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**HOME MAKING AND IDENTITY:**  
**A Psychology of Personality Processes in North East  
Scotland**

**LEANNE TOWNSEND**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements of The Robert Gordon University  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## **Abstract**

This thesis investigates the roles of identity and personality in the home making process. Well-known approaches to identity typically define context in social or temporal terms, largely neglecting the physical environment. Personalisation of the dwelling has been argued to function in self-definition and self-presentation, yet only a small body of research corroborates such theories. Personalisation of the dwelling therefore presents an ideal context within which to explore identity processes in the physical environment. The thesis argues that the connection of identity to a dwelling has strong psychological implications for dwellers. Such implications are investigated, particularly in relation to meanings of home.

The first study explores psychological and social drivers on the personalisation process through interviews with people who have converted farm buildings to home use. In the second study, attitudes towards home making behaviours are investigated in relation to social and personal identity orientations. The study explores whether such identity-based personality traits influence the way in which the dwelling is used as a means of self-definition. In the third and final study in-depth interviews are carried out with people living in typical Aberdeenshire dwellings. These interviews explore the ways in which identity and personality are connected to the dwelling and how these contribute to the process of home.

Quantitative findings suggest that only a small relationship exists between identity orientations and personalisation. However qualitative findings in particular from the third study show a strong link between various aspects of identity and the dwelling. The ways in which identity is connected to the dwelling vary as a function of personality differences. Importantly these connections contribute to the process of home.

This research constitutes contributions to a number of research areas, in particular home research and research exploring the role of personalisation and possessions. The research brings together identity, personality and home – areas which have not previously been explored together in great detail. The thesis presents a valuable framework within which to study the interactions of place, personality and identity processes and therefore makes an important

contribution to a number of academic fields, in particular environmental psychology and built environment research.

## **Declaration**

The candidate has not, while registered for this Ph.D. submission, been registered for another award at a university during the research programme.

None of the original material in this thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award. Acknowledgements for assistance received are given under the heading acknowledgements and any excerpts from other work have been acknowledged by its source and author.

Leanne Townsend

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# 1 Introduction to the Thesis

## 1.1 *Background to the research*

The research presented in this thesis is concerned with the relationships between identity, dwelling and home. A theoretical framework is developed which combines areas which have not previously been considered together in great detail. The findings from this research comprise important lessons in terms of the psychological significance of home.

This introduction describes in brief the theoretical development based on previous theory and research, particularly in reference to identity and the self-concept and in terms of academic contributions to meanings of home. Aims and objectives are outlined. The structure of the thesis is then explained.

### 1.1.1 Identity and the self-concept

A large body of work, both theoretical and empirically based, has explored the way in which we define, construct and understand our self-concepts (e.g. James, 1890; Baumeister, 1999; Oyserman, 2004). It has been argued that constructions of and understandings of the self are inherently social (e.g. Myers, 2002; Deaux, 1992; Abrams and Hogg, 2004). Self-presentational factors are crucial to self-construction, both in increasing self-esteem and in ensuring that the self is perceived by others in a positive light (e.g. Adams and Marshall, 1996; Abrams and Hogg, 2004). Comparison with others and with members of other groups also functions in the construction of the self-concept and with this in mind, Social Identity Theory (SIT) was introduced by Tajfel and Turner (1979) as a means of explaining largely negative comparisons between groups. SIT posits that people will seek to enhance the value of the ingroup (the group to which a person belongs) through comparison with the outgroup (a group to which a person does not belong), in order to lead to a positive group evaluation and therefore self-construct. The extent to which a person will compare at the group level or the individual level is argued through SIT to be dependent upon features of the social context, for example whether a person is amongst outgroup or ingroup members.



SIT is perhaps the most well-known theory of identity, but the theory really concerns comparisons between groups and is less concerned with identity processes at the level of the individual. Identity Process Theory (or IPT, Breakwell, 1986) provides a hypothetical model of identity processes within the individual. This model considers the role of motivational aspects such as a need for distinctiveness and self-esteem, as well as suggesting ways in which identities are created or maintained.

Despite the popularity of theories such as SIT and IPT, a number of authors have criticised a failure to account for individual differences in identity processes and have suggested that there are personality-based differences on the meaning of the self-concept, regardless of other social influences on such processes (Abrams and Hogg, 2004; Deaux, 2000; Worchel et al. 2000; Capozza et al., 2000). It can be argued that people are either oriented mostly towards personal levels of self-definition, or mostly towards social levels of self-definition (Cheek and Briggs, 1982). In other words, people differ in the extent to which their self-definition relies on how others view them. Following this argument, Cheek and Briggs (1982) found empirical evidence for the existence of such characteristics and described personality traits called identity orientations, which account for such personal or social based differences in the definition of the self-concept. Identity orientations relate to other well-known personality measures such as self-monitoring (Snyder, 1974) and self-consciousness (Fenigstein et al., 1975), although identity orientations are distinguished from these in being based in self-definition. These developments (which are discussed in greater detail in Section 2.6) to some extent deal with the criticism relating to a lack of explanation of the individual differences in terms of identity processes.

Another problem with common approaches to identity is their apparent neglect of the *physical* context in influencing identity processes (Twigger-Ross et al., 2003), although Chapter 2 shows that proponents of IPT have successfully incorporated aspects of the physical environment. James (1890), in his classic work on the psychology of self, argues for aspects of the material environment as an extension of the self-concept, with a particular focus on the *home* environment. Proshansky (1978) argues that as well as the commonly understood aspects of identity, people also have *place identities*. It has been argued that psychologists are frequently guilty of ignoring the influence of the

physical environment on behaviour (Twigger-Ross et al., 2003). *Environmental psychology* is a discipline which attempts to address this problem (Bonnes and Secchiaroli, 1995). These points argue for the physical environment as an influence on identity processes, and Chapter 2 considers this in more detail.

This thesis explores identity and self-definition in a physical context – namely, the home environment. The focus of the thesis is on the ways in which people connect their identity to the dwelling, and the consequences of such behaviours for the home making process. The exploration of such phenomena is revealing in terms of complex psychological implications arising from the experience of home. Consequently, a more extensive consideration of research into home, particularly where approached from a psychological or social perspective, is useful in outlining existing contributions in terms of identity processes and the home environment.

#### 1.1.2 Research into “home”

For a number of years a great many academics from a variety of disciplines have theorised, researched and otherwise speculated on the nature of home (e.g. Hayward, 1975; Chapman and Hockey, 1999; Mallet, 2004; Lawrence, 1987; Kellett and Moore, 2003). Contributions have related to definitions of home (e.g. Gurney, 1997; Mallet, 2004; Case, 1996; Hayward, 1975), as well as more specific aspects of behaviour within the home, such as the use of space (e.g. Ozaki, 2002; Lawrence, 1987), the regulation of privacy and social contact (e.g. Tomas and Dittmar, 1995; Lawrence, 1987; Mallet, 2004) and territoriality (e.g. Altman, 1975; Harris and Brown, 1996; Omata, 1995). Other work has related to the self presentational aspects of home (e.g. Cooper Marcus, 1995; Nasar, 1989; Dittmar, 1992) and argues that the home may be used both as a stage for the expression of identity and also as an influence on the ongoing construction of identity. Such work has provided empirical evidence which underlines the fact that people make identity inferences based upon others' dwellings (e.g. Sadalla and Sheets, 1993). More specifically a body of work has explored personalisation behaviour (e.g. Bonnes et al., 1987; Cooper Marcus, 1995; Nasar, 1989) and its functioning in a variety of facets of home, including the construction of and expression of identity. It is argued in this thesis that



personalisation behaviour is central to identity processes as well as being of value in making a dwelling feel more like a home.

Personalisation of the home appears to be a particularly popular behaviour, highlighted by for example interiors magazines and an increasingly diverse range of products available in do it yourself (DIY) stores in the UK. Entire satellite television channels are devoted to the subject of home improvements. People engage in personalisation on a number of levels ranging from the fairly modest (painting a wall for example) to the quite dramatic (e.g. altering the existing layout of the dwelling). Even more dramatic examples of personalisation can be seen when people convert disused buildings to home use, where such buildings were formerly used for a different purpose. This growing trend in home improvements may well continue, therefore a more thorough account of the psychological processes underlying these behaviours is desirable.

On a practical level, personalisation can be explained in terms of improving the value of a dwelling, or improving the dwelling's appearance or function. However, it is without much doubt that personalisation is far more complex than suggested by these explanations. The literature on personalisation behaviour in the home supports this assumption (e.g. Cooper Marcus, 1995). Much of the research to date has provided theory, or anecdotal evidence in support of the view that home is a stage for identity processes and some have provided empirical evidence which supports the claim (see Section 3.8). The literature shows a large degree of agreement. However, research has not gone further into more complex areas of such processes, such as the potential for individual differences to affect the way identity is connected to the dwelling.

## **1.2 The Research Problem**

Many approaches to identity have been criticised for their failure to acknowledge the individual differences which may affect identity processes. Importantly, such approaches also often fail to consider the role of the physical environment when considering contextual influences upon identity processes. Literature argues that home may be used as a resource in the construction of and expression of identity (e.g. Cooper Marcus, 1995; Nasar, 1989; Dittmar, 1992) yet these theories only have limited empirical support. Therefore, there is a need to



investigate the relationship of identity processes to the home environment – and importantly, how these interactions are affected by individual differences. The research presented in this thesis addresses these areas. It is argued here that the connection of identity to dwelling is an important behaviour in the process of home. The research in this thesis aims to deliver a better understanding of the ways in which identity is connected to dwelling, the potential for individual differences to affect such behaviours, and how such behaviour is central to the process of home<sup>1</sup>.

Although a large volume of research into issues relating to dwelling and home exists, a need for more extensive research into personalisation remains. Only a small proportion of this research has looked in depth at the process of personalisation of the dwelling (for examples, see Section 3.9). The dynamics of personalisation behaviour may reveal interesting insights into the meanings attached to use of the dwelling. For example, it can be argued that for many people, the ideal of home is often severely lacking and this brings psychological detriments, as it is argued that the way in which we experience dwelling and home strongly affects our happiness and well-being (Mallet, 2004). A fuller understanding of the importance of behaviours relating to dwelling such as personalisation may allow for insights into how the experience of home can be improved for those people whom suffer a lack of well-being as a consequence of poor housing conditions. Research then has the potential both to shed light on the psychological implications of home, and to contribute to the multidisciplinary literature on housing and the built environment.

### **1.3 Aims and Objectives**

The thesis is premised upon three overall **aims** which are addressed in the three studies:

- To deliver a greater understanding of the ways in which identity is connected to dwelling
- To explore the ways in which personality affects this process

<sup>1</sup> In this thesis, "the process of home" refers to an ongoing process of making a house a home, and is discussed in greater detail throughout Chapter 3 and in Section 5.2.3.

- To research the extent to which identity and personality impact upon the process of home

A number of **objectives** were developed as a means of meeting the research aims:

- To carry out an in-depth exploration of academic contributions to the relevant subject areas through conducting a multi-disciplinary literature review (see chapters 2 and 3).
- To design and implement a qualitative study in order to explore personalisation behaviour and the ways in which people connect identity to the dwelling (see Chapter 4).
- To utilise the results of this first exploratory study in the development of hypotheses for more in-depth research (see Chapter 5).
- To design and implement a study which utilises a quantitative approach in researching how personality variables impact upon home making behaviours (see Chapter 5).
- To develop a final study which employs a mixed-method approach to explore how identity is connected to dwelling, how personality impacts upon the process, and the implications of such behaviours for home (see Chapter 6).

#### **1.4 The Research Approach**

The first stage in the PhD process reported in this thesis is the execution of an in-depth, multi-disciplinary literature review. The first part of this process concentrates on literature relating to self, identity and personality. The second part of the process explores literature relating to meaning of home, and personalisation of the dwelling. Three studies form the basis for the research reported in this thesis. The first study is exploratory and aims to uncover socio-psychological factors functioning in personalisation through qualitative in-depth

interviews. Particular attention is given to identity processes. The goal is to generate hypotheses to research in subsequent studies. Interviews are conducted with those who have converted redundant farm buildings into dwellings. It is argued that interviewing those who have gone to great lengths to create their own dwelling may result in salient issues being more evident to the researcher.

The second study builds on the first study in developing hypotheses to be tested through administration of a questionnaire to a large postal and e-mail sample. The issue of identity processes in relation to personalisation in the dwelling is studied in more detail. Attitudes towards a number of approaches to personalisation and related behaviours in the dwelling (described as *home making behaviour*) are gauged and dispositional aspects of identity are measured. These are called identity orientations (developed by Cheek and Briggs, 1982) and relate to the extent to which a person is guided either by the impression they make on others, or more personal aspects, in the construction of their self definitions.

A third study further explores the nature of the connection of identity and dwelling through the use of in-depth, qualitative interviews with female home owners, taking a grounded theory approach in the analysis. Differences based in personality are considered in terms of their impact upon home making approach. The study also explores the nature of the process of home and the role of identity in this process.

### **1.5 Thesis structure**

The individual chapters of this thesis are outlined as follows:

**Chapter 2** sets the thesis in a psychological context and describes contributions to the definition of self and identity processes, with particular reference to Social Identity Theory and Identity Process Theory. A critical approach is then taken - the identity literature largely fails to account for the physical environment. Theories of identity are further criticised in failing to acknowledge individual differences in identity processes, with a discussion of the theoretical development of accounts of dispositional aspects of identity. A model of identity



is presented which incorporates both individual differences and the physical environment.

**Chapter 3** discusses previous literature (including theoretical and empirical approaches) relating to the meanings and interpretations of the concept of *home*. The chapter then focuses on literature covering the more social aspects relating to behaviour in the home environment, concluding that personalisation of the home, which is facilitated by the use of personal possessions, may be a means to construct and reflect aspects of identity.

**Chapter 4** presents the first study, through its theoretical conception to the methodology and results. This study comprises interviews with people who have converted farm buildings to home use. Responses given in the interviews are considered and main themes are drawn from the results.

**Chapter 5** builds on the results of the first study and generates hypotheses to be researched in the second study. A second study is designed which explores relationships between identity orientations and home making through the use of a large-scale postal questionnaire. The study is described and results are presented and discussed.

**Chapter 6** describes the conception, design and execution of the third study in which the connection of identity and dwelling is explored in in-depth, semi-structured qualitative interviews with female home owners. An in-depth thematic analysis is described and findings are discussed at length in relation to four research questions.

**Chapter 7** discusses the results of the three studies in a broader context and outlines the academic contribution of this research to a number of fields. Limitations of the research are discussed and suggestions for areas in which this research may be taken forward are made.

It should be borne in mind when reading this thesis that a large body of the research and literature reported here is culturally specific – mostly this relates to Western societies. The research carried out within this thesis is set in a Scottish context.

## **2 Theories of self and identity processes**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter introduces the academic context in which the research presented in this thesis is set. Self and the self-concept are discussed. Personality theory is discussed with a focus on trait-based theories. The literature on Identity is discussed following which self-presentation and social comparison are considered. Key identity theories are critically reviewed (Social Identity Theory or SIT and Identity Process Theory or IPT). The way in which the physical environment interacts with identity is then considered and an argument for individual differences in identity processes made. The different theories of identity each neglect important points so a theoretical model of identity is presented which takes account of all the different considerations raised. Importantly, this model of identity incorporates the physical environment, and the potential for individual differences.

### **2.2 The Self**

Any attempt at defining the nature of the self is fraught with difficulty. No two selves are the same. It is fair to say though that the idea of self brings with it notions of individuality and uniqueness. It is considered to be composed of those aspects that make us who we are and distinguish us from other people. According to Baumeister (1999), the self is understood to some extent in terms of the physical body that we inhabit. However, to most people, references to self encompass more than the physical – generally the reference is to the psychological processes and aspects of the individual in question. What's more, there is an implication of secrets and hidden aspects of the self – both in the sense that others will not fully know another unless they reveal such aspects to them and even in the extent that a person may need to go through difficult processes in order to fully understand his/her own self (Baumeister, 1999).

James (1890) provided a well-known approach to the theory of self. James proposes that the conscious self is two-fold in being composed of knower and known and therefore subject and object. By this, James means that a person is



both aware of the self and simultaneously is the self that they themselves are aware of. He adds that of the self that is known, there is a difficulty in distinguishing between what is “me” and what is “mine”, so that those things that a person can call their own become integral to the understanding of self. This adds further complication in that our bodies are often referred to as belonging to us – leaving it unclear as to whether the body belongs to us, or is us. James (1890) says:

*“In its widest possible sense, however, a man’s Self is the sum total of all that he CAN call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, his wife and children... his reputation and his works... All these things give him the same emotions. If they wax and prosper, he feels triumphant; if they dwindle and die away, he feels cast down...”*

(p. 291).

James further proposes three aspects to the self, these being the constituents of self, the affective aspects of these constituents and acts prompted by them, such as self-seeking and self-enhancing behaviours. The constituents themselves are composed of material, social and spiritual aspects. James argues that material aspects include the body, followed by the clothes on the body (which he argues people strongly identify with self), followed by the immediate family which is considered as an extension of the self and finally the home. Of home, James (1890) goes on to say:

*“Its scenes are part of our life; its aspects awaken the tenderest feelings of affection; and we do not easily forgive the stranger who, in visiting it, finds fault with its arrangements or treats it with contempt.”*

(p. 292).

Here James is implying that home is synonymous with self (see also Chapter 3). He further argues that by a similar process we are driven to collect property which becomes an extension of the self suggesting that if these things are cruelly swept away, a lessening of self results. Further support for the role of material possessions in the cultivation of the self is presented in Section 3.9.1. The point that James makes here is an important one: he is arguing for the self as being projected onto the physical world, in this case using the example of the home as being an extension of self. James then had made an early contribution to theory on meaning of home, arguing for the strong psychological implications that home has for people – arguing for home as an extension of self (see also

Cooper Marcus, 1995). This is a central argument made by this thesis because the research presented here considers the connection of identity, dwelling and home.

James' social "me" is the self as recognised by others, particularly by significant others in the form of friends and family. He argues that people have an innate drive to make themselves noticed - and noticed in a favourable way. He further suggests that there are as many of these social selves as there are people whose opinion the individual cares about - hence, a person shows a different side of themselves to every person they try to impress. The research in this thesis is based on the premise that this drive to express certain aspects of self to others can manifest itself through behaviour in the home environment.

Finally, the spiritual "me" refers to the entirety of a person's thoughts, emotions, conscious states and mental abilities and can be seen in terms of the more private, personal aspects of the self. The research presented in this thesis also argues for the manifestation of this side of self in the home – people may use the home environment to learn about the more private aspects of themselves.

Importantly, most authors agree that essential to the existence of self is an awareness of the existence of that self. A self-awareness or interpretation of the self is known as the self-concept and the next section discusses this in more detail.

### 2.2.1 The Self-Concept

Psychologists refer to a person's self-definition as the self-concept. To have a concept of self is to have an awareness of oneself as an individual. This is an important theme for this thesis because it is argued throughout that this sense of self is an important moderator of behaviour within the home environment.

The self-concept is our understanding of who we are as people and has been described as "*a repository of autobiographical memories, an organiser of experience and... an emotional buffer and motivational resource*" (Oyserman, 2004). It refers to our understanding of the self as a continuous entity over time. That said, there is also an awareness of the changing nature of the self-concept



over time and its dependence upon social and environmental context and this is discussed in more detail in sections 2.2.2.1 and 2.5.2.

The self-concept relies on the use of self-schemas, a form of schema<sup>2</sup> which we use to organise our sense of self into something meaningful and categorized. These are somewhat similar to the self-categorizations of Self-categorisation Theory which are discussed in more detail in Section 2.4.2. The categories that we perceive ourselves as fitting into, such as student, teenager, psychologist, or British can all be considered as self-schemas (Myers, 2002)<sup>3</sup>. These schemas often represent roles that we carry out in life, which eventually become a part of our self-concept. Augustinos and Walker (1995) argue that the self-schema is often theorized as referring to the stable and enduring aspects of our self-concept, as opposed to those aspects of identity which are flexible and dependent upon social and environmental context.

The situational influence on our understanding of the self-concept is powerful because there is such a vast array of information to process (Oyserman, 2004). As a result, only the information which is considered most salient at that particular time and in that particular place is retrieved and used in the definition of the self-concept. Empirical evidence supports this. For example, researchers find that in cases where participants are expected to report their level of shyness, ratings are higher when they have been asked to recall a specific incidence of shyness than when they have been asked to recall a specific incident of extroversion (Fazio et al., 1981).

The self-concept has a strong influence on the behaviour of self and others. Oyserman (2004) argues for the self-concept as a social force, in that the way that we view ourselves will affect the way we are treated by others. It is argued that the self-concept drives people in continuous quests for self-improvement and this has been supported empirically by numerous studies over the last century (for a review see Oyserman, 2004). Such efforts for self-improvement may manifest in a number of behavioural domains, for example in terms of ambition in one's career, or other personal achievements. Other ways of improving the self-concept may include the way that a person dresses, or the

<sup>2</sup> A schema is defined as a basic cognitive structure which holds associated chunks of information in memory (Driscoll, 1994).

<sup>3</sup> It should also be noted however that such categorizations are also often considered as identities in the literature.



way that he or she personalises their home environment. The improvement of the self-concept is connected to the concept of self-esteem, which is now discussed.

### 2.2.2 Self-esteem, self-efficacy and self-monitoring

The enhancement of the self-concept is strongly related to self-esteem (see also Sections 2.4.1 and 2.4.3). Self-esteem is a psychological concept which has in recent years become a household word and is synonymous with understandings of psychological well-being (Baumeister et al., 2003). Self-esteem describes a person's evaluations of self-worth. Self-esteem is affected, both positively and negatively, by the self-concept. Conversely, self-esteem can influence the self-concept (Campbell, 1990). For example, a change in the way that the self is viewed can have evaluative consequences which are either beneficial or detrimental to self-esteem. In reverse, when self-esteem is high, the self-concept is evaluated in a positive way. This understanding of the two constructs suggests that they are inseparable from one another. Self-esteem is explored in relation to feelings about dwelling and home, particularly in Study 3 within this thesis.

Related to self-esteem, self-efficacy is the perception of one's own abilities in terms of achieving specific goals (Ormrod, 2006). The construct was first proposed by Bandura (1977) who described self-efficacy as having a strong influence on behaviour. Those with high self-efficacy are likely to approach tasks positively, seeing them as an enjoyable challenge. Those with low self-efficacy on the other hand may be more likely to engage in avoidant behaviour of certain tasks.

Self-efficacy has also been described as a belief that one is able to be effective in one's environment (Steinberg, 1998), making it a useful construct in the consideration of personalisation and home making behaviour (see also Section 2.5.2 for a discussion of this approach to self-efficacy in housing research). Self-efficacy is therefore explored in relation to these issues, particularly in Study 3.

Self-monitoring refers to self-reflection and self-control which is informed by an individual's understanding of the social environment, and its expectations

(Snyder, 1974). Snyder (1987) identified high and low self-monitors, distinguishing between them in terms of the extent to which they seek to make a favourable impression on others (see also Section 2.6.1.1 for more discussion on self-monitoring as a measure of personality).

Self-esteem, self-efficacy and self-monitoring are constructs which are related to the way a person thinks about themselves. It is useful to see beyond what a self-concept is, and to consider some of its psychological implications – the personality constructs which may affect and be affected by it. These constructs point to the importance of the social context in the evaluation of the self-concept. The importance of social aspects in terms of the self-concept is considered next.

#### *2.2.2.1 How social is the self-concept?*

Literature on the self-concept strongly suggests that it is to some degree a social phenomenon. For example, in their 1979 paper, Shrauger and Schoeneman argue for the self-concept as being dictated by the way that an individual believes he or she is perceived by others. The self-concept then can be thought of as having personal aspects (the sense of self as an individual, including beliefs and values, for example) and social aspects (the sense of self in comparison to others, or as seen by others). Carver and Scheier (1981; 2001) argue for public and private aspects of self – a classification that they compare to the spiritual and social selves proposed by James (1890). Such public and private selves are governed either by internal factors, or socially contextual factors. Fenigstein, Scheier and Buss (1975) developed personality traits called public self-consciousness and private self-consciousness as a means of measuring the extent to which individuals are governed by an awareness of such internal or external factors (for a discussion on public and private self-consciousness see Section 2.6.1.1).

The dichotomy of personal and social is so popular that even personality has been conceived in this way. Hogan and Cheek (1983) for example point out that the word personality derives from the latin “persona”, which means to wear a mask and take on social roles, despite the fact that personality is typically understood to refer to the underlying, more internal aspects of the self.



The self is inherently social. People do not develop in the absence of other people - therefore, the presence of others is an important part of the process that moulds the self. Theorists have consistently argued for the self-concept as a social product and as something which emerges as a result of our interactions with other people (Oyserman, 2004). For example, the influential work of James (1890) purported that social selves are contextually constructed, therefore a different social self is present in every single social interaction that a person engages in. Mead (1934), one of the forefathers of social psychology, argued for the "Generalized Other" (that is, an understanding of the role of self and others in various situations in life) as being instrumental in the development of social self-consciousness. Self begins to develop when children engage in imaginative play in which they take on the role of another in predicting how others may respond to their own actions. Through such games, children are able to develop a sense of self which is capable of responding to a variety of different others, in a variety of contexts. Mead stated that the way we perceive others as perceiving us strongly influences the self-concept and therefore the self is perceived:

*"indirectly, from the particular standpoints of other individual members of the same social group, or from the generalized standpoint of the social group as a whole to which he belongs" (Mead, 1934, p138).*

This is supported by Baumeister (1999), who argues that the child first learns about itself through both its connections to others in the environment (particularly as part of a family unit) and also through its distinctiveness from others (e.g. boy as opposed to girl, child as opposed to baby etc.). The infant's sense of self develops firstly in terms of an understanding of the body as separate from other bodies. But as argued by Oyserman (2004), this understanding *must* develop in a social context because the infant is unable to fully interact on a physical level with the environment, relying on caregivers for support in this respect. Therefore, this social context influences the development of this emerging sense of self.

The relationship of self with the social setting is a complex one and it has been argued that negative effects occur for those who are too dissimilar to others in their social group, even though people typically strive to hold some level of uniqueness compared to other group members. The balance is clearly not an easy one and as shall be argued for later, one that differs from person to person. Therefore, the ideal is a self-concept which is not too different, yet not too similar

to other members of the group (Oyserman, 2004). On the other hand there appears to be a desire to preserve some sense of self as an individual and not to exist as just a part of a greater social whole.

The distinction between the personal and social aspects of self is often thought of as the difference between our personal and social identities - these are discussed in more detail in Section 2.3.1. Myers (2002) reminds us that the social definition of a person holds a strong implication of the person they are *not*, thereby highlighting the dichotomy of *us* and *them*. Comparing ourselves with others is one way of knowing whether we are doing well or badly in relation to others in certain aspects of life (see discussion on Social Comparison Theory in Section 2.3.3).

There are cross cultural differences in terms of the level on which self is defined and due to these influences, the level on which self is primarily understood (be that as an individual or in relation to others) is variable (Abrams and Hogg, 2004). This is an important concept and one which is discussed in more detail in Section 2.3.2.

Closely linked to self and identity is personality. Personality is central to the research in this thesis and is therefore considered in the next section.

### 2.2.3 Personality traits and the five factors

No discussion on self is complete without a consideration of the history of personality theory and research. Given the importance of individual differences in this thesis, particularly in reference to Study 3, personality is now considered before the discussion turns to identity.

Personality refers to traits held by a person which, although these are liable to change over the life course, can be described as to some extent stable and enduring. Personality is descriptive – it is a dynamic range of traits within a person which can influence that person's cognitions and behaviours in a number of situations (Ryckman, 2004).



Theories of personality can be classified into a number of categories, including trait theories (e.g. Cattell, 1957 and Costa and McCrae, 1976); type theories (e.g. Jung's 1921 work on psychological types); psychoanalytic theories (e.g. Freud, 1923); behaviourist theories (e.g. Pavlov, 1927) and social cognitive theories (e.g. Bandura, 1986) among others. The following discussion largely focuses on the trait approach to personality.

The early theoretical development of personality psychology was characterised by a struggle to be acknowledged as a field in its own right, as opposed to a subdivision of social psychology (Barenbaum and Winter, 2008). It was in the 1930s that personality psychology emerged as a field in its own right (McAdams, 1997; Barenbaum and Winter, 2008). Personality psychology research did not take the typical approach seen in other areas of psychology of finding ways in which all people are alike; instead, the field focused on studying ways in which people differed from one another alongside finding similarities between people. Furthermore, the focus was on the whole person as a unit of analysis (McAdams, 1997) – a view that people continually strive for unity and wholeness in their sense of self. James (1890) and Freud (1923; 1961) both accounted for this drive for wholeness: James (1890) in contrasting “me” (understanding of what is me and what is mine) with “I” (the ego, a less stable state, generally in flux); Freud (1923; 1961) in defining “*das ich*” (the ego) as a unifying force which works towards a compromise between the conflicting drives experienced by an individual and realistic and effective functioning in the environment.

In 1921 Allport and Allport spoke of the difficulty in measuring personality traits, arguing that differences between people on any one trait are qualitative rather than quantitative. They did however outline the kind of traits which were at that time popular for measurement amongst personality psychologists, these including but not restricted to: truthfulness, conscientiousness, neatness, tactfulness, perseverance and loyalty. They argued that many of the traits studied at this time could be traced back to more fundamental traits – for example, a tendency towards neatness may be attributable to a phobia of dirt. They stressed the importance of traits which are exclusive from one another, offering a list of traits which included: intelligence, emotional breadth, emotional strength, extro-introversion, ascendance-submission and social participation (Allport and Allport, 1921).

The development of trait theory in the 20<sup>th</sup> century can be traced back to Francis Galton (1884), frequently argued as the first to recognise the “Lexical Hypothesis” – the belief that the most important of personality factors would over time be incorporated into everyday language. Allport and Odbert (1936) tested the theory by identifying almost 18,000 words in the dictionary which referred to personality or individual differences, reducing this list to 4,504 personality-describing adjectives. Cattell (1952) later reduced the list to 171 words. He asked subjects to rate people they knew on these terms, finding 35 clusters of personality terms, later carrying out factor analysis on the results and finding 16 personality factors. Data reduction was advantageous in order to make sense of such a vast number of personality traits. Cattell was not the first to use this method: in 1934, Thurstone asked subjects to rate people they knew based on 60 adjectives and later reduced these to five factors with factor analysis. Thurstone however did not follow up his findings, instead following an alternative route of inquiry and arriving at seven factors (Goldberg, 1993).

A number of researchers attempted to validate the 16 factors proposed by Cattell (1952), but were only able to replicate 5 (e.g. Fiske, 1949; Norman, 1963; Tupes & Christal, 1961) – a phenomenon which suggests that Thurstone was overly dismissive of his own findings in 1934. Such research led to the development of the Five Factor Model of personality, an area of personality psychology which has since been extensively researched and refined, in particular by Goldberg (e.g. 1982; 1990; 1992; 1993), Cattell (e.g. 1957; 2007) and Costa and McCrae (1976; 1985; 1987).

The five factors are typically referred to as: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness (or dependability), emotional stability (or neuroticism) and intellect (or openness to experience). Extraversion encompasses traits such as talkativeness and assertiveness and in contrast, passivity and reserve. Agreeableness encompasses traits such as kindness and warmth and in contrast, hostility and distrust. Conscientiousness encompasses traits such as organization and reliability as well as negligence and unreliability. Emotional Stability encompasses traits such as nervousness and moodiness. Finally Intellect encompasses traits such as on the one hand imagination, curiosity and creativity, and on the other hand shallowness and imperceptiveness (Goldberg, 1993).



Although the five factors could be described as offering an overly simplistic view of a huge complexity of personality variables, this argument does not hold when the model is viewed as a framework for organising and classifying personality (Goldberg, 1993). The model continues to be utilised as an organising framework and basis for measurement in personality-based research (see for example Terraciano et al., 2008 and Rottman et al., 2009).

This discussion has presented a brief history of the development of trait theory in personality psychology. As stated above, personality is defined as a set of characteristics within an individual that guide behaviour and cognitions (Ryckman, 2004). Personality is related to identity in that it may go towards an overall definition or self-definition of the person. Identity however is based more in self-definition than is personality (Deux, 1992). The next section considers identity in detail.

### 2.3 *Identity*

A person's identity is a complex attempt at a categorized account of who and what that person is (Twigger-Ross et al, 2003). Identity is made up of numerous dimensions, for example cultural identity, or national identity. Fundamental aspects of identity are considered in this section, particularly personal and social identity, as well as a consideration of place identity as proposed by Proshansky et al. (1983).

Confusion exists in the conceptualisation of *identity* as opposed to that of the *self-concept*. Identity is often framed in terms of category memberships. A person can hold multiple identities, which may go towards a more general self-concept. Mead (1934) said that "*a multiple personality is in a certain sense normal*" (p142), adding to the argument for the multiplicity of self and identities. Deux (1992) distinguishes between self and identity in that self refers to a global sense of self, whereas identity refers to definable aspects of the self-concept. Therefore, identities can be seen as being components which together make up the self-concept.

According to Adams and Marshall (1996), identity is an ongoing process and people actively seek to change identities for many reasons, particularly when the

real self and ideal self are very incongruent. Furthermore, they argue that identity can be assigned but it can also be selected, especially in Western cultures where a greater element of social mobility and choice exists. In support of this, Abrams and Hogg (2004) argue that identity functions in a way which is dependent upon social context and social audience. So it can be argued that whereas the self-concept may refer to an ongoing and permanent sense of self, identity refers to a shifting set of categories which define the self contextually and which function in the ongoing construction of the self.

### 2.3.1 How do social and personal identities differ?

The meanings behind the concepts of personal and social identity have been the subject of much debate in the literature (Abrams and Hogg, 2004) and as Deaux (1992) points out, the two have sometimes been defined as sitting at two opposite ends of the same spectrum, allowing for smaller or greater levels of each in terms of identity along the continuum. As we shall see later in this chapter, however, evidence suggests that the two are not opposite ends of the same spectrum, but are instead two separate, but related constructs (see Section 2.6.1). Generally speaking, personal identity typically refers to internal aspects of self-definition, whereas social identity refers to externally construed aspects of self-definition. Differences exist in the literature in the way in which social identities are defined. Brewer (1991) argues for personal identity as comprising of aspects which distinguish us from others in social settings and social identity as those aspects which categorize us into groups and therefore make us *like* the other people in those groups (this is comparable to the understanding of social identity in the framework of Social Identity Theory, or SIT, as described in Section 2.4.1 - see Abrams and Hogg, 2004). However, other understandings of social identity posit that it refers to the self as we perceive it to be seen by others – that is, the more public aspects of self (for example social identity as understood in the framework of identity orientations, e.g. Cheek, 1989 – see Section 2.6.1). This understanding holds an implication of self-presentational strategies and a desire to be held in a certain regard. Luhtanen and Crocker (1992) point out that whereas social identity in SIT refers to intergroup processes, the term as used in American literature generally refers to interpersonal processes. The American term “collective identity” is more akin



to the social identity proposed in SIT, as it refers to social category memberships such as nationality and religion.

Social identity as understood in this thesis refers both to the identity a person holds in terms of category memberships, but also to those aspects of the self-concept as perceived by others and subsequently that part of the self-concept which depends on others for its definition. Positive evaluation by others provides validation for the self-concept and suggests future memberships to desired ingroups. So it can be argued that the two views of social identity are inseparable, and this thesis posits a holistic understanding of social identity based on these approaches.

Personal identity typically refers to the more private or individual aspects of the self. For example, a desire to reflect on poetry and literature may constitute one aspect of personal identity. However, Augustinos and Walker (1995) argue that regardless of the popular dichotomy between the two constructs, *“there are no forms of identity which are strictly personal (asocial)...”* (p26). All forms of identity can be argued to have social elements as these involve a comparison against other sorts of identity – for example gender identity. However, personal identity can be seen to be meaningful and it is useful to consider it in some sense as different to social identity, because it refers to self-definition at the *individual* level – aspects of the sense of self which depend less upon the opinions of others for their validation.

### 2.3.2 Self-presentation

People frequently carry out self-presentational strategies to influence how others see them (Abrams and Hogg, 2004; Baumeister, 1999) and to reflect aspects of their identity to themselves and others. The term “self-presentation” may originally have been introduced by Goffman (1959) in his analogy of human life as a theatrical event – life is a stage, on which people carry out a number of roles, as well as following preconceived scripts for behaviour.

Cross cultural differences in the extent to which a society values individual or collective aspects of self will affect the degree to which people tend to highlight their own achievements as a means of self-enhancement (Abrams and Hogg,

2004). Different societies actively encourage or discourage self-enhancement strategies when these function through individual self-presentational strategies. For example, Deaux (1992) points out that whereas Japanese culture (which is well-known as particularly collectivist) stresses social and group definitions of the self, American culture stresses more individual self-definitions. Self-presentation then may be a more crucial behaviour in Western societies.

