bartenders. This led some bartenders to become frustrated with management, as this lack of alcohol was affecting patrons attitudes toward them.

We ran out of liquor and draft beer again last night before 1:00am. That’s fucking ridiculous. This is a bar; we shouldn’t run out of these things until closing time. We run out of them all of the time. And it’s not like we don’t have room to store kegs and beer in the back. We have a huge walk in cooler that could fit twenty kegs easily. If we don’t have beer, people get mad at us (bartenders) like it’s our fault. I don’t do the ordering. – Dave Bartender

This problem was resolved toward the end of the research, undoubtedly because Dave was made an assistant manager and was placed in charge of ordering the beer.

A second frequently occurring problem pertaining to the draft beer was the tap system used at the Brownstone. On many nights, it is not uncommon to see a pitcher of beer in the cooler half-full of beer and “head” (i.e., foam that is found at the top of a beer poured from a tap). This was a measure taken by bar staff when the CO₂ levels in the tap system were deficient or malfunctioning. This would cause beer to shoot out of the tap too quickly creating foam to form at the top of the beer. In an attempt to have beer ready for this situation, bar staff would try to fill up pitchers and place them in the cooler. In time, the head would subside from the top of the beer leaving a half-full pitcher of beer. However, the result was that patrons received stale beer. The pitchers could sit in the cooler for up thirty minutes. Many of the patrons did not seem to care about this problem. Also, if there wasn’t enough CO₂ pressure in the tap, the reverse was true. This would cause the beer on tap to trickle out. At times, it could take five minutes to fill just one glass of beer. This would cause open grumblings throughout the bar while patrons would be forced to wait longer for their beverages. If the problem occurred during day-bar, the bartender on duty at the time would simply put a plastic cup on the tap signifying that the keg was kicked, when in reality the bartenders just did not think it was worth the hassle. This problem appeared to be one that the ownership could easily fix, yet the problem continued. Bartender Frank commented: “It doesn’t make any sense to me. Every time we have to

dump half a pitcher of beer because of the head, they lose money. We are just wasting beer.”

Even though the bar seemed to have many such issues, and patrons and staff alike found multiple reasons to complain about the condition of the bar, there were no instances of actual hostility regarding these aggravations. Commonly, individuals who became most upset were non-regulars. Often, these individuals would leave the bar instead of waiting for the problem to be resolved. Regulars, however, simply dealt with the issue by accepting these frustrations as just part of the Brownstone, and were to be expected. Other common complaints to surface during the fieldwork pertained to the dress code (or lack of one) for employees, shortage of liquor/beer selection and amount in stock, and the selection of bar food. Other complaints were the grimy carpet, use of plastic beverage cups, bar temperature, condition of bathrooms, and the constant stale aroma of the tavern. In addition to these wide-ranging concerns, a final anxiety of many employees related to the promotional activities by staff to attract customers.

During the research period, some employees attempted to create promotional activities with the assistance of management. These instances were interesting because in some cases these activities led to the eventual firing of an employee. As noted earlier, aside from bartending Dave also had the responsibility of running open-mic night, a responsibility that had been passed down from manager to manager over recent years. This responsibility was a challenge for those few individuals tasked with keeping the music scene alive.

When I was the manager here I was in charge of the music. And we could get some pretty good bands here. But the system sucked. Every now and then the audio system would just shut down for no reason and

we would lose like five seconds of a song. I told management that if they gave me three hundred bucks I could fix it and we wouldn't have this problem. They refused to fix the problem. So I went back to them and said that in the long run they will make their money back. But they again didn't listen to me. I was fired shortly after because of it. – Blair former Bartender/Regular

This problem was also faced by Dave;

You know I am trying to turn the Brownstone into a venue that can attract decent talent. But it's hard because the owners don't want to invest any money into the project. We need to sound-proof that back room so we can actually have bands come here and play the way they want to without fear of the cops showing up. There is a lot of money to be made here if we could just get the support of ownership. I mean I understand why they wouldn't. What do they care? This place is just a paycheck. They have lives outside of this bar. They want to sell it. – Dave Employee/Regular

The problem between ownership and staff appeared to be a constant theme throughout the research on the Brownstone. Complaints were often seen just as another case of staff wanting funds to help improve the bar thereby improving their weekly salary. Toward the end of the research period, many of the problems noted here between ownership and employees were resolved (i.e., sound proofing the game room, beverage glasses, and making Dave responsible for ordering alcohol). However, this last remedy continued for only a short period as Dave was dismissed for constantly requesting extra funds for the tavern. On another occasion Bill, a bartender brought his own television to the bar in an attempt to create a “sports club” like atmosphere. For nearly a two-week period when patrons entered the bar, they were greeted by a large flat scene television. Shortly after installing the television, Bill was dismissed and his television removed from the wall.

This perceived lack of concern by management for the tavern seemed to trickle down to the behavior of the staff (i.e., “If the management does not care,

why should we”?). According to the managers, some of these problems related to the unfortunate financial state of the hotel business. One of the owners revealed that they had made recent attempts to beautify the outside of the building, but raising money for these changes has been difficult.

Okay I'll give you an example last winter. My brother and I go to the bank To borrow \$30,000 to put in new sidewalks and improve our building and pay some taxes. We wanted like \$32,000. We have a mortgage to pay. The building is worth about \$527,000; we have about \$120,000 lien against it. And they wouldn't give it to us, they turned us down. A bank that I had written 3,800 checks to turned us down. I can see the bank from here. My uncle was the head of the bank, board of directors, stockholder...one of the bigger stockholders. They turned us down. We felt abandoned by our own bank. We have been with them since the 50s. They won't give us \$30,000? It's not like we're going to go piss it away, we want to fix our sidewalks, and we wanted to repair the building. John and I sat there with our mouths wide open; we could not believe it. We had been abandoned by our own community bank that wouldn't help us. And that just shot our wad, as far as what is the world coming to, we couldn't even get a loan from our bank. – Vincent Owner

Some forms of deviance within the tavern appeared to be accepted. This acceptance seemed to trickle down from ownerships inability to at times appease the wants of both employees and patrons. This difficulty seemed to result in a general relaxed feeling from both staff and patrons as many appeared to accept the tavern as it was. Interestingly, of the groups to enter the tavern, the one group to be mentioned in relation to deviance most often by patrons were the local police.

Law Enforcement

Much like residents of the hotel, many tavern employees, and regulars viewed the response to acts of deviance within the Brownstone by the local police to be excessive and in some cases not needed. Although the researcher never interacted with the police during the research period, many patrons would often

discuss their interactions with the local law enforcement within the bar on a regular basis. Dave provided his own experience after the researcher discovered this publication in the local newspaper.

David Howard, 27, of Indiana, was cited with public drunkenness after Indiana Borough police found him making a disturbance outside the Brownstone Hotel around 2:15 a.m. Oct. 9. Police reported he had to be subdued with pepper spray. (The Indiana Gazette, 10/19/2010)

Dave explained the situation that unfold this way,

Yeah dude I got arrested. I wasn't bartending that night, but we had a show. The bar was just about to close and we had just finished playing. So we needed to load the van with our equipment. I start taking things outside and up the street I see the lights of a squad car role up to a group of people walking away from the Brownstone. They just crossed Water Street and were at the corner. Didn't appear to me that they did anything wrong, but the two cops get out of the car and they have everyone in the group sit on the ground. After a few minutes they must have called for backup and like three other officers arrive. I am watching this and I say "They didn't do anything I saw them leave," in the direction of the group, and instantly two of the officers run across the street throw me against the van and start trying to cuff me. I am like I didn't do anything why am I being arrested? I guess because I claimed I didn't do anything wrong, they tackle me to the ground tell me that I am struggling, pepper spray me and throw me in the squad car. For what? I didn't do anything. Fucking cops on a power trip. No one did anything they were just harassing people walking down the street.

