

Home, work and health in the Airbnb system

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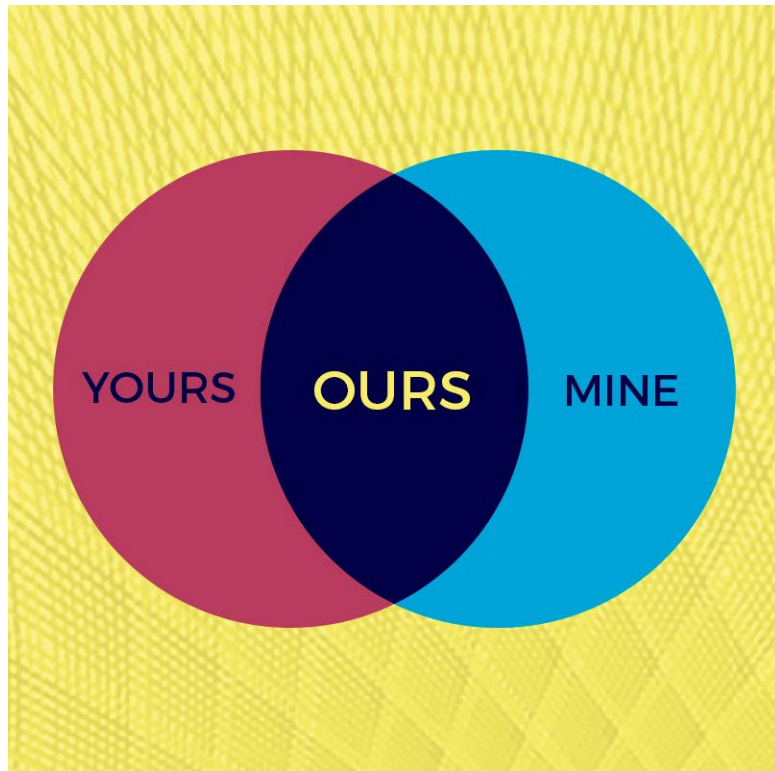
Dr. Phil Bigelow