Baumeister (1999) offers two accounts of self-presentation behaviour. Firstly, self-presentation can be explained in terms of pleasing others around us. Secondly, it has been explained in terms of making a public claim to a certain identity, through publicly subscribing to those behaviours which belong to the identity in question. Surely the real truth lies somewhere in between – self-presentation allows us to make the best possible impression on others thereby pleasing them and leading to interpersonal benefits to the self, such as more positive reactions to our behaviour, more positive social relationships and easier access into desired social groups. Jones and Pittman (1982) presented five motives for self-presentation: self-promotion, ingratiation, exemplification, supplication and intimidation. Jones and Pittman's classification is useful because it reminds us that not all self-presentation behaviour seeks to present the individual in a positive light, for example in the case of intimidating behaviours.

Self-presentation allows us to present a certain version of self (like wearing a mask). It can enable us to subscribe to the group of our choice through adhering to the identity attributes of the group in question. Wicklund and Gollitzer (1982, cited in Baumeister, 1999) argue that people seek social validation for their identity claims, which are only confirmed once validated and accepted by others. In support of this point, Adams and Marshall (1996) speak of the process of *identity resolution*, which is carried out in order to attempt to equalize the imbalance between the real and ideal selves. This process involves self-presentational strategies in adhering to new identities. Self-presentation therefore seems to function in enhancing both personal and social identity.

In relation to the research context of this thesis, self-presentation may function in personalisation of the home environment. For example, the choice of furniture, décor and ornaments used in the home may be strategically chosen as part of a



self-presentational strategy which aims to enhance certain aspects of a person's identity or desired identity.

### 2.3.3 Social comparison

As has already been explored in this chapter, people are by nature social creatures. People look to the social context in self-definition, and engage in behaviours which allow for the expression of identity to others. As well as seeking to create the best possible impression upon others, people also engage in comparisons between self and the social world around them. Whenever they are faced with the failures and successes of others, people relate such information to their own failings and strengths – whenever people evaluate themselves, they do so in comparison with others (Mussweiler, Ruter and Epstude, 2006). Social Comparison Theory was initially proposed by Festinger (1954) as a means of understanding the ways in which people engage in social comparison in order to evaluate their own opinions and perceived abilities. The theory usefully accounts for the influence that the social context might have on individuals. People look to both other people and idealized images with a view to behavioural change which will align the self more closely with these external ideals. Such comparisons act as a form of self evaluation (Festinger, 1954). Such comparison leads to evaluation in order to enhance perceived aspects of the self. In particular, *upward social comparison* involves comparison with others who are considered to be socially superior to the individual. The individual may seek commonalities between self and the other in order to raise their own perceived social status (Suls, Martin and Wheeler, 2002). *Downward social comparison* occurs when the individual compares self with another who appears socially inferior to themselves, in order to enhance their own perceived status in comparison with the other (Suls, Martin and Wheeler, 2002).

Festinger (1954) argued that whereas there are limits to the extent to which a person can alter their abilities as a result of social comparison, such limits are virtually non-existent in terms of opinions. This view presents the individual as psychologically somewhat fickle and compliant – a person's opinions are not fixed and stable, but are easily influenced through the process of social comparison. The notion of social comparison can be considered in relation to the home environment, because people may actively compare the interior of



others' dwellings with their own, in evaluating their own successes or failures in their own personalisation behaviour. Personalisation then is only to a certain extent personal – Social Comparison Theory provides one means of understanding the way that the social context may influence such behaviour. Furthermore, comparisons between one's own and others' dwellings may impact upon an individual's ideas of what elements comprise the ideal home.

Social Comparison Theory shares features with Social Identity Theory (or SIT). Both theories argue for comparison as a key influence on behaviour and behavioural change. The following section describes SIT in more detail, before introducing Identity Process Theory (IPT).

## **2.4 Theories of identity**

### **2.4.1 Social Identity Theory**

Social Identity Theory (SIT) was developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979) as a means of answering questions relating to the nature of discrimination and prejudice between groups in society. SIT has been extensively argued to be a comprehensive theory of intergroup relations (Turner and Reynolds, 2004). SIT is based on the premise that people strive for a positive social identity and in so doing aim to raise the status of the ingroup, by showing distinctiveness on the part of the ingroup. This is achieved through intergroup comparison.

Social categorization allows for comparison between the self and others and is carried out in order to render the social world coherent and meaningful. Social categories can be very general, such as nationality, social class or religion, or more specific, such as local interest groups or colleagues in a specialist field. For any one individual, such categories will either refer to an ingroup or an outgroup (Augustinos and Walker, 1995).

Comparison between groups is considered by SIT to be carried out in order that a person can raise their own self-esteem by raising the status of the ingroup. It is argued that the desire to think well of oneself is a universal trait (Augustinos and Walker, 1995). A desire to evaluate the self in positive terms not only applies to self-evaluation, but also to social evaluation – there is a desire to be

evaluated positively by other people as well as by the self. Abrams and Hogg (2004) argue that self-esteem is a social psychological phenomenon, rather than being a universal or biological trait, describing it as "*an important outcome motivator of intergroup behaviour*" (p166), further claiming that "*the question 'who am I?' precedes the question 'how good am I?'*" (p167).

Taking the notion of social comparison to the group level, the value of any group membership cannot be gauged without comparison with other groups. Comparison used to be considered as a means of acquiring an accurate self or group concept, but evidence since suggests that comparison is instead done in order to enhance the self or group concept (Augustinos and Walker, 1995). This finding is central to SIT. SIT posits that comparison between groups is carried out by members of groups, in order to enhance the social identity of members of the group (Hogg, 2004). Enhancing social identity in turn leads to an increase in self-esteem, which is typically argued to be the end goal of intergroup comparisons. Therefore, having a positive social identity based upon group memberships (belonging to the "right" groups) can lead to an increase in self-esteem for the individual.

Put simply then, the intergroup process argued for by SIT follows three steps – firstly the self and others are categorized into social groups or categories, which secondly leads to subscribed identities for those in question. Finally, people carry out intergroup comparisons, namely comparisons between themselves (or the ingroup) and others belonging to the outgroup (and thereby holding different identities). This comparison aims towards positive distinctiveness on the part of the ingroup, which raises its value and therefore the self-esteem of the members of the group.

Importantly, social comparison is carried out at the group level when the goal is to increase social identity. SIT claims that of central importance in such processes is the question of which group and dimension is chosen for comparison. Threats to the identity of the group occur when the outgroup being used for comparison appears to fare more favourably on the comparison dimension. In order to maintain individual self-esteem, it is argued that ingroup members will either change the group or the dimension they are comparing themselves against.



#### 2.4.2 Self-categorization Theory

SIT focuses squarely on the social aspects (as is inherent in its title), but it could be argued that this approach neglects the personal aspects of such processes. Augustinos and Walker (1995) argue that the nature of a self-categorization and the level to which it can be considered social will be dependent upon contextual factors. This problem has been tackled with the development of a complementary theory – that of Self-categorization Theory or SCT (Turner, 1985; Turner et al., 1987) – a theory which was developed as a result of issues arising in the SIT literature (Turner, 1999). SCT posits that the level on which identity is categorized will be a function of temporal and social context. SCT is based upon the premise that cognitions vary dependent upon the way in which a person categorises themselves in a given context, as argued by James (1890):

*“As a man I pity you, but as an official I must show you no mercy; as a politician I regard him as an ally, but as a moralist I loathe him”. (1890, p43).*

Here, James illustrates how both our self-definitions and our reactions to others are context-dependent. Turner et al. (1987) argue that the self can be categorized at three levels: the superordinate level is self as a human being – as belonging to the human race. The intermediate level is determined by group memberships. Finally, the subordinate level is self defined as a unique individual when compared against others. According to Abrams and Hogg (2004) if outgroup members are present or brought to mind in a given context, salient features for categorization and comparison are those which distinguish the ingroup from the outgroup and thereby self is defined at the intermediate (group) level. However, if only other members of the ingroup are present (physically or in an individual's thoughts), categorization occurs at an subordinate (or intragroup) level. In other words, people compare themselves against other members of the ingroup, rather than comparing the ingroup to the outgroup. *Depersonalization* occurs when self-categorizations function at a more social level (Deaux, 2000).

As pointed out by Turner (1999), the development of SCT was useful not only in addressing apparent gaps in the SIT literature; it has also allowed for the expansion of social identity theory into the realms of social cognition – and has more recently been applied to realms outwith social psychology, such as the study of the self-concept and personality (e.g. Turner and Onorato, 1999). SCT



is an important consideration in this thesis: it extends the remit of SIT in acknowledging that people categorize and compare not only at the group level, but also at the individual level – and it recognises the important part played by context.

SIT (and to a lesser extent SCT) is perhaps the most well-known theory of identity within psychology, but it is argued here that the theory is more to do with intergroup processes such as comparison and their affective outcomes, rather than describing the way in which identities are formed and managed in individuals. Additionally, SIT does not explicitly incorporate aspects of the physical environment. Identity Process Theory can be used to address these gaps, and this theory is discussed next.

#### 2.4.3 Identity Process Theory

Identity Process Theory (IPT) was developed by Breakwell (1986) and considers the mechanics of identity at a more personal level than SIT and SCT. The theory has a number of central tenets. Identity *resides* in psychological processes, yet is made manifest through *action* and *affect*. Therefore, identity can be modelled at two levels – that of *structure* and that of *process* (Breakwell, 1986). The idea of identity in terms of both structure and process is reminiscent of the theory of James (1890), who describes the self in terms of “I” - process and “me” - structure (Twigger-Ross et al., 2003). The IPT model is based on an understanding of people as aware, active agents in the construction of their own self-definitions. Interestingly, the distinction in IPT between the personal and social aspects of identity is ignored because this is seen as nothing more than a temporal artefact (Twigger-Ross et al., 2003), suggesting an understanding of identity as inherently bound in social aspects, and dependent upon context in its activation. The theory also considers the role of place as important in the processes of identity, making it an attractive theory in terms of the research context of this thesis.

The theory argues that identity processes are driven by four key principles – a need for *distinctiveness*, *continuity*, *self-esteem* and *self-efficacy* (Breakwell, 1986; 1992; Twigger-Ross et al., 2003). Distinctiveness reflects a need to be to some extent an individual, to be unique and somehow different from others in

the social context. Continuity reflects a desire to be aware of oneself as the same person from one moment to the next. Self-esteem refers to the positive evaluation of oneself, which is argued to be a strong driver in identity processes (Breakwell, 1986). Finally self-efficacy refers to the need for a person to feel that they are able to meet the demands of their daily life –the perception of an ability to function adequately in the physical and social environment (Twigger-Ross et al., 2003). These four drivers are seen as fairly universal psychological needs which motivate our identity processes. They give reason to our need for identity management.

Furthermore, the structure of identity is constantly regulated by the processes of *assimilation*, *accommodation* and *evaluation* (Breakwell, 1986). Assimilation and accommodation refer to two parts of the same process, with assimilation meaning the absorption of new elements into the structure, and accommodation meaning the adjustment in the overall structure that is necessitated by assimilation. Evaluation refers to the values given to elements of the identity structure, and hence identity processes involve an affective aspect. Together, these three make up the *processes* which are active in constructing, altering and maintaining identities.

Whereas SIT has tended to cite a need for self-esteem as a motivational force behind intergroup processes, IPT arguably provides a more complete account of the motivations behind identity processes, and accounts for these at the personal as well as the social level. What's more, the central tenet of IPT concerns the construction and regulation of identities, whereas SIT is more concerned with the intergroup behaviours which may occur as a result of identity processes. Arguably then, IPT is more *about* identity than is SIT.

Another key strength of IPT is its consideration of the physical (environmental) context (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996) and its effect on and usage in identity processes. IPT is a useful theory for environmental psychology (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996; Twigger-Ross et al., 2003; Hauge, 2006; see Section 2.5.1). There have been a number of environmental psychology studies which have utilised IPT – for example Korpela (1989) found a connection between favoured places and self-esteem; Speller et al. (1999) found negative consequences to collective self-esteem and distinctiveness, and individual place-congruent continuity and self-efficacy amongst a community who had been forced to



relocate. These considerations are covered in the next section, which discusses the role of the environment in identity processes.

## **2.5 *The Importance of Place***

This thesis is concerned with home and identity, therefore a consideration of the literature on the importance of place (the physical environment) to identity is crucial. Twigger-Ross et al. (2003) argue that identity is related to belonging in a particular place, or places. The consideration of place and identity is important because this thesis argues for a relationship between the two. Firstly, it is useful to introduce the discipline of environmental psychology, given the nature of the research in this thesis.

### **2.5.1 Environmental psychology**

During the 1970s a sub-discipline of psychology evolved called environmental psychology – a branch of psychology which is concerned with the interactions between people and their environments, and the ways in which environments can impact upon human behaviours. The emergence of this field was driven by the various needs of a multitude of sources, not all of them psychology based (Bonnes and Secchiarioli, 1995). According to Canter and Donald (1987), a convergence of disciplines fostered a conducive context for the emergence of environmental psychology. For example, human geographers, planners and architects are all at the roots of the field (Canter and Donald, 1987). Collaborations on projects between architects and psychologists highlighted the importance of the human element in the built environment. In these early stages the field was termed “architectural psychology”, concerning itself largely with built environment aspects of the physical environment (Bonnes and Secchiarioli, 1995; Bonnes et al., 2003). The emergence of environmental psychology was marked with a number of new journals, such as the *Journal of Environmental Psychology and Environment and Behavior*, and the establishment of a number of new organisations, in particular EDRA (Environmental Design Research Association) and IAPS or the International Association for People and Environment Studies (Stokols, 1995).



Research in the field of environmental psychology was initially driven by *“a firm belief that scientific psychological investigations could have direct implications for policy makers”* (Canter and Donald, 1987, p1282). They argue for *“a new paradigm in social psychology that follows trends in environmental psychology, bringing the two subdisciplines closer together”* (Canter and Donald, 1987, p1288). For example, social psychologists have demanded phenomenological validity in research methodologies – something addressed by environmental psychology which, as argued by Bell et al. (2005), is characterised by research settings largely outwith the laboratory. The overall purpose of environmental psychology is to examine relationships between people and their physical environments (Sundstrom et al., 1996, Bell et al., 2005). This understanding of the field implies that the research presented in this thesis belongs to the discipline of environmental psychology.

Key research themes that initially emerged in environmental psychology were those of territoriality, environmental stress and crowding/proximity studies (Stokols, 1995). Since then, areas of research within environmental psychology have included environmental factors such as temperature, lighting, sound, air quality, architectural features of buildings and neighbourhoods, and built and natural features of entire regions (Canter and Donald, 1987; Sundstrom et al., 1996). Other themes include formation of internal representations of the physical environment, neighbourhood perception, theory of place, environmental cognition in children and the development of environmental dispositions (Canter and Donald, 1987; Stokols, 1995). Areas of application of scientific enquiry in the field of environmental psychology include housing, educational environments, offices, therapeutic environments, transportation, landscape assessment, building evaluation, energy conservation and fire behaviour research (Canter and Donald, 1987). More recently environmental psychology has expanded to include a greater focus on such areas as interactions between people and nature - sometimes referred to as natural psychology, pro environmental behaviour and sustainable development, “conservation psychology” and participation in planning (Giuliani and Scopelliti, 2009). According to Stokols (1987), the role of environmental psychologists is not only that of solving environmentally based psychological problems, it is also important that environmental psychology develops new concepts and theories which promote understanding of the role of the environmental context in behaviour, as well as the nature of transactions between people and places.

Environmental psychology then is concerned with our interactions with, behaviour in and feelings towards our environment (Sundstrom et al., 1996). The environment is not only physical and natural, it is also made up of other people and sociocultural factors, for example rules within a community (Wapner and Demick, 2000). The discipline is characterised by its focus on spatio-physical characteristics, problems with social relevance, and an interdisciplinary approach to research and theory (Bonnes and Secchiarioli, 1995; Giuliani and Scopelliti, 2009). In particular, whereas psychology has long professed a concern over “context”, this has typically referred to the social and cultural aspects of a person’s environment (Wapner and Demick, 2000). Wohlwill makes the point:

*“When psychologists have talked of environmental influences, they have rarely been specific about the meaning for them of the concept of environment.... The physical environment that serves as background and context for behavior has been of little interest to psychologists; the role of environment has almost invariably referred to social or interpersonal influences...”* (Wohlwill, 1970, p303, cited in Bonnes and Secchiarioli, 1995).

As mentioned previously, key theories in psychology are guilty of ignoring the impact of the environmental context on behaviour. SIT is one example – social context is acknowledged as a key moderator of identity activation, yet environmental context is not considered. Environmental psychology research ensures that the importance of the physical environment is not neglected.

Whereas many areas of psychology take the individual as the unit of analysis, environmental psychology considers both the person and the environment as the unit of analysis (Bell et al., 2005) – an approach which is referred to as the “transactional world view” or “transactional approach” (e.g. Wapner and Demick, 2000; Stokols, 1995; Altman and Rogoff, 1987). This approach stems from a belief that the person and their environment should be considered as a whole (Wapner and Demick, 2000). The transactional approach is described as “*the study of changing relations among psychological and environmental aspects of holistic unities*” (Altman and Rogoff, 1987, p24). The whole does not comprise of separate entities but of a “*confluence of inseparable factors that depend on one another for their very definition and meaning*” (Altman and Rogoff, 1987, p24). The emphasis is on the reciprocal nature of people and their environments



(Stokols, 1995) and importantly, neither the environment nor the individual can be considered as an independent variable having a unidirectional influence on the other. Instead, individuals and the environment are interdependent on a number of levels and define one another (Wapner and Demick, 2000).

As previously argued in this section, the environment is not only physical and natural, it is also made up of other people. Environments have physical, interpersonal and socio-cultural elements (Wapner and Demick, 2000). So the environment and the person are never separate. The transactional approach implies that individuals are dependent upon the environment and cannot function in its absence. In turn, the environment is dependent upon individuals in its definition and meaning. Taking a transactional approach to identity, it could be argued that the identities of the person and of the environment are interdependent because they rely on one another for their definition. This suggests that the physical, interpersonal and socio-cultural elements of the environment can have consequences for identity and identity processes in the individual. Changes in one part of the whole (the person and the environment) will have consequences for other parts of the whole. Not only can the individual affect and define the environment, the environment can also be instrumental in defining the individual and in turn the individual's actual and perceived identities.

### 2.5.2 Identity and place

This thesis explores the psychological significance of place – in particular, the home environment. Despite the tendency for some authors to ignore the importance of place, research has explored the effect of the physical environment on identity processes (e.g. Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996). Although place and identity have been considered together in the literature, psychologists have failed to extend their models of self to incorporate the environment – and therefore such models are incomplete (Twigger-Ross et al., 2003). Some contributions have been made however, particularly in terms of applying mainstream theories of identity to the physical environment.

One important theoretical contribution regarding identity and place is that of Place Identity Theory (Proshansky et al., 1983) in which the authors propose that place identity constitutes a distinctive aspect of identity:



*"It is a sub-structure of the self-identity of the person consisting of, broadly conceived, cognitions about the physical world in which the individual lives." (p59).*

Proshansky et al. (1983) further add:

*"The substantive and valutive natures of these cognitions help to define who and of what value the person is both to himself and in terms of how he thinks others view him." (p74).*

In this quotation Proshansky et al. account for place identity both in terms of personal and social aspects of self-definition. They argue that the affective components of the place identity can affect the understanding and evaluation of self at these different levels. However, in criticism of Place Identity Theory, Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) contest place identity as a singular identity in itself, instead suggesting that all aspects of identity will interact with and are mediated by place – and as will be shown in Chapter 3, many aspects of identity can be reflected through the physical environment, making the latter of these viewpoints more plausible. Uzzell et al. (2002) go on to argue for place identity as an aspect of social identity. They suggest that identification with a place involves a feeling that a particular place has distinctive attributes which set it apart from other places. In this sense, *"place identification would reflect membership in a group that is defined by location"* (p29).

Although SIT has not considered the role of environment, aspects of the theory can be used to explain environmental behaviour. For example, Twigger-Ross et al. (2003) suggest that, in line with the tenets of SIT, *"people move to specific places in order to increase or maintain a positive social identity, suggesting that social identities have place-related implications which can be mobilised to enhance or diminish social identity"* (p206). They further suggest that the notion of social mobility within SIT i.e. moving social groups when a threat to identity occurs, can be applied to the act of moving houses or neighbourhood. Finally, they suggest that identity is context-dependent and place can act both as a social category and as a trigger for certain identities. In support of this, Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) speak about "place identifications", which refer to a person's identification with a particular place or area. In some cases the place is interchangeable with a social category - for example, classifying self as a "Londoner" (p206). They further argue however that this view may lead to the

importance of place being played down and considered merely as another sort of social identification, and therefore, SIT is capable only of accounting for a part of the relationship between identity and place.

IPT is arguably more appropriate for application to the physical environment than other theories of identity. Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) carried out research in which the four driving principles of IPT were used as a starting point to analyze the role of place in identity. For example, continuity, an important driving force in identity processes, can easily be applied to place and can be further broken down into *place-referent continuity* in which experiences and memories of certain places provide a link to more recent places thereby strengthening the feeling of continuity of the self-concept and *place-congruent continuity* in which generic characteristics of places are either seen as congruent or incongruent to the self-concept in terms of continuity. Importantly for the development of this thesis, place-congruent continuity can be achieved not only by attending mainly to environments that are congruent, but also by modification or appropriation of the environment to make it more congruent to the self-concept (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996). They provide further examples. Distinctiveness can be enhanced by a sense of place, such as a feeling of being a city person as distinct from a country person. Self-efficacy can be enhanced through the environment being one which assists rather than holds back effectiveness in daily activities. Finally, self-esteem can be enhanced through pride in one's environment. In these ways then, aspects of place are utilised directly in identity processes. Further support is provided by evidence from qualitative research interviews (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996). For example, continuity as provided by environmental context is shown in the case of two women who refuse to leave an area because their husbands have lived and died there and for some participants, status attached to living in a particular area enhanced self-esteem. These ideas can be directly applied to the residential environment (the area in which a person lives), suggesting that a relationship between identity and dwelling does exist.

The social aspects of identity and place have been considered. For example, Falke and Balatti (2004) discuss the social constructivist approach to place identity, which conceives of place identity as a construct "*that people create together through talk*" (p5). They further cite cultural differences, for example, the distinction between western and indigenous societies e.g. the government of



place based on legal grounds versus intergenerational oral traditions and beliefs. Finally, Sarbin (1983, cited in Falke and Balatti, 2004) suggests that:

*“social identity and place-identity (answers to who am I? and where am I? questions) are ordinarily inseparable” (p339).*

These points suggest that in line with the argument made by Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996), place identity cannot be considered as a separate entity to other types of identity process, as implied by Proshansky et al. (1983). Instead, identifications with place interrelate with other sorts of identification, resulting in a dynamic process of identity formation and regulation which is dependent upon social, temporal and environmental context. Chapter 3 takes a specific example of physical context in considering the role of the home environment in psychological processes, particularly those related to identity.

## **2.6 Individual differences in identity processes**

When considered as a whole, the work described so far presents some level of understanding of identity processes. Yet it is argued that this understanding is incomplete and lacks acknowledgement of other important psychological factors. According to Abrams and Hogg (2004), the self-concept has a unique meaning for each individual person and cannot be reduced to a normative framework of identity processes. In making this point they further argue that individual differences do exist on the meaning of the self-concept, irrespective of contextual influences. They suggest that SIT does not account for these individual differences, which is evidenced in that even when social identity is salient, not all group members behave in the same way. For example, differences exist in the extent to which individuals choose to use intergroup comparison as a means of raising the status of the ingroup (Capozza et al., 2000).

The approach of social psychology in explaining the self-concept has been criticised for its focus on situational factors in determining the self and identity (Leary and Jones, 1993; Cheek and Hogan, 1983). Cheek and Hogan (1983) point out that this suggests an inference of self as based on unstable aspects, and they disagree, arguing that dispositional factors based on personality also impact upon the self-concept. They further add that popular theories of self are



often guilty of ignoring individual differences in the extent to which a person's self-definition is based in social or personal elements.

Social identities may hold different meanings for different people and in the literature, the individual aspects of these meanings tend to be neglected in favour of the socially shared meanings such identities may hold (Deaux, 2000). Therefore, social identities may hold two sets of meanings – those shared meanings which are more commonly discussed and studied by social psychologists and also the more personal meanings which individuals attach to them. Deaux points out that with some social categories, a level of choice as to whether or not to identify with that category exists; some categories are not optional, for example ethnicity, but others hold a level of choice (stamp collector, for example). Deaux (1992) further argues that some people may choose not even to claim membership of those categories they cannot avoid falling into, thereby identifying less with that group and valuing it less in terms of defining the self-concept. An example of one likely scenario for this is provided in that amongst Hispanic people in the US, some associate the categorization with pride, whereas others associate it with social exclusion (Deaux, 1992).

Identity activation may also be subject to individual differences. Worchel et al. (2000) argue that, in contrast with the viewpoint of SIT, a person's behaviour is not guided by the single salient identity present at one time, but by a number of both personal and social identities acting simultaneously. They further argue that SIT fails to acknowledge that individual differences exist within groups in terms of the roles and statuses held by group members.

One approach attempts to categorize personality types based on different styles of identity activation, or *self-categorization*. Capozza et al. (2000) distinguish between collectivist and individualist self-categorizations. Individualist categorizations focus on independence, personal benefits and rights to certain behaviours. Collectivist categorizations focus on dependence on the group, being guided by norms and lack focus on personal benefit, instead favouring the group. Capozza et al. (2000) argue that personality differences exist in the extent to which people favour one of these two approaches. In other words, self-categorization style is not merely a result of context. They go on to define two general types of person. The *idiocentric* person is not guided by the needs of the group and shows a great deal of pride in individual success. In contrast, the

*allocentric* person is concerned with the aims of the group and it is the success of the group, rather than the individual, which raises self-esteem. Idiocentric people appear to engage in more self-enhancing behaviours and as a result tend to have higher self-esteem than allocentric personality types (Capozza et al., 2000).

Furthermore, Smith (1999) suggests that if a group can become a part of the self-concept (and this is a major tenet of SIT), then group membership must have affective qualities. Deaux (1992) supports this in arguing that every social identity is accompanied by a set of personal attributes (some of which may be shared but not necessarily so) – for example, the category of “mother” may be associated with the attribute of “caring”. This may depend upon all sorts of personal aspects such as past experience of one’s own mother and the relationship with her.

Cultural differences also exist in the extent to which a person will self-categorize in personal or social terms. In Western cultures, the concept of self as an individual is so strong that it is used in the marketing of consumable products (Kitzinger, 1992). This highlights the importance of the individual self in the definition of the self-concept, in Western cultures at least. Kitzinger (1992) argues for a tension between the private, unique and individual self, versus the social, public self. However, he goes on to argue, as argued by other authors such as Augustinos and Walker (1995), that the individual and society are inseparable.

These arguments illustrate the connection of personality to identity processes. This concept is central to the research presented in this thesis, because dispositional aspects of identity are explored in terms of their effect on behaviour in the home environment. The development of theories of such dispositional aspects of identity is now discussed.

#### 2.6.1 The concept of identity orientations

This chapter has argued that although SIT has provided a comprehensive and useful theory of intergroup behaviour, it fails to acknowledge the likelihood of individual differences in identity processes (Abrams and Hogg, 2004; Capozza



et al., 2000; Deaux, 2000; Worchel et al., 2000). As argued by Cheek (1989), *"it seems reasonable to expect that there are consequential individual differences in the relative importance or value placed on personal compared to social identity characteristics"* (p275). It is *identity orientations* as conceived by Cheek and Briggs (1982) which are of interest to the research presented in this thesis. The theoretical development of identity orientations is now discussed.

Sampson (1978) argues that some people are orientated towards more internal aspects in defining the self-concept, whereas others are orientated more towards external aspects. He gives as an example a person who defines the self in terms of their occupation, in contrast with a person who defines the self in terms of their likes and dislikes. Sampson's approach constitutes a first hurdle in dealing with some of those classic objections to identity theories as failing to account for individual differences. His distinction to some extent is mirrored by the idiocentric and allocentric personality types proposed by Capozza et al. (2000), although these are defined in motivational terms rather than self-definition terms.

Sampson's internal and external orientations were further developed by Cheek and Briggs (1982), who similarly argue that some people orientate their self-definitions more towards the personal and some more towards the social aspects. They found that the items on Sampson's scale of external and internal orientations related to public and private aspects of self-consciousness, respectively. They conclude that those people who are more socially orientated in terms of their identity pay more attention to the impressions that they make on other people, whether that be through their appearance, their mannerisms, or the way that they behave publicly. In contrast, those who are more orientated towards the internal, or personal aspects of identity tend to value their own personal beliefs and values the most.

Sampson's belief that people either orientate towards internal or external aspects of self-definition holds an inherent assumption that the internal and external are at opposite ends of the same dimension (Cheek and Briggs, 1982; Cheek, 1989). Cheek and Briggs (1982) found a small positive correlation ( $r = .19$ ) between Sampson's measures of internal and external orientation, concluding that the two measure different, albeit related constructs.



Cheek and Briggs (1982) went on to develop the concept of identity orientations, along with a measure of these – the Aspects of Identity Questionnaire (or AIQ), which was adapted from the previous work of Sampson (1978). This questionnaire measured personal and social identity orientation. A third scale was added called collective identity orientation (Cheek, 1989). Finally, in 2002 a fourth scale was added – that of relational identity orientation (Cheek et al., 2002). Cheek (1989) explains that *“identity orientations refer to the relative importance that individuals place on various identity attributes or characteristics when constructing their self-definitions”*. Personal and social identity orientations relate to personality differences functioning in identity processes, namely, the extent to which a person may locate their identity or identities in the personal or social realms<sup>4</sup>. It can be further argued that in those with high social identity orientation, for example, there is a higher value placed on the way the self is presented to others, because this feeds back into the definition of self and may have far reaching consequences for self-esteem. Collective identity orientation refers to the value placed on group memberships such as nationality, profession or gender in constructing the self-definition (Cheek, 1989). Finally, relational identity orientation refers to the importance of close relationships in self-definition (Cheek et al, 2002)<sup>5</sup>.

The approach taken by Cheek and colleagues (1982; 2002) may complement that of other identity theories such as SCT which purport that contextual influences can affect the extent to which a person will self-categorize in a social or personal direction. Identity orientations add to this understanding in that as well as such contextual influences, personality differences may also function in such categorizations. A more complete understanding of the effects on self-categorization then may be that the social, temporal and environmental context, as well as differences in personality such as identity orientations may affect the extent to which a person self-categorizes in terms of social or personal aspects.

Cheek and colleagues are not the only ones to speak in terms of identity orientations. Brewer and Gardner (1996) argue for personal, relational and

<sup>4</sup> As with the internal and external orientations of Sampson (1978), Cheek (1989) is keen to point out that personal and social identity orientations are separate but related constructs showing a small positive relationship of  $r = .15$ , and therefore, *“a person may score high on one or the other, or both or neither of these dimensions. Thus the personal and social aspects of identity may be viewed productively as dialectical rather than diametrical opposites.”* (p276-277).

<sup>5</sup> It is noted here that in Study 2 personal and social identity orientation was studied, whereas in Study 3 all four types of identity orientation were studied.

collective identity orientations, which are somewhat similar to those proposed by Cheek and colleagues. Unlike those of Cheek et al. (2002), however, these identity orientations have more of a focus on dynamic and context-dependent aspects, although individual differences are still acknowledged. Berzonsky (1994) defined three different orientations:

- Informational (active self-exploration in identity formation)
- Normative (conforming to social norms and expectations held by others, in self-definition)
- Diffuse/avoidant (avoiding self-exploration and relying on the situation in self-definition).

In particular, informational identity processing style is reminiscent of the internal orientation described by Sampson (1978) and the personal identity proposed by Cheek (1989) - people who are information-orientated look more to the internal, personal aspects in self-definition. Normative processing style is similar to the external orientation posited by Sampson, or the social identity orientation proposed by Cheek (1989) – people who are normative-orientated look towards social aspects, particularly in terms of societal or cultural norms, in forming their self-definition. They are keen to be seen in a favourable light by others. Finally, the diffuse/avoidant style bears resemblance to the collective identity orientation proposed by Cheek (1989) – individuals are depersonalised and define themselves completely at the group level – depending upon situational factors.

Berzonsky's distinctions also bear some resemblance to the idea of public and private self-processes, so it can be seen that a number of dichotomous concepts (public/private, internal/external, social/personal) are used in the literature to describe a common theme. Self-definition happens at a personal and social level, and there are personality-based differences in the extent that each of these levels are important to self-definition. As mentioned previously, there may also be cultural differences which affect such processes. It appears logical to subdivide the social category into interpersonal and intergroup considerations (Berzonsky, 1994). This would account for the different social levels proposed by Berzonsky (normative and diffuse/avoidant) and the social and collective identity orientations proposed by Cheek (1989). This sentiment is echoed in the point made earlier regarding the ambiguity on definition of social identity – to



conceive of two types of such an identity is helpful in highlighting the different processes being considered. This point is also reflected by the need to add a collective identity orientation scale to the AIQ (Cheek, 1989), due to a qualitative distinction between interpersonal and intergroup processes.

#### 2.6.1.1 *Research with identity orientations*

Identity orientations are central to the research of Study 2 within this thesis as well as being a component of Study 3 (see chapters 5 and 6). This section provides further detail on identity orientations, describing other research which has used them – both in order to show the validity of identity orientations as a measure, and to provide a deeper understanding of what exactly identity orientations are.

Perhaps two of the most important areas to have been researched in terms of identity orientations are self-monitoring, and self-consciousness. These areas of inquiry are both important because they refer to the extent of a distinction between public and private selves.

The concept of *self-monitoring* was developed by Snyder (1974) to capture individual differences in how people monitor self-presentation and expressive behaviour. A high self-monitor pays a great deal of attention to the social context in terms of how he or she self-presents, and in some ways this quality seems similar to a person with a high social identity orientation. Many research studies show that social identity orientation *does* predict a high self-monitoring personality (Cheek and Busch, 1982; Cheek and Briggs, 1981; Penner and Wymer, 1983; Lamphere and Leary, 1990), although a complementary link between personal identity orientation and low self-monitoring has never been found. Cheek (1989) argues that this could be due to a wrongful assumption that personal and social identity orientation are opposite ends of the same scale (which as has already been discussed, is not the case). Personal and social identity orientations refer to two distinct constructs.

Self-consciousness theory was originally developed by Fenigstein et al. (1975), with a distinction between public and private aspects of self-consciousness. Self-consciousness relates to the extent to which a person is conscious of



aspects of themselves, these being the more public or the more private aspects of self. Identity orientations have been found to relate to self-consciousness. In particular, personal identity orientation positively correlates with private self-consciousness and social identity orientation positively correlates with public self-consciousness (Cheek and Briggs, 1982; Penner and Wymer, 1983; Schlenker and Weigold, 1990; Lamphere and Leary, 1990). Wymer and Penner (1985) further found that those with high personal identity orientation tend to display stronger consistency between their attitudes and their behaviour than those with low personal identity orientation.

Lamphere and Leary (1990) suggest that self-monitoring, self-consciousness and identity orientations can be distinguished from one another in the following way. In terms of public vs. private self-processes, self-monitoring refers to the individual's "locus of behavioural influence", self-consciousness refers to the "locus of self-attention" and identity orientations refer to the "locus of identity". Importantly, although self-consciousness or self-monitoring may have been useful constructs to research in the second study in this thesis<sup>6</sup> (in terms of their relation to the extent to which a person is guided by the opinions of others), identity orientations were deemed of greatest value because of their focus on identity and self-definition – and this thesis builds an argument for the role of the home environment in self-definition processes. What's more, the AIQ, as argued by Lemay and Ashmore (2006) has been well validated in previous research. More of this research is now discussed.

Social and personal identity orientations can predict how individual or connected to others a person feels. Dollinger (1996) employed a method called autophotography in which participants compile "photo essays" in order to portray their identity. Social identity orientation correlates with "relatedness" - defining of the self in terms of relatedness to other people, shown in terms of photos of the self in contact with others. Personal identity orientation is related to individuality - defining the self in individualistic terms, as evidenced by a majority of photographs without other people present. This seems unsurprising but it shows that those who are inclined to define themselves at a social level do so in terms of social comparisons, whereas those with high personal identity orientations

<sup>6</sup> The second study explored the relationship of personal and social identity orientations to home making behaviour.

define themselves as an individual without placing importance on others in that self-definition.

