



LIFE AT HOME

WHAT MAKES A HOME

REPORT #3

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT MAKES A HOME

THEY SAY THAT home is where the heart is. But what actually makes a home a home? And what makes us feel at home somewhere? We have looked at these questions from four dimensions: Space, Things, Relationships and Place, and come to the conclusion that it's time to redefine our idea of home.

The world is changing and so are our lives at home. More and more people move to cities and live in smaller spaces with fewer rooms. New household structures have an impact too.

Our lives have become more diverse. More of us live alone, lodge or live together with roommates and many children live in single-parent homes. We also travel abroad more than ever. And we are always online – ready to share our meal, our purchase or our latest discovery with the rest of the world through social media.

Still, for many, the longest journey is the one to the local market. The living room is still dedicated for special occasions only, and the phone is just

a tool to make a phone call. Many of us choose to seek happiness in big cities. Others are forced to leave their homes for an unknown life in a new country. Regardless of the reasons, it's clear that we have to get used to new ways of living, rethink our approach to the home.

Understanding our lives at home is helping us realise the IKEA vision: "To create a better everyday life for the many people". That is why we are always curious about what makes a home. In a world that is changing faster than ever, it becomes increasingly important to understand the challenges we face and the needs we want our homes to fulfil.

We believe it's time to take our curiosity one step further: we want to know how people define what makes a home. What are their emotional and personal relations to home? How are these changing? And how are the homes we live in changing? We believe exploring this area on a deeper level and across the world will give us valuable insights that will help us redefine IKEA's idea of the home.

We are starting our journey to find out more about people's real needs, aspirations and dreams when it comes to the home today. Our aim is to make this a part of our long-term business development. Hopefully, our exploration will make us even better at making people's homes more meaningful.

As a foundation for our studies, we had a look at existing research to find a way to describe the key aspects of what makes us feel at home. We found that a home can be looked at from four basic perspectives: Relations, Things, Space and Place. We then started our exploration of what really makes a home today based on these four dimensions.

In this report, we share our first findings from our studies; we hope you are as excited as we are!

ABOUT THE REPORT

AT IKEA WE have years of experience, knowledge and insights about people's lives at home from listening to the needs and dreams of our customers. With the IKEA Life at Home report we want to share our knowledge, raise awareness and interest, spark debate and contribute toward creating a better everyday life.

This is the third consecutive year we launch this report, where we explore the life at home of people all over the world. In the previous reports, we have taken a closer look at morning routines and at how people meet and eat in and around the kitchen. This time, we are digging deeper into what actually makes a home for people. What ingredients form a home? And in this fast-changing world we are living in, how is that "home" being redefined or reinvented? This year we want to deepen our understanding of how people really think and feel about their homes.

Our study is based on research done by ourselves and others. We have conducted a new quantitative survey in twelve different cities of the world. The

survey was conducted in cooperation with Swedish business intelligence agency United Minds, using online panels in Berlin, London, Moscow, Mumbai, New York, Paris, Shanghai, Stockholm, Sydney, Toronto, Zürich and Madrid. More than 1,000 respondents in each city add up to a total of 12,000 respondents among people from 18 to 80 years of age. We also dug into our own archives of recent studies, looking for cues that could help us find out what makes a home to people. In addition, we have looked at a large number of external studies in various fields, for example sociology, psychology, liberal arts, neuroscience and design. Not to mention talked to academic experts. All as part of our quest to learn even more about life at home. But perhaps most importantly, we have talked to real people. The pictures in the report are from some of our home visits, depicting authentic homes from all over the world.

At IKEA we always challenge ourselves to be more relevant and offer better solutions to people's real needs at home. The extensive research that makes up the foundation for this report is part

of our continuous process to always improve, in order to make life at home better for many.

This year's IKEA Life at Home Report is divided into two parts. In the first part, we share insights based on our new survey and existing IKEA research, as well as other well-known and published study findings from experts and opinion leaders from a variety of backgrounds. In the second part, we dive deeper into an interesting finding from our survey to understand it in more detail. To get a better understanding of the public-private relationships of the home, we have visited and photographed households in four cities: Stockholm, Mumbai, New York and Shanghai. This is what we call the narrative of our report: emotional stories that can help us really understand people's feelings, thoughts and behaviours.

THE FEELING OF HOME

– *Comfortable, sense of belonging, safety. The feeling of home is like feeling safe. You have something to depend on. Security – or perhaps more like safety.*

Wang Chaoyin, living with wife and grown up child
Shanghai

WE KNOW ABOUT many of the important aspects of how people connect with the idea of the home. But we also know that life at home is constantly evolving and that the ever-changing world around us affects our lives at home – not least when it comes to our feelings.

To find out more about how people feel about their homes today we started this study by asking some fundamental questions: What is a home to you? What do you need to experience in order to feel at home? We found that homes of today still inspire feelings of comfort, safety and belonging – essential needs that appear to be constant. We need our homes to physically protect us – to provide roofs over our heads. But we also need the emotional

aspects of having a secure base to return to. To many of us, home is a personal haven where we can recline, reconnect and revitalize after a long day. Our homes can provide a sense of stability in life and a familiar place where we leave the outside world behind. Considering our urban living conditions, this might be more needed than ever. City life can be tiring with streets crammed with vehicles, people rushing by and round-the-clock light, noise and smell. Going to work, finding time to spend with our families and loved ones, taking care of our minds and bodies – we simply need downtime to cope with our busy lives, and room to breathe and relax. As Simon from Stockholm said:

– *Home is where you are the happiest in your life. Home is happiness and comfort. It's where you feel good, like kicking off your shoes and walking around, maybe even half-dressed. Home is where you feel most comfortable and it's where you feel happy.*

Different as we are, our feelings of home are strikingly similar. People all over the world, in all

kinds of homes and households, use similar words to describe the essence of what makes a home to them. Comfort, cosiness, relaxation and warmth are among the first words mentioned. The feeling of home is described as a feeling of being myself, a feeling of safety, a feeling of belonging and even that home is the feeling of love.

– *Home is full of love, from the family, from a girlfriend and other people. Home is a place where you can feel loved. Everyone needs love.*

Yan Chenhao, living single
Shanghai

HOME IS...

...where I have my most important relationships 48%

...a physical space 20%

...where I keep my most important things 19%

...a geographical place 7%

Privacy plays an important part for our well-being at home. However, relationships are also vital building blocks of what makes a home to us. In fact, most people in our survey actually define their homes – not as a physical or geographical place or a place to keep their things – but as where they have their most important relationships. Partners, parents, children, siblings, Internet friends, pets... They are all important in the making of a home.

- *When we bought the cat I suddenly felt and said to my partner – now we have a home. We don't have any children but now we have someone to take care of. Someone who really needs us... We have a home now.*

Robert, living with girlfriend

New York

When we combine our previous knowledge with the insights from our quantitative survey and our experiences from talking to people in their homes, we get a picture of how people want to feel in their homes. We can also see what they need from their homes and how they create meaning in their lives at home. It seems, our requirements of our homes can be summed up like this: it has to be comfortable, it has to be safe, and it has to provide famil-

arity. Relationships, love and belonging have to be balanced by room for privacy, relaxation and recovery. And we like our homes to be personal and express who we are. Maybe most importantly, our basic needs at home are quite similar, all over the world.

- *Home can be everything and nothing, but it's not about the material things. It can be a five star hotel, but it's not home. Where you sleep*

What I think makes something a home, are the psychological functions that it serves. It's a place where we can feel protected, a place where we can feel provided for, a place where we can feel loved, a place where we can feel connected to others. The things that make a house a home are the psychological senses, the emotional senses. That's what makes it a home.

**Professor Samuel D. Gosling,
Professor at the Department of Psychology, University of Texas**

is home and it's all about a matter of habits that make you feel at home.

Milind, living with wife, two grown up children and their grandmother

Mumbai

But how are these feelings and needs challenged in our new, urban way of living? To understand life at home, we want to review the changing conditions for our homes. In order to do so, we want to

MY IDEAL HOME IS...

...safe 38%

...spacious 34%

...simple to maintain 29%

look at the development that comes with urbanization and find out more about how it impacts our lives.

As more and more people move to the cities, hard-to-find or smaller and more expensive apartments and houses become a reality for many. We move more often than before and have to create new relationships in new places, again and again. Our study shows that people make little effort to get to know their neighbours, even though they think it's an important part in feeling at home somewhere. Life in the city can be lonely. Adding to that, many of us have left our family and loved ones behind in our quest for a better life in the city. This creates a situation where we crave human connection – in new and different ways. We have to find new means of keeping in contact and build new relationships, and technology often comes to hand – which also changes our social behaviour.

Another change connected to urban living is the increasingly blurred lines between work and time off. This has bearing on our minds and well-being, which in turn affect what we need in our homes. We also see a quest for a more sustainable way of living – for us as human beings as well as for the environment – which of course, has an impact too when it comes to life at home.

Urbanization clearly creates new living conditions for us. These changes place a demand on our homes to be multi-functional and flexible, not only in a practical sense but in an emotional sense too. We have to make room, one way or the other, to experience the feelings that are needed for us to call a place our home. Regardless if they are connected to our relationships, the space and the area we live in or the belongings we keep to create meaning in our lives. In what way does the changes in our living conditions affect how we view our homes? What new needs emerge, now and in the future? And how can we reinforce our understanding of urban living to improve life at home?

Let's have a look at what makes a home from four basic perspectives of the home: Space, Things, Relationships and Place.

SPACE

SENSES: THE HOME'S FOURTH DIMENSION

When we think of the space at home, most of us think about a physical area where we keep our things and go about our daily activities. In other words: four walls and a roof. But space isn't only a physical structure – it's also a sensory experience. Our senses are important building blocks for our experience of our surroundings – a fourth dimension beyond the physical. They influence how we feel about home in more ways than we are aware of: the familiar smell when we return from a holiday; the feeling of a soft wooden floor; the taste of our favourite meal; the

sound of the rice cooker or the coffee machine bubbling. As our living conditions change, how can we make better use of our senses to fulfil our needs at home? We are already trying new solutions to some of the challenges we face in this new way of living. By understanding more of what our senses can do for us, maybe they could be part of the solution too?



TOUCH: THE BODY LANGUAGE OF OBJECTS

TOUCH IS THE first sense we develop and experience. Even so, it's one of the least explored. We know that a warm touch, a loving hug or even a friendly handshake releases the "love hormone" oxytocin, which creates feelings of happiness and joy – see IKEA Life At Home Report #1: Cuddle Chemicals. But how well do we understand the tactile dimension of surfaces, furniture and appliances in our homes?

Emotional effects of touch do not only come from human contact. For example, the simple act of choosing a hard or soft chair to sit on can affect us. Researchers at MIT, Yale and Harvard have found that an object's weight, texture and hardness can influence our judgements and decisions on a subconscious level. It turns out that we connect the way an object looks and feels with an emotional meaning. Rough textures can make social situations seem more difficult and harsh. Smooth wood can make them feel a little friendlier. Sitting on a hard chair can make a person take a tougher stance in a negotiation. On the other hand, someone sitting on a softer one might be more flexible to deal with. We can even get the feeling that what we are talking about is more serious or important when we carry heavy objects. It seems like objects have body language too.



Modern technology can simplify our lives at home. Experts believe that our homes will soon be intelligent enough to adjust lighting, temperature and scents to match our heartbeats. Increased "smoothness" may have potential to make our lives at home better, but not all smoothness is good for us. Clean, steely and minimalistic design often comes with smooth surfaces. But do we actually want a frictionless everyday life? Touch expert Marieke Sonneveld argues that distinct textures and contrasts make us feel more in contact with our objects and our homes. Perhaps more

friction could make us feel more and experience more in our homes?

The good news is that we already appreciate the effects of touch more than we may realise – for instance in the way we use a soft blanket to create a feeling of comfort. There is no doubt that touch can affect our emotions, moods and even behaviour at home. Perhaps if we became more aware of the feelings that hide in the objects around us, we could get more out of them and feel better at home.

LIFE AT HOME

SPACE

SIGHT: LIGHT IN THE DARK

SIGHT: LIGHT IN THE DARK



MANY SAY THE brighter the better and safer. However, street lamps, store signs and mobile screens all contribute to what is called “light pollution”. The lack of contrast between daylight and darkness makes it difficult for our bodies to keep track of day and night, with sleeping problems and health issues as a result. Our sight is affected too. The uniformity of illumination can cause visual discomfort and decrease visual abilities. Urban illumination is a real issue – the never-ending blinking from the outside world can be difficult to shut out, even at home. As many as 18% in our study consider their homes too bright. In Toronto, light seems to be an issue for many, and adjusting poor lighting is a top priority when it comes to improving well-being at home.

The rapid urbanization not only leads to increased amounts of light around the clock. It also creates a lack of natural light. This is troubling since studies show that natural light makes us feel, perform and sleep better. It has even been shown to make hospital patients recover faster and students to do better in school. Simply put, we need it to function as human beings. When

natural light is replaced by artificial, what new demands are put on our homes?

They say that nobody loves a sky that is always blue, and the same appears to be true for a bright one. As with many things in life, variation seems to be important. Light therapy has long been used to treat depression and seasonal

fatigue. On the other hand, sitting in front of a lamp for hours isn’t necessary to spark improved well-being at home. Dynamic lighting seems to have the effect too. Researchers at Stanford have found that controlled, short flashes of light at night help prevent jet lag – perhaps one way to tackle disturbances to our internal clock caused by light. Other studies show that there is a big difference between cool and warm lighting. Cool light is better for learning and warm is better for relaxation.