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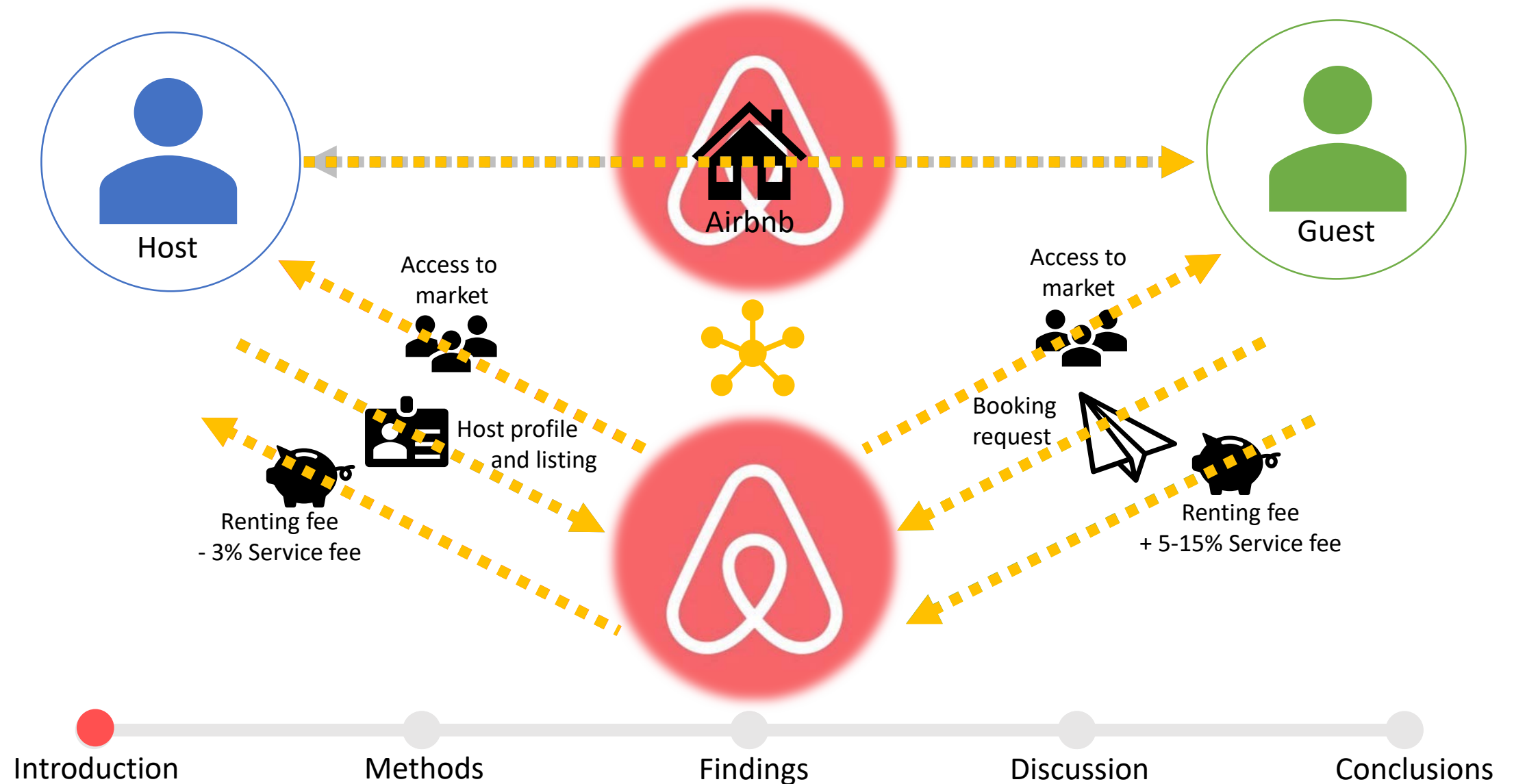
The Access Economy



- App-based platform to connect dispersed networks of individuals
- A system based on trust
- Access to goods and services at a lower cost than owning them (by sharing)
- Nov 2015-Oct 2016: 2.7 million Canadians in SE, spending \$1.31B

Source: <https://www.fatbit.com/fab/strangers-benefits-rise-sharing-economy-startups-loving/>

Airbnb



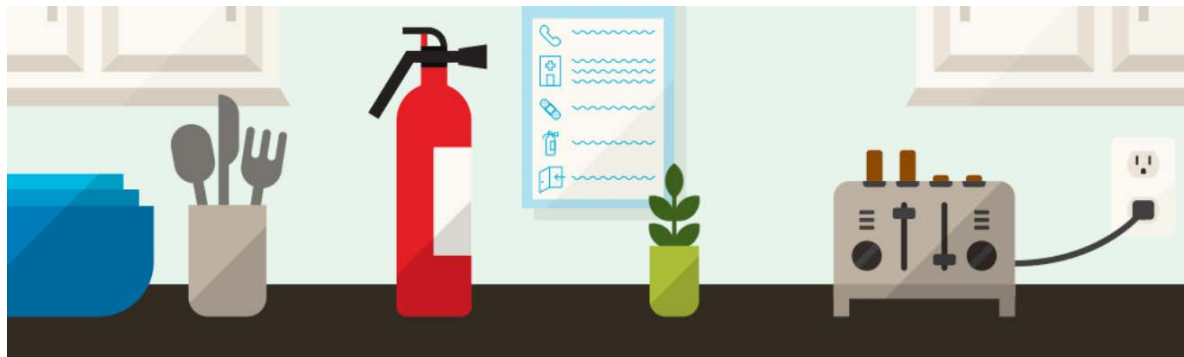
Airbnb Health and Safety

We encourage every Airbnb host to install working smoke & CO detectors in their listing and to check them frequently.



Warm, Cosy and Inviting Homes

Using Airbnb depends on a warm and hospitable home experience. Safety, security, and privacy are essential qualities in a household, so we want to encourage them in yours.