For people high in social identity orientations, it is evaluations in terms of social attributes which are most important. However, for those high in personal identity orientation, there is no threat posed to self-esteem from social evaluation (Barnes et al., 1988). This suggests that those high in personal identity orientation are "protected" from the worry of negative evaluation from others, as their self-definition and therefore their self-esteem is rooted in personal factors – they care the least about what other people think of them. The researchers conclude that the results provide strong evidence in support of public and private (or personal and social) aspects as being distinct constructs, in support of Cheek who argues for these as separate dimensions (as discussed). They further argue that the results suggest that there is value in studying people in terms of their personal and social identity orientations and that the distinction is a meaningful one.

Identity orientations can reveal interesting insights into common attitudes and behaviours. For example, Cheek and Hogan (1983) showed that whereas guilt was related to personal identity orientation, shame related to social identity orientation. This suggests that guilt is an internal personal emotion (where a person feels they have let themselves down) whereas shame is something much more social – a feeling of having let others down and appearing badly socially. These findings were replicated by the work of Lutwak et al. (1998).

Social identity orientation is related to the desire to maintain group concepts. Seta et al. (1998) found that amongst those high on social identity orientation, positive group stereotypes were more fiercely maintained in the light of inconsistent behaviour on the part of an ingroup member.

SIT focuses on situational influences on self-esteem. Luhtanen and Crocker (1992) argue for more stable aspects to self-esteem. They suggest that for some, self-esteem may be based in interpersonal relationships whereas for others it may be more strongly moderated by personal achievement. They found that social and collective identity orientations correlated with their measure of collective self-esteem, supporting their arguments on individual differences in collective self-esteem, and suggesting that identity orientations predict the ways



in which a person's self-esteem may be affected, dependent upon these dispositional aspects.

Collective identity orientations have been shown to predict how people describe themselves. Tropp (1992) found that those people scoring higher on collective identity orientation were more likely to define the self in collective terms, rating their ethnicity as a central aspect of self and placing less value on uniqueness. In contrast, those high in personal identity orientation tended to value uniqueness over ethnicity. Furthermore, Kowalski and Woolfe (1994) found that American subjects high on collective identity orientation rated the United States more favourably following a national failure than did those American subjects who were low on collective identity orientation.

A more limited body of research has also explored the impact of relational identity orientation on attitudes and behaviours. For example, Brickson (2000) found that activating a relational identity orientation may promote the benefits and inhibit the disadvantages of organizational diversity, and Prado et al. (2007) found that in four different cultures, relational identity orientation was more important than social and collective (but not personal) identity orientations to people as well as being more closely associated with personal than with social identity orientation.

**Table 1 - Key constructs relating to identity orientations**

<b>Social identity orientation</b>	<b>Personal identity orientation</b>
Public self-monitoring	Private self-monitoring
Public self-consciousness	Private self-consciousness
Relatedness to others	Individuality
Threatened by social evaluation	Not threatened by evaluation
Shame	Guilt
Collectivism	Individualism
Collective self-esteem	
Conformity	Autonomy
Desire to maintain group concepts	

The majority of research discussed relates to personal and social identity orientations. Table 1 summarises the key psychological constructs discussed



above which have been shown to relate to social and personal identity orientations.

Identity orientations are also found to be related to other constructs and behaviours such as collectivism (Triandis and Gelfand, 1998); world views (Johnson et al., 1988); health behaviours such as sun tanning behaviour (Leary and Jones, 1993); athletic ability and religion (Dollinger, 1995); patriotism (Kowalski and Wolfe, 1994); personal and social aspects of job satisfaction as well as occupational choices (Leary et al., 1986 cited in Seta et al., 1998); reactions to own appearance (Davies, 2005), perceived behavioural control over exercise, dieting and binge drinking (Hagger et al., 2007); ethnicity (Wink, 1997); creativity (Dollinger et al., 2005), self-appraisal in terms of face to face versus private contexts (McKillop et al., 1992); autonomy and conformity (Hogan and Cheek, 1983); attributions relating to the opinions of others (Seta et al., 2006); concern for social appropriateness (Cheek and Busch, 1982) and church attendance (Tiliopoulos and McVittie, 2009), amongst others.

Taken together, these findings suggest that identity orientations are about the things that a person values in terms of their idea of the kind of person they are. Identity orientations reflect the kind of things that a person will think of as important, or the way in which a person will behave, dependent upon their need to impress other people (whether these be individuals or groups), or focus on the self, in efforts to raise self-esteem. In particular, a person with a high personal identity orientation<sup>7</sup> is likely to monitor private aspects of the self more closely, be more self-conscious about private aspects, be individual and not dependent upon others in evaluation and therefore in self-esteem. Their behaviour is likely to be more autonomous and not particularly dependent upon social context. In contrast, a person with a high social identity orientation<sup>8</sup> most closely monitors social, viewable aspects of self, is more self-conscious of public aspects, feels more connected to others and dependent upon them in constructing a self-definition and also in raising self-esteem, is more likely to conform to social norms and protect group concepts.

Although these findings suggest a strong dichotomous split between personal and social identity, it should be borne in mind that the two show a small positive

<sup>7</sup> In comparison to someone with a low personal identity orientation

<sup>8</sup> In comparison to someone with a low social identity orientation

correlation ( $r = .15$ ; Cheek, 1989). It is possible for a person to value both the personal and the social aspects of the self in constructing a self-definition. Conversely, it is possible to place a low value on each of these in constructing a self-definition. The way in which such a self-definition is constructed assists a person to evaluate themselves and this evaluation can potentially improve self-esteem.

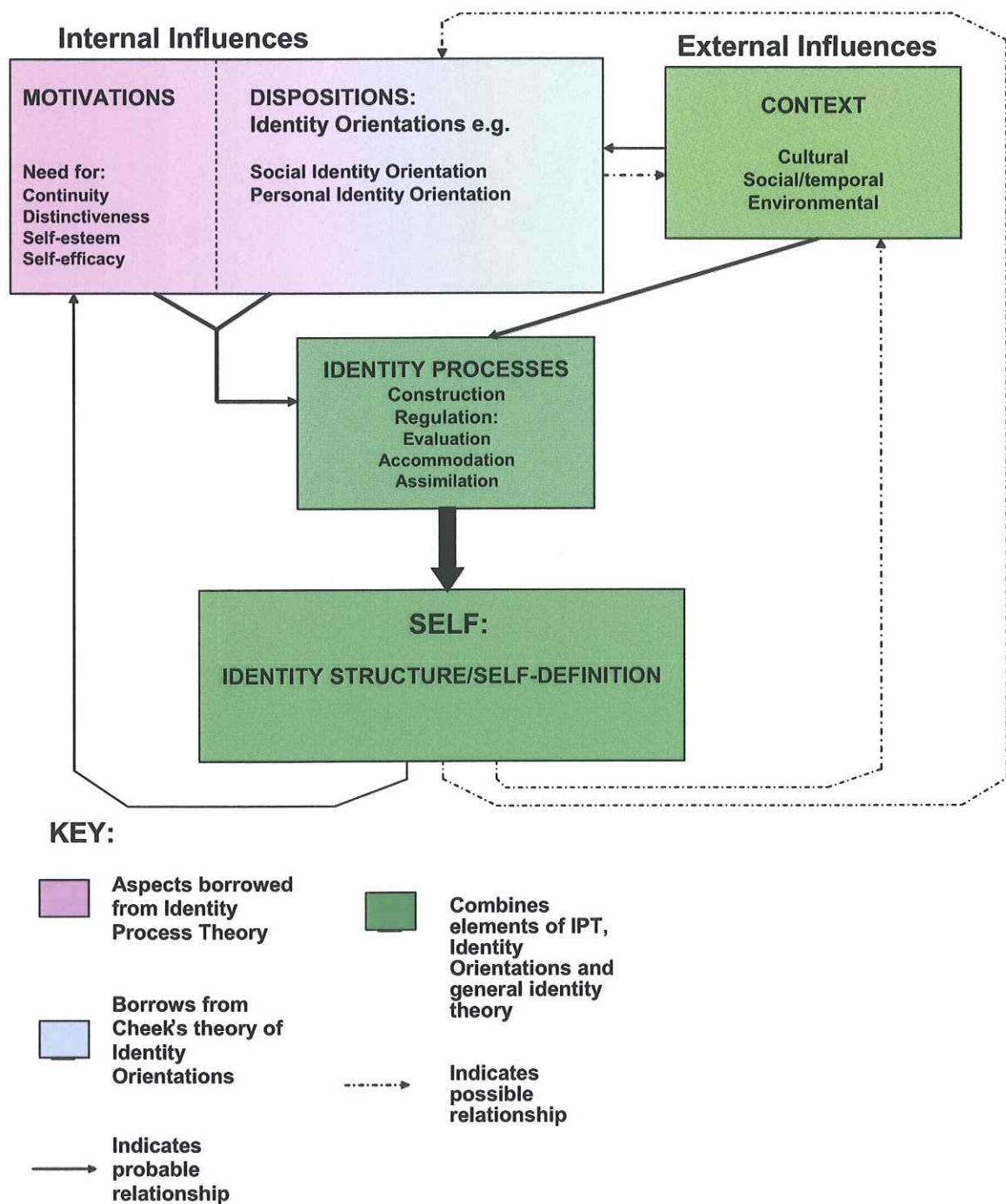
This chapter has built an understanding of identity through the different perspectives presented by a number of different authors and theories. As has been argued however, each of these perspectives is limited and misses important contributing factors to the processes involved in self-definition. A perspective on identity will now be presented which is based on the model provided in Figure 1 in Section 2.7.

## **2.7 A synthesised perspective of identity**

Figure 1 has been developed for this thesis taking into account the different approaches to identity presented in this chapter, which on their own remain incomplete, but when combined may provide a much more complete understanding of how a person forms an identity, and maintains or manages that identity.

As can be seen in Figure 1, identity can be thought of in terms of structure and process (as argued for by IPT). The processes of identity function in helping to maintain the positive aspects of a person's identity, or to alter the negative aspects. These processes are driven by a number of motivations which are internal to the person. These are derived from IPT and are a need for distinctiveness, continuity, self-esteem and self-efficacy. As well as these motivations driving identity processes, personality will also play a part. In particular it is argued that individual differences in a person's identity processing style will affect identity processes (as argued for by Cheek and Briggs, 1982). In this model, social and personal identity orientation should be taken as *examples* of dispositions which may act as an internal influence on identity processes.

Figure 1 - Theoretical Model of Identity



As well as these internal aspects influencing identity processes, there are also influences which are external to the person. These refer to various situational, contextual aspects, such as social and temporal context, cultural context and environmental context. In this thesis, the environmental context studied is the home environment, and the ways in which identity relates to it. These external contexts can potentially impact on the internal influences e.g. in cases where the



environment supports distinctiveness, a person may place more importance on other motivational factors such as self-esteem.

The identity processes themselves involve the construction of new identities, and the regulation of existing identities, through the processes of evaluation, accommodation and assimilation (as argued for in IPT).

Finally, these processes feed into aspects of the self: the existing identity structure which encompasses the range of identities held by a person, these going towards a general self-definition which is dynamic, and an important part of the self-concept.

The solid arrows in Figure 1 indicate a directional influence from one stage to another. It can be seen that as well as the internal and external influences impacting on the processes, which in turn lead to the structure, the nature of the structure itself can also impact on the nature of the motivations - for example, if an identity is congruent with a desired identity, then self-esteem may be higher, resulting in a lesser focus on that particular motivation. Likewise, if a person's resulting identity structure does not enhance their feelings of distinctiveness, there would be an increased focus on this as a motivating force. It is also argued that the social, temporal, cultural and environmental context (external factors) can affect the motivational (internal) influences on identity processes – for example in that the sort of home a person lives in may raise their actual or perceived status, and therefore their self-esteem.

The dashed arrows in the model represent potential directional relationships between stages. These relationships are only hypothesised to exist and the model does not refer to relationships found (see Chapter 6 for the research findings relating to statistical testing of hypotheses relating to this model). It is hypothesised then that the resulting identity structure can affect identity-based dispositions. This is an interesting proposition because Cheek and colleagues (e.g. Cheek 1989, Cheek et al., 2002) argue for identity orientations as relatively stable and enduring qualities. However, no evidence exists to support this claim, and it is possible that a bidirectional influence exists between the two. Further, it is hypothesised that the resulting identity structure can affect the external factors, such as social and environmental contexts, e.g. personalisation of the home. Finally, it is hypothesised that the dispositional aspects will influence the

external factors (again, such as social and environmental contexts). In particular, the second study argues that identity orientations, both social and personal, can affect the way that a person interacts with their home environment through the use of personalisation, because this environment is used as a resource in identity processes.

## **2.8 Conclusions**

This chapter has presented a body of work relating to identity. As has been shown, each approach to identity and self-definition adds an important contribution, but as shown by other approaches, each remains incomplete. Importantly, most approaches (with the exception of Place Identity and IPT) neglect the role of the physical environment, instead focusing on social and temporal aspects of context. Additionally, the possibility of individual differences in identity processes are typically neglected.

One important conclusion to draw is that identity processes are complex, affected both by dispositional and situational factors. A person's self-concept is a dynamic structure of multiple layers of identity.

A model has been presented which attempts a more complete understanding of how identities are formed and managed. Importantly for the research development, the model hypothesises a two-way link between the dispositional aspects of identity (identity orientations) and the physical environment.

This thesis studies identity processes in the specific context of the home environment, because it is hypothesised that the home affords an ideal resource for such processes. Home may therefore have implications for people in terms of psychological constructs such as self-esteem, self-efficacy and ongoing self-definitions. The next chapter explores research relating to home in more detail, with a focus on identity and personalisation in the home environment.



### 3 Meanings and interpretations of *home* and its relationship with aspects of the self

*"We make our homes. Not necessarily by constructing them, although some people do that. We build the intimate shell of our lives by the organization and furnishing of the space in which we live. How we function as persons is linked to how we make ourselves at home....Our residence is where we live, but our home is how we live"* Ginsberg (1999, p31).

#### 3.1 What is "*home*"?

Home is a much used word in everyday language, but when faced with the question of what home actually is, many would find it difficult to provide a straightforward response. The understanding of home has attracted a great deal of academic contemplation, with scholars attempting to solve the problem of home by providing a comprehensive explanation. Research and theoretical contributions into the concept of home are vast and have been offered by academics from a wide number of disciplines (Gurney, 1997). Research approaches have explored behaviour in the home environment (e.g. Ozaki, 2002), and sought resident meanings through in-depth interviewing techniques (e.g. Case, 1996; Kellett and Moore, 2003). Other approaches are more theoretical and draw on diverse sources such as art (Cooper-Marcus, 1995) and language (Kaiser and Fuhrer, 1996) for their support. Contributions have come from those in the fields of sociology, psychology, human geography, anthropology, history, architecture and philosophy (Mallet, 2004). It is interesting that a concept such as this, which is so ingrained into our common understanding of the world, should attract so much intellectual attention. Lawrence (1995) argues that home is worthy of study because it is a complex subject area with a number of conflicting accounts in the literature. For example, home is frequently defined as an ideal and celebrated place despite negative examples, such as accounts of violence in the home which makes it far from a safe and ideal environment for many people. Moore (2000) argues that the understanding of the concept of home is problematic because home itself has many associations and the understanding of home is multi-layered.

Despite the diverse and often contradictory approaches that have been put forward, writings on the nature of home have revealed a number of interesting and important



insights, which will be considered throughout this chapter. Multidisciplinary approaches have shown that home is a concept which exists on a number of levels and which is used to communicate thoughts and emotions in a number of ways as well as providing a means of facilitating our own understanding of the world and our place within it. Largely, in the literature as well as in this thesis chapter, home as a place in geographical space is given less emphasis than the more abstract qualities of home, particularly those which refer to psychological and social constructs. According to Pallasmaa (1995):

*"Reflection on the essence of home takes us away from the physical properties of house into the psychic territory of the mind" (p134)*

It is this position which informs the approach of this chapter. The most common approaches to the definition of home are considered, before moving on to a more focussed discussion of those aspects of home which interrelate with aspects of the self.

### **3.2 Definitions of home**

Home has been defined or described in a number of ways. Hayward (1975) provided an early model of the different aspects of home by categorizing these into five areas – home as physical structure; home as territory; home as locus in space; home as self and self-identity; and home as social and cultural unit. All of these themes will be revisited in more detail at later points in this chapter. However, Moore (2000) argues that such classifications are overly simplistic and attempt to reduce a complex set of systems to a mere list. Despite this criticism, it is pertinent to consider the key themes that are commonly associated with home in the literature (some of which are argued for by Hayward and others which are not) because these constitute a major part of the intellectual contribution to the theory of home made over the last few decades.

#### **3.2.1 Home as territory**

Home has territorial properties and according to Altman (1975) is our *primary* territory and allows us control over the environment which is generally not afforded by other places. According to Hansen and Altman (1976), the marking of human territory can be seen in environmental symbols such as fences,

hedges and nameplates, for example. Harris and Brown (1996) found that naïve observers are capable of gauging with some accuracy a resident's level of territorial commitment to home from the appearance of the home in question, which suggests that the marking of territory is a social and conspicuous activity. According to Omata (1995), human territoriality manifests itself in observable behaviours such as taking control over a space, using that space exclusively and personalising and appropriating the space. Omata goes on to argue that territoriality in terms of the home not only can assist with self-identity processes, it can also bring psychological well-being. Territoriality thought of in this way is very similar to the argument of home as a haven of privacy – the home as ones' territory precludes others from automatically invading this space, as it is someone else's territory, it is necessary to be invited to come in. Therefore, territoriality functions as a maintainer of privacy in the home (Omata, 1995) and is dependent upon *control* in its execution.

### 3.2.2 Home affords control

Control and independence are qualities afforded to many through their homes (Case, 1996; Tomas and Dittmar, 1995; Kellett and Moore, 2003; Coates and Fordham, 2000). Control is related to territory, because home is our primary territory (Altman, 1975) and is therefore likely to be the place where we are able to exert the most control. In Case's (1996) study, one participant gives an example of how control is lost when travelling away from home:

*"... when you are travelling you have a real loss of control... over what you eat".*

Furthermore, Kellett and Moore (2003) carried out interviews with people in homeless shelters and found that the dominant theme to emerge in terms of the meaning of home to these people was that of independence and freedom. According to one participant:

*"Your home is your castle. I say what goes. I say who comes in and what goes on" (p131).*

Home is the place that people may exert the greatest degree of control in their lives – both control over their own lives and control over the actual physical



environment. It is, therefore, understandably a quality of home that is highly valued. It is also of importance in the context of this thesis because the research presented here considers personalisation in the home environment, and personalisation involves exerting control over one's environment.

### 3.2.3 Home as refuge and shelter

Home is frequently defined in terms of "refuge" and "shelter" in dominant theories (Tomas and Dittmar, 1995; Mallett, 2004) and has been thus portrayed commonly throughout history, for example in the work of popular painters who often portray a stark contrast between a warm and familiar interior and a harsh and bleak outside world (Hepworth, 1999). Concepts such as refuge and shelter can be understood in psychological as well as physical terms. They encompass feelings of safety from danger and emotional upset, and feelings of psychological comfort and ease as well as comfort and shelter from the physical elements. The psychological significance of home is highlighted in research with the Carlisle flood victims of 2005, which shows that the desecration of home can have significant impacts on a person's mental health (Carroll et al., 2009). A place of shelter is somewhere that a person can be themselves, free from exposure to the more challenging and upsetting aspects of the outside world. According to Dovey (1985), *"the sense of home is heightened when we are warm in bed yet can hear the rain on the roof and the wind whistling under the eaves"*. Such experiences serve to remind us of the harshness of the outside elements, from which we are protected by our place of shelter. Further to the physical aspects of shelter, many also see the home as a place to take refuge from other sorts of difficulties in the outside world, particularly social difficulties, for example an inability to fit in amongst work colleagues or school peers. This point refers to the social quality of home which is discussed in more detail in Section 3.6.

Although an understanding of home based on the idea of the refuge dominates in the literature, it has been criticised in its appropriateness as a universal or necessary aspect of home (e.g. Mallett, 2004; Chapman and Hockey, 1999). As pointed out by Gurney (1997), home can actually be a place of oppression for women who associate the home with a workplace and even with a prison where they are trapped in a life of domestic servitude. This can be related back to the



idea of home as a territory – the person who feels trapped has a negative association with the home as being someone else's territory. This contrasts starkly with the commonly held notion of the home as feminized and as being more of a haven for women than for men (Mallett, 2004).

Others assert that home can be a place of fear or somewhere to run away from, particularly for victims of physical and sexual abuse, whether adults or children (Mallett, 2004; Coates and Fordham, 2000; Tomas and Dittmar, 1995). Goldsack (1999) stresses that it is only for men that the danger of physical violence lies predominantly outside of the home – for women the danger is greatest within the supposed “sanctuary” of home (although it should be acknowledged that men too can be the victims of domestic abuse). For people facing homelessness through poverty or other circumstances, home does not provide a feeling of security. Cresswell (2002) notes that the experience of home as a haven of safety and comfort may also depend upon the type of neighbourhood, for example the difference between a suburban home and a home within an inner city ghetto, arguing that this highlights the relationship of sex, race and socioeconomic status to experiences of home. Even for those for whom the home or the family do not pose actual physical threat, it is not unusual for family relations to grow tense from time to time, for example when family members disagree, or when siblings are being noisy and difficult and demand to be entertained and amused by their parents. In Case's research (1996), participants often alluded to the need to escape from the oppression of the routine or familial tensions within the home and this escaping could be carried out in solitude, or as a group. For example, one male commented that:

*“If we are all having a bad grumpy day it's not unusual for us to say 'let's go to MacDonalds' and just get out of the house” (p6).*

On the other hand, the home is frequently referred to as a place to escape to, particularly in terms of the stresses of working life. Again in Case's (1996) study, one woman commented that:

*“Instead of the getting out of the house..... it's the coming home that is relaxing” (p6).*

It is also worth bearing in mind that a home can sometimes serve functions other than that of shelter. For example, a growing number of people use the home as

a place of work and production – either through choice or through economic crises such as a lack of local employment. Work and production activities can detract from other qualities of home, as in the case of Nilofar and her husband – a participant in the research of Kellett and Tipple (2000) in which the spatial and social implications of home enterprise are explored. Nilofar's production of jewellery in the dwelling took up a great deal of room which meant there was little room for furniture and possessions. Yet as argued by Kellett and Tipple, *"the struggle to increase household income is intimately linked to the process of gaining and improving shelter"* (2000, p204).

It can be seen then that there is much truth, for many people, in the understanding of home as a place of refuge, shelter and comfort, both physically and psychologically. However, it is too simplistic to assume that to all people, home provides these benefits. And for those to whom home does afford these qualities, there are times when the home itself is a place to escape from, or take a break from. Home can also be a place to escape from for those who *do* have a positive association with the security provided by home – for example in the case of children who need to explore the world beyond what is familiar, whilst retaining the security of a safe place to return to.

Case (1996) also argues that ritual checks and other activities done on going away from the home are a means of reducing an anxiety that is commonly felt on leaving the home for a period of time, providing an example of one family in his study that would take a "part of home" with them – soft toys and security blankets for the children and books for the adults. These points show that the relationship of home to qualities of refuge and comfort is a complex one, one that shifts over time and from time to time and is dependent upon many factors. Home therefore *can* be understood as having such qualities but only under certain conditions and the reverse can be true when conditions change.



### 3.2.4 Home as a haven of privacy

Related to the notion of home as shelter and refuge is the common approach to home as a haven of privacy from others (Tomas and Dittmar, 1995, Lawrence, 1987; Mallett, 2004; Chapman and Hockey, 1999). Such accounts stress the boundaries between the public and private realms. The home is somewhere we can return to and be ourselves free from the social scrutiny we experience in the outside world. According to Lawrence (1987) one role of housing design is to distinguish between public and private domains and accordingly, *"these spatial relations express the administrative, cultural, judicial and sociopolitical rights of the residents, visitors, neighbours and strangers"* (p 155). These ideas can be related back to the notion of home as a territory. Although this is most likely a notion valued by many, if not a majority of people in terms of home, home is also often a place of social interaction with friends and extended family. This is evidenced by the fact that historically in the UK, houses have been designed with a public, social area such as a parlour and that these areas have been consistently used by others from outside of the familial home (Hepworth, 1999). Furthermore, modern homes are often much more open in design and incorporate features such as home offices and living quarters for extended family members, thereby challenging the view of home as private haven from the world, including the workplace (Mallett, 2004).

Chapman and Hockey (1999) point out that although the home is commonly understood as a haven of privacy and indeed is a place affording more privacy and control than other environments, behaviour is still to some extent guided by social pressures from the outside world. They further argue that despite our efforts to maintain the home as a private sanctuary, the fact remains that a variety of people will cross the threshold throughout our stay in a home – whether they are friends or family, or less well known people such as electricians, doctors, midwives and so on – and this highlights the fragile nature of the boundary between the public and private realms. Furthermore, Chapman and Hockey (1999) highlight the fact that in cases of burglary, such boundaries are ruthlessly violated and the psychological consequences in terms of the victim's sense of identity in these cases can be severe. These points show that the notion of home as a private realm does not provide us with a full understanding of the meanings of home. However, it seems clear that most people do feel more at liberty to be themselves at home, with less of a need to



make a favourable impression on others, or to conform to expected models of social behaviour, although undoubtedly there will still be times when these are necessary – largely when home is visited by other people. This shows that home certainly does have the capacity to provide us with privacy some of the time, at least some of the time. Furthermore, turning this private realm into a social realm is arguably largely done through choice, showing that a desire for home as a place of privacy only applies some of the time.

Importantly, the extent to which the home is seen as a social or private domain may differ between people based upon personality traits such as extroversion/introversion, or social and personal identity orientations, which were discussed in Chapter 2, and relate to the degree to which a person looks to other people or themselves in defining the self-concept (see Section 2.6.1). This is particularly relevant here because this thesis argues that social and personal identity orientations can affect the way that people behave in their homes. Research into the influence of such personality traits on home making behaviour is reported in Chapter 6.

It could be argued that despite the social aspects of the home, residents do possess a large degree of control in terms of which people are allowed to enter; therefore the privacy element remains true in terms of strangers and people less well known. Those who are close to us are less likely to be the people we seek sanctuary from, assuming that relations with such people are positive.

### **3.3 *How physical is home?***

The word “home” is often used interchangeably with the word “house”, yet it means so much more than this and often doesn’t relate to a physical structure at all. Many authors have suggested that a reliance on the physical dwelling in explaining home is fundamentally flawed because many groups and cultures either lack such a physical structure, do not root their meaning of home to one dwelling or the current dwelling, or do not place emphasis on a physical quality of home in defining what home means to them (Mallet, 2004; Tomas and Dittmar, 1995; Cresswell, 2002; Pallasmaa, 1995).

To some people, home may mean a past home, a home located in a different geographical place to that where they currently reside. Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) describe the concept of home as referring to childhood and the roots of selfhood. This suggests that even if the word home does conjure up images of a particular place, this is not necessarily the current dwelling place. This may be particularly true for young people leaving home for University, according to Kenyon (1999), because they are likely to spend term time in their University accommodation and the holidays back at "home" with family. This suggests that the term time address is a transitional place where young people can begin to create their identities as "adult", while still having the safety net of the family home. This may also be true of young people not taking the University or college route. A further point to note is that for some people, home means a number of places, such as the day to day dwelling, the childhood dwelling, the holiday home and even the workplace. Some people also have more than one family home. Therefore, it is problematic to think of home in terms of a singular, current dwelling place.

Home may not refer to one particular place, but to a series of geographical concepts such as the town, the country and the planet. Ahmed (1999, cited in Mallett, 2004) shows that home can be understood on a number of levels not merely restricted to the single physical dwelling – for example a person's town, village or city, their country, the home of their family members. This is supported by Moore (2000) who points out that much ancient literature and early usage of the word home did in fact refer to the country, homeland or birthplace of a person as opposed to the singular dwelling. In 17th and 18th Century England the term was used to refer to the dwelling rather than the previous meanings of village, town or country. This illustrates the changing primary meaning of the very word itself. Furthermore, cross cultural research can highlight alternative meanings of home in different cultures. Mallett (2004) found that for the people of Nuakata Island in Papua New Guinea, home meant either the village or the island inhabited (and this could be interpreted as showing a priority of community over nuclear family units, in contrast to Western societies), rather than the individual family dwellings.

With such strong arguments against the definition of home as a singular geographical location in space, it becomes clearer as to why some authors have been keen to draw a distinction between the house and the home. Pallasmaa



(1995) distinguishes between the dwelling, or house (*"the container, the shell for home"* p132) and the home (*"an expression of the dweller's personality and his unique patterns of life"* p132). Mallet (2004) points out that academics frequently conflate house and home, despite evidence to suggest that the two are not necessarily interdependent. Lawrence (1995) suggests that, although there often is an overlap of house and home, house is not a necessary condition of home.

Perspectives on meanings of homelessness lend further support to the argument against the interchangeable nature of house as home (Kellett and Moore, 2003; Padgett, 2007). Tomas and Dittmar (1995) explain that homelessness is most often defined in terms of "rooflessness" or lack of a physical dwelling and argue that this view of home and homelessness is far too limited. In studying perceptions of home amongst homeless women, they concluded that the loss of either house or home does not necessarily equal the loss of the other. In support of this, Kellett and Moore (2003) found that for a large number of homeless people a lack of home equalled a lack of the social and personal qualities of places they had lived, rather than a lack of the physical dwelling itself. They go on to argue for the notion of home as not merely a place, but also a process used by people to place themselves in a particular social position and to guide themselves towards social belonging. This can be related to the argument that those with a high social identity orientation will utilise the home in self-presentational strategies in order to sustain a positive self-definition. Furthermore, this confusion of house and home is acknowledged by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements who state that *"homelessness can be seen as a condition of detachment from society characterised by the lack of the affiliative bonds that link people into their social structures. Homelessness carries implications of belonging nowhere rather than having nowhere to sleep"* (2000, cited in Kellett and Moore, 2003).

These arguments strongly support the notion that the home does not necessarily relate directly to the current dwelling structure. Home can also be understood in terms of multiple structures, in terms of past rather than current structures, or in terms of diverse areas of geographical space such as the village one grew up in, the house that one's parents now inhabit and possibly even the workplace. Such an understanding illustrates that home may not be composed of a neatly defined area in geographical space, because there may be gaps, some of which may



span large areas, even entire portions of the globe depending upon location of relatives and where we have lived in the past. These points together suggest that home is not definable solely in physical terms and is more to do with the way in which we conceptualise home psychologically.

Despite the above objections to the home as a physical entity firmly grounded in space, it seems clear that in attempting a complete understanding of home, it is impossible to dismiss the notion of the physical environment. It appears as though the psychological aspects which combine to produce home only do so in a particular environmental concept – whether that be a particular dwelling, or a village, or a set of loosely defined physical locations which together combine to produce a notion of a physical setting for an individual's understanding of home. Coming back to the classifications of Hayward (1975), "home as locus in space" can be said to describe the contribution of physical qualities to home more appropriately than "home as physical structure".

### 3.4 *Home is "something we do"*

Moving away from notions of home as a place or a static material object there is the idea of home as an ongoing process or an unfinished construct. It can be noted that the word "home" is sometimes used in its adjectival form (a place feels "homely" or a person feels "at home" in a place). The use of the word in this way implies that the concept is affective in its meaning.

The idea of home making as a process has been considered by Kellett and Moore (2003; see also Dayaratne and Kellett, 2008) who studied the home making activities of residents on the fringe of society and argue that home may be a process which is used as a means of social change. Tognoli and Horwitz (1982, cited in Kellett and Moore, 2003) posit that home *"is a living process or a construction"*. The activities performed within a home, be they daily activities such as cooking and sleeping or activities that serve to organise or beautify the home, can be argued to contribute to a sense of home there. Priemus (1986) speaks of *"housing as a social adaptation process"* and cites Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance in arguing that people will strive to make the difference between the actual household situation and the desired household situation as minimal as possible. Priemus suggests that one means of achieving

this is by improving the environment in some way (i.e. domestic appropriation or personalisation) and argues that such activity increases the satisfaction of the resident. Cresswell (2002) argues that "places" are never a finished product, but are constantly changing, *"always becoming – in process"* (p20). This is supported by Pallasmaa (1995), who claims that home *"cannot be produced at once; it has its time and dimension continuum and it is a gradual product of the dweller's adaptation to the world"* (p133). Kaiser and Fuhrer (1996) use the metaphor of language to describe dwelling as a dialectic communication process. They speak of dwelling not in the sense of a particular place or thing, but as the *process* of dwelling, which can occur anywhere and not only in the conventional understanding of home. They go on to say that it is impossible to define this process in terms of a list of activities, although dwelling certainly is a process of carrying out activities in a place. They argue that dwelling serves two purposes: construction of aspects of a person's identity and the regulation of social interaction in a place. Furthermore, in achieving these ends through dwelling, certain physical objects are used in the environment which serve as non-verbal symbols. They conclude that dwelling is a form of communication. The idea of home as a means for the reflection of identity is central to this thesis and will be returned to in Section 3.8.

Home then can easily be illustrated as an ongoing construction or process and as something we do. This process of making a home relies upon the carrying out of routine every day activities and this will now be considered in more detail.

### **3.5 The routines of home**

Dovey (1985) suggests that it is the carrying out of everyday tasks and routines in familiar places that imbue us with a sense of home. Carried out so frequently, these activities become automatic rather than conscious, yet at the same time provide a very strong sense of familiarity and routine and it is this that leads to the feeling of *"being-at-home"*. This argument is certainly based on home as a process, rather than a physical place. Case's (1996) study explored the way that journeys away from home, including holidays, can add to the meanings we attach to homes. He found that people wished to break from the daily routine they associated with home, almost to feel its comforting value on their return. He states that *"home is valued for its daily rhythms"* and it seems that such routines



and rhythms provide a sense of relief in that we know what to expect from time spent in the home environment – there are not likely to be any unpleasant surprises, life at home is predictable and therefore secure. This sense of predictability is less powerful outside of the home, although it may be present to an extent in other places where we feel at home and where rhythms and routines are familiar, such as the workplace, or the home of other family members or friends. Case concludes by arguing that the routine common to home is experienced both as a comfort and also as a tedium from which people periodically break from, often in the form of holidays away from home.

We attach meaning to space through rituals such as cooking and eating, and entertaining friends (Ozaki, 2002). Rituals are an attempt to maintain a particular culture. Perhaps the performance of rituals could be described as an attempt to adhere to a new culture, for example, in situations where a person desires membership to a new social group. So, the way we use domestic space for these rituals is key to understanding the meanings attached to the home.

So far this chapter has considered a number of definitions and classifications of home. Home appears to be charged with a number of meanings such as territoriality; control; refuge and shelter; haven of privacy and home as a process including a physical context for daily activity and routine. Discussion around all of these aspects has repeatedly alluded to social elements as intrinsic to our understanding of home. For example, territoriality is carried out for the attention of others, i.e. to let others know that this is our corner of the world – and this entails a set of socially constrained rules on how to behave in that space. Other aspects such as refuge and shelter imply a sense of shutting oneself off from the social world outside. These points show that social factors are necessarily entwined in our concept of home and are therefore worthy of a more detailed consideration. The next section is therefore dedicated to various aspects of the social nature of home.

### **3.6 *How social is home?***

Discussion in this chapter so far suggests that social factors are inseparable from other areas of definition in terms of home. Furthermore, it is commonly held



in the literature that social elements are intrinsic to the meaning of home (e.g. Gram-Hanssen and Bech-Danielsen, 2004; Lawrence, 1995). Massey and Jess argue that our mental representations of physical space are socially constructed and to illustrate their point they provide a metaphor of space as stretched out social relations (1995, cited in Coates and Fordham, 2000). Tomas and Dittmar (1995) point out that home is *“an arena for social activities and social interactions, with friends and family, enabling intimacy as well as the performance of our social and personal roles”* (p. 496). Lawrence (1995), in refuting other definitions of home as too simplistic, argues that home is constructed through the relationships of people to other people and society, in a particular time and place. Home therefore does not exist in social isolation – and in support of previous discussion in this chapter his approach entails that home is not rooted to one particular house or location, but is a concept bound by social relations regardless of how spread out these are in space.

Werner (1987) suggests that the home is an excellent setting for the grounding of an understanding of interpersonal relationships because the environment affects interpersonal behaviour in a number of ways. She argues that it is fruitless to attempt an understanding of interpersonal behaviour without considering the environmental context and suggests four levels of influence that the environment can have on interpersonal relationships. This is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2 - Werner's (1987) model of environmental influences on interpersonal behaviour**

Level of environmental influence	Example
Most direct	Building boundaries between people (e.g. Berlin Wall)
Indirect	City pollution heightens stress, causes conflict between people
Mediated	Environment perceived as socially conducive
Support for personal qualities	Introvert residing in reclusive location

The first level is the most direct, for example a natural or man-made disaster may physically remove boundaries thereby bringing people closer together, or conversely people may be separated - an obvious event that springs to mind is the building of the Berlin wall. The second level involves the environment affecting relationships physically but indirectly – for example, pollution in a city may heighten stress levels which in turn have an impact on the way people react

to one another. The third level is the environment as a mediated influence on interpersonal behaviour due to perceived qualities of an environment, e.g. whether an area is private or social, formal or informal. The fourth and final level involves the environment lending support to personal qualities. For example, if a person is already fairly introverted, residing in an isolated place will lend support to a tendency to be socially reclusive. These four levels successfully illustrate a number of ways in which the physical environment can affect social interaction. Furthermore, the environment can act as a means of regulating social interaction and displaying an enthusiasm or reluctance to participate socially.