This proves that light is so much more than just something to switch on or off at home. Small changes in the lighting conditions can make a dramatic difference to our well-being and even intellectual abilities. If our homes are to be places where we can recharge and feel good, perhaps we should start paying more attention to the light in and around our homes – beyond the pleasure of cosy dimmers and candle lights. The lighting environment is changing radically in the world around us, giving our homes and us a whole new setting. The question is, how can we use light at home to tackle the challenges that come with that development?

“WHEN NATURAL LIGHT IS REPLACED BY ARTIFICIAL, WHAT NEW DEMANDS ARE PUT ON OUR HOMES?”

LIFE AT HOME

SPACE



SIGHT: LIGHT IN THE DARK



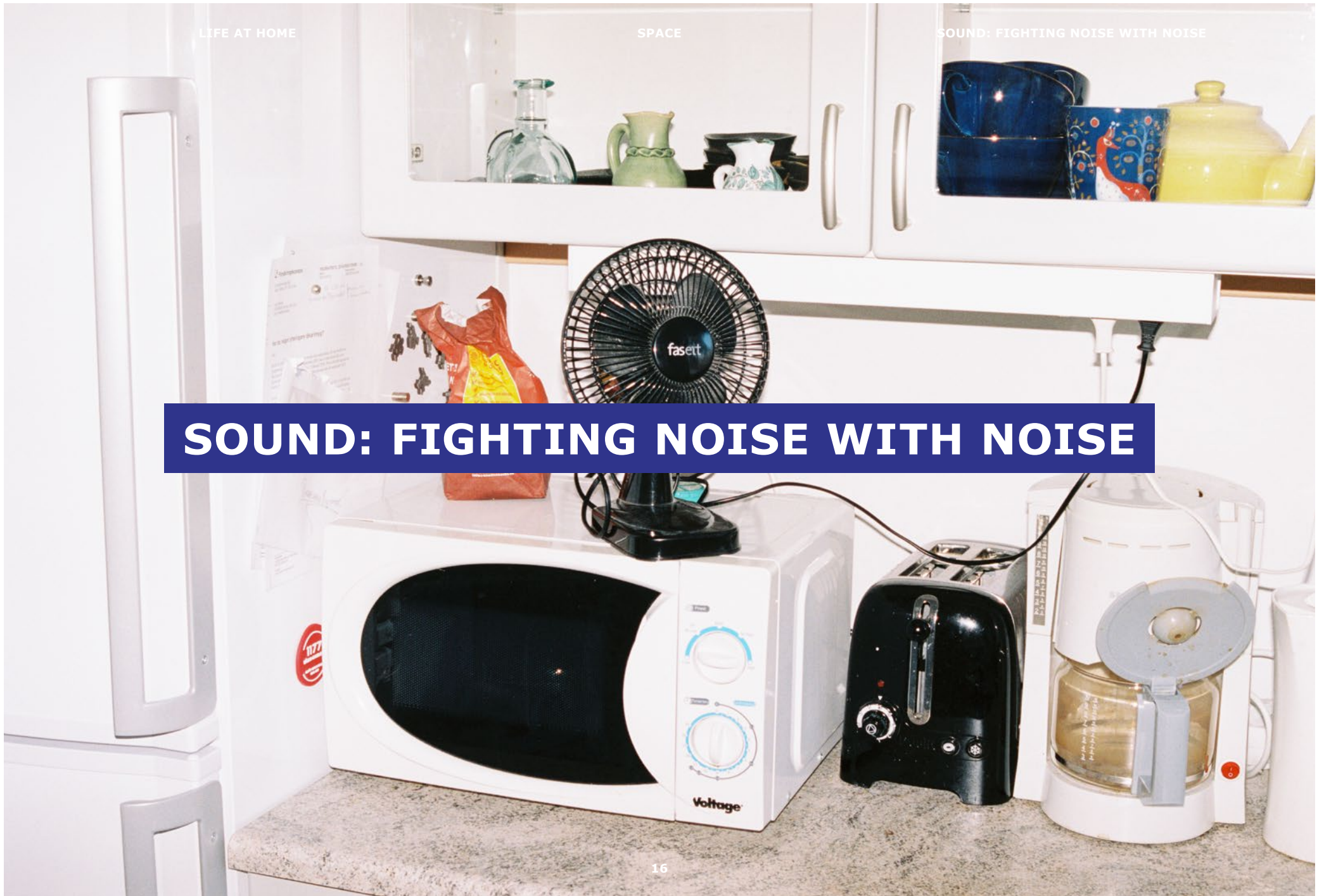
**18% IN OUR STUDY CONSIDER
THEIR HOMES TOO BRIGHT**

LIFE AT HOME

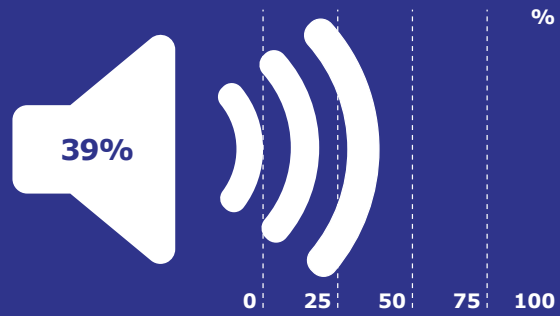
SPACE

SOUND: FIGHTING NOISE WITH NOISE

SOUND: FIGHTING NOISE WITH NOISE



LIFE AT HOME



39% OF PEOPLE IN MUMBAI WANT TO REDUCE NOISE IN THEIR HOMES TO IMPROVE THEIR WELL-BEING

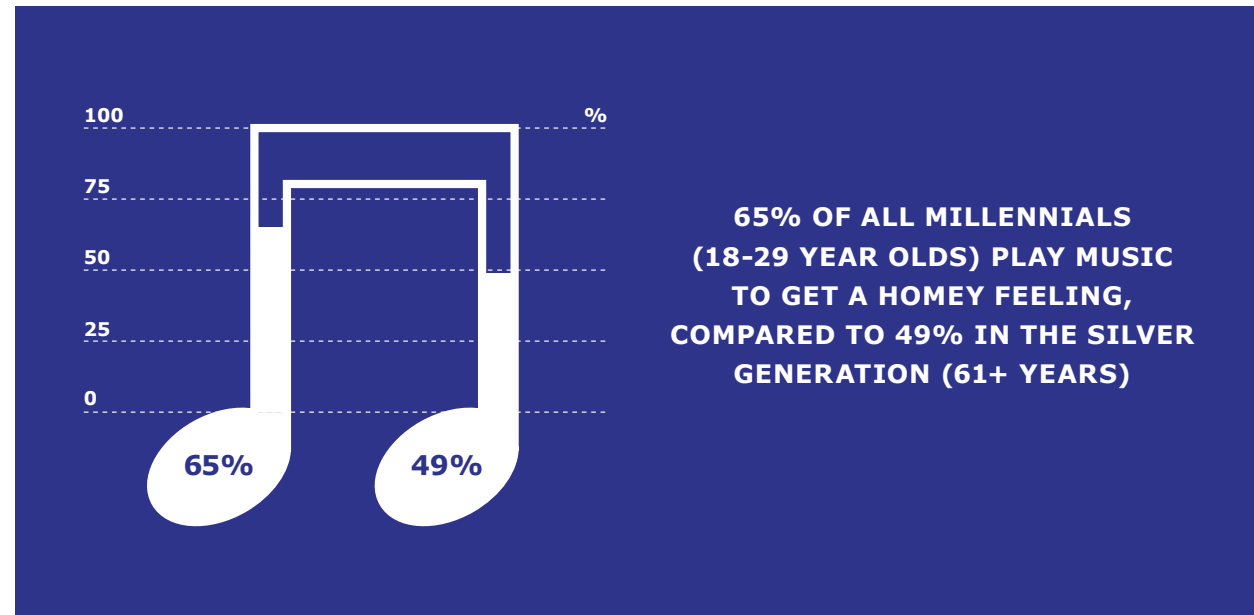
SPACE

SOUND: FIGHTING NOISE WITH NOISE



A PIECE OF music or a familiar noise can spark some of the strongest emotions like joy, sadness, fear or nostalgia. In today's growing cities we are exposed to all kinds of sounds. And urban living can be loud. The combination of car horns, sirens, traffic, people passing by and close neighbours can mean this background noise isn't really in the background at all. In fact, it can often reach 70 decibels, which is like having a vacuum cleaner running next to you.

When we asked people what sound they associate with their homes, most people mentioned everyday sounds like those of voices or children playing. But to many, it's the music that makes it home. 59% of the respondents in our survey play music to get a homey feeling. In Madrid, music seems to be an even more important part of life, where as many as 72% enjoy music to make themselves at home. And among the Millennials (18-29 year olds), more than 65% play music to get a homey feeling, compared to only 49% in the Silver generation (61+ years). Young people seem to use music for other reasons too. Research has found that they often use music to make their bedroom their own safe haven – a home within the home. Considering that more privacy is what we long for most at home – so say 29% in our study



– perhaps this trick could be worth trying for the rest of us too?

However, our homes are not only filled with the sounds we like. To people in urban areas, noise is a major concern. As many as 39% of people in Mumbai find noise in their homes to be an issue. And more than just keeping us awake, noise can be bad for our well-being. In fact, WHO considers “noise pollution” to be a threat to public health. Neurologist Dr. Christopher Winter suggests that while we

can't stop the sounds of the city surrounding our homes, we can block them out with a basic, repetitive noise. This is known as “white noise”, and can increase our chances of a good night's sleep. According to the US National Sleep Foundation, white noise can easily be created by the sound of a fan, air conditioner, or air purifier – the same everyday sounds that we most associate with a feeling of home. Considering the possible health effects it might bring, maybe that dishwasher humming isn't so bad after all.

LIFE AT HOME

SPACE

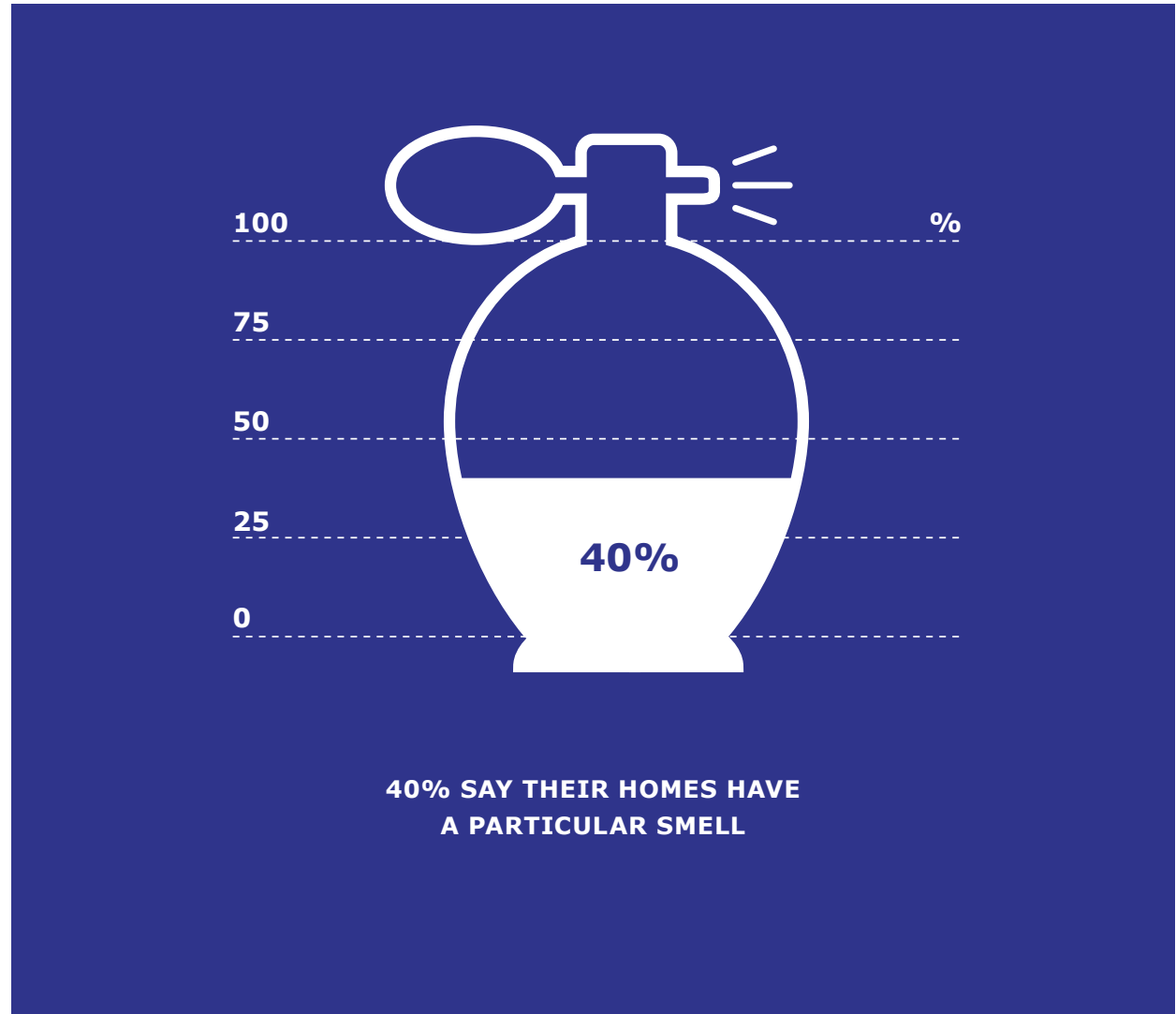
SMELL: THE SHORTCUT TO OUR MEMORIES

SMELL: THE SHORTCUT TO OUR MEMORIES

WHEN WE SMELL something, we remember without trying. It can be the smell of sunscreen that stirs up feelings of summer or the romance of a freshly baked cake. We can all relate to the sensation of being transported to another time and place when we sense a particular smell. Why? Smell is the sense with most powerful influence on memory, mood and emotion. Yet it's perhaps the one which we value the least. A recent study shows that 53% of young people aged 16-22 and 48% of those aged 23-30 would give up their sense of smell if it meant they could keep one of their electronic gadgets.

Our survey shows that smell is the sense that we associate the most with home. As many as 40% say their homes have a particular smell. To some, the fragrance of home is distinct and obvious; to others it's hard to explain. Either way, smell is important when it comes to making a home. Scents can help us create a feeling of safety and intimacy, and make a space feel like home. Maybe we could benefit from exploring the world of scent a bit more in our homes.

Some of us might have experienced the effect of a familiar smell in an unknown setting, for example when traveling abroad. When we recognize that





smell, we instantly get a feeling of calmness and belonging. English student Amy Radcliffe picked up on this effect and has developed Scent-ography. Her camera-like "Madeleine machine" captures domestic odours and makes it possible to bring the smell of home wherever we go. In our time of migration and mobility, could this be a way to recreate the feeling of home in new places?

TASTE: THE FORGOTTEN SENSE OF HOME





THERE ARE SIGNS of a new direction in the world of design and home decoration. We are moving from a strictly functional focus towards more emotional aspects. We have seen examples of how our senses affect our feeling of home. But how does taste fit into that picture? Can we really create a feeling of home through taste?

Taste seems to bring back memories and previous experiences in the same way that smell does. In our study, 30% say they associate a certain food with home and 63% cook to create the feeling of home. In Moscow, food seems to play an even more important role to create a homey feeling – as many as 73% use food to make themselves at home. When asked what home tastes like, one of the most common answers is “the taste of my mother’s food”. But studies show we have less time and space than ever for taste experiences in our homes. The number of people eating together with their families is shrinking too. So what place does food have in our lives at home today? Taste can stimulate feelings of what we long for at home: intimacy, familiarity and belonging. As we lead more hectic lives and live in smaller spaces, how will the role of taste as part of our homes change?

UNLOCKING THE FOURTH DIMENSION OF LIFE AT HOME

Most homes have been designed to be functional with little attention paid to our senses. But making a home goes beyond the functionality and aesthetics of the spaces we live in. For a space to really feel like home, a fourth dimension needs to come into play: our senses. Our brains seem to be hardwired to connect a specific smell, sound, touch etc. to feelings about our home. Senses help us make sense of the world around us and have a strong impact on our moods, emotions and even behaviour. When

we live in smaller spaces, with new types of household constellations and in cities that create a new sensory environment – perhaps we should look closer at the role our senses play when it comes to our homes. Not only to improve our well-being, but perhaps also to find new and unexpected solutions to the challenges we face. Coming to our senses might bring a new understanding of what a home is – and what it could be.



MARIEKE SONNEVELD

Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Industrial Design Engineering, Delft University of Technology and expert on the haptic sense

WHAT ROLE DOES TOUCH PLAY IN THE EXPERIENCE OF HOME?

Our experience of home is to a large extent expressed through touch – how things actually feel contribute a lot to the welcoming atmosphere and the feeling of home. Just think about a front door. Some doors are a fight to open; others open easier and feel more welcoming. The moment you grasp the handle and enter, you think: “Ah, I’m home!” This door metaphor can be applied to everything. Another example is floors; you walk differently depending on what material your floor is made from. The same goes for the difference between chairs. A comfortable chair makes you feel welcome while an elegant chair can feel very “distant” to the touch. This means you can be at home but still not feel at home, because the chair is not welcoming.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO REFLECT ON OUR SENSORIAL EXPERIENCES AT HOME?

The senses play an important role in drawing people into their homes – not only physically, but to really make them be at home. Today it’s difficult to communicate touch, because we don’t have the

proper language for it. By giving people concepts, by figuring out the tactual language and by reflecting on our tactile experiences, we can deepen our understanding of touch as well as make it more nuanced. The key reason to address our sense of touch, is that it’s through touch that we experience the affective qualities [like heat and cold] of our environment.

WHAT TRENDS DO YOU SEE WHEN IT COMES TO SENSORIAL DESIGN?

For some time there has been a tendency to make the world softer. Of course it’s nice if the world is more soft than sharp, but to make things interesting you also need to feel friction, – you want the challenge. It’s the same thing as in interaction with people; if someone is always soft, you get bored. Now we see more examples of moving beyond the comfort and adding challenges, for example by working with textures and contrasts to make the interaction with objects more interesting and to make us feel more in contact with our objects. The sensorial experiences must be diverse, and by challenging our senses we can develop our sensitivity.

THINGS

FROM OBJECTS TO SUBJECTS

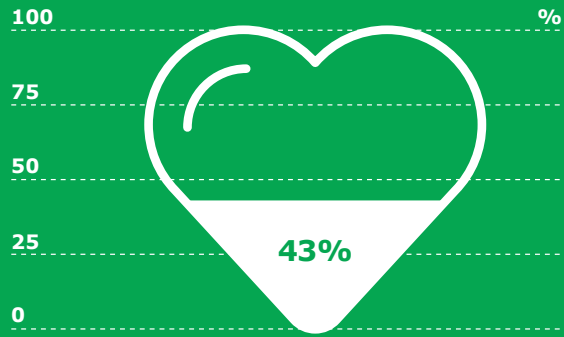
Our homes are filled with things: books, tools, clothes, decorations and much more. The things we surround us with help us fulfil our basic human needs. We eat, we sleep, we dress. But things are so much more than objects. Things help us to do, to experience, to live. And they also have a big impact on how we feel in our homes, how we feel for our homes and how we create meaning in our life at home.

According to our study, the main reasons why we keep things in our homes are that they make us happy and because they make our homes more beautiful and homey. But our possessions also show our identity, our lives and our memories. Things are reflections of our personalities and essential building blocks in making a home – beyond their functional use. In fact, only 22% in our survey view the things in their homes as strictly functional objects. On the contrary, they appear to have important emotional

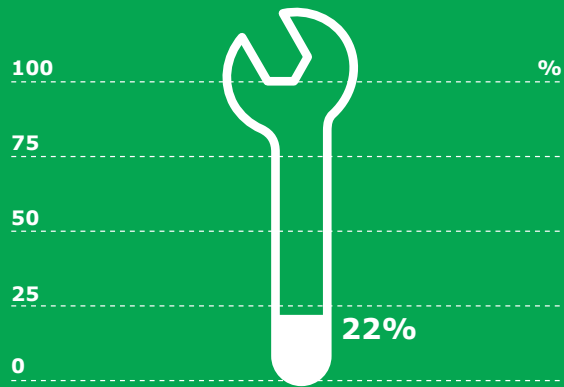
meaning to us: 53% keep objects in their homes that are connected to memories and 11% bring something from home when they travel to remind them of home. It seems that not only do our things make our daily lives a little easier; they also play an important role in defining what is a home.

As we adjust to new ways of living, will our views on things change as well? It's clear that today's world changes the importance of the objects in our homes – physically as well as mentally. We need to become more flexible in order to be able to move more often, longer distances and into smaller spaces. Not to mention adjust to new kinds of household and family structures. This brings new challenges and needs in our homes. But apart from the functional aspects, how can we look at this from an emotional perspective? How do we use things to create meaning and feel better at home – and how is this changing?

LIFE AT HOME



43% THINK THE THINGS THAT ENABLE THEM TO DO WHAT THEY LOVE ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT



22% IN OUR SURVEY VIEW THE THINGS IN THEIR HOMES AS STRICTLY FUNCTIONAL OBJECTS

THINGS

INTRODUCTION



GETTING EMOTIONAL ABOUT THINGS

MANY OF US can relate to having too many things: drawers that won't close, congested wardrobes and floors full of toys. In Sydney, as many as 22% feel guilt about owning too many things, compared to the average of 15%. They are also more aware of the things they have at home – 51% compared to 45% for the rest of the respondents. At the same time, we buy more new things than ever, regardless of where we live in the world. There is a fast growth in India and China, where more and more people are able to afford better lives at home. 23% of people worldwide buy something new for their home every week, according to our study. But with shrinking living spaces in the cities, it gets difficult to collect more and more things – there simply isn't enough room in our homes. There is also a general and growing understanding about the world's resources not being limitless, which makes people more aware of the things they have. Smaller living spaces and increased concern for the environment bring a need for a new approach to things. We simply can't have too much stuff at home. And as part of this, we are becoming more mindful of our things at home.

Our study shows that more people want fewer things at home rather than the other way around. The main reason is simple: to keep better order.



Too much stuff not only makes it difficult to find what we are looking for, it actually seems to make us grumpier too. In our study, 39% claim their messy homes irritate them once a week or more and 27% argue about tidying up once a week or more. The younger generation (18-29 year olds) seems to be even more sensitive to messy homes. In this group, 47% get irritated about clutter every week and 36% have weekly arguments about it.

Adding to that, other studies show that disorderly spaces makes us feel less at home. It's not surprising that the professional organizing industry, which offers personal help with organizing our things at home, is on the rise. But where a mess can create stress and make simple tasks like getting dressed in the mornings more complicated, simple measures can help us. Marie Kondo, author and organizational expert inspired by mindfulness,

LIFE AT HOME

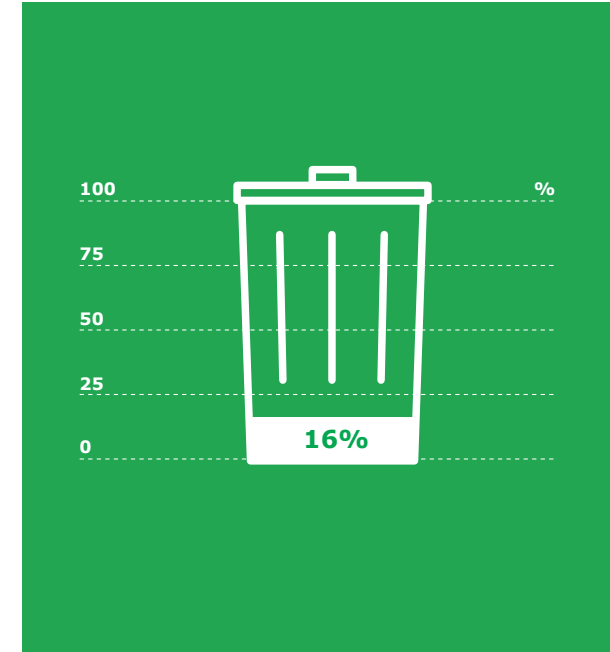
suggests that we should organize our clothes in an eye-pleasing order from dark and heavy to the left, to light and bright on the right. This makes it easier for us to find what we need and helps us be more mindful of our belongings. As Kondo says: "When you put your house in order, you put your affairs in order too."

But being mindful of our things isn't only about having fewer of them, or organizing them better. It's also about a change in how we look at them. We are moving from valuing practical benefits to appreciating the emotional meaning of objects. This trend seems especially strong in younger generations. Millennials (18-29 year olds) put higher value on objects that carry emotional meaning and see the ideal home as a place for memories, reflection of self and a source of pride to a higher extent than other age groups. This sentimentality doesn't show in the Silver generation (61+ years), which cares more about practical aspects such as the home being easy to look after. The same goes for expectations of other people's homes. Millennials have greater expectations of emotional features, such as art and design and that the home is unique. Older people care more about the practical circumstances of visiting other people's homes, like being invited to eat or drink something. The

THINGS

tendency among young people of wanting to feel – as designer Ilse Crawford puts it – the "magic of things" at home, could perhaps be an indication of how future generations will tackle global challenges like housing shortage, shrinking living spaces and the need for more environmentally friendly living. The growing trend of becoming more mindful of things seems to be here to stay. Not just because we have to, but perhaps also because we want to. We like to surround ourselves with things that are meaningful to us. Whether it's a bookshelf full of books that let us immerse ourselves in new experiences; a wardrobe that really helps us organize our carefully selected clothes or inherited tableware that reminds us of our loved ones – a more mindful approach to our things seems to be one way we reinvent our relation to things at home.

GETTING EMOTIONAL ABOUT THINGS



"16% SAY THEY WOULD NOT HAVE ANY PROBLEMS THROWING AWAY AND REPLACING ALL THE THINGS THEY HAVE IN THEIR HOME"

OBJECTS AS ENABLERS



WE ALL HAVE our favourite objects at home: perhaps a cup, a blanket or an instrument. Things that might not look special to others but have strong personal meaning to us. We use these objects to enjoy coffee with our partners, to comfort ourselves when watching a movie or to connect with others through music. In fact, the things that matter most to us seem to be ones that enable us to do what we love – at least, that’s what 43% in our study say. In Berlin, this is even more evident, where as many as 55% agree on this. Psychologists Leaf van Boven and Thomas Gilovich even suggest that we are happier when we buy things to do something with than when we buy things just to own. The connection between what an object lets us do and the feelings we attach to it is clear.

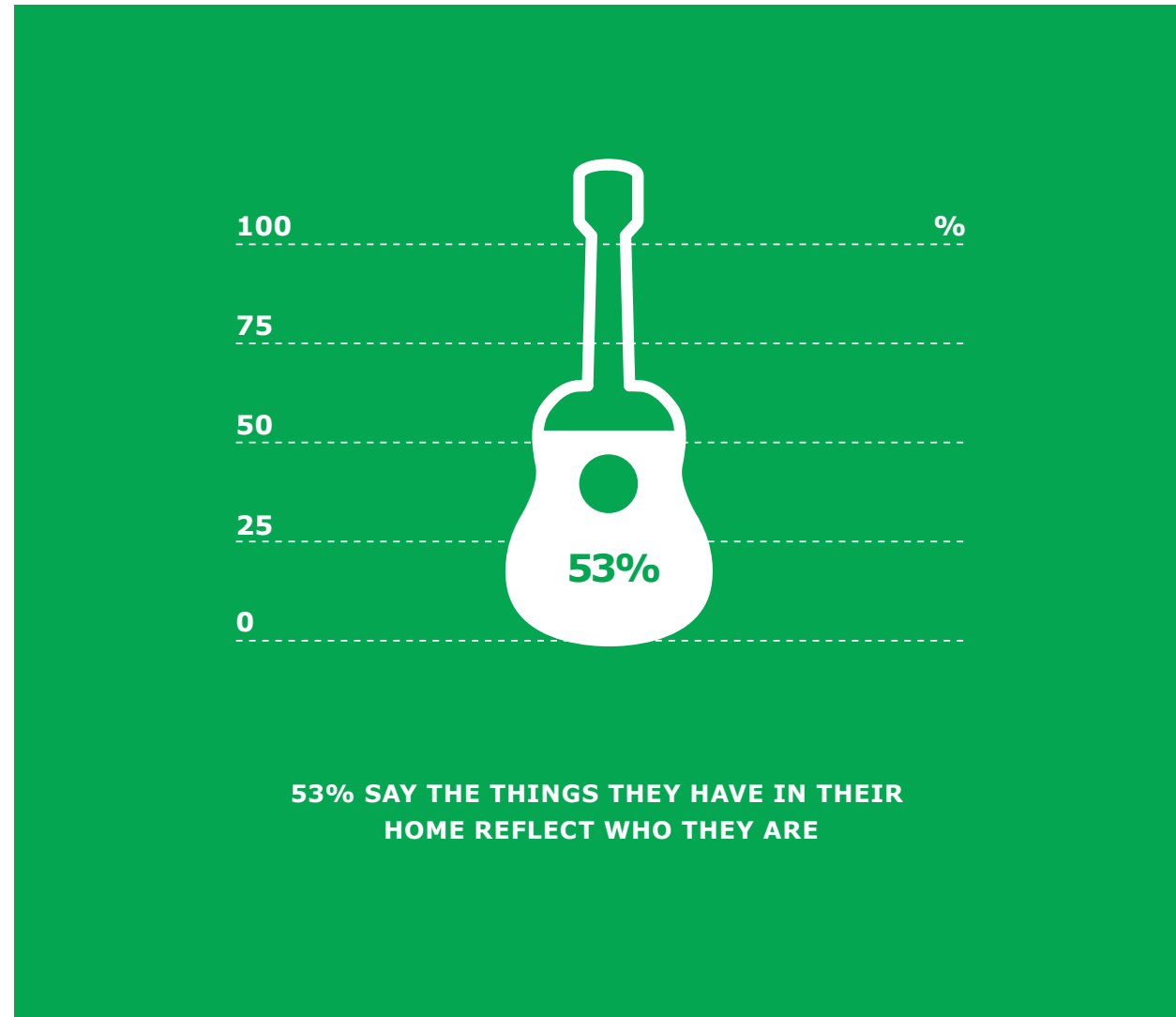
Kristina Niedderer, Professor of Design and Craft at the University of Wolverhampton, has studied what she calls “performative objects” or “action objects”, things that work as catalysts for social engagement. Or in other words: things that in one way or other make us perform activities, often social – like a dining table that acts as an enabler for a family to spend time together. Other studies focus on objects’ abilities to change our feelings. At the department of Man and Well-being at the Design Academy Eindhoven, designer Ilse



Crawford and her colleagues are looking at the possibility to design objects that can change our moods through their design, like “happy” or “sad” glasses. The things we surround us with clearly have the power to affect us beyond our understanding. Perhaps the next time we buy a sofa, we should consider if it’s a social one.

We see a shift in values regarding our relation to things at home – from valuing objects for their own sake to appreciating the experiences they can bring. A table isn’t just a beautiful or practical object; it is an enabler for social gatherings at home. In this new age of experiences, the value of an object isn’t the result of an objective evaluation. Instead, the way we appreciate our things seems to be connected to our personal needs and dreams on a deeper level. Happiness, enjoyable activities or even connecting with others might only be an object away.

Multi-functionality is a growing demand at home, due to smaller living spaces and sharing our homes with others. And we are already starting to find new practical solutions to this issue. But perhaps we could find new use for our things, simply by paying attention to how they make us behave and feel?



THE HOMINESS OF HACKING



NO TWO HOMES look the same. Not just because of the things and people in them, but also because our homes are a work in progress. Whether it's buying new cushions, putting up a photo of our loved ones or giving an old chair new life by painting it, we often try to increase the feeling of hominess. More and more people appreciate the experience of "hacking" their things. In our study, 37% say that they enjoy making, modifying and assembling things for their home. The largest numbers of home hackers in our study are found in Mumbai (57%) and Shanghai (49%).

The popularity of doing things on our own is broad, as is the concept of hacking. It can be applied to everything from making homemade pickles, to laying tiles or constructing a complete house. Sometimes we do it because we can't find the products we need in the store, sometimes we want to save money. Our study found that 32% prefer to repair things that break rather than buy a replacement, even if the cost is the same. Also, 22% regularly alter things to better fit their needs and preferences. But the fact is that many of us do it simply because we enjoy the work. The feel-

ing of being capable of creating something unique and the self-expression that connects us with like-minded people are some of the reasons we love to do it ourselves. And of course this affects our well-being too.

Research has shown that projects like building things, gardening, and other hands-on activities in our homes can make us feel better about our-

"IT SEEMS WE HAVE A LOT TO GAIN BY PERSONALISING AND TAKING BETTER CARE OF OUR THINGS"

selves. For example, it's been shown that older people who carry out do-it-yourself jobs are more satisfied with their lives than those who don't. The same seems to be true for hacking, and in addition to improving our well-being, it also affects the atmosphere in our homes and the feeling of home. In a recent study on the subject, many of the people who were interviewed described working on their homes as an important aspect of life. It wasn't only the work itself that mattered, but also what they

were working with. For example, malleable materials were more strongly associated with positive emotions than rigid materials. Flexible materials were also believed to better create feelings of hominess. It appears as if hacking is more about creating meaning than actually making stuff.

On the positive side, one doesn't have to be handy to enjoy the benefits of making things.

Some researchers claim it's not the modifying as such that matters, but the fact that we are interacting with the objects. In a Harvard study, elderly residents in a nursing home were given houseplants: one group was responsible for caring for them; the other had the staff watering

them. The plant-caring group showed improved alertness, increased social participation and greater general well-being. It seems that the journey might just be as important as the destination when it comes to hacking. Another example of the "caring effect" is the growing use of "dementia dolls" in care homes. Patients are given plastic dolls to care for, with reports of reduced anxiety and aggression as a result. Perhaps it's not surprising that growing plants is the number one choice among

the Silver generation to create a feeling of home, according to our study.

It seems we have a lot to gain by personalising and taking better care of our things, not only for our wallets, but for our well-being and feelings of hominess too. In times of increased focus on sustainability and well-being, we enjoy making things on our own. How does this affect the sense of home? And what does it mean for our homes in the future? Will we have fewer things but engage more with what we have? When we have to move more often, perhaps hacking is a shortcut to making ourselves feel at home?



THE THINGS ABOUT HOME

We live our lives among and through objects. They are reflections of our identities and bring our thoughts and feelings together. And as we've learned, the things we love seem to be those that go beyond form and function. It's the ones that make us mindful, enable our activities or offer interaction that help us grow as human beings.

Global challenges like overcrowding and lack of space are among the reasons why we are redefining the meaning of things. Objects are becoming subjects in our lives. Exploring how and what this means for the home might bring a new understanding of how our things can contribute to a better everyday life.



SAMUEL D. GOSLING

Professor in Psychology at the Department of Psychology, University of Texas with an expertise on the psychology within physical environments

HOW WOULD YOU SAY THAT THE THINGS IN OUR HOMES AFFECT OUR BEHAVIOUR?

In all kinds of ways. Many things we do to a location are deliberately done to try to affect our behaviour. Essentially that is what most of the things in the house are for. Some of these things are very ordinary – you know, we put the coat hook and the umbrella rack by the door so that we can put our coats and umbrellas there. They are also, and this is important, used to affect our thoughts and feelings. For example, if you want to create a sense of relaxation – what are the specific material things you do to your place of residence to create that? If you want to create a sense of family – what are the things you do to do that? In our work we propose three basic processes by which we connect to locations through things.

The first is the deliberate statement we make to ourselves, but mainly to others about our attitudes and values. We do this in a lot of domains, for example if you wear a t-shirt with your favourite band, you are telling people you like the Rolling Stones. It's a way of telling other people what I care about. Those things help us express our identity.

Secondly, many of the things we deliberately put up in our homes are put there for our own benefit. These things are what I call thought and feeling regulators; they do not have to be understood by others. So a lot of the things in our homes are about creating thoughts and feelings. Maybe happy memories of important people, places and times. Or things that allow us to concentrate, open our minds and be creative. We are doing these things deliberately to the home. The goal is not to communicate; it's really about affecting our own feelings.

The third way we relate to our homes is the idea that we engage in a lot of activities there. A subset of the activities leaves a material trace. The fact that we have a lot of books and they are organised by topic, and have things written in them and so on, that is essentially behavioural traces. Like an animal leaves evidence of their behaviour as it moves through the environment, we do too, with our things.

RELATIONSHIPS

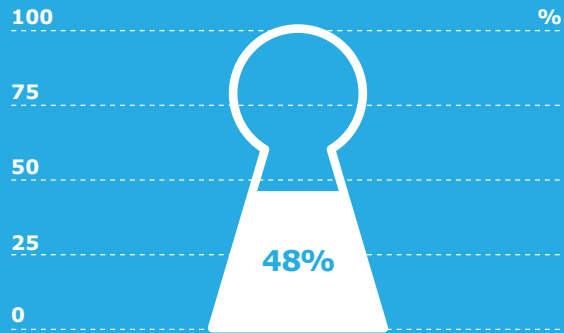
THE MULTI-CONNECTED RESIDENT

Relationships are an important part of what makes a home. You might even say they are essential. Almost half of the people in our study (48%) say that they think of a home as a place where they have their most important relationships. Those who are satisfied with their relationships at home are also happier and more satisfied with life in general. And maybe not surprisingly – feel better at home. Not only because of the happiness that the relationships bring, but perhaps also because relationships seem to make us want to make our homes more homey. Our study shows that people who think that relationships are central to what makes a home engage in gardening, play music, socialise and cook more than others. There is no doubt about it: relationships are an important aspect of what makes a home, and play a significant role in how we feel. But as the world around us is changing, so are our relationships at home.

Urbanization, technology and new living constellations challenge traditional ideas of what a home is, as well

as the relationships we have in our homes. In many societies, the nuclear family is no longer the norm and we see new ways of living together. Limited space, shortage of affordable housing and an increased awareness of our impact on the environment are other reasons why we see more alternative ways of living, like co-housing and micro-apartments. New kinds of households change our idea of what is a home, as well as our view on what is private and what is public. Digital technology has an impact too. With social media being an ever-present part of our lives, our concept of being alone has changed. We can be physically alone, but at the same time have a busy social life online. We can invite people less often to our physical homes, but share it digitally on a daily basis.

In short, we have more complex connections than ever – we are becoming multi-connected residents. How will the changes we see affect how we think and feel about relationships at home? And how can we use this knowledge to support better relationships at home?



48% SAY THAT THEY THINK HOME IS THE PLACE WHERE THEY HAVE THEIR MOST IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIPS



HOME IN FLUX



MOTHER, FATHER AND children: this has long been our standard image of relationships at home. But reality is very different. In fact, in the US, not even 20% of the households are nuclear families. A full 45%, or 107 million of the adults in the US are living as singles. Pew Research Center estimates that by the time today's young American adults reach their 50th birthday, 25% of them will have been single their entire lives. The same trend can be seen in other parts of the world too. In China, unmarried and older people living alone is a rising trend and a big break from traditional family structures. We see more people moving from rural areas to the cities, looking for an opportunity to support themselves and their families back home. This, together with the rise of a well-educated generation valuing the independence that comes with earning a good living, is driving a trend towards more single households in Chinese cities. On the other hand, in some Western societies like Australia and Canada, there is a growing trend of multi-generational homes; a type of housing that until now has been more common in the East. It's clear that things are on the move when it comes to how we live and with whom. We are breaking with old ways of doing things in all types of societies, but in different ways.

The changes in how people build their relationships in their homes are partly driven by urban challenges like small living spaces, lack of housing or expensive care for ageing populations. We are simply forced to live together to a greater extent. Hard-to-find housing and other practical aspects that influence our relationship combinations at home, are on the rise. The UN Population Fund estimates that three million people move to cities every week. The total number of urban citizens is expected to be five billion people by the year 2030 – but construction of new housing isn't keeping up. On the other hand, higher educational levels and our longing for independence result in fewer or later marriages and more people living alone. We see a shift in values, where individual needs and dreams and freedom to choose become more important.

Social scientist Bella DePaulo claims that more and more people are considering new ways of living and "not going nuclear". After spending several years travelling across the US doing research, she found several examples of different family conditions, such as intergenerational neighbourhoods planned with older people in mind and married couples who happily live apart. According to DePaulo, these choices are freer, more varied

and more in harmony with our modern need to be multi-connected.

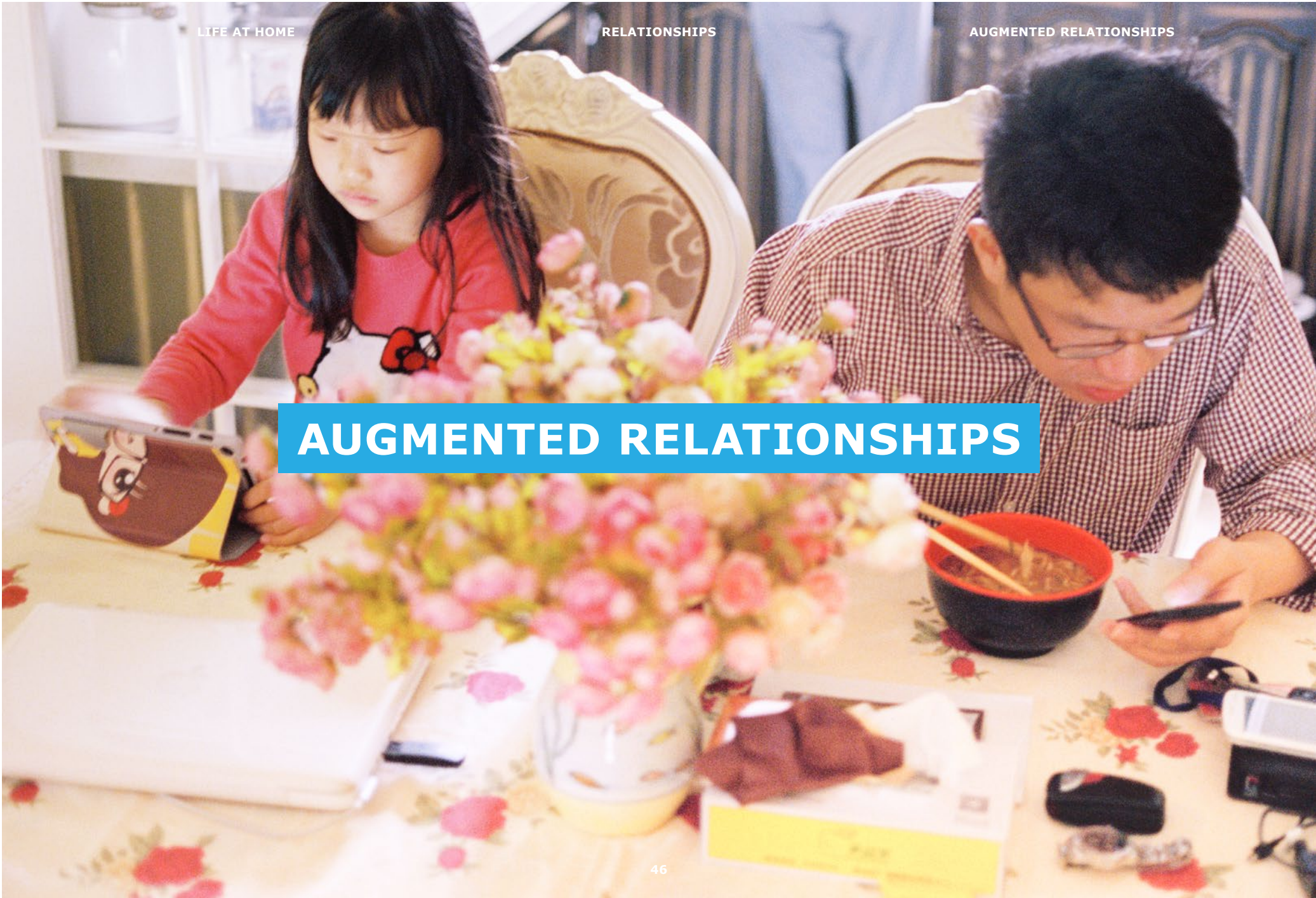
In several major cities, not only in the West but also in countries like South Korea and China, shared living – or co-living – is booming. This can of course be for economical or practical reasons. But it can also be a reaction to the increased solitude that many people feel today. Stories of the urban loneliness are shared in books, blogs and proved by several studies. Surrounded by strangers we lack the unity of small-scale communities. When the matrimonial relationship as the foundation for the home is replaced by single living, we seem to long for intimacy with other people. As a result of this, we see examples of new ways of living together, where people try alternative forms of property ownership or ways of sharing flats. For many, co-housing seems to be a way of reducing the isolation many of us experience today – in a way recreating the neighbourly support of the past.

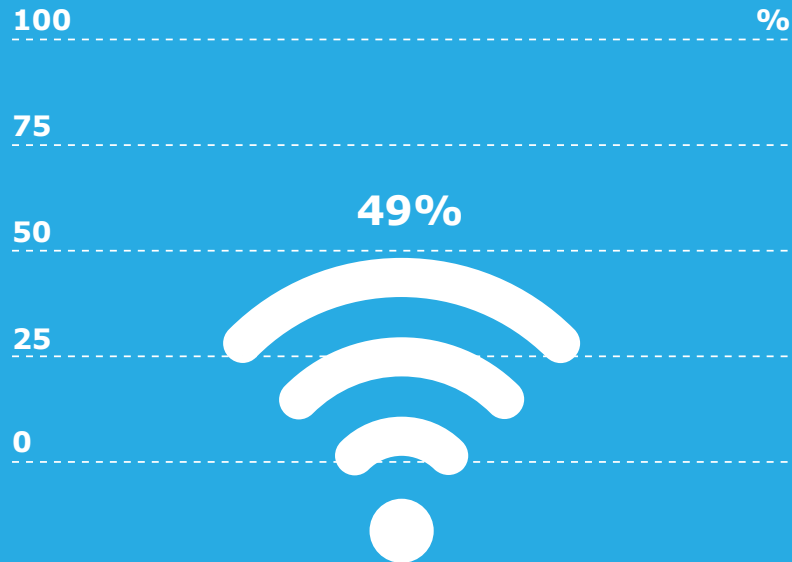
Whether it's for practical, emotional, cultural or economical reasons, more and more people are moving from traditional relationship structures to new arrangements at home. The red thread is that we see a more diverse approach to relationships. It's not that our relationships are becoming less

important at home, but we are finding new ways to form them. We are breaking the norms all over the world, in different ways. They say that necessity is the mother of invention. And we have invented many new types of families and households. The driving forces behind the urbanization challenge our way of living, and make it possible for us to ignore expectations and reinvent the idea of relationships at home. This also means that our homes need to change in order to suit new types of needs. Instead of generic homes, designed for one type of family dynamics, perhaps we will see even more types of homes in the future? For the time being, the new and alternative living arrangements all offer hints as to what a family – and a home – might mean in the coming decades.



AUGMENTED RELATIONSHIPS





IN SHANGHAI 49% THINK IT'S MORE IMPORTANT TO HAVE GOOD WI-FI THAN TO HAVE SOCIAL SPACES AT HOME

WE SPEND MORE and more time online and social media has become an important place for us to develop our relationships. We chat, we blog, we stream and share stories and images from our lives. It's no longer possible to separate our digital life from our real one; they both enhance and affect each other. The shift of platforms for our relationships – real world to digital – is also affecting how we look at our homes. For example, our study shows that 23% think it's more important to have good Wi-Fi than to have social spaces at home. In Shanghai, the number is even more extreme – 49% are Wi-Fi-lovers. Moreover, 19% think it's more important to keep in contact with friends online than to invite them to their homes. Technology definitely has an impact on our behaviours, needs and values when it comes to relationships at home.

In last years' IKEA Life At Home Report #2 we suggested that sharing food experiences via social media could make you feel a little less lonely. Technology clearly brings people together, and food is often at the centre. This goes for the real world and the virtual, as well as for old and new friendships. Apps aimed at food lovers connect people who would otherwise never meet, inviting them to get together over dinner. The fact is that more people are dining solo in the cities, which

is a change from the traditional social function of eating together. According to Sangyoub Park of Washburn University, the South Korean phenomenon known as *mukbang*, where viewers pay to watch strangers eat over a live video stream, is another example of how people are using technology to reconnect over a meal.

Our study shows that young people use social media in the kitchen more often than the older generation. 16% of the Millennials (18-29 years) eat or drink together online, compared to 8% among the Silver generation (60+ years) and 15% post pictures, for example while cooking, compared to only 2% among the oldest group. Eating alone, but together with friends and family online, is just one example on how new technology can change our idea of social interaction and relationships in the home. To many, reliable Wi-Fi at home is more important than having a social space, especially for those who have moved at least twice during the last two years (31%), for those who have more than one residence (32%) and for those who have children living with them in periods (32%). It seems, good Wi-Fi becomes especially important to social life when people are often on the move.

An older example of how technology has changed



our behaviour in our homes is television. When we all got TVs, they soon became a central object in our homes, and the TV room the place where all family members got together. But today, TV doesn't have that same function as a social glue. Or as Chris Baumann – Ph.D candidate and expert on organization and usage of everyday technology – puts it: "The idea of people watching TV with five people in the sofa is dead". However, when objects and places lose their function, new types of objects

and places replace them – and they don't have to involve several people to be social. Much like television replaced radio and the fireplace, these devices may cause small but important changes to how we think of and use our spaces. For example, in what way will our tablets – and other, not yet launched technical devices – change the way we design our homes? The way that technology will impact our homes and behaviours in the future is exciting and unexplored.

HOME AS A HAVEN



WE ALL HAVE a need for privacy at home. Our study shows that private space is a top priority for people when asked what they would do to improve their homes to feel better. In fact, “more private space” in their homes is something people want more than they want “more social space”. And as many as 25% would choose to spend an hour alone, if they had one to spare. We simply need private space. But as our living conditions change, we have less room for privacy. Our study shows that young people and those who share their living space with others often leave their homes to get some. According to professor Samuel D. Gosling, our need for privacy at home isn’t only about taking a break from socializing with others. It is also about being able to get work done, concentrate, be creative and relax. In other words: some of our most important needs are being challenged by the way we live.

The decreasing sense of privacy at home isn’t only about us having to live with more people under the same roof. It also has to do with the rise of the sharing economy and social media. Today, our homes are open, not only to ourselves but also to others. We share our homes online and offline. The only truly private space seems to be our minds.

Housing prices have sky-rocketed over the last two decades, and continue to do so. As more people look for better lives in the cities, our homes have become a lucrative business. A lack of housing makes people look for new alternatives. New technology brings easy-to-use home sharing platforms, temporary as well as permanent. If the home used to be a private space, closed to strangers, we are now opening it up. Does this

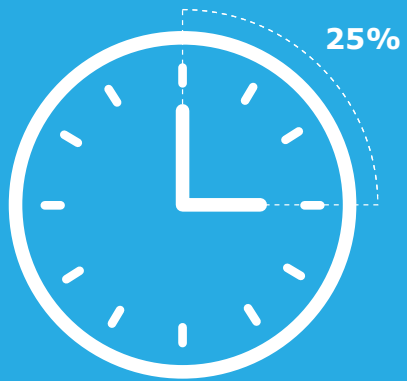
“WE ALSO DESIGN OUR HOMES TO SUIT THE NEEDS OF STRANGERS”

change our sense of our home as a personal haven where we can relax, be ourselves and feel at home? The trend of sharing spaces with people we don’t know also affects our homes, not only mentally but also physically. We see examples of people actually designing their homes in order to take on guests (on a regular basis), for example by building extra storage space, installing electronic locks or putting bunk beds in the children’s room to be able to lease the master bedroom. A couple of years ago, this would probably have been seen as strange. It seems that inviting people into our homes – virtual-

ly and physically – means that we no longer design our homes only to suit our own needs, but also to make them attractive to strangers.

The housing shortage could probably force even more people to live together in the future. Living with others, especially people that we are not particularly close to, can create new feelings at home. Shared spaces lead to compromises on things like the level of organisation, types of décor, timings for activities etc. Professor Samuel D. Gosling claims that informal power structures often arise in these situations, where one person becomes more in charge. This in turn means that the different

psychological needs in the households are not met. According to Gosling, it’s the combination of power struggles and the lack of space that makes privacy more important. He argues that household members that haven’t played a big part in creating the space at home often find their own little hideaways to escape to. Whether it’s the garden, basement or even the bathroom; people tend to have spaces where they can get the privacy they want. Perhaps next time our household members annoy us by taking extra long showers, we should just let them be.



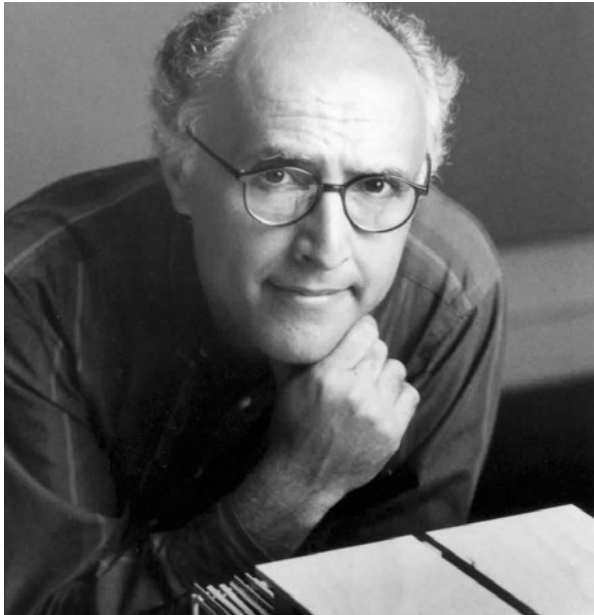
**25% WOULD CHOOSE TO
SPEND AN HOUR ALONE IF THEY
HAD ONE TO SPARE**



HOME LIFE IN A MULTI-CONNECTED WORLD

Relationships are a fundamental part of the home and maybe even more so today than a decade ago. And it's no surprise, as they are key to our well-being at home. Our study shows that positive feelings about the home increase when people live together. And the larger the household – the more feelings of belonging, excitement and caring. But at the same time, we do have an undeniable need for privacy. Thanks to our digital life we can create a virtual “room” wherever we are, and use it to create privacy but also to socialise with others. This might be one way of handling the paradox our study points to: we crave more privacy at home but at the

same time we want to nurture relationships there, as they are strongly associated with what actually creates a home. Bringing our relationships closer and into our home, both physically and digitally, affects our view on what is private and public, along with our behaviours and how we design our homes. In research we have found that the number of different relationships at home are growing, which creates new needs and challenges. What does this mean for our future homes? Will they become multi-functional centres for all the different needs of our relationships? And if so, how will the home of the multi-connected resident be designed?



AVI FRIEDMAN

Professor at the School of Architecture,
McGill University

WHAT CHANGES DO YOU SEE IN THE WAY WE LIVE TODAY?

We see many new family compositions and different types of families, completely different from the ones we used to see right after World War II. These are part of changes in society that have to do with the new demographic types. In some parts of the world, the families made up of parents and two or three kids are now a minority. They still form a big chunk of the family pie, but their numbers are getting smaller. Instead, we see other types of families increasing. Except for single parents and same sex marriages, we see a comeback of multigenerational families, for example in North America. This will give rise to completely different spaces and different attitudes. You will still need a bedroom and so on, but there will be completely other needs than those of traditional families.

WHAT CONSEQUENCES DO THESE CHANGES HAVE?

The housing market must adapt to these changes. When apartment buildings are designed and constructed, builders must offer a greater flexibility. We already see houses being designed to accommodate different types of families, so called

adaptable houses. And in North America and Europe, what we see is that apartment buildings are becoming more of a neighbourhood. Maybe you have a few rooms in the building that you can rent for family gatherings and other social activities, or a kindergarten in the same building as you live.

HOW CAN DESIGN WORK AS A CATALYST FOR SOCIAL INTERACTION?

I believe there are several things you can do. For example, if you have a family room that is comfortable, it's likely that there will be more opportunities for family members to sit together for a while. If you have a nice and comfortable dining room, it's more likely that the family will eat there together. And vice versa: if you don't have a comfortable dining place in which the entire family can sit and dine, the family will not sit there. If there is no place to eat breakfast, people will bring their breakfast on the way. These are important elements that need to be in place in order to change our social behaviour in our homes.

PLACE

THE EXTENDED HOME

They say there is no place like home. But where is that exactly? When we asked people what matches their idea of a home, we found that few associate home with a geographic place. In fact, as few as 7% think of their home as a specific location. Instead, 37% believe the concept of home goes beyond the four walls and 38% consider their neighbourhood part of their home. We also found that many people go outside of their residences to get the feeling of home. In fact, 42% feel more at home outside their actual residence. When you think of it, it's no surprise that feelings, habits and activities that used to take place in the home, now find their way out. Life at home is getting more crowded, and we turn to other alternatives to fulfil our needs as human beings.

We are all different, and we all have our own personal needs at home. But our basic human needs can be generalized in

terms of physiological needs like eating or sleeping, a need for safety like a lock on the door, and needs for love and belonging. Many of these needs have until now been fulfilled at home, where we have found a place to relax, feel safe, build relationships, express our identity and find peace to read, write and be creative. But our homes are becoming crowded and to many of us, it's difficult to create a lasting sense of familiarity at home. One example of this is when strangers have to move in together to find a place to stay in overcrowded cities. It can sometimes be difficult to find room for our personal needs at home in our modern society. Our fundamental needs are not always met, and some of them seem to be satisfied in new ways and in new places. How do people try to fulfil the needs that traditionally were fulfilled in their physical homes? And how does the quest for solutions outside of the home affect how we view our home as a physical place?



**38% CONSIDER THE
NEIGHBOURHOOD IN WHICH
THEY LIVE A PART OF
THEIR HOME**

LIFE AT HOME

PLACE

HOME AWAY FROM HOME

HOME AWAY FROM HOME



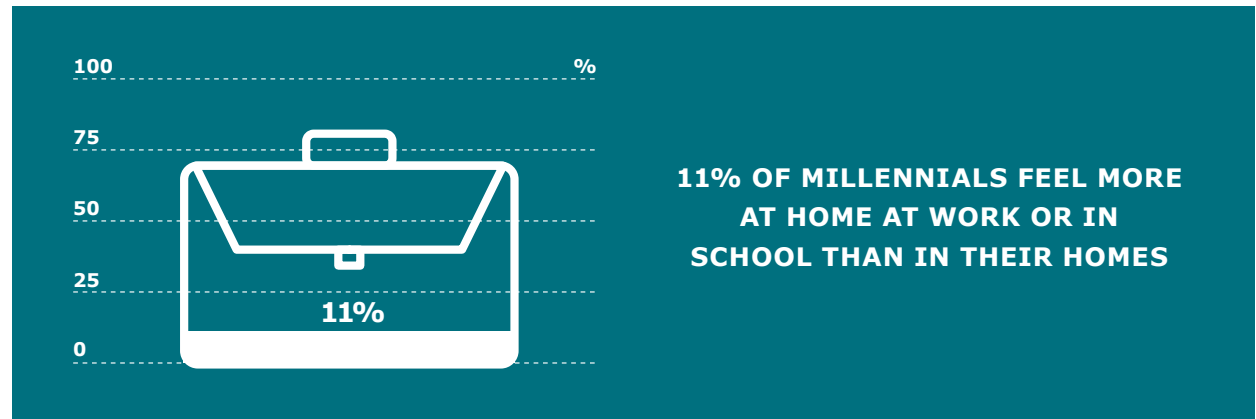
ACCORDING TO OUR study, feelings of safety, familiarity, relaxation, freedom and intimacy are strongly associated with the home. Today, many public spaces such as cafés, hotels and restaurants are designed to appeal to those exact feelings by mimicking a home. Borrowing the appearance of a home is part of an overall “casualization trend”. In the restaurant business, this is expressed by “family style” dinners, mismatching dinnerware and informal service. And in several big cities, so called “underground restaurants” where amateur chefs open up their homes to cook for strangers, are gaining in popularity. This might be the ultimate experience for those looking for a truly personal, authentic and homey feeling. The increase in temporary living solutions make it challenging to really make oneself at home – and might even sometimes be viewed as a waste of time. As a result of this, we see more people moving activities that used to take place in the home to other locations. Eating, socializing, relaxing, sleeping, and as we’ve seen in our study, even looking for privacy and revitalization.

The lines between our homes and other places are becoming blurred, not least when it comes to work. One important reason for that is because of our changing living patterns. Many of us spend as much time at work as in our homes, sometimes



even more. It's not surprising that we see a trend of more homey settings in the work places. Residential design influences informal areas, such as lounges. In extreme cases, some offices even appear and function as "homes away from home", complete with kitchens and rooms for napping. The other side of the coin is that we live in a time when many of us only need a laptop to do our job. This changes the demands and functions of homes in the same way as for work places – as our needs in these different places change. The feelings of home seep into our work places, and the mood of work enters our homes. But what does this mean for our emotions and attitudes towards our home?

To Millennials (18-29 years), this development seems to spark a completely new approach to home and the time they spend in it. Only a few people across all age groups (6%) feel more at home at work than at home, but as many as 11% of Millennials say that they feel more at home at work or school than in their homes. Actually, Millennials seem to have extended their home to even more places than work. For example, they feel more at home than others at the gym, at cafés and in their friends' homes. Only 37% of the Millennials feel most at home in their actual residence. Millennials also tend to spend more time outside of their res-



idences doing typical home activities; they relax, watch TV and sleep somewhere else to a larger extent than other age groups. It's clear they can find homey feelings in other places than their homes. As we can only expect our living spaces to shrink, perhaps this could serve as inspiration for the rest of us too?

The rise of home sharing services is another example of our need for the feeling of home. In our study, we found that the main reasons why we would want to stay in someone else's private home instead of a hotel is that we think of a home as more inviting and having more character. Values that are usually associated with the home are now sought in other places too. This brings a chance to fulfil our

11% OF MILLENNIALS FEEL MORE AT HOME AT WORK OR IN SCHOOL THAN IN THEIR HOMES

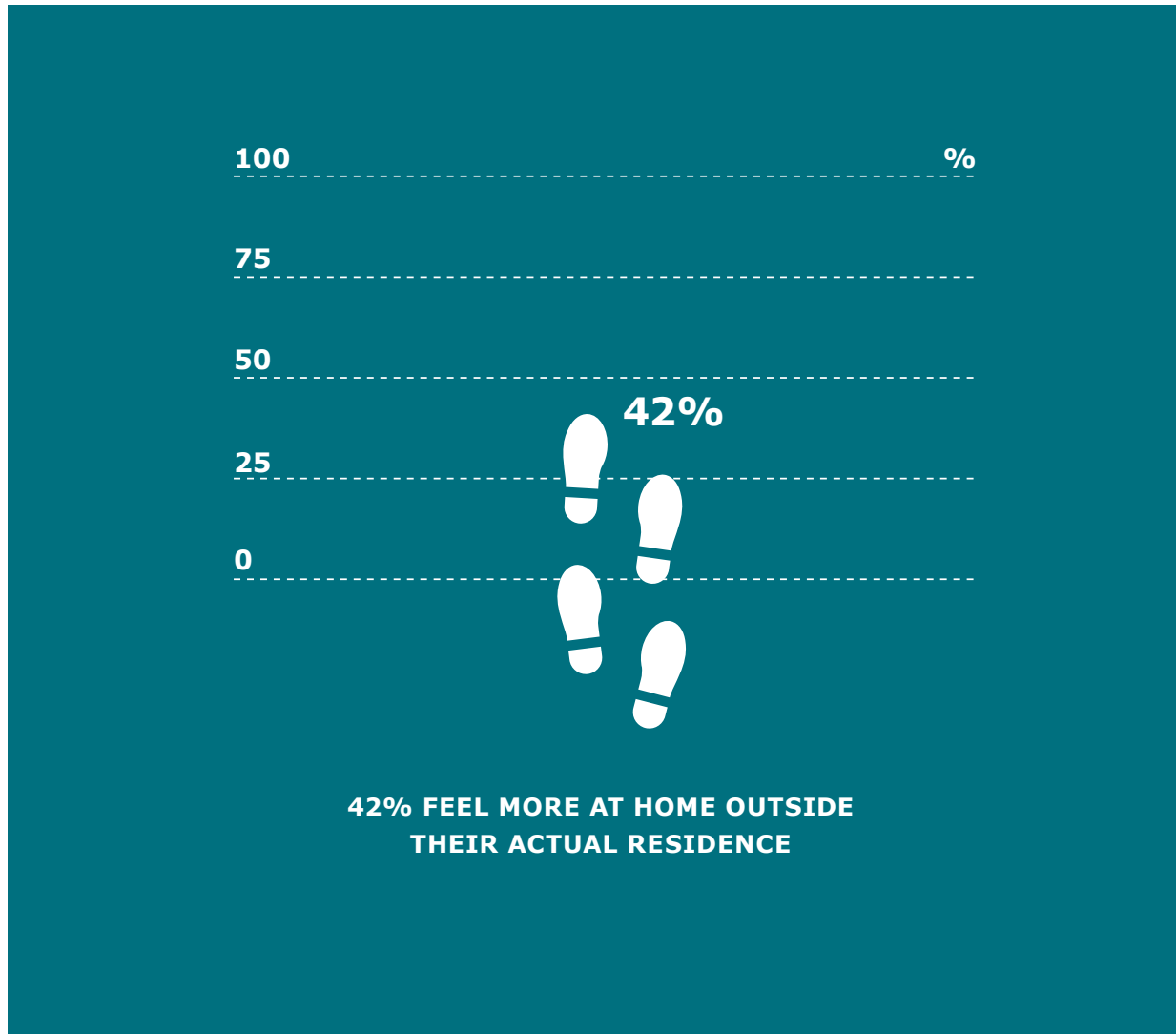
human needs and opens up to new experiences and opportunities that can bring flavour to our lives. The city is becoming our living room, with a common interior for all of us. This offers us access to new areas and experiences the city has to offer. In a way, this drags our homes out into public spaces, as well as turns the city into more of a home to us. But the blurred lines between public and private space and our longing to experience the feelings of home also raises questions. What does it do to our feelings for our physical homes? What needs – emotional and functional – will they have to fulfil in the future? And how will the breakdown of the private-public divide affect the way we design and use our homes and public spaces? Will apartments without kitchens and offices with beds be the new normal?

LIFE AT HOME

PLACE

NEIGHBOURHOOD REVIVAL

NEIGHBOURHOOD REVIVAL



AS A NATURAL consequence of urbanization, we live closer to each other than before. Despite this, many of us don't even know the names of our next-door neighbour. Some studies show that we have become more disconnected from our neighbours, and city planners even talk about the "death of the neighbourhood". At the same time – or maybe because of this – we are witnessing strong tendencies of a neighbourhood revival. It might not only be because it's practical to have someone to borrow sugar from, but also an expression of how we stimulate our emotional needs outside of our residences.

It's been said that anyone can buy a good house, but that good neighbours are priceless. At IKEA, we want to understand and improve life at home and this also means learning about the life surrounding it. In 2015 we did an experiment to see if we could increase well-being, comfort and happiness in a neighbourhood by promoting better local relationships. By creating a physical and digital platform for social interaction together with the locals, we found a strong desire to get in touch with others. By giving people a push in that direction, they became prouder, more comfortable and felt more secure in their neighbourhood – basic needs when it comes to what makes a home. Our survey

also supports this: respondents that make efforts to connect with others in their area tend to feel better, happier and more satisfied with their lives in general. It's evident that if we want to improve our lives at home, we could benefit from looking beyond the four walls of our residences. And it actually seems that more people are picking up on this in various efforts to re-energise community spirit.

Initiatives that try to create more social communities are being introduced in many parts of the world. For example, in both North America and Europe, kindergartens are built into apartment buildings to create tighter bonds between residents and their neighbours. Other types of mixed-use living communities include stand-alone home living, but with added places to work and socialise – some call this “dorms for grown ups”. In some places, there are even arranged activities to encourage socialization among residents, like the micro-apartment building Carmel Place in New York where day trips, classes and workshops are organized. But it's not only in the housing industry we see things happening, citizens are inventing solutions too. There are many grass root initiatives that promote tighter communities and sense of belonging, sometimes referred to as DIY urbanism. Urban gardening, pop-up bike repair centres and fleamarkets are



some examples of how people all over the world are actively trying to reconnect with their neighbourhood. It seems our quest for privacy in our homes is contradicted by a craving for belonging, which is rapidly changing how we interact with our communities.

The neighbourhood has been reborn as a focal

point for relationships, safety and even identity-building. In other words, for emotional human needs. We are actively trying to rebuild aspects that seem to have gotten lost in urbanization: a sense of belonging, trust and protection associated with the small society. The home is extending outside the four walls, bringing increased room for living, creating and self-expression.

THE PERMANENT TEMPORARY



ALL OVER THE world, we see increasingly fluid living. In the cities, many of us have to move more often than we would want to – making temporary living a permanent situation for many. For example, in North America, people move on average every five years. Studies show that increased temporary living is a global phenomenon that sometimes even leads to homelessness. The driving factors such as overcrowding, expensive living and housing shortage are connected to urbanization. But urbanization isn't the only driver behind temporary living. One of the greatest challenges of today is the dramatic increase in forced migration.

Conflicts and disasters in many parts of the world are forcing people to leave their homes, often without knowing where they will end up. This way, all aspects of home are lost: space, things, relationships and a place to call home. Designer Ilse Crawford puts it like this: "Home is a primal need, not an affectation. To be 'homeless' is not just to be without a house; the feeling of vulnerability that goes with having no home is really profound." So, can a sense of home, feelings of safeness and belonging be created in a temporary place?

The IKEA Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Stitching INGKA Foundation (the owner of the

"One of the most interesting and important topics discussed today regarding space is the question of migration and belonging. When we see a lot of people leaving their homes for economic and political reasons, what kind of homes do they and can they create in their new place? Originally, home was just built as a shelter, a protection against the environment, but it has become a complex space – a personal space reflecting the individual. What happens to people who are forced to leave their homes and make a new home in a shelter; how do they combine that shelter and an identity for themselves?"

**Professor Kathy Mezei
Professor Emerita, Department of Humanities, Simon Fraser University**

IKEA Group), launched flat-pack refugee shelters in 2015, which offer a place to sleep, socialise and create feelings of home. A door lock provides a sense of privacy and security, and solar panels offer electricity to enable living after dark. Other similar solutions for when people abruptly lose their homes can be seen in disaster areas. For example, post-tsunami housing made from local materials

provide easy access to a place called home. We know how important the home is for our well-being, our ability to grow, connect with others and simply live, and it's clear that design can be used to change lives. But the question remains: how can we use our knowledge about our emotional needs at home when creating new solutions to tackle the issue of temporary living?

ALL OVER THE PLACE

The home cannot be limited by physical space – it continues beyond the four walls of a residence. The feelings and emotions of a home such as safeness, comfort, caring, belonging and familiarity can be found in multiple places. Needs, emotions and activities that until now have been confined to the home, are moving outside of it, extending the home in the process. Neighbourhoods and cities are offering us new places to kick back, relax and be ourselves. Claiming public spaces as our own private ones, gives

access to the city for more people. But our reduced sense of privacy at home – practically and emotionally – complicates our relation to our home and the definition of it. How do we define the home, when the emotional and practical needs of home can be met in other places? And is it really possible to replace a safe, permanent haven with other solutions? Focusing on basic human needs when we shape our homes and cities could perhaps be a good way to reinvent what actually makes a home.



KATHY MEZEI

Professor Emerita in the Department of Humanities at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, also co- author of the book *Domestic Space Reader*

WHY DO YOU THINK IT IS INTERESTING TO EXPLORE THE MEANING OF THE HOME AND DOMESTIC SPACE?

It's a complicated question. It is important to distinguish between the material home and the psychological and emotional home. Most of us think of home as something as a concrete- physical but this is not the case for everybody. What does home mean to a homeless person? We must distinguish between these two. In the West, up until the 1700-century, the home was also a work place. The idea of home as we know it is quite new. The concept of intimacy and privacy is relatively new but at the same time, we see a change today. The home is becoming a new workspace. We are going back again to where the house and home combine everyday family life and work. But what does that mean to our homes? How do you create a home with intimacy, coziness and comfort when it's also a place for work?

WHAT DOES HOME AND DOMESTIC SPACE MEAN TO US?

In the West we want intimacy, privacy and convenience at home. But today, the housing situation in many large cities is terrible. Very few people can

afford housing. And we can see the same development everywhere. Therefore people are opening up their homes to rent out a room, for example, to be able to afford living in the city. I am wondering what it means for the concept of home. What happens if you can't have privacy? Maybe, we will create platforms for objects that make you feel more at home.

SUMMARY

HOME: A NEVER-ENDING JOURNEY

The ways in which we design, construct and live in our homes are reflections of the world around us. Our basic feelings and needs at home are constant, but changing values, lifestyles and societies force us to meet these needs in different ways and different places than before. We all have our own personal needs, dreams and aspirations at home, but we have found some common tendencies in how the idea of the home is being reinvented.

Our crowded cities impact the physical conditions of our homes. Housing shortages, more expensive living and smaller spaces affect our possibilities to meet our needs at home. Values that previously were associated with the home are now sought for outside the four walls of our residencies. We stimulate our need for hominess and belonging by re-energising our neighbourhoods – blurring the line between public and private. People are creating homes away from their homes.

The new physical circumstances in our homes are balanced by digitalization, which fundamentally changes our human social behaviour as well as



our concepts of being alone and socialising. With new technology, we can be alone, together – or together and alone. This also creates an increased need for privacy and lone time. To meet our needs, our homes have to be flexible enough to make room for both privacy and socialising – physical as well as digital.

Shrinking living spaces and increased awareness about sustainable living create a new approach to the things in our homes. On the one hand, we let things play a bigger part in our lives and actively interact with them to feel good in our homes. On the other hand, we want to be mindful of our things and keep our homes uncluttered. We are moving from appreciating things for their own sake, to valuing the experiences they bring. In this new age, the things that are important to us are the ones that enable us to do what we love.

When our possibilities to adjust the three-dimensional aspects of our homes are limited, we can turn to our senses – an unexplored area with great potential to improve our lives at home. The senses have a strong impact on our emotions and behaviours – and thereby our personal well-being at home. Urban life brings a sensory environment that places new demands on our homes. Paying

“WITH NEW TECHNOLOGY, WE CAN BE ALONE, TOGETHER – OR TOGETHER AND ALONE.”

more attention to our senses could not only benefit our well-being at home, but perhaps also offer new and unexpected solutions to the challenges we face in our lives at home today.

No matter how we define what makes a home – connected to space, things, relationships or place – what matters is that we reflect on how the changes in the world around us impact our lives at home. And that we try to use that knowledge to meet our personal preferences and needs. For us at IKEA,

this report is only the start of our journey. To truly understand what makes a home, we must view the home as a never-ending, constantly changing idea. With this report, we have shared some insights on how people of today feel in their homes, what they need from their homes and how they create meaning in their lives at home. But as the world around us changes, so does our life at home. We will continue to explore what makes a home in order to improve our business and to be able to create a better life at home for the many people.

REAL LIFE STORIES

THE PRIVATE-PUBLIC RELATIONSHIPS OF HOME

AT IKEA, WE visit thousands of homes every year. We ask people to invite us into their homes in order for us to fully understand how they live, what their needs are, their frustrations, their happy moments and their dreams. We know a lot about what's going on in people's lives at home. We also know that the ever-changing world around us affects the way we live, which means that life at home is constantly evolving. More people move to the cities, we live in smaller living spaces and in new types of household constellations. Compact living has become standard for many of us. Living in a confined space – alone or with others – is a constant compromise between different opinions and needs, practical as well as emotional. In our survey we found that private space is a top priority for improving well-being at home. At the same time, almost half of the people in our survey think of their homes as where they have their most important relationships. The tension between want-

ing to have private and social space is clear, and perhaps more interesting now than ever.

– *When my father was growing up, that family had 50 people in one house. There were so many people in the house that it was not possible for them to have meals together. So first the children had their meals, then the men, and then the ladies.*

Milind, living with wife, two grown up children and their grandmother

Mumbai

Not that long ago, we did almost everything with other people around. An entire family living in the same room made it difficult to have a private space for eating, sleeping or attending to personal needs. The options for private space were limited, and self-expression was not at the top of the agenda. But times change and today



we live differently. Perhaps more importantly, we also think differently. We seek to fulfil ourselves more than ever, we want our lives to be meaningful and our homes to be more than just a place to sleep. Many want their homes to express who they are and we expect this from other people's homes too. Increased emphasis on the individual can be seen everywhere, more in some parts of the world than others, and it's an important driver of the increased need for personal space. We

want to make our own life choices, create our own destinies and have room for me in our homes – a need for privacy and the ability to express our personalities. As part of this, the friction between the private and the social is growing. At IKEA, we want to learn more about this in order to continue creating solutions that can make life at home better, both today and tomorrow.

- *My dream home is designed by myself, and it's my own work. It's important for me to do it myself. The things made by me suit my own personal need."*

Pascal, living in a dormitory with another student
Shanghai

In this study we interviewed people in Stockholm, Shanghai, Mumbai and New York. We wanted to understand more about their feelings of home and in particular how they view the tension between private and social needs.

THE ME AND THE WE AT HOME

- *It's important having social as well as private spheres in the home. In my dream home I would be able to have a big social space where*



I could invite others for dinners, as well as a more private part with bedrooms and so on. If I, after hosting a big dinner, could offer everyone a sofa for a nap or a space where they could just relax, that would be richness to me. The way we live now does not afford us that many options, since we have chosen to live in the city centre which means that

we live in a small apartment. It can be a bit frustrating when we have to rearrange the room every time we have friends over for dinner. But I much prefer to live in a small space in the city centre compared to having more living space outside of the city.

Fredrik, living with husband and baby
Stockholm

When reflecting on the statements and views expressed by the 17 families and households we visited, we found two essential emotional needs that people expect their homes to accommodate; the me and the we. The me concerns the development and recharging of oneself – a sanctuary, a place to rest, a place to engage in activities that are just about you. The we concerns activities with others – nurturing and building relationships, and spending time with family and friends.

- *For me, home is where I come back to my nephew and niece. It doesn't make me feel alone, I do need people around me. When I go home, my niece comes jumping at me. That human interaction, human feeling, is important for me at home.*

**Sameer, living with mother, brother,
sister-in-law, and niece**

Mumbai

The need for love and belonging extends beyond the four walls of our homes. But reflecting over what the people in this study say, there seem to be special emotions attached to spending time with others at home that for some can't be satisfied in other places. The people we met describe a specific feeling of being the most relaxed me in their

homes – a feeling that appears to make socialising in the home more effortless than in other places. Socialising with others at home seems to be an important part in the making of a home and, for many, relationships are what actually transform a house into a home.



- *It would be very different living without social spaces in the home. We could either not invite people over, or instead go out to spend time with them. It would be ok, but it would be a big pity. That way the home would mainly be a place to rest.*

Feng Wang Wei, living with wife, parents, and child starting school
Shanghai

Many of us can relate to having moments of quietness, like when the rest of the household has gone to bed and we can sink into a comfortable sofa in front of the TV, or even doing the simplest things like chopping vegetables. Living in smaller spaces, these little moments are important for us to feel privacy at home. But having privacy is not only about being physically alone. The psychological



aspects of privacy include being free from expectations and just be “the most relaxed me”. Sometimes we can experience this with other people around us, being as comfortable as can be. Some people describe meeting the love of their life as “coming home”. Perhaps it’s because in our most secure relationships we can combine the me and the we. And the same goes the other way around: in order to be able to nurture the we, we benefit from privacy. The me and the we are dependent on each other and the challenge is to make them work together to feel good in our homes. So how

do people relate to the friction between me and we? How do they create solutions to combine the two? On the following pages we describe the issue using real people’s own words.

- *The home is where we can be most comfortable and unproductive. We can be together in the same room, but not talk to each other and still feel good.*

Juliette, living with friend and two dogs
Shanghai



THE FRICTION BETWEEN ME AND WE AT HOME

- Privacy is probably my biggest frustration living like this. My parents living habits are different from mine, and if I could choose I would make a child's room for my son, which would also make it easier for me to have

privacy. When my son gets older, we can move to our own place but right now it's necessary to live with my parents in order for them to take care of my son when my wife and I are at work.

Feng Wang Wei, living with wife, parents, and child starting school

Shanghai

Making time and space for the sometimes conflicting needs of the me and the we within the same home is often a tricky puzzle. We often have to make trade-offs. Their inherent differences create tension across the home. As an example, social gatherings can easily disturb someone's privacy, but taking excessive care not to disturb others can also be limiting. The lack of control over the psychological space seems to be an issue for many of the people we talked to. To a certain degree, these disturbances and frustrations are daily companions for all people who share a home with others. Living with others can be seen as a constant compromise. We move in together and bring belongings that don't match. We live together and have to make room for our different needs. And as we know, the rapid increase in people moving to cities means that people have to live in smaller spaces and in new types of household constellations – sometimes even with complete strangers. Considering that we can only expect this trend to grow, the friction between me and we is becoming more important to understand than ever.

- As soon as someone opens the door they can see me in my bed, which makes it hard for me. Also, the other person living in my room talks

very loudly when he speaks to his girlfriend every evening. The biggest reason for me living here is that it is cheap.

Pascal, living in a dormitory together with another student

Shanghai

Of course, living with others is also positive in many ways: the feeling of joy you get when coming home from work and being greeted by children, a partner or a pet or the feeling of belonging when you eat a spontaneous dinner together with a room-mate. But we could see in our home visits that privacy is not always prioritised, for practical, emotional or financial reasons. Sometimes people simply can't have physical privacy at home, and sometimes they prioritise other things.

Another aspect of the me-we tension is the fact that not all of us share our homes with others. Single households make up a large percentage of today's homes and our survey shows that people who live alone feel more privacy and stillness at home than others – but on the other hand sense less love and belonging. We tackle the tension between private and public space from different angles depending on how we live.

– When my girlfriend or some other family member is visiting, it makes me feel very different. When I have someone at home waiting for me, it gives me the urge to go home early rather than work late.

Yan Chenhao, living single

Shanghai

Looking at the numbers in our survey, most people describe their home as the place where they have their most important relationships and most say that they are satisfied with their homes. But when we enter people's homes and spend time with them, we discover another side. The public-private tension means that people have moments when they feel frustrated and out of control. We see that people, regardless of how they live, find creative ways of adapting and making room for private and social space. It might be simple things like using earbuds to create a zone of privacy in a cramped dorm room or having blankets for guests to use when sitting on the floor and, thereby, creating social space. Some of these habits are so insignificant that people would never even think to acknowledge them in a survey. But they are there. And they are signs that adaptations to the new compact way of living are taking place.



THE FLEXIBLE HOME

– The balcony is my special place. Sometimes I spend time on the balcony just to be alone. We can still look at each other, but it still feels more like privacy to me. She watches TV, I have a scotch and smoke a cigar.

Matthew, living with wife and toddler

New York

People who live together with others in small spaces often have a hard time finding privacy inside their homes. Still, many have their own methods for getting more space and time to themselves, as well as for being social. When there are no designated private and public rooms, people find creative solutions adapted to suit smaller spaces.

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es. For many, the spaces in their homes must be multifunctional. The living room must be able to be transformed into a dining room and bedrooms must function as both studies and places for sleeping. In our interviews, we have seen a lot of examples of creative ways to transform a home in small ways. Let's now look at how people find solutions for managing the constant tension between me and we at home.

CREATING PRIVATE SPACE

– *Since I live in a foreign country and can't visit my family, the home for me is a place that I can come back to after a long day of work and just relax. Get away from all the stress that Shanghai brings.*

Diego, living single
Shanghai

Despite the fact that our need for privacy seems to be universal, our study indicates that privacy can mean different things to different people. When we look at our survey we find that Mumbai has the highest proportion of respondents who crave more private space in order to increase their well-being. But in our interviews, we found that requirements concerning the personal sphere

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were sometimes less in Mumbai than in New York and Stockholm, for example. This indicates that the physical definition of privacy varies between individuals, and probably also between cultures. For some, it could be enough just to close their eyes, while others demand more to experience privacy.

– *We have a lot in common so we don't feel that we need to be alone. We are always doing the*

THE PRIVATE-PUBLIC RELATIONSHIPS OF HOME

things we want to do, but together. That is how we do to feel relaxed. But sometime it's a challenge living in a small space, and that is why we have always wanted to have a two-room apartment so that we don't have to disturb each other. For example, one time I sat a whole night on the floor in the bathroom and worked when I didn't want to disturb Andreas.

Norah, living with boyfriend
Stockholm



During our home visits, we observed that many create privacy by having a favourite place in their homes, a physical place that is special to me. For instance, one of our interviewees in New York always sits in her favourite spot in the right-hand corner of the sofa when working from home, chatting in the evening or working after her boyfriend has gone to bed. A woman who was interviewed in Stockholm always lies down on the bed with her laptop on her knee when she comes home from work. Having a “favourite” spot seems to be one way in which people create a sense of privacy.

- *When I want to have privacy, I read a book. Even if someone talks to me I don't hear it. Books are privacy for me.*

**Juliette, living with friend
and two dogs**
Shanghai

Habits, rules and routines are other ways in which people create private space at home. We observed a group of flatmates in New York who used coordinated schedules, allowing each one to get at least some alone-time in their shared apartment each week. A woman co-habiting with three others in Stockholm is a strong advocate for house rules, stating their importance in achieving some



sense of privacy. In her flat they use signals, like leaving their door ajar if they are not at home and closing it if they want time to themselves. She claims that she gets more privacy living together with non-relatives simply because of the clearly-stated rules and set routines. When she was living with her husband and children, she never reflected on her need for privacy. Looking back,

she now understands that privacy was something that she was missing.

In some of the homes we visited, we found that making room for me at home can be achieved through objects that act as symbols for private space. Pascal, a Chinese student sharing a 15 m2 dorm room in Shanghai, faces perhaps the great-

LIFE AT HOME

est challenges in achieving privacy of all the interviewees in our study. His bed is barely a metre from his roommate's bed. Nevertheless, Pascal has found ways to increase his sense of privacy. He keeps a rice cooker and a kettle by the foot of his bed, so that he can make some tea or rice whenever he feels like it. This appears to give him more psychological control over the space. He has also hung some decorations on the wall above his bed. Pascal says that looking at them gives him a feeling of privacy and makes him feel at home.

Some people we met are also in the habit of leaving their residence to get more privacy. One man in New York fulfils his need for privacy on the subway. There he gets the time alone that he needs, although in the company of strangers. Like many others, one man we met in Shanghai describes



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cafés as his quiet places. During our interview sessions, we also met people who found their calm spots in natural settings. Our survey supports the conclusion that the "extended" home is often used to create space for privacy.

Another interesting finding is that food and cooking are not only seen as social activities, but also as a way of getting privacy and me-time. For most people, food is a central part of the home. In our survey, we found that 30 per cent of respondents want to eat more food at home to improve their well-being. Cooking is also the most common activity that people who took the survey undertake to create a homey feeling (63% of respondents). However, during our visits we observed that food and cooking weren't only used to create a home-like atmosphere. For some, preparing a meal is also a meditative, Zen-like activity and gives them a moment for themselves.

Cooking is by no means the only activity people employ to create a private space at home. Other examples include leaving dinner to go and do the dishes alone in the kitchen, taking long showers, or repairing things. During our home visits, we found these types of activities being employed as a means of creating a private "space" of one's own.

THE PRIVATE-PUBLIC RELATIONSHIPS OF HOME



CREATING SOCIAL SPACE

– It's all the family members and extended family members, having lunch and dinner together. It's the celebration of anybody's birthday. When my mother turned 80 I had 40 people over. So space is not the thing, it's how you enjoy it.

**Ashwini, living with husband,
mother in law and two grown up children**

Mumbai

In our survey we could see that relationships are the key to what makes a home – almost half of our respondents say so. Naturally, the home then needs to provide room for relationships in the best possible way, regardless of the space we live in. We saw interesting examples of how people work with the physical space, and we also observed



that the definition of what social space is differs between individuals. For some people, space for relationships at home can mean a specific room for socialising, while for others, physical social space could even be a piece of furniture.

– *The sofa is my social space. I have brunches there. Diego and I watch many movies and*

spend time together there.

**Juliette, living with friend
and two dogs**

Shanghai

For some, it's an important part of life to always have the possibility to invite people home and make them feel welcome, regardless of the size of

their home, and we have seen creative examples of creating social space by employing “hacks” at home. For example, one interviewee living in New York puts up a small plank in the kitchen where his party guests can put down their cocktails. He says that his guests always end up in the kitchen anyway, and that he might just as well make things a little bit more convenient for them. People are finding many creative solutions for different activities and for fulfilling their emotional needs – homes are becoming more multifunctional.

– *The ability to be social is very important, and we have hosted a lot of parties here. The rooftop at our house definitely comes in handy for parties*

Glenn, living with three roommates

New York

Even though objects can't expand the physical space, it seems that they are still important for many people in creating a sense of social space a home. One of the women we talked to in Stockholm keeps a kit with toothbrushes on hand and one Mumbaikar keeps 30 blankets in case guests want to stay over for the night. A man in New York always makes sure he has snacks ready in case someone comes over. As much as objects can

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be symbols of privacy, it appears that they can also function as bearers of social meaning. Tying this phenomenon back to the overall movement in which we increasingly value things that enable us to do the things we love, the emotional significance of these symbols is perhaps not surprising.

- *My deck of cards is important when I have friends over. I usually play Texas poker with my friends when they come over.*

Yan Chenhao, living single
Shanghai

Faced with a lack of physical space within their four walls, people find other places where they can enjoy home-like experiences. According to our survey, the home doesn't need to be inside a residence, or even part of the physical world. Their neighbourhood is seen as part of the home by many respondents (38%) and 27 per cent get to know their neighbours to increase the feeling of being at home. Moreover, 23 per cent feel that a secure Wi-Fi connection is more important in nurturing relationships at home than being able to invite friends to their physical homes, and 19 per cent think it's more important to keep in contact with friends online than to invite them into their homes. It's obvious that, for many, relation-

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ships are more important in the making of a home than the physical space or even the physical world. Consequently, the extended home can function as a place for the we at home. This is also true of the people we visited. A couple we talked to in New York consider some restaurants in their neighbourhood to be their living room because they are important social places to them. One interviewee in Shanghai often uses one of her four nearby parks

as a place to meet friends and play with her dogs.

- *We can be at the most 4-5 people in our home in Shanghai. Home is more a place for close friends and family. When we go out with others, we eat at restaurants.*

**Daisy, living with husband and
child starting school**
Beijing and Shanghai





We know that people are creative when it comes to making private and social space at home, but sometimes there's simply not enough space to transform. This is where connected devices enter the picture. Using social media on a smartphone or tablet enables us to be in the same physical room as others while we fulfil our social needs through someone else in our virtual "room". As noted in the relationships chapter of this report, we can create a virtual "room" wherever we are and use it to create privacy, but also to socialise with others. During our home visits, we observed that connected devices become a means to indulge the physical me and the virtual we at the same time. What's more, we have yet to see the full effect of this phenomenon. In our survey, 16 per cent of interviewees said that they use social media in the bathroom, showing that all parts of the home can be used for socialising and creating something of a private-public dissolution of the home. For some, the Internet is their living room.

– *That my computer connects to the Wi-Fi automatically, without asking for passwords, updating podcasts I like etc. That is the feeling of home.*

Henrik, living with husband and baby
Stockholm

THE YIN AND YANG OF WHAT MAKES A HOME

In order for a home to truly feel like a home, it needs to allow for privacy and social life alike. These two needs are often seen as opposites, where the presence of one excludes the other. However, findings from this study indicate that this might be an over-simplification. Instead, our interviewees told us that the me and the we are interdependent – that one can't exist without the other. We need time and space for privacy in order to recharge our batteries and to be able to spend time with others, and we have our privacy or alone-time in the light of our social lives. Too much me in our homes makes us lonely, and constantly spending time with others is exhausting. We simply need both.

For many of us, the friction between the me and the we can sometimes create frustration. What, then, is the upside to this inter-dependency? In many of the homes we visited, creativity blossoms. Headphones allow privacy, flexible furniture enables social gatherings, rules are created in order to help respect each other's personal space, and doors are left open to make the home feel inviting. No matter how we live, we can always find solu-



tions for creating a home that meets the needs of me and we. And when we spend time with people in their homes, we discover a diverse spectrum of people's feelings about the balance between the two. For some people, having to deal with the issues of cramped living seems to stimulate feelings of creativity, the joy of taking on a challenge and a self-perception of being active and energetic. For others, it evokes feelings of nervousness, stress



and uneasiness. We are all individual human beings and need to shape our homes according to our own needs and feelings. What's more, we all have different requirements and definitions of what actually makes a private or a social space. Not least of all, we have our own little ways of combining the two in our homes, creating a me inside the we.

One of the most important discoveries we made in spending time with people in their homes is that privacy seems to be more important in our homes than we might think. That said, privacy is defined and expressed in different ways. Since most of us can only expect our living space to shrink, taking privacy and relationships into consideration will be critical in designing the homes of tomorrow. The multifunctional needs associated with compact living are not only practical, but also emotional. The feelings that are necessary for us to be able to feel like we are at home must be stimulated in new ways. Privacy is not only created by having a door to close, but can be generated in many different ways, as we saw during our home visits. Relationships do not solely depend on having a huge space to use, but can be nurtured at home in other ways, too, not least of all in the virtual "living room". We have yet



to see how the tension between the private and public relationships of the home will develop. One thing is certain: our future homes will need to look different from our current homes and, without doubt, new and exciting solutions will emerge

to satisfy the me and the we at home. At IKEA, we will continue our visits to people's homes. Driven by our curiosity, we want to understand more about one of the most essential aspects of home – the feeling of me and we.

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EXPERT INTERVIEWS

Avi Friedman, Professor at School of Architecture, McGill University

Brain Moeran, Professor in Business Anthropology, Copenhagen Business School with an expertise on olfactory sense

Chris Baumann, Ph.D.candidate at the Department of Media Studies at Stockholm University with an expertise on organization and usage of everyday technology

Kathy Mezei, Professor Emerita, Department of Humanities, Simon Fraser University with an expertise on domestic space

Marieke Sonneveld, Assistant professor at the Faculty of Industrial Design Engineering, Delft University of Technology and expert on the haptic sense

Paul Alarcón, Chief Sustainability Officer, Stockholm stad, with an expertise within city development

Samuel D. Gosling, Professor at the Department of Psychology, University of Texas with an expertise on the psychology within physical environments

Trevor Keeling, EngD from University of Reading and Senior Engineer at BuroHappold Engineering with an expertise in people's wellbeing in indoor environments.