

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

CAROL ELAINE RUPE for the degree of MASTER OF SCIENCE in  
CLOTHING, TEXTILES AND  
RELATED ARTS presented on MAY 13, 1977.

Title: FURNITURE UTILIZATION IN APARTMENT LIVING

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The purpose of this study was to investigate the pieces of furniture apartment residents had purchased and their use of this furniture within the spatial limitations of their apartments. Comparisons were made between long-term and short-term apartment residents and respective demographic characteristics, furniture purchase patterns, attitudes toward the functional aspects of furniture, attitudes toward multi-functional furniture, and attitudes toward apartment living.

A written questionnaire was developed by the investigator and personally administered to fifty-two couples in one- and two-bedroom units throughout two apartment complexes. Data obtained from the resulting twenty-five short-term residents and twenty-seven long-term residents were analyzed by frequency counts and percentages. Potentially significant relationships were tested by the use of the Chi-square statistic with the accepted level being .05 or less.

Analysis of the data indicated that there was an association between income level and the residency category of the respondents.

Residents in the lowest income group were predominantly long-term and residents in the highest income group were mainly short-term.

There was no association found between residency category and the demographic characteristics of age, education level or presence of children in the home. Similarly, no association was found between residency category and decision-making patterns in the purchase of furniture, degree of emphasis placed upon the functional characteristics of furniture, attitude toward multi-functional furniture, and attitude toward apartment living. These findings indicate that the two respondent groups were not unlike each other in most of the examined areas.

Generally, the participants were under thirty-five and had a high level of education. They acquired most of their furniture by purchasing it new or used and gave new purchases a considerable amount of thought before making them. Although the functional aspects of furniture were rated high in importance, awareness of multi-functional pieces was limited.

The majority of respondents felt that apartment living somewhat limited their chosen discretionary-time activities. Entertaining was primarily confined to meals for small groups and makeshift overnight accommodations for guests were more common than versatile or convertible situations.

Furniture Utilization in  
Apartment Living

by

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A THESIS

submitted to

Oregon State University

in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the  
degree of

Master of Science

June 1978

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Date thesis is presented May 13, 1977

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer wishes to express her sincere appreciation to Dr. Misako Higa, her major professor, for her encouragement and guidance throughout this study.

Grateful appreciation is also extended to her other committee members, Dr. Geraldine Olson and Dr. Holly Schrank, for their constructive suggestions and support.

To Mrs. Dorothy Brown, Extension Housing-Home Furnishings Specialist, the writer is deeply indebted for her assistance in obtaining owner and manager approval to conduct the study. Special appreciation is also expressed to Gail Keymer and Pat Kerr, Managers of the Oak Lane and Devonshire Hills complexes, for their cooperation and assistance in the collection of the data. In addition, the writer wishes to express her gratitude to the respondents who so willingly participated in this study.

The writer is indebted to the Department of Statistics and in particular to Dr. Fred Ramsey for his technical assistance in the statistical analysis of the data.

For granting the sabbatical leave to do graduate work, the writer wishes to thank Shasta College.

The writer acknowledges with special appreciation the constant inspiration and support given by her husband and family throughout the period of graduate study.

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# FURNITURE UTILIZATION IN APARTMENT LIVING

## I. INTRODUCTION

Housing in the United States is being drastically affected by several factors. Among these are the energy crisis, imposed environmental and land constraints, soaring construction costs, and emerging alternative lifestyle forms. While the long-term goal of a single-family house is still the dream of most Americans, the capacity to deliver this product is rapidly diminishing; alternative housing forms must substitute (Sternlieb, et al., 1975, p. 100).

Sternlieb, Burchell, and Hughes have co-authored a research paper that reviews present housing research programs in terms of energy conservation. As far as the future of the energy crisis is concerned, they state:

early reports from the Ford Foundation indicate that the energy situation is neither fiction nor an oil company rip off. It is, in fact, the handwriting on the wall for the next ten years; the shortages of March 1974 were not aberrants; but they rather telescope the future (1975, p. 107).

Data from another study was used to demonstrate the impact on housing utility costs: "What was once a \$40/month heating cost for an 1,800 square foot house in 1973 will be \$120 monthly by 1980" (Sternlieb, et al., 1975, p. 107). If such predictions are realized, the American public is going to be forced into smaller, less luxurious, more

energy-efficient homes (Metzen, 1975, p. 14). It is known that single-family homes use more energy than multifamily dwellings (Morrison and Gladhart, 1976, p. 17). Therefore, multifamily dwellings may very well be the dictate of the future (Sternlieb, et al., 1975, p. 110).

Environmental constraints that include land use planning are restricting suburban sprawl in many areas and therefore some developers are turning back to the cities to build multifamily units. Agan states: "By the year 2000 it is predicted that more than 70 percent of the American people will live in urbanized areas called megalopolises" (1972, p. 16). Even in the suburbs, condominiums and apartments--arranged so as to minimize the environmental impact on the landscape--are being supported (Sternlieb, et al., 1975, p. 110).

Another factor affecting housing is the soaring land and construction costs involved in single-family dwellings. Lot prices are up, accounting for 24% of the total price of a typical new single-family home (Time, 1973, p. 86). Main comments:

At last report, the median price of a new house was \$41,000--nearly three times the median U. S. family income and beyond reach of all but about one family in five. Older houses are cheaper, but still their median price is over \$35,000; moreover, the down payment for old houses is higher than for new (1976, p. 50).

As a result people are turning to the more affordable "minihouses" (Main, 1976, p. 50), and alternate forms of ownership, mainly the condominium (Sternlieb, et al., 1975, p. 110).

Certain alternative lifestyles are coming more into focus and are proving to be another important factor affecting housing demand. Specialized living accommodation are being built on a wider scale for young marrieds, for singles, and for the elderly. These groups are demanding smaller, more efficient units (Agan, 1972, p. 17; Forum, 1974, p. 24; Sternlieb, et al., 1975, p. 101).

Whether by choice or by force, it seems that Americans will move toward smaller homes and multifamily units. How will this trend affect their lifestyles? What will they do to adapt? How successful will the adaptation be?

### Need for the Study

There are many ways to adapt to smaller living spaces. Architectural features, the use of interior color and design, and furniture arrangement have been studied. The functional aspects of furniture, however, have not yet been investigated in terms of limited space settings. Popular literature enthusiastically promotes the use of built-in and multi-functional furniture for people living in apartments, assuming that lack of space is generally a problem. The contention is that this type of furniture is versatile and can be adapted to many uses--whatever the situation demands. As a result, fewer pieces of furniture are needed to support the desired lifestyle. While this may be true, are apartment residents purchasing, or planning to purchase,

this type of furniture? Or, are they disregarding spatial limitations when they purchase furniture, assuming they will move to larger quarters in the near future? And, are there differences in the furniture purchases and use patterns of apartment residents who have definite plans to move out of apartments and those who have not made such plans? This study will focus upon these questions. It will investigate what pieces of furniture apartment residents are buying and how they are using this furniture in their daily living. Assuming that living space in an apartment is generally more limited than in a single detached home, it follows that furniture pieces also need to be limited. For this reason, the results of this study will not only reflect what is happening today, but could be an indicator of what will need to happen on a much wider scale in the future. Today's apartment residents are already involved in space utilization practices that tomorrow's generations may have to accept.

#### Statement of the Problem

Economic realities are going to force lifestyle changes upon future generations. With the movement in housing toward smaller, more efficient units, people are going to have to adapt to smaller amounts of living space. In order to be successful, this adaptation must provide for satisfaction of personal needs and desires such as the

need for social interaction, for privacy, and the need for creative expression.

One way to prepare future generations for successful adaptation to smaller amounts of living space is to investigate present lifestyles that are already involved with such limitations. Apartment residents fit into this category. This study will focus upon apartment residents and the furniture they utilize in carrying out their desired lifestyles. Furniture purchase patterns and utilization frequencies will be investigated.

#### Justification

The investigator believes that many people will benefit from this research. The respondents in the study may benefit from the thought-instigating questionnaire and interview. It is hoped that both consumers and manufacturers will benefit through the resulting information and recommendations. The investigator hopes to gather practical examples of home furnishing ingenuity and relate these examples to others. And most important, the results of this study will hopefully reflect how apartment residents are adapting their desired lifestyles to limited space living situations. This could also demonstrate that, given similar housing units, a wide variety of satisfactory adaptation schemes are quite possible. Such an insight

would be encouraging at a time when resource shortages seem to threaten desired future lifestyles.

### Objectives

The objectives for the study are as follows:

1. To determine the frequency of long-term apartment residents among families living in two selected apartment complexes.
2. To establish the frequency of use of selected furniture pieces.
3. To compare actual furniture purchases by long-term apartment residents with those of short-term apartment residents.
4. To compare furniture-purchasing patterns of long-term apartment residents with those of short-term apartment residents.
5. To compare awareness of retail multi-functional furniture between long-term apartment residents and short-term apartment residents.
6. To determine the frequency of multi-functional furniture purchases by apartment residents.
7. To investigate attitudes toward currently-owned multi-functional furniture pieces, if appropriate.
8. To investigate perceived problems of apartment residents in terms of appropriate furniture availability.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The study of home furnishings has expanded beyond the aesthetic elements of color and design. Professionals currently stress the importance of creating an environment that supports personal growth and fulfillment while minimizing extravagances that waste resources. Apartments and other multifamily housing cut down on resource waste, but often present a problem in terms of smaller living quarters. Furniture can be one means of minimizing spatial limitations, if careful thought and planning go into the purchase of major furniture pieces.

The literature important to such concepts will be broken down into four main categories: (1) the importance of the near environment, (2) multifamily housing, (3) furniture for apartment living, (4) consumer behavior in purchasing furniture.

### Importance of the Near Environment

The term environment has progressively become the focus of concern throughout several disciplines. The natural environment, in particular, has attracted nationwide attention. Recently, the man-made environment has come into prominence as being an equally important ecological facet. Morrison states:

The natural environment is, of course the ultimate environment from which man derives the support systems for human life; however, the nearest and most immediate environment of man is the environment he creates from



nature. The man-made or man-built environment is the primary environment of man today (1976, p. 4).

Anthropologist Paul Baker has been concerned with the structuring of this near environment, particularly with temperature, noise, atmosphere, and territory, and how it affects man (1974, p. 6). He acknowledges that we are shaping our man-made environment and therefore have a tremendous opportunity to positively influence it. In his book Personal Space, psychologist Robert Sommer emphasizes that "all people are builders, creators, molders, and shapers of the environment;" and urges all disciplines to work together to create optimum surroundings (1969, p. 7). Microbiologist René Dubos discusses the macro-environment and then refers to the micro-environment when he states:

Just as important for maintaining the quality of human life is an environment in which it is possible to satisfy the longings for quiet, privacy, independence, initiative, and open space. These are not frills or luxuries, they constitute real biological necessities (1976, p. 8).

Housing is one of the categories at the micro-environment level. People interact with their homes daily. Obviously, this does not mean that housing itself is a social experience, but that it does affect the people who return to it after work each day or who consistently remain in it throughout the day. Psychiatrist Paul Lemkau believes that housing is important to good mental health--but objectively points out that all people are not equally affected by their housing. Some react

spontaneously to their surroundings and some act in spite of them.

He does state: "There's a relationship between good housing and good mental health--and bad housing and poorer mental health" (Lemkau, 1974, p. 8). This relationship may be compounded when the home that affects one family member will set the stage for that member affecting another and so on. Mothers who are frustrated by bad housing may very likely transfer this frustration to their children and to their husbands. Sociologist James Montgomery (1970) has studied the probable effects of housing on the husband-wife relationship. He divides the areas of concern into seven categories:

1. privacy
2. self-concept
3. replenishment
4. psychological stimulation
5. sense of place
6. relatedness
7. creativity

Other professionals support Montgomery's philosophy. Several agree that the most important of a home's roles is privacy (St. Marie, 1973, p. 47; Montgomery, 1970, p. 268; Mead, 1976, p. 138). It is the key to mankind's psychological survival. Through both auditory as well as visual privacy individuals and families are able to maintain themselves and their sanity.

The self-concept is not only dependent upon interaction with other people, but also upon interaction with inanimate surroundings. Here again, a person's home is one of the most consistent of surroundings. Cooper states that the house is the symbol-of-self in America. Once a house has been designated as a personal home, the inhabitants try to personalize it, and in turn, it becomes a reflection of them (Cooper, 1976, p. 155-156).

Replenishment refers to alleviating the frustrations of the day. While housing cannot do this alone, it can certainly aid in the process. In another article Montgomery states:

Home, the hub of the family's private world, is the place to shed the stresses of the modern world. Therefore, housing is more important than less, for if we don't find a place to retreat and refresh at home, I don't know where we will find it (1974, p. 10).

Anthropologist Edward Hall agrees, as he urges city planners and architects to make homes for the people that will be antedotes for all the city stresses (1969, p. 178).

Psychological stimulation comes from variety in the environment. Although lack of empirical data fails to qualify the amount of stimulation needed in the home, there is no doubt that stimulation is an important factor in daily living. St. Marie relates:

Psychologists are now finding that a monotonous environment, which deprives the senses of stimulation, can be harmful to mental health. The brain needs sensory intake and stimulation for optimum development just as the body needs food for growth (1973, p. 8).

A sense of place, or rootedness, refers to the desire to become a part of the neighborhood or community; while relatedness involves both relationships within the family and outside of it. Mead agrees with Montgomery in these two areas. She asserts that continuity in human relationships, both familial and peripheral, is a basic human need (1976, p. 138-139).

The need to be creative can either be promoted or discouraged by one's home. Montgomery points out that apartments in particular can inhibit creativity. He asks:

When a family moves into an apartment and is told that it may not keep pets, may drive only eight nails of a certain size in the walls, may not soil the carpet, and may not paint, how are its members to be creative, to make an imprint (1970, p. 274)?

Thus, the importance of the near environment--in particular the home--is clear. The realization of its full influence is still in the infant stage. Yet, the findings point out that professionals should be very concerned with helping families to cope with their near environment (Mann, 1975, p. 3). This study will concentrate upon multi-family housing and some of the problems characteristic to it.

### Multifamily Housing

A growing number of housing professionals are supporting the concept of multifamily housing. A few discriminate among the types of structures they recommend: high-rise apartment buildings,

low-rise structures, garden complexes or townhouses. Most professionals, however, simply urge construction of well-designed projects conceived with a concern for human needs and values (Morrison and Gladhart, 1976, p. 18; Thompson, 1975, p. vi; Agan, 1972, p. 18-19). The reasons behind this campaign for multifamily housing are generally economic. The scarcity of resources, particularly energy and the high cost of land and buildings are forcing families to think about alternatives to single-family dwellings. Multi-unit structures require less energy than single-family dwellings and provide the potential for more energy-efficient mass transportation (Morrison and Gladhart, 1976, p. 18). In addition, the cost of building an apartment is less than building a comparable single-family home (Agan, 1972, p. 18; Angell, 1976, p. 277). This is due to less land per unit being used as well as common walls, plumbing and other combined uses of building materials.

Thompson points out these economic factors and adds the concept of population pressures in moving toward multifamily housing:

The new emphasis on multi-unit buildings is the result of many factors, not the least of which are the population pressures of the last ten to twenty years and the change in the composition of the population to a preponderance of young (under 30) and old (over 60) people. But by far the greatest influence in this change has been the spiralling cost of land which has made the single-family house all but prohibitive in cost, and has led inevitably to the more intensive use of each plot of land, most often to guarantee a desired investment return (Thompson, 1975, p. vi).

While economic factors point out the need for multifamily housing, there are other factors that should be considered. Angell points out, "The time required for maintenance as well as the expense of maintenance and utilities are usually less.... This savings is the result of reduced exterior surfaces--up to a 90 percent reduction" (1976, p. 277). Also, multifamily housing utilizes less land and consequently it is chosen for urban sites and that factor may provide proximity to jobs, shopping districts and city cultural events. Additional elements that may entice people toward apartment living include amenities such as swimming pools, saunas, and tennis courts. While these may be unavailable if living in a single-detached home, access is possible on a shared basis.

Social advantages are offered in certain complexes. Sommer points out:

The market for specialized (segregated) housing for young unmarried people is booming in southern California. The builders see themselves as being in the forefront of a major housing trend for apartments and recreational facilities for people of the same age groups with the same social interests (1969, p. 16).

Popular literature is quick to point out these advantages of apartment living and yet Angell cautions:

Although at face value these factors tend to indicate that apartments are a preferred alternative for certain types of consumers, there is evidence which suggests many apartment dwellers base their selection on necessity (e. g., low income or inability to maintain) rather than preference (1976, p. 276).

Cooper also questions the preference aspect of apartment living stating that it is a threat to the occupant's self-image. She explains: "Even though we may make apartments larger and with many of the appurtenances of the suburban house, it still may be a long time before the majority of lower- and middle-income American families will accept this as a valid image of 'home'" (1976, p. 158).

Research concerning apartment living has been limited primarily to measuring attitudes about specific apartment complexes. Bubar (1968) concentrated on a high-rise apartment complex in Los Angeles. She found that location was the primary motivation for most tenants choosing the apartment complex. In addition, over half of the respondents were not satisfied with all aspects of design of their individual apartments. Gorius (1970) and White (1969) conducted similar studies concerning condominium residents<sup>1</sup>. Gorius collected data from 48 owner-occupants of condominiums in three cities in Oklahoma. She found that nearly half of the population were very satisfied with their unit's specific design features and over one-third were satisfied (1970, p. 37). White found condominium residents in Connecticut satisfied with the building type, floor plan, personal privacy within the unit,

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<sup>1</sup>Since the condominium concept is a method of financing real property ownership of one unit within the larger multi-unit structure, it falls under the classification of multifamily housing along with apartments.

and the size of the unit--but dissatisfied with storage space, fire protection inherent in the design, the quality of construction and the size of the entire condominium. Location, again, was a highly important aspect in the selection of the living unit (White, 1969, p. 54). Lack of sufficient storage space was also noted as a significant drawback of the units studied by Bubar (1968) and Gorius (1970).

Humphries (1976) in her study of "Values, Satisfaction, Aspirations and Goal Commitment Among Multi-unit Housing Residents" in Greensboro, North Carolina, compared attitudes of apartment residents with condominium residents. Both groups of respondents were generally satisfied with location of their dwellings, and management operations. There were mixed reactions to common facilities and services. Under the heading of "structural design features" she found more dissatisfaction among apartment residents than condominium residents. The following features were rated in descending order of dissatisfaction:

1. soundproofing between units
2. space for hobbies, studying, etc.
3. bulk storage space
4. space for social gatherings
5. safety features
6. privacy of entrances
7. carpet or draperies furnished



8. number of exterior doors
9. wall colors
10. arrangement of units in complex to allow for privacy

Only two design features, bulk storage and space for hobbies, studying, etc., were areas of dissatisfaction for condominium residents (Humphries, 1976, p. 63).

Taylor (1974) utilized questionnaire responses from couples in one- and two-bedroom apartments to assess functionality of space within the units. As in the other studies, the apartments in general were rated satisfactorily with the exception of storage space. When asked for suggestions to improve the apartments, respondents focused upon more space:

1. more storage space
2. another bedroom
3. larger second bedroom
4. larger living room
5. wider living room (Taylor, 1974, p. 82)

The results of all these studies seem to indicate a desire for more space in multifamily housing. But is such a desire congruent with reality?

Stepat-DeVan acknowledges that space is expensive when either buying or renting it (1971, p. 6). Raven agrees, pointing out that space quotas are often designated by financial restraints. He refers

to situations in which young families with children have the greatest space needs and yet often cannot afford homes that provide such space. Ironically, older people who can afford the larger homes rarely need them and would probably rather occupy the smaller homes in which younger couples are living (1967, p. 70).

Perhaps closer to financial reality would be better designed spaces rather than more space. Hall proclaims the importance of properly designed space when he states that "one of man's most critical needs . . . is for principles for designing spaces that will maintain a healthy density, a healthy interaction rate, a proper amount of involvement, and a continuing sense of ethnic identification" (1969, p. 168).

Minimum living space recommendations have been made by different cultures and consequently they vary a great deal. The Hong Kong Housing Authority gives a minimum of 35 square feet per person (Sommer, 1969, p. 27). The French Chombart de Lauwes established 10-14 square meters as the appropriate minimum (Hall, 1969, p. 172), and the American Small Homes Council recommends 1500 square feet of living space, excluding bathrooms and closets, for a family of four (Stepat-DeVan, 1971, p. 7). While these minimums may give some indication of spatial needs in living quarters, they are merely guidelines. Exact spatial needs vary with family size, family life cycle,

special needs of family members and personal perceptions of space (Deacon and Firebaugh, 1976, p. 327; Raven, 1967, p. 70).

### Furniture for Apartment Living

Research in the area of home furnishings suitable for apartment living has been very limited. In the past, apartments were viewed as temporary living situations and tenants were inclined to buy furniture that would fit into their future home. As a result, apartments were filled with over-sized, under-useful pieces that constricted movement and precluded entertaining friends or involvement in hobbies. Recently, popular magazines such as Apartment Life and Apartment Living and Decorating have attempted to revitalize attitudes toward apartment lifestyles. They have encouraged apartment residents to purchase furniture particularly suited for smaller spaces and varied uses. Along with the immediate satisfaction, a natural advantage is that the furniture would be very suitable when the tenant eventually moved to a single-detached home.

Nissen (1972) states one of the problems of furnishing apartments:

One of the common dilemmas of apartment interiors is that of limited space or how to find enough room for everything. This lack of space dictates the need to make maximum use of each square foot in a room (p. 10).

Bradford offers solutions to this space limitation problem when she suggests the use of built-in units, double-duty furniture and wall-hung

furniture (1976, p. 79). Faulkner (p. 385) and St. Marie (p. 98) make similar recommendations. Yet these suggestions are not without cautions. Concerning built-in furniture, Faulkner states:

More often than not, built-in furniture promotes flexible living, although this may seem like a contradiction. Because the furnishings take up less room than movable pieces, they leave maximum amount of free space around and between them. Built-in furniture can also minimize dust-catching crevices, give a feeling of permanence and security and break up the boxiness of typical rooms (1975, p. 387).

Rabeneck, et al. state explicitly that no furniture should be built into the design of the apartment. They conclude, "We consider this (the absence of built-ins) an intrinsic feature of adaptability: function should not be predetermined by built-ins" (Rabeneck et al., 1974, p. 201). Conran advises that there should also be limits when considering multi-functional furniture:

Dual-purpose adaptability is an attractive concept, which may make for interesting picture material in magazines. But in practice it can be very difficult and awkward. Anything more ambitious than fold-away beds, stacking chairs, sliding doors, folding screens or mobile furniture mounted on large safe castors should be regarded with suspicion. And any so-called flexible furniture ideas which really mean involving yourself in constant switching around--like using the bath as a base for the kitchen table--should be avoided (1976, p. 283).

In summarizing her study and making recommendations, Nissen includes the use of multi-functional furniture and emphasizes the importance of furniture arrangement. She recommends the following practices for apartments with space problems (1972, p. 45-46):

1. limit furniture to the necessary
2. arrange furniture against walls
3. keep as much floor space free as possible
4. do not obstruct glass walls by placing furniture in front of them
5. use furniture grouping to direct the eye to more expansive space
6. keep the furniture low
7. use multipurpose furniture
8. use mirrors and planning devices to create an illusion of visual space where possible

In addition to limited space, apartments have traditionally been labeled as architecturally dull boxes. While this aspect is changing, it is still a challenge to personalize apartments to support individual and unique lifestyles. St. Marie states: "Each family develops its own life-style, based on its values, goals, and resources. Wants, needs, and activities will vary for the different areas in a home accordingly" (1973, p. 35). Faulkner gives suggestions for personalizing apartment interiors by using multipurpose furnishings that can be reversed, rearranged, and reshaped (1975, p. 25). Baker (1969) emphasized personalization of apartment interiors in her thesis by designing seven different interiors for one floor plan.

### Consumer Behavior in Purchasing Furniture

Furniture pieces themselves can help families adapt to limited-space dwellings while, at the same time, help them to personalize their living space. Furniture can provide storage, working space, comfort, and privacy. The usefulness of a piece of furniture can be limited to one function or it can serve many purposes. While the functional aspect of furniture is important in any household, it becomes vital in limited-space settings such as apartments. Smaller rooms hold less furniture and therefore the pieces that are present must support all desired activities. Whether or not this occurs depends upon thoughtful planning and wise decision-making at the time of furniture acquisition. An investigation of consumer behavior at this point seems appropriate.

It is also important to remember that the decision to purchase a piece or pieces of furniture can be a major one in terms of economic output. It is not unusual to find larger pieces of furniture such as sofas or dressers costing the equivalent of a month's salary for some families. Because of this high cost, such purchase decisions are made rather infrequently. Once the decision to buy is made, the furniture is usually kept for a long period of time. Thus the situation is often one in which the consumer must bear the consequences of a decision, good or bad, for several years. Brown states: "No other purchase is made

by the American consumer with so little know-how (and, oftentimes, with so much confusion) as the selection of home furnishings. As a result, hundreds of thousands of consumer dollars are wasted every year" (1973, p. 5). Schoenfeld reiterates: "The purchase of furniture is a major purchase, not made every few years, and one in which quality pays" (1960, p. 10).

What evidence is available that gives some insight into the way consumer decisions in home furnishings are made? In general, literature points to values and goals as basic to decision-making. In "An Exploratory Study to Learn How Families Now Make Decisions in Home Furnishings", Sebree (1957), categorizes reasons for changes in home furnishings into four value groups: appearance, family, economy, and personal (p. 27). Lackey views the values--decision-making relationship with a different slant. She states that "as decision-making is better understood families can be better assisted in intelligently using their resources to achieve the values and goals they have established" (1967, p. 3). And, when Brown states that consumers purchase home furnishings for both practical and aesthetic reasons (1973, p. 6), the interpretation of what is practical and what is aesthetically pleasing is based upon the consumer's own value system.

If values are the general underlying motives in consumer decisions, there are many more specific reasons for a particular purchase. Habel lists family needs as the major concern, followed by

the place the furniture is to be used, price, and style. Additional factors include husband's preference, color, brand names and bargains (1963, p. 34). Function is the most important reason as far as Koppe is concerned. He states that "houses and furniture are objective things in our world that are meaningless apart from the ways in which they are used" (1955, p. 129). The most important factors in Sebree's study include need, color, mobility, and desire for change (1957, p. 27). Stepat-DeVan alerts consumers to consider design, cost, size, function, and, of course, quality (1971, p. 257).

If the overt reasons were the only important factors in buying furnishings, consumer decisions would be much simpler than they actually are. However, many additional factors complicate the matter. Consumer decisions in furnishings are often made together with other family members. Therefore, additional reasons may be introduced. Sebree found that the wife enters into the decision 100% of the time; the husband 63% of the time; the children 57% of the time (1957, p. 31). Lackey reported that the purchase decision was made by the husband and wife together in three-fifths of the cases (1967, p. 58).

Sources of information will definitely affect the consumer decision. Lackey reports that the majority of her sample referred to advertising or to friends (1967, p. 55). In a study of consumer satisfaction with home furnishings done by Nichols and Dardis, 43% of the consumers utilized comparative shopping while 31% depended on the



salesperson for total information about the item (1973, p. 169).

Sebree found that 90% of her sample relied on their family for information, while 27% depended on friends, and 13% went to neighbors (1957, p. 28). With such an array of potentially different information, it is very obvious how consumer decisions can be complicated. It was interesting to note that professional advice was sought by only 3% of the consumers in Sebree's study (p. 28), by approximately 13% of the cases in Lackey's study (p. 36), and not even mentioned in the study by Nichols and Dardis, unless one would consider the salesperson to be the professional.

The planning period before purchase is another variable that would affect the decision to buy furnishings. When a purchase is well-planned in advance, alternatives are generally weighed more objectively and the purchase has a better chance of being successful. Allen recommends that the furniture "purchase be made with a 'plan', a general theme which you wish to eventually achieve" (1972, p. 239). Brown states: "A firm decision made at home can prevent an impulse purchase of a costly misfit item that can create frustration for years to come" (1973, p. 9). St. Marie reminds consumers that "a plan for furnishings developed step by step according to activities that are related to needs can solve the major problem of what furnishings are needed" (1973, p. 35).

In practice, Habel found that 71% of the homemakers in her study made plans before buying wood furniture (1963, p. 49). However, no information was given pertaining to the length of the planning period. Lackey found that the planning period for buying selected household equipment varied from one day to one year. For one-half of the sample the planning period was two weeks (1967, p. 56). Sebree noted that the majority of decisions in her sample had been under consideration for one year (1957, p. 26). It should be mentioned that some of these decisions involved wall finishes and woodwork finishes, which are primarily remodeling decisions rather than purchasing decisions. It seems that many people do plan their furnishing purchases in advance, but information on how extensive the plan is, and the completeness of information is lacking.

Certainly there are special circumstances in each case which affect the reasons for buying furnishings. Limited economic means, health problems, family size, ages of children, family interests and hobbies are all important considerations when they are relevant.

### Summary

The home is one of the most influential near environments upon its inhabitants. It is also one of the few near environments that is under the direct control of its occupants. With this realization it is vitally important to make the home as conducive to the family's

desired lifestyle as possible. There will always be limitations in such a scheme. Apartment residents face such limitations. The furniture they choose can help the situation or hinder it, depending upon their foresight and thoughtful purchases. An investigation into the furniture purchases that apartment residents are making may give insight into the dilemma and help others facing similar living situations.

### III. PROCEDURE

#### Definition of Terms

The purpose of this study was to investigate the major furniture pieces that apartment residents have acquired and how they are using this furniture in their daily living. Within this framework, the following definitions were formulated:

Lifestyle--the apartment resident's typical and desired way of living.

Long-term Apartment Residents--current apartment residents who plan to remain living in apartments or move to condominiums or cooperatives or other limited-space housing.

Short-term Apartment Residents--current apartment residents who plan to move out of apartments and into single detached homes. Plans must be specific and operationalized as in the following examples:

1. established savings account for down payment
2. shopping for another apartment, house, etc.
3. given 30-day notice to management
4. contacted realtors
5. other specific plans

Residency category--refers to the residents' plans to move, consequently their classification as long-term or short-term apartment residents.

Major furniture pieces--refers to those furniture pieces that generally cost over \$100, therefore assuming some degree of planning before purchase. Lighting and accessories will not be considered major furniture pieces.

### Hypotheses

- H<sub>0</sub> 1. There will be no association between the residency category of the subjects and the following descriptive dimensions:
1. age
  2. education level
  3. income level
  4. presence of children in the home
- H<sub>0</sub> 2. There will be no association between decision-making patterns in the purchase of furniture and the residency category of the subjects.
- H<sub>0</sub> 3. There will be no association between the residency category of the subjects and attitude toward apartment living.
- H<sub>0</sub> 4. There will be no association between the residency category of the subjects and the degree of emphasis placed upon the functional characteristics of furniture.
- H<sub>0</sub> 5. There will be no association between the residency category of the subjects and attitude toward multi-functional furniture.

### Limitations

1. This study will be limited to a select group of residents from the Oak Lane and Devonshire Hills apartment complexes in Eugene, Oregon.
2. It will not include an analysis of resident satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the particular apartment.
3. It will be concerned primarily with the functional aspects of furniture and will not analyze other aspects such as style, color, scale or price.

### Assumptions

1. That the existing lifestyle of the resident is satisfactory or that the resident will indicate dissatisfaction through answers to selected questions.
2. That furniture in apartment living situations will be selective in terms of number and therefore function.

### Development of Questionnaire

A written questionnaire consisting of forty-three questions was developed by the investigator (Appendix B). Questions #18, #40, #41 and #43 were adapted from Apartment Life's Questionnaire, March 1975. They were particularly suitable to this research project and

the investigator was interested in comparing the results. The questionnaire content was organized into three parts:

1. Furniture Purchases. Information was collected about major furniture pieces acquired since living in apartments, furniture rentals, decision-making in the purchase of furniture, attitudes toward multi-functional furniture, and attitudes concerning the functional aspects of all furniture pieces. Open-end questions were included to clarify responses to questions #8, #10, #14 and #17.

2. Lifestyle. Questions were formulated to explore the residents' adaptation to their present apartment. The purpose was to acquire an indication of whether they adapted their lifestyle to fit the apartment, or adapted the apartment to fit their desired lifestyle. Emphasis was placed upon entertaining patterns and discretionary-time activities. The functional aspects of furniture in relation to such activities was also determined in question #27.

3. Demographic Information. Data about age, size of household, education, occupation, annual income, housing mobility and residency category were included in this section.

### Pretest

The proposed questionnaire was pretested by selected residents of the Brooktree apartments in Corvallis, Oregon, to check for clarity and objectivity. This apartment complex was similar to the one chosen

for the official sample and the respondents were limited to couples, with or without children, in one- or two-bedroom units. Respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire and to make comments and recommendations for changes. The investigator concurrently recorded the time needed for the interview. Several of the suggestions were utilized in making adjustments in the final questionnaire.

### Selection of Sample

Seventy-seven potential subjects in the Oak Lane and Devonshire Hills apartment complexes in Eugene, Oregon, were identified through the cooperation of the managers. The subjects were couples in one- and two-bedroom units. Approximately half of the couples had children. Couples, since they must share living space while engaging in combined and separate discretionary-time activities, were felt to have a more complex living situation and were chosen for this reason. In order to obtain a reasonable sample size, couples with children were also included.

The female was the interview subject, primarily for consistency. It was also felt that she would more likely be interested in home furnishings than the male. The male was not excluded from the interview and, in some cases, indirectly influenced the responses. Out of the seventy-seven potential subjects the investigator hoped to interview at least fifty and this was achieved.



### Location of the Study

The two apartment complexes utilized in the study were very similar. The same architect designed the townhouse units and the floor plans and available living space were nearly identical. The one-bedroom units contained approximately 750 square feet of living space while the two-bedroom units contained approximately 980 square feet of living space.

The interior of the units was very well appointed. The lower floor of the townhouse structure contained the living room, a half-bath and the kitchen-dining area. Another full bath was upstairs along with either one or two bedrooms. All kitchen appliances, including garbage disposal, dishwasher and refrigerator, were provided. The living room, hallways, stairs and bedrooms were fully carpeted.

Each complex was three-years-old at the time of the study and in good condition. They were located on the same street about one-quarter mile apart and approximately two miles from downtown Eugene.

Outside amenities included patios, designated yard space for each unit and a swimming pool. The Oak Lane complex contained compact laundry equipment within each apartment, a park area for the children and a cooperative garden area. The Devonshire Hills complex maintained a common recreation room with kitchen facilities, a ball court

amenable to tennis, and a child-care center that was also open to the general public. Laundry facilities at Devonshire Hills were in common areas.

The two apartment complexes were selected for several reasons. First, the owner and both managers gave their approval for the study to be conducted on the premises. Secondly, the units were in the medium rent range (\$160 per month for one bedroom; \$190 per month for two bedrooms) so that middle-income families could afford them. The apartments were also well appointed and therefore conducive to long-term residency. Finally, the units were as far away from the University of Oregon campus as possible--while still being located within the city limits--to minimize the number of student respondents. Students tend to be inherently mobile and too many students might skew the results.

### Data Collection

Through the cooperation of the managers, apartment numbers of couples in one- and two-bedroom apartments were obtained. Introductory letters were sent to these apartments explaining the study and asking for assistance (Appendix A). The letters were followed by phone calls to the tenants to make appointments for the interviews. Phone numbers were also supplied by the managers. Since several

of the women were employed it was necessary to schedule appointments for evenings and weekends as well as weekdays.

Each apartment was called three times, excluding busy signals and requests to call back later. Each call was made on a different weekday evening and spread out over a month's time period. If the apartment could not be reached by phone the investigator went to the tenant's door to make the appointment. This was done three times as well, at different times of the day and during the month. Using this procedure sixty-eight residents or 88.3% of the sample was contacted. Six of these (8.8%) refused to take part in the study. Five (7.3%) were declared ineligible because of incorrect marital status. Another five (7.3%) had moved and were also declared ineligible. The final sample of fifty-two tenants were then personally interviewed during July 1976.

The interview consisted of the investigator personally administering Part I of the written questionnaire. The investigator read the questions aloud--as the respondent viewed her own copy--and then wrote down the answers given by the respondent. This was done mainly to expedite the process. Next, the original copy of the questionnaire was given to the subject to fill out Parts II and III herself. Clarifying questions were encouraged.

### Analysis of Data

Data obtained from the respondents were analyzed by frequency counts and percentages. Comparisons between long-term apartment residents and short-term apartment residents were made.

Chi-square was used to test for significance with the accepted level of significance at .05 or less. Since values were not always obtained for all cells, certain categories were combined.

#### IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

##### Description of Sample

##### Residency Category

The fifty-two respondents were divided into two categories-- long-term apartment residents and short-term apartment residents-- according to their plans for future housing. Those who did not have any plans to move were categorized as long-term apartment residents. Those who had made definite plans to move were asked to specify what type of housing. If their answer was another apartment, the respondent was still classified as long-term. If the move was to a single-family home then the respondent was classified as short-term. In four cases the subjects gave other responses and, through additional inquiry, the investigator was then able to place these answers in the most appropriate category. The operational approach toward moving was used to focus upon the actions that tenants had taken toward moving as compared to their illusionary plans.

As a result, twenty-five couples were classified as short-term apartment residents. All of these had made specific plans to move and were doing something about it. Twenty-two were going to move into a single-family house, one into a condominium, one into a mobile

home and one into a duplex. Descriptions of the condominium, mobile home and duplex fit into the short-term category.

Twenty-seven couples were classified as long-term apartment residents. Seventeen had no plans to move. Ten couples did plan to move but into a more appropriate apartment, still classifying them as long-term apartment residents. One couple was moving into base housing.

The two residency categories were used as the basis for comparison throughout this study. Demographic characteristics, attitudes toward apartment living, furniture purchasing patterns, attitudes toward multi-functional furniture and degree of emphasis placed upon the functional aspects of furniture were compared for the two groups.

### Age

Approximately 96% of the female respondents in this study were under the age of thirty-five. They were equally distributed among the two lowest age groups (18-24 years and 25-34 years) in the short-term category. A greater percentage (59%) of long-term female residents were in the 18-24 year group. In general, the males in the study tended to be slightly older than the females but still predominantly in the two lowest age groups. Eighty-eight percent of the short-term male residents and 92.6% of the long-term residents were under thirty-five (Table 1).

Table 1. Age level of participants

<u>Female</u> Age	<u>Short-term</u>		<u>Long-term</u>	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
18-24	12	48.0	16	59.3
25-34	12	48.0	10	37.0
35-44	-	-	1	3.7
45-54	1	4.0	-	-
55-64	-	-	-	-
65 & over	-	-	-	-
Total	25	100	27	100

  

<u>Male</u> Age	<u>Short-term</u>		<u>Long-term</u>	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
18-24	6	24.0	11	40.7
25-34	16	64.0	14	51.9
35-44	1	4.0	2	7.4
45-54	2	8.0	-	-
55-64	-	-	-	-
65 & over	-	-	-	-
Total	25	100	27	100

This predominance of young families in apartments supports the findings in other studies (Angell, 1976, p. 276; Taylor, 1974, p. 40), but with an even higher percentage. While these figures represent the sample studied, it should be noted that resident participation was voluntary. It is possible that younger couples were more willing to participate in the study than were older couples.

The lack of data in all cells necessitated combining of groups for statistical analysis. The residents were grouped into "under 25" and "25 and over" categories. There was no apparent association between the age of female ( $\chi^2 = 0.66$  with 1 d. f.)<sup>2</sup> or male ( $\chi^2 = 1.65$  with 1 d. f.) groups and their residency categories.

### Education

A majority of the respondents had attended college at some time and a large percentage of both the short-term (68%) and the long-term (70.4%) male residents had graduated from college (Table 2). This high level of education may be related to the accessibility of a community college, a Bible college and a university within Eugene.

A comparison of the two groups indicated no apparent association between the education level of the females ( $\chi^2 = 0.93$  with 4 d. f.) or males ( $\chi^2 = 2.55$  with 4 d. f.) and their residency category.

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<sup>2</sup>For a complete summary of Chi-square values see Appendix C.



Table 2. Education level of participants.

<u>Female</u>	<u>Short-term</u>		<u>Long-term</u>	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Grade school only	-	-	-	-
Some high school	-	-	1	3.7
Graduated high school	5	20.0	4	14.8
Some college	10	40.0	12	44.4
Graduated college	5	20.0	2	7.4
College graduate work	<u>5</u>	<u>20.0</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>29.6</u>
Total	25	100	27	100

  

<u>Male</u>	<u>Short-term</u>		<u>Long-term</u>	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Grade school only	-	-	-	-
Some high school	1	4.0	-	-
Graduated high school	4	16.0	1	3.7
Some college	3	12.0	7	25.9
Graduated college	8	32.0	5	18.5
College graduate work	<u>9</u>	<u>36.0</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>51.9</u>
Total	25	100	27	100 *

\*The values have been rounded so that a slight discrepancy may exist in the totals of this and succeeding tables.

### Occupation

Occupations were categorized according to the following breakdown:

Manager - administrators, executives or officials, managers supervisors.

Professional - (degree usually required) doctors, teachers  
accountants, engineers, nurses.

General Office and Sales - salesman, secretary, clerk, teller,  
service representative.

Skilled, General Trades, and Services - laboratory technician,  
contractor, photographer, plumber, policeman.

Student - full-time or part-time student without another full-  
time occupation.

No occupation - unemployed, homemaker, disabled, and others  
not in labor force.

A majority of all female respondents worked outside the home.

The distribution of occupational categories was similar in both groups (Table 3). For the males in the sample, distribution among the categories was more varied. A higher percentage (40%) of short-term males were employed in the skilled, general trades and services category than long-term males (18.5%). The reverse was found in the professional and student categories. Here, there was a higher percentage of long-term males.

### Income

There was an association found between income level and residency category ( $\chi^2 = 6.35$  with 2 d. f.), when income cells were combined into three groups. A comparison was made among residents with incomes under \$10,000 per year, between \$10,000 and \$20,000, and over \$20,000. Residents in the lowest income group were predominantly

Table 3. Occupational category of participants.

<u>Female</u>	<u>Short-term</u>		<u>Long-term</u>	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Manager	2	8.0	1	3.7
Professional	4	16.0	4	14.8
General office & sales	5	20.0	8	29.6
Skilled, general trades and services	2	8.0	2	7.4
Student	3	12.0	4	14.8
No occupation	9	36.0	8	29.6
Total	25	100	27	100

  

<u>Male</u>	<u>Short-term</u>		<u>Long-term</u>	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Manager	2	8.0	2	7.4
Professional	4	16.0	7	25.9
General office & sales	3	12.0	3	11.1
Skilled, general trades and services	10	40.0	5	18.5
Student	5	20.0	9	33.3
No occupation	1	4.0	1	3.7
Total	25	100	27	100

long-term. Those in the highest income category were mainly short-term (Table 4). This association supports previous studies that found single-family homes to still be the strong choice among Americans, but that the attainment of this ideal was closely related to income (Angell, 1976; Cooper, 1976; Sternlieb, et al., 1975).

Table 4. Income level of participants.

Gross annual income in dollars	Short-term		Long-term	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than 5, 000	-	-	5	18.5
5, 000 - 9, 999	5	20.0	10	37.0
10, 000 - 14, 999	10	40.0	7	25.9
15, 000 - 19, 999	4	16.0	4	14.8
20, 000 - 24, 999	4	16.0	1	3.7
25, 000 & over	2	8.0	-	-
Total	25	100	27	100

Presence of children in the home

Children were present in 40% of the short-term homes and 44.4% of the long-term homes (Table 5). In both categories the number of children and the ages of these children were similar. Therefore, the presence of children in the home was not associated with the residency category of this sample.

Table 5. Presence of children in the apartment

Children present	Short-term		Long-term	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	10	40.0	12	44.4
No	15	60.0	15	55.6
Total	25	100	27	100

Length of residency in current apartment

Since the apartment complexes were three years old, no couple could have lived in them longer than that period of time. While 48% of the short-term residents had lived in the units over a year, only 25.9% of the long-term residents had been in them that long (Table 6). These results tend to indicate a highly mobile sample but such an inference may be premature simply because of the limited residency length possible.

Table 6. Length of residency in current apartment.

Time period	Short-term		Long-term	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than 6 months	6	24.0	7	25.9
6 months - 1 year	7	28.0	13	48.1
1 year - 2 year	9	36.0	5	18.5
2 years - 3 years	3	12.0	2	7.4
Total	25	100	27	100

Length of residency in previous residence

Ninety-two percent of the short-term and 92.6% of the long-term residents had moved within the last five years. Only one couple in each category had lived in their previous residence for 6-10 years.

One couple in each category had recently married and their present unit was their first home together (Table 7).

Table 7. Length of residency in previous residence

Time period	Short-term		Long-term	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than 1 year	9	36.0	11	40.7
1 year - 5 years	14	56.0	14	51.9
6 years - 10 years	1	4.0	1	3.7
Over 10 years	-	-	-	-
Not applicable*	1	4.0	1	3.7
Total	25	100	27	100

\* not applicable: first residence as a couple

#### Type of previous residence

Short-term residents had moved into their present apartments from varied previous settings. Forty-four percent had lived in another apartment, 36% had moved from a single-family home, 12% from a mobile home and 4% from a duplex. A majority of long-term residents (77.8%) had previously lived in another apartment. Only 7.4% had moved from a single-family home and 11.1% from other types of housing. In the last instance one couple had moved from a church farm, another from a dormitory (serving as dorm parents) and the third from a shared cabin in the woods (Table 8).

Table 8. Type of previous residence

Type of residence	Short-term		Long-term	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Another apartment	11	44.0	21	77.8
Single family home	9	36.0	2	7.4
Mobile home	3	12.0	-	-
Other	1	4.0	3	11.1
Not applicable*	1	4.0	1	3.7
Total	25	100	27	100

\*not applicable: first residence as a couple

One fact emerged in the case of short-term residents that had moved from a single-family home into their present units. Five of these were in the process of buying or building another single-family home but were unable to move into them for various reasons. Therefore, they were in a transition period and viewed their present apartments as temporary living situations.

#### Acquisition of Furniture

The respondents were asked to specify how they had acquired their major furniture pieces by checking the appropriate column. The columns were subsequently tallied to discern trends in furniture acquisition. In all but two cases, a trend toward one method of acquisition was evident. For example, a couple might have acquired the majority of their furniture by purchasing it new, while another couple might have

built most of their furniture. In the two cases referred to earlier, the couples had acquired equal number of pieces through purchasing them new and used. The investigator examined the cases carefully and then classified them according to the size and probably monetary value when new.

Differences were found between the two categories in the trends of furniture acquisition. A majority (64%) of short-term residents had purchased new furniture as compared to 44.4% of long-term residents. Long-term residents had received more of their furniture through gifts and by purchasing used pieces (Table 9). This fact may have been related to income in certain cases. Two short-term couples and one long-term couple were renting the majority of their furniture.

Table 9. Acquisition of furniture

Method of acquiring furniture	Short-term		Long-term	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Gift--selected by couple	1	4.0	-	-
Gift--selected by others	1	4.0	5	18.5
Built by couple	1	4.0	2	7.4
Purchased--new	16	64.0	12	44.4
Purchased--used	4	16.0	7	25.9
Renting it	2	8.0	1	3.7
Total	25	100	27	100



Person making furniture purchase decision

Final purchase decisions concerning major furniture pieces were similarly made in each category. A majority of the couples--68% of the short-term and 63% of the long-term residents--made the decision jointly. Only 8% of the short-term and 11.1% of the long-term couples made the decisions independently (Table 10). Such close agreement between the categories reveals no association ( $\chi^2 = 0.18$  with 4 d. f.) between the person making furniture purchase decisions and residency category of the subjects.

Table 10. Person making furniture purchase decision

Decision made by	Short-term		Long-term	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Wife only	1	4.0	-	-
Husband only	1	4.0	3	11.1
Together	17	68.0	17	63.0
Together, but wife primarily	3	12.0	4	14.8
Together, but husband primarily	<u>3</u>	<u>12.0</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>11.1</u>
Total	25	100	27	100

### Pattern of purchase decision

There was also close agreement between the residency categories and the ways decisions about furniture purchases were made. Forty-four percent of the short-term residents and 37% of the long-term residents made purchase decisions with a telescopic view of long-range plans in mind. Another 20% of short-term and 22.2% of long-term residents thought it over seriously before going back to the store to make the purchase. An equal amount--20% short-term and 22.2% long-term--thought it over seriously but made the decision in a hurry, usually without leaving the store. Finally, 16% of the short-term and 18.5% of the long-term residents stated they generally made their furniture purchases impulsively (Table 11). These results showed no

Table 11. Pattern of purchase decision

Way the decision was made	Short-term		Long-term	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
The piece fit in with long-range plans	11	44.0	10	37.0
Thought it over seriously for quite a while	5	20.0	6	22.2
Gave it serious thought but made decision in a hurry	5	20.0	6	22.2
Purchase not planned but seemed like the best thing to do at the time	4	16.0	5	18.5
Total	25	100	27	100

association ( $\chi^2 = 0.03$  with 3 d.f.) between the way the decision was made and the residency category of the subjects.

#### Sources of information used in furniture purchases

The respondents were asked to rank the sources of information they used most often in prospective furniture purchases. Table 12 summarizes the top-ranked answers for each respondent. Magazines and newspapers, plus the stores themselves were most frequently used as sources of information for both categories. Friends and parents ranked third, while very few respondents even listed television or manufacturer's pamphlets.

Table 12. Sources of information used in furniture purchases

Sources of information	Short-term		Long-term	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Magazines and newspapers	11	44.0	12	44.4
Television	1	4.0	-	-
Stores	11	44.0	10	37.0
Manufacturer's pamphlets	1	4.0	1	3.7
Friends	-	-	2	7.4
Parents	1	4.0	2	7.4
Total	25	100	27	100

### Problems finding desired furniture

Fifty-six percent of the short-term apartment residents and 40.7% of the long-term apartment residents revealed problems in finding the furniture they had desired to buy (Table 13). The problems indicated were the following:

1. desired style unavailable (6)
2. selection too limited in Eugene (4)
3. price too high (5)
4. quality too low (4)
5. improper size (1)
6. discontinuation of line (5)

The last complaint, voiced by five couples, refers to situations in which respondents had purchased part of a bedroom set, for example, with intentions of completing the set in the near future. When the couples returned to the store they found the line had been discontinued and that they could not even special order the remaining pieces.

Table 13. Problems finding desired furniture

Problems?	Short-term		Long-term	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	14	56.0	11	40.7
No	11	44.0	16	59.3
Total	25	100	27	100

### Decision about next furniture purchase

There was no association found between those couples who had made the decision about their next furniture purchase and residency category ( $\chi^2 = 0.07$  with 1 d.f.). Fifty-two percent of the short-term residents and 44.4% of the long-term residents had made such decisions (Table 14).

Table 14. Decision about next furniture purchase

Decision made about specific piece to be purchased?	Short-term		Long-term	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	13	52.0	12	44.4
No	<u>12</u>	<u>48.0</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>55.6</u>
Total	25	100	27	100

### Planning period for next purchase

A greater number of short-term residents (46.2%) who had made such purchase decisions were going to buy the furniture within the next six months while long-term residents were generally going to delay such purchases for a year or more (Table 15). The length of the planning period in most cases was attributed to the price of the furniture.

Table 15. Planning period for next purchase

How soon will the next purchase be made?	Short-term		Long-term	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Within 6 months	6	46.2	3	25.0
Within 1 year	5	38.5	6	50.0
Within next few years	<u>2</u>	<u>15.4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>25.0</u>
Total	13	100	12	100

### Importance of Functional Characteristics of Furniture

The subjects were asked to rate the importance of each of the following functional characteristics: durability, versatility, easy-care, and movability. The responses to each characteristic were compared. There was no association found between residency category and the rated importance of durability ( $\chi^2 = 1.09$  with 3 d.f.), of versatility ( $\chi^2 = 1.06$  with 3 d.f.), of easy-care ( $\chi^2 = 0.31$  with 3 d.f.) or of movability ( $\chi^2 = 2.76$  with 3 d.f.).

In general, most of the respondents--96% short-term and 92.6% long-term--rated durability as being either very or moderately important. Versatility was also rated high in importance with 88% of short-term residents and 77.7% of long-term residents rating it very or moderately important. A majority of both categories rated easy-care at least moderately important. And, although movability was rated very or moderately important by both categories, 40.7% of the long-term

apartment residents rated it very important as compared to only 20% of the short-term residents (Table 16). Since increased mobility is a characteristic of apartment dwellers, such a difference might be expected, although it was not significant.

Table 16. Importance of functional characteristics of furniture

	<u>Short-term</u>		<u>Long-term</u>	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<u>Durability</u>				
Very important	18	72.0	22	81.5
Moderately important	6	24.0	3	11.1
Slightly important	-	-	2	7.4
Not important	<u>1</u>	<u>4.0</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total	25	100	27	100
<u>Versatility</u>				
Very important	9	36.0	10	37.0
Moderately important	13	52.0	11	40.7
Slightly important	2	8.0	6	22.2
Not important	<u>1</u>	<u>4.0</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total	25	100	27	100
<u>Easy-care</u>				
Very important	8	32.0	11	40.7
Moderately important	8	32.0	10	37.0
Slightly important	5	20.0	3	11.1
Not important	<u>4</u>	<u>16.0</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>11.1</u>
Total	25	100	27	100
<u>Movability</u>				
Very important	5	20.0	11	40.7
Moderately important	9	36.0	7	25.9
Slightly important	5	20.0	7	25.9
Not important	<u>6</u>	<u>24.0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>7.4</u>
Total	25	100	27	100

The respondents of this sample revealed that the functional aspects of furniture were important to them. When asked if they had any major pieces of furniture in the apartment that were not functional, but primarily decorative, 84% of the short-term and 85.2% of the long-term respondents answered "no".

#### Utilization of specific furniture pieces

The investigator was interested in determining the various ways that apartment residents used their furniture. So, the respondents were asked to look at a list of furniture and to state if they used the pieces in any of the following ways:

1. for storage
2. for meals
3. in entertaining
4. for relaxation
5. for hobbies
6. for paperwork

The respondents could check any of the columns that were appropriate for their own lifestyle. In some cases the couple did not own such a piece and therefore would not have checked any of the columns. For example, only five couples owned buffets.

Table 17 gives an indication of some of the ways the various pieces were used by the residents. The use pattern of both short-term



Table 17. Utilization of specific furniture pieces

Furniture	Short-term (n=25)						Long-term (n=27)					
	S	M	E	R	H	P	S	M	E	R	H	P
Sofa	1	11	21	23	11	8	-	10	23	26	10	14
Coffee Table	12	11	7	3	5	7	6	11	15	5	6	8
End Table	10	3	5	2	2	2	14	3	10	-	1	5
Bookcase	16	-	1	1	6	5	22	-	-	1	7	1
Desk	2	-	-	-	3	7	17	1	-	1	10	19
Dining Table	3	23	18	3	11	16	2	27	24	5	17	23
Buffet	-	1	1	-	1	-	4	-	2	-	-	-
Bed	9	2	1	23	2	4	7	1	2	27	4	4
Night Stand	11	1	-	-	3	2	19	1	-	-	-	4
Dresser	20	-	-	-	-	2	26	-	-	-	1	-

S = storage

M= meals

E = entertaining

R = relaxation

H= hobbies

P = paper work

and long-term residents was quite similar, with the exception of the long-term residents owning, and therefore using, more desks. The living room combination of the sofa, coffee table and end table, plus the dining table and the bed were used in the widest variety of ways. These pieces, although not originally designed to be multi-functional, seem to have assumed multi-functional status in this sample.

#### Attitudes toward multi-functional furniture

Popular magazines, geared toward apartment lifestyles, have extolled the virtues of multi-functional furniture. This study was planned to determine the attitudes of apartment residents toward such furniture as well as their awareness of its availability. Residents were asked to view a list of multi-functional pieces (Table 18) and to state whether they already had such a piece, wanted one in the future, did not want it, or were unfamiliar with it.

For statistical purposes the respondents' answers were divided into positive or negative classifications. Answers in the "already have" and "want in future" columns were classified as positive. Those responses in the "do not want" and "unfamiliar" column were classified as negative.

Based upon this comparison, there was no association found between residency category and attitude toward any of the multi-functional pieces. Chi-square values (with 1 d.f.) for each of the

Table 18. Attitudes toward multi-functional furniture

Multi-functional furniture	Short-term		Long-term	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<u>Sofa bed</u>				
Have	6	24.0	6	22.2
Want	16	64.0	16	59.3
Do not want	3	12.0	5	18.5
Unfamiliar	-	-	-	-
Total	25	100	27	100
<u>Expandable table</u>				
Have	11	44.0	12	44.4
Want	10	40.0	14	51.9
Do not want	4	16.0	1	3.7
Unfamiliar	-	-	-	-
Total	25	100	27	100
<u>Wall-storage unit</u>				
Have	1	4.0	4	14.8
Want	13	52.0	12	44.4
Do not want	9	36.0	4	14.8
Unfamiliar	2	8.0	7	25.9
Total	25	100	27	100
<u>Stackable storage cubes</u>				
Have	3	12.0	-	-
Want	6	24.0	5	18.5
Do not want	14	56.0	19	70.4
Unfamiliar	2	8.0	3	11.1
Total	25	100	27	100
<u>Modular seating units</u>				
Have	-	-	-	-
Want	4	16.0	5	18.5
Do not want	17	68.0	15	55.6
Unfamiliar	4	16.0	7	25.9
Total	25	100	27	100

Table 18. (Continued)

Multi-functional furniture	Short-term		Long-term	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<u>Convertible coffee/ dining table</u>				
Have	-	-	-	-
Want	3	12.0	4	14.8
Do not want	14	56.0	19	70.4
Unfamiliar	8	32.0	4	14.8
Total	25	100	27	100
<u>Convertible buffet/ desk/table</u>				
Have	-	-	-	-
Want	10	40.0	7	25.9
Do not want	9	36.0	17	63.0
Unfamiliar	6	24.0	3	11.1
Total	25	100	27	100

pieces were as follows: sofa bed: 0.06; expandable table: 1.14; movable wall-storage system: 3.74; stackable storage cubes: 1.74; modular seating units: 0.38; coffee/dining table: 1.23; buffet/desk/table: 2.41. Attitudes of residents in both categories tended to be more positive toward the sofa bed, expandable table and movable wall-storage system. Negative attitudes were more predominant toward the stackable storage cubes, modular seating units and the convertible pieces. Unfamiliarity did not seem to be as great a factor as was expected. At least it was not an admitted factor for most respondents. Thirty-two percent of the short-term respondents were unfamiliar with

the convertible coffee/dining table and this represented the maximum "unfamiliar" response (Table 18).

Those respondents who "already had" multi-functional pieces were asked to state their level of satisfaction with those pieces. Of the twenty-two short-term respondents that had multi-functional furniture 72.7% were very satisfied with the pieces and only 4.5% were not satisfied. Of the twenty-three long-term residents having such pieces 78.3% were very satisfied while 4.3% were not satisfied. Dissatisfactions centered around quality features such as "wobbly legs" rather than functional failures.

#### Attitude Toward Apartment Living

The respondents' attitude toward apartment living was classified according to positive and negative responses to three questions (#17, #39, #40, see Appendix B). In each question the respondents were given the opportunity to check any alternative that seemed personally appropriate.

Although the short-term apartment residents were somewhat less positive and more negative (Table 19), there was no association found between residency category and attitude toward apartment living. Approximately 92% of all respondents felt that their apartment was a place to live and feel comfortable. This percentage corresponds exactly with the results of Apartment Life's questionnaire (1975).

Table 19. Attitude toward apartment living.

Is your apartment...	Short-term		Long-term		$\chi^2_1$
	Number*	Percent	Number*	Percent	
An expression of your personality	13	52.0	19	70.4	.44
A place to be proud of	11	44.0	20	74.1	1.50
A place to live and feel comfortable	22	88.0	26	96.3	.03
A place to entertain your friends	14	56.0	17	63.0	.02
A place that you don't care much about	3	12.0	1	3.7	.33
A temporary roof over your head, but not a "home"	12	48.0	7	25.9	1.18
A place that "cramps" your desired lifestyle	8	32.0	5	18.5	.48
*Each respondent had the opportunity to give one or more answers.					

Another 60% of all respondents felt that their apartment was a place to be proud of and a place to entertain their friends, while 62% thought their apartment expressed their personality. The corresponding percentages of Apartment Life's results were 64%, 73% and 67%.

Only 8% of all respondents said that they did not care much about their apartment, while 25% felt it "cramped" their desired lifestyle and 37% viewed it as a temporary roof over their heads, but not a "home". The greatest discrepancy between short-term and long-term residents was in this last response. Forty-eight percent of the

short-term respondents felt that their apartment was only a temporary living situation as compared to 25.9% of the long-term residents.

Of particular interest to this study were the possible effects that apartment living had on the discretionary-time activities of the couples. The respondents were asked to list the indoor hobbies of the family. For the females, sewing (42.3%), needlecrafts (28.8%) and reading (23%) were the hobbies mentioned most frequently. Reading (36.5%) and woodworking (25%) were the most popular indoor hobbies of the male.

The respondents were also asked whether there were any indoor hobbies that they would like to have participated in, but thus far refrained because of limited space. Forty-eight percent of the short-term and 37% of the long-term residents replied "yes". These residents were then asked if they had any future plans for incorporating such desired hobbies into their home life in the particular apartment. Only one long-term couple had any such plans. Their desired hobby was photography and they were in the process of designing a convertible darkroom in their bedroom. They had already purchased photographic cloth to darken the room and could apply it to the window at will by using velcro tape. They were also designing shelves that would hold their equipment and still be attractive when not in use. The remainder of the couples had no plans of incorporating their desired hobbies into their present apartment. Short-term couples were understandably

waiting until they moved into their own single-family home. Long-term couples did not seem to think in terms of "convertible" space and had conceded the unlikely possibility of the situation. Ironically, the hobbies that were considered unfeasible by these couples were being carried out by other couples in the sample.

### Types of entertaining done by participants

The types of entertaining done most frequently by this sample included meals for 1-2 guests (84.6%) and hosting weekend guests (80.8%), followed by meals for 3-6 guests (65.4%). Less than half the respondents (44.2%) ever had more than six guests over for meals (Table 20). Other types of entertaining included youth group parties (1), church classes (1), and having friends over without refreshments (2).

Table 20. Types of entertaining done by participants

Entertaining done by residents	Short-term		Long-term	
	Number*	Percent	Number*	Percent
Meals for 1-2 guests	20	80.0	24	88.9
Meals for 3-6 guests	15	60.0	19	70.4
Meals for over 6 guests	10	40.0	13	48.1
Cocktail parties	4	16.0	3	11.1
Weekend guests	22	88.0	20	74.1
Card parties	9	36.0	6	22.2
Other	-	-	4	14.8
Do not entertain	2	8.0	-	-

\*Each respondent had the opportunity to give one or more answers.



When asked if limited space dictated the type of entertaining that was done, 84% of the short-term residents and 70.4% of the long-term residents replied "yes".

#### Dining accommodations for three or more guests

Additional information about dining accommodations for three or more guests was desired. The responses indicated that short-term residents primarily (80%) fit these guests around their dining table, while long-term residents were equipped with a greater variety of alternatives as well (Table 21). Food trays and card tables were the most frequent alternatives. The "other" category specified was eating out.

Table 21. Dining accommodations for three or more guests

How do you accommodate three or more dining guests?	Short-term		Long-term	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Dining table	20	80.0	15	55.6
Convertible or flip-down table	-	-	-	-
Card tables or other fold-away tables	-	-	3	11.1
Food trays or plates on laps	4	16.0	6	22.2
Other	1	4.0	1	3.7
Do not have 3-6 dinner guests	-	-	2	7.4
Total	25	100	27	100

There does seem to be a contradiction between responses to this question and answers given previously. While only 65.4% had answered that they had 3-6 guests over for meals during the year (Table 20), 96.2% told how they accommodated such guests. The discrepancy may have been due to the respondents misunderstanding the question or perhaps some may have given projections of how they would handle 3-6 guests.

#### Overnight accommodations for guests

Twenty short-term residents and twenty-two long-term residents lived in two-bedroom units. The second bedroom was used to accommodate overnight guests in nine of these short-term apartments and in seven of the long-term units (Table 22).

Table 22. Overnight accommodations for guests

How do you accommodate overnight guests?	<u>Short-term</u>		<u>Long-term</u>	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Bed in second bedroom	8	32.0	6	22.2
Sofa bed in living room	2	8.0	7	25.9
Sofa bed in 2nd bedroom	1	4.0	1	3.7
Sleeping bags or cots	6	24.0	9	33.3
Other	7	28.0	4	14.8
Not applicable	<u>1</u>	<u>4.0</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total	25	100	27	100

Three short-term and eight long-term respondents reported that they utilized their sofa beds in accommodating extra guests. Once again there is a discrepancy in the figures, this time in the long-term category. While only six long-term respondents stated that they owned sofa beds (Table 18), eight reported using them for overnight guests. It is possible that two respondents misinterpreted sofa bed to mean sofa. Sleeping bags were used by 24% of the short-term residents and 33.3% of the long-term residents. Eleven couples in the sample used "other" means. Five of these couples had guests sleep on the living room sofa, four rented beds when guests came, one borrowed a bed, and one couple gave up their own bed to the guests and slept in sleeping bags themselves.

#### Advantages of apartment living

There was no significant difference found between short-term and long-term residents in their responses to the advantages of apartment living. Each respondent was asked to check any of the advantages listed (Table 23) that was personally relevant. Seventy-five percent of all respondents felt that the minimal amount of maintenance was an advantage. A majority (52%) of short-term respondents felt that apartment living was less expensive than buying a home. Facilities and services (51.9%) and the freedom to move easily (59.3%) ranked

fairly high in the opinion given by long-term residents. Neither category seemed to feel that a better social life was an advantage of apartment living.

Table 23. Advantages of apartment living

What do you feel are the advantages of apartment living?	Short-term		Long-term		$\chi^2_1$
	Number*	Percent	Number*	Percent	
Minimal amount of maintenance	18	72.0	21	77.8	.01
Less expensive than buying a home	13	52.0	12	44.4	.04
Freedom to move easily	10	40.0	16	59.3	.62
Good location	4	16.0	7	25.9	.23
Better social life	3	12.0	1	3.7	.33
Facilities and services	10	40.0	14	51.9	.18

\*Each respondent had the opportunity to give one or more answers.

#### Disadvantages of apartment living

Similarly, there was no significant difference found between short-term and long-term residents and their responses to the list of disadvantages of apartment living (Table 24). A majority of both categories felt that the lack of equity build-up and the lack of a private yard were disadvantages. Sixty-eight percent of the short-term respondents felt

that there was insufficient storage space and 56% felt that apartments lacked individuality.

Table 24. Disadvantages of apartment living

What do you feel are the disadvantages of apartment living?	Short-term		Long-term		$\chi^2_1$
	Number*	Percent	Number*	Percent	
Noise level too high	8	32.0	13	48.1	.49
No private yard or garden space	19	76.0	15	55.6	.55
Lack of equity build-up	17	68.0	19	70.4	--
Lack of individuality	14	56.0	11	40.7	.35
Apartments are not a good place to raise children	10	40.0	10	37.0	--
Insufficient storage space	17	68.0	12	44.4	.90
Lack of privacy	12	48.0	12	44.4	--
Other	4	16.0	4	14.8	--

\*Each respondent had the opportunity to give one or more answers.

"Other" disadvantages given included the following:

1. space too limited (3)
2. no garage (1)
3. parking problems (1)
4. cannot garden (1)
5. lack of managerial upkeep (1)
6. vandalism (1)

While the investigator had emphasized that responses should be geared toward apartment living in general, it became obvious that some residents were referring to specific situations.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to investigate differences between two types of apartment residents: those short-term residents that had made plans to move into single-family dwellings and those long-term residents that had not made such plans and would continue to live in apartments. Comparisons were made between the two categories and respective demographic characteristics, decision-making patterns in purchasing furniture, attitudes toward the functional aspects of furniture, toward multi-functional furniture, and toward apartment living in general.

Five null hypotheses were tested in this study and the following conclusions drawn:

H<sub>0</sub> 1. There will be no association between the residency category of the subjects and the following descriptive dimensions:

1. age
2. education level
3. income level
4. presence of children in the home

Chi-square analysis revealed an association between residency category and (3) income level when income cells were combined into three groups: under \$10,000, \$10,000-\$20,000, and over \$20,000 per year ( $\chi^2 = 6.35$  with 2 d.f.,  $p < .05$ ). Residents in the lowest income

group were predominantly long-term and residents in the highest income group were mainly short-term. This association supports the findings of other studies (Angell, 1976; Cooper, 1976; Sternlieb, et al., 1975) that the single-family dwelling is the preferred living situation but that realization of this preference is dependent upon income level. The three remaining descriptive factors: (1) age (2) education level and (4) presence of children in the home were similarly analyzed and no significant association was found ( $p > .05$ ). Thus, the null hypothesis can be only partially rejected.

H<sub>0</sub> 2. There will be no association between decision-making patterns in the purchase of furniture and the residency category of the subjects.

No significant association was found between residency category and the person making the purchase decision ( $\chi^2 = 0.18$  with 4 d.f.,  $p > .05$ ), the way the purchase decision was made ( $\chi^2 = 0.03$  with 3 d.f.,  $p > .05$ ), and the decision about the next furniture purchase ( $\chi^2 = 0.07$  with 1 d.f.,  $p > .05$ ). The null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

H<sub>0</sub> 3. There will be no association between the residency category of the subjects and attitude toward apartment living.

Chi-square analysis revealed no significant association ( $p > .05$ ) between residency category and the positive or negative attitudes toward apartment living. The null hypothesis cannot be rejected.



H<sub>0</sub> 4. There will be no association between the residency category of the subjects and the degree of emphasis placed upon the functional characteristics of furniture.

No significant association ( $p > .05$ ) was found between residency category and the rated importance of durability ( $\chi^2 = 1.09$  with 3 d.f.), of versatility ( $\chi^2 = 1.06$  with 3 d.f.), of easy-care ( $\chi^2 = 0.31$  with 3 d.f.), or of movability of furniture ( $\chi^2 = 2.76$  with 3 d.f.). The null hypothesis cannot be rejected. In general, the respondents of this sample revealed that the functional aspects of furniture were quite important to them.

H<sub>0</sub> 5. There will be no association between the residency category of the subjects and attitude toward multi-functional furniture.

There was no significant association ( $p > .05$ ) found between residency category and attitudes toward any of the following multi-functional furniture:

1. sofa bed ( $\chi^2 = 0.06$  with 1 d.f.)
2. expandable table ( $\chi^2 = 1.14$  with 1 d.f.)
3. wall-storage system ( $\chi^2 = 3.74$  with 1 d.f.)
4. stackable storage cubes ( $\chi^2 = 1.74$  with 1 d.f.)
5. modular seating units ( $\chi^2 = 0.38$  with 1 d.f.)
6. coffee/dining table ( $\chi^2 = 1.23$  with 1 d.f.)
7. buffet/desk/table ( $\chi^2 = 2.41$  with 1 d.f.)

The null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

The results of this study seem to indicate that the two respondent groups were similar in most areas. While greater differences might have been expected, it must be kept in mind that the responses were classified and compared according to the investigator's definition of short-term and long-term apartment residents. These two definitions were based upon the actions of the respondents rather than their future desires. The intent was to investigate the realistic situation as distinct from the residents' dreams. It is quite possible, however, that such a distinction was not made in the residents' own minds. And, even though the long-term residents were not doing anything toward moving into a single-family home, they may still view apartment living as a temporary lifestyle.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

### Use of the Research

The findings of this study may be of interest to educators, furniture manufacturers and retailers, as well as those involved in apartment management. If energy constraints persist as expected, and if monetary and spatial limitations continue to pressure young couples into living in apartments for longer periods of time, then efforts must be made to make these multi-family units more conducive to individualized lifestyles. This effort has to be a two-way process. Architects and builders must consider user needs when constructing multi-family units and provide for flexibility of space. In addition, residents need to be open-minded toward the adaptability of space to their specific needs.

The results of this study seem to indicate that the apartment residents looked forward to more idealized living situations rather than adapting present situations to their specific needs. While this attitude might be expected from short-term residents who will soon be changing their living situations, it was somewhat disturbing to see the same attitude in long-term residents. How long will they continue to postpone part of their desired lifestyles? The expense factor of single-family homes is so great that residents may continue to live in apartments for several years.

There is an imminent need for a positive approach to spatial constraints. If society is to respond positively, then professionals must lead in this endeavor. Furniture manufacturers and retailers must not only produce more furniture that is smaller in scale, but pieces that are more versatile too. A greater variety of multi-functional furniture should be available to the public. Retailers need to promote the advantages of such pieces and maintain variety in their stock so that consumers have a wide selection when they decide to purchase.

Educators have a great responsibility in pointing out the advantages of smaller dwellings while instructing students in how to create the illusion of space without paying more for it or wasting it. Perhaps through the combined effort of manufacturers, retailers, educators and apartment management short seminars or workshops could be arranged at apartment complexes to promote such ideas and give suggestions to the residents.

With a positive approach to spatial restrictions by professionals, young people in particular may begin to see the benefits of such changes and face future constraints more realistically. This would be advantageous to the individuals themselves and to society in general.

### Improvement of this Study

The technique of personally administering the questionnaire was advantageous in several ways. The investigator was able to methodically proceed through the questionnaire with the respondents so that no questions were skipped or left unanswered and therefore all questionnaires were usable in computing the results. The investigator was also able to interpret vague questions or unfamiliar terminology to the respondents and more consistently classify their answers. For example, the term "buffet" was unfamiliar to several respondents and a short description of the piece was necessary. "Wall-storage system" was another ambiguous term. A few respondents confirmed owning such a system when they only had a single bookshelf. Others with full storage systems would answer "no". With further inquiry the investigator was able to more consistently classify the pieces of furniture.

The respondents seemed to be grateful and more willing to participate in the study because of the introductory letter and the phone call to make an appointment. Since the topic was home furnishings, most respondents were overly conscientious about the appearance of their apartment. In two cases the subjects were willing to participate as long as the interview was postponed another day so that they could clean their apartment. The investigator feels that attempts to interview on this topic without appointments would increase the refusal rate.

Males were not excluded from the interviews, although it was explained that the females' responses were desired for the purpose of consistency. In a few cases the males indirectly dominated the interview by their presence. The wives would not answer the questions until their husbands told them what to say. It was difficult to say whether the female's attitude would have been different had she been alone.

The strategy of the questionnaire was found to be successful. Demographic information was purposely placed at the end to prevent respondents from becoming defensive at the onset of the interview. It was carefully explained that respondents could refuse to answer any particular question, and yet no one hesitated to give information about their age, education, or income level.

The investigator feels that the results of the study might have been different if there had been a greater variation in the age of the respondents and if fewer students were among the sample. Even though an attempt was made to avoid a high student concentration, this "occupation" plus the young age of the respondents may have biased the results. The study might have been improved if it had been conducted in a city without the impact of a major university.

### Suggestions for Further Research

There is a need for additional study in the area of home furnishings as a means of adapting to man's changing near environment. Similar studies to this one might be conducted in larger cities where the sample would be a different cross-section of ages and occupations. Larger cities might also enable the investigator to obtain a larger sample size which would be helpful in statistical analysis. The selection of different statistical tests would provide the possibility of different types of inferences from the data. Use of factor analysis would permit identification of major factor clusters.

Comparisons might be made between apartment residents and condominium owners to see if the permanency of ownership affects furniture purchase and utilization patterns. Similarly, comparisons between the purchase and utilization of furniture by apartment residents and owners of single-family homes might be studied.

An investigation of the psychological attraction of different apartment complexes might reveal environmental characteristics that are particularly desired by people of certain ages, occupations or cultures.

## VII. SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the pieces of furniture apartment residents have acquired and how they are using this furniture in their daily living. Apartment residents were selected because of their need to contend with greater spatial limitations in their dwellings. It was hoped that their insight might reflect space utilization practices that could be helpful to future generations.

A written questionnaire was developed by the investigator and personally administered to fifty-two couples in one- and two-bedroom units throughout two apartment complexes. The female was the interview subject. Data obtained from the respondents were analyzed by frequency counts and percentages. Comparisons between long-term and short-term apartment residents were made using the Chi-square statistic as a measure of significance. The accepted level of significance was .05 or less.

Short-term and long-term apartment residents were defined according to their plans for future housing. Those who had made specific plans to move into single-family dwellings were defined as short-term, and those who did not have any plans to move out of apartments were considered long-term. Twenty-five couples were subsequently classified as short-term and twenty-seven couples were long-term apartment residents.



An association was found between income level and the residency category of the respondents. Residents in the lowest income group were predominantly long-term and residents in the highest income group were mainly short-term. These findings support other studies which state that the single-family home is the preferred living situation, but that the realization of this preference is dependent upon income level.

There was no association found between residency category and the demographic characteristics of age, education level or presence of children in the home. Similarly, no association was found between residency category and decision-making patterns in the purchase of furniture, degree of emphasis placed upon the functional characteristics of furniture, attitude toward multi-functional furniture, and attitude toward apartment living. These findings indicate that the two respondent groups were not unlike each other in most of the examined areas.

The participants were generally under thirty-five years of age and had a high level of education. Children were present in approximately 40% of the apartments.

The majority of short-term residents had acquired their furniture by purchasing it new while long-term residents had received more of their furniture through gifts and through purchasing used pieces. Both groups of couples generally made their furniture purchase decisions

jointly, giving each purchase a considerable amount of thought before buying. Approximately half of the respondents reported problems in finding the furniture that they desired.

The functional aspects of furniture were rated high in importance by both groups. Eighty-five percent of the respondents reported that they did not own a major furniture piece that was decorative rather than functional.

While respondents were only aware of a limited number of specifically designed multi-functional pieces, they utilized several of their own pieces in many ways, actually giving them multi-functional status.

The majority of respondents felt their apartment was a comfortable living situation and they were proud of their unit, thinking that it expressed their personality. Nevertheless, discretionary-time activities were considered limited and several couples had resigned to the fact that their desired activities were not possible in their present living situation.

The majority of respondents perceived the minimal amount of maintenance and the freedom to move easily as the major advantages of apartment living. The lack of equity build-up, lack of private yard space and insufficient storage space were viewed as the major disadvantages.

Entertaining was primarily limited to meals for small groups and the majority of couples used their dining table for such meals, even when groups were larger. Sleeping bags and beds in the second bedroom, if available, were largely used to accommodate overnight guests.

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## APPENDICES



## Appendix A

### Letter to Sample

School of  
Home Economics



Corvallis, Oregon 97331 (503) 754-3551

June 17, 1976

Dear Apartment Resident:

I would like to explain that this letter has not been personally addressed for a specific reason. It is to assure you of confidentiality.

Please let me introduce myself. I am a community college home economics teacher, presently on sabbatical leave at Oregon State University to obtain my Master's Degree in Home Furnishings. As part of the requirements for this degree I am conducting a study about furniture for apartment living. The purpose of this study is to determine what types of furniture apartment residents are buying, and how they are using this furniture in their daily living. It is hoped that the results of this study will benefit both consumers and manufacturers of furniture.

I will be conducting my research by interviewing women in the Oak Lane and Devonshire Hills complexes, that live in one- or two-bedroom apartments. For this reason I am asking for your help. Your participation will be essential for the accuracy of the study because there is no other way we can substitute for the information that you can share. The interview will consist of a questionnaire that we will fill out together. It should take approximately twenty minutes.

Should you have any questions about the authenticity of this research, you are welcome to call my advisor, Dr. Misako Higa, 754-3796, in the Clothing, Textiles and Related Arts Department, at Oregon State University. I have also thoroughly discussed this entire project with your managers, Mrs. Gail Keymer and Mrs. Pat Kerr, and received their approval.

In order to save time for both of us, I will be calling you in a few days to make an appointment for an interview. I hope you will decide to share your valuable insight and experience with me. It should be an interesting and worthwhile session for everyone involved.

Sincerely,

Redacted for Privacy

(Mrs.) Carol E. Rupe

Redacted for Privacy

Dr. Misako Higa  
Advisor

Appendix B  
Questionnaire

## INTRODUCTION TO QUESTIONNAIRE

## Statement of Informed Consent

Hello,

I am Carol Rupe, a graduate student from Oregon State University. Recently I telephoned you concerning a study that I am conducting through the Department of Clothing, Textiles and Related Arts. My study is designed to ask apartment residents about their recent furniture purchases and the multiple use of certain furniture pieces. I hope to administer this questionnaire to a minimum of fifty apartment residents in Eugene.

I have thoroughly explained the intent of this research project to your manager who then gave me the apartment numbers of residents that might qualify to participate in the study. In order to qualify you must be a couple living together, either with or without children, in a one- or two-bedroom apartment. If you meet these criteria, I hope you will choose to be interviewed.

I think that you will find the interview to be a worthwhile experience. Your participation will be essential for the accuracy of the study because there is no other way we can substitute for the information you can share.

Be assured that your responses to the questionnaire will be kept confidential. You do not have to answer questions that you feel infringe upon your privacy.

If you have any questions upon completion of our interview, I will be happy to discuss them with you. You are also welcome to call Dr. Misako Higa, my advisor, at 754-3796 at Oregon State University for further information about my study.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire has been developed to collect information about your recent furniture purchases as well as the use of specific pieces of furniture in your home. Part I centers around the furniture that you have acquired since you have been living in an apartment. In order to expedite matters, I will read the questions aloud, as you look at them, and write down the answers you give me. A different procedure will be used for Parts II and III, in which you will write down your own answers. Please answer the questions as completely and as accurately as you can. If a question seems unclear, please feel free to ask me to clarify it for you. If you feel that you do not want to answer a question, please mark a line through the questions so that I know you have not skipped it. Be assured that there are NO right or wrong answers.

The information that you furnish on the questionnaire will be treated with complete confidentiality and will be grouped with other residents to arrive at statistical measures. Please DO NOT put your name or any other identifying marks on this questionnaire.

I appreciate your helping me with this project very much. If you are interested in the results of the research, I would be very happy to share them with you.

PART I: FURNITURE PURCHASES

1. Please indicate the major furniture pieces that you have acquired since living in an apartment(s). How did you acquire them? Indicate this by tallying the pieces in the appropriate column(s).

MAJOR FURNITURE PIECE	<u>RECEIVED AS GIFT</u>		Built It	<u>PURCHASED</u>		
	Selected by others	Selected yourselves		New	Used	Total
a. Sofa						
b. Upholstered chair						
c. Unupholstered chair						
d. Coffee table						
e. End table						
f. Desk						
g. Dining table						
h. Dining chair						
i. Buffet						
j. China cabinet						
k. Bed						
l. Night stand						
m. Dresser						
n. Chest						
o. Wall storage unit						
p. Bookcase						
q. Other _____						
r. Other _____						
s. Other _____						

2. Do you presently rent any of your furniture?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

3. If yes, what major pieces do you rent?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. When you buy a major furniture piece, who generally makes the decision about the final choice?

\_\_\_\_\_ Wife only \_\_\_\_\_ Together  
\_\_\_\_\_ Husband only \_\_\_\_\_ Together, but wife primarily  
\_\_\_\_\_ Together, but husband primarily

5. For your last major furniture purchase, which of the following statements best describes the way the decision was made?  
(Please check only one statement)

\_\_\_\_\_ The piece fit in with long-range plans we had made.  
\_\_\_\_\_ We thought it over seriously for quite a while  
\_\_\_\_\_ We gave it serious thought, but made the decision in a hurry.  
\_\_\_\_\_ It was not something that we had planned to buy, but it seemed like the best thing to do at the time.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

6. Was what you did for your last purchase typical?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No.

7. Where do you generally get ideas about future furniture purchases that you would like to make? (Please rank the top three categories that you use)

\_\_\_\_\_ Magazines  
\_\_\_\_\_ Newspapers  
\_\_\_\_\_ Television  
\_\_\_\_\_ Stores  
\_\_\_\_\_ Friends  
\_\_\_\_\_ Parents  
\_\_\_\_\_ Manufacturer's pamphlets  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

8. Have you ever had trouble finding furniture in stores that you had seen elsewhere, and wanted to purchase?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

9. If yes, please explain \_\_\_\_\_

10. Have you and your husband decided yet on your next major furniture purchase?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

11. If yes, what will it be? \_\_\_\_\_

12. And, how soon do you plan to purchase it?

\_\_\_\_\_ Within 6 months

\_\_\_\_\_ Within the next year

\_\_\_\_\_ Within the next few years

13. How important would the following features be to you, should you buy a major furniture piece, such as a storage unit?

FEATURE	VERY IMPORTANT	MODERATELY IMPORTANT	SLIGHTLY IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
a. Durability	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. Versatility	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. Easy-care	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. Movability	_____	_____	_____	_____

14. Do you have any major pieces that are primarily decorative rather than functional?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No.

15. If yes, what are they? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



16. Which of the following multi-functional furniture do you presently have? Which would you like to have in the future? Which not? Which pieces are you unfamiliar with? (Please check only one category for each piece)

FURNITURE	Already Have	Want In Future	Familiar, But Do Not Want	Unfamiliar To Me
a. Sofa bed	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. Expandable table	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. Movable wall-storage system	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. Stackable storage cubes	_____	_____	_____	_____
e. Modular seating units	_____	_____	_____	_____
f. <u>Convertible pieces:</u>				
1) coffee/dining table	_____	_____	_____	_____
2) buffet/desk/table	_____	_____	_____	_____
3) Other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4) Other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

17. If you "Already Have" any of the pieces listed in question #16, how satisfied are you with its performance?

FURNITURE	VERY SATISFIED	MODERATELY SATISFIED	SLIGHTLY SATISFIED	NOT SATISFIED
(List)				
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Comments:

## PART II: LIFESTYLE

18. Do you consider your apartment to be: (Check any that apply)

- ☐ An expression of your personality
- ☐ A place to be proud of
- ☐ A place to live and feel comfortable
- ☐ A place to entertain your friends
- ☐ A place that you don't care much about
- ☐ A temporary roof over your head, but not a "home"
- ☐ A place that "cramps" your desired lifestyle

19. How frequently do you entertain in the following ways?  
(Give approximate number of times per year)

- ☐ Sit-down meals for one or two guests
- ☐ Meals for three to six guests (sit-down or otherwise)
- ☐ Meals for over six guests (sit-down or otherwise)
- ☐ Barbecues or cookouts
- ☐ Cocktail parties
- ☐ Card parties
- ☐ Weekend guests
- ☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Do not entertain

20. Does limited space dictate the type of entertaining that you do?

☐ Yes ☐ No

21. Where do you usually dine when you have three or more guests?  
(Check)

- ☐ Expandable dining table
- ☐ Convertible or flip-down table
- ☐ Bring out card tables (or other fold-away tables)
- ☐ Food trays or plates on laps
- ☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

22. How do you usually take care of overnight guests for sleeping?  
(Check one)

☐ Bed in second bedroom (if you have one)  
☐ Sofa bed in living room  
☐ Sofa bed in second bedroom (again, if you have one)  
☐ Sleeping bags or cots  
☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

23. What are your main indoor hobbies and pastimes? Your spouse's?  
Your children's (if any)?

Your hobbies	Your spouse's hobbies	Your children's hobbies
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

24. Are there any other indoor hobbies that you or your spouse would like to engage in, but don't because of limited space?

☐ Yes
 ☐ No

If no, proceed to Question #27

25. If yes, what are they? (Denote whose hobby by use of W(wife) and H (husband) in the parentheses)

\_\_\_\_\_ ( )      \_\_\_\_\_ ( )  
 \_\_\_\_\_ ( )      \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

26. Do you have any future plans for incorporating these hobbies into your "home life" in this apartment? If yes, HOW? If no, WHY?

☐ Yes      HOW ? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ No      WHY? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

27. For each of the following furniture pieces, put a check in the appropriate column(s) for which it is used.

	Storage	Meals	Entertaining	Relaxation	Hobbies	Paper Work
Sofa						
Coffee table						
End table(s)						
Bookcase(s)						
Desk						
Dining table						
Buffet						
Bed						
Night stand(s)						

## PART III: DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

28. What is your approximate age? \_\_\_\_\_ 18-24 years \_\_\_\_\_ 25-34 years  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 35-44 years \_\_\_\_\_ 45-54 years \_\_\_\_\_ 55-64 years \_\_\_\_\_ 65 &  
 over
29. What is your spouse's approximate age? \_\_\_\_\_ 18-24 years \_\_\_\_\_ 25-34  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 35-44 years \_\_\_\_\_ 45-54 years \_\_\_\_\_ 55-64 years \_\_\_\_\_ years  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 65 & over
30. Do you have any children living at home?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No
31. If yes, how many? \_\_\_\_\_ Age(s)? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
32. What was the last grade in school:
- | YOU COMPLETED?              | YOUR SPOUSE COMPLETED?      |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| _____ Grade school or less  | _____ Grade school or less  |
| _____ Some high school      | _____ Some high school      |
| _____ Graduated high school | _____ Graduated high school |
| _____ Some college          | _____ Some college          |
| _____ Graduated college     | _____ Graduated college     |
| _____ College graduate work | _____ College graduate work |
33. What is your present occupation? \_\_\_\_\_
34. What is your spouse's present occupation? \_\_\_\_\_
35. What is the approximate combined income of the household before taxes?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Less than \$5,000  
 \_\_\_\_\_ \$5,000 - \$9,000  
 \_\_\_\_\_ \$10,000 - \$14,999  
 \_\_\_\_\_ \$15,000 - \$19,999  
 \_\_\_\_\_ \$20,000 - \$24,999  
 \_\_\_\_\_ \$25,000 and over

36. How long have you lived in your present apartment?

\_\_\_\_\_ Less than 6 months      \_\_\_\_\_ 1 year to 2 years  
\_\_\_\_\_ 6 months to 1 year      \_\_\_\_\_ 2 years to 3 years

37. How many bedrooms does it have?

\_\_\_\_\_ 1 bedroom  
\_\_\_\_\_ 2 bedrooms

38. What type of residence did you live in before moving to your present apartment

\_\_\_\_\_ Another apartment  
\_\_\_\_\_ Single family residence  
\_\_\_\_\_ Mobile home  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

39. Approximately how long did you live at your previous residence?

\_\_\_\_\_ Less than 1 year      \_\_\_\_\_ 6 years to 10 years  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1 year to 5 years      \_\_\_\_\_ Over 10 years

40. As far as you are concerned, what are the major advantages of living in an apartment? (Check any that are important to you)

\_\_\_\_\_ Minimal amount of maintenance  
\_\_\_\_\_ Less expensive than buying a home  
\_\_\_\_\_ Freedom to move easily  
\_\_\_\_\_ Good location  
\_\_\_\_\_ Better social life  
\_\_\_\_\_ Facilities and services that wouldn't be possible otherwise  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

41. As far as you are concerned, what are the major drawbacks of living in an apartment? (Check any that are important to you)

☐ Noise level too high  
☐ No private yard or garden space  
☐ Lack of equity build-up  
☐ Apartments lack individuality  
☐ Apartments are not a good place to raise children  
☐ Insufficient storage space  
☐ Lack of privacy  
☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

42. Have you made any specific plans to move?

(eg. - established savings account for a down payment  
 - been "shopping" for another apartment, house, etc.  
 - given your 30-day notice  
 - contacted a realtor  
 - other specific plans \_\_\_\_\_)

☐ Yes ☐ No

43. If yes, what will be your next logical move?

☐ A more appropriate apartment  
☐ A condominium or cooperative  
☐ A mobile home  
☐ A single family house  
☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C

### Summary of Chi-Square Values



APPENDIX C  
SUMMARY OF CHI-SQUARE VALUES

Factor	Degrees of Freedom	Critical $\chi^2$ Value (.05)	Calculated $\chi^2$ Value
Age:			
Female	1	3.84	0.66
Male	1	3.84	1.65
Education:			
Female	4	9.49	0.93
Male	4	9.49	2.55
Income	2	5.99	6.35*
Person Making Furniture Purchase Decision	4	9.49	0.18
Pattern of Purchase Decision	3	7.81	0.03
Decision About Next Furniture Purchase	1	3.84	0.07
Functional Characteristics:			
Durability	3	7.81	1.09
Versatility	3	7.81	1.06
Easy-care	3	7.81	0.31
Movability	3	7.81	2.76
Multi-Functional Pieces:			
Sofa Bed	1	3.84	0.06
Expandable Table	1	3.84	1.14
Wall-Storage System	1	3.84	3.74
Stackable Storage Cubes	1	3.84	1.74
Modular Seating Units	1	3.84	0.38
Coffee/Dining Table	1	3.84	1.23
Buffet/Desk/Table	1	3.84	2.41
Attitude Toward Apartment Living:			
Express Personality	1	3.84	0.44
Proud Of It	1	3.84	1.50
Comfortable	1	3.84	0.03
Place to Entertain	1	3.84	0.02
Don't Care Much About	1	3.84	0.33
A Temporary Roof	1	3.84	1.18
Cramps Desired Lifestyle	1	3.84	0.48

## SUMMARY Continued

Factor	Degrees of Freedom	Critical $\chi^2$ Value (.05)	Calculated $\chi^2$ Value
Advantages of Apartment Living:			
Minimal Maintenance	1	3.84	0.01
Less Expensive	1	3.84	0.04
Freedom to Move	1	3.84	0.62
Good Location	1	3.84	0.23
Better Social Life	1	3.84	0.33
Facilities and Services	1	3.84	0.18
Disadvantages of Apartment Living:			
Noise Level	1	3.84	0.49
No Private Yard	1	3.84	0.55
Lack of Equity	1	3.84	**
Lacks Individuality	1	3.84	0.35
Not for Children	1	3.84	**
Insufficient Storage	1	3.84	0.90
Lack of Privacy	1	3.84	**

\* Significant at .05 level

\*\* Significance was not calculated since similarity was so close.