Often the people who live with us in the home are considered to be at the very heart of the home itself. For example, Case (1996) points out that people claim that having a spouse with them on holiday provides a sense of home whilst away. He argues that the home is a place that both separates people, thereby providing privacy from others, whilst at the same time bringing certain people together. According to Hayward (1975), not only is the home a social unit in its own right, it also provides a social connection to the wider community of which it is part.

It has been argued that the notion of home is related to a sense of social inclusion. As stated by Hepworth (1999) *"individuals in their own home have a respectable place in society: they can be located and identified as anchored in the normal social world"* (p21). This suggests that home fulfils a human need – a need to belong socially and a sense of belonging is often considered central to the meaning of home. Kellett and Moore (2003) found that families in informal settlements in Colombia go to painstaking efforts to create an image of a conventional home and this reflects a goal to belong. Rent and Rent (1978) suggest that a person's desired type of home is heavily influenced by the group to which they aspire to gain membership of, in terms of the characteristics of those homes that belong to that group.

This raises another point – that it is possible to "feel at home" somewhere other than the dwelling itself, for example the workplace. To "feel at home" in a place may be connected to the sense of social belonging which is experienced there. It is probable that we are likely to feel more at home amongst close friends and family than amongst mere acquaintances or strangers.



The social aspects of the physical environment including home strongly suggest that place is rich with social symbolism because symbolism acts as a form of non-verbal communication in interpersonal behaviour. Many theoretical and research contributions have been made in this field and these are considered in the next section.

### **3.7 The symbolism of home and place**

Symbolic elements of the built environment have been the subject of much academic attention over the last several decades. It is widely held that environment and behaviour are inseparable. However, Rochberg-Halton (1984) points out that on the one hand some neglect to consider the symbolic elements of environmental features and behaviour in environments, whereas others neglect the role of the environmental context in the study of such signs and symbols. Symbolic interactionism is one approach which is particularly useful in explaining the symbolic properties of things and environments (Sadalla and Sheets, 1993). Symbolic interactionism *“stresses the importance of symbols as mediators of self-definition and role performance”* (Sadalla and Sheets, 1993, p156). They stress that physical structures and objects become valued not merely for their functional affordances, but also for their social meanings. People have knowledge of these symbolic aspects and some level of agreement has been shown empirically in the literature (as discussed elsewhere in this chapter – see Section 3.1). People therefore strive to employ those symbols which are most in line with the identity they wish to convey through self-presentation, be that through house choice or through appropriation and personalisation of the existing dwelling.

It has been argued that the design of buildings is important because we appropriate and attach meanings to objects and environments (Chaney, 1996). According to Rapoport (1989), the bits and pieces that make up space (e.g. colour, furnishings, materials and signs) can be seen as the *organisation of meaning*. The environment creates a context and defines a situation. Environmental cues enable a person to make sense of a social situation and act appropriately. What is more, people act differently in different settings. “Culture shock” occurs when someone in a strange setting is unsure of how to interpret environmental and social cues. Environmental cues are therefore to some extent



mnemonic triggers. These cues are strengthened by repetition over time and this is how culture is developed – consistency is lent to acts of interpretation. According to Rapoport (1989), one role of the built environment is to cue appropriate behaviour within that space - to render certain activities highly likely or unlikely to occur. But he argues that there are more discrepancies in modern day living, as there are more subcultures in contemporary societies. This creates a problem in communicating to members outside of the subculture. Rapoport (1989) believes that meanings are shared more widely in traditional than in modern settings for this reason.

So how can such theory be applied to the home context? A great many writings on home have focussed on the more symbolic aspects of the home environment (e.g. Rapoport, 1989; Sadalla et al., 1987; Cooper-Marcus, 1995; Harris and Brown, 1996). As previously discussed, the home is the one place that most people experience some degree of control over at some point in their lives. Kellett and Moore (2003) argue that the value in having a home is as much symbolic as it is practical in a physical way, signalling to others that this person holds a place in society. They note that, in their sample of people on the fringes of society, construction of a wooden hut made them feel a part of society and these dwellings were kept sparkingly clean in order to convey a sense of pride, decency and respectability. This highlights the symbolic quality of the home, its potential to send messages to the outside world about its occupants and, as previously noted, suggests that there is a need for people to feel a sense of belonging in their home environment. Indeed, it has been argued that home improvement efforts are “*as much a drive for respect as... for comfort*” (Peattie, 1992, cited in Kellett and Moore, 2003). Rapoport (1989) categorised such behaviour as a form of *non-verbal communication* – the appropriation of the physical environment in order to communicate to others. This communication may be directed at expressing something about the self, or may function to order the behaviour of self and others within the space in question. This argument is supported by Kaiser and Fuhrer (1996), who suggest that the function of using dwelling as a language is both to make other people behave in the way we wish them to behave in our home and also to convey favourable information to others about the self.

It has been shown that a number of authors agree on the role of symbolism in the home environment. Such symbolism can function in controlling the

behaviours of others in a space and can also function in communicating some aspects of the identity of the resident. The next section discusses identity in relation to the home environment in more detail.

### 3.8 *Identity in the home*

Section 2.5.2 introduced the concept of Place Identity as conceived by Proshansky. Proshansky (1978) argues that because a person has a number of identities such as their race, gender, social class and so on, they must also have a place identity. Proshansky (1978) describes this form of identity as *“those dimensions of self that define the individual’s personal identity in relation to the physical environment by means of a complex pattern of conscious and unconscious ideas, beliefs, preferences, feelings, values, goals and behavioural tendencies and skills relevant to this environment”* (p155). He claims that, not unlike personal identity, place identity is not static but is permanently in a state of flux. Finally, a person’s place identity may be another means of defining that person and placing them in a social context.

According to Barbey (1976), appropriation of environments such as the home has consequences for a person’s identity. This is reflective of a number of approaches which have considered the home as being related to aspects of the occupant’s identity. This refers to both the reflection of that identity to others and to the assisting in the construction of identity both through a person’s interactions with their home environment and social interactions with others in the home. Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) gathered data which indicated that houses and the objects within them have social and psychological functions. They suggest houses may represent conflicts with self and qualities of self to others; signify status; define group membership; create bonds between people and encourage socialisation. They also suggested that houses may actually help to create the self by creating behavioural opportunities.

As argued by Brown (2007), if home is considered as an autobiographical narrative rather than as a set of formal and aesthetic considerations, it becomes easy to interpret home as the centre of an important social process. Brown argues for home making as a route to identity formation, focusing on the narratives of amateur self-builders to support her claim.



Although these arguments highlight a belief that identity is linked to home, the difference between a house and a home should be borne in mind. Stea (1995) points out that a failure to reflect identity through a dwelling may be due to the dwelling in question not feeling like home – perhaps the sense of home is felt for another place entirely. This suggests that level of personalisation of the dwelling may reflect the level of commitment in making this place a home, or intended length of stay in a particular place. Furthermore, Stea points out that some people may have a lack of control over their dwelling (for example, this may be true in rented accommodation or state provided housing) and finally, to some people, other aspects of life may take on a heightened significance thereby rendering the dwelling little more than a physical shelter. This final point is important as it suggests that there may be individual differences in the extent to which a person relates aspects of their identity to the home environment.

Korosec-Serfaty (1984) suggests that different parts of the home reflect different aspects of the self. The cellar can be compared to the unconscious areas of our thoughts, whereas the more socially acceptable aspects of the self are at home in the living room or other social areas. In contrast, the more personal, private and hidden parts of the self can be represented by the cupboards and hidden, secret areas within the home. Because of these analogies with aspects of the self, any violation of the home may be experienced in a similar way to violations of the person and as an example he cites that victims of burglary often liken their experiences to those of someone who has been raped.

It can be seen then that the home can function in influencing the construction of aspects of a person's identity. Further to this, a number of authors have argued that the home environment can also communicate information about the identity of its resident or residents to outside observers (Sadalla and Sheets, 1993; Nasar, 1989; Harris and Brown, 1996; Tomas and Dittmar, 1995; Coates and Fordham, 2000; Kellett and Moore, 2003; Chapman, 1999; Wilson and Mackenzie, 2000; Giuliani, 1987; Kaiser and Fuhrer, 1996). The following quote is useful in illustrating the way in which some authors have approached the subject:

*"As we become accustomed to and lay claim to, this little niche in the world, we project something of ourselves onto its physical fabric. The*



*furniture we install, the way we arrange it, the pictures we hang, the plants we buy and tend to, all are expressions of our image of ourselves, all are messages about ourselves that we want to convey back to ourselves and to the few intimates that we invite into this, our house” (Cooper, 1976, p132).*

As suggested by the above quote, such information may be conveyed through a number of aspects of the home, such as the choice of home type, personalisation and level of maintenance to the home (Nasar, 1989; Harris and Brown, 1996). These “signs” can provide us with information of both the personal and social aspects of a resident’s identity. Some of this information may be conveyed without the intent of the resident to do so, but this thesis argues that people also make efforts to convey favourable information about the self through the home.

However, the reflection of self in the environment may not be solely for the benefit of others to observe. Such a process may function in helping a person to place themselves and to gain insight into their own identity. For example, Kenyon (1999) suggests that students, a group of people in a transitional state both in terms of home and identities, use their home environment as a means of moving between statuses and identities. Pallasmaa (1995) suggests that people find it unsettling to inhabit a space where there is no personal sign of themselves, therefore in hotel rooms and even when staying with friends, people tend to take out and arrange their belongings in the room (such as clothes and books) – and this activity affords a feeling of possession over the territory and it could therefore be argued, makes people feel more at home in unfamiliar places.

Presumably then, such relations with the home environment have the power to imbue us with a sense of self-worth, or worthlessness. For example, a clean and well organized home may result in a sense of pride and even motivation and self-worth. Conversely, a messy and disorganised home may result in feelings of stress, confusion and even a lack of pride and self-worth. This relates back to the work on identity and self-esteem which is discussed in Chapter 2. Identity processes are often carried out in order to enhance self-esteem, as argued by IPT (Breakwell, 1986), and this thesis argues that the home can be used a resource in such identity processes, and can therefore function in increasing self-esteem (in ideal conditions). This is explored in Study 3 (see Section 6.4.2).

Identity is related to routine (see Section 3.5 for a discussion on the routines of home) in that daily routines strengthen various aspects of a person's identity. For example, Shenk et al. (2004) found that elderly widows found it important to continue with some of the home roles which were so important a part of their identity when they had their husbands and family living at home. The example given is that of providing family meals and these women draw special attention to how they make an extra effort if they are cooking for younger family. The daily routine of providing for the family once gave these women a strong sense of purpose and meaning, therefore they strive to continue with these roles to gain a continued sense of meaning and identity in old age.

The relationship of routine with the construction of identity necessitates that there are gender differences in the way in which identity is constructed through and reflected in the home environment. The home is commonly believed to be a strongly gendered environment (Mallett, 2004; Gram-Hanssen and Bech-Danielsen, 2004; Gurney, 1997; Madigan and Munro, 1999) and Hepworth (1999) argues that during the early nineteenth century the change to employment taking place outwith the home for many men who had previously worked within their own homes led to the home becoming a female realm – the task fell largely to women to realise the ideal and aspirational home.

Brooker (2006) argues that home is an appropriate context for the construction of gender identities. In this study, a number of primary school children were interviewed about activities in school. It was found that the "home corner" (an area in the classroom with a little playhouse and various household based toys) was for little girls *"pretending to be mummy"*, according to one little boy interviewed. The same little boy stated that little girls and little boys do different things, alluding to gendered roles in the home at an early age. Brooker concludes that it is through experiences in the home environment that children learn about who they are and who they want to become, thereby constructing aspects of their identity.

Coates and Fordham (2000) point out that a person's identity is not fixed and people tend to switch between a number of different identities dependent upon social context. They add that the meanings associated with significant places may be so salient that they influence the identity of the person in question. This



highlights the two-way relationship of identity and home. Home may both reflect the identity of the resident and therefore that identity is imposed upon the home environment and thereby affects that environment. It may be the home itself which affects the identity of the resident. Pallasmaa (1995) supports this view in arguing that the home functions as a means of expressing personality to the outside world as well as helping the individual to gain a fuller understanding of the person that he or she is. It is this dualistic approach which seems to make the most sense in understanding the relationship of identity processes to the home.

Harris and Brown (1996) suggest that there is value in researching the extent the self is reflected through the home because *“the home becomes an extension of the self, providing a tangible support of the self image and a vehicle for experiencing the sense of self”*. This point of view is reminiscent of James in 1890, who posited that material elements of the environment, particularly the home, are an extension of the self. The next section of this chapter focuses on self-presentational strategies within the home environment. To what extent are these processes communicated to others outside of the home, as some authors have suggested? This question is now considered in detail – both in the sense of communication on a subconscious level and reflection of the self on a more consciously social level.

### 3.8.1 Communication of identity through symbolism in the home environment

A number of writers have provided theoretical accounts and empirical evidence to support the argument that identity is reflected through the home environment. Some of these relate more to the personal aspects of identity that may be unintentional in the home environment than to aspects which may be intentionally communicated. For example, according to Cooper Marcus (1995) home expresses unconscious desires and needs. This claim is based on interviews carried out with people in terms of their relationship with the home. She was heavily influenced by Carl Jung, taking a depth psychology approach and drawing on examples from dreams and literature. Although very influential in the field, her work is not without criticism. For example Cahill (1996) suggests her sample is biased, as it is made up of middle class occupiers of architect designed houses.

Rapoport (1989) carried out an analysis of cultural symbolism in house form. He drew on examples from anthropology and documented cases where house form clearly indicated social status, social role, or group membership. As well as the more theoretical accounts of the reflection of self in the home environment, a number of studies have attempted to gather some empirical support. For example, Gurney (1997) found that two of his participants made judgements about the strength of a couple's relationship based on the degree of warmth a home had and how inviting that home appeared.

Home has been said to reflect aspects of social roles or socio-economic status. Laumann and House (1970) found anecdotal evidence suggesting that the type of décor employed in a home reflects the social roles of its occupants. For example, they observed that people with traditional interiors tended to be more traditional in approach to religion, family, marriage and so on. Cherulnik and Wilderman (1986) even showed that the exterior of houses from the 1900s was associated accurately with social class, suggesting that such associations may not be temporally bound.

Wilson and Mackenzie (2000) were interested in the extent to which social roles and status attributed to residents based on home interiors were accurate. As the research stimuli used were pictures from magazines and therefore not the homes of "real" people, accuracy was gauged through level of agreement of subjects. Level of agreement was high, suggesting a degree of accuracy in attributions. This shows that when people make judgements of others based on their homes, there is a degree of social agreement in such judgements, suggesting a common understanding of the symbolism of the home environment.

Home appearance is also sometimes associated with personality traits. Sadalla et al. (1987) took interior and exterior photographs of the homes of 12 homeowners and measured a range of identity traits. 99 participants undertook the task of making identity inferences from the photographs and were able to give accurate identity ratings based on the pictures. Participants demonstrated agreement with each other in their ratings and also demonstrated agreement with homeowner ratings. Interior and exterior areas communicated information about different personality dimensions (although there was some overlap).



Finally, participants shown interior pictures made more accurate identity inferences. Sadalla and Sheets (1993) also found that exterior building materials were associated with personality traits that the people living in those houses had claimed of themselves (in a self-report measure). This work lends support to the findings of Nasar (1989) who found that people had a high level of agreement in judging residents based on the style of their houses, in terms of friendliness (as well as social status).

Other traits which have been associated with the appearance of the home include attachments to home (Harris and Brown, 1996) and level of friendliness (Nasar, 1989, Werner, 1987), intention to complete a first year of a University degree (Hansen and Altman, 1976) and formal versus informal occupants (Canter et al, 1974, cited in Harris and Brown, 1996). Giuliani (1987) found that preferences for different house styles (bourgeois traditional, popular traditional and modern) were associated with similar tastes in objects and layouts – for example, those adhering to the more traditional styles also preferred antique or old furniture and a more traditional style of layout which also affords a certain style of privacy regulation.

Cupchik et al. (2003) looked at memory for details of interior spaces and found that recall was better when a subject had been able to imagine themselves as living in that interior in cases where the room was judged as “warm” rather than “cool”. This suggests that an ability to identify with an environment may render that environment more salient and therefore lead to a heightened awareness in and memory of that environment.

At the very least then, it can be argued that the messages sent out by certain house styles and decorative arrangements are clear, in that a reasonable consensus exists as to their meanings. It has been empirically shown that the symbolism of home is interpreted in a similar way by many people. Therefore, even if such messages are not sent out intentionally for others to read, it appears as though our homes do give something away about certain aspects of our identities. Sometimes however, it appears that the communication of aspects of self through the home environment may be an intentional process and used as a social strategy in conveying a favourable image of the self. The next section considers this in more detail.

### 3.8.2 Self-presentational aspects of home

As well as arguments for the subconscious reflection of identity in the home environment, some have suggested that the home may be used by people *intentionally* to communicate information about the self to others (e.g. Rapoport, 1989, Nasar, 1989, Dittmar, 1992, Cooper Marcus, 1995). This supports the work of Becker (1977) who reviewed much architectural and social science literature, concluding that the home is commonly used to define and express the self.

According to Sadalla et al. (1987), people engage in acts of self-presentation in order to establish and maintain the identity or image they would like to portray to other people. They go on to argue that this process of self-presentation may be performed through manipulation of the home environment, as well as in other areas of life. When considered from the perspective of Jones and Pittman's (1992) five motivations of self-presentation (see Section 2.3.2), such a view could be consistent with the idea of self-promotion through self-presentation. It is also conceivable that the dwelling might be used to reflect intimidating aspects (perhaps through territorial approaches to personalisation), or to ingratiate oneself with others. Exemplification may even be a motivation for self-presentation through personalisation – for example in order to show others how to live a more ecologically sound lifestyle. It is less obvious how self-presentation in the dwelling may be used as a means of supplication. These examples show that a theoretical approach to self-presentation can be applied to personalisation behaviours in the home, and may assist our understandings of such behaviour.

Many people openly admit to the desire to make an impression through the home, further supporting the argument for a link between the home and self presentation. For example, in Giuliani's (1987) study, one female participant said:

*"I think that all women desire a room where they can entertain a few friends... It would be something for the exclusive purpose of making an impression."* (p192).

Personal *and* social aspects can be reflected through the home (Pallasmaa, 1995) – as discussed throughout the previous chapter, the self-concept exists



on both a personal and social level. Although there are convincing arguments to suggest that personalisation of the home allows for the expression of personal identity, albeit that many rely on anecdotal evidence for their support, this approach fails to acknowledge the social aspects of self-presentation. As pointed out by Billington et al. (1998) *"although we may pride ourselves on our individuality and difference, our desire for approval strictly limits us"* (p39).

Furthermore, it is hard to imagine a home as reflecting the identity of only one resident, unless the home is occupied by only one person. Stea (1995) suggests that it is difficult to conceive of personal identity if the term "personal" is to be understood in an individualistic way. He draws on an example of the typical family home in Mexico, in which there is little or no private space whatsoever and argues that in such an environment identities as reflected through the home must be shared. This suggests that information presented through the home environment expresses an amalgamation of identities of the people who live there. Although this thesis focuses mainly on aspects of individual identity within the home, it is acknowledged here that a more complex system of identity symbols must exist in order to meet the needs of all residents. What's more, such shared identities, and the potential for both harmony and conflict in the expression of multiple identities emerged in the findings of Studies 1 and 3.

It can be argued that the way that a house has been modified, decorated and furnished may indicate both the actual social position of a person in terms of group memberships, financial status etc. and also *aspired* social positions. For example, a person may wish to belong to a group of people he or she has just met so much that he or she begins to alter his or her home (possibly along with his or her appearance, stated interests and behaviour) in order to reflect the perceived character, tastes and interests of the group. Chapman and Hockey (1999) point out that, during the industrial revolution, people bought into new technology not only to make their lives easier, but also to demonstrate to others that they had socially assimilated to the new society. This suggests that home can reflect a need to belong, as discussed previously in this chapter. Personalisation of the home then, in the social sense, may be seen as a form of intentional assimilation to a new social group or subgroup.

Cooper Marcus (1995) argues that housing choice (which house to buy, rent and so on) is guided by practical elements *and* symbolic factors such as whether the

house expresses the identity a person wishes to convey to others. We make judgements of others based on their homes – how much they earn, their place in society, their personalities. American and British TV shows such as Brookside, Roseanne and The Waltons illustrate this point — all of these shows start with a view of the house, so we can get an idea of the characters and the context. Cooper Marcus goes on to argue that this practise of using the home to convey favourable information to others is commonplace. Brown and Werner (1985, cited in Werner, 1987) found that, in one neighbourhood, exhibiting Halloween decorations functioned in indicating to others a friendly open attitude and a desire to belong and be a part of the community.

It has been shown then, both through theoretical and anecdotal accounts and also with empirical data, that people may actively and intentionally reflect aspects of the self through the home environment. It has also been shown that people may reflect more personal aspects of the self through the home. Therefore it seems that factors related to both the *personal* and *social* aspects of identity are associated with the home environment.

### 3.8.3 Meeting the personal and social needs relating to home

As argued throughout Chapter 2, the self-concept has both public and private aspects (e.g. James, 1890). A conflict can sometimes be seen between the various identities of a person. As pointed out by Rechavi (2009), certain rooms within the dwelling meet both personal and social needs of residents. In cases where a person has gone to lengths in creating a home which satisfies the more social aspects, such as a place to socialise and a home which creates a very positive impression socially, often the more personal needs of the self and the family are neglected. Likewise, in creating a room for social purposes, it is often found that this room is not favoured by family members on a day to day basis. According to a participant in Giuliani's (1987) interview research, on the subject of the more formal room, the room kept especially for entertaining:

*"We go in there rarely because it's very cold, we go in mostly when someone's over. It's cold not in the sense of climate but because it's not cosy, because no one's ever in there, so when you go in you don't feel any warmth. In fact I am aware that when it's Christmas time and we have more people over and we spend most of our time in there, it's all*



*much nicer, because it's warm, it's cosier, it's more fun, while when we're alone, it's always cold."* (p193).

This excerpt highlights the fact that in providing a room which is socially acceptable, a room for receiving guests, an area of the home has been made "cold" and uninviting to family members. It is not used to meet the more personal needs of the family. What this also suggests is that for a part of the home to feel homely and "cosy", it needs to be used and become part of the routine of home. Something about this room did not encourage people to use it, suggesting that usage of spaces within the home is not a given and is influenced by certain features such as those of the interior decoration or layout and how these relate to the psychological needs of the residents.

#### 3.8.4 How is identity conveyed through the home?

It has already been shown that various aspects of home, including both the house itself, as well as interior elements of home, can be used in the reading of and reflection of aspects of identity. However, it is argued that interior elements of home are usually much more salient in reflecting aspects of self. For example, Cooper Marcus (1995) points out that the exterior audience is made up largely of non-significant others (neighbours and passers by) as opposed to the significant others that come into our homes on a regular basis (friends, family). Cooper Marcus suggests therefore that people are more willing or more interested in revealing more personal aspects of self through interior cues. Interiors may also be more informative as there is more flexibility to manipulate cues. For example, furniture style and setting, rugs, art, plants, electronic equipment, lighting, decorative artefacts and so on may all reveal something of a person's tastes, history and financial status. However, exterior cues are limited to the initial choice of house style, landscape design/gardening and exterior decoration. What's more, house style choice is often constrained by availability, location and price. In her influential book entitled "House as a Mirror of Self" (1995), Cooper Marcus argued that "nesting" or home making is a major means of personal expression and development. Like Rapoport (1989), she found that it was the moveable elements of home rather than the fixed, structural elements that expressed self and afforded personalisation of the home. She interviewed approximately 60 participants, all of whom had some degree of economic

freedom about where and how to live. Her claims can therefore be seen to be somewhat supported by empirical evidence.

It seems then that it is the *personalisation* of the home environment that is the most effective way of reflecting aspects of the self through the physical environment, or conveying favourable information and therefore a favourable self-image. It is this behaviour within the home which is hypothesised within this thesis to be an important function of identity management. Personalisation of the home will now be considered in greater detail.

### **3.9 Personalisation**

Many of the behaviours carried out within the home are connected in some way to the personalisation of domestic space. Examples include the arrangement of furniture, home improvements, renovations, restructuring of space for example taking an inside wall down, home adornment including “styles” of décor and the arrangement of ornaments or treasured possessions.

People undertake home improvements on a number of levels in order to make a home more beautiful or more suitable to their needs, as well as for other reasons such as improving the financial value of their home. In the UK the past several years have seen a dramatic increase in do-it-yourself (DIY) stores, a wider variety of DIY merchandise and a dramatic increase in the amount of media attention given to the subject (Mintel, 2005). According to Leaver and Al-Zubaidi (1996), the amount of money spent yearly on home improvement products continued to grow despite a drop in the housing market. This is interesting because the growth of the DIY market was once commonly attributed to the rising housing market and it has since become clear that other factors must be involved.

Perhaps the influence of the media has a part to play in the growing DIY market. There is a plethora of television “makeover” shows and websites and the number of home interiors magazines in print is on the increase (with examples of popular magazines including “Country Living”, “Elle Décor” and “Living etc.”). These forms of media prove a strong form of influence on many people, showing them how to achieve the “ideal home” - there is even a magazine called “Ideal



Homes" and a yearly show called "The Ideal Home Show" in Britain. Chapman (1999) points out that show homes on new housing estates can function in constructing an image of the ideal home which should be aspired to. Such influences undoubtedly affect many peoples' propensity to carry out personalisation.

The types of personalisation that take place range from the fairly modest (e.g. putting a coat of paint onto a wall or adorning the home with new ornamental and practical objects) to quite dramatic (e.g. taking down interior walls in order to change the layout of a house). Even more extreme examples of personalisation are seen when people convert old buildings which were once used for some other purpose (mills, old farm buildings and churches, for example) and when people build their own homes. The research carried out in Study 1 of this thesis focuses on people who have converted redundant farm buildings to home use (see Chapter 4). People who self-build, or convert old buildings are of special interest as they may be able to reveal some need which is not fulfilled by the designers and builders of housing (at least within this group.) It is argued in this thesis that regardless of how well housing providers seek to meet the needs of their customers, there is a basic human need to personalise the home environment – and this argument is supported with the points made above.

Personalisation is commonly thought of as referring to the way in which objects and aesthetics are used in the home. However, Barilleau and Lombardo (1976) argue that personalisation behaviour may also extend to the way in which every day activities are carried out within each home.

Personalisation can be argued to have psychological consequences. For example Maxwell and Chmielewski (2007) showed, in their study of children and school classrooms, that personalisation of the physical environment can have consequences for self-esteem in children, because the physical environment is interacted with by children who are discovering their place in the world and learning how the world operates.

Personalisation and appropriation of the home space serves a number of purposes. In 1976 the International Architectural Psychology Conference (IAPC) focused entirely on the appropriation of space. This was an important event in directing attention towards the way in which people exert control over their

environments, including the home. A number of key scholars in the field presented their own perspective on the role of appropriation, particularly in terms of the home. For example, Moles (1976) suggested that appropriation of space may relate to "anchoring" or the putting down of roots. He also spoke of a need to differentiate one's own place in the world from that of others, suggesting that this can be strengthened through appropriation. Graumann (1976) added to this in saying that the word "appropriation" actually means to make something one's own. Barbey (1976) argues that appropriation may also help to enhance control over privacy.

Personalisation of the home environment then may serve the purpose of improving those aspects which have already been discussed as important elements of home. Personalisation may function as a territorial behaviour. Kron (1983) points to the importance of personalisation as a product of the exercising of control over one's own territory. So it can be seen that the personalisation of space is a means to a number of ends. The home then may be appropriated in order to gain a sense of control and ownership over that space and to make a dwelling feel more like home. In support of this, Gurney (1997) found that one woman was able to transform the home of her mother (who had recently died) into a home for herself, by restructuring the way the space was used, both domestically and symbolically. It has also been argued (Rapoport, 1989) that the arrangement of domestic space can be used as a way of regulating social interaction. For instance, public and private areas can be indicated with lighting, curtains and doors. The way that a person arranges his or her domestic space therefore can be partly governed by the kind of person that he or she is - the more sociable, public people may leave more of their homes open for others to explore, whereas the more private people may restrict access to more of the home through the use of internal cues and the way in which they wish to guide their own and others' activity in that space.

Bonnes et al. (1987) suggest that the decoration of the home interior could be described as a "*process of environmental optimization by the inhabitants*" (p205) and they argue that such a process may serve a variety of environmentally-based needs such as regulating social interaction, personalisation of self and therefore the reflection of self to others and a need to be surrounded with appropriately aesthetic stimulation. In their 1987 study Bonnes et al. found that the most important "rule" applied in terms of decorating the living room was



related to social interaction – both at mealtimes and social interaction outside of mealtimes. Also, Davidson and Leather (2000) found that DIY is carried out for a number of reasons, noting that *“the desire to personalise the dwelling, especially on homogenous new estates, also is an important motivating factor for upgrading work”* (p752). However they do also list other reasons for carrying out such work such as a lack of trust in professional decorators and financial reasons. It should be noted that people also are motivated to personalise their external environment. Personalisation of the garden, for example, is argued to be an important part of home making and *“may have a significant impact on the search for identity”* (Bhatti and Church, 2000, p194). Support for the role of the garden in the reflection of identity is reported in Studies 1 and 3 of this thesis (see sections 4.3 and 6.4.1).

The above points show that personalisation acts as part of the process of home, it is something we do in order to benefit aspects of home which are important to our ultimate sense of home. However, this thesis argues that the personalisation of home serves a further purpose, that of the construction and reflection of identity and self. It has been widely argued that the personalisation of domestic space is important because the way that a home is personalised is done in such a way so as to reflect the character, tastes, interests, values, lifestyles and social status of residents (Rapoport 1989; Nasar, 1989, Sadalla et al, 1987). Personalisation of the home, when carried out with other inhabitants can also assist in the creation of shared identities and in strengthening relationships (Gorman-Murray, 2006). Previous discussion in this chapter highlights theoretical and empirical support for this assertion. These issues are of interest because an understanding of aspects of such behaviour can lead to a deeper understanding of the functions of a home. As previously discussed, the argument is made that meanings are communicated via symbols in the environment. We have seen that reflection of such aspects of self can generally be split into aspects communicating self, or personal identity and aspects communicating social identity and group memberships (or aspired group memberships). Personalisation then is one way in which it is possible to portray aspects of self to the outside world. The physical requirements of personalisation largely involve personal possessions, as these can be argued to say a lot about the bearer. A more in-depth discussion of the psychological role of possessions now follows.

### 3.9.1 Possessions and home

The manipulation of personal possessions is at the heart of personalisation behaviour. There is much theoretical work into the meaning of possessions and their connection to the self. Social psychologists and sociologists, as well as economists have all had reason to investigate the connection of possessions with the self.

It should be noted that there may be differences between people as to the extent that personal possessions are psychologically important. Cooper Marcus (1995) argues that people differ in respect to their attachment to objects –collectors sit at one end of the scale and people that shun possessions sit at the other. Home is a stage for our collections of memorabilia – ornaments, pictures, furniture and so on are all connected to a memory of where and how we acquired them. Such possessions are used in a number of ways, for example in enhancing contemplation of significant others (Rechavi, 2009).

Possessions can assist in the construction of identity and therefore may go towards the role of the home itself in this function. Rochberg-Halton (1984) provides examples of objects as role models in peoples' lives – for example a doll, which can symbolise to a child certain values common to that culture and thereby act as a role model in the socialisation of the child in question. According to Rochberg-Halton, *"in objectively telling us who we are, what we do and who and what we might become, things can act as signs of the self and role models for its continued cultivation"* (p339) and later, *"transactions with cherished possessions are communicative dialogues with ourselves"* (p 347).

Possessions can assist with the personalisation of space and therefore might contribute to the process of making a place feel more like a home. For example, according to Kenyon (1999), students living in temporary accommodation *"used their belongings to create a surface veneer of homeliness"* (p92). Digby (2006) further states that *"objects are used to conjure to their owner both a familiar, nurturing hearth and the wider cosmos... objects can be mobilized to make a home in unfamiliar surroundings"* (p170). These accounts suggest that possessions are an extension of self and a necessary aspect of home. Objects within the home serve as an illustrated history of the people who live there, as well as signalling a variety of aspects of residents' identities (Tomas and



Dittmar, 1995; Dittmar, 1992, Hurdley, 2006) and are important to the process of "cultivation" of self (Rochberg-Halton, 1984), serving as a means to realising goals and value-related aims. As argued by Gilroy and Kellett (2006), older people use possessions both as a means of keeping the past alive, and as a way of reflecting their values to the next generation (see also Cram and Paton, 2008).

Amaturo et al. (1987) consider the role of *conspicuous consumption* - or in other words, consumption of goods which are on display to other people as a means of showing off status and wealth to others. They note that some people may be more prone to this behaviour than others. They argue that, in more socially mobile societies, changes in status become harder to detect because they take place more often and therefore conspicuous consumption is used as a signifier of improved social status. Their argument is supported in that through their research they found that those with more static social status displayed more functional use of objects, whereas those with mobile social status were more likely to use such consumables in a symbolic way. They write:

*"Conspicuous consumption is therefore the consumption of status symbols, which are goods that assign the individual a position in the system of social stratification" (p230).*

In support of this, Gram-Hanssen and Bech-Danielsen (2004) argue that:

*"As class structure and individual identity may not be as fixed anymore, identity-creating through home-decorating has become a way to develop and express identity..." (p25).*

Possessions also relate strongly to the more personal aspects of our identities. Kamptner (1989) found in his qualitative research on objects and the self, that possessions were repeatedly associated with significant other people in the lives of the participants. This was supported by the research conducted by Shenk et al. where it was found that photographs were amongst the most treasured items. Furthermore, possessions often act as signifiers of relationships with others, particularly in the form of gifts, because these serve as a reminder that an individual is treasured and loved by those that he or she in turn treasures and loves. Such possessions can reflect his or her identity as a mother, father, wife, husband or friend, for example (Shenk et al., 2004). Possessions therefore act as reminders of significant people, places and the values we hold.

We impose our values, tastes and beliefs on our children through the nature of the objects that we surround them with (Rochberg-Halton, 1984) and it has been argued that artefacts contained within the home often contain significant family histories and that these special possessions often enjoy a special place of focus within the home (Pahl, 2004; Tomas and Dittmar, 1995). The following excerpts illustrate the importance of possessions to a sense of identity. The excerpts are taken from a 1996 BBC television series called "Sign of the Times" which is discussed in Chapman (1999). The family being interviewed had bought into the idea of a show home they had visited to such an extent that they purchased and moved into the show home itself, complete with all the ornaments and bits and pieces that would normally accrue through the process of personalisation. The responses of the couple point to the confusion they experienced as a result of being surrounded by such impersonal objects:

Husband: *"It's a strange concept to move in and suddenly [there are] all these ornaments... I think it's the ornaments which generally are personal things that you go out and buy for a special occasion. And they are all here and they haven't got any history attached to them."*

Wife: *"The children do it all the time [they say] 'is this ours mummy, or the house's' which I find astonishing. I say it's all ours, Rachel, it's all ours."*

Cited in Chapman (1999, pp55-56).

This excerpt from a television interview illustrates an example of the strong emotional links that the participants feel in relation to personal possessions and how a detachment from the personal aspect of these things can lead to confusion – not least in the eyes of the children, who had suddenly been faced with a barrage of things which they could not conceive as belonging to them or being a part of their lives. Surely it is small wonder that the children were confused, having been socialised in a world in which possessions are connected with a sense of history and meaning regarding the place, time or social significance of their use. These children were unable to make these connections with these things and hence struggled to identify with them.

Further evidence for the strong emotional link with possessions is found in the reactions of victims of burglary. Chapman (1999) provides a discussion of this in



which he points out that the victims typically feel a violation of self in response to the burglar having gone through their belongings. One person (in a study carried out by Korosec-Sefaty, 1986, cited in Chapman 1999) said that:

*"They've seen...seen things which belong to us, which are, if you like, our little secrets, that's nobody's business, we don't talk about them to anyone... that's it, it's this side of it, rather than what they took off with, I'd say". (p142)*

It can be argued that some objects serve to reflect self to others, yet there are others which are personal, they are kept in more private areas of the house, they are only for the eyes of the spouse and sometimes so private that not even he or she may be allowed to see them or know of their existence. When these things have been rifled through by a burglar, it is no wonder that people will feel that personal and private aspects of themselves have been violated.