Dave also noted that once he arrived at the county jail, he was bailed out by Michael T., who according to Dave, believed the arrest and pepper spraying to be completely unjustified. One very popular story among regulars concerning the use of excessive force around the hotel related to a situation in which a group of five officers stormed the bar (armed with loaded shotguns) in response to false allegations claiming someone in the bar had a gun. One employee, Brad, was working the bar at the time of the "raid."

There was me and two other people in the bar. We are just sitting here. Then out of no where like five cops come running through the door with shot guns locked and loaded. They are pointing these things at our heads and screaming at us. No warning just came running through the door

screaming. We were scared shitless for a second there. What were they thinking?

As in the case with residents of the hotel, regulars of the bar perceived their interactions with local law enforcement as unnecessarily stressful compared to the types of crimes being committed or not by participants. Tavern patrons would often question the need and purpose of “so many cops” in the neighborhood.

Despite these issues with the taverns, physical conditions both staff and patrons continued to patronize the tavern. Even those employees who were fired due to disputes with ownership over paying for equipment (i.e., Dave, Blair etc.) continued to patronize the bar after being let go without any tension being felt between themselves and management. Interestingly, the severe type of deviance to be discussed by most regulars within the tavern did not involve deviant behaviors being committed by patrons or hotel occupants, but instead by the formal agents of social control, the local police.

Perceptions of Brownstone

Despite the occurrence of some deviant behavior, and the smoky, unkempt nature of the tavern, patrons generally perceived the establishment in a positive light. In order to gather a fuller understanding of the culture of the Brownstone Hotel and its tavern, it is important to explore the why people patronize the Brownstone Hotel in the first place. Here, the perceptions of tavern patrons are discussed as they pertain to both the tavern and hotel subculture, as well the opinions regarding other bars in the area. This section is followed by a discussion

concerning the importance of this chapter to the research questions and dissertation in general.

Perceptions of the Tavern

Despite suffering from inconveniences, the regulars of the Brownstone Hotel bar find it the only acceptable bar in the area. Though at times the beer is warm or stale, among other difficulties, regulars continue to return without any thoughts of leaving. In the case of some patrons, the Brownstone is the only place they will go to have a drink. One patron no longer resides in the area. Yet, when she returns, the Brownstone is the only bar she will visit. This is quite common for individuals who were once regulars at the Brownstone, but who had left the area. The reasons why these patrons tolerate the bar are similar. Some patrons note that the bartenders are the best in town.

They all know my name and what I want to drink, and the drink is sitting at the bar before I even sit down, and they are willing to give you a drink free. That is what a good bartender does to show how much they appreciate your business. They know in this case that they are going to make money. They know that if they are nice to us, we will be nice to them. Uptown, it is not like that. They don't know you and they don't care. - Mr. Banks Regular

One patron summed up his feelings on the Brownstone Hotel in this way:

It's nice here. In the other bars, there is always some dick that casts a huge shadow of dickery over the entire group; there is one in every group. But, there are just fewer dicks in this group. It's a good group. - George Patron

A retired long-time bar customer enjoyed the bar because of its local roots, and the appreciation the bar has for its regulars.

This is the last town-bar for people like me. I can't go to another bar because some young punk might dump his drink on me and punch me in the face. They may not be like the young kids here, but, here we have a respect for each other. We don't want any trouble. Kids here just want to drink and have some conversation, and that's all they do. There may

be some problems, but everyone gets along for the most part. – Mr. Jones
Regular

Dr. Gray summed up his feelings concerning his regular presence in the bar and his eventual move into the hotel (occupying the researcher's old room) by saying,

This place makes me feel alive. I come down here and I feel the energy from these kids and from the music. Every time I come down I leave feeling younger. I can feel the life in here. That's why I love it here. The energy makes me feel alive.

A common theme shared by most regulars during the study pertains to a lack of aggression (physical and verbal) in the Brownstone. To most of the patrons, violence was associated more with the popular college bars on Philadelphia Street, a five block strip through the center of the small town. Respondents noted that patrons in other bars felt that hostile behavior within a bar was normal and accepted. Thomas, an employee and regular, noted that his size usually draws him unwanted attention by patrons in other bars.

You know I am a pretty big guy. If I go to another bar, every cat in there is going to be sizing me up. Just because I am a big guy, people think I am a fighter. I don't want to fight anyone. What sucks more is up there, it's not just one dude, but it's a group of them. You have to fight the one cat and all of his friends. I don't want to fight anyone.

In relation to the perception of the bar as a nonviolent place compared to other bars in the area, patrons and management alike saw the Brownstone tavern as a place where people were respected (especially women). On multiple occasions, female customers remarked that they enjoyed coming to the Brownstone because they were not "harassed" by the male patrons.

I don't like those other bars uptown. I worked at one of them for a while and they treated me like shit. I had guys pushing me against the wall (employees and patrons) and no one would do anything about it. They just laughed. – Katie Patron

The Brownstone owners also noted that within the tavern individuals disrespecting a woman would not be tolerated and would be thrown out. Interestingly, even with this claim, the owners admitted to hiring Sue because she was a young, attractive female that could “put asses in the seats.”

Another shared perception of the bar by employees and regulars alike related to the hotel being a place of “opportunity.” For many of the musicians who patronized the tavern, it was more than just a bar. The researcher considered Dave to be the leader of his band “Sassafras Assassins.” On one night while he worked the door Dave talked about his music;

I really want this band to do something. I think we can do it too. We just need to sit down and write songs. We can't go anywhere playing covers (for cover charges) all the time. I know people enjoy covers because it is what they know. But as a band we need to expand and I need to grow. We can't continue to only play here in front of the same crowd.

Despite this band breaking up shortly after the fieldwork ended, and the firing of Dave and Thomas, Dave continued to participate regularly in the music scene within the hotel. Dave, like many other musicians in the bar believed that the Brownstone was a place that could help promote his music and interests. For some, it was the hope that playing an open-mic night could lead to being offered their own show on a Thursday night. For others the bar appeared to be a stepping-stone for a future in concert promotion. Despite leaving the area, Dave continued to be a semi-regular fixture in the bar, playing shows on a monthly basis. In a discussion concerning his future plans Dave remarked:

The Brownstone is a decent show for me. I know that I can usually get a good crowd to come out here. So if I am in need of some cash I always can try to come play a show here. It is nice to know that I can do that if I need to.

As noted throughout this chapter, despite the many differences between patrons, the tavern setting at the Brownstone was one where little blatant tension developed between parties. Despite what may be many inconveniences, the regulars and employees retain a very positive perception of the tavern scene. Tavern customers did appear to define themselves as being different from other persons or groups patronizing the diverse establishments in town. Because of this, the Brownstone became the only place in town they felt comfortable or welcome. Despite expressing mainly positive views in regard to the bar subculture, most patrons viewed the hotel subculture in the same fashion as outsiders to the establishment. It is these perceptions that are discussed next within this section.

Patron Perceptions of the Hotel

In order to fully understand the subculture of the Brownstone Hotel, it is important to gain an understating that tavern patrons had of those who resided at the hotel. Though only a few tenants of the hotel area actually frequented the bar, many regulars who did not live at the hotel appeared to believe that it was an unclean, disagreeable place. At times, tavern regulars would ask questions like “How are the crack-heads upstairs?” Others made statements to the researcher, such as, “Wow you’re really taking this research seriously. I wouldn’t live there.” Though they did feel the upstairs of the Brownstone was a place where many of them would not want to live, they did respect a few of the men who lived there.

Mr. Hughes was respected by both regulars and employees because of his kindness to them. Every day that I passed by him sitting on his stoop he would

say, “Good day sir. How are you feeling?” When I would respond and ask in turn, he would often respond in quiet voice, “Only God knows.”

