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Impromptu Domesticity: Housing Adaptations by the Marshallese in Springdale, AR

Kera Lathan
University of Arkansas

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Impromptu Domesticity

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Architectural Studies

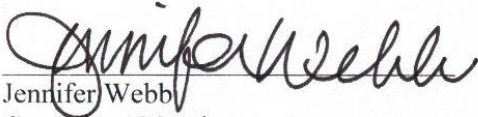
by

Kera Lathan

May 2016
University of Arkansas



Noah Billig
Thesis Director



Jennifer Webb
Committee Member



Jeff Shannon
Committee Member

Abstract

This study analyzes the relationship between people and their spatial environment through the lens of cultural practices and experiences. By using theories of cultural identity and activity patterns to compare spatial usage in two differing circumstances, this study will help to better understand the spatial needs of Marshallese living in Springdale, Arkansas.

The analysis uses two in-depth interviews to establish a base of qualitative data to understand the unique needs of this specific population. Through constructs such as spatial fluidity, sharing culture, and ability to adapt to new spatial practices, the two cases are compared to one another in order to understand each case's specific circumstances.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Why the Phenomenon Warrants Study

In order to create and provide the best possible spaces for people, designers and policy makers must first understand the population of people they are working with. This is particularly true in Springdale, Arkansas, where there is a high population of Marshall Islanders. According to a study done by the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation in 2013, “The unique background of the Marshallese population, their concentration in the Springdale area, their contributions to the local workforce and economy, and their potential integration challenges are topics warranting study.”¹

In 2010, an estimated 22,400 Marshallese were recorded as living in the United States. Of that total, 19% live in Arkansas. The movement of Marshallese people from the Marshall Islands to Arkansas is facilitated by two factors: the Compact of Free Association with the United States and the multitude of jobs in the area, specifically at Tyson Foods. The Compact of Free Association with the United States is a result of the terms of Marshallese Independence in 1986, following health effects and radiation caused by nuclear testing done by the United States after World War II. The Compact allows Marshall Islanders to come to the United States and be employed, but does not allow them to become naturalized citizens. Since the 1980’s, large waves of arrivals of Marshallese citizens seeking opportunities in the Springdale area has remained consistent.²

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1. Appold, Stephen J., Randy Capps, Michael Fix, Ying Huang, Rafael A. Jimeno S., James H. Jr., John D. Karsada, and Kristen McCabe. *Profile of Immigrants in Arkansas: Volume 3*. 9 (Little Rock, AR: Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, 2013), 3-4.
 2. Appold, Stephen J., Randy Capps, Michael Fix, Ying Huang, Rafael A. Jimeno S., James H. Jr., John D. Karsada, and Kristen McCabe. *Profile of Immigrants in Arkansas: Volume 3*. 9 (Little Rock, AR: Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, 2013), 3-4

These conditions lead to critical architectural questions, such as: What kind of housing do the Marshallese immigrants find upon their arrival to Springdale? What are the architectural characteristics of their new housing, as opposed to the living arrangements they left behind on the Marshall Islands? And lastly, what adaptations, either physical or otherwise, have the Marshallese people imprinted upon their new environments? This research will study the housing conditions of the Marshallese population in Springdale, as compared to their housing conditions on the Marshall Islands, by looking at the characteristics of domestic life that occur in each area of the dwelling.

CHAPTER 2: UNDERSTANDING THE PHENOMENON

Connecting the Marshall Islands and Springdale, AR

History of the Marshall Islands

The Marshall Islands are a group of atoll islands in the North Pacific Ocean (see Figure 2.1). The islands were originally settled by Micronesian navigators who claimed the land as their own between 500 BC and 2000 BC. From the fourteenth century through the present, the islands have served as important naval and air bases for many of the world's empires, including Britain and Germany. In 1914, the Marshall Islands were captured by the Japanese from Germany. Japan retained possession of the islands and utilized them as a strategic spot to place military bases during World War II. In 1943, Allied invasion of the Marshall Islands began, with Allied occupation beginning in 1944. The U.S. obtained effective control of the islands at the end of World War II in 1945.³



Figure 2.1 The Marshall Islands are a group of islands located in the Pacific Ocean.

3. "RMI Homepage." RMI Homepage. Accessed January 22, 2016. <http://www.rmiembassyus.org/>.

Beginning in 1946, and continuing throughout the 1950's, the U.S. used the area around the Marshall Islands as a nuclear testing ground. The most notable of the tests was a hydrogen bomb test at Bikini Atoll. The 15-megatonne bomb (which was one thousand times more powerful than the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima), named Bravo, was tested on March 1, 1954. 167 Bikini Islanders were evacuated to Rongerik Atoll, approximately 125 miles to the east of their home, in March of 1946 preceding the nuclear test. In July of 1947, The Marshall Islands and the rest of Micronesia became a United Nations Strategic Trust Territory under the control of the United States. Among the obligations of the Strategic Trust Territory undertaken by the U.S. was the mission to “protect the inhabitants against the loss of their lands and resources.”

Upon seeing the severity and effects of nuclear radiation on the land, food sources, and people of the tested areas following operation Redwing on Enewetak and Bikini Atolls (a total of 17 nuclear tests including several hydrogen bombs), in November of 1956 U.S. officials gave the Enewetak Islanders living on Ujelang \$25,000 cash and a \$150,000 trust fund as compensation. Additionally, Bikini Islanders residing in Kili were given \$25,000 cash and a \$300,000 trust fund. Repeated bouts of food shortages and starvation were experienced by residents on relocated islands.⁴

4. “RMI Homepage.” RMI Homepage. Accessed January 22, 2016. <http://www.rmiembassyus.org/>.

According to the Republic of the Marshall Islands, “[in 1963] the first thyroid tumors began appearing among the Rongelap people exposed to the Bravo test in 1954. A higher than normal incidence of growth retardation among young Rongelap Islanders was noted by U.S. doctors.” This and other health-related problems led the United States to approve an exgratia payment of \$950,000 to the exposed Rongelap people for injuries resulting from the testing which took place in 1954. Shortly thereafter, in 1969, U.S. officials declared Bikini Atoll safe for re-habitation. However, in 1975 radiological tests showed higher levels of radiation than were originally assumed on Bikini Atoll, leading the Atomic Energy Council to suggest Bikini grounds were too radioactive for safe use and that consumption of some vegetation and fish should be prohibited.⁵

Compact of Free Association

Amid other discoveries concerning the effects of radiation in the area, in 1981 Bikinians filed a class action law suit against the U.S. government, seeking approximately \$4 billion in compensation from the U.S. for personal injuries resulting from the nuclear testing. As a result of the lawsuit, the U.S. established a second trust fund of \$20 million (which was later increased to \$90 million) and approved the Compact of Free Association in 1986. “The compact includes an espousal provision, prohibiting Marshall Islanders from seeking future legal redress in U.S. courts and dismissing all current court cases in exchange for a \$150 million compensation fund.” The Compact of Free Association also, “sets the terms for Marshallese independence from the United States, conditions for U.S. assistance, and the rules for migration of Marshallese individuals to the United States.” This allows Marshallese individuals the ability to travel to the United States and enter as “nonimmigrants without visas”.⁶

5. “RMI Homepage.” RMI Homepage. Accessed January 22, 2016. <http://www.rmiembassyus.org/>.

6. “RMI Homepage.” RMI Homepage. Accessed January 22, 2016. <http://www.rmiembassyus.org/>.

In congruence with the compact, one Marshallese citizen found employment in Arkansas at a plant operated by Tyson Foods, the nation's largest meat producer and processor. John Moody started working at Tyson in the early 1980's where he was paid \$3.25 an hour for working on the production line, a job that many Americans would shy away from due to its smelly, often hazardous conditions. Due to these reasons, jobs at Tyson were plentiful, a fact that John Moody often shared with other Marshall Islanders who wished to come to the United States.

Similar to Moody's experience, most Marshall Islanders come to Springdale to work entry level jobs in the hopes of establishing a life. According to the Center for Pacific Islands Studies at the University of Hawaii, "The Pacific islanders who have settled in Springdale have paid their own way or borrowed from relatives, unlike thousands of Marshallese brought to the United States as indentured laborers at nursing homes and amusement parks by 'body brokers.' Because they came on their own, they are free to accept a less taxing or better paying job, as Moody eventually did, free to quit and go home, free simply to leave."⁷

In his report on the Marshallese migration to Springdale, Roche also goes on to explain that immigrations arranged by brokers often end in islanders being stranded, isolated, and/or hungry. As an alternative to this method, many Marshallese people have adopted a community approach in moving to Springdale. John Moody offered his own home in Arkansas as a temporary refuge to fellow islanders who would sleep on his floor or couch until they found employment and a permanent place to stay.⁸

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7. Roche, Walter F., Jr., and Willoughby Mariano. Pacific Islands Report, Freedom: On Their Own, Marshallese Migrate To Arkansas To Process Poultry, Play Ball – Maybe Even Buy A House. Report. Pacific Islands Development Program/ East-West Center, With Support From Center for Pacific Islands Studies/ University of Hawai'i.
 8. Roche, Walter F., Jr., and Willoughby Mariano. Pacific Islands Report, Freedom: On Their Own, Marshallese Migrate To Arkansas To Process Poultry, Play Ball – Maybe Even Buy A House. Report. Pacific Islands Development Program/ East-West Center, With Support From Center for Pacific Islands Studies/ University of Hawai'i.

Marshallese Culture

Due to its island locale, life on the Marshall Islands has fostered a distinct cultural climate. This includes a strong connection to the land, water, and family bonds. On their website, the US Embassy to the Republic of the Marshall Islands outlines the importance of family to Marshall Islanders: “The concept of family and community thus remain inextricably intertwined in Marshallese society. People will consider grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and far-flung relatives among their closest family. The strong family ties contribute to close-knit communities rooted in the values of caring, kindness, and respect.”⁹

Social systems are organized with an emphasis on the land. Land rights are organized through “jowi”, which is a clan of related Marshallese citizens. These groups owe allegiance to a chief, otherwise referred to as an “iroji”, who controls the use and distribution of land. The ownership of land has important implications to food sources on the island. The primary resource of sustenance comes from the surrounding ocean: fish. Fishing is supplemented with agricultural yields such as breadfruit, pandanus, swamp tare, and coconut.¹⁰

Springdale, AR

Springdale, Arkansas is a city of 76,565 citizens, located in the Northwest corner of the state. According to 2010 census data collected by the United States Census Bureau, Springdale’s population is 52.7% white, 1.8% African American, 1.0% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 2.0% Asian, 5.7% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 2.9% multi-ethnic, 35.4% Hispanic or

9. Roche, Walter F., Jr., and Willoughby Mariano. Pacific Islands Report, Freedom: On Their Own, Marshallese Migrate To Arkansas To Process Poultry, Play Ball – Maybe Even Buy A House. Report. Pacific Islands Development Program/ East-West Center, With Support From Center for Pacific Islands Studies/ University of Hawai’i.

10. “RMI Homepage.” RMI Homepage. Accessed January 22, 2016. <http://www.rmiembassyus.org/>.

Latina. Spatially, the city consists of 41.80 square miles and 1,669.80 persons per square mile. The median household income from 2009 to 2013 was \$41,281 and 23.8% of the population is below the poverty level. Of the 25,614 housing units in Springdale, 34.6% were housing units in multi-unit structures. The homeownership rate was 52.2% in 2010.¹¹

These statistics become central to investigating Marshallese housing in Springdale Arkansas. As is illustrated in the example of John Moody, the relocation of Marshall Islanders in Springdale has taken place primarily in the private, residential sector. This can be compared to the relocation of other populations, where mass housing was provided. Additionally, the example of John Moody shows that Marshall Islanders are living beyond the typical single-family function that most housing in Springdale is based upon (the average persons per home is 3.01).¹²

11. "RMI Homepage." RMI Homepage. Accessed January 22, 2016. <http://www.rmiembassyus.org/>.

12. "Springdale, Arkansas." United States Census Bureau". Accessed January 23, 2016. <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/05/0566080.html>.

CHAPTER 3: INFORMALITY IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

How to Study Unconventional Use in the Built Environment

Studies have been done in the design fields that studied the exterior of residences and community areas. Authors such as Margaret Crawford¹³, Nabil Kamel¹⁴, and Michael Rios¹⁵ have all focused on the urban environment and the exterior of buildings. This brings up some questions related to this study: What happens on the interior of dwellings and community buildings? Do the conclusions of these authors concerning outdoor spaces carry over to the way in which the space is thought of and used on the inside? While this study will mirror much of these authors' methods in finding and interpreting data, this study delves deeper into the underpinnings of ideas such as identity and belonging through spatial practices. This is something the very practical studies of Crawford, Kamel, and Rios largely leave out. In many ways, this research will be a quest to find “what”, and then a quest to unearth “why”.

The questioning of conceived norms concerning the suburban front yard was the primary focus for Crawford¹⁶ when she studied the urban community of East Los Angeles. Here, she looked at how stock suburban housing was adapted and transformed by its' inhabitants. Both the methods of finding this information and the ways in which it was accurately described, represented, and analyzed are helpful to the questions that will be investigated. Additionally, Crawford answers several questions concerning the importance of a study such as this that I believe will carry over to my own project.¹⁶

13. Crawford, Margaret. “Mi Casa Es Su Casa,” *Assemblage*, no. 24, House Rules (Aug., 1994): 12.

14. Rios, Michael. *Learning from Informal Practices: Implications for Urban Design*. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2014), 180.

15. Kamel, Nabil. *Learning from the Margin: Placemaking Tactics*. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2014), 126.

16. Crawford, Margaret. “Mi Casa Es Su Casa,” *Assemblage*, no. 24, House Rules (Aug., 1994): 12.

Exemplar Methodology

“By investing [East Los Angeles] resident’s dwellings with the personal values contained in their interests, competence, and originality, the residents remove them from the context of mass-market values, and thereby de-commodify them. Their pleasure in transformation and self-expression reclaim a central aspect of homeownership that many other Angelenos, obsessed with property values, have forgotten.”¹⁷

This statement speaks to the importance of ownership of a space and the way in which it affects the space of stock suburban housing where unique ideas of inhabitation are imposed.

Crawford’s methodology is that of direct study of the conditions she wishes to study. In “Everyday Urbanism” she outlines a series of diary entries used to observe uses and events in Durant Minipark. The entries are divided into observations of “the street” and observations of “the park”. Dividing the two typologies serves as both a logical step in organizing data and a definition of the two primary aspects of the study. Entries are categorized on the day of observation, and sub divided in to categories such as “observation”, “analysis and solution”, and “vision”.

Similar to the work done by Crawford, Michael Rios conducted a study that looked at unique urban spatial uses (by residents in Sacramento, California). The observed spatial practices are analyzed in the context of existing norms, in this case laws and regulations concerning the urban environment. The term “informal” is used to identify spatial re-use by the

17. Crawford, Margaret. “Mi Casa Es Su Casa,” *Assemblage*, no. 24, House Rules (Aug., 1994): 12.

people who inhabit a space. Rios confronts an interesting idea concerning the insertion of the informal into the norm: “[current codes and regulations] reveal cultural assumptions about how land is to be used, for whom, and for what purpose, is at odds with the existing spatial practices in South Sacramento.”¹⁸ This statement speaks to the codification of norms in current zoning plans and building codes.

Role of Informal Research in Design

An important difference between the, otherwise similar, studies by Crawford and Rios is that Rios takes his initial findings and implements them into a studio environment at the University of California, Davis. Here, students were “asked to test assumptions about land, property, and zoning by beginning with, but expanding upon, the spatial circumstances found on the ground.”¹⁹ In the fleshing out of the operations of the studio, important methodological practices are revealed (interviewing, collecting visual and oral data, and the representation of findings). In this instance, students produced a guide titled, “The Citizen’s Guide to South Sacramento.” This document explored ideas of the formal and informal, as well as public and private land use. The final produced document was intended for use by “public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and community groups to assess existing policies and inform ongoing planning activities,” in a hope to, “stimulate dialogue about future strategies that build on existing spatial practices.”²⁰

18. Rios, Michael. *Learning from Informal Practices: Implications for Urban Design*. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2014), 180.

19. Rios, Michael. *Learning from Informal Practices: Implications for Urban Design*. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2014), 181.

20. Rios, Michael. *Learning from Informal Practices: Implications for Urban Design*. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2014), 181.

The temporal component of many informal practices is another contribution of Rios, pointed out in this writing. “Less permanent, but frequently present, is the fruit cart situated on the sidewalk at the edge of the site.”²¹ This may seem like an insignificant finding, but Rios goes on to explain how it impacted one student’s design as the type and temporal nature of certain activities were the driving factors of a design. This speaks to the importance of a study such as this; that seeks to find unorthodox spatial practices in hope of informing designers for future work.

Activity Patterns

The collection of use and activity patterns is the theme of the work done by Nabil Kamel in metropolitan Phoenix, in which recent population surges have been experienced. In this case, housing was built in anticipation of new residents. As seen in other examples of stock housing, “the Fordist organization of the built environment is resisted through local tactics of different types and scales, ranging from individual micro-tactics to collective ones with communal outcomes.”²²

Activity patterns become the way in which people take on usage as dictated by space, or the way in which people are able to inflict new uses upon their space. Both of these outcomes are possible findings when studying Marshallese people living in Springdale.

21. Rios, Michael. *Learning from Informal Practices: Implications for Urban Design*. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2014), 182.

22. Rios, Michael. *Learning from Informal Practices: Implications for Urban Design*. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2014), 124-125.

Kamel uncovers that many re-appropriative spatial uses are “hiding in plain site”. An example he discovered was one in which residents wished to play basketball but didn’t have a court. “[An] example of stretching the limits of an innocuous activity is the front yard basketball game. ... instead of confining the game to the typical front yard (which can only accommodate a half court), they turn two basketball hoops to face each other on opposite sides of the street and use the entire width of the street as their court.”²³ Again, this is a seemingly average example, but speaks to many factors concerning use, activity, re-appropriation of space, and the temporal nature of such practices.

The work of these authors bring up related questions to study: What happens on the interior of dwellings and community buildings? Do the conclusions of these authors concerning outdoor spaces carry over to the way in which the space is thought of and used on the inside? While this study will mirror much of these authors’ methods in finding and interpreting data, it delves deeper into the underpinnings of ideas such as identity and belonging through spatial practices. This is something the very practical studies of Crawford, Kamel, and Rios largely leave out. In many ways, this research will be a quest to find “what”, and then a quest to unearth “why”.

23. Kamel, Nabil. *Learning from the Margin: Placemaking Tactics*. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2014), 126.

CHAPTER 4: ARCHITECTURAL IDENTITY

How Physical Space is Linked to Social Identity

A subfield of research that pertains to the study of changing domestic space to fit pre-existing cultural norms are the notions of identity and belonging. These have wide-reaching implications in the study of cultural perception of space and its subsequent use. Cultural norms and values are an essential aspect of Marshallese resident's transition to Springdale. Scholars such as Edward Said and Neil Leach have collected various schools of thought concerning the construction of identity and have outlined the spatial components of that construction.

Cultural Identity

Edward Said²⁴ focused on the construction of memory and its cultural use by looking at the area of Jerusalem and Palestine. He highlighted the important factor that separates memory and identity from the pure recollection of facts, which is representation. This is the method by which cultures may choose what is remembered or important to the collective history. This may include down-playing certain, undesirable parts of a group's history, while prioritizing other parts. National identity becomes a key feature of how a group of people view themselves and set themselves apart from others. "National identity... how memories of the past are shaped in accordance with a certain notion of what "we" or, for that matter, "they" really are."²⁵

24. Said, Edward W. "Memory, and Place," *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (winter, 2000): 180.

25. Said, Edward W. "Memory, and Place," *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (winter, 2000): 177.

The construction, maintenance, and exploitation of group identities primarily have ramifications in the fields of politics and anthropology. However, in the latter half of “Invention, Memory, and Place”²⁶ Said’s focus shifts to the geographic ramifications of these understandings. He points out that the inspiration of European crusaders in the middle ages was based on ideas and constructions of biblical sites mainly imparted to them through Renaissance art.

The distance, both geographically and temporally, did little to obscure crusader’s deep connection with the place. In this case, the interpretation of place has kept the idea of a disparate geographical location pertinent to the current culture (that of the middle ages), nearly one thousand years after religiously important events took place. Similar conditions occurred in the Jewish re-inhabitation of Jerusalem following World War II, in which a place that had long lacked significant Jewish occupation could be a homeland for an entire group of people. In these cases memory becomes an idealized version of past events and faraway places. “...that after hundreds of years of living in Europe Zionist Jews could still feel that Palestine had stood still in time and was theirs, again despite millennia of history and the presence of actual inhabitants. This too is also an indication of how geography can be manipulated, invented, characterized quite apart from a site’s merely physical reality.”²⁷

26. Said, Edward W. “Memory, and Place,” *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (winter, 2000): 177.

27. Said, Edward W. “Memory, and Place,” *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (winter, 2000): 180.

An important aspect of memory, as it is tied to place, is that through a culture's use of their own shared, invented history a group of people are able to take possession of their cultural identity. In Said's writing this idea focuses on colonial forces throughout the world. However, he also points out the implications of a "global world" on the importance of creating group identities. "Because the world has shrunk- for example, communications have been speeded up fantastically- and people find themselves undergoing the most rapid social transformations in history, ours has become an era of a search for roots, of people trying to discover in the collective memory of their race, religion, community, and family a past that is entirely their own, secure from the ravages of history and a turbulent time."²⁸

Architectural Objectivity

Building upon identity as described by Said, Neil Leach proposes that architecture is a cultural object which is integral to the construction of identity.²⁹ An important aspect of identity becomes the narrative established by a culture that describes themselves and their relationship to others. Architecture is both the backdrop and container for the narrative constructed by the group.

Leach points to Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus, as an action which reflects the legacy of a group upon a new situation. "Habitus", for Bourdieu is a dynamic field of behavior, of position-taking, when individuals inherit the parameters of a given situation and modify them into a new situation.³⁰

28. Said, Edward W. "Memory, and Place," *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (winter, 2000): 177.

29. Leach, Neil. "Towards a Theory of Identification with Place," *Perspecta*, Vol. 33, *Mining Autonomy* (2002): 121.

30. Bourdieu, Pierre. "Physical Space, Social Space and Habitus," (1996): 15.

Derek Robbins explains: ‘The habitus of every individual inscribes the inherited parameters of modification, of adjustment from situation to position which provides the legacy of a new situation.’”³¹ This idea becomes an important concept in the study of the transferring of cultural concepts from one space to another, that the change inflicted upon the new space is what should be looked at.

When establishing an idea of belonging, Leach references Judith Butler, who focused on identity based on “performativity.” “According to Butler, our actions and behavior constitute our identity.”³² By tying actions to identity, the space in which actions take place gains prominence in the discussion of the construction of a cultural narrative. In addition performativity becomes the challenging of conceived normal uses of space in any given situation.

As belonging is transferred from one space to another through performativity, a multiplicity of belonging can arise, “... an image of movement can come to temporary rest in new places while maintaining ongoing connections elsewhere.”³³ This multiplicity is increasingly important in a globalized, highly mobile society such as our own. Architecture becomes both the “mechanism for inscribing” group identity into a place, as well as “facilitating a sense of belonging.”³⁴ This connection sets architecture as the product of narrative, while simultaneously being the setting for the narrative of the same forces.

31. Leach, Neil. “Towards a Theory of Identification with Place,” *Perspecta*, Vol. 33, Mining Autonomy (2002): 121.

32. Leach, Neil. “Towards a Theory of Identification with Place,” *Perspecta*, Vol. 33, Mining Autonomy (2002): 121.

33. Leach, Neil. “Towards a Theory of Identification with Place,” *Perspecta*, Vol. 33, Mining Autonomy (2002): 130.

34. Leach, Neil. “Towards a Theory of Identification with Place,” *Perspecta*, Vol. 33, Mining Autonomy (2002): 132.

The transference of group identity and the shaping of cultural belonging through spatial manipulation become key underlying theoretical ideas when studying the transference of a large population of people from one space to another. This is especially true in the case of a population that has been displaced from their homeland due to a catastrophic event that has hampered their existing ideas of identity and belonging.

CHAPTER 5: METHODS, DOCUMENTING DOMESTIC ACTIVITIES

Documenting Domestic Activities

Research Framework

Although studies by Crawford³⁵, Kamel³⁶, and Rios³⁷ identify functions of design that make the user the maker of their own space, the method does not reach to interior domestic space. Each study focuses on how the use of exterior spaces has been modified by users in order to accommodate a non-average use. Crawford begins by identifying distinct typologies in the area in which she is studying. These include: the fence and the “yarda.” Once the space and the boundary were identified, she could observe what activities happened in each typology.³⁸

Crawford identified what actions were performed in each space that constituted “alterations”. In the case of East Los Angeles, she coined the idiom “Mexicanization” to describe the phenomenon. In the general sense, the studies of Crawford, Kamel, and Rios follow these steps:

- 1) Identification of typologies
- 2) Conducting the observation
- 3) Establishing norms from the collected data
- 4) Creation of means by which to share the norms with designers and policy makers

35. Crawford, Margaret. “Everyday Urbanism” (2008): 157-170.

36. Kamel, Nabil. *Learning from the Margin: Placemaking Tactics*. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2014), 126.

37. Rios, Michael. *Learning from Informal Practices: Implications for Urban Design*. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2014), 181.

38. Crawford, Margaret. “Everyday Urbanism” (2008): 157-170.

Constructs

This study evaluates domestic activities of Marshall Islanders in Springdale, AR through a series of questionnaires, interviews, and direct observations. The characteristic of domestic life this study researches is the change in activities of each room of the house.

This is done through establishing areas of study within the typical house, including: entry, living room, dining room, kitchen, garage, bathroom(s), and bedroom(s). Questionnaire answers, provided narratives, and direct observations are compared to the typical uses of various spaces within the house.

This study has low internal validity because it does not establish a causal relationship between two variables (however a causal relationship is only necessary for explanatory case studies). Yin explains that case studies involve a high degree of inference, “Basically, a case study involves an inference every time an event cannot be directly observed.”³⁹

Methodology

Research that describes the domestic activity of a critical mass of people requires a structured method of data collection to succinctly collect large amounts of data, from a considerable number of people, relatively quickly (as to not ask too much time from participants). This was to be accomplished through a questionnaire that was distributed to willing participants in a three-sheet printed paper form. (See appendix B)

39. Yin, Robert K. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods, Third Edition*. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE publications, 2003), 36, 86.

In addition to close-ended questions, the questionnaire also uses open-ended questions that allow participants to share their unique experiences concerning the use of their domestic spaces. These questions have the possibility to lead to a discussion type interview with participants who wish to share more information. Additional information is provided by participants verbally in a narrative format that is less dependent on the researcher's questions. Lastly, questions concerning demographics are asked.

The questionnaire portion of the study is a descriptive study. This type of research is defined by its objective to describe a phenomenon through a structured, fact-finding method, "... it focuses on relatively few dimensions of a well-defined entity and measures these dimensions systematically and precisely, usually with detailed numerical descriptions."⁴⁰

This portion of the study is also defined by Yin as documentation (see Table 5.1).⁴¹ Here, Yin describes the strengths of this type of study as being stable, unobtrusive, exact, and broad in coverage.⁴² By using a questionnaire, a large amount of people are able to be reached. Since everyone answers the same questions, delivered in the same method, extraneous variables are minimized so that answers can be compared to one another. This form of research also has weaknesses, including: "low retrievability of data, biased selectivity and incomplete collection, reporting bias, and access to the study."⁴³

40. Yin, Robert K. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods, Third Edition*. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE publications, 2003), 86.

41. *Ibid*, 86.

42. *Ibid*, 86.

43. *Ibid*, 86.

The use of documentation in this study is affected by some of these weaknesses. The data is returned to the researcher after completion, so retrievability is not a problem. The researcher did not exhibit a bias in selecting participants; however, the methods in which participants were found could affect the population of participants. Participants are likely to be more engaged in the community, as participants are recruited through referrals from community leaders. Reporting bias is very low for this section of the study; however, some bias is exhibited through question selection despite the regard for using non-leading questions.

Yin points out documents are most useful in case studies to, “corroborate and augment evidence from other sources.”⁴⁴ Explicit, written information is helpful to refer back to for spellings or exact names or definitions of things mentioned in the interview that the researcher may not be able to decipher. Additionally, documental research can corroborate the study. Contradictory information found in the documents and interviews or other field research is studied further.⁴⁵

In addition to documentary evidence collected through the questionnaire, more in-depth evidence is collected through the use of interviews. The strength of using this type of collection is that the research is “targeted, focuses directly on case study topic and insightful, providing perceived causal inferences.”⁴⁶

44. Yin, Robert K. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods, Third Edition*. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE publications, 2003), 87.

45. Yin, Robert K. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods, Third Edition*. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE publications, 2003), 87.

46. Yin, Robert K. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods, Third Edition*. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE publications, 2003), 86.

When the opportunity arises, the researcher takes on a third source of evidence: direct observation. When allowed, participants from earlier portions of the study, invite the researcher into their home for the opportunity to take direct observational notes, sketches, and photographs. The advantages of this source of evidence are it “covers events in real time and is contextual to the event being studied.”⁴⁷ These advantages hold true in the study of domestic activities of the Marshallese population in Springdale, AR., as direct observation will allow the researcher to see domestic conditions and modifications first hand.

In addition to being unpredictable and sporadic, due to the high degree of participant allowance, direct observations also have several other weaknesses. These include: “[direct study is] time-consuming, selectivity of participants, reflexivity (observed event may proceed differently because it is being observed), and cost to observers [time].”⁴⁸ Weaknesses to direct study have little effect on the validity of the study but greatly affect how many direct studies are able to be included in the research.

47. Yin, Robert K. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods, Third Edition*. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE publications, 2003), 86.

48. Yin, Robert K. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods, Third Edition*. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE publications, 2003), 86.

Reliability and Validity

As is evident, this study employs multiple sources of evidence in the studying of domesticity among Marshallese residents in Springdale, AR. Using documentation, interviews, and direct observation, as outlined by Yin⁴⁹ (Table 5.1) allows for a more cohesive overall study, “The use of multiple sources of evidence in case studies allows an investigator to address a broader range of historical, attitudinal, and behavioral issues.”⁵⁰

Table 5.1 Sources of Evidence

Source of Evidence	Type of ¹ Study	Form of question	Type of data	Strengths ²	Weaknesses ³
Questionnaire	Descriptive/ Documentation	Paper survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • factual • short answer • demographics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stable – can be reviewed repeatedly • Unobtrusive – not created as a result of the case study • Exact – contains exact names, references, and details of an event • Broad coverage – long span of time, many events, and many settings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retrievability – can be low • Biased selectivity, if collection is incomplete • Reporting bias – reflects (unknown) bias of author • Access – may be deliberately blocked
Interviews	Interviews	Spoken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • narrative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted – focuses directly on case study topic • Insightful – provides perceived causal inferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bias due to poorly constructed questions • Response bias • Inaccuracies due to poor recall • Reflexivity – interviewee gives what interviewer wants to hear
Observation	Direct Observations	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notes • sketches • photographs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reality – covers events in real time • Contextual – covers context of event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time-consuming (for both parties) • Selectivity – unless broad coverage • Reflexivity – event may proceed differently because it is being observed • Cost – hours needed by human observers

49. Yin, Robert K. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods, Third Edition*. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE publications, 2003), 86.

50. *Ibid*, 98.

Yin also points out that multiple sources of evidence allow for “converging lines of inquiry” or a “process of triangulation”, which allow for findings of the study to be more convincing and accurate.⁵¹

External reliability is the most important factor for this study, as its primary purpose is to provide design guidelines for future work. External reliability is a common problem among case studies, as they are typically so in-tune with acute conditions in the studied material. Yin compares case studies to surveys, which are often regarded as being more generalizable universally, “Survey research relies on statistical generalization. In analytical generalization, the investigator is striving to generalize a particular set of results to some broader theory.”⁵²

Yin notes how wording, chapter topics, and framing can be used to transform a case study in to broader theoretical issues:

“This approach is well illustrated by Jane Jacobs (1961) in her famous book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. The book is based mostly on experiences from New York City. However, the chapter topics, rather than reflecting the single experiences of New York, cover broader theoretical issues in urban planning, such as the role of sidewalks, the role of neighborhood parks, the need for primary mixed uses, the need for small blocks, and the processes of slumming and unslumming.”⁵³

51. Yin, Robert K. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods, Third Edition*. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE publications, 2003), 98.

52. Ibid, 36.

53. Ibid, 37.

External validity of this sort is very important to the study of domestic re-appropriation in Springdale, AR. The conclusions of this research will not be universal to all immigrant cultures; however it will serve as a critical explanation of the Marshallese immigrant culture that can be used in Springdale and other areas with high concentrations of Marshallese migrants. This is done through the same methods of reframing findings in to theories that were employed by Jane Jacobs in her book.⁵⁴

54. Yin, Robert K. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods, Third Edition*. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE publications, 2003), 38.

CHAPTER 6: DATA RESULTS AND COLLECTED NARRATIVES

Understanding Domestic Conditions

Although the study was designed to incorporate various sources of data, the information that the researcher was able to collect consisted of two in-depth interviews. The qualitative data collected during the interviews are described in the two cases below. Issues with the questionnaire and collecting data are discussed in chapter 8.

Case 1

Domestic life on the Marshall Islands was quite different from that experienced in the United States for interviewee #1. In some ways, the environment caused changes to everyday life, while in other ways, the family inflicted changes upon their built environment.

The case 1 interviewee shared that on the Marshall Islands he lived in a one bedroom house that was attached to a small store, see Figure 6.1.



Figure 6.1 Typical house on the Marshall Islands. Structure consists of one room for living and sleeping and a small attached retail area.

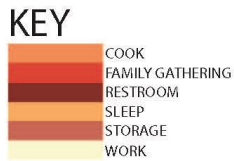
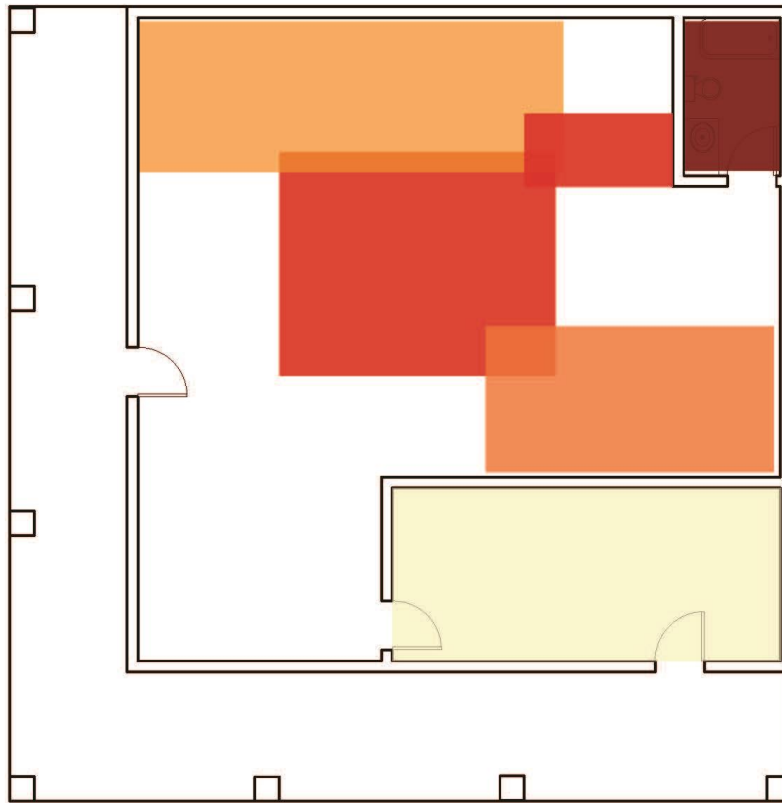


Figure 6.2 Approximation of spatial distribution and activity usage of Interviewee #1's house on the Marshall Islands as described in his interview.

A majority of the interviewee's extended family lived in this house, sharing the one bedroom. Sentiments of family and closeness were perceived as important. The activity usage of each room of the house was highly overlapped with many daily activities occurring in one room, as shown in Figure 6.2.

Interviewee #1 moved to Springdale, Arkansas when he was in the third grade. He described his preconceptions of domestic life in the United States as filled with large houses and

big mountains. This view was primarily a function of movies the interviewee had seen about life in America.

The interviewee described his first residence in Springdale as a duplex with a garage and multiple bedrooms. He and his family had never thought of a garage as an essential part to a house. They did not understand the concept of a front and back yard and why the two were separated from one another. Duplexes in Springdale often share a wall along the garage, as shown in Figures 6.3.



Figure 6.3 Duplex similar to the one described by interviewer #1.

Interviewee #1 stated that the move to a house where each member of the family received their own bedroom was a new experience. He expounded that a sense of family bond was lost, not only because the extended family no longer lived together, but also do to the fact that the nuclear family was dispersed throughout the house. Whereas on the Marshall Islands there was no built separation between family members, in their new residence in Springdale there was. In the interviewee's new living space each activity is delegated to its own area, such as the living room, bedrooms, and garage as labeled in Figure 6.4.

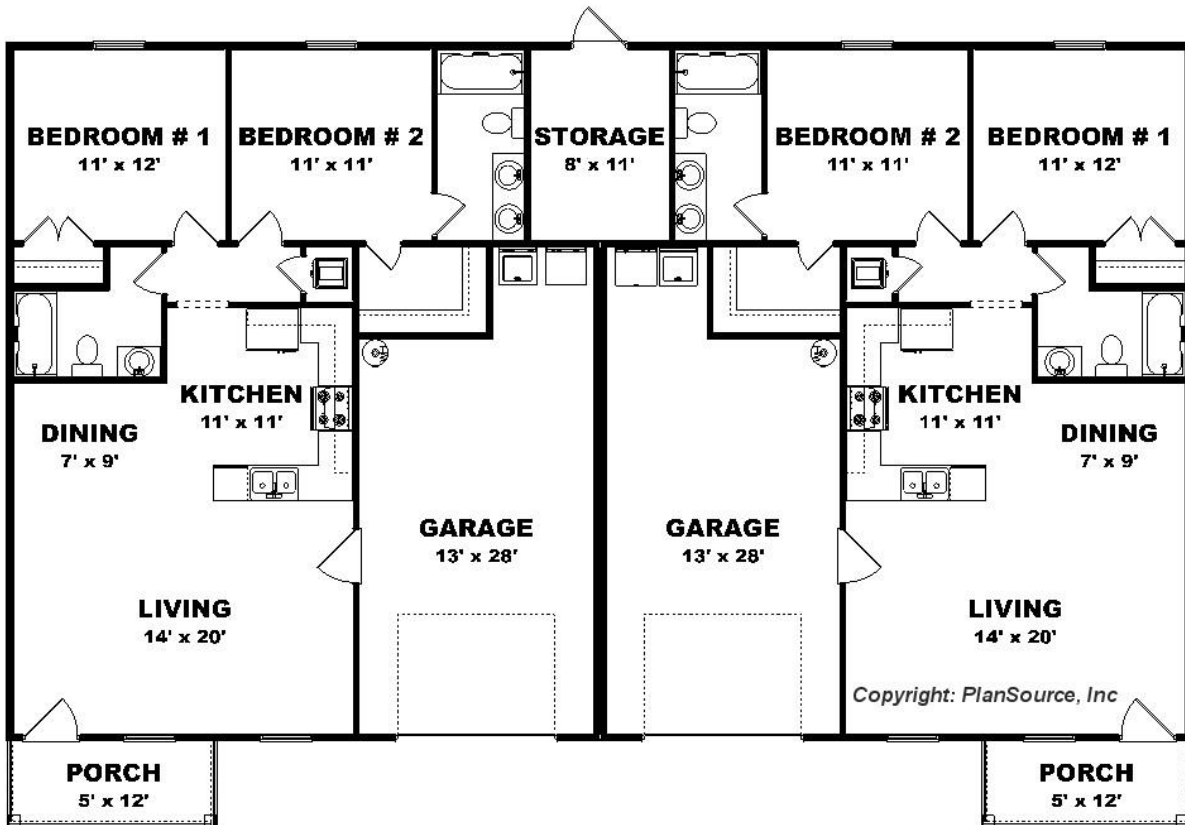
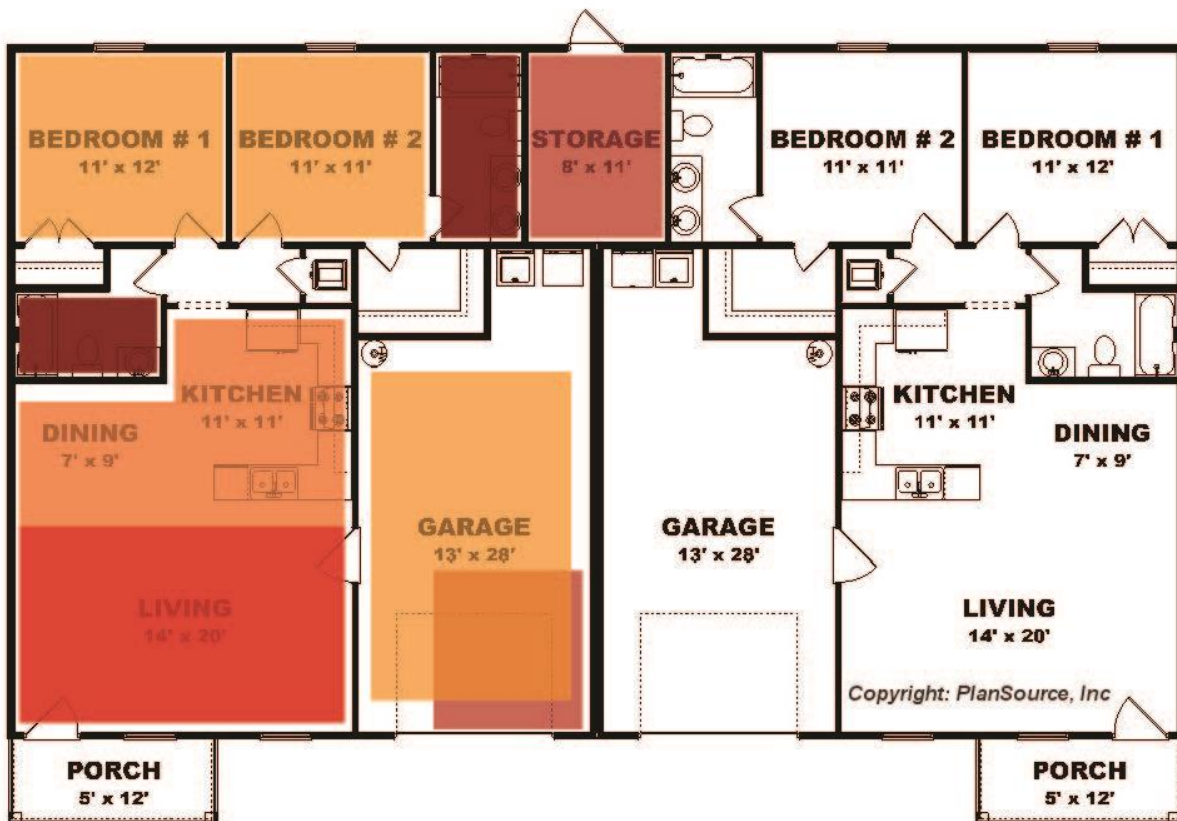


Figure 6.4 Example of typical duplex spatial layout similar to Interviewer #1's description of his first residence in Springdale, AR.

Daily activities that were once experienced in the confines of one area (Figure 6.2) were delegated to separate rooms in the new living arrangement in Springdale, as shown in Figure 6.5. Daily activities took on the purpose of their designated areas of the house. Cooking was done in the kitchen, family time took place in the living room, and each family member slept in their own bedroom.



KEY	
	COOK
	FAMILY GATHERING
	RESTROOM
	SLEEP
	STORAGE
	WORK

Figure 6.5 Approximation of spatial distribution and usage of Interviewee #1's duplex in Springdale, AR.

One instance in which the new environment did not inflect changes on daily life, but rather living practices inflected changes to the built environment is described through the use of the garage. Often times a flex-use room in the average American house, the garage has become the area in which Marshallese residents can create their own rules. Interviewee 1 described the garage as sometimes being used for storage and occasionally used as an additional bedroom. In this one area of the house, use overlap was allowed to prevail.

Case 2

For interviewee #2, traditions and daily activities from the Marshall Islands persisted despite the change in domestic environment after moving to Springdale, Arkansas.

Interviewee #2 described her home on the Marshall Islands as a simple, one-room structure. She said that it was common for houses to be self-built by families out of coconut leaves or other local resources, as seen in Figure 6.6 and Figure 6.7.



Figure 6.6 An example of coconut leaf construction as described by interviewee #2.

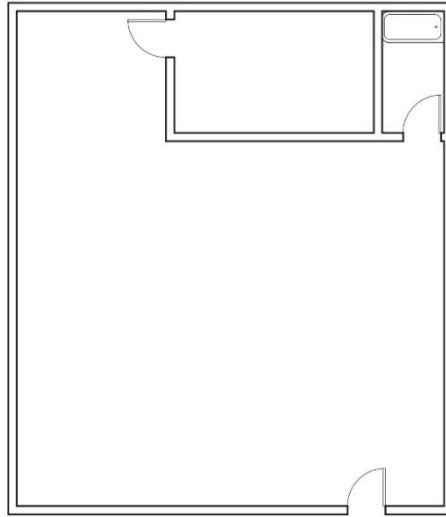


Figure 6.7 The one room, self-constructed house on the Marshall Islands as described by interviewee #2.

Within this structure, the primary couple of the family had their own bedroom, but all other members of the family slept in the main room of the house. Most of the daily activities took place within the single large room of the house. The described spatial use, which consists of many activity overlaps, can be seen in Figure 6.8 below.

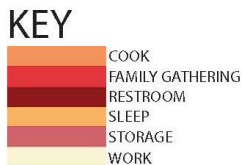
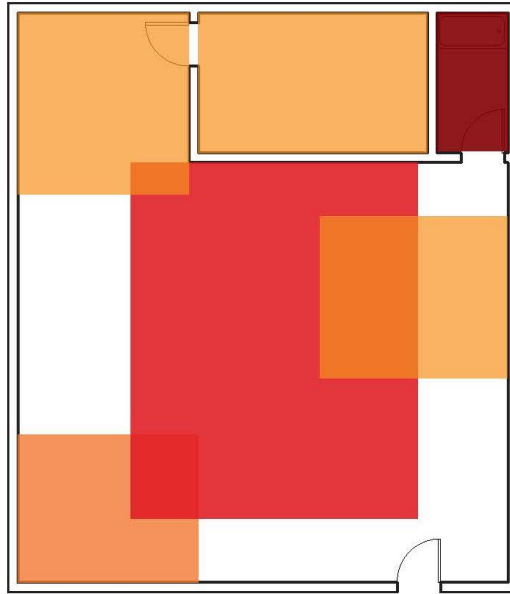


Figure 6.8 Approximation of spatial distribution and activity usage of interviewee #2’s house on the Marshall Islands.

Sentiments of neighborly help were widespread as few of the surrounding houses had partitioned yards and it was common for neighbors to share groceries and food amongst one another. The feeling of having one’s own home and space in the community was memorable to the interviewee.

Upon moving to Springdale, Arkansas in her twenties, interviewee #2 lived in an apartment with a few of her family members. She has since moved into a duplex where she currently lives with three of her brothers, her boyfriend, and one of her nephews. She has lived at her current residence for four years and is extremely satisfied with the living situation. (See Figure 6.9.)

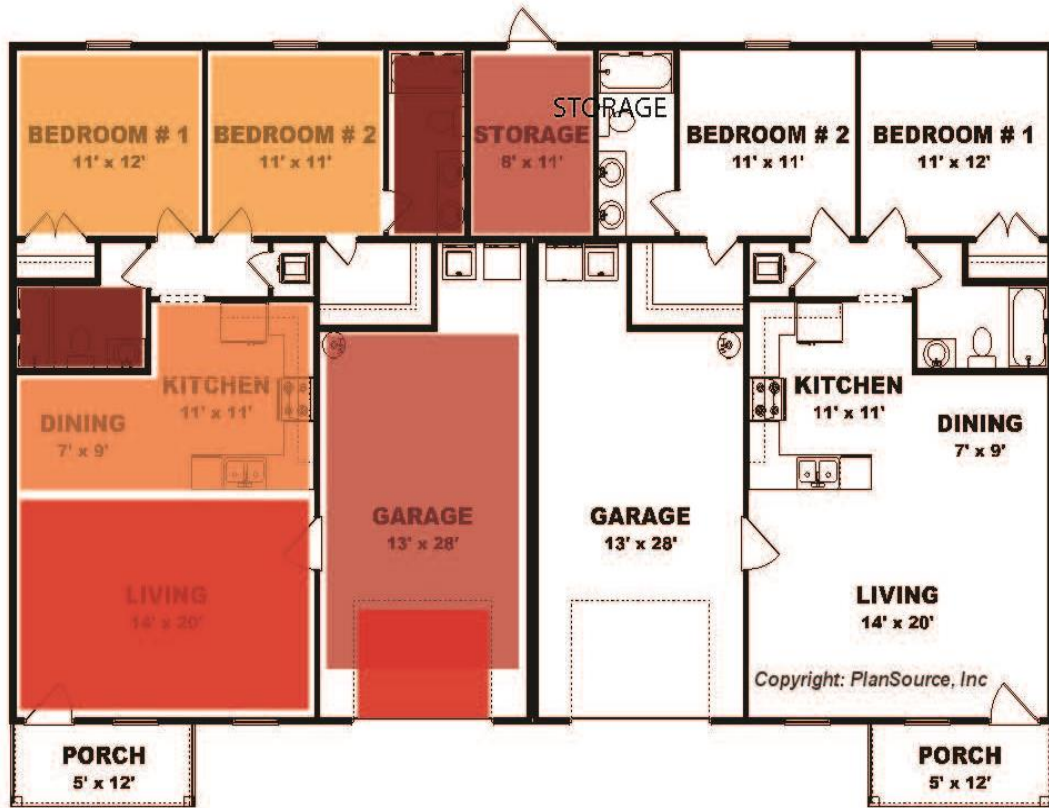


Figure 6.9 Duplex similar to the one described by interviewer #2.

Although the spatial arrangement is rather different from her home on the Marshall Islands, Interviewee #2 said her daily activities were not affected. Cooking still takes place in the kitchen, family time and activities continue to take place in the living room, and people sleep in the bedrooms. Although there are more bedrooms in her current duplex than the living arrangements she experienced on the Marhsall Islands, sometimes more than one person will reside in one bedroom when circumstances require. This is a practice that is common on the Marshall Islands but is very uncommon in the United States, where the norm is for one person, or couple, to occupy a bedroom.

Family gatherings and events were the most important activities in both her home on the Marshall Islands, as well as her home in Springdale. She said that family time took place in the

primary room of the dwelling on the Marshall Islands. If the celebration grew too big, the event would spill out in to the exterior of the home. A similar phenomenon takes place in interviewee #2's home in Springdale. Family time occurs in the living room area of the duplex. Interviewee #2 said that although she uses her own garage to park her car, some of her friends and extended family members use their garages for bigger family gatherings or an occasional large game of cards. This spatial overlap can be seen in Figure 6.10. For even larger, extended family gatherings, interviewee #2 said that her family will rent McDonald Park, a local community park, which is a short drive away.



KEY

COOK	COOK
FAMILY GATHERING	FAMILY GATHERING
RESTROOM	RESTROOM
SLEEP	SLEEP
STORAGE	STORAGE
WORK	WORK

Figure 6.10 Approximation of spatial usage and activities as described by interviewee #2.

When asked what she misses about her living situation on the Marshall Islands, interviewee #2 explained that she misses the sense of community, where neighbors often shared resources and food. She also missed the feeling of ownership in her home, a place that she could call her own that her family had constructed themselves.

Although not entirely the same, interviewee #2 has managed to keep these values intact by fostering a strong sense of community in her new environment. Beginning at the apartment where she first lived when arriving in Springdale, and continuing in the neighborhood where her duplex is located, interviewee #2 has made it a point to continue sharing goods (such as a freshly baked batch of cookies) with her neighbors. Additionally, interviewee #2 described that many people in her neighborhood, as well as family members she has living in other areas of Springdale, use their opened garages as porches when the weather is nice. This further facilitates community engagement similar to that found on the Marshall Islands.

Although interviewee #2 rents her duplex, she has kept the idea of ownership and pride in one's home, first established within her on the Marshall Islands, alive. Interviewee #2 and her brothers often propose small improvement projects to their landlord. Most recently, they installed a fence to enclose the backyard. The interviewee said this made the duplex feel more like a home, even though the modifications were to the exterior of the house.

CHAPTER 7: SYNTHESIS OF CASE FINDINGS

Trends and Implications

This study's two cases bring to light important architectural practices and values of Marshallese people living in Springdale Arkansas. Among these are spatial fluidity, a unique sharing culture, and an ability to adapt to new spatial arrangements. These factors manifest themselves in differing ways in the two cases of this study and impact the work of designers, as well as policy makers, in varying ways. These constructs emerged from the cases that could not be anticipated earlier in the study, which is a testament to using more open-ended questions.

Spatial Fluidity

Both interviewees described areas of their current home that served multiple purposes. Spatial fluidity is a term used to describe the phenomenon of multiple and changing uses discovered in the study. This construct is similar to placemaking tactics defined by Nabil Kamel as a tactic to, “resist a material and institutional reality that does not match their resources and aspirations.”⁵⁵ Both spatial fluidity and placemaking are tactics in which people can appropriate space to better fit their unique needs.

In the case of interviewee #1, the garage became the place where this type of resistance could be manifested. Perhaps due to the fact that interviewee #1 and his family did not know what a garage was or its purpose when they moved to Springdale, they found ways to use the space that were more useful and meaningful to their family.

The use of the garage as a place of storage, a space for family gathering, and when needed, a space for sleeping shows how the room has become a fluid, multiuse space. Since it was deemed by interviewee #1 and his family as not useful for its intended purpose, the garage became a blank slate for activities and living the way the family was accustomed.

55. Kamel, Nabil. *Learning from the Margin: Placemaking Tactics*. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2014), 119.

In comparing the activity usage of the garage in the duplex in Springdale (Figure 7.1) and the house on the Marshall Islands (Figure 7.2), it is clear that the fluid way of living, with multiple activities in one room of the house, experienced on the Marshall Islands had been adopted to the living situation in Springdale.

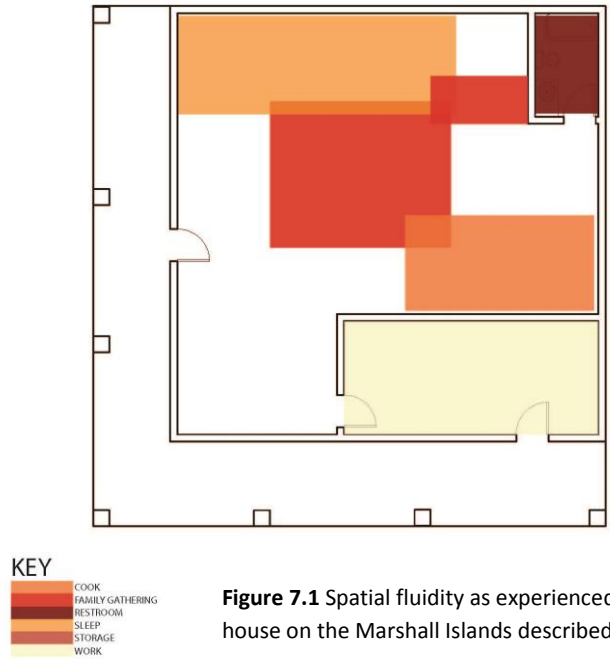


Figure 7.1 Spatial fluidity as experienced in the one room house on the Marshall Islands described by interviewee #1.

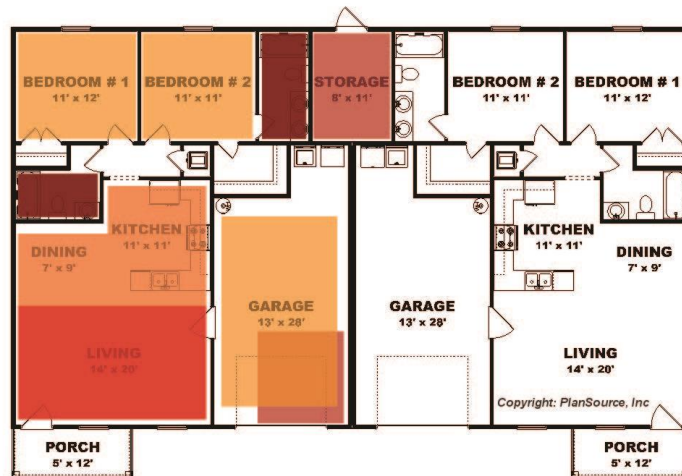


Figure 7.2 Spatial fluidity as experienced in the garage of a duplex in Springdale as described by interviewee #1.

A similar practice can be found in the garage of interviewee #2's living situation. Although interviewee #2 shared that she often parks her car in her garage, she described that if a family gathering exceeds the spatial limits of the living area of the duplex, the event will spill over in to the garage. The example she used was a game night where tables were set up in the garage because there was not enough room in the living room.

This practice points to another important aspect of spatial fluidity: temporality. The idea that placemaking, or the reconstructing of space, often has a temporal aspect is another idea pointed out by Nabil Kamel. He uses the example of children creating an impromptu basketball court in a neighborhood street.⁵⁶

Spatial Fluidity becomes temporal because it is used in both cases when using a space in an uncommon way or in multiple ways is necessary. When interviewee #1's family takes in an extended family member or friend who just moved to Springdale, they use the garage as a bedroom for a temporary amount of time. When interviewee #2's family needs more space, or an area that is partially open to the outdoors, they use the room they usually use as storage for another purpose. When the family gathering is over and the cards are put away the space reverts back to its conceived use as car storage.

Flexibility of use and temporal uses are somewhat common in the United States where people may use a garage, spare bedroom, or basement for a multitude of activities, the Marshallese population living in Springdale, Arkansas bring a unique spatial sensibility to the practice of spatial fluidity. Both interviewees were accustomed to living in single-space homes where a multitude of activities took place in a single room. This unique experience makes living

56. Kamel, Nabil. *Learning from the Margin: Placemaking Tactics*. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2014), 126.

with multiple people sleeping in one bedroom or using a single room for many different purposes over the course of a few months an easy adaption upon moving to Springdale.

Sharing Culture

Another cultural value that manifests itself in the domestic environments of Marshallese people living in Springdale, Arkansas is the idea of collective help and sharing. In many descriptions of their journey from the Marshall Islands to Springdale, Marshallese people point out the importance of family and friend relationships to making a life in Springdale. Upon arriving in Springdale, many Marshallese will temporarily live with family or friends until they establish themselves and earn enough to get their own place.

The practice of groups of immigrants banding together, through spatial means, to make assimilation an easier process is pointed out by Michael Rios in his discussion of urban informality. He used an example of gardens created by Hmong refugees, which have become a place to gather and share the resources which are produced in the garden.⁵⁷

Sharing is manifested in domestic spatial use in the duplexes described in case #1 and case #2 through using spaces to sleep and live wherever they are needed. In case #1 that space was the garage, where interviewee #1 said people would sleep when they needed a place to stay. In case #2 the spaces that incorporated sharing were the bedrooms. Although the bedrooms were still used for their intended purpose of sleeping, the spaces often housed more than one person at a time. Interviewee #2 said that her brothers, a niece, a nephew, her boyfriend, and herself lived in a three bedroom duplex. Room sharing is what made this living arrangement possible.

57. Rios, Michael. *Learning from Informal Practices: Implications for Urban Design*. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2014), 183.

This practice is different from what is common in American culture where even young siblings often do not share a room.

An additional aspect of sharing culture is the sharing of resources and relationships that is adopted from life on the Marshall Islands. Interviewee #2 remembered that it was common to share groceries and food among neighbors who lived close by. She explained that while she no longer shares goods in this way, it is important to keep in touch with her neighbors. One way many of her friends and family do this is by using their garage as a large porch area where they can talk to their neighbors who are outside or walking by. This act uses the primary aspect of a garage (the large opening door) to modify the use of the space to fit within a cultural value.

Adaptation to Space

Although Marshallese residents took steps to modify their domestic environment, most notably in the garage, in many ways both cases took on the spatial usage of the spaces in which they lived. Contrary to constructs of the study, that assumed Marshallese culture would have a large impact on their environment, did not take in to questions the ways in which the environments found in Springdale would change Marshallese resident's way of life.

Both interviewees described their daily activities in the same way most typical Americans would. Cooking took place in the kitchen, sleeping took place in the bedrooms, family time took place in the living room. For the most part no concern or thought was given to what happened in each space.

The multiplicity of spatial usage exhibited in both case's living situation on the Marshall Islands was largely left behind. The difference in spatial usage between life on the Marshall Islands compared to the spatial usage in the United States in Figure 7.3 and Figure 7.4 shows that activities within the house have taken on the confines of specialized rooms, as dictated by American culture and practices.



Figure 7.3 Activity usage changes from multiple uses within one room to singular uses for each room.



Figure 7.4 Activity usage changes from multiple uses within one room to singular uses for each room.

The move to singular spatial practices affected the two cases in varying ways.

Interviewee #1, who had formerly shared one living and sleeping area with his family on the Marshall Islands, described displeasure with his family being separated in various rooms. For him, a sense of family and closeness were lost when his family was dispersed throughout the house and weren't as physically close together as they had been before.

In comparison, interviewee #2 found her living arrangements in Springdale very satisfactory despite, or perhaps due to, singular spatial use of each room. Interviewee #2 described that she was very happy with her duplex in Springdale and the changes in living practices did not affect her much.

The difference in experiences of adapting to spatial practices in Springdale could be due to several factors in the two cases. One factor is the difference in age of the two interviewees when they moved from the Marshall Islands to Springdale. Interviewee #1 was eight years old while interviewee #2 was in her twenties. Perhaps the transition to new spatial practices is more difficult for children than it is for adults. Another factor that could lead to the difference in perception of spatial changes could be the conditions experienced on the Marshall Islands. For interviewee #1 there was only one space in the house where all family members resided and all activities took place. However, interviewee #2 was already accustomed to some degree of spatial disconnection due to the fact that the house where she lived on the Marshall Islands had two spatial areas: that of the primary room where most activities took place, as well as that of one bedroom where the primary couple of the family slept. This difference could also explain the higher level of satisfaction interviewee #2 felt with her living situation in the Marshall Islands.

Implications for Designers and Policy Makers

For designers and policy makers, working in the Springdale area, the implications of this study are simple, yet carry the possibility of being very helpful in making successful domestic spaces for Marshallese residents. Creating chances for spatial fluidity and taking into account sharing mechanisms within the Marshallese communities are both useful tactics when considering what could make housing in Springdale better fit the needs and culture of those moving from the Marshall Islands.

When considering spaces that could accommodate a multiplicity of uses and activities, it would be useful for designers to look at the example of the garage in both cases. A room that is, for the most part, not specifically programed is an essential quality of the garage that makes it spatially fluid. Another aspect of the garage that makes it useful in a multitude of ways is the degree to which it is largely transformable via the large overhead door. The door enables the space to be converted from an interior space to one that is largely open to the exterior of the house. This transformability further opens the realm of possibilities of how the single room of the garage could be used.

While the design tactics of spatial fluidity and transformability are useful to designing for the Marshallese community in Springdale, the ideas are also useful to designing for a general public that is ever-changing. Findings from the two cases could point to the design field's role in creating spaces that are able to adapt to a multitude of uses and activities over the course of the lifespan of a house or building.

Both interviewees explained that for varying lengths of time, extended family members or friends would live in their house. Interviewee #1 explained that even on the Marshall Islands, most of his extended family lived in the same house. In Springdale, because of the value of sharing, it is common for households to take in a friend or family member who recently moved from the Marshall Islands. It is important for policy makers and designers to not make assumptions about how, or with whom, people live and to give enough room in their designs and policies for residents to choose how to best live for themselves.

The finding of spatial adaptation, or how the cases have adapted to new spatial arrangements, is an invitation for good and innovative design and policy in Springdale. All residents deserve, and could benefit from, creative design solutions in their living spaces. While areas of spatial fluidity and sharing could possibly be very beneficial to Marshallese residents, it

is important to note that Marshallese residents are open to new ways of living and exhibit a sense of openness to new options and conditions, as exhibited in both cases.

An intriguing experiment in creating a design using oral narratives dealing with informality is documented by Michael Rios. "...student proposals were a sincere response to the spatial appropriations and material conditions of site as well as the local knowledge shared by individuals." This is an example of how qualitative research can attribute to design where "consideration of the type and temporal nature of existing uses" played a large role in decisions.⁵⁸

For these reasons, both design and policy should have a degree of flexibility that allows for diverse and transient living to occur. Creating spaces for, and opportunities for, multi-family living would not only be beneficial to Marshallese residents, but could also be helpful to all families who are dealing with rising living costs and/or aging parents and grandparents.

58. Rios, Michael. *Learning from Informal Practices: Implications for Urban Design*. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2014), 183.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

Recommendations for Further Study

Problems with the Study

This study was designed to couple quantitative data from surveys with qualitative data from interviewees. A few factors which were not taken into account when designing this study were loose community organization, research fatigue, and unwillingness to participate in written surveys.

Throughout the four month research process the researcher found it very difficult to successfully meet with community leaders and organizers who could introduce the study to willing participants. This was due to inconsistencies in scheduling and protocol in several groups that serve to represent Marshallese residents living in Springdale. Unwillingness to participate in the study is also partly due to seemingly low benefits for participants. For many people, the ideas of housing and spatial use were not important issues they wanted to speak to researchers about.

Difficulty finding willing participants could be attributed to the researcher's role as an outsider. John Lofland and Lyn H. Lofland expound on this role, stating: "The major strategic problem of getting in then, falls to the outsider seeking admission to a setting for the purpose of observing it or access to individuals for the purpose of interviewing them."⁵⁹ As an outsider in the Marshallese community in Springdale, the researcher found it very difficult to convey her sincerity and willingness to learn, void of agenda.

Additionally, the relative short research timeframe limited the researcher in her ability to create lasting connections and establish trust amongst the community. Many community leaders

59. Lofland, John, Lofland, Lyn H. *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1995), 37.

were only interested in participating with research if they could tell it would be a lasting, fruitful, and reciprocal relationship. These were things a study confined to one semester could not give.

Establishing trust among communities is pointed out as an important factor in creating in-depth qualitative studies by David Fetterman in “Ethnography”. “Ethnographers need the trust of the people they work with to complete their task. An ethnographer who establishes a bond of trust will learn about the many layers of meaning in any community or program under study.”⁶⁰ Although small cases of trust were established within the two cases studied, a sense of trust among the larger community was never able to grow.

The researcher found that the written survey was a particularly difficult format to gather information among the Marshallese community. Both interviewee #1 and interviewee #2 displayed a sense of being overwhelmed upon initially looking at the survey. Although short in questions and duration, the initial impact of full pages of written words seemed to be off-putting to participants. The researcher responded to this sense by asking questions in an interview format. Both interviewees responded well to verbal questions and were very giving in information and details pertaining to their unique situations. The qualitative content of the survey seemed to lend itself better to a verbal interview format, where the researcher wrote down the responses.

Further Study

In many ways, *Impromptu Domesticity* could serve as an introduction to the types of studies that could serve the design community and other decision makers, through studying the spatial practices of migrant cultures. An in-depth study of the Marshallese community, allowing for more research time and community integration, would be very helpful in further

60. Fetterman, David M. *Ethnography, Second Edition*. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1998), 140.

understanding the topics of spatial fluidity and sharing community explained in this study. In addition to more time, a further study reaching a wider range of Marshallese residents in Springdale would require a better fitting research format than the written survey used in this study.

Those wishing to learn more about spatial practices of immigrant communities could also expand their research to learning about spatial usage and activities amongst other immigrant communities located in Northwest Arkansas, as well as other geographic locations. A similar approach and methods, adapted from this study, could be very useful to other researchers wishing to study similar topics.

Concluding Remarks

Comparing the living conditions on the Marshall Islands and Springdale, Arkansas shows the drastic difference between spatial practices and attitudes in the two areas. Seemingly, Marshallese residents who have moved to Springdale have largely taken on the activity distribution dictated by their new environments. However, upon closer investigation subtle nuances are able to be found. The unique characteristics of practices and values such as spatial fluidity and sharing culture provide interesting cultural insight, not only to Marshallese spatial practices, but additionally how cultural practices shape spatial understanding among groups of people.

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Chapter 6

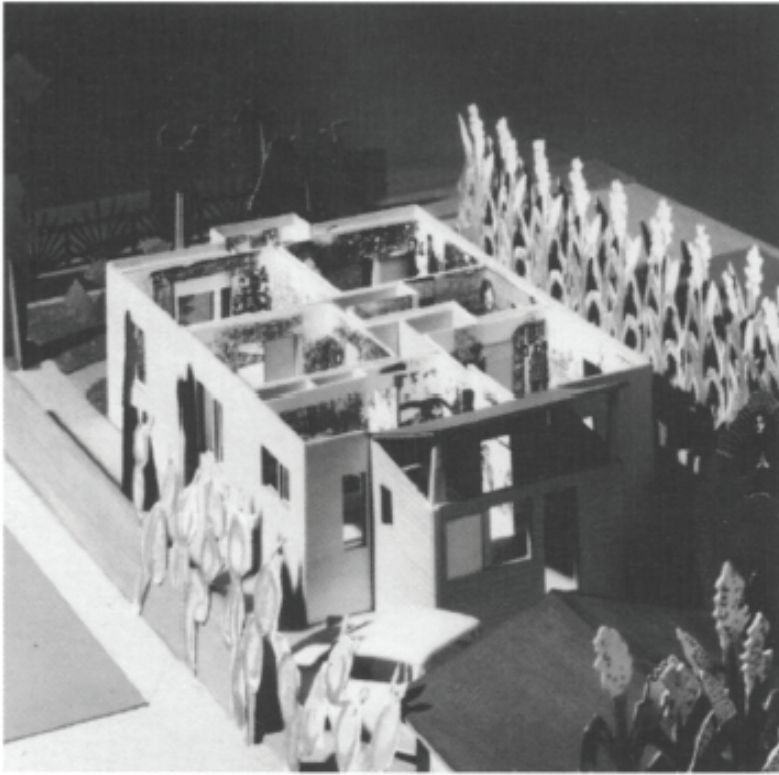
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Chapter 7

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Diagrams by Kera Lathan.
- Figure 7.3 Created by Kera Lathan based on interview data.
- Figure 7.4 Created by Kera Lathan based on interview data.

Appendix A.1.1
Crawford House Study





6. Model

The Altered House

At the border between the exterior and interior areas is the model. ADOBE LA has duplicated the shell of a typical single-story house of 1920–30 stock, much like those inhabited by Latinos in East L.A. Added to the shell, and differentiated from it through contrasts in technique and palette, are elements used by residents to transform their homes.

Appendix A.1.3
Street Investigation



Marshallese Domestic Conditions Survey

Principal Researcher: Kera Lathan, University of Arkansas

First, I would like to ask about where you lived on the Marshall Islands:

- What was your living/ housing situation while living in the Marshall Islands?

- Can you describe the rooms that made up your living space and what each room was primarily used for?

- Do you have any stories you would like to share about your living situation on the Marshall Islands?

Secondly, I would like to ask about your current living situation in Arkansas:

- Is the place where you currently live a (circle one)
 - Single-family detached home (house)
 - Attached home such as a townhouse or duplex (more than one house connected)
 - Apartment
 - Other

- How long have you lived at your current address

- Do you own or rent your current residence?
 - Own
 - Rent
 - Neither
 - Live with another family

- Overall, how satisfied are you with the house or apartment you live in?
 - Very satisfied
 - Somewhat satisfied
 - Somewhat dissatisfied
 - Very dissatisfied

Now, I would like to ask you about activities and changes to your living situation.

- Can you describe the most important or meaningful parts of your daily activities that take place within your home?

- Can you describe the most important or meaningful parts of your daily activities that take place in the immediate exterior vicinity of your home (yard, street, porches)?

- Do you have any stories you would like to share about your time spent in the living space in which you currently reside in Springdale, AR?

- Have you ever taken steps to modify your living space in any way in order to make it better fit your needs?

- Are there ways in which your actions and/or daily routine have been modified in order to fit your current living situation?

- Would you like to add any other insights or stories you have about your interactions with your living space(s)?

Thank you again for taking the time to talk with me. To help me understand who feels what, we would be grateful if you could let us know the following information. Your answers are strictly confidential and will be used only for the analysis of this study. You will not be identified in any way.

- Male Age _____

- Female How long have you lived in the United States _____

How many people live in your household _____

How many children live in your household _____



January 29, 2016

MEMORANDUM

TO: Kera Lathan
Noah Billig

FROM: Ro Windwalker
IRB Coordinator

RE: New Protocol Approval

IRB Protocol #: 16-01-464

Protocol Title: *Impromptu Domesticity: Housing Adaptations by the Marshallese in Springdale, AR*

Review Type: EXEMPT EXPEDITED FULL IRB

Approved Project Period: Start Date: 01/28/2016 Expiration Date: 01/27/2017

Your protocol has been approved by the IRB. Protocols are approved for a maximum period of one year. If you wish to continue the project past the approved project period (see above), you must submit a request, using the form *Continuing Review for IRB Approved Projects*, prior to the expiration date. This form is available from the IRB Coordinator or on the Research Compliance website (<https://vpred.uark.edu/units/rscp/index.php>). As a courtesy, you will be sent a reminder two months in advance of that date. However, failure to receive a reminder does not negate your obligation to make the request in sufficient time for review and approval. Federal regulations prohibit retroactive approval of continuation. Failure to receive approval to continue the project prior to the expiration date will result in Termination of the protocol approval. The IRB Coordinator can give you guidance on submission times.

This protocol has been approved for 30 participants. If you wish to make *any* modifications in the approved protocol, including enrolling more than this number, you must seek approval *prior to* implementing those changes. All modifications should be requested in writing (email is acceptable) and must provide sufficient detail to assess the impact of the change.

If you have questions or need any assistance from the IRB, please contact me at 109 MLKG Building, 5-2208, or irb@uark.edu.

Marshallese Housing Perception Survey
Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Principal Researcher: Kera Lathan, Advisor: Noah Billig

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

You are invited to participate in a research study about housing adaptations by the Marshallese in Springdale, AR. You are being asked to participate in this study because you were identified as fitting this description.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE RESEARCH STUDY

Who is the Principal Researcher?

Kera Lathan
Student, Architectural Studies
Vol Walker Hall
University of Arkansas
479-575-5924
nsbillig@uark.edu

What is the purpose of this research study?

The purpose of this study is to gain understanding about the Springdale, AR Marshallese's use and modification of existing housing in the Springdale area. It is intended that the work will help guide future design and policy in Springdale, as well as broaden the scope of knowledge concerning the needs of the Marshallese population in the area.

Who will participate in this study?

About thirty (30) members (6-7 households) of the Springdale Marshallese community.

What am I being asked to do?

Your participation will require the following:

Answering questions about your use of various rooms in your home and how your time on the Marshall Islands has shaped that use.

What are the possible risks or discomforts?

There are no anticipated risks or discomforts of participating.

What are the possible benefits of this study?

The study will possibly provide new information about Marshallese use and need within the domestic context (housing) of Springdale, AR.

How long will the study last?

The study will last 10 minutes, but could last up to an hour or more if you would like to share stories and perspectives about how you use your home and specifics about your home such as dimensions.

Will I receive compensation for my time and inconvenience if I choose to participate in this study?

No, there will be no monetary compensation.

Will I have to pay for anything?

No, there will be no cost for your participation.

IRB #16-01-464
Approved: 01/28/2016
Expires: 01/27/2017

What are the options if I do not want to be in the study?

If you do not want to be in this study, you may refuse to participate. Also, you may refuse to participate at any time during the study.

How will my confidentiality be protected?

All information will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by applicable State and Federal law. Data will be locked in a secure location at the University of Arkansas.

Will I know the results of the study?

At the conclusion of the study you will have the right to request feedback about the results. You may contact the Principal Researcher, Kera Lathan (kslathan@uark.edu). You will receive a copy of this form for your files.

What do I do if I have questions about the research study?

You have the right to contact the Principal Researcher, and/or advisor, as listed below for any concerns that you may have.

Kera Lathan
Student, Architectural Studies
University of Arkansas
kslathan@uark.edu

Noah Billig
Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture
304 Vol Walker Hall
University of Arkansas
479-575-5924
nsbillig@uark.edu

You may also contact the University of Arkansas Research Compliance office listed below if you have questions about your rights as a participant, or to discuss any concerns about, or problems with the research.

Ro Windwalker, CIP
Institutional Review Board Coordinator
Research Compliance
University of Arkansas
109 MLKG Building
Fayetteville, AR 72701-1201
479-575-2208
irb@uark.edu

I have read the above statement and have been able to ask questions and express concerns, which have been satisfactorily responded to by the investigator. I understand the purpose of the study as well as the potential benefits and risks that are involved. I understand that participation is voluntary. I understand that significant new findings developed during this research will be shared with the participant. I understand that no rights have been waived by signing the consent form. I have been given a copy of the consent form.