Treasured personal possessions are seen to assist in the transition between dwelling places and in transforming a new dwelling place into a home (Shenk et al., 2004; Kenyon, 1999; Chapman and Hockey, 1999). In the interviews carried out with widows, Shenk et al. discovered that on the subject of having to move from the family home, one widow believed she would be able to recreate her home and its emotional significance in a new dwelling through the rearrangement of her treasured things in the new place.

The significance of objects is such that a conflict may be felt if a gift of a household object is given which the receiver does not like. Chapman (1999) points out that in such circumstances the fear of offending the giver by not displaying the object is so great that a disliked object may become part of the decoration of the home, although in some cases, this may only be the case for the duration of the giver's visits. He writes *"in every household, there must be something that is on relatively prominent display which at least one member of the household wholeheartedly despises and is constantly injured by whenever it comes into view"* (Chapman, 1999, p136). This statement suggests that to adorn the home with an object that is disliked, or that a person struggles to identify with may have negative psychological consequences, suggested here by the use of the word "injured". Perhaps this is because of the worry that others visiting the home may identify the person with that object and therefore that *kind* of thing and this is not the image that the person hopes to reflect. Otherwise, it may be

that the person feels that this object gives the home the wrong meaning, a personal meaning which applies to others but not to him or herself. These points highlight the strong significance of giving gifts which are to be displayed in the home.

Chapman (1999) goes on to argue that objects within the home are moved around and have a life cycle leading them to have different significances at different times – for example baby equipment may be moved into storage areas such as the attic when it is no longer required or until such a time that it is required again. Furthermore, some objects may suddenly be “hidden” because they are no longer fashionable and therefore send out the wrong messages of identity to significant others. Chapman (1999) also suggests that for those people who attempt to be particularly fashionable or stylish through their home, taste can become tyrannical, because there is a constant need to be at the cutting edge rather than simply to enjoy the things that are there in the more usual ways. For these people, objects probably take on a heightened significance in an effort to compete with others. It is likely that such people will have a high social identity orientation (for results relating to this argument, see Section 5.4.3).

Gender differences relating to the importance of personal possessions may exist. For example, women are more likely than men to value objects with social or emotional significance (Cooper Marcus, 1995). Dittmar (1992) also suggests there may be gender differences, with women focusing more on symbolic aspects and men more on instrumental aspects of their possessions – in other words, men value the practical usage of objects whereas women value the symbolic affordances of objects. Coates and Fordham (2000) provide examples of disaster victims who tried desperately to save possessions that had special significance to them, due to their connections with deceased family members. According to McCracken (1988):

*“Surrounded by our things, we are constantly instructed in who we are and what we aspire to. Surrounded by our things, we are rooted in and visually continuous with our pasts. Surrounded by our things, we are sheltered from the many forces that would deflect us into new concepts, practices and experiences. Things are our ballast.” (p124).*



Furby (1978) argues that possessions give us control over the environment and other people. As argued by Dittmar (1992), many possessions have practical or functional significance (e.g. a kitchen knife), but they also have symbolic value. They are often perceived as part of the self and can be material symbols of identity or “status symbols” – for example, the type of car sitting in the driveway or the type of gemstones displayed in a necklace. Beggan (1992) investigated what he later called the “mere-ownership effect” – that is owning an object makes it more attractive to us. His participants displayed this effect more strongly after an experimentally induced failure. This suggests we use possessions to re-establish a positive self-image. Saunders (1989) even went as far as to suggest that the desire for home ownership may have biological roots. Unfortunately though, he provided no empirical support for his claim.

This discussion of personal possessions has shown that they hold symbolic significance in terms of both personal and social aspects of self and identity. For this reason, it can be argued that the process of personalisation (which in part is driven by a need to develop and reflect such aspects of identity) relies upon the acquirement, arrangement and display of personal possessions for its execution.

### 3.9.2 Framework for understanding home

This chapter has presented a number of theoretical contributions to the subject of home. Such contributions, taken together, suggest that home is something which is complex both in its construction and in its definition. Table 3 presents a framework for understanding the many attributes of home.

**Table 3 - Framework for understanding home**

<b>Dimensions of Home:</b>	<b>Qualities of Home:</b>	<b>Process of Home:</b>
Personal	Territory	Routines
Social	Control	Personalisation
Physical	Privacy	Social interaction
Symbolic	Refuge/shelter	

The framework presented argues for home as possessing different aspects – home consists of different dimensions, different qualities and behaviours which function in the process of home. The framework does not claim to constitute an exhaustive list of what is home, rather, it is a means of organizing the ideas presented in this chapter, as well as a means of illustrating that home is to be

understood in a variety of ways. Firstly, home has a number of dimensions. For example, home can be understood as something physical, such as the structure of the dwelling, or the layout of streets and green space in a neighbourhood. Yet home also can be understood in the symbolic sense – for example, when away from home a particular kind of cooking may represent home. Home has a number of qualities and in the ideal home, territory, control, privacy and refuge will all be afforded to the inhabitant. Finally, home can be understood as a process, as something we do. A number of behaviours go towards the creation of home. Routines, such as cooking, cleaning, watching television and sleeping in the dwelling, and going to the shop to collect the daily paper in the neighbourhood, for example, make a place feel like home over time. Personalisation is an important behaviour in the home making process – in particular personalisation acts as a means of connecting identity to a dwelling and thereby making it more of the person, more like home. Finally, social interaction is an important behaviour in the process of home – even for those living alone, the dwelling is usually used for social interaction. Home is something created together with others. This also works at the level of the community – social interaction is required in order to integrate – and being part of a community may be an important aspect of home to many.

It can also be argued that all of the different aspects of home will both affect and be affected by a person's identity. Furthermore, there may be individual differences in the importance placed on, and the approach to the various aspects of home.

### **3.10 *Self at home and housing design***

Ozaki (2002) explored people's values attached to their use of space within their homes. She asked 44 participants where in the home they normally eat and why, and where they would eat with guests and why. She found age differences based on formality in approaches to eating, in that younger participants had a more informal approach to where they ate, often valuing convenience more than the older participants. She also found that differences in cultural values were reflected in English and Japanese samples. It could be argued that such cultural values inform the design of housing over the ages. A further study (Ozaki and



Lewis, 2006) showed that a cultural value prevalent in Japan of using spatial attributes of the home to create and reinforce psychological boundaries between people can also be observed in the homes of Japanese people living in the UK.

It can be argued then that housing both reflects aspects of the identities and values of the residents within and can also go some way towards the construction of the identity and values of the resident. Most studies of home are concerned with home as a concept and do not deal with physical aspects such as layouts. However, as shown by Ozaki (2002), there are meanings attached to our use of space. It is typically the place we use the most (although some people spend a great deal of time at work) and where we spend most of our lives. Therefore research into and consideration of the physical elements of the home environment can lead to a deeper understanding of psychological aspects of home.

Rapoport (1989) points out that the built environment holds particular meanings for particular groups of people. The human mind imposes meaning on things – taxonomies, categories and schemata. The built environment is a physical expression of these schemata (Rapoport, 1989). At the volume end of the housing market traditional elements are often relied upon to sell houses, suggesting that developers are aware of a shared set of meanings held in peoples' conception of an acceptable home (Edge et al., 2002).

Another area of interest is the observed difference between designer and layperson meanings (Rapoport, 1989; Nasar, 1989). Hill (2001) highlights the conflicts between architects, the original creators of a building and the ultimate residents of that building:

*"users are a threat to architects in that their ability to transform buildings and spaces questions architects' perceptions of themselves as the authors of architecture" (p352)*

And:

*"architects have a number of ways to ignore users or to turn them into abstractions" (p353).*

These points illustrate the problems that can result from a conflict between designer and user interests. What is more, designers and architects tend to

react to buildings in perceptual terms, whereas laypeople tend to react to buildings and scenes by using associational and affective criteria, as their minds have not been trained otherwise. Nasar argues that architects prefer different features of architecture than do the ultimate users of these buildings and in his 1989 study found that architects misgauge laypeople's meanings attached to houses. Users' meanings are clearly more important, however the designer retains the most control in the structure of the building. For example, in Hertzberger's Old People's Home in Amsterdam (Rapoport, 1989) the design was modern and unusual and the users found associational meanings in the design, such as crosses and black areas, which they related to coffins. Rapoport suggests that this points to the importance of *under* design rather than high design – in order to accommodate the user's own meanings which will be added at a later time. Rapoport even goes so far as to suggest that the Modern Movement was an attack on user meanings (e.g. not making space for ornaments). This is backed up by the work of Cooper Marcus (1995). One of her participants, Jean, who had a bare small home consisting of one large space which she had not gone far to decorate was encouraged to "speak" with the house as if it were another person<sup>9</sup>. When in dialogue with the house, Jean said

*"You're bare and plain, you aren't soft. You don't give me a place to display myself."* (p111)

Architects sometimes seem to block routes to expression and control, perhaps because they feel some ownership of the building themselves. It can also be argued that architects place too much importance on the artistic qualities of their work and fail to take into account the fact that a building is first and foremost a functional entity which should be designed to meet a range of user needs. However, despite these potential problems, Hill (2001) suggests that *"the creative user either creates a new space or gives an existing one new meanings"* (p364), suggesting that, despite a lack of agreement between architects and users of housing, a way will always be found for people to continue their process of self and social interaction through the home environment. He goes on to say:

<sup>9</sup> Cooper Marcus carried out in-depth interviews with people, which she based on a Jungian approach, in which she encouraged her participants to enter into a dialogue with their home, both through direct speaking, and through encouraging them to draw images which related to their feelings about their homes.



*"To use a building is also to make it, either by physical transformation, such as moving walls or furniture, by using it in ways not previously imagined or by conceiving it anew." (p354)*

Rapoport (1989) outlined three main aspects of buildings – fixed, semi-fixed and informal elements. Rapoport suggested that users have more control over the semi-fixed elements (furniture, paintings) than the fixed elements (actual structure of the building) and are therefore more inclined to appropriate these elements for symbolic purpose – an emergent finding in Studies 1 and 2 (to a lesser extent) and particularly in Study 3 in this thesis. Becker (1977) also suggests that users are more concerned with semi-fixed elements. Perhaps this implies that the design of the building is immaterial to the personalisation aspect of home. However, this is unlikely, as it is probable that some designs and interior layouts afford more personalisation of space than do others, as indicated by Cooper Marcus's participant Jean, who felt that the house did not allow her to express herself.

User needs and preferences in housing have been considered from a number of angles in housing research, mainly focussing on the practical needs of people (often from specific user groups) and employing a checklist approach to determine user needs. However, this discussion into the more psychological impacts of housing design suggests that other, more subtle ideas need to be taken into account in order to allow for a fuller understanding of needs and preferences in housing design.

### **3.11 *The multi-disciplinary nature of Built Environment research***

Built environment theory and research has been carried out by academics from a large variety of backgrounds. Housing is by no means the sole focus of such research. Research explores for example the impact of the built environment on human health issues (e.g. Frank and Engelke, 2005), design for improving housing conditions (e.g. Hopton and Hunt, 1996), crime prevention through design (e.g. Newman, 1972), gender issues in the built environment (e.g. Roberts, 1991; Silbaugh, 2007); environmental behaviour (e.g. Turner and Penn, 2002) and aging studies (e.g. Crews and Zavotka, 2006; Oswald et al., 2007; Gilroy, Kellett and Jackson, 2004). Built environment literatures can be

classified according to a number of disciplines and industries, including architecture, surveying, planning, interior design and human geography, along with literature arising from various fields within sociology, psychology and anthropology.

A wide number of built environment settings are central to built environment research. Healthcare settings are frequently researched in terms of how the design of such environments can improve experiences for both patients and staff. For example, Macnaughton et al. (2005) evaluated the accommodation of two hospitals in Middlesbrough, England both before and after a move into a new building, for example exploring the impact of the addition of art to the new building for end users. The study found that the new environment was considered of a higher quality than the old, and the artworks improved the end users' experiences for a variety of reasons, in particular these made the hospital seem less "hospitally" (p.2). Workplaces are also a key area of research (e.g. Brunia and Gosselink, 2009) with studies investigating, for example, the beneficial effects for companies of allowing staff members to personalise their workspace (Wells, 2000; Wells and Thelen, 2002). These examples show how the study of psychological factors in the dwelling may offer insights for a diverse range of environmental settings.

Participatory design is a field which in some ways parallels theory on identity and home. The field is political and argues for the rights of end users to participate in the design of their own environments, residential and otherwise. Although participation has seen periods of popularity and success (particularly in the 1970s and 1980s during which time it was generally known as Community Architecture), recent decades have seen a decline in the movement. As highlighted by Jenkins, Pereira and Townsend (2009), a number of disciplines make important contributions to the literature on participation. Such disciplines include environmental psychology, architecture, housing, planning and facilities management/post-occupancy evaluation. Architectural theory on the subject highlights the tendency of architects to assume full control of the design process (Till, 2005; 2009). It is argued that architects need to find ways to engage more fully with the end users of their design. However, architects have typically treated participation as:



*“a form of intrusion into the idealised values of architectural culture, something that brings unwanted noise to an already complex process”.  
(Till, 2009, p.xi).*

Qualitative research reveals that architects' main concerns in terms of involving end users relate to such peoples' lack of expertise in design issues (Pereira and Townsend, 2009). In a more positive light however, architects who support participation argue that the key to surpassing such barriers is in the education of the end users in aesthetic and design issues. What's more, exemplary cases of participatory projects reveal the immense benefits to end users – such as in the case of Kingsdale School in London – a regeneration project which included a massive participatory stage, which led to a school populated by high achieving students who identify highly with their school – where once the school had been well known for violence and low achievement among pupils (Forsyth et al., 2009). Although other factors may have been at work in the regeneration of pupils' attitudes (not least the provision of an impressive piece of modern architecture), it is without doubt that in being given a voice, pupils identified more strongly with their school.

Can such participation be considered as a form of personalisation? Certainly, input in the design process lends people a sense of ownership and increases the extent to which their shared identities are connected to that environment – which can be argued to provide strong benefits in terms of being “at home” in the space. The strong parallels between issues relating to participation and the personalisation literature suggest that research into personalisation may offer insights into the best applications of the participatory process.

Housing theory and research contributes a major contribution to the built environment literature, and comprises contributions from academics from a wide range of disciplines. Of the literature discussed in this chapter, a number of disciplines are present including architecture, environmental psychology, sociology and human geography. Housing research is extensive and relates to a number of diverse areas of which meaning of home is just one. A number of studies are concerned with housing choice and preferences, for example in terms of how these are affected by resident values (e.g. Lindberg, Garling and Montgomery, 1988; Coolen and Hoekstra, 2001), and preferences for specific groups such as homosexuals (Lucco, 1987) or psychiatric patients (Minsky, Reisser and Duffy, 1995). Other areas in the literature include neighbourhood

cohesiveness (e.g. Ellen and Turner, 1997), sustainability – both social (e.g. Seo, 2002) and environmental (e.g. Noorman and Schoot Uiterkamp, 1998; Birkeland, 2002), housing design (e.g. Goodchild, 1994; Carmona, 2001) homelessness (e.g. Rossi, 1991; Kellett and Moore, 2003), affordable housing (e.g. Wallace, 1995; Downs, 1991) and smart homes technologies (Edge et al., 2000) – to name but a few.

The research presented in this thesis may have applications in a number of the fields discussed above. For example, insights into personalisation may be beneficial in relation to research into housing design, neighbourhood cohesiveness and social sustainability and participatory design. There may be practical applications of research findings in the areas of planning and architecture, and the findings of the research presented in this thesis may be applicable not only in residential environments, but in a wider range of built environments. Such contributions are discussed at length in Chapter 7.

### **3.12 *Relating the home literature to the field of identity***

In Chapter 2 a model of identity was proposed (Figure 1) which argues that identity is affected and driven by two areas. The first of these relates to internal factors, that is, factors which are psychologically based and internal to the individual. These include needs such as a need for self-esteem and continuity and also dispositional constructs which vary from person to person such as identity orientations. The second of these areas is the external context. This includes the social, cultural and temporal context as well as the physical environment. As the focus of this chapter suggests, the physical context of importance to this thesis is that of the *home environment*. Home is signified on the model as a type of physical context.

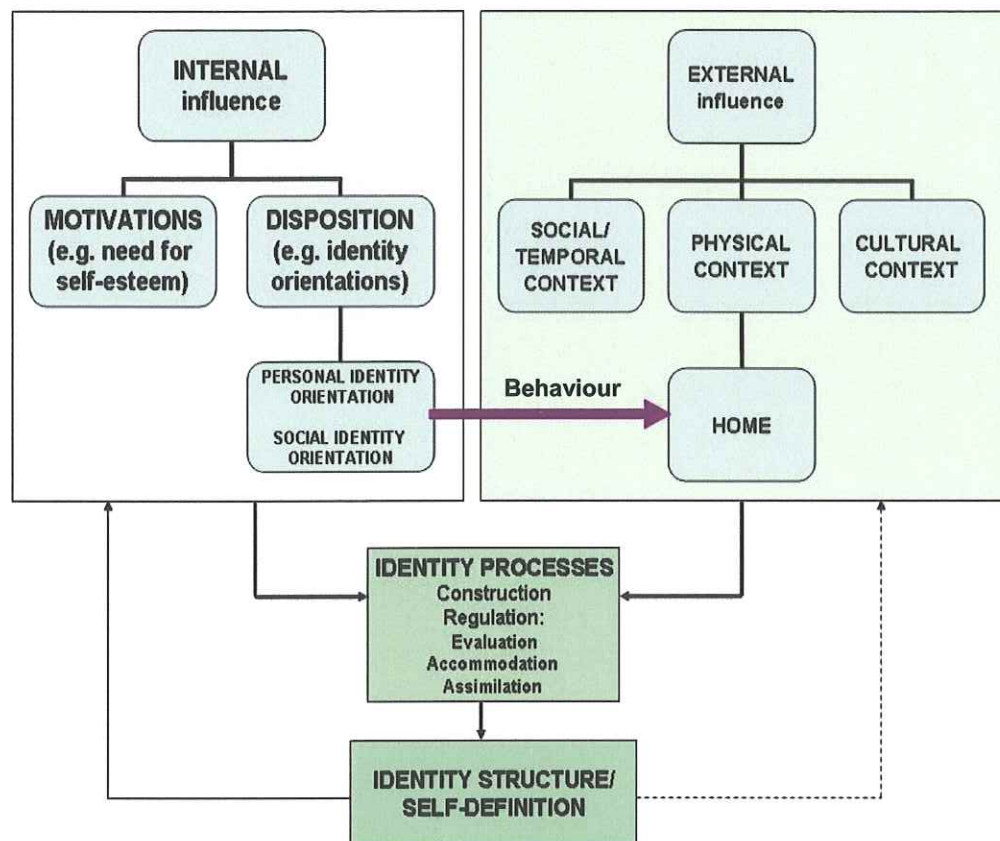
As shown in this chapter, there is much support for the assertion that home and home-related objects can signify social status and roles (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton, 1981). What is more, a large body of work relates to the self-presentational affordances of home (e.g. Amaturio et al., 1987; Sadalla et al., 1987; Wilson and Mackenzie, 2000). Self-presentation may function at both social and personal levels of self-definition - what is reflected through the home is identified with attributes either of personal or social identities and therefore



feeds back in to the ongoing construction of the self-concept. To relate these points back to Figure 1, the home may act as one example of an environmental context in which identity processes take place and therefore the home may both affect and be affected by such processes.

Many examples have been given in which the home acts as a context within which personal and social aspects of identity are constructed, reinforced and reflected. Acts of personalisation such as the display of status symbols may function as conspicuous means of self-definition at the social level. As argued by Amaturio et al. (1987), *"status symbols... are goods that assign the individual a position in the system of social stratification"*. This suggests that status symbols are actively used in identity processes as a function of achieving membership status to a certain ingroup or as a means of creating a positive self-concept in terms of the way we are seen by others. It is argued here that such behaviour represents a more social level of self-definition therefore such an approach may be more common amongst those with a high social identity orientation. Those with a high personal identity orientation may also use forms of personalisation but the intention may be to reflect identity back to the self, because such people self-define at a more personal level and do not rely on the opinion of others in this definition. Personalisation may be used as a means of enhancing personal meaning in those with a high personal identity orientation. Importantly then, it is argued in this thesis that individual differences based in personality, namely personal and social identity orientation will to some degree predict the way in which the home is used in identity processes. This argument acknowledges that differences exist in people in terms of levels of self-definition, as discussed in Section 2.6. Furthermore, such individual differences are argued to extend to behaviour in the home environment. Figure 2 presents a model which expands on the first model of identity (see Figure 1) to include the important role of home in identity processes. Figure 2 argues for the influence of internal and external factors which in turn affect the identity structure. As can be seen from the arrows feeding back up to the internal and external influences, it is argued that the resulting identity structure can affect these in turn – this constitutes a holistic approach to identity which encompasses other people and environmental context and more specifically the home environment.

**Figure 2 - Model showing development of research focus**



**KEY:**

- > Indicates probable relationship
- - - - -> Indicates possible relationship
- > (purple) Indicates hypothesised relationship

The research in this thesis is particularly interested in the point on the model which shows a purple arrow representing a hypothesised relationship in which personality traits influence behaviour in the home environment. In this model it is argued that personal identity orientation will influence a person to use the home as a means of increasing self-reflection, whereas social identity orientation will influence a person to use the home as a means of reflecting the best possible identity to others, because this is important in terms of self-definition. It is acknowledged however that a number of other aspects of personality will affect and be affected by home.



Therefore, of particular interest in this thesis is the ways in which people carry out behaviours in the home as a function of differences based in personality, identity orientations in particular. Given that the literature provides us with numerous examples of a link between personalisation and identity, research which reveals more of the nature of the behaviours involved in such identity processes is essential. This is addressed in the research presented in the first study of this thesis, which takes an exploratory approach in order to learn more about the behaviours relating to personalisation of the home environment.

### **3.13 Conclusions**

The notion of home brings with it a number of associations with psychologically significant constructs such as territory, control, privacy and shelter. Tomas and Dittmar (1995) suggest that in contrast with the merely physical, container-like qualities of the house, the home is imbued with psychological meanings. When considering the home then, it is crucial to not confuse the concept with the houses, flats and other forms of dwelling where people live. Although these physical properties are most often a necessary feature of the home, the home is much more than this. As argued by Dant and Deacon (1989, cited in Kellett and Moore, 2003), home is significant in its ability to connect the identity of a person, a place and a social context. It is however very difficult to speak of home without alluding to the house itself and in subsequent discussion within this thesis the "home" also refers to a physical, environmental context in which identity processes occur.

This chapter has shown that home can be related to identity on a number of levels. According to Creswell (2002), *"place is the raw material for the creative production of identity"* (p 25). Home is an ideal example of a place in which a person can carry out such identity processes for example in providing a medium for reflecting aspects of the self which reinforce the desired identity. Home has also been shown to be a stage upon which people can act out their identities and display aspects of themselves which they hope others will observe. Therefore identity processes in the home, as carried out through the act of personalisation, can be seen to be utilised by some as a social strategy for

gaining membership to certain social groups and to do well in terms of social comparison.

This chapter has shown that home has a number of psychological components, and as hypothesised in this thesis, subsequently the home carries with it psychological implications for people. Importantly for the development of the research in this thesis, the home can be related to theoretical approaches to identity (see section 3.12). It has been argued that the home may be a resource for identity processes through the use of personalisation, for example in the choice of décor or display of status symbols. Furthermore, personality traits such as identity orientations may affect the way in which the home is utilised as a resource in identity processes. For example, someone with a high social identity orientation may be inclined to use the home as a means of making a positive impression on others. In contrast, someone with a high personal identity orientation may be more inclined to use the home as a means of strengthening personal understanding. Effectively, this would have consequences for behaviour within the home environment and it is this relationship between personality, identity and home which is of interest in this thesis.

Chapter 4 discusses the development of the first study through its conceptual development and design of the methodology to discussion of the results.



## 4 A study of steading converters

### 4.1 *Introduction to the study*

This chapter describes a study which was designed to explore psychological constructs relating to personalisation in order to complement insights from the literature review. It was hoped that findings would be useful in the generation of hypotheses for a larger, more detailed study (see Chapter 5).

This study explores a range of socio-psychological variables which are hypothetically active in driving personalisation, in order to devise a contextual framework which would enable these variables to be studied in a wider context. As has been discussed in chapters 2 and 3, home has psychological implications for dwellers - there is evidence to suggest a relationship between home and identity. A particular area of interest was the potential for differences based in personality such as identity orientations to affect a person's approach to personalisation behaviour. Rather than taking a pre-defined approach to personalisation, it was felt that a more complete understanding could be gained in an exploratory approach which sought to uncover a range of phenomena. Of particular interest are socio-psychological constructs because it has already been argued that the dwelling is used in social strategies such as self-presentation. The first study therefore considers the nature of socio-psychological constructs that are active for a particular group of people in relation to their dwellings. It was also of interest whether certain responses would be suggestive of personal and social identity orientations, because this thesis is interested in how individual differences based in identity might affect the way in which home is used as a resource in identity processes such as self-definition.

As a means of exploring these different areas, the research design was deliberately exploratory and a qualitative approach was taken. In order to study personalisation behaviour in its most conspicuous form people who had converted a non-domestic building to home use were interviewed. The research question is as follows: *What can the conversion of non-domestic buildings to*

*home use reveal about the influence of socio-psychological processes on personalisation behaviour?*

## **4.2 Method**

Since the purpose of this study was to explore a range of variables which influence approach to personalisation, the most practical way to acquire this information was by talking to people, as opposed to using a quantitative method. Taking a qualitative approach allowed the participants to give a full account and include all details relevant to their own experience. According to Marshall and Rossman (1999), a qualitative approach is best for “*research for which relevant variables have yet to be identified*” (p43). This approach allows for the most meaningful response, therefore allowing the relevant variables to be confirmed before further testing in subsequent studies.

### **4.2.1 The sample**

In total 13 interviews were conducted. However, 3 of these were interviews with couples rather than with individuals. Therefore there were 16 participants. Each interview lasted between 45 minutes and 90 minutes, with participants also showing the researcher what had been done in the dwelling. Of the 16 participants, 9 were male and 7 were female. They were aged between 25 and 59. Further demographic information on the sample can be found in Appendix 3.

#### **4.2.1.1 Why steadings?**

Participants were selected who live in a dwelling which has been converted from a steading to home use<sup>10</sup>. In rural Aberdeenshire (North East Scotland) there are a large number of steading conversions. Some of these are developments by housing developers, whereas others are conversions in which the residents have had a greater level of input into the finished product. It is occupants of the

<sup>10</sup> A steading is a farm building that was traditionally used to process crops and to house farm animals, farm machinery and equipment (see Figures 3 to 12). Many of these are no longer in use because modern farming machinery is much larger and takes up far more room than such buildings were designed to provide. Modern farming now involves much larger areas of land and therefore greater numbers of cattle, sheep etc., rendering such buildings of less value to farming.



latter group of buildings who were of more interest to the research, because they are likely to have engaged in a much higher level of personalisation than people who buy from housing developers, especially if choice in layout and building materials is considered as a form of personalisation. As argued by Brown (2007), home making is a social process, and there exist “*unique ‘identity formation’ properties of amateur self-building*” (p262). Furthermore, the end result of their conversion projects reflects their personal choices regarding personalisation of the home. That said, it should be noted that one participant moved into a steading which had been converted by a developer, although he did have an element of choice in terms of decor and layout. Another participant bought a steading which was almost entirely converted by someone else although a flood led to him having to redo most of the decor. Figures 3 to 12 show some of the participants’ dwellings. To protect anonymity, interview pseudonyms are given in place of real names.

As can be seen in Figures 3 to 8, steadings afford the option of a long open-plan living area and many of the participants had opted for this layout. What the pictures also convey is the difference in styles that people take in personalising the interior of their dwellings.

This sample was considered of interest and value to the research because the conversion of a non-domestic building such as an old farm building allows for a large degree of freedom in the design of the internal layout and the aesthetic and functional aspects of the dwelling. How might the potential for a large degree of control and personalisation be attractive to this sample? Another possibility was to consider people who built their own houses, or a more diverse sample of people who had converted various types of building to home use: however, steadings were chosen due to their high numbers in rural Aberdeenshire.

Figure 3 - Steading 1 exterior



Figure 4 - Steading 2 exterior





Figure 5 - Steading 3 exterior



Figure 6 - Steading 1 interior



Figure 7 - Steading 2 interior





Figure 8 - Steading 3 interior



#### 4.2.1.2 Recruitment of participants

A number of approaches were taken to the recruitment of participants. Firstly, a press release sought participants who had converted steadings (see Appendix 1). Secondly, letters were sent directly to addresses of steading conversions in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire (see Appendix 2). This involved both the use of telephone directories and a database of postal addresses in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire<sup>11</sup> in finding addresses: addresses with the word “Steading” in the house name were picked out and letters sent to these. Lastly, word of mouth from participants themselves was utilised in the recruitment of the sample. Using existing participants to assist in the recruitment of new ones (friends, neighbours etc.) is a recognized approach in qualitative research and is known as Snowball Sampling (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

<sup>11</sup> From a database called “PAF Data AB Post town April 2002”, Allies Computing.

#### 4.2.2 Materials

Participants first read and signed a briefing and consent form (see Appendix 4) and then completed a questionnaire collecting general demographic information (Appendix 5). Following this participants took part in a semi-structured interview (see Appendix 6), which was designed to gauge the range of influences on personalisation decisions. Following the interview, participants were presented with a debriefing sheet (Appendix 7). For an example transcript see Appendix 8. A camera and audio recorder were utilised.

##### 4.2.2.1 Piloting

The demographic questionnaire was piloted on 8 members of staff within the Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen. No issues arose in this piloting stage, therefore no changes were made to the questionnaire.

The semi-structured interview was piloted on the first participant (Rick), and his interview is included in the analysis in order that valuable data was not lost. This approach is one frequently used by qualitative researchers. Although contamination through the use of pilot data is a serious issue for quantitative research, this is generally not the case for qualitative research, as argued by Teijlingen and Hundley (2001):

*Contamination is less of a concern in qualitative research, where researchers often use some or all of their pilot data as part of the main study. Qualitative data collection and analysis is often progressive, in that a second or subsequent interview in a series should be 'better' than the previous one as the interviewer may have gained insights from previous interviews which are used to improve interview schedules and specific questions (p3).*

A formal pilot study is therefore not a requirement of qualitative research (Robson, 1993; Holloway, 1997; Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001). Instead, a qualitative interviewer reflects on each interview, in terms of the effectiveness of its structure in providing meaningful answers to the research questions (Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001; Richards, 2005). In this study, then, each interview was considered and where necessary, subtle changes to the questions (and their order) were made in order to improve the effectiveness of the interviews.



### 4.2.3 Procedure

#### 4.2.3.1 *The setting*

The current research focuses on behaviour in the dwelling. In this study, the setting was the particular building (the steading) which had been converted to home use by the participant in question.

It can be argued that as the topic of research was the dwelling, by far the best place to conduct the research was in the dwelling of the participant, the place where the complex processes under discussion actually take place. It was felt that carrying out the interviews in a person's own dwelling would allow for the building of trust in the interview process and enable the participant to feel most at ease due to being on familiar territory. Furthermore, the participant was not put to any trouble by being asked to travel to a different site to be interviewed. Finally, the home environment acted as a point of reference and as a cue to discussion, therefore assisting the interview process on behalf of both the researcher and the participant. It was also possible for the researcher to be able to see for herself the nature of what was under discussion.

#### 4.2.3.2 *The researcher's role*

The extent of participation on the part of the researcher should be discussed. In some research, the researcher acts only as an observer of some activity. In the case of in-depth interviewing, however, this is rarely the case. The researcher necessarily plays an active role. According to Holstein and Gubrium (1995), the researcher is an important part of the meaning-making process. The researcher can benefit the interview by encouraging, challenging, guiding the conversation and adding their own thoughts which may provoke more interesting discussion. Also, the further encouragement of participants on certain topics was desirable because the aim of the interviews was to uncover a range of variables and generate hypotheses for later research. The researcher therefore took an active and encouraging approach in conducting the interviews, although participants were encouraged to do most of the talking.

#### 4.2.3.3 *The interview*

Participants first read and signed a briefing and consent form before taking part in the interview discussion (see 4.2.2). The interviews were semi-structured. The questions used in the interview were aimed at setting the scene and encouraging discussion as well as determining the range of influences that contribute to personalisation decisions, particularly those deemed to be socio-psychological in nature. The structure for the full interview can be seen in Appendix 6. The interviews were largely framed in order to encourage discussion on the more social aspects of dwelling particularly in terms of personalisation. Such social aspects are central to the functioning of identity processes and questions relating to these also have the potential to reveal insights relating to the influence of individual differences such as identity orientations. Although participants were asked a considerable number of questions, it was found that insights into socio-psychological processes arose largely from a smaller body of questions. These are outlined below. In the discussion of findings (Section 4.3) some of these questions are encompassed under the heading of a related question. Where this is the case these have been inset below the main question.

The most revealing questions are now outlined and discussed (the full list of questions can be seen in Appendix 6).

- Why did you choose this particular building?
  - Did you consider other types of building?

These questions are fairly self explanatory and were designed to find out something of the participants' housing preferences, as well as to determine what was special about the particular building that they chose to convert. It was hoped that responses may reveal interesting information relating to why the participants did not choose a more conventional form of housing. Participants were further questioned as to whether they had considered building a house from scratch, buying an old house, or buying a new property (if they had not mentioned these things independently).

- Did anything influence your ideas about how the conversion should look?



- What is important to you in terms of the decor?
- Is there any style or type of decor which you wanted to avoid?
- How has your taste in home decor evolved over the years?

These questions were designed to determine what was important to participants in terms of décor, it being one aspect of personalisation. It was hoped that such discussion may point towards identity-related issues regarding the appearance of the dwelling.

- What does this home represent for you, now it is complete?

Much has been written about the “meaning of home” to people in different home contexts. This question was designed to find out the meanings around home where a person has carried out a high level of personalisation.

- Does it matter to you whether or not other people like your home?

This question was designed to determine the extent to which participants opened their dwelling to other people and the extent to which they actually care about what these other people think about its appearance.

- Does your home reflect aspects of you?

This question was designed to directly ask participants whether or not they felt that their dwelling reflected aspects of their personalities. The reflection of self is important in identity processes such as self-definition. For people who have a high social identity orientation, reflecting self positively to others will result in a positive self-definition. For those with a high personal identity orientation, mirroring the self to oneself positively will result in a positive self-definition.

#### 4.2.4 Ethical considerations

In both long and short term qualitative research, the researcher has the potential to make a significant impact on the lives of the participants. This raises a number of ethical issues which are not necessarily present in quantitative research. It was felt important to remember during the interview process that

participants had put a great deal of themselves into their homes, therefore it was crucial to remain sensitive and avoid any comments relating to the home which could be taken in a negative sense. This was also important for the building of trust between the researcher and participants.

The research design was approved by the research degrees committee and all aspects of the study meet the requirements set out in the APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (2003) and the BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct (2009). Informed consent was secured (see Appendix 4 for briefing and consent form). Participants were also asked prior to the interviews whether they were happy for the researcher to take photographs in their dwelling at a later time – all agreed to this and the researcher later returned to three of the participants' dwellings to take photographs (see Figures 3-8). Participants understood their right to withdraw from the study at any time.

### **4.3 Results of the interviews**

Interviews were recorded and transcribed in full (see Appendix 8 for an example transcript). Interview transcripts were coded and a thematic analysis was carried out. In the following section, emerging meanings and themes are discussed. Discussion is ordered in terms of which areas of discussion led to the most interesting responses in terms of the research context of the thesis, with the most interesting results presented first. It is noted that the names used here are not the converters' real names, in order to protect their identities.

#### **4.3.1 Reflection of self**

Findings related to the theme "reflection of self" arose largely in response to the question "*does your home reflect aspects of you?*" This question is at the heart of the research and it was thought that by asking converters this question they may be able to point out the way in which their dwelling reflected aspects of their personalities. Some participants found the question difficult. For example, Claire responded:

*"Well almost certainly but I can't say how."*



Others were more able to identify what aspects of themselves are reflected through their dwelling, for example, Fred responded:

*"Oh desperately and devastatingly.... the picking up too much and not carrying things through, I would say you could read that in there.... These things, they don't come through entirely cos there are things like available money as a constraint as well and things like this."*

Fred goes on to say that if he had no such constraints, he would have devoted much more time and money to his garden, which at one point in the interview he points out is a much bigger reflection of who he is than the house itself, as he is passionate about gardening, nature and being outdoors (and is in fact a professional gardener by trade). In deeper discussion about the reflection of self through the home environment, Fred says:

*"That's another thing you see, 'express yourself' suggests that the self is somehow out there and you let people in. Whereas I think it's a process of continuous construction, the same way that you are in the garden; you are changed by the act of making gardens, so that the you that ends up being represented in the garden is not the you that was there before.... We live in a state of becoming... and we're continually formed and reformed and changed by almost every interaction – every single interaction we have."*

The above comment is reminiscent of a transactional approach to people and the environment. It is likely that the process of converting a steading not only allows a person to express themselves, but also alters the self which is expressed. This is supported by (and supports) previous theory in the field of identity (e.g. Rochberg-Halton, 1984) which purports that identities are not fixed and unchanging, but malleable. In particular, IPT (Breakwell, 1986) argues for identity as both a structure and a process, with the processes continually altering the identity structure.