Frank (bartender) related to me that once he told his son.

If you ever see anyone out there messing with Mr. Hughes, or you hear that someone at your school (near the Brownstone) was giving him a hard time. I want you to kick their ass. No one should be disrespect him. He is a good man.

Despite respecting Mr. Hughes, and a few others, throughout much of the research period, it appeared that bar regulars generally held a negative perceptions of the hotel. Much of these perceptions stemmed from townspeople descriptions of the Brownstone as related to regulars, but also the from the few hotel tenants who frequented the tavern. These opinions generally grew from patrons interactions with one resident, Mr. Phillips. Mr. Phillips received generally mix descriptions from tavern patrons. These ranged from very positive to even criminal. Mr. Phillips resided at the hotel for similar reasons as his peers.

You know why I come here the location. It's close to where I work. Plus it's cheap. I can get a dollar beer here. I won't pay more than two bucks for a drink. I mean I could live other places that may be nicer, but hell my friends are all here and its close. I am young man I got my health. I want to have fun. I have fun here. And you know what the people here treat others with respect. There is never a problem here. No one is going to get belligerent here. — Mr. Phillips
Employee/Resident/regular

Much of the issues related to negative perceptions of Mr. Phillips appeared to stem from his asking other regulars for favors—a common theme within the hotel's tenant subculture. Three usual complains referred to his asking for rides, various items (i.e., a dollar, cigarette, cell phone), or attempting to pick up women. The following are two quotes relating to Mr. Phillips asking for both rides and money from other tavern patrons and regulars.

One day I saw him with sack of things walking down the street and he waives me down and asks me to give him a ride to the pawn shop. I go in with him because he says I can take him back. I am waiting and he is pawning off all the really old VHS tapes, and only got \$7.00. He is pretty optimistic though no matter what you say. He gets 7 bucks and is like “It’s all good, dog, 7 bucks is all I need for a couple beers a pack of smokes that’s all I need, dog. – Thomas Employee/Regular

It is important to note that just only a few blocks from the Brownstone

tavern, \$7.00 is the equivalent of two beers. Within the Brown, Mr.

Phillips is able to drink to the point of mild intoxication (seven beers

seemed to be easily consumed by Mr. Phillips) on only \$7.00. Despite

giving some praise to Mr. Phillips in regards to his positive attitude

concerning his situation, another regular was not so positive.

It fucking pisses me off sometimes. He flagged me down a couple weeks ago and asked me to drive him to Wal-Mart and he had me wait for like thirty minutes. Then he walks around here asking people for money. He just has a lot of nerve. – Mr. Jones Regular

Though Mr. Phillips would ask to only “borrow” a small amount of money

from patrons, he would usually ask multiple people during any one visit. Mr.

Phillips did occasionally ask the researcher for money, and in most instances

declined. However, I did allow him to use my cell phone on a few occasions.

The researcher recognized that Mr. Phillips knew who he was when on one

occasion, he looked at the researcher, pulled out a wad of bills and asked, “Do I

owe you any money?” In addition to money, Mr. Phillips also would ask the

researcher if he could borrow his cell phone. Though he never actually used it,

often times becoming frustrated with it and returning it in order to find a simpler

phone.

The final issue which often drew negative attention toward Mr. Phillips was his regular attempts to seduce female bar patrons (of all ages). Mr. Phillips loved to talk to and about women. He would often share his stories of “sexual conquest.” Though he claimed to have “busted a lot of asses,” as he referred to it, the researcher only saw him with a few women during the time that he knew him. This type of behavior, openly hitting on female patrons, was generally considered objectionable within the tavern, and the blatant actions of Mr. Phillips tainted the perceptions of other hotel tenants.

Shortly after the first fieldwork period, Mr. Phillips was evicted and banned from the tavern after being found guilty of theft and receiving stolen property.

Mr. A. Phillips, 59, of 103 N. Sixth St., Brownstone Hotel, Indiana, charged by Indiana Borough police Aug. 21 with theft and receiving stolen property. Officers reported in a criminal complaint that Patterson stole a cell phone valued at \$40 from Steven Hilinski at 10:15 p.m. Aug. 20 in the bar at Brownstone Hotel. Patterson is scheduled to appear for a preliminary hearing before Haberl on Oct. 8. (The Indiana Gazette, 9/23/2008)

Interestingly Mr. Phillips was accused of stealing another patrons cell phone, an item that he would often ask others (including the researcher) to borrow. In addition to negative perceptions of Mr. Phillips, other tavern regulars did mention other negative opinions of the hotel tenant subculture, usually concerning prostitution and substance abuse. Recall that some patrons would refer to occupants of the hotel as “crack heads.” This accusation generally resulted from patron’s knowledge of local media reports about Brownstone tenants being involved in arrests related to substance abuse. Also, one common tavern

discussion related to the rumor that the hotel was at one time the home of prostitution in the town. One of the owners had this to say about this rumor.

Whorehouse...we've been accused of having a whorehouse. Yeah we've been accused of having a whorehouse upstairs. My dad said geez wouldn't that be nice in this town. There is no whorehouse in this town. Oh, it's just funny, it is just hilarious. I wish you were around for some of that. Because you know it is not true...Yeah there's a whorehouse upstairs we have a whorehouse upstairs what room is it? I want to know. But then they can't tell you anything. Well geez what are you saying that for, but they never have any answer. It's just rumor, they go by rumor. – Vince Owner

Much of the perception of the hotel tenants by tavern patrons was similar to those of townsfolk who had never entered the hotel. This is important because many of these individuals were able to create these perceptions after interacting with residents in the tavern. One interesting point related to the perceptions of both residents and tavern patrons of the Brownstown Hotel is the frequency and severity of criminal behavior compared to other taverns of the community.

Local Crime

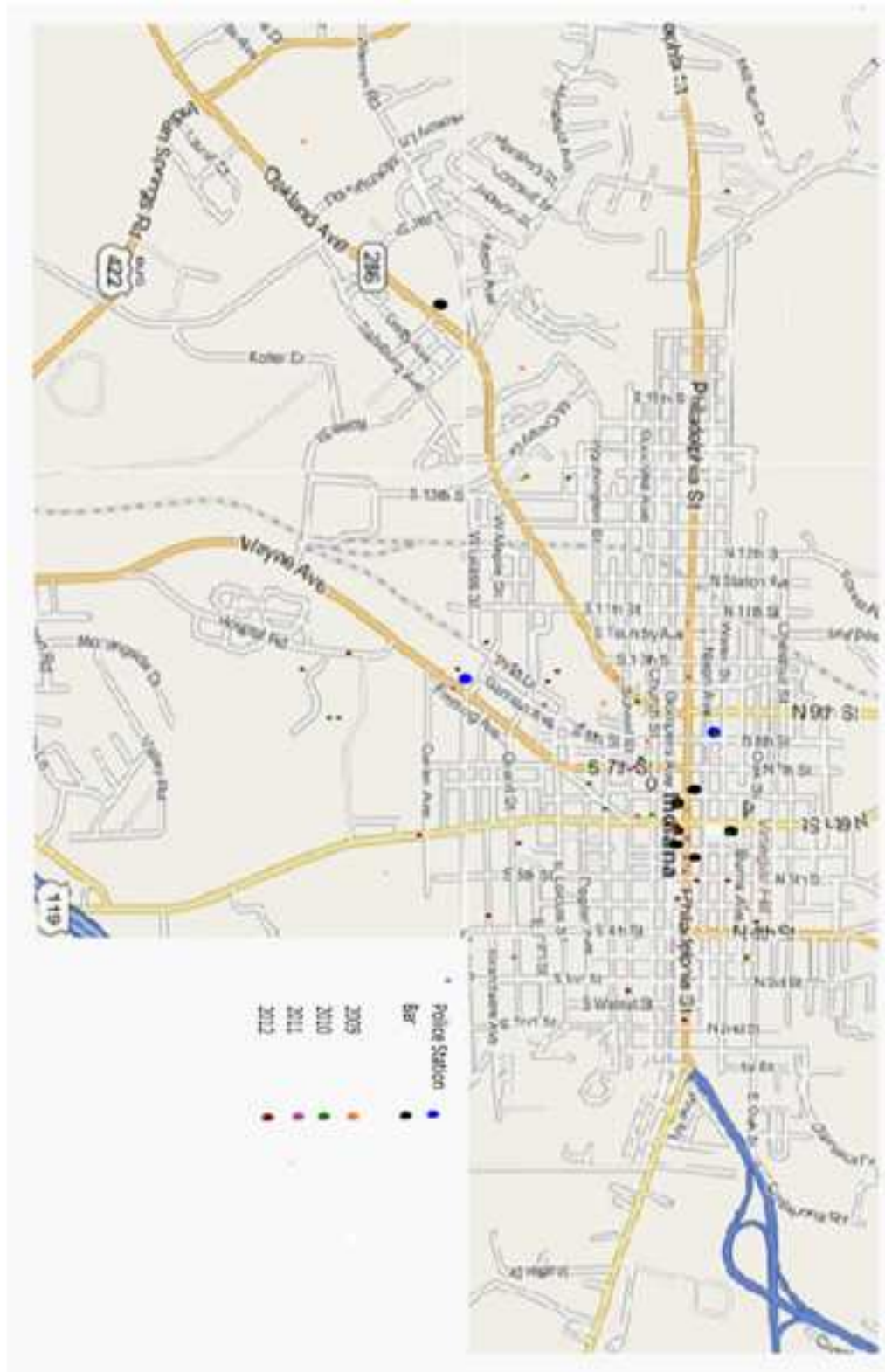
The discussions with Brownstone tenants and tavern patrons led to an attempt to compare the types and regularity of crimes being committed at other bars in the area compared to the Brownstone. As previously noted, many patrons were surprised find a lack of drugs and fights at the Brownstone when compared to other bars in the area (i.e., cocaine or marijuana use). No official crime maps were available for the research area. However, maps were constructed based on the accounts of law-breaking activity as reported in *Police Logs* published in the local newspaper from 2009 through 2012.

In relation to the types of crime and sheer number of arrests occurring in local bars, the Brownstone tavern was found to have fewer instances of reported

police activity. Four maps (See, Maps 6.3 and 6.4) illustrate a variety of police reporting activity in or around town bars. These include: vandalism, theft, assault, disorderly conduct, criminal mischief, and substance abuse. Interviews with patrons of the Brownstone tavern often cited physical aggression, and general rude behavior as a reason for not patronizing other taverns in the area. A mapping of local arrests suggests this perception appears true, with assaults and disorderly behavior occurring in places other than the Brownstone.

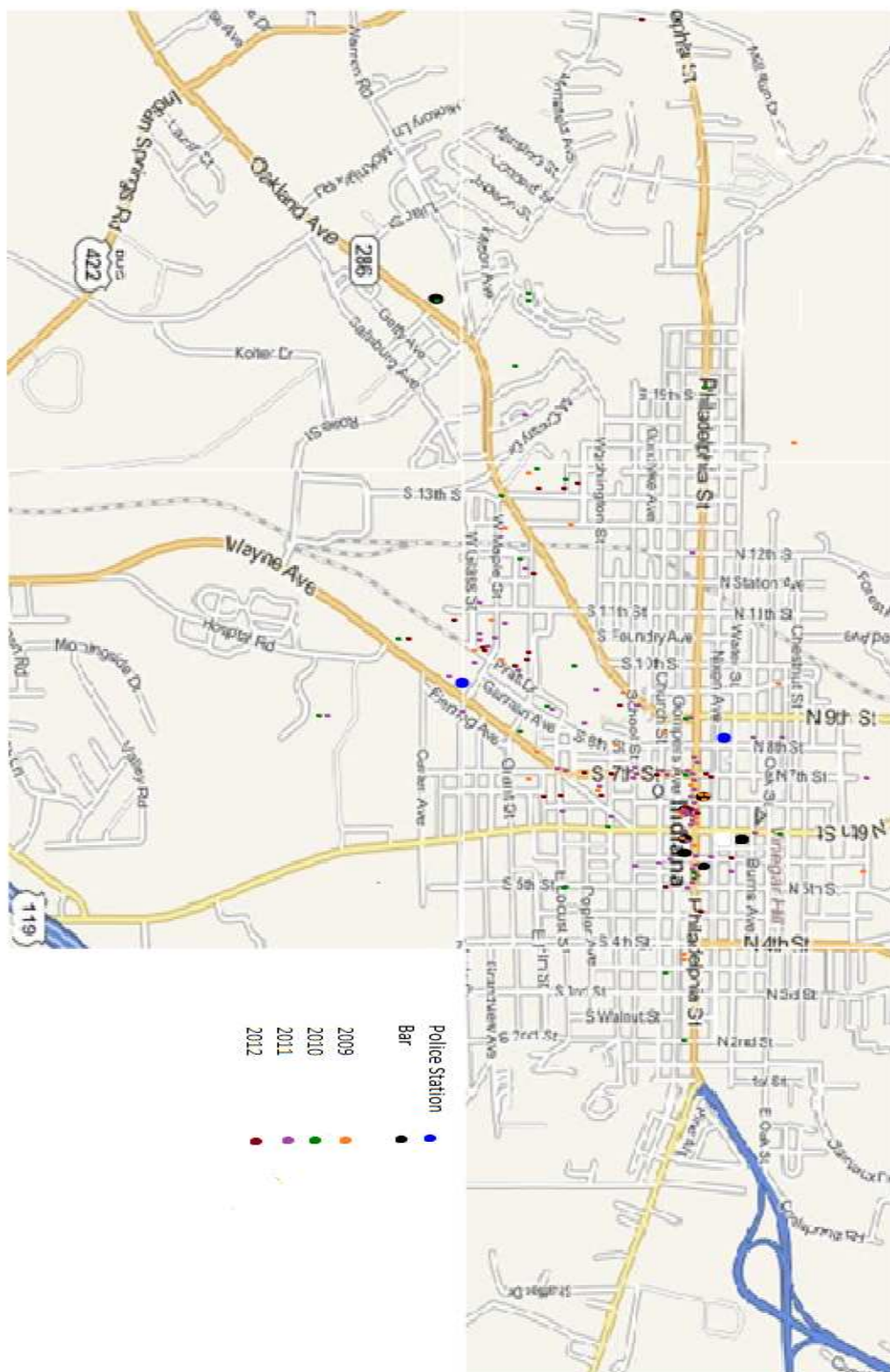
6.3

Assault reports 2009-2012



6.4

Disorderly conduct reports 2009-2012



These maps illustrate that police reports of violent or aggressive crime occurred at bars other than the Brownstone, specifically located along the street in center of town. This is important because patrons of the Brownstone explained this as one of the reasons why they avoided these bars. During a four-year period, a total of eleven assaults occurred in six different bars, with five of these located on Philadelphia Street in the town center. Thirty-three instances of disorderly conduct were reported by the police along this strip as well, with fourteen occurring in four different bars and nineteen occurring in the surrounding area. The following are two examples of fighting/disorderly conduct in other bars in the area.

Borough police said they have charged Rysaun Mills, 21, of Philadelphia, with simple assault, resisting arrest, two counts of disorderly conduct and harassment following a fight early Sunday morning at The Island, 642 Philadelphia St. Police said Mills assaulted a bouncer and was struggling with other staff members. Police said Mills resisted when they arrested him. Also, police said, another man, Jason Gay, 24, of Philadelphia, who were walking by, refused to leave the area when ordered to do so. Police said they then sprayed Gay with pepper spray. Gay has been charged with failure to disperse and two counts of disorderly conduct. (Indiana Gazette, 5/6/2010)

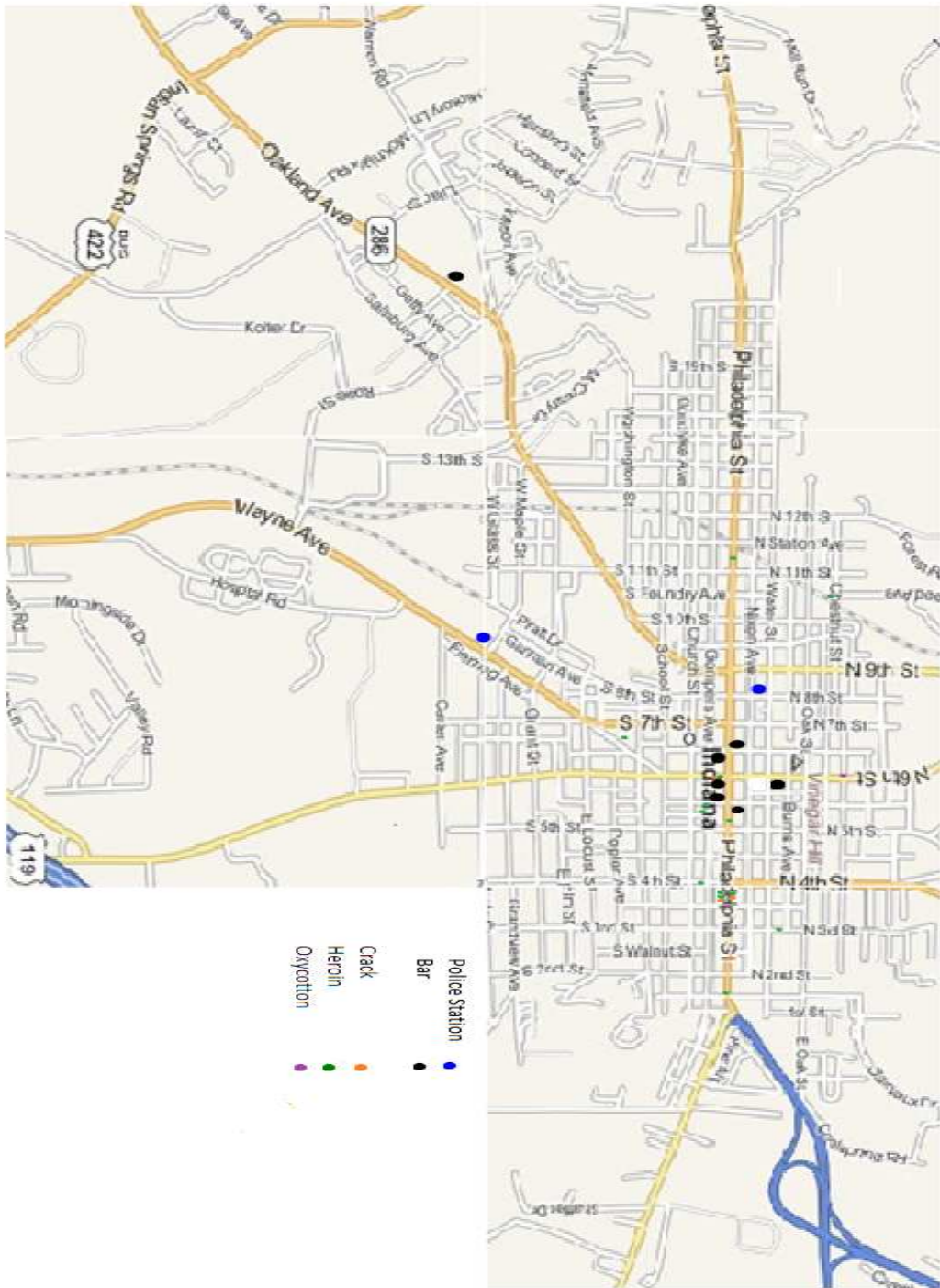
Ryan Matchica, 21, of West Chester, Chester County, was charged by Indiana Borough police with simple assault and two counts each of harassment and disorderly conduct in connection with a disturbance at 1 a.m. Wednesday on the 500 block of Gompers Avenue. According to investigators, Matchica confronted Tyler Lorditch and Matchica's former girlfriend, Terra Brubaker, inside Wolfs Den Bar, where Matchica twice punched Lorditch's face. After being ejected from the bar, Matchica accosted both Lorditch and Brubaker on Gompers Avenue and punched Brubaker's face, breaking one of her teeth, police reported. Matchica was incarcerated at the Indiana County Jail and was released later Wednesday after posting \$5,000 bond. A preliminary hearing is scheduled Thursday in Indiana district court. (Indiana Gazette, 10/9/2009)

Two maps illustrate drug citations in the community. This type of crime was selected for discussion because many townspeople believe the Brownstone

tavern and hotel to be a drug-ridden place. The first map shows arrests hard drugs. These include crack cocaine, heroin, and unlawful prescription drugs (oxycontin/oxycodone). The second map shows arrests relating to marijuana.

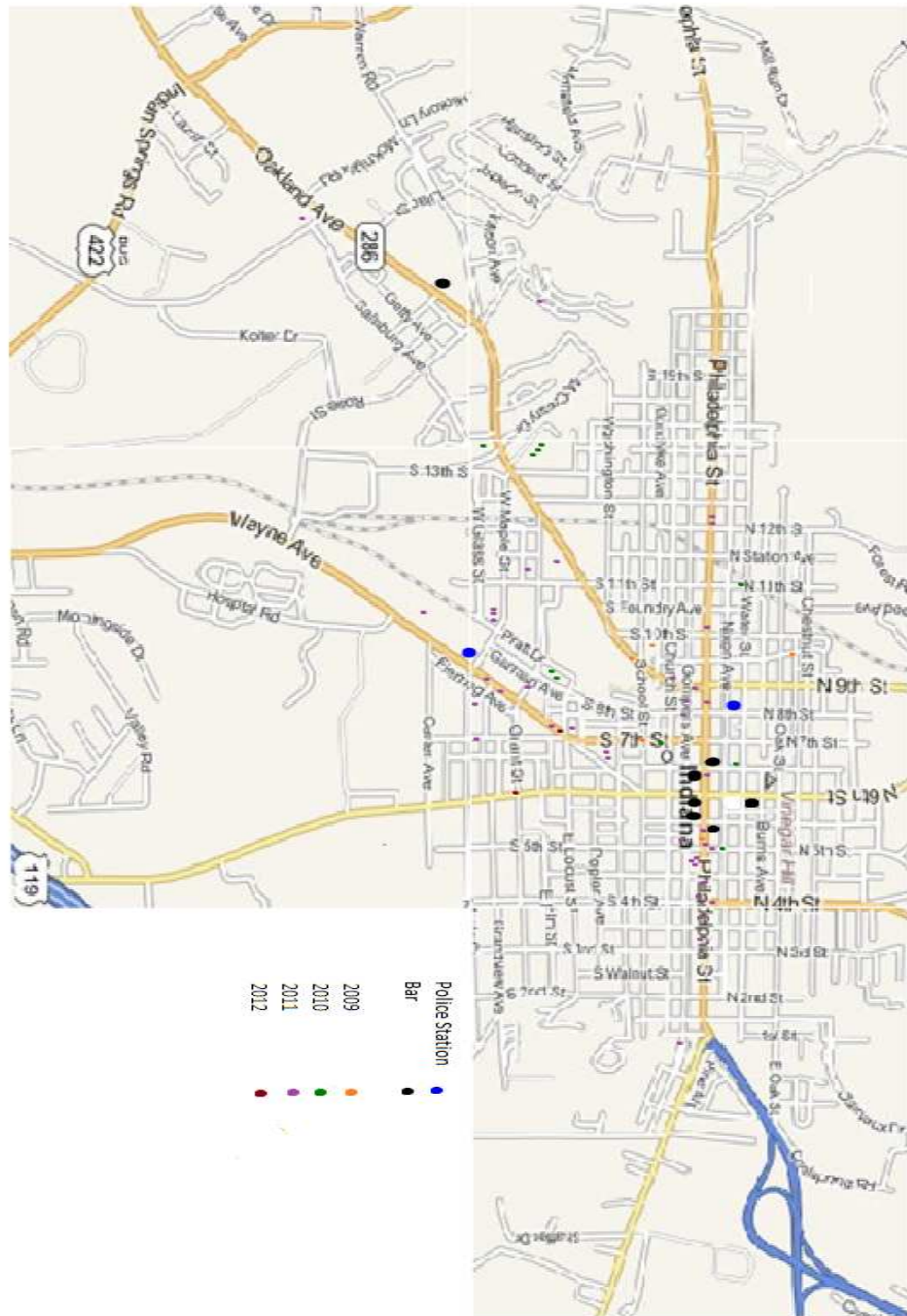
6.5

Arrest reports for crack, heroine, and oxycontin.



6.6

Marijuana reports 2009-2012



These two maps are significant with none of the arrest locations at the Brownstone Hotel. The arrests for harder drugs occurred on the town's main street, with six arrests occurring in restrooms of local convenient stores. Very few arrests pertained to powder cocaine use. This seemed odd because respondents remarked how surprised they were at the absence of such a drug at the Brownstone, yet the large amounts in other areas of town

In general, the data depicted by these news report crime maps appear to substantiate the perceptions of those within the Brownstone subculture. In terms of actual unlawful activity, the Brownstone was the safer tavern to patronize. The question remains, why would townsfolk regard the Brownstone a drug infested place rather than other town locations?

Conclusion to Chapter VI

As shown in the above narratives, despite members of the subculture viewing the tavern as a relatively non-deviant space, interviews with outsiders presents it differently.

Research question #2 asks: *How is the Brownstone Hotel described in regards to types of patrons who frequent the hotel?* This chapter addresses the tavern subculture, as it existed separately from the hotel tenant culture. The tavern crowd differed from the hotel tenant subgroup because only a few of hotel tenants actually patronized the tavern. Instead, the tavern was primarily patronized by groups of students and locals. Other than the bar regulars, this population generally shared the same perception of the hotel as did outsiders to the Brownstone—that of a place associated with marginal social groups reflective

of deviant, if not unlawful behavior. Despite this negative perception of the Brownstone hotel, these bar patrons generally perceived the setting as the best and safest tavern in the town. This perception aside, some forms of aberrant behavior did emerge as commonplace even among employees (i.e., “handing out free drinks,” and “soft-drug use”). Although tolerating some forms of eccentricity within the bar culture, there was little tolerance for violence or belligerence of any kind. This type of behavior at the Brownstone was purely associated with outsiders who frequented other bars.

Research question #4 asks: *In what ways has the cultural setting of the Brownstone emerged as a deviant eco-niche in the small town in which it is located?* Within the context of the tavern, this sub grouping appeared to be viewed as deviant simply due to its physical proximity to the tenant subculture. In many cases, it appeared that the emergence of deviant opinions of outsiders and newcomers to the tavern stemmed from their views of hotel tenants. Much of those perceptions appeared to originate simply from local townsfolk seeing hotel residents gathered outside the decaying building. These often untidy residents were visible from a busy residential street and, with the hotel’s physical condition abutting used car lots, tainted an outsider’s picture of the hotel and people around it.

The theme of biased and/or divergent perceptions (i.e., whether from hotel insider or outsider) pertains to time-honored theory in social science and criminology—particularly social ecology and labeling theory. As the hotel and its immediate locale declined in value and condition, those associated with it, either

as tenants or tavern patrons, also suffered a loss of worth in the eyes of outsiders. As the building continued to age, with little or no maintenance, its physical condition deteriorated. It was increasingly difficult to attract tenants. The subsequent decline reinforced a negative perception of the hotel as a dilapidated or disreputable place. These negative perceptions generally came to include beliefs that the Brownstone was a place riddled with unsuitable if not criminal behavior. These findings argue that this simply was a false perception.

The next chapter summarizes the dissertation, expands on the theoretical significance of the findings, and comments on future directions. Several strengths and weaknesses are noted.

CHAPTER VII

DISCUSSION

As noted earlier in this dissertation, it was anticipated that this research would be guided by ecological themes from sociology and criminology. The focus of ecology can range from an extreme macro-approach with attention to global competition among migrating peoples, to a more micro-approach with emphasis on how a single location, such as a small-town hotel, struggles over time to survive. This dissertation has concentrated on the latter. It has been illustrated in these chapters that a single hotel, over its life-course, may experience multiple shifts in its social structure and function. Such changes in social organization and purpose are shown to be linked, at least in this study, with fluctuations in the way people perceive of the hotel dwelling as a spatial area or eco-niche. What was in the beginning a high-class guesthouse for travelers, with an accompanying up-scale restaurant and tavern for the well-healed, changed over the decades to a shadow of its original self.

The past few years have seen the hotel under scrutiny turn into an unkempt neighborhood bar with a few dozen adjoining rooms mainly sought after by the down-and-out, the disadvantaged, and in some cases near-homeless. This research has provided ethnographic descriptions of the state of a hotel after more than a century of existence with an inside look at its conditions and social character today. This study has assessed the hotel itself as a dwelling, as well as, providing personal accounts of the kinds of people who pass through it. These include hotel workers, managers, owners, bartenders, and patrons. Finally, particular attention has been placed on the nature of rules and regulations that apply to hotel and tavern life, the kinds of norm-breaking or social

deviance that occurs in such a setting, and how the hotel as a spatial area is perceived by local townsfolk. Some outsiders observe the hotel as a deviance generating milieu, whereas others see the setting mainly as a favorite welcoming pub. For a few, the timeworn hotel rooms still provide a comforting, even if, disheveled, unhygienic and sometimes perilous refuge. This discussion will be divided into five sections, these being, addressing the research questions, theoretical linkage, strengths and weakness, directions for future research, and some concluding thoughts.

Addressing Research Questions

This dissertation was designed to answer five research questions concerning the history, changing functions, and social perceptions of the Brownstone Hotel. Each of these five questions are briefly reviewed.

1. *How has the social function of the Brownstone Hotel changed throughout the years and how is it described today?*

Throughout its century long history, the Brownstone Hotel has served a variety of functions within the community. Publications discovered through an exhaustive content analysis of local newspapers revealed a hotel functioning as not only inexpensive housing, for what was, in part, day laborers and Pennsylvania coal minors, but also a community and business center. During its early existence the building itself was consistently advertised as conveniently located in the central part of town, within walking distance of one's needs. During much of this period, the tavern or lounge was advertised as a popular eatery which also provided a meeting place for a number of public organizations (labor unions and political parties) and public figures (sheriffs and politicians). In addition to this, the hotel's adjoining lots provided the public with a central space to hold events such as large public auctions.

In more recent years, the hotel has come into disrepair. Its function has become a residence for what poverty-stricken, poor, and working class individuals and families who in many cases reside in the building due to an inability to pay a security deposit or commit to a lease. Still, for many tenants the building also offered housing that was located within walking distance of most local businesses. This was important because most of the hotel's tenants could not afford an automobile, or in some cases were unable to drive due to court ordered suspensions. Most outsiders considered the hotel to be a socially deviant and even dangerous place within the community. Interviews with tenants revealed that in many instances they feared for their safety when first moving into the building, because of these types of local perceptions.

Much like the hotel tenant subculture, the hotel tavern was also perceived by many outsiders as a deviant or disreputable space. This opinion appeared to stem from locals passing by the aged hotel and seeing unkempt tenants sitting on the stoops outside their rooms. Despite these negative perceptions of the hotel, the tavern continued to function as a neighborhood pub where patrons and regulars could find a relaxed atmosphere comprised of groups referred to as townies and hippies (i.e., as depicted by older patrons). Although some forms of deviance were reported by patrons of the tavern (i.e., alcohol and marijuana related), most patrons believed that outsider perceptions of the tavern were exaggerated. Although many regulars felt this way after patronizing the tavern, many noted their surprise when first entering the establishment, expecting to witness more severe types of deviance in the tavern only to find a collection hippies and locals which, for the most part, interacted without issues.

Throughout its history the Brownstone Hotel has served a variety of social functions within the community. As the building has aged, its reputation as an upscale hotel and eatery has shifted to one depicted by local publications as a deviant, crime-prone place or eco-niche.

2. *How would the Brownstone Hotel be described in regards to types of patrons who frequent the hotel?*

Despite many outsiders perceiving the hotel's subcultures as one large entity, two distinct groups occupied the space within the Brownstone Hotel—the tenants and the tavern patrons. Hotel residents represented a semi-transient, working-class, and generally low-income and marginal social status. Some residents were referred to the hotel, upon release from local correctional institutions. Most of the reasons the dozen or so residents chose to reside in the hotel were financial. Despite many tenants being employed in a series of low-income jobs, residents chose the Brownstone because it did not require them to pay security deposits, or commit to yearlong leases. In addition to this, many residents cited the hotel's location as important, since many were unable to afford a vehicle. Tenants could walk to menial jobs in the town.

Although many outsiders and bar patrons perceived the hotel tenant subculture as a deviant one, often referring to the small tenant population as “crack heads” or “bums.” In many cases tenants themselves shared these views when they first became occupants. However, for most residents, this perception has changed as most now believe the hotel, although dilapidated in appearance, remains a safe place to live. Most tenants developed a strong sense of camaraderie with other tenants of the Brownstone.

Much of this companionship appeared to originate from the lack of amenities provided in hotel rooms forcing individuals to seek out each other for assistance and friendship. The tenant subculture, while finding ways to survive in a difficult situation, developed a daily routine (i.e., cooking on the hotel stoops) that was seen by outsiders as disorderly, unseemly, and even a group to be avoided and feared. Much like the views of townsfolk, even some of the regulars of the Brownstone's tavern viewed the adjoining hotel subculture as a deviant one. Some of these perceptions were based on gossip, or media depictions of hotel tenants, or in some cases actual interactions with hotel tenants. Despite agreeing with outsiders concerning the level of deviance within the hotel, regulars of the tavern (like their counterparts in the hotel) viewed themselves as non-deviant and law-abiding. The subculture of the tavern consisted mainly of locals and college students referred to as hippies. These individuals patronized the Brownstone for three reasons. First, the price of drinks at the Brownstone was cheaper than other bars in the area. Many regulars also patronized the Brownstone tavern because they saw it as safer compared to the numerous, rowdy college bars not far away. Third, the Brownstone tavern was the only locale with a live music and entertainment. Regardless, the hotel and bar subcultures overlapped and together were perceived by town locals as rather seedy and disreputable. Contrary to the perceptions of outsiders, the tenants and bar regulars felt quite comfortable in their smoke-filled, disheveled, second-class location.

3. *How have the different subcultures of the hotel patrons evolved throughout the history of the Brownstone Hotel?*

Throughout much of the hotel's early years, it appeared that many of the tenants and occupants of the hotel differed in social status from those currently occupying the space. The content analysis unveiled numerous reports celebrating the different high

profile guests occupying the Brownstone hotel and tavern from one week to the next. As previously noted, throughout the first half of the 20th century, the hotel was a gathering place for local coal mining unions, church organizations, as well as, the local wing of the Democratic Party.

The Brownstone appeared to draw this type of population up until the 1950s when the Tormli family purchased the building. The lounge was known as The Red Onion, and for a period the hotel was patronized by mainly rowdy bikers and coal miners. During this period, the tenant population of the hotel shifted as even the owners catered to the growing number of members of working and lower classes. As Michael put it,

We grew up and were told to be nice to people. The guys that live here we understand they may come across as different to some. But, we were brought up to be nice to the people who may be mentally retarded or just out of prison. We would have these guys living here and working at our fathers Christmas tree store.

In general, it is this discredited population that has occupied the hotel since.

The tavern subculture has shifted on multiple occasions since being referred to as The Red Onion. As noted by the owners, after a few years of being perceived as a “roughing house,” their father shifted the function of the tavern from biker lounge to upscale restaurant. This shift appeared to be a success as the many locals and newspaper articles raved about the quality service, meals, and atmosphere provided at the Brownstone, and once again for a short period the hotel was visited by local politicians and regularly highlighted in the local press.

Unfortunately, a fire forced the closing of the hotel for the best part of a year. The restaurant was shut down and the ground floor was left mainly for the bar space. Since this shift, the owners have attempted to attract more college students to the tavern.

The owners note that this population keeps the town economy alive for much of the year. Since this shift began in the early 2000s, a select group of college students have been a regular sight within the tavern. The students who frequent the tavern are described by employees and older bar regulars as hippies, due to their non-violent, music loving, and relaxed hygienic attitudes. Possibly, the run-down hotel, a bit isolated from the more typical college bars, is attractive to this select group. It is these hippies, along with a small group of locals, and hotel residents, making up the dominant subculture currently within the Brownstone tavern.

4. *In what ways has the cultural setting of the Brownstone emerged as a deviant eco-niche in the small town in which it is located?*

Throughout its history, the Brownstone was periodically associated with abnormality in some way. For example, during its early existence the hotel was the sight of a poisoning, and what appeared to be a string of residential burglaries and forgeries—all publicized in local newsprint. Historically, the hotel tavern was linked to an occasional drunken disturbance to be expected with any bar. Despite a number of criminal activities occurring in and around the hotel over the decades, the owners, and hotel patrons generally depicted the place as respectable, at least until the mid-1970s. Interviews with longtime residents of the area note that around this time the hotel began to be mentioned as a place to stay away from. Catering to the mentally disadvantaged and ex-prisoners took its toll, at least in the minds of townsfolk.

The portrayal of the Brownstone as a deviant place was highlighted in the local newspaper (Ross, 10/9/2006) whereby the Brownstone was recognized as a drug infested place. At the same time, the immediate neighborhood around the Brownstone also

declined, at least in its appearance and shabbiness of buildings. As the Brownstone went down in reputation, so did the neighborhood.

5. *Do perceptions of deviant and/or law-breaking activities associated with the Brownstone Hotel culture correspond with realities as depicted by police reports?*

The Brownstone and the immediate area did seem to be associated with some unlawful activity, but not in terms of violent crime or hard-core drug use. The majority of such crimes occurred elsewhere. Ironically, the Brownstone, as some tenants and bar regulars noted, may, in fact, be one of the safer locales in the town.

Theoretical Linkage

This dissertation was not designed with the specific goal of testing a particular theory.

However, it was predicted that the research would be guided or informed by themes as set forth in social ecology, social disorganization, and the related ideas of labeling theory.

As the early social ecologists of the first part of the 20th century would agree, the Brownstone hotel is not unlike an organism. It is born, and lives out its life with changing structures and functions as it struggles to survive in a competitive environment. Over its more than 100 years of existence, the hotel has had its good days and it's bad. Many of the older residents of the research setting can remember the hotel when it was the place to go on a Saturday night for the best steak in town. As this ethnography describes, this is no longer the case. The same entry way into the once fancy restaurant and cocktail lounge, today is a smoke-filled, saloon-like atmosphere where a few aging regulars hunch over the bar with cheap beer, listening to music or watching a broken TV.

Yet, the spatial area still provides a function for a segment of the local population even if different than previous decades. The hotel is still living, though has had to adapt

to changing times that includes a fluctuating economy and demographics. A most relevant finding is that the perception of the hotel as an eco-niche is perceived differently by insiders and outsiders. Hotel tenants have adapted to the living space in a way that suits them, even if it means cooking on a small grill on the hotel stoops. The tavern regulars and the tenants alike have developed a sense of camaraderie that makes them able to survive, quite efficiently given their station of life. However, the outside world sees these hotel tenants and tavern goers differently. The townsfolk have, in essence, constructed a different reality. The hotel and its patrons have been negatively stereotyped as unseemly and unkempt, and as social deviates. Some outsiders see the hotel eco-niche as a crime zone. This has become its reputation. But, the data simply do not bear this out.

Consequently, the problem, if it is a problem, is one of perception. Given the rich history of social science research in similar settings, this dissertation's findings should not be surprising. They only add fuel to the relevance of social ecology, and how negative definitions may be constructed in different ways by insiders and outsiders.

Strengths and Limitations

Ethnographic field research is an effective method for studying human behavior with both distinctive strengths and limitations. A major strength of in-depth and subjective data is that validity may be presumed to be high, but with a limitation that the reliability may be in question (Berg, 2007). The greater the in-depth nature of the respondents with their personal experiences and feelings, the more validity one would attribute to the information received. In a participant observation format, whereby the researcher was also experiencing some of the same stimuli and feelings as the

respondents, the assumptions of validity are increased. In such a case, a level of “inter-subjective” meaning or understanding is reached between researchers and respondents (Schwandt, 2007). Additionally, for this dissertation, a research period that extends four years whereby the researcher was a tenant (for one year) within the actual research setting allowed the investigator to observe the setting at any time during the day or night further enhancing the reliability of the method. Spending such a comprehensive period in the field also helped the researcher to gain rapport (informal consent) with participants and work to reduce reactivity and help establish trust between the researcher and individual.

A second strength of this study was the use of member checks. Participants who also functioned as informants for the researcher were utilized as checks for further tests of validity and reliability. Member checks allowed participants the opportunity to assess the findings and conclusions of the researcher (Maxwell, 1996). These checks ensured that the researcher was observing and interpreting the data in an accurate and unbiased manner. However, the ideal test for the validity of the findings remains for the study to be replicated to check if subsequent researchers arrive at the same or similar results.

Asking questions and listening to subjects’ personal narratives is a time-honored method of data collection and strength of this study. Such a style of data collection yielded rich descriptive data while allowing the investigator to include a wide-range of topics with the ability to ask probing questions as new insights develop during a conversation (Westat, 2002). This method also allowed the researcher to gain a direct understanding of the respondent’s perceptions at the moment an experience or event was occurring.

A final strength of this study is referred to as triangulation (Berg, 2007). The data collected over the course of the observation period came from a variety of areas (i.e., field notes, archival data, interview transcripts) . By incorporating each of these methods, the researcher could verify the information collected. Berg notes that triangulation allows the researcher to see the phenomena through multiple lenses, each verifying the other. This study was not only an attempt to view the hotel setting through the eyes of those within the sub-culture, but also through the eyes of the local media using a thematic content analysis.

Reactivity may be a limitation of this research. According to Hagan (1997), reactivity, or respondent awareness of being studied, may lead to unnatural behaviors on the part of subjects. Participants for this study may not have felt comfortable revealing personal insights if the researcher was perceived as an outsider. The researcher attempted to minimize reactivity through multiple interviews with the same patrons and employees, gaining rapport with respondents, and through regular observations of the research setting. In essence, the researcher was attempting to become just another patron/resident at the Brownstone Hotel, or as close to such as possible.

Generalizability is also a limitation of fieldwork, according to Jorgensen (1989). Can the experiences of residents in the Brownstone Hotel be generalized to others? The researcher does not claim that the findings can be directly generalized to other hotel settings. However there are a number of establishments within the geographic region of southwestern Pennsylvania that appear similar in history and social function. This dissertation's findings, at least in regards to any theoretical conclusions, should be useful in subsequent hotel research.

There are strong points to this study that improve its worth to criminologists, as well as, sociologists and anthropologists. The ethnographic nature of this study allowed the researcher to observe patrons and employees in their natural environment. According to Lofland et al. (2006), ethnography allows researchers to experience more aspects of the social life than quantitative studies. The time spent in the research setting allowed the researcher and the participants to gain mutual trust in the responses being recorded (Maxwell, 2005). By studying the Brownstone Hotel over an extended period, the researcher was able to evaluate narratives of different time periods. The researcher also used guides (expert informants) to review journal notes in order to provide more complete understanding of the findings through the eyes of a subculture member. Participant observation allowed the researcher to grasp a fuller understanding of the perceptions, feelings, and thoughts of the subjects being interviewed and observed.

Policy Implications

In relation to policy, this dissertation explored issues focusing on the perceptions of low-income residents. One important policy discussion related to the Brownstone Hotel concerns the hotel's future as well as the futures of others like it. As discussed in the literature review, over the previous century communities all around the county have been demolishing residential SROs and apartments like the Brownstone Hotel, depriving residents of low-cost housing.

The potential closing of buildings like the Brownstone is important because they provide a crucial housing function within the community serving as temporary lodging for individuals unable to afford a security deposit, or chain hotels. This type of housing provides individuals a home that may otherwise be homeless.

Future Directions

There are a number of directions for future research as spin-offs from this dissertation. One research possibility includes the examination of other similar hotels, undergoing decay, located in rural or small towns. Researching other SROs in rural areas may lead to further clarifications of this dissertation's finding. Arguably, hotels like the Brownstone play an important role in the housing market for the working poor. How their decline will impact on the prevalence of homeless populations needs to be examined more closely.

How crime is reported, investigated, and interpreted by the media continues to be a theme in need of further exploration.

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APPENDIX

Informed Consent Form

You are invited to participate in this research study. The following information is provided in order to help you make an informed decision whether or not to participate. If you have any questions do not hesitate to ask.

The purpose of this study is to explore the nature of small town hotel life and the related tavern culture with which the hotel is connected. We are exploring what hotel life is like and how local hotel clientele associate with and perceive of the related tavern culture. Of particular concern is the historical development of the hotel and how it is, and has been, viewed by locals and those who visit the location.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to not participate or to withdraw at anytime. If you choose to participate, you may withdraw at any time by notifying the interviewer. If you choose to participate, all information will be held in strict confidence. In all questions to you, we emphatically stress that no information is desired that may identify any person or agency with illegal activity or wrongdoing. Your response will be considered only in combination with those from other participants.

Information in which you share may be audio recorded if you agree to it.

The study may be published in a scientific journal, book, or presented at scientific meetings but your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the statement below.

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This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 724-357-7730)

Log Number _____

Voluntary Consent Form:

I have read and understand the information on the form and I consent to volunteer to be a participant in this study. I understand that my responses are completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at any time. I have received an unsigned copy of this Informed Consent Form to keep in my possession.

Name (PLEASE PRINT): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Phone number or location where you can be reached: _____

Best days and times to reach you: _____

I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research study, have answered any questions that have been asked, and have witnessed the above signature.

Date: _____ Investigator's Signature: _____