Meet Regulations

Make sure your property meets government and safety codes for your area.

Electrical Safety

Fix any exposed wires. Ensure all appliances and equipment are properly and safely installed.

Hazards

Remove any hazards that might cause guests to trip or fall, or mark these areas clearly.

(Airbnb, 2017I)

Introduction

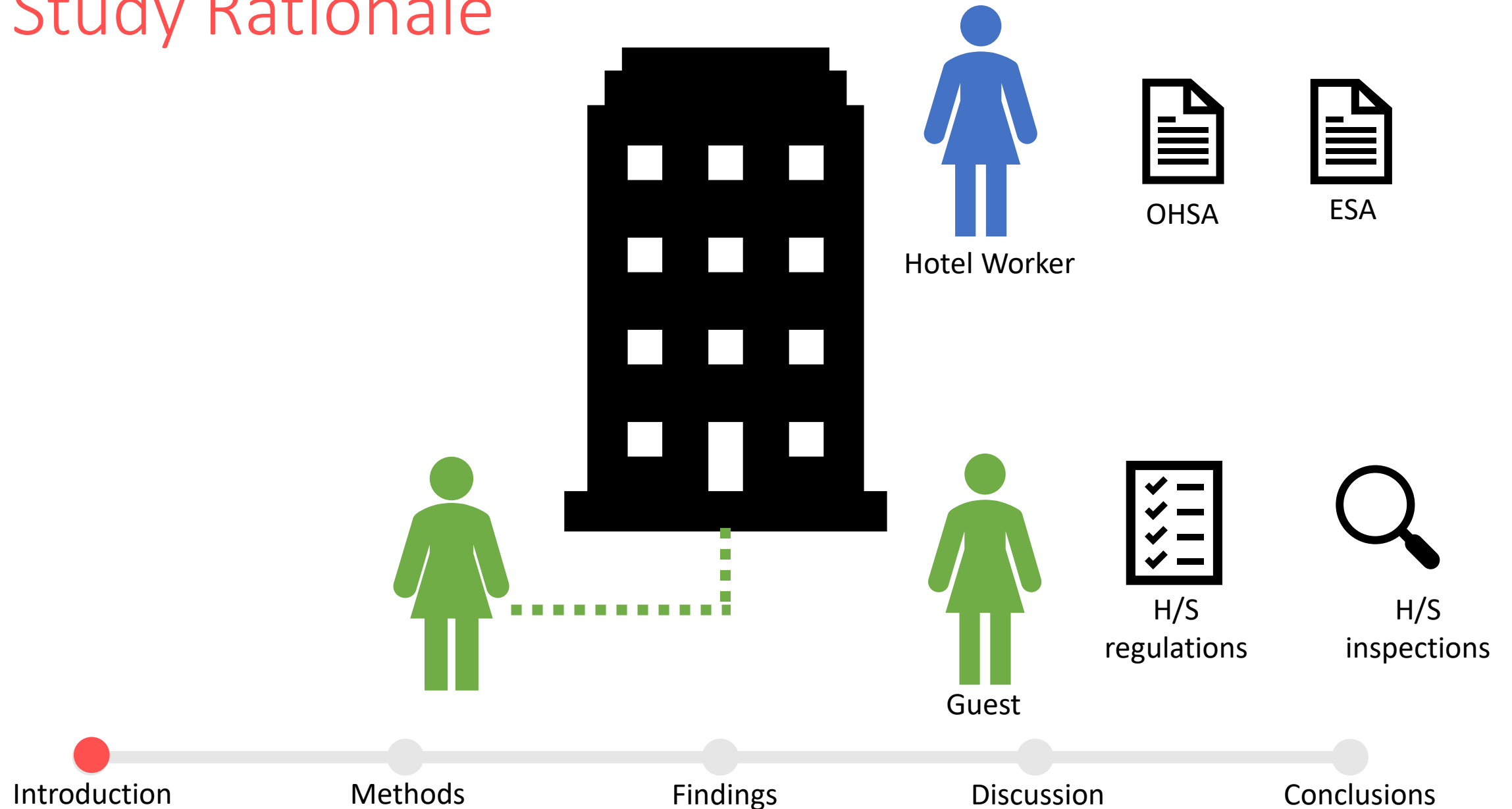
Methods

Findings

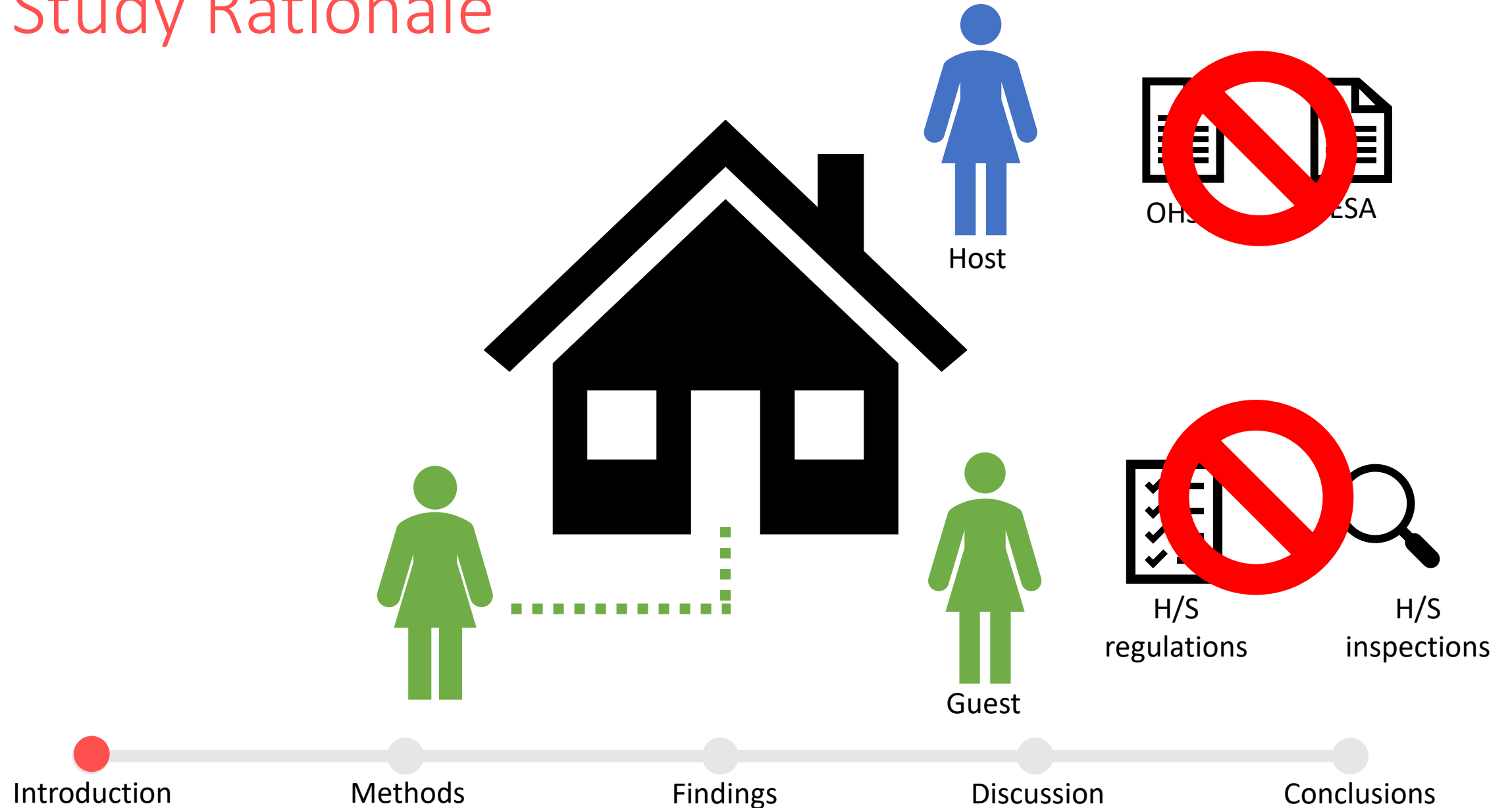
Discussion

Conclusions

Study Rationale



Study Rationale



Health and Safety of Hosts

- Airbnb hosts are self-employed
 - Not protected under Employment Standards Act
- Literature on OHS of hotel workers, not hosts

Type of Risk	Examples
Physical	repetitive movement, lack of ergonomic equipment
Chemical	cleaning products, latex gloves
Biological	broken glassware, used hypodermic needles, contaminated waste, human excreta and mold/microbial contaminants
Psychosocial	work stress, low control of works, lack of supervisor or co-worker support, lack of respect, lack of recognition, lack of promotion prospects, harassment, violence, bullying and discrimination

(O'Regan & Choe, 2017; Hsieh, Apostolopoulos, Hatzudis, & Sonmez, 2014)



Health and Safety of Guests

- Airbnb guests are vulnerable
 - Online reviews help in decision-making?
- Literature scant on health and safety of guests
- Reports of negative experiences by guests:
 - Sexual assault
 - Privacy violation
 - Violence
 - Racism

(Ert et al., 2016; Bridges & Vasquez, 2016; Vora, 2017; General, 2017; Holmes & Farberov, 2017)



Study Rationale

- SE is undeniably changing the landscape of work, and with that, reinventing work:
- Past and current discussion for stricter regulations on Airbnb in various Canadian cities – namely Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver:
 - ✓ Housing availability
 - ✓ Housing affordability
 - ✗ NOT health and safety considerations
- Airbnb's *laissez faire* attitude leaves hosts and guests vulnerable



Qualitative Design

- Research Objectives

- To document the experiences (both positive and negative) of hosts and guests in relation to Airbnb health and safety
- To identify possible changes to improve health and safety within the system

- Interpretivism

- Multi-method: (1) document analysis of Airbnb host forum
- (2) 17 in-depth interviews: 8 hosts, 9 guests



Analytical foci

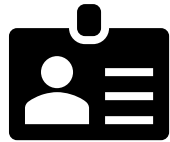


BEFORE the stay

Risk Assessment

1

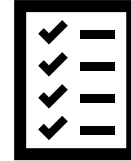
Information Gathering



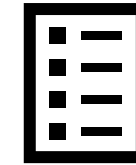
Host profile



Photos



Amenities



House rules



Online reviews



Guest

I guess like you can kind of get a vibe, even like in their description and stuff for like what they're saying. Like if it just sounds like sketchy, then I probably wouldn't want to go for that? If they sound really nice in their description, I'd be more likely to go with them. (Kristen, guest)

Introduction

Methods

Findings

Discussion

Conclusions

BEFORE the stay

Risk Assessment

2

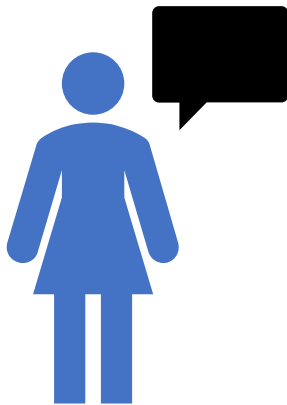
Vetting process



Interact with other users



Look out for red flags



Host

Like if it's a young crowd and if it's all women, I think my parents would prefer all young women versus all young men. And by young, I mean like college age or like even younger. Like their age, their gender. My dad even looks to see ethnicity if they have too many people.

(Tariq, interview host)

Introduction

Methods

Findings

Discussion

Conclusions

BEFORE the stay

Risk Assessment

3

Booking process



Instant booking

\$100 **Per Night**

Check in	Check out	Guests
<input type="text" value="dd-mm-yyyy"/>	<input type="text" value="dd-mm-yyyy"/>	<input type="text" value="1"/>

Instant Book

Introduction

Methods

Findings

Discussion

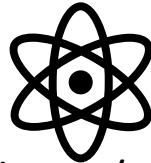
Conclusions

DURING the stay

Risk Management

1

Health Risks



Cleanliness/Disease



I think obviously cleanliness is a huge part because when you think about it...[hosts] were making a living out of this so, that implies that that place is probably rented out 99% of the time. That means that there are so many different people from so many different places... There are so many different activities that could take place in that place and all of those things can impose certain health hazards for the next person coming in and renting that place out. (Naseem, guest)

Introduction

Methods

Findings

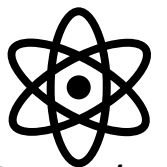
Discussion

Conclusions

DURING the stay

Risk Management

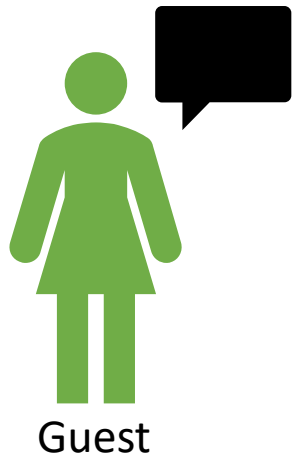
1 Health Risks



Cleanliness/Disease



Physical Harm



If I am the host and I ever been purposely hurt, like they dropped something on me, I'd break a toe like whatever. But if like I got purposely hurt by them, like someone was aggressive and like purposely tried to hurt me, I would probably stop hosting totally.
(Liam, interview host)



DURING the stay

Risk Management

2

Safety Risks



Neighbourhood



Keys

Introduction

Methods

Findings

Discussion

Conclusions

DURING the stay

Risk Management

2 Safety Risks



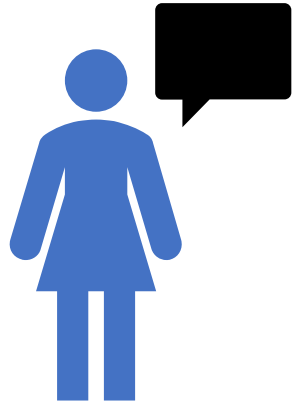
Neighbourhood



Keys



ID verification



Host

He was using a false name and, I found that out after he arrived...he was using the wifi here at the house and that put a violation on his parole. But I didn't know that until just before he was leaving because of something he had let slip and not about that, but about his name, about what his real name was and I was able to Google him.
(Susan, interview host)



DURING the stay

Risk Management

2 Safety Risks



Neighbourhood



Keys



ID
verification



Undesirable
Guests



DURING the stay

Risk Management

2 Safety Risks



Neighbourhood



Keys



ID verification

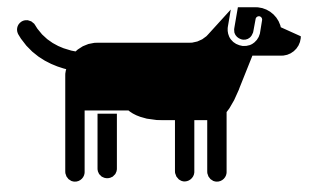


Undesirable Guests

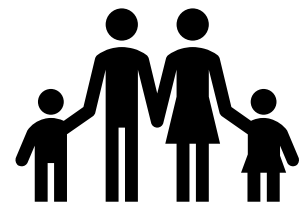
Undesirable guests as described by hosts:



Guest



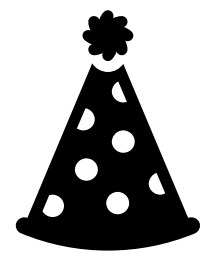
OR



OR



OR

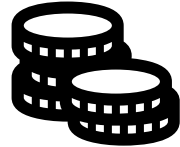


DURING the stay

Risk Management

3

Psychosocial Stressors



Financial Pressure

Introduction

Methods

Findings

Discussion

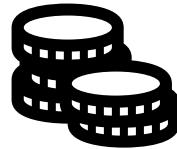
Conclusions

DURING the stay

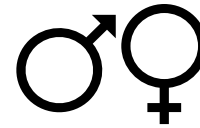
Risk Management

3

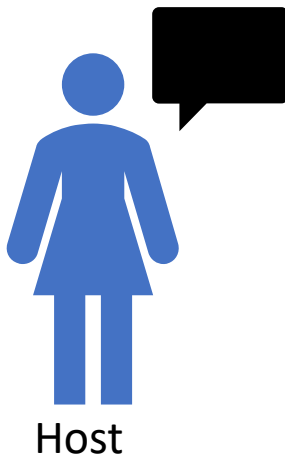
Psychosocial Stressors



Financial Pressure



Gender



One of my guests repeatedly asked me if I had a boyfriend (I do, and said so), and repeatedly made grabs for my lower back. After I dodged a few grabs, he succeeded in grabbing my ass when I bent over to plug something in. I swatted his hand off, yelled, "no, I REALLY have a boyfriend," and jumped away from him. As I was showing him the patio, he tried to kiss me. Again, I swatted. Then I told him that I was going to go, and when I went inside to retrieve my purse before leaving, he blocked the door in an effort to keep me inside. I had to hit him to make him leave the door. (Olivia, forum host, United States)

Introduction

Methods

Findings

Discussion

Conclusions

AFTER the stay

Systemic Pressures

Hosts experience...

- 1 Stress of hosting
- 2 Unreliable review system
- 3 Difficulty striking a balance between work and life
- 4 Difficulty juggling the rules
- 5 Little support from Airbnb



GUESTS

TAKEAWAYS!

How guests can keep healthy and safe if they...

- 1 Travel in groups
- 2 Read online reviews beforehand and interact with the host
- 3 Ensure the neighborhood of the Airbnb is safe
- 4 Opt for private room or full dwelling Airbnbs (to avoid interaction with host and other guests)



HOSTS

TAKEAWAYS!

Hosts should be aware of...

- 1 Cohabiting with guest
- 2 Hosting more guests and more frequently
- 3 Multiple listings
- 4 Trying to create cleaning and maintenance system



Private and public spheres

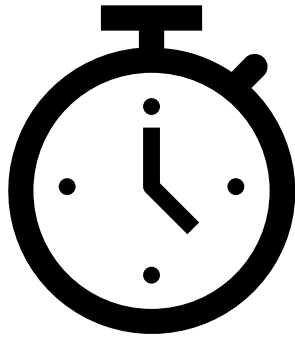
HOME ↻
↻ WORK



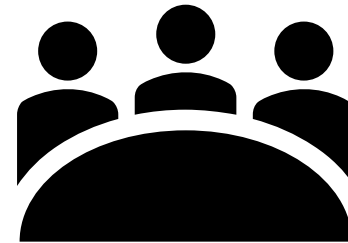
Key Problem Areas



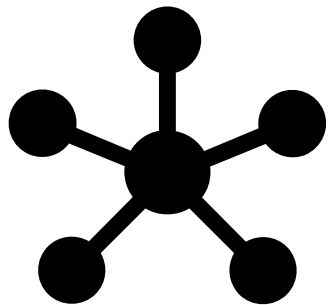
Glitches on
Airbnb interface



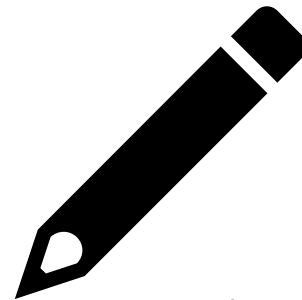
Lack of 24/7
human support



Health and safety is
not a priority



No sense
of belonging



Policy



Strengths and Limitations

Strengths	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Exploratory work in an unexplored field of research- Multi-method design	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Location- Type of participants: demographics, no key informants- Could approached RQ differently

Conclusions

- Findings shed light on health and safety situation of users
- Unaddressed needs are identified
- Consider implications for policymaking and practice for Airbnb, hotels and rentals
- Rethink the role of Airbnb
- New forms of work emerging – how can we better support Canadian workers?



Questions?