Connor responds to this question by referring to the notion of quality:

*"We're both quite keen on good quality artefacts, good quality ornaments and things like that, but not in a very loud way and I think we're both very calm controlled people. And so the way the house is done is in line with our characters."*

Connor here links aspects of his and his wife's personality (being calm and controlled) with the way they have made their dwelling look. Also, with the

reference made by Connor to *quality* (which is repeated in his interview), he is drawing a direct link between the concept of quality and he and his wife's characters.

Mark discusses his star sign, suggesting that *"as with any of these things there is an element of truth"*. He points out that he is a Libran and Librans are known for liking things to be in balance. Mark is keen on things being in balance and attributes his profession (an ecologist) to this part of his nature. He points out that he does not like an overly busy décor, referring to his parents' home as being:

*"busy busy horrible....swirly things on the carpets and lots of patterns on the wall and you couldn't go to sleep at night and your eyes would go all the way round backwards and URGH!"*

He suggests that a largely plain decor with the odd bit of pattern or colour or texture is much more balanced and this is what he has tried to achieve with his own dwelling. Mark points out that his wife considers herself half Scottish, which is why they had a sofa re-upholstered in tartan - making reference to an aspect of identity which they intentionally chose to reflect through the decor.

In summary, participants were largely able to discuss and often illustrate that some part of their character or personality was reflected in the appearance of their dwelling. Others used their response to *identify* themselves with traits and concepts (such as Connor and *quality*). It is possible then that people use the dwelling to express characteristics that they identify with. These findings echo findings of Study 3 (see Section 6.4.1.1). The findings suggest that aspects of identity relating to personalisation are complex and the process may function not only in reflecting a person's identity to others, but also in reflecting a person's identity to themselves (as argued in the literature, e.g. Cooper Marcus, 1995; Rochberg-Halton, 1984). Finally, this identity may not be fixed and personalisation may be part of the process of "becoming" which was suggested by Fred.



#### 4.3.2 Housing preference

This section discusses findings relating to housing preference. Such findings were largely gained in responses to the question *“why did you choose this particular building?”* as well as comments given in response to the further question *“did you consider other types of building?”*

On the whole, the first reason that people give for their housing choice seems to relate to practical issues such as location, cost, timing and proximity to various amenities. However, as well as these reasons, some psychological reasons were given and these will now be discussed.

Rick and Fred give the same reason – that of wanting to find a set of buildings to convert in order that they and friends may live collectively. These two participants are neighbours and were both part of the small group of friends looking to live collectively. The motivation behind this lifestyle choice was that the said group of friends all have similar values and spend a lot of time together socially. Rick points out how important it is to him to have personal boundaries:

*“Not under the same roof – I saw too many communes in the Sixties, they were just dreadful places. They made the mistake of trying to force people to do things, like do the dishes on a rota, or eat together when you didn’t want to.”*

Rick, Fred and friends were aiming for (and achieved) a ready made community with neighbours that they knew they would get along with. This was their main motivation for choosing their particular steading, although living rurally was also important, as was the independence and privacy afforded by having individual dwellings. In this instance then, housing preference can be seen to facilitate social interaction.

Connor explains that his reason for living in a small group of dwellings rurally, rather than on a housing estate was that:

*“I prefer the sort of real community we get round here”.*

He believes that on housing estates people are forced together and that there is something artificial – not “real” about this kind of arrangement. The result,

according to Connor, is a kind of artificial community. This is an example of comparison with other types of housing, of which more examples are given throughout this section.

Mark explains that he and his wife were keen to live in a rural location, yet be close to community:

*"But it was that we wanted something that was fairly isolated, fairly remote. But also close enough to services, closer to community".*

Chapter 3 showed that both private and social elements are important to people in terms of their dwellings. Study 1 findings suggest that some people actively strive to find the perfect balance of these properties of home. It seems that this group of people have a preference for a certain type of community. Despite the desire to be somewhat isolated, all of the participants mentioned community. Living in a steading provides a degree of isolation and privacy, but almost always with at least one other household nearby – typically the farmhouse that the steading originally serviced. These findings suggest that the kind of community which is desirable to this group of people is somewhat spread out, giving each member of the community privacy and space, while at the same time retaining the benefits of support and company that come from being part of a community.

Another issue to arise was that of the participants finding typical new housing undesirable, because of social issues such as a lack of privacy. As Jack points out, when asked about living on a housing estate:

*"It's communal living, it's the lack of privacy. There's just no way. And it's all that petty niggling, you know".*

Further, Annie says of her and her family:

*"We wanted something that could help us to develop our personality. That was difficult for us, because we don't particularly like living on estates..... We've always managed to live in a village, on the very edge. We've never lived on an estate. We've been very lucky; we've always lived in peculiar places haven't we?"*

June points out:



*"We don't like having neighbours, we're not Brookside Close people."*<sup>12</sup>

In making these comments about new houses, participants might be implying that they do not identify with new housing, or the type of person that lives in this kind of housing (e.g. *"we're not Brookside Close people"*). They are making a statement about what kind of people they are, through their choice of housing. It could be argued that this behaviour is an example of social comparison as was discussed in Chapter 2.

Another important theme to arise in responses to this question was that of character. As has been outlined above, many participants referred to new build houses largely in a negative sense as a reason for choosing an older building. These comments were used by participants in order to illustrate those aspects of their dwelling which they have a positive opinion of – in particular those aspects of the appearance of an old building which are often described as a building having "character". For example, Colin says:

*"I was interested in any building that had character. And of course we all know that a lot of new houses don't have character, they're all ticky tacky boxes, although things are improving compared to 15 or 20 years ago".*

Further, Mark explains that when searching for a new home in Scotland, they didn't even consider looking at new houses, as they perceive this kind of housing to have little character.

In summary, it appears as though there are a number of potential drivers behind the desire to convert a steading. Some of these may be practical and of less interest to the research, such as availability and planning consents. Others are of more interest from a psychological point of view. Particularly salient is a desire to belong to a particular *community* or type of community. It can be argued that the people interviewed may identify with this sort of person and may wish to belong to this kind of group. The process of converting a steading in such a place may be a move towards this. Another characteristic of steadings which was favoured by the participants is that of the building having *character*. Perhaps those converting steadings (and any other person wishing to live in a

<sup>12</sup> Brookside Close refers to the street where residents lived on the now ended British soap opera "Brookside".

home with “character”) see this as reflecting on themselves as a person – they themselves are too “characterful” to live in a standard house. Comments relating to character may also reflect that a person aspires to be seen as having good taste aesthetically – such responses may be indicative of social comparison. Indeed, the steading converters are typically middle class and affluent, unsurprisingly given that converting a steading is not one of the more affordable housing options. Housing preferences such as wanting a house with character may be more prevalent amongst affluent home buyers. Shove (2006) found that the more affluent of her sample were more likely to use emotive terminology in describing the positive aspects of their dwelling, something which she argues stems from this group having higher expectations that a dwelling should “*have character and personality*” (2006, p136).

The drivers of housing preference found in this study also emerged in Study 3 – particularly with reference to privacy and community (see sections 6.4.4 and 6.4.3.1) and echo authors in the meaning of home literature who argue for the importance of social aspects in the home environment (e.g. Gram-Hanssen and Bech-Danielsen, 2004; Lawrence, 1995). What’s more, findings suggest that the environment can have different levels of influence on social behaviour, as argued by Werner in her 1987 model. The environment can be considered as socially conducive - as in the case of participants who chose the steadings due to their location in a particular social context. It can also provide support for personal qualities, as in the case of Rick whose insistence on a separate dwelling rather than a commune-like set up supports his ability to act independently in his home environment.

#### 4.3.3 Influences on personalisation

Discussion around this theme largely emerged in response to the question “*did anything influence your ideas about how the conversion should look?*”. Useful responses were also collected in response to the questions “*what is important to you in terms of the decor?*”, “*is there any style or type of decor which you wanted to avoid?*” and “*how has your taste in home decor evolved over the years?*”.



Rick and the other converters wanted to keep all of the building's original features. He also wished to have a big party room on three levels (he later said that *"I jokingly call it a Baronial Hall"*). On the other hand, he was keen that his main living area did not have that feeling of space or grandness, but in fact was small and cosy. Many of the participants have suggested that for their main living space, they actually wanted a small cosy area rather than a large space.

Fred explains that because he and the other converters did all of the building work themselves, this was the main focus for a long time and the more aesthetic side of things (particularly the decor) was dealt with as a separate process much later on. Fred points out that the most important factor to them in terms of the decor was that it was evident that the building had been used for another purpose:

*"... we wanted things to look like you could tell what it had been. So we didn't want it to look like a Stewart Milne<sup>13</sup> interior, within... so things like leaving the stone wall exposed in the first room and leaving beams exposed here and there. This sort of thing. So you know, you wanted to be clear that this had been what it had been."*

This response shows another reference to new build housing and a desire for a building with character. He also points out that he is becoming more interested over time in the way things look in his dwelling, going on to say:

*"... I like the way when you've got a room, arranging the things in it in a way that is pleasing, I'll always like that. You know, making a sort of a nest I suppose".*

In this statement, Fred is pointing to the behaviour that is most central to the current research - personalisation. He is suggesting that there is an enjoyable (perhaps therapeutic) quality to the personalisation of space. He goes on to say that it can be more interesting to use the things that you have, rather than buying new things for a new home and refers to this as the *"make-do aspect"*.

Mark responded that the decor had been influenced mainly by reading books and magazines on architecture and interiors:

<sup>13</sup> Stewart Milne is the leading privately owned house building company in Scotland.

*"I guess that's where the influence on minimalism is coming from, because the balance in those magazines tends to be shifted more towards minimalism and more towards modernism".*

Jenny explains that she got many of her ideas from her father's interior decor business. Being around different interiors and looking in some of his books gave her a good idea of what she actually liked. Despite having a strong idea of what she wanted, Jenny had to compromise her ideas due to her husband having firm ideas of his own. For example, Jenny likes neutral colours, but her husband is a fan of strong colour. Jenny claims that the compromising was done mostly on her part. This reflects an important point – where more than one person occupy a dwelling, there is bound to be a degree of tension in terms of whose personality is reflected. It is noted later in this section however that a dwelling can reflect shared identities and even relationships of residents – findings which are echoed in the third study (see Section 6.4.4).

Frank points out that he took control of the physical structure (building etc.) and gave his wife control of the decor:

*"I wanted to leave it up to her, the ownership of that. As I was going to do the outside, it was no problem".*

This suggests that people need to have some control over their dwelling, in order to make it their own home. The term "ownership" is used by Frank not in the traditional sense of the word, but more in terms of letting his wife put her mark on their dwelling and in so doing, make it her home too, rather than just his home and a place where she would live. In this instance a compromise was found as a means of making sure that the identity related needs of both people were met through the dwelling. As Frank points out, he didn't mind his wife taking the "ownership" of the decor because he would be able to do the same with the outside. Perhaps this also reflects traditional gender roles in terms of control over home appearance.

Shelley says:

*"We wanted it to look like rather than Joe Bloggs had been in and converted it and it looking exactly the same as the steading down the road, we wanted ours to look a bit different, to put our signature on it or whatever, which I think we've achieved".*



This statement may highlight Shelley's need to be different and to have an original dwelling, which arguably reflects a desire for distinctiveness in the dwelling (evidence of distinctiveness in the dwelling is found in Study 3, see Section 6.4.2 for a framework for identifying a need for distinctiveness; see also Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996).

Colin felt that he should keep the interior of his home fairly traditional because of the age and history of the building. The only real exception was the kitchen and the bathrooms, *"because I think you can get away with that"*. Thomas and June also refer to a set of rules relating to home decor in certain buildings. Thomas suggests that:

*"Because it's a steading it has to be traditional. So you have to work out a happy blend between traditional and modern".*

These extracts suggest there is a social norm held amongst some people, that an old building should be treated "sympathetically" and not given a modern decorative scheme. It would be interesting to see if people felt the same in reverse about modern buildings. The following excerpt shows another example of people resisting modernity in old buildings, although in this case the couple disagree and the man (Jack) alters his stated opinion slightly so that it is more in line with that of his wife:

*Interviewer: Can you describe your own taste in home interiors?*

*Jack: Farmhouse. Farmhouse? [Looks at wife].*

*Gina: Some steadings have been done really modern.*

*Jack: Yes, some are really modern. It's like I stayed in a hotel in Inverness and it was an old Georgian building and it had modern mirrors and lights hanging down and it was just – why would anyone do that?*

*Interviewer: So you think that if it's an old property it should be kept in keeping?*

*Jack: Yes, it'll need modern fittings...*

*Gina: No!*

*Jack: [sighs] how do you mean?*

*Gina: Just cos we have this as a farmhouse, doesn't mean that all steadings should be kept in that period.*

*Jack: [sighs] No.*

*Gina: It's horses for courses. Depends on your lifestyle, depends on what your tastes are. It doesn't agree with everybody. If they want to turn it all into black and white, fine.*

*Jack: It's like the chapel at Inch, instead of trying to use it like an existing building they've opened the front door and put a huge glass facade inside. It's really quite good. It's quite modern.*

*Gina: In fact I actually like to see innovation.*

*Jack: I like to see innovation, but I don't like it just for fashion. You see what I mean? There's a difference between seeing something in John Lewis and thinking "I'll just stick one of those up". I like innovation, good ideas.*

*Interviewer: As long as there's a reason...*

*Jack: Yeah. A really good idea – how to shut off the back – wow! Do it, it's innovative, modern materials, not a problem at all. But I hate to see it when it's just done for fashion.*

Colin says that his home is very much influenced by the Orient. He and his wife identify with this style and culture, because his wife is interested in Feng Shui and they have travelled extensively in the Far East. This response highlights their shared experience, reflected in the personalisation of a shared home environment, giving personal meaning to the space for both (or more) of the people involved as well as providing strong visual cues to the strength of the relationship (as argued by Shenk et al., 2004).<sup>14</sup> Colin's love of the Orient and its subsequent affect on his dwelling also supports previous literature which argues that people aim to reinforce and strengthen memories by surrounding themselves with objects relating to those past experiences (a key finding in Study 3, see Section 6.4.1.4; see also for example Cooper Marcus, 1995; Rechavi, 2009; Rochberg-Halton, 1984).

In summary, there are many influences on the way in which the participants have personalised their dwelling. Some cite aspects of media as well as other peoples' houses (c.f. Mintel, 2001). Many did say that they wanted their home to

<sup>14</sup> Such an approach to personalisation behaviour may also be influenced by another type of identity orientation – relational identity orientation (Cheek et al., 2002), which was discussed in Chapter 2. This type of orientation refers to a person's need to consider close interpersonal relationships in definition of the self-concept. Relational identity orientation is of obvious interest in terms of personalisation in the home and is explored in Study 3 – see Section 6.4.3.9.



be *different* to an average dwelling, implying that being original is a desirable characteristic to this group. As Annie says, *"we've been very lucky; we've always lived in peculiar places haven't we?"* This statement suggests that to her and her family, distinctiveness is a desirable attribute in a dwelling, or at least its location (see Twigger-Ross et al., 2003).

A small number of the participants felt that there were norms as to how an old building should look, in the sense of being sympathetic and keeping the appearance traditional. Others did not feel that this was a constraint. These rules can be thought of as perceived social norms in housing. Norms have been previously argued to act as determinants for housing satisfaction and propensity to move (Morris, Crull and Winter, 1976). Even the shared experiences (such as travel) of a couple or family can be an influence on personalisation. Perhaps people are guided to "make their home" based on principles which they *identify* with, such as "traditional", "original" and "oriental". Also, translating a shared experience with another person into some aspect of the dwelling may help to identify people as part of the relationship and give shared meaning to the home environment (as also found in Study 3, see Section 6.4.4).

#### 4.3.4 Others' opinions

Findings relating to this theme arose largely in responses to the question *"does it matter to you whether or not other people like your home?"*. Many of the converters do care about what other people think. For example, Jenny says:

*"Yeah, very much so. I hate it when people visit and I haven't tidied".*

A lot of participants argue that it doesn't matter at all to them what other people think and that they had converted their dwelling in such a way as to suit their and their family's needs rather than with other people's opinions in mind (for example Mark: *"it doesn't bother me one jot to be truthful...It's my home and as long as my family are happy and I'm happy, that's the main thing"*). However, many of these stated at other points of the interview that they had been pleased by the positive evaluation of their dwelling by other people. For example Connor says:

*"It doesn't bother me, but I do enjoy it when people come in and say "ooh, that's nice" and "wow what a room" and things like that. It's really nice that people do come and approve".*

Even though he denies the importance of other peoples' opinions of his home, positive evaluation of his dwelling by others is something which makes him feel good. As argued by Fred:

*"I don't care enormously, but yeah, I think everyone cares. And you would be a bizarre individual if you didn't. I mean I don't see how life works if you don't even think about what other people think about what you do. I mean, it's one way of finding out if you're doing the right thing. It doesn't mean you have to take their lead.... They keep you on the track on which you wish to travel. So you would be a bizarre individual if you didn't care at all I think."*

Perhaps this is true of many people, but it is likely that some people are guided much more strongly by a desire to impress others and to gain access to certain ingroups. A high social identity orientation may cause a person to place more importance on positive evaluations, because such people place a high importance on the impression they make on others. It is possible that one way of creating a favourable impression on others is through the dwelling and the styles and types of aspects of dwelling that a person identifies with. It would be interesting to see if the personalisation behaviour of people differs dependent upon how much they care about what others think and this is the subject of the research carried out in the second and third studies.

In summary, some people responded that they were driven by what others think. Others responded that they are unconcerned with what others think of their dwelling (although are sometimes pleased with positive comments). It appears as though there are differences in the extent to which people are guided by the opinions others have of their dwellings – such differences are also discussed in Chapter 6 (see Section 6.4.4).

#### 4.3.5 Symbolic aspects

Participants often made reference to the symbolic aspects of their dwellings, in particular, in response to the question *"what does this home represent for you, now it is complete?"*. Participants often pointed to feeling safe and secure and a



some to the importance of financial security (both for the converter and his or her family) and investment. However, there are some responses which go beyond these explanations. Connor says:

*"There is a warm feeling of having made the right choices...we've made good choices of what to put where and the bits and pieces that we've bought have fitted in nicely and all the finishes and everything".*

Connor suggests here that the act of personalisation is satisfying; he describes a warm feeling related to his sense of achievement. In fact, many of the participants said that to them, the conversion represented a sense of achievement. For many this would have been the largest project they had ever undertaken.

Jenny feels that her dwelling represents:

*"Our whole life together I would say, cos we only had been together for a couple of years before we bought the house, so it's been a constant right the way through whatever, fifteen years since we bought it? Fourteen years, yeah".*

To her, the completed project represents her life with her husband and also the coming together of their two families, both of whom helped with the project. So for Jenny, the completed steading clearly stands for more than a roof over her head – it stands for a wealth of shared experience between her and her husband and the strengthening of relationships. Perhaps the documentation of the conversion process expressed through framed photographs on the walls (as described by Jenny) is an attempt to strengthen that feeling of shared experience and relationship with another person, perhaps indicating the importance of continuity as enhanced by the home environment (see Section 6.4.2 for Study 3 findings relating to continuity). She goes on to mention that at their wedding, the best man read a poem called "To a Hoose"<sup>15</sup> which was to represent their shared involvement in the making of their future home together (see also Study 3 results, Section 6.4.4). The conversion perhaps helps Jenny to place herself strongly amongst the people that are important in her life. Shelley adds to this by saying that *"it was a good thing to do as a couple – character building."*

<sup>15</sup> Source of poem unknown. "Hoose" is a Scottish word for "house".

## 4.4 Discussion of results

### 4.4.1 Results considered in terms of identity theories

The findings are firstly considered in the light of key theoretical approaches to identity. Some of the comments made by participants might be driven by an element of social comparison; many people compared their dwellings favourably against other kinds of housing and in one case, others that live in such housing – “*we’re not Brookside Close people*”. When considered in the light of Festinger’s Social Comparison Theory (1954), such comparisons may be interpreted as a means of bringing about a positive evaluation of one’s own dwelling. Festinger argues that in many forms of self-appraisal, people compare self against others in order to evaluate strengths and weaknesses. Perhaps this is also true of housing – people use others’ dwellings as a means of comparison in order to evaluate whether or not their own dwelling is acceptable. Where comparisons lead people to a negative evaluation, other behaviours may ensue in order to improve that evaluation, such as personalisation behaviour, or even moving house. The comparisons seen in this study are generally in favour of the participants’ dwellings, and are therefore comparable with the downward comparison described by Suls et al. (2002) which is carried out in order to enhance a person’s perceived status.

From the perspective of SIT such behaviour could be considered a form of intergroup comparison, an attempt to compare the ingroup favourably with the outgroup as a means of raising self-esteem. Interestingly, in the current study, participants almost always chose a very different group for comparison (people living in new build houses) – perhaps in order to accentuate the differences between groups. Negative references to other types of housing or community may therefore function as a form of intergroup comparison. SIT argues that people tend to be motivated to gain or maintain self-esteem (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) and these findings hint at the possibility that intergroup comparison in terms of the dwelling may be one of many ways that people afford themselves a positive self-concept.

Such findings are interesting and interpretations of these can be helpful in considering how the dwelling might be used as a means of social comparison.



However, as argued in Chapter 2, SIT largely deals with behaviour between groups as opposed to self-definition – hence the exclusion of the theory from theoretical models in this research. Identity Process Theory (or IPT; Breakwell, 1986) arguably constitutes a more useful theoretical approach in terms of self-definition.

Interpretations of findings in terms of IPT in this section are based on the interpretative framework of Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) who carried out interviews with people based on their residential environments and analysed the data for evidence of the four key principles of IPT: continuity, self-esteem, distinctiveness and self-efficacy. The need for distinctiveness is a key driving force behind identity processes in IPT, along with a need for continuity, self-esteem and self-efficacy. Twigger-Ross and Uzzell employ a particular framework in identifying these characteristics in their data. They argue that distinctiveness is evidenced whenever a participant discusses a need to be distinct or individual from others in relation to the environment. They further argue that continuity is evidenced whenever participants show a sense of history and continuity within a residential environment (place-referent continuity) as well as showing a desire to attend mainly to environments which are congruent with a person's identity (self-congruent continuity). Self-esteem is in evidence when a person shows enhanced psychological well-being in relation to the environment. Finally, self-efficacy is experienced when a person feels a sense of skill over the physical environment. For further discussion of the interpretative framework of Twigger Ross and Uzzell (1996) see Section 6.4.2.

The need for a building with character and the need for a building which is in some way different from others' dwellings both suggest a need for distinctiveness (a principle in the IPT model). As argued by Uzzell et al. (2002), distinctiveness is an essential component in the formation of place identity. A wish to have an unusual dwelling may be a means of meeting a need for distinctiveness and may help a person to feel that they are an individual and somehow distinguished from others. These results echo previous research by Gram-Hanssen and Bech-Danielsen (2004) who found that people sought a unique interior through the decoration of their homes, particularly women. Converting a steading seems to bring with it a sense of achievement, and is therefore potentially beneficial in terms of self-efficacy and self-esteem. Also, the

process of creating one's own home from a disused farm building may have significant impact on a person's sense of continuity because various memories of the building in its various stages will result from the process. This is illustrated in the data: one of the participants has a photograph gallery in her home of the various stages of the conversion project, which she feels documents a large part of her and her husband's history. This is redolent of place-referent continuity as described by Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996). Finally, the comparison made by a number of participants between their own homes and new housing, which was sometimes expressed as being inappropriate for the types of people they are, could be interpreted in terms of self-congruent continuity (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996). It was argued in Chapter 2 that self-congruent continuity can be achieved not only by attending mainly to environments that are congruent, but also by modification or appropriation of the environment to make it more congruent to the self-concept. Perhaps the conversion of a steading to a home allows a person to both choose the kind of environment that is most congruent to them (for example a rural environment) as well as the kind of building which they feel is most congruent, for example an old building which has character.<sup>16</sup> Such a high level of personalisation as afforded by the conversion will allow for the creation of an optimally congruent environment. These behaviours and associations therefore could potentially contribute to the processes and structures of identity which are argued for in IPT.

#### 4.4.2 Applying these results to a further study

The thesis explores how dispositional aspects of identity might influence the way in which the dwelling is used as an identity resource through personalisation. Comments made by some participants suggest that the opinion of others is appreciated. This could act as an influence on personalisation behaviour. The extent to which any expressive element is for a social audience or personal benefit is unclear. However, participants appear to display differences in the extent to which they care about what others think about them and their dwellings or the extent to which they are happy to discuss this. It could be that dispositional aspects such as *social identity orientation* and *personal identity orientation* may exert influence on personalisation behaviour. For example, the

<sup>16</sup>It is interesting that most felt a new building to have little or no character in comparison to an older building – this may say something about the tastes and preferences of the sample, as not everyone would agree that new buildings are devoid of character.



way in which the dwelling is modified may be more in line with current fashions amongst those who have strong social identity orientation, because social identity orientation refers to a stronger need to be viewed favourably by others in order to maintain self-esteem and a positive self-concept.

This discussion suggests that further investigation into such phenomena in terms of behaviour within the home may reveal interesting and important insights. In particular, identity orientations are of interest to the research in terms of the arguments developed. It has been argued throughout that the influence of individual differences such as identity orientations may affect the way in which identity processes function within the home and the findings suggest there is value in investigating this field.

Therefore, of particular interest in the context of the next study are *social identity orientation* and *personal identity orientation* in terms of personalisation behaviour. The next chapter discusses in detail how the findings of this study are applied in designing a second study which examines the relationship between identity orientations and personalisation behaviour.

In summary, the interviews are exploratory and tentative and conclusions should not be overstated. However, findings suggest that identity might function on a number of levels through personalisation of the home environment. As argued by Brown (2007), "*Self-building is better understood as a social process - an act of identity formation - providing a coherent discourse on the reproduction of the self, family, and social world*" (p282). The findings provide a small degree of support for Brown's argument in suggesting that converters used home making as a means of identity formation, both in reflecting their identities and their relationships with other people (be they family members or other social groups).

#### 4.4.3 Limitations of the study

Study 1 was exploratory in nature and resulted in some interesting findings in terms of personalisation and housing preference. The results are intriguing and to some extent supportive of the ideas developed so far within the thesis. However, the exploratory and tentative nature of the findings is central to their interpretation: the results should not be overstated. Instead, these are

considered as pointers for further studies. In particular, the following two studies have taken as their focus the differences between people in their approaches to personalisation, researching in more detail personality-based differences influencing the process. The analysis of this study takes an interpretive approach, using the questions themselves as a framework for the analysis. The lack of a traditionally well-received approach further necessitates that results are interpreted as preliminary and exploratory.

Another limitation of Study 1 lies in the researcher's skills at the time in eliciting data of interest from participants. At this stage the researcher had carried out no previous qualitative research. A number of things could have been done differently in order to elicit a greater richness of detail. For example, the researcher could have been clearer in all prior communication that the purpose of the interviews was to discuss psychological factors (participants were also keen to discuss at length other issues, such as planning issues with the conversion process). What's more, the researcher tried to open the discussion by asking participants to describe what they had done with their steadings, but responses to this question proved to be incredibly detailed and lengthy, often taking up a good part of the interview. Study 1 did not explore in any detail the extent to which the steadings were considered home by the participants. This limited the study both in leading the results in terms of assumptions of home, and in failing to explore the extent to which personalisation may be central to the process of home. Finally, despite an interest in personality and identity-based individual differences, this study did not carry out any form of personality test on participants. The design of the subsequent two studies benefits from a critical reflection on these limitations.

The next chapter presents the conceptualisation, methodology and results of a large scale postal and e-mail study which considers the effect of personality differences on the home making process in more detail.



## **5 A study of identity orientations and their relationship to home making behaviour**

### **5.1 *Introduction to the chapter***

This chapter discusses the rationale, methodology and results of a study which explores relationships between identity orientations and home making behaviour. The aim of the first study was to explore a range of phenomena driving personalisation and to provide evidence of a link between identity orientations and personalisation behaviour as well as to generate hypotheses for a second study (see Chapter 4). This chapter describes the rationale behind the development of these hypotheses and explains the way that findings from the first study are applied in the development of this study. The methodology is explained, with a discussion of the questionnaire design and the research question and hypotheses. The piloting and sampling procedures are also explained. Finally, all results are presented and discussed.

### **5.2 *Developing the key findings from the first study***

Findings from the first study suggest that a number of socio-psychological factors might be related to personalisation of the home with support being provided for the role of personal and social identity orientations in influencing personalisation. The first study has shown that people are guided to live in certain homes and do certain things to those homes and that socio-psychological aspects, particularly those related to identity orientations, might function in influencing this process. Identity orientations stand out as a potential means of interpretation of responses which indicate a need to enhance self-meaning or impress others through personalisation of the home. One striking finding is that participants repeatedly referred to the kind of person they are, in terms of what they strive for in their ideal home environment. Firstly, this draws an instant link between identity and the home – certain types of people desire certain kinds of homes. Furthermore, when discussing their housing choices (both in terms of converting and rural location), people often mentioned what they considered less desirable housing. Perhaps people believe that a dwelling can reveal something of its occupant to the outside world (as argued in the

literature e.g. Cooper Marcus, 1995). It may be that some people are keen to ensure that the identity that they wish other people to see is portrayed through their home environment. The participants appeared to show differences in the extent to which they appeared to behave on the basis of how others would form opinions of them, again suggesting that dispositions such as identity orientations may play a role.

The second study therefore aims not only to provide more substantial evidence across a larger and more representative sample for a link between personal and social identity orientations and home, but also seeks to uncover more detail on the kinds of behaviours deemed most important in the home dependent upon these orientations. Such behaviours relate to personalisation but also to other areas such as keeping the home clean and tidy and the extent to which the home is a social rather than a private domain. Together these behaviours are described as home making behaviours and more detail of this development in the research focus are given in Section 5.2.2.

#### 5.2.1 Personal and social identity orientations

The second study investigates the relationship of identity orientations to behaviours in the home including personalisation behaviour. Identity orientations have been discussed throughout the thesis and a thorough account is given in Section 2.6.1. Chapter 4 speculated that individual differences such as identity orientations may mediate the use of the dwelling as a means of expressing self to others, particularly the presentation of self in a positive light. Study 2 explores these constructs further in relation to personalisation of the dwelling. In particular, it was of interest to determine whether a person's identity orientations would affect the relative importance placed on various behaviours carried out within the dwelling.

An important point to reiterate is that, as outlined in Chapter 2, personal and social identity orientations refer to the extent to which a person self-defines at the personal or social level. As pointed out by Cheek (1989):

*"Identity orientations refer to the relative importance that individuals place on various identity attributes or characteristics when constructing their self-definitions."*



The important point is that identity orientations ultimately describe the way in which different people define themselves. A person with a high social identity orientation will place importance on how they believe they are perceived “out there”, by others in their self-definitions. A person with a high personal identity orientation will place importance on the private idea that they have of themselves in self-definition. It should be noted that it is possible for a person to have both strong personal and social identity orientation (or low for that matter) and the two are not necessarily polar opposites – this was discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

A tendency to rely on these aspects will necessitate that these features are of value to the person in question. For example, a person with a high social identity orientation is argued to place a strong value on what others think of him or her, because this will ultimately feed back into either a positive or a negative self-concept, which in turn may have consequences for self-esteem. Therefore, identity orientations may influence the extent to which we value the opinions of others on the self, or value the more internal aspects of our personalities. Support for this assertion was provided by Cheek and Briggs (1982), who found that identity orientations were related to measures of collective and self-esteem.

Perhaps then, as argued throughout this thesis, the extent to which a person values what others think of him or herself (in terms of constructing a positive self-concept) might affect the kinds of behaviours within the home that are considered most important – including behaviours which are visible to others such as personalisation and behaviours which are more private. Furthermore, the extent to which a person values more personal aspects such as imagination, thoughts and feelings may also affect such behaviours.

### 5.2.2 Home making behaviour

The interviews carried out in the first study explored personalisation in relation to the conversion of old farm buildings. The sample for this study was limited to those who exhibit a large degree of personalisation of the home environment, as evidenced through large scale structural modification of the dwelling. The literature on personalisation as a means of constructing and reflecting identity

focuses on the adornment of the dwelling with certain objects and possessions which are in some way significant to the dweller (see Section 3.9.1; e.g. Shenk et al., 2004; Kenyon, 1999; Chapman and Hockey, 1999). A brief list of relevant behaviours could include choice of furniture and paintings, their arrangement in the home and the displaying of personal possessions. Together these behaviours seemed to make up an important part of the home experience to those interviewed in Study 1, lending strength to the areas argued as important in the home process throughout the thesis. Individual differences might also account for differences in approach to personalisation behaviours.

It can be seen then that personalisation is a type of behaviour which exists on a number of levels. Those behaviours which contribute to it do not only function in indicating identity to others, but also may serve a number of other purposes in terms of those qualities which are valued in the home, including those discussed in Chapter 3, such as territory, privacy, comfort and shelter (e.g. Altman, 1975; Mallet, 2005; Chapman and Hockey, 1999). These behaviours need to be considered more widely as contributing to making a house feel more like a home – something which was not explored in the first study. The term “home making” adequately encompasses this range of behaviours because they either make a house feel more like a home, or improve the *sense* of home that is experienced in the current dwelling.

It can be seen then that a shift in focus has occurred in the development of the research focus of the second study. Personalisation is still key, but a wider range of behaviours are considered particularly in terms of their relative importance to people depending upon their social and personal identity orientations. In carrying out interviews with steading converters, many participants spoke at length about the technical side of the processes they went through in order to convert their homes. What is of more interest at this stage of the research is the range of behaviours which enhance the feeling of being at home and the ways in which these may differ in their relative importance from one person to the next, based upon personal and social identity orientations.

So what should home making behaviour encompass? Home making behaviour has been considered by a number of authors and these have mainly sought to investigate a range of behaviours in the sense of making a dwelling or other place feel more like home. Pallasmaa (1995) spoke of the frustration felt by



those forced to live in a space not recognisable as home – for example, a hotel room is instantly subtly personalised by laying out clothes and books, unmaking the bed and so on. This behaviour could be thought of as making a place feel like home and therefore *home making*.

Home making is defined in different ways in the literature. Srinivasan & Thara (1999) assessed the long-term impact of schizophrenia on home making function (which is argued to be an important part of everyday life for women in India). Aspects of home making evaluated were cooking and activities related to the maintenance of a household, washing of clothes and utensils, taking care of the children in the house and meeting the needs of other adults in the house. This approach suggests a more traditional understanding of the term home making which relates to the role of keeping house and feeding the family.

In contrast, the 2003 study by Kellett and Moore which explored routes to home in homeless people (discussed in Chapter 3) lends an alternative understanding to home making. One of their samples consisted of people in Colombia who had constructed illegal shack housing. They explored home making in this community through the activities of constructing and developing one's own home. Importantly, they argued that in developing and improving their housing (i.e. home making), people are not only trying to improve comfort, but also to share broader social and cultural housing norms and experiences. For example, in keeping a house clean and tidy, these people felt they were able to convey decency and respectability to others. Home making can therefore reflect the social ambitions of the residents and provide a route to belonging for people at the edges of society. This approach to the study of home making suggests a deeper understanding of the psychological aspects surrounding it. Home making encompasses all of these behaviours and more. For example, as pointed out by Lawrence (1987) cooking food and other such daily activities will lend a dwelling a sense of home, over time.

To provide an overall framework, it is useful to refer to Kellett and Moore's (2003) focus on the process of constructing and *developing* one's own home, rather than on only the initial construction. This understanding is reflected in the current definition of home making as that of *developing one's own home*. This broader definition seeks to

acknowledge the viewpoint that people can in fact *construct* their home themselves, using the shell of the dwelling as a starting point. The construction is a psychological one but is facilitated by physical behaviours (personalisation). However this definition does rule out the aspect of physically constructing the dwelling place (and therefore is appropriate for most people in UK society).

It is also necessary to outline the specific behaviours to be studied as part of the home making process. One useful way to constrain those activities which are classed as home making is to limit the definition to activities which are intentionally carried out in order to change the experience of the home in a *visual* sense. So while it can be acknowledged that activities such as baking bread may make a house feel more homely, such activities are ruled out of the present definition. This is appropriate both to narrow the area of study to a realistic scale and because social identity orientations in particular might be more likely to affect behaviour which is carried out intentionally in order to change the visual experience of home. Such changes are arguably more noticeable, both to the self and to others.

The definition of home making as used in this thesis is as follows:

*Home making refers to a range of behaviours that people engage in, in order to make a physical dwelling feel more like a home. These include activities such as cleaning and tidying as well as referring to the way in which a person organises their belongings within the home and the lengths that a person may go to in order to modify the function or appearance of the actual fabric of the home itself. For the purpose of this research, home making refers to such behaviours where these have been carried out intentionally, and where these alter the visual experience of the dwelling.*

### 5.2.3 Development of the research focus

It is of benefit to clarify further the topic under investigation. As the model presented in Chapter 3 shows (Figure 2) identity orientations are argued to influence the way in which the dwelling is used as a resource in identity processes. This chapter has developed an argument that personal and social identity orientations may affect the importance placed on a range of behaviours



in the home, some of which relate to personalisation and some of which relate to more routine everyday tasks such as cleaning. As argued at various points in this thesis, behaviour carried out within the home, particularly personalisation behaviour, feeds back into self-definition in terms of the ongoing construction of the self-concept.

The research question is as follows:

Do relationships exist between identity orientations and home making behaviours?

The research hypotheses are as follows:

1. *The higher a person's social identity orientation, the more importance they will place on behaviours which enhance the appearance of the home and the impression the home can make on others*
2. *The higher a person's personal identity orientation, the more importance they will place on behaviours which enhance personal meaning, values and ideals within the home*

The research hypotheses refer to either social or personal identity orientations. It should be noted at this point that in both cases the hypotheses refer to the strength of identity orientation (either personal or social) without comparison to the other sort of identity orientation. So, for example, hypothesis 1 purports that a person with strong social identity orientation is more likely than a person with weak social identity orientation to desire to make the home attractive or impressive. It does not purport that social identity orientation is more related to this behaviour than is personal identity orientation. This is because as argued by Cheek (1989), there is a very small positive relationship between personal and social identity orientations of  $r = .15$ , which indicates that the two are not bipolar opposites (Cheek, 1989)<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> See Section 5.4 for results relating to relationship between personal and social identity orientations

### 5.3 *Method*

The above research question and hypotheses were explored through the administration of a large scale questionnaire, which measured identity orientations as well as attitudes towards a number of home making behaviours on a large sample of the local (Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire) population. The questionnaire focuses on home making behaviours relating to social and personal aspects of the dwelling, as well as those which go towards making a home look attractive, or personalising the dwelling.

#### 5.3.1 The sample

The sample targeted for the study was a random cross-section of the Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire population. The questionnaire was delivered by Royal Mail to a random selection of 1500 residential addresses in Aberdeenshire<sup>18</sup>. 352 of these households returned a completed questionnaire, giving a response rate of 23%<sup>19</sup>. The questionnaire was also emailed to all the staff email distribution lists within The Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen, in the form of a Microsoft Word file which could be completed in Microsoft Word as a questionnaire. 146 people responded with completed questionnaires. 11 of these were excluded because participants had not completed all parts of the questionnaire, although exclusions did not apply where a participant had failed to respond to some items, providing they had filled in the majority of both parts of the questionnaire. It was impossible to obtain a response rate for the email participants because of the unknown extent of crossover on email distribution lists. The total number of participants from postal and email sources was 487. Table 4 shows the distribution of demographics in the sample.

Having examined the two data sets to ensure that responses were similarly distributed, the data was analysed as one sample – a practise becoming more commonly practised as web- and e-mail based surveys increase in popularity. Such an approach to combining samples is argued to preserve data quality over and above the use of internet-based surveys alone (e.g. de Leeuw, 2005), which

<sup>18</sup>These addresses were obtained from a data source in the form of an Excel file containing 65536 addresses which was called "PAF Data AB Post town April 2002", from Allies Computing.

<sup>19</sup> Another 2 questionnaires were returned uncompleted, 1 questionnaire was returned which had been directed to a business address in error and 13 were returned by Royal Mail as "return to sender".



may not reach an adequate spread of the population in question. Its success relies on uniformity of question formats across the various samples (Dillman,

**Table 4 - Demographic groupings**

Demographic	Grouping	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Male	151	31
	Female	331	68
	Missing	5	1
<b>Age</b>	18-25	37	7.6
	26-35	100	20.5
	36-50	169	34.7
	51-65	112	23
	Over 65	63	12.9
	Missing	6	1.2
<b>Employment Status</b>	Employed	304	62.4
	Self-employed	23	4.7
	Unemployed	18	3.7
	Student	19	3.9
	Retired	88	18.1
	Other/missing	35	7.2
<b>Residential Status</b>	Renter	98	20.1
	Owner outright	137	28.1
	Owner with mortgage	231	47.4
	Other/missing	21	4.3
<b>Home type</b>	Flat	146	30
	House (terraced)	60	12.3
	House (semi-detached)	135	27.7
	House (detached)	95	19.5
	Bungalow	27	5.5
	Other/missing	24	4.9
<b>Number in household</b>	Living alone	105	21.6
	Living with partner	179	36.8
	Living with flatmates/housemates	13	2.7
	Living with a partner and children	134	27.5
	Living as a single parent	28	5.7
	Other/missing	28	5.7
<b>Years in home</b>	Less than a year	61	12.5
	1-2 years	53	10.9
	2-5 years	107	22
	5-10 years	69	14.2
	More than 10 years	89	18.3
	More than 20 years	99	20.3
	Missing	9	1.8

2000, 2007), as is the case in the current study although it is important to pay attention to resulting data, because measurement error can occur when respondents interpret questions differently when presentation mode is very different (Dillman and Christian, 2003). In particular the email version of the survey used in this study was identical in appearance to the paper-based version, with the main difference being completion on-screen rather than on paper (along with differences with recruitment and return of questionnaires).

It is important to bear in mind that whilst the postal sample are a cross-section of the Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire public, the email sample all worked for the Robert Gordon University. Yet it is argued that the email sample make up less than a third of the overall sample and comprises not only academics, but also a variety of administrative and support staff. Given the similar patterns of distribution for the two sub-samples, such an approach should not affect the validity of the results.

### 5.3.2 Materials

The materials designed for this study consisted of a questionnaire, which incorporated a briefing letter (see Appendix 9). The questionnaire was designed to measure identity orientations and home making behaviour as well as a range of demographic variables. The design of this questionnaire is now described in more detail.

#### 5.3.2.1 *Identity orientations*

The first part of the questionnaire was a modified version of the Aspects of Identity Questionnaire III or AIQ-III (Cheek, Underwood and Cutler, 1985). This questionnaire measures social and personal identity orientations as well as collective identity orientation. It is a self report measure which does not ambitiously attempt to gauge a person's actual identity or categorise a person – but rather determines what aspects are most important to them (in defining the self-concept). It can therefore tell us the extent to which a person cares about what others think and is validated in their actions by the approval of others.



One of the authors of the AIQ-III (Jonathon Cheek) was contacted in order to gain his opinion on reducing the items on the original scale to measure just two aspects of identity orientations. He agreed that the scale was suitable for this purpose. Inter-item reliability of the two scales is good, with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of .84 for personal identity orientation and .86 for social identity orientation<sup>20</sup> (Cheek et al., 1994). Therefore the AIQ-III was reduced by means of extracting only those items which referred to personal and social identity. Participants were asked to read each item (a total of 17) and indicate "how important each is to your sense of who you are" by responding on a five-point Likert scale – "extremely important (to my sense of who I am)", "very important", "somewhat important", "slightly important" or "not important". The 17 items ranged from "my personal values and moral standards" to "my reputation, what others think of me", for example (see Appendix 9 for the full questionnaire). Ten of these items provided an additive scale for personal identity orientation and the other 7 provided an additive scale for social identity orientation.

#### 5.3.2.2 *Home making*

The second part of the questionnaire was specifically designed for the current research and focused on measuring importance placed on various aspects of home making as well as more general items relating to dwelling satisfaction (see Appendix 9 for the questionnaire). Some items related to the more presentational aspects of home making – the effect that changes made to the dwelling may have on others and the importance of other peoples' opinions of the dwelling (and related more to the hypothesis on social identity orientation). Other items related more to behaviours which would enhance the experience of dwelling from a more personal point of view (and related more to the hypothesis on personal identity orientation). Other items were designed to gauge the extent to which a participant was concerned overall with the aesthetic qualities of their dwelling, as it was of interest to see whether this may be related to social identity orientation. In other words, to see whether a desire to be seen positively by others may be more influential in motivating a person to make the dwelling attractive. It was intended that responses to items could be analysed individually in terms of the hypotheses but also it should be possible to combine the items

<sup>20</sup> These compare very well with alpha coefficients for data in the present study, with a coefficient of .83 for personal identity orientation and .82 for social identity orientation.

into a scale measuring the importance of *home making* to participants. General items relating to satisfaction within the home were also included for interest. It should also be noted that home making behaviours were structured around themes: dwelling satisfaction; dwelling appearance; physical changes to the dwelling; non-fixed elements of personalisation; contextual changes to the ambience of the dwelling; and cleaning and tidying. These themes were developed to give a point of reference for participants in thinking about different activities in the dwelling. Each represents home making at a different level and each theme was covered in a separate sub-section of the questionnaire.

Firstly, participants were asked to indicate whether or not they lived alone. They were then asked to indicate whether they felt that they took the most interest in the inward appearance of their dwelling and, if not, whether it was their partner or other adults in the dwelling that took the most interest, or whether interest was shared. It was felt this was important to gauge, as whether or not a participant was the “main” home maker was bound to affect their responses. Participants were then asked to complete the main body of items relating to home making, indicating the extent to which they agreed with each statement on a Likert-type 5-point scale with 1 being “strongly agree”, 3 being “neither agree nor disagree” and 5 being “strongly disagree”. The most frequently used Likert-scales consist of five or seven points (Malhotra and Peterson, 2006). It was sensible to use a five point Likert-type scale as this mirrored the scale used in the reproduced identity orientations measure. In this way, participants were not required to learn a new responding method for the second part of the questionnaire, resulting in less confusion on completing it.

Participants were also encouraged to provide any additional comments at the end of each of the six sub-sections. A further item asked for participants’ definitions of the term “home making” – this was of interest because the thesis defines the term in a particular way and it was useful to determine whether participants thought of home making in a similar way. The final section requested that participants provide demographic information including gender, age group, employment status, residential status, dwelling type, household type and length of time in current dwelling.



#### 5.3.2.3 *Piloting*

The questionnaire was piloted on 10 members of staff from the Robert Gordon University. The piloting stage uncovered a problem with one item - Item 27: "I enjoy decorating my home for cultural celebrations such as Christmas". This item had initially been stated as "I enjoy decorating my home at Christmas". The pilot participant who raised the concern with this item did not celebrate Christmas as a part of his culture. The item was subsequently amended. No further concerns were raised with the questionnaire, participants found it straight forward and all completed within 15 minutes (with no researcher present in order to mirror the conditions for the study itself).

#### 5.3.3 *Procedure*

The questionnaire was either mailed or emailed to participants who completed it in their own time, in the comfort of their own dwelling or workplace. Postal participants then returned the questionnaire in the stamped-addressed-envelope provided, whereas email participants returned the completed questionnaire to the researcher by email.

#### 5.3.4 *Ethical considerations*

The research design was approved by the research degrees committee and the study met the requirements set out in the APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (2003). Participants were aware that their responses were entirely anonymous as this was outlined in the briefing letter, and no names or identifying details were requested.

### 5.4 *Results*

This section presents the results from the analysis of data. Section 5.4.1 outlines general findings regarding the home making items. Section 5.4.2 discusses the combination of home making items into a scale which is used for analyses. Sections 5.4.3 and 5.4.4 discuss testing of the hypotheses in relation to SIO and PIO. Section 5.4.5 considers findings relating to gender, followed by a

consideration of age (section 5.4.6). Section 5.4.7 presents findings which raise questions into the identity orientation scales. Following this, a qualitative analysis of open-ended responses is presented (Section 5.4.8).

Throughout this chapter, support for hypotheses and other findings is provided in a number of forms. Not only are statistical analyses presented, support is also provided for arguments through the presentation of qualitative data (comments) obtained in the questionnaire.

This chapter refers to personal identity orientation level as PIOL and social identity orientation level as SIOL whereas personal and social identity orientations are referred to as PIO and SIO. PIOL and SIOL refer specifically to a category membership of low or high, whereas PIO and SIO refer to individual scores on scales. It is important to bear in mind that for home making and PIO/SIO scores, a lower score denotes a stronger level of agreement.

#### 5.4.1 Home making: general findings

This section discusses the questionnaire responses in general. A table showing mean responses for all home making items is provided in Appendix 10.

It is noted that whereas the majority of items are importance-based, items 3-7 are satisfaction-based. Participants tended to agree most highly with the items relating to satisfaction in the dwelling. Item 30 which relates to the dwelling being cleaner when visitors are expected also has a high mean response. Next are items relating to making a good impression on others through the dwelling. Participants agreed least with items relating to making physical changes and upgrades to the dwelling, as well as Item 14, which relates to having a stylish home.

Table 5 shows the items with the highest mean response. The items are shown in descending order with those items having the highest mean agreement shown first (it is noted that a lower mean denotes higher agreement).



**Table 5 - Items with highest mean response**

Item	Statement	Mean response	Standard deviation
6	I feel very much at home in the place where I currently live	1.55	.94
30	My home is cleaner and tidier when I know people are coming to visit	1.65	.93
5	My home is a place where I like to spend a great deal of time	1.67	.85
7	When I find a nice home I like to stay there for a long time	1.70	.96
4	If I like my home I feel better about myself	1.78	.86

Most of these items relate either to satisfaction in the dwelling, or rootedness, with the exception of Item 30 which relates to cleaning and tidying.

#### 5.4.2 The Home Making Scale

In order to provide an overall measure of the importance of home making a number of items in the Home Making part of the questionnaire were used in the composition of a scale. Importantly, most of the items in this part of the questionnaire relate to behaviours which aim to improve or alter the visual experience of the home. The home making scale is used in the testing of the two hypotheses (see sections 5.4.3 and 5.4.4). Although data relating to individual items was explored in relation to SIO and PIO (as discussed in sections 5.4.3 and 5.4.4), such analysis did not shed additional light on the hypotheses. In particular no strong correlations were found in terms of individual items and PIO/SIO. The home making scale is appropriate for testing the hypotheses because it measures the importance of home making to participants. However, in order to respond more specifically to the two hypotheses, sub-scales of the questionnaire are also used in testing the hypotheses, with *home appearance* being considered most useful in terms of SIO and *personalisation* being considered most useful in terms of PIO (see following section).

In developing the home making scale, Cronbach's Alpha was run for all 24 home making items. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is .896 which is encouraging and suggests that these items together measure something coherent and can therefore be combined as a scale (Field, 2000). However, on removing the items in Table 6 (the satisfaction- and rootedness-based items), the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is even stronger at .902. In support of excluding the items shown in

Table 6, the scale is also more meaningful when only importance-based items related to improving the appearance of home are included. The frequency distribution for scores on this new scale also approximates a normal curve. It can be argued then that the new scale "Home Making" reliably measures the importance of the improvement of home appearance to respondents.

**Table 6 - First five items on home making questionnaire**

Item	Statement
3	I like to have an "open house" – I am happy for people to come round unannounced
4	If I like my home I feel better about myself
5	My home is a place where I like to spend a great deal of time
6	I feel very much at home in the place where I currently live
7	When I find a nice home I like to stay there for a long time

#### 5.4.2.1 Sub-scales of the questionnaire

On designing the questionnaire, items were grouped into sub-sections around conceptual themes and these have been explored for their suitability as sub-scales. Inter-item reliability was calculated for items within each of the six sub-sections in the questionnaire. Only sub-scales with a Cronbach's Alpha of above .7 are used for analysis purposes in order to ensure validity within scales. The six sub-sections of the questionnaire were designed to relate to satisfaction within the home, home appearance, physical changes to the home, "non-fixed" elements, i.e. the use of objects to personalise the home (which will be called "personalisation" here), contextual changes to the home and finally cleaning and tidying the home. Table 7 presents the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for each of these sub-scales.

**Table 7 - Inter-item reliability of sub-sections in the questionnaire**

Sub-section	Items in sub-section	Cronbach's Alpha
Satisfaction in the home	3, 4, 5, 6 & 7	.541
Home appearance	9, 10, 11, 12, 13 & 14	.816
Physical changes to the home	16, 17 & 18	.829
Personalisation	20, 21, 22 & 23	.796
Contextual changes	25, 26 & 27	.672
Cleaning and tidying	29, 30 & 31	.417



As can be seen from Table 7, only three of the six sub-sections have a Cronbach's Alpha above .7 – home appearance, physical changes to the home and personalisation. What this shows is that three of the six sections were meaningful and can be used as scales of measurement. The other three are less reliable as a scale and further work is needed to create scales measuring these constructs. These sub-sections are therefore not considered further in this analysis. The sub-scale “home appearance” was considered of particular importance to the hypothesis relating to SIO, whereas the sub-scale “personalisation” was considered of particular importance to the hypothesis relating to PIO.

#### 5.4.3 Social Identity Orientation

Social Identity Orientation Level (SIOL) is the level of SIO shown by a participant, in terms of responses to extracts from The Aspects of Identity Questionnaire (the first section of the questionnaire). Participants fall into one of two groups: high SIOL, or low SIOL. Participants were assigned to either the high group (n = 242) or low group (n = 245), depending upon SIO scores<sup>21</sup>. It was necessary to split participants into groups in order to carry out tests for significant differences between groups. Participants were split into two roughly equal groups based on where their scores fell. It is noted that SIO scores are based on responses to 7 items with a maximum possible score of 35.

In theory, those with high SIOL will place most importance on the more external, social aspects of identity, generally relating to the impression they make on others in terms of their personality, appearance and so on. The study aims to test a hypothesis which relates to SIO, as well as another relating to PIO. The hypothesis relating to SIO is as follows:

**Hypothesis 1: The higher a person's social identity orientation, the more importance they will place on behaviours which enhance the appearance of the home and the impression the home can make on others**

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<sup>21</sup>The distribution of SIO scores across the sample approximates a normal distribution

#### 5.4.3.1 Preliminary findings

Those in the high SIO group agreed most highly that they have the most interest in the appearance of their home (Item 2), compared to other residents, supporting the first hypothesis. Of those who responded to this item, those showing the most interest in the appearance of the home also had higher mean SIOs, as shown in Table 8.

**Table 8 - Interest in home appearance**

Interest in home appearance	N Value	Mean social identity orientation
"I show the most interest"	128	17.98
"My partner shows the most interest"	46	19.33
"We both show equal amounts of interest"	175	19.69

#### 5.4.3.2 Tests for significant differences between SIO groups and Home Making

A t-test was run between SIO groups and Home Making (the scale). It was found that differences between groups on Home Making are significant:  $t(447) = -6.94$ ,  $p < .001$ . This provides some support for the argument that SIO relates to home making behaviours, although correlational support is required to confirm this.

#### 5.4.3.3 Relationship between Social Identity Orientation and Home Making Scale

In order to fully test the hypothesis, it was necessary to establish the strength of relationship between Home Making and SIO. A Pearson's correlation was run and a correlation of .364 was found ( $r(444) = .364$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

In deciding how to interpret correlations, Franzblau's (1958) classic interpretation of  $r$  is commonly used, in which a moderate correlation must be at least .40. Based on this means of interpreting the strength of association, it can be seen that Home Making shows a *low degree of correlation* with SIO. The strength of this relationship must not be overstated. A relationship *does* exist,



but it is small, suggesting that the hypothesis should not be completely rejected. Section 5.4.7 within this chapter illuminates an important finding which may go some way towards explaining why a stronger relationship could not be found.

#### 5.4.3.4 Sub-scales and Social Identity Orientation

MANOVA was run to examine associations between SIOL groups (as independent variable), and the three sub-scales (as dependent variables). MANOVA showed a significant multivariate effect for the three sub-scales in relation to SIOL group: Roy's largest root = 0.113,  $F(1,456) = 17.156$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . T-tests and Pearson's correlations were used to further investigate the associations between SIOL groups and the three sub-sections.

Table 9 shows mean scores for each SIOL group in terms of the three sub-scales. Results of t-tests are presented in the table along with Pearson's correlations (all correlations were significant at the .001 level).

**Table 9 - Mean scores for SIOL groups on sub-scales**

Sub-scale	T value	Pearson's r with SIO:	Mean score for low SIOL group (n = 245)	Mean score for high SIOL group (n = 242)
Home appearance	-7.36*	.364	15.09	12.07
Physical changes to the home	-4.52*	.239	8.28	7.02
Personalisation	-6.09*	.300	9.90	7.96

\* = difference significant at the .001 level

Arguably then, all three areas of home making are more important to those with higher SIO. All three of these areas relate to the appearance of the home. These findings suggest that SIO can affect the extent to which home appearance is important and therefore the extent to which people will engage in home making. The correlations are low and do not add strong support to this argument (furthermore, SIO was correlated with all individual items with no further success – all correlations were low). However, the highest correlation is between SIO and home appearance.

#### 5.4.3.5 Evidence from open-ended responses

Some of the comments made by participants in the open-ended sections provide some support for the first hypothesis. This is important given the low degree of support found so far through statistical analyses. A selection of these comments is provided here, with discussion.

Some comments suggest that those with a low SIO are more concerned with other aspects of life and do not prioritise the appearance of their dwelling:

*"I prefer to socialise or have holidays" (low SIOL).*

*"A home is just a shelter from the elements i.e. weather" (low SIOL).*

*"Comfort and meeting my own personal needs is more important than style" (low SIOL).*

Some participants claimed to be happy to have visitors, but only when the visitors were expected because they liked to have their dwelling ready for guests:

*"I like having people round but prefer to know when so I can have the flat clean" (high SIOL).*

Other comments suggest that those with low SIOL place less value on sharing the home with others:

*"Because I lead such a busy life I regard my home as my own private space and do not like it invaded" (low SIOL).*

One participant stated that they were open to influence from television programmes:

*"All the DIY programmes have an influence and make you want to try different things to your home" (high SIOL).*



Perhaps this comment supports an argument that those higher in SIO are more inclined to look for external influences as to how to decorate their dwellings, although this is something which would need to be explored through further research.

In conclusion, these open-ended responses suggest that for those with a high SIO, the appearance of the home is important, particularly in terms of the effect it can have on the impression made on other people. For those with lower SIO, other aspects within the dwelling appear to be more important, with some even suggesting that they are more concerned with activities outwith the dwelling. It is acknowledged however that these interpretations are based on little data.

#### 5.4.3.6 Summary

In summary of the above findings, those with a higher SIO scored significantly higher on the scale "Home Making" than those with a lower SIO. This suggests that SIO may have some part to play in behaviours and attitudes associated with the scale. Further evidence supporting this is found in some of the open-ended responses and when analysing responses to the three sub-scales. However, of import is the fact that Pearson's correlations only found low correlational support. Furthermore, correlations between SIO and individual items provided no further support.

Based on the evidence reported here it would be over-ambitious to accept the first hypothesis. However, there is *some* minimal support.

#### 5.4.4 Personal Identity Orientation

Personal Identity Orientation Level (PIOL) is the level of PIO shown by a participant, in terms of responses to the first part of the questionnaire. Participants fall into one of two categories: high PIOL or low PIOL. Participants were assigned to either the high group ( $n = 234$ ) or low group ( $n = 239$ )

dependent upon their PIO score<sup>22</sup>. It is noted that PIO scores are based on responses to 10 items with a maximum possible score of 50.

In theory, those with high PIOL will place most importance (in terms of defining their own identity) on the more internal, personal aspects, generally relating to their own imagination, values and ideas when constructing their self-concepts.

The study aims to test the following hypothesis which relates to PIO, as well as another relating to SIO, as discussed in section 5.2.3.

**Hypothesis 2: The higher a person's personal identity orientation, the more importance they will place on behaviours which enhance personal meaning, values and ideals within the home**

#### *5.4.4.1 Tests for significant differences between PIOL groups and Home Making*

A t-test was run between PIOL groups and Home Making (the scale – Section 5.4.2.1 describes the development of the scale). It was found that differences between groups on Home Making are significant:  $t(438) = -3.86$ ,  $p = < .001$ , showing that those who have a higher PIOL score higher on the home making scale. As with results on SIO groups, this provides some support for the hypothesis that PIO affects a person's approach to home making, although correlational support is required to confirm this.

#### *5.4.4.2 Relationship between Personal Identity Orientation and Home Making Scale*

In order to fully test the hypothesis, it was necessary to establish the strength of relationship between Home Making and PIO. A Pearson's correlation was run and a correlation of .269 was found ( $r(439) = .269$ ,  $p = < .001$ ). This correlation represents a low degree of relationship. In fact, the correlation is weaker than that with SIO ( $r(446) = .364$ ,  $p = < .001$ ), suggesting that home making has a stronger relationship with SIO than with PIO.

<sup>22</sup> The distribution of PIO scores approximates a normal distribution. 13 participants failed to fully complete the PIO scale – this explains the lower overall number in the PIO sample.



#### 5.4.4.3 Sub-scales of the questionnaire

As with SIOL groups, PIOL groups were examined in relation to responses on the sub-scales of the questionnaire. The three sub-scales relate to home appearance, physical changes to the home and personalisation. In particular, it seems likely that PIO may relate to personalisation of the home.

MANOVA was run to examine associations between PIOL groups (the independent variable), and the three sub-scales (the dependent variables). MANOVA showed a significant multivariate effect for the three sub-scales in relation to PIOL group: Roy's largest root = 0.036,  $F(1,456) = 5.431$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . T-tests and Pearson's correlations were used to further investigate the associations between SIOL groups and the three sub-sections. Table 10 shows mean scores for each PIOL group in the three sub-scales. A t-test was also run on this data and results of this analysis are presented in the table, along with Pearson's correlations (all of which were significant at the .001 level).

**Table 10 - Mean scores for PIOL groups on sub-scales**

Sub-scale	T value	Pearson's $r$ with PIO:	Mean score for low PIOL group ( $n = 239$ )	Mean score for high PIOL group ( $n = 234$ )
Home appearance	-3.61*	.202	14.35	12.82
Physical changes to the home	-2.83**	.162	8.03	7.22
Personalisation	-4.10*	.291	9.56	8.21

\* = difference significant at the .001 level

\*\* = difference significant at the .05 level

Significant differences between groups on all three sub-scales suggest that the higher the PIO the greater the importance placed on behaviours changing the appearance of the dwelling. However, this finding is not supported by correlational evidence - all correlations are low<sup>23</sup>. Therefore the effect can only be considered small. It is interesting that the highest correlation is with personalisation – the sub-scale that was predicted to relate most strongly to

<sup>23</sup> Interestingly, these correlations are lower than those found with SIO, again suggesting that home making behaviours are more strongly linked with social than with personal identity.

PIO. However, the relationship is not strong enough to add meaningful support to the hypothesis.

#### 5.4.4.4 Evidence from open-ended responses

Responses in the open-ended sections were mostly relevant to findings relating to SIO. This suggests that the questionnaire relates more to social than personal identity. However, a few comments were made which could be shown to refer to PIO.

Reflection of self was mentioned by a number of participants, which is unsurprising given the reference to this in item 13. Reflection of self in the dwelling might be carried out to enhance either personal or social identity. A few participants went as far as offering examples of ways in which this could be carried out, with one referring to personal interests and another to travels made with a partner:

*"...we have traversed around the world - it's nice for others to comment on the unusual things we have in the house" (low PIOL).*

This suggests that not only do people often realise the importance of such behaviour, but they are also aware of the ways in which their dwelling might reflect aspects of self, evidence of which was seen in Study 1. In this example a clear reference to other people is made – it is *nice* for other people to be able to read something of the residents through their home décor, particularly where those things are unusual. Perhaps unusual objects are thought to bring distinctiveness to a person's identity.

Another comment shows the importance of memories reflected in the home:

*"Don't spend much time looking for objects but colour is important in a room. Have objects from holidays that hold memories" (high PIOL).*

This finding can be compared with a similar finding in the first study, in that shared identity can be reflected through the display of objects which conjure up memories of shared experiences. In terms of home, this shared sense of identity



between spouses and family members (similar to what Cheek calls “relational identity”) may be equally as important as PIO. This suggests that more research is needed which explores the role of relational identity orientation in the home environment – this research is carried out in Study 3 (Chapter 6).

#### 5.4.4.5 *Summary*

In summary, it is shown that those with a higher PIOL score more highly on the home making scale, echoing findings with SIO. This suggests that PIO may have some part to play in home making behaviours. A small amount of further evidence supporting this is found in some of the open-ended responses and when analysing responses to the three sub-scales. However, in analysing findings with sub-scales it can be seen that correlations are all low, with one showing a negligible relationship. Therefore the sub-scales don’t add anything to what has already been shown. Also it is important that Pearson’s correlations between Home Making and PIO only found low correlational support, with the strength of relationship being even lower than that found with SIO. This may suggest that SIO is more related to home making behaviours (although perhaps not much more).

As with results based on SIO, it would be over-ambitious to accept the second hypothesis based on such findings. Again though there is a small amount of support.

#### 5.4.5 Gender and Home Making

The data was analysed in terms of gender and a number of important findings were found in terms of gender and home making. This section discusses these findings.

151 men and 331 women make up the sample (with 5 participants failing to indicate their gender). Table 11 provides the means for male and female participants in terms of PIO and SIO.

**Table 11 - Mean identity orientations by gender**

Gender	Mean Personal Identity Orientation	Mean Social Identity Orientation
Male (n = 151)	22.57	19.35
Female (n = 331)	21.60	18.48

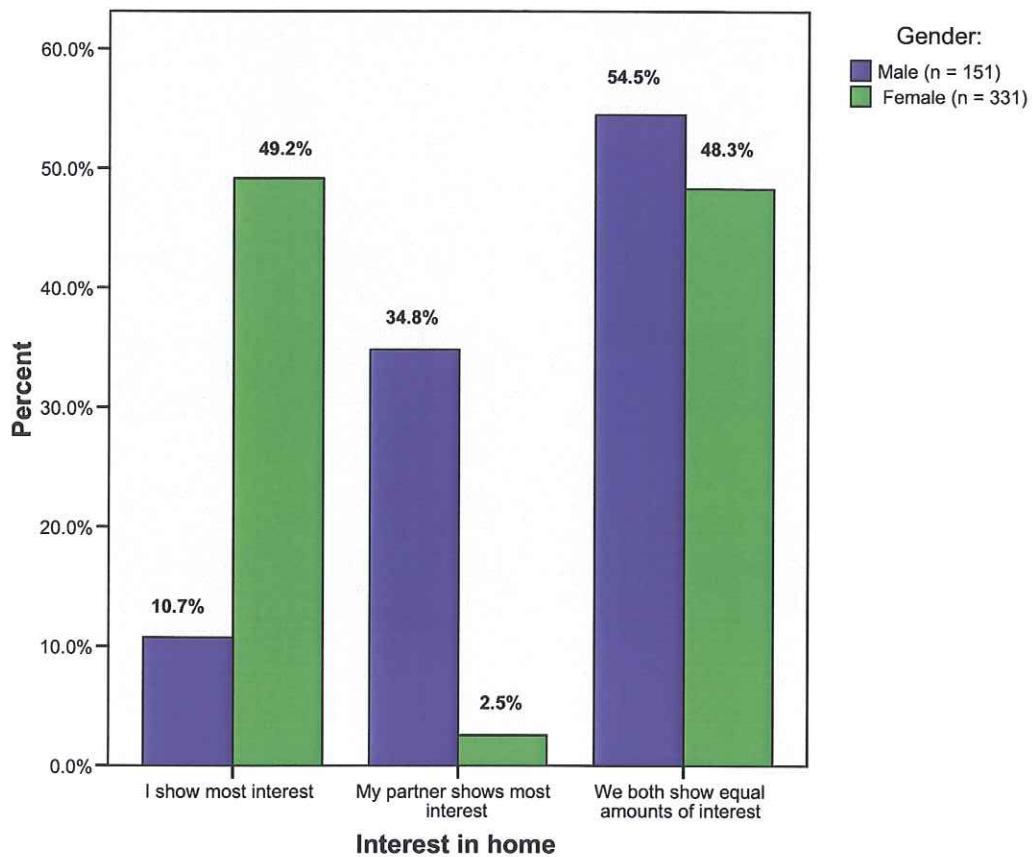
No gender differences were found in terms of PIO ( $t(468) = 1.60, p > .05$ ) and SIO ( $t(475) = 1.83, p > .05$ ).

There is a tendency for women to agree more highly with items than men. In fact, this is the case for all items on the home making section of the questionnaire. It is likely that the nature of this particular questionnaire encouraged men to agree less, as traditionally many home making behaviours relate more to female roles (Dempsey, 1997; Gram-Hanssen and Bech-Danielsen, 2004).

Boundaries between home making activities (in terms of gender) have become less clear in recent times, but women remain the primary home makers in many family dwellings. This is suggested by findings on the item relating to interest in home appearance. The most striking of all the findings regarding interest in home appearance is that gender influences whether or not a participant takes the main responsibility for the appearance of the dwelling. As illustrated by Figure 9, 49.2% of women claim to have the most interest, compared with only 10.7% of men. The converse is true in terms of being the least interested. However, a fairly similar number of men and women claim to share equally with their partner concern over home appearance. These findings somewhat support the stereotypical view of the woman as home maker, although clearly a large number claim to share the task (or at least share the interest and control over what the décor looks like).



**Figure 9 - Gender and Interest in Home Appearance**



As women agreed more highly than men on the home making scale, a t-test was run to check for significant differences between scores on the home making scale dependent upon gender. Differences are significant:  $t(447) = 5.46$ ,  $p < .001$ .

The significant difference between gender groups on the home making scale suggests that gender does exert some influence on home making behaviour. This supports the notion that traditionally men and women have quite different roles in terms of home making as argued by Dempsey (1997). However, Pearson's correlations were run for both gender groups between home making and SIO, and home making and PIO. Sub-scales and individual items were also explored in terms of gender. Results do not highlight any important findings and they are discussed no further here. This finding suggests that although differences between gender groups on home making scores are significant, this does not impact so greatly upon the relationship between SIO/PIO and home making.

Gender is also related to some of the demographic variables in the questionnaire. Men in the sample tend to work for themselves more than women do and men seem to be more likely to own their homes outright. More women than men live as a single parent.

Finally, it should not be ignored that the researcher who designed the questionnaire is herself female and this could bias the questions towards female participants, in some way.

#### 5.4.6 Age and Home Making

##### 5.4.6.1 Responses to home making items and the home making scale

Table 12 illustrates the way in which the sample is distributed over age groups.

**Table 12- Number of participants by age group**

Age group	Number of participants
18-25	37
26-35	100
36-50	169
51-65	112
Over 65	63
No age group disclosed	6

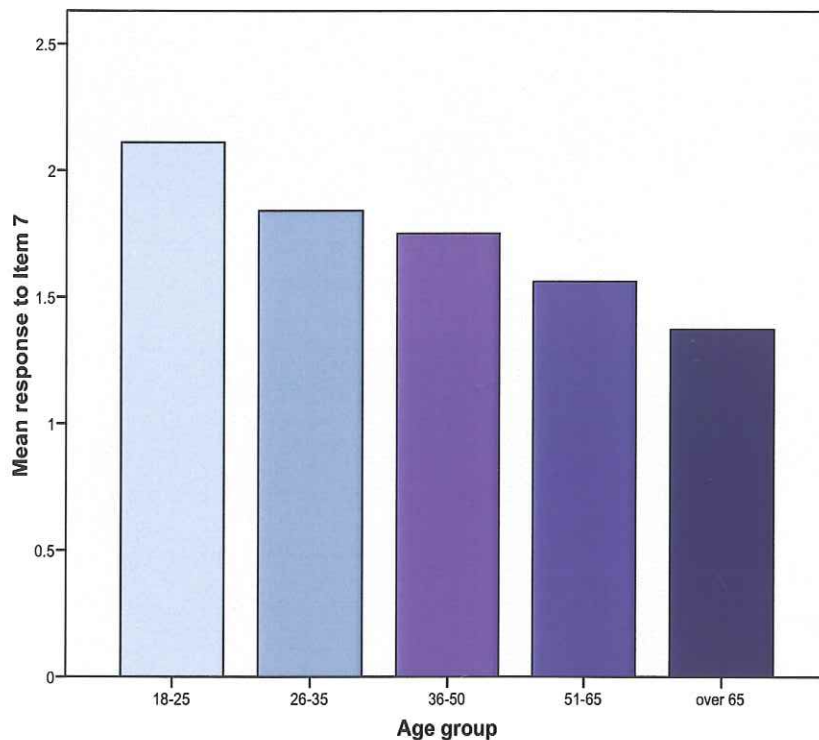
The data was explored to see if any effects exist in relation to age group. Firstly, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was run to see if significant differences exist between age groups in terms of responses to the Home Making scale. Differences between groups were not significant:  $F(464, 4) = 1.55$ ,  $p = > .05$ . Additionally, MANOVA was run to examine associations between age groups (the independent variable) and the three sub-scales (the dependent variable). MANOVA showed no significant multivariate effect for the three sub-scales in relation to age group: Roy's largest root = 0.025,  $F(4,453) = 2.784$ ,  $p > 0.05$ .

In order to gain a deeper insight into the differences between age groups on certain behaviours means were observed in terms of the individual items on the



questionnaire, and the Kruskal-Wallis test was run on items. For ease of interpretation only differences significant at the highest level ( $p < .001$ ) are reported<sup>24</sup>. Generally there is a tendency for older people to agree more strongly than the other age groups with items relating to satisfaction with and rootedness to the dwelling. Perhaps this is because to them, home is a more permanent concept<sup>25</sup>.

**Figure 10 - Mean responses to Item 7 ("When I find a nice home I like to stay there for a long time") by Age group.**

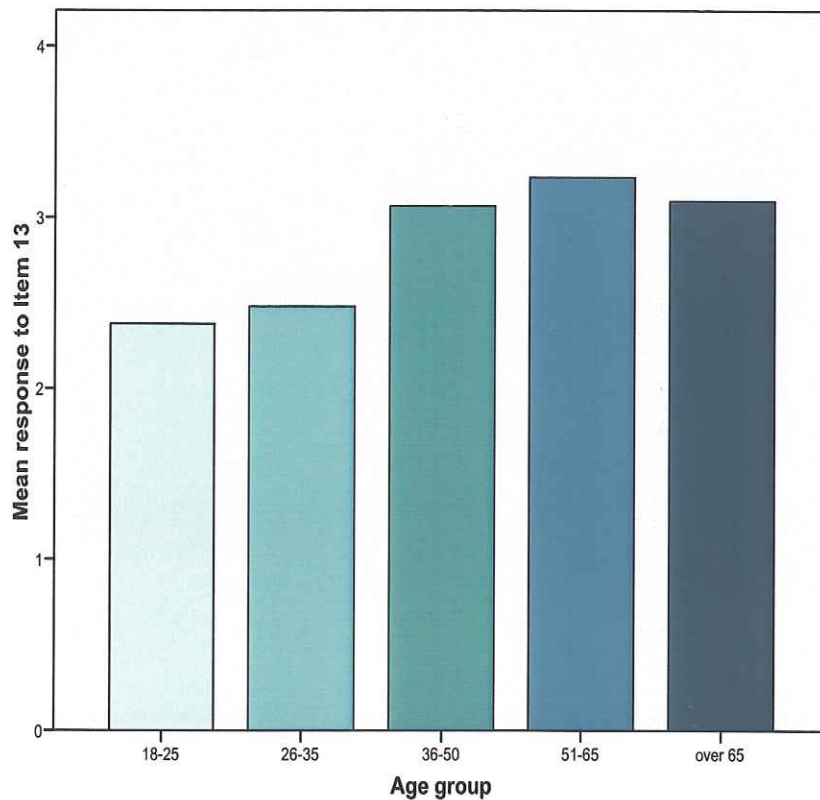


The Kruskal-Wallis test revealed a significant difference between groups on item 7 ("When I find a nice home I like to stay there for a long time"):  $X^2(4) = 20.83$ ,  $p = < .001$  (as illustrated in Figure 10). The youngest group agree least with this item. In contrast, there is a tendency for the youngest group to agree most strongly with items which refer to improving the appearance of the dwelling. Kruskal-Wallis reveals that of those items relating to home appearance, it is Item 13 ("It is important that the inside of my home is very stylish") on which age groups differ significantly:  $X^2(4) = 29.70$ ,  $p = < .001$  (see Figure 11).

<sup>24</sup> There are very few differences significant at lower levels and it was considered more useful to discuss only the most significant items here, for ease of interpretation.

<sup>25</sup> As supported by responses to Item 7: "When I find a nice home I like to stay there for a long time".

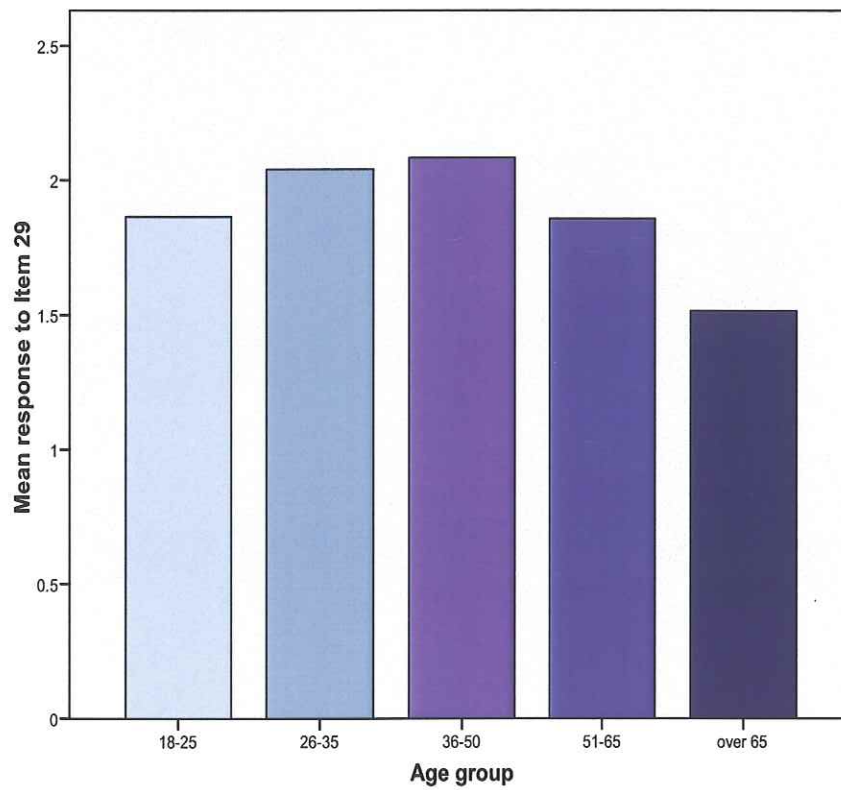
**Figure 11 - Mean responses to Item 13 ("It is important that the inside of my home is very stylish") by Age group.**



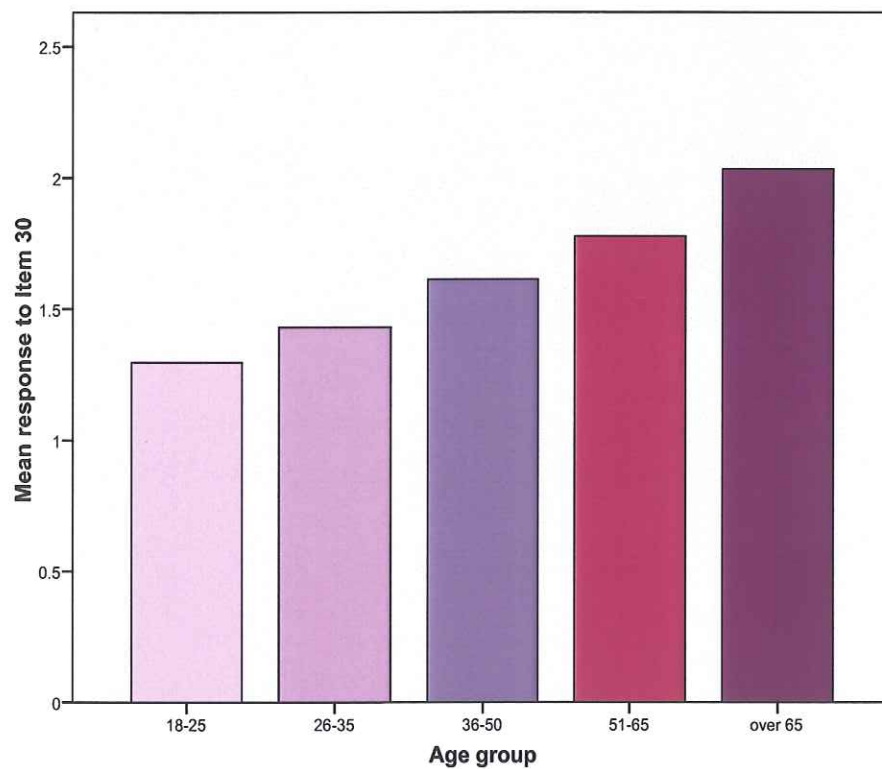
Finally, the eldest group placed the most importance on having a clean and tidy dwelling constantly, with significant differences for item 29 ("I like to ensure that my home is clean and tidy all of the time"):  $X^2(4) = 21.62$ ,  $p = < .001$ . Interestingly, item 30 ("My home is cleaner and tidier when I know people are coming to visit") shows that the youngest group may be more likely to have a cleaner dwelling when people are visiting:  $X^2(4) = 28.23$ ,  $p = < .001$ . This finding ties in with the fact that younger people have stronger SIO. The following two graphs illustrate this contrast. Figure 12 shows mean responses by age group to item 29 whereas Figure 13 shows mean responses by age group to item 30.



**Figure 12 - Mean responses to Item 29 ("I like to ensure that my home is clean and tidy all of the time") by Age group.**



**Figure 13 - Mean responses to Item 30 ("My home is cleaner and tidier when I know people are coming to visit") by Age**



Within this sample, it appears as though peoples' priorities regarding the dwelling change as they become older. Younger people seem to be more concerned with improving their homes in terms of appearance – perhaps even more so when others are likely to be visiting. As people get older however, their priorities seem to shift towards being settled and more practical concerns such as the day to day running of the household – i.e. cleaning and tidying. Perhaps as people get older their lifestyles change in such a way as to necessitate this shift in priorities. For example, having children creates more work in terms of tidying, washing, drying and cooking. It is possible that this is what replaces the desire for a beautiful dwelling and with time, people become more focused on organisation (and hence an easier life) and less focused on the appearance of their dwelling. On the other hand, the differences could be indicative of generational differences.

#### *5.4.6.2 Age, identity orientations and home making*

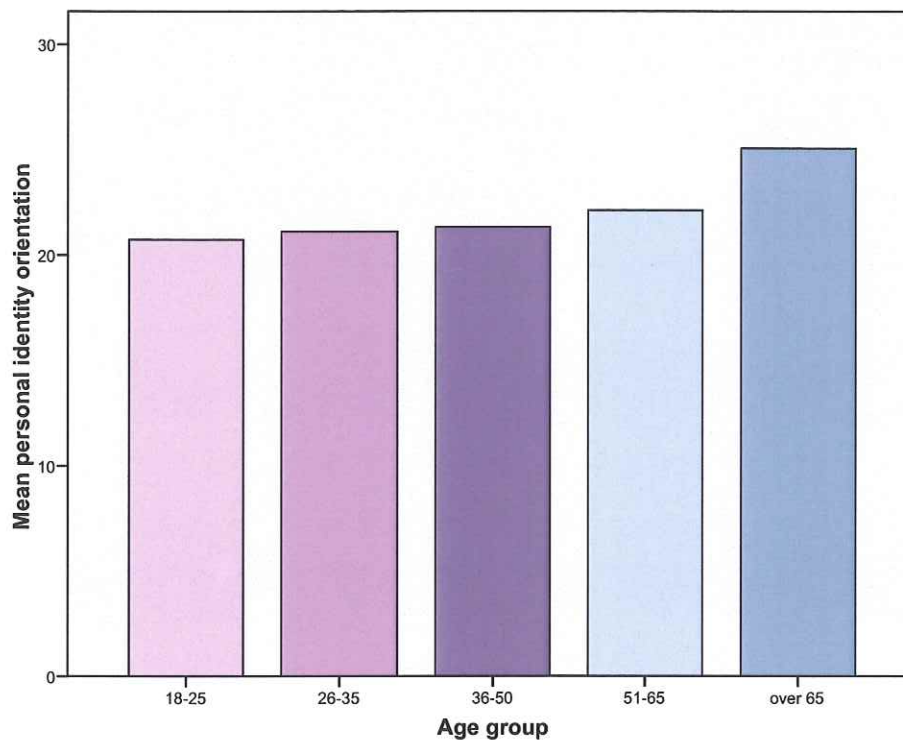
MANOVA was run to examine associations between age group (as independent variable), and PIO and SIO (as dependent variables). MANOVA showed a significant multivariate effect for the three sub-scales in relation to age group: Roy's largest root = 0.055,  $F(4, 461) = 6.360$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . ANOVA was used to further investigate the associations between age groups and PIO and SIO.

SIO appears to weaken with age. It should be noted however, that PIO also appears to weaken with age and the difference across age groups is larger – age group differences on personal (but not social) identity orientation are significant as shown by ANOVA:  $F(4, 464) = 5.34$ ,  $p < .001$ . Figure 14 shows that PIO drops much more quickly after the age of 50, with a particularly dramatic drop occurring beyond the age of 65<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> It is noted again that a higher score here denotes a lower PIO.



**Figure 14 - Mean personal identity orientation by age group**



An exploration of Pearson's correlations between identity orientations and home making dependent upon age group was executed. It was found that SIO and Home Making have a moderate correlation ( $r(36) = .523, p < .01$ ) amongst the youngest age group, the 18-25 year olds. This correlation is much larger than that found for all age groups ( $r(444) = .364, p = < .001$ ). Therefore, social identity is more related to home making behaviour for the youngest group. Exploring sub-scales and individual items by age group leads to further interesting findings – for the oldest and youngest age groups, a number of moderate correlations were found between SIO or PIO and home making items.

**Table 13 – Spearman's correlations: 18-25 year olds (n = 37)**

Home making item	Spearman's r with PIO	Spearman's r with SIO
Item 13 (It is important that my home reflects my personality and interests)		.429**
Item 14 (It is important to me that the inside of my home is very stylish)		.592**
Item 17 (I enjoy making physical changes to my home)	.404*	
Item 20 (I put effort into finding the right decorative objects for my home)		.543**
Item 23 (When I buy functional items it is important to me what they look like)		.556**

Table 13 shows those home making items with showed moderate correlations (those above  $r = .4$ ) with SIO or PIO for the youngest group (18-25 year olds). The table shows that the majority of moderate correlations exist for SIO and home making items. It is noted that when exploring individual items, Spearman's correlations should be used as interval data cannot be assumed.

For the older group, moderate correlations exist in terms of SIO/PIO and home making items, as shown in Table 14.

**Table 14 – Spearman's correlations: 65 year olds and over (n = 63)**

Home making item	Spearman's r with PIO	Spearman's r with SIO
Item 4 (If I like my home I feel better about myself)		.490**
Item 20 (I put effort into finding the right decorative objects for my home)	.493**	.449**
Item 23 (When I buy functional items it is important to me what they look like)		.457**
Item 27 (I enjoy decorating my home for cultural celebrations such as Christmas)	.502**	

What these results suggest is that for these two very different age groups, SIO and PIO are related to home making behaviours and attitudes towards these. In particular, SIO relates to attitudes towards aesthetic qualities of home for the younger group – having a home which is expressive and stylish. For both groups, identity orientations seem to relate to the importance of finding the right possessions for the dwelling. Although these findings are promising in showing some of the most significant correlations presented so far in the findings, the sizes of these age groups must be borne in mind. Both groups are small, and therefore large claims to strong or significant findings should not be made. However, the findings illustrate that age has a bearing on the ways in which identity orientations might affect home making behaviour. Therefore, future quantitative research in this field might benefit from large samples which are controlled for age groups.



#### 5.4.7 The Identity Orientation scales reconsidered

##### 5.4.7.1 *Relationship between social and personal identity orientations*

According to Cheek (1989), SIO and PIO do not represent opposite ends of a bipolar scale but represent two separate but related constructs (see Section 2.6.1). However, the relationship between PIO and SIO reported by Cheek (1989) is small ( $r = .15$ ). As discussed elsewhere in this thesis it is possible for a person to score high or low on both scales. As pointed out by Cheek, *“a person may score high on one or the other, or both or neither of these dimensions. Thus the personal and social aspects of identity may be viewed productively as dialectical rather than diametrical opposites.”* (1989, p276-277).

The correlation presented by Cheek (1989) is low. Furthermore, the literature on identity orientations is suggestive of people being either high in one or the other, i.e. people are either more personally or more socially orientated in their identities, and PIO and SIO relate to different psychological constructs (e.g. Cheek and Briggs, 1982; Penner and Wymer, 1983; Schlenker and Weigold, 1990; Lamphere and Leary, 1990 – see Section 2.6.1). Importantly, this research has taken care not to treat personal and social as opposite ends of one scale, instead treating them as two separate constructs.

The current research however found a much larger correlation between SIO and PIO:  $r(473) = .434, p < .01$ . This association can be described as moderate – therefore a moderate relationship exists, in comparison with that reported by Cheek, which could be described as a negligible relationship. This large discrepancy is worthy of further consideration<sup>27</sup>.

This finding casts doubt on the claim that personal and social identity are measuring two distinct constructs and suggests that instead they may be two aspects of the same construct.

Table 15 shows cross tabulations based on PIOL and SIOL groups. These results relate to how many participants fall into high or low PIOL and SIOL

<sup>27</sup> As noted in section 6.5.1 however, the difference in correlations could be in part due to the much larger sample size in the present study – 487 participants compared with 185 participants in Cheek's (1989) sample.

groups. Results show that participants in this study are more likely to be either high, or low on both constructs. This explains the moderate correlation found in the current research.

**Table 15 - Cross tabulation of PIOL and SIOL<sup>28</sup>**

	High SIOL	Low SIOL
High PIOL	146	88
Low PIOL	87	149

This finding casts further doubt on the notion of PIO and SIO as two distinct constructs.

#### 5.4.7.2 *Identity orientations and age*

As discussed in Section 5.4.6, PIO and SIO both weaken with age. These findings raise important questions about the stability of identity orientations, argued by Cheek and colleagues to be stable and enduring constructs (e.g. Cheek, 1989). Perhaps younger people have a stronger feeling of themselves as an individual, particularly as younger people are still trying to “find” themselves. Older people may have a less egocentric view of the world, thereby accounting for their lower levels of agreement on the identity orientation items.

The relationship between SIO and PIO was explored for individual age groups, which led to an interesting finding. The relationship between PIO and SIO appears to increase with age – see Figure 15. This casts further doubt on Cheek’s report of a low correlation between the two constructs, with the strongest correlation in the current sample being .758 ( $r(58) = .758, p = < .001$ ). It is acknowledged however that when running correlations for individual age groups, these groups have a much smaller sample size than when considering the entire sample<sup>29</sup>.

This finding suggests that as a person gets older, they distinguish less between PIO and SIO. This is interesting especially as it has already been shown that

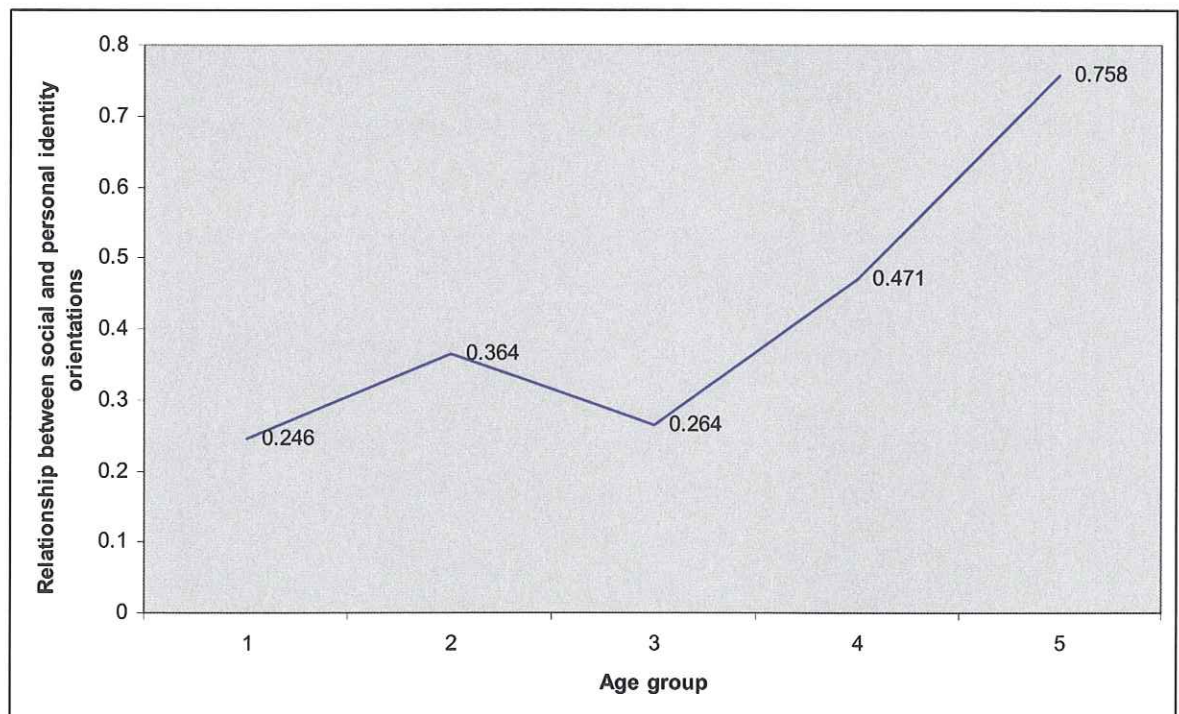
<sup>28</sup> It is noted that when participants do not respond to items in either the PIO or SIO scale, they do not have a subsequent score on that scale. This explains how the overall number of participants here differs from that given in Table 4.

<sup>29</sup> For group sizes refer to Section 5.3.1.



identity orientations weaken with age. Cheek's (1989) correlation of .15 was based on a sample of students, therefore the seeming inaccuracy of this correlation can perhaps be explained by the young age group of his sample. It appears that as people age the two scales become less and less distinct. In the light of this finding, correlations were run between SIO, PIO and home making for individual age groups (see Figure 15). As discussed in Section 5.4.6.1, for the youngest age group a relationship exists between SIO and home making of .523 ( $r(36) = .523, P < .01$ ). This shows that for younger people, SIO is *more* related to home making behaviours than for other age groups.

**Figure 15 - Relationships between personal and social identity orientation, dependent upon age group**



Age group key: 1 = 18-25; 2 = 26-35; 3 = 36-50; 4 = 51-65; 5 = Over 65

#### 5.4.7.3 Implications for the hypotheses

It is interesting that correlational results between identity orientations and home making are not stronger. It is important to make sure that the two scales used in the research are measuring what they purport to measure.

The finding that there is a moderate correlation between PIO and SIO is in conflict with the expectations when designing the research and therefore, the

research hypotheses. The finding of a marked degree of correlation between PIO and SIO for the eldest age group calls into question the low correlation found by Cheek (1989). The distinction between the two scales seems to decrease with age. If personal and social identities are not two distinct constructs it might be difficult to show that the two relate to different home making behaviours. Perhaps the scales measure something else, such as an overall need for identity, which one would expect to decrease with age. A further exploration of the data in light of this new information is therefore necessary.

For people who have both high PIOL and SIOL the mean home making score is 36.25. For those with both a low PIOL and SIOL, the mean home making score is 46.65 (which represents a lower level of agreement with items on the scale). Perhaps this result shows that stronger identity orientations *per se* lead to a higher importance being placed on home making. However, this could also mean that certain people score more highly on all scales because they are more inclined to respond in a certain way on questionnaires.

All in all the results presented in this section suggest that the two are not necessarily that easily distinguished by those completing the scales. Perhaps these two scales represent different aspects of the same scale - identity orientation, i.e. how important a range of behaviours and attributes are to people when constructing the self-concept. Further research into identity orientations may help future understandings of their true meanings.

These findings are important as they call into question those presented by Cheek (1989). In further research the use of a different scale may help in understanding home making behaviour. The use of other measures of personality in future research on home making could go further in providing insights into how personality affects home making behaviour.

#### 5.4.8 Home making: a qualitative analysis

Study 2 aims to investigate relationships between identity orientations and home making, largely through the analysis of quantitative data. However, the questionnaires also gathered qualitative data. Participants were given the opportunity to comment following each sub-set of questions in the home making



section of the questionnaire (see Appendix 9). Additionally, participants were asked to describe what the term "home making" meant for them. Whereas the additional comments left after sub-sections were optional, the home making item was not framed in an optional way, and resultantly a far larger number of participants responded to this question (n = 369).

Qualitative data has already been explored to a small extent in relation to the research hypotheses (see sections 5.4.3.5 and 5.4.4.4). However, the data collected can reveal something of the meaning of home and home making to participants. It is important that qualitative data is not only applied to existing hypotheses, rather, such data may contain rich insights that can both contribute to and disconfirm existing theory, as well as providing new insights into a particular field (Dick, 2005).

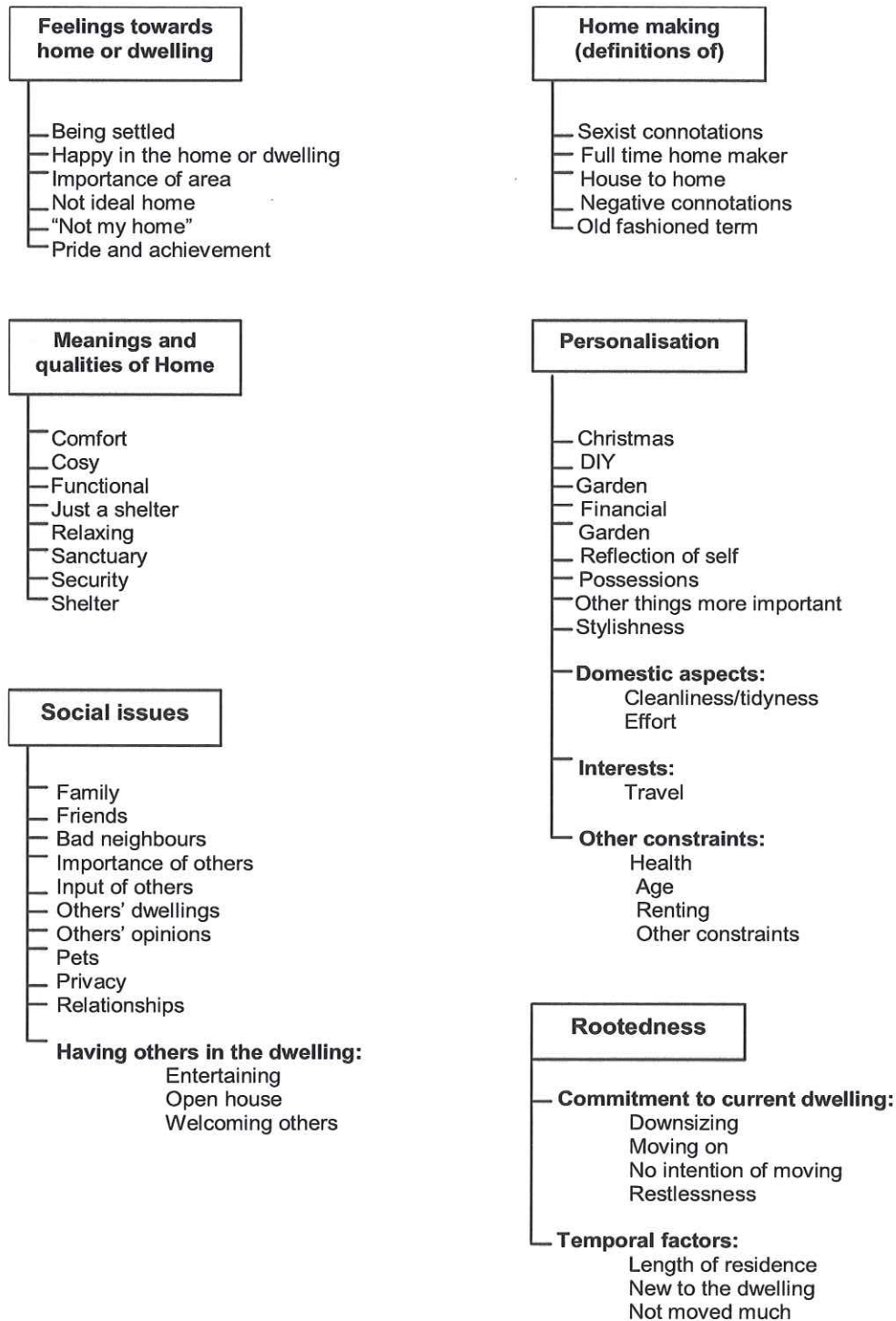
Therefore, a thematic analysis was carried out, with the aim being to generate findings which are well grounded in the data. The analysis is influenced by Grounded Theory – the approach is described in this thesis and in the literature as a "grounded theory approach" (Lewins and Silver, 2007; see Section 6.3.1). This approach was chosen because of its departure from the scientific approach of hypothesis testing: instead grounded theory approaches the data in an open way, allowing theory to emerge which is well grounded in the data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Alan, 2003). Grounded Theory in its strictest sense dictates that the researcher should have no preconceived ideas about the likely findings of the research. However, this study primarily explored preconceived hypotheses using a quantitative method. Therefore, not only are there expected categories of discussion from the qualitative data, the questionnaire itself will also have influenced the nature of qualitative responses (as is indeed the case for most, if not all, qualitative interviews). It would be inaccurate to describe the design of this part of the study itself as Grounded Theory – instead, elements of Grounded Theory are implemented in order to ensure rigour in the analytical process - an approach commonly used by qualitative researchers (Lewins and Silver, 2007). Open coding was first carried out with a large number of resultant codes – these were then consolidated through a further coding process into meaningful concepts (such as in the case of two or more codes containing data relating to the same phenomena). This process was continued until all codes were mutually exclusive. Once these coding activities were complete relationships between the concepts were examined in order to build up a meaningful

hierarchy of categories. In this way, the analysis took its influence from Grounded Theory in working from bottom-up: first generating codes, then consolidating these into meaningful concepts and finally working these into a meaningful hierarchical taxonomy of categories (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1992; Allan, 2003).

The analysis was assisted with the use of a software programme called NVivo 8 (for a discussion on the use of NVivo in analysis see Section 6.3.2). Once the data was input into NVivo it was read in-depth and repeatedly by the researcher who then carried out open coding (coding extracts into nodes, as the software labels them). These nodes were both emergent and a priori – a priori concepts were necessarily present in the data due to the nature of the questionnaire items and their influence on the responses. All data was coded: it was all relevant to the analysis. A large number of nodes were generated in this open coding stage – these were consolidated and organised into meaningful hierarchies during subsequent passes through the data. The data was then explored in-depth in order to identify relationships between concepts (or nodes). This process allows the researcher to consolidate the findings, bringing the data back together and describing it as a conceptual whole (Charmaz, 2006). The concepts and categories (and their hierarchical structure) are presented in Figure 16.

The data is explored and discussed in terms of what it tells us about home and the process of home making. The emergent categories which are illustrated in Figure 16 are discussed in this section in terms of three overarching areas within which the data can be meaningfully understood: the nature of home, personalisation, and social aspects. These three areas are strongly interconnected as shown in the following discussion. Attention is also given to the different nuances that can be seen within the categories. This discussion does not rely on the reporting of frequencies to add weight to the findings. However, the researcher did pay attention to frequencies, and it was found that a large number of participants refer to a number of common concepts. Therefore, these are considered as key and are given prominence in the discussion (for a table with frequencies of all themes, see Appendix 11).

**Figure 16 - Hierarchy of categories in Study 2**





#### 5.4.8.1 *The nature of home*

What are the desired qualities of home?

A number of thematic areas within the analysis reveal something of the nature of home to participants. Participants' comments often relate to the ways in which they define home and the qualities that are important to them, in order that a dwelling is considered home. The most outstanding finding here is that for a very large number of participants, comfort is important. Comfort is the most frequently mentioned concept throughout all open-ended questions (see Appendix 11). Comfort is mentioned most often in response to the home making question, and in the open-ended section following Item 14 ("It is important to me that the inside of my home is very stylish"). Comfort is something that participants strive to create in a dwelling in order that it may feel more like home:

*Somewhere where I feel comfortable and "at home"*

*Making the property comfortable enough to ensure that I see it as a home and not just a property that I live in*

Comfort is an important end goal in the home making process because it is an important aspect of home for many of the participants:

*Creating a comfortable, pleasant environment in which I enjoy spending free time*

Comfort is often discussed in terms of its importance in comparison with other aspects of dwelling or home. Comparison is used by participants as a means of illustrating what is genuinely important to them in terms of home for example:

*Comfort and meeting my own personal needs is more important than style.*

Here the participant has compared comfort against style – style itself being something which was explored within the questionnaire, and which consequently has emerged as a prominent theme within comments relating to personalisation. In fact, the comparison between style and comfort is used frequently – a finding which suggests that for some participants, the notion of a stylish dwelling in

some way conflicts with the notion of a comfortable home (see also the discussion on functionality below).

In commenting on the importance of comfort in the dwelling, participants frequently mention significant others, in particular family members, partners or spouses, and friends (see also Section 5.4.8.3):

*Creating a living space where family and friends are comfortable and feel welcome*

*A place where all of the family feel secure and happy, a place of refuge, a place of love and comfort.*

These findings highlight the importance of comfort in the home environment, both in the physical and psychological sense, as argued for by Rybczynski (1986) and Woodward (2003). The majority of meaning of home theory discusses notions of sanctuary and refuge, and comfort does not appear to be part of the popular terminology. Perhaps this is because from a psychological point of view, notions of comfort and sanctuary are similarly construed.

Related to the notion of comfort in the dwelling, functionality is also important to participants, and something that they strive for when personalising their home (see also Section 5.4.8.2). Often, functionality is offered as an overriding concern in terms of qualities of home, for example:

*It's a roof, bed and toilet, what more do I need?*

As with comfort, functionality is often cited as more important than style, or the aesthetic qualities of a dwelling:

*Practicality is more important to me than style*

*Looks are not always important, practicality more important*

People differ in the way they conceive of home – for some, the functionality of the dwelling is the only thing that matters:

*A home is just a place to shelter and has always been*

Functionality, as with comfort, is often seen as a barrier or somehow in conflict with style, as illustrated in the following two extracts:

*I often have to sacrifice style for convenience of use*

*[Item] 23 begs the question style or function first*

These findings are reminiscent of an age-old philosophical dilemma in academic writings on Architecture: what is more important – form or function? This debate stems from the problem of Architecture as on the one hand an art form, and on the other hand an important functional contribution to society that both meets the needs of residents and end users as well as shaping their lives and identities (Pai, 2002; Seamon, 1993). Although writers in the field insist that the ideal is a compromise, a blending together of form *and* function, the lengthy debate around the subject suggests that in terms of architectural design, a real difficulty exists. This undoubtedly extends to interior design – not least because of the hefty requirements placed on a dwelling in order to meet the needs of its residents.

These findings suggest that for those to whom functionality in the dwelling is a priority, this may be reflected in the way that they personalise – in the aesthetic appearance of the dwelling, as suggested here:

*Making living where you live an attractive, easily maintained place to spend time in. Functional rather than "pretty". Minimalist rather than "fussy".*

For this participant, the need for a functional home may lead them towards a minimal style, rather than a fussy, pretty one. Yet it *is* important for aesthetics and functionality to exist side by side to many participants:

*Decorating my home and furnishing it with items that are comfortable and practical but reflect who I am and my tastes and interests.*

These findings act as a reminder that although personalisation of the dwelling may be a powerful means of reflecting and reinforcing a sense of self, other concerns ensure that this is not the only function of a dwelling space.



Happiness is frequently cited as a desired quality of home. Happiness is mentioned alongside comfort and security, suggesting that such qualities of home are interdependent. Again, the notion of happiness in the home is important for all members of the family:

*To provide a warm, homely, happy atmosphere in the home*

*A place where all of the family feel secure and happy*

*Warm and happy family life*

As with comfort, the importance of happiness is contrasted with that of other qualities of a dwelling such as aesthetics, functionality or cleanliness and tidiness – again suggesting that there is conflict in maintaining all of these in the dwelling:

*I like my house to look clean and tidy but a happy atmosphere is preferable and a little bit untidy to a very tidy but unhappy home*

Findings also show that a home is somewhere to relax for many participants. Such comments arose almost exclusively in response to the item in the questionnaire relating to home making definitions. In particular, it is important to many participants that their dwelling is relaxing for other people:

*A comfortable relaxed place to be welcoming to all*

As illustrated above, the concept of relaxing in the dwelling frequently appears in the same sentence as the notion of comfort. The two themes appear together repeatedly in the data, suggesting that comfort and relaxation go hand in hand with one another. In order to relax, one needs to feel comfortable; in order to feel comfortable, one needs to be relaxed. Home is ideally a place where such qualities are felt more strongly than in any other environment (and for this reason, feelings of home can extend beyond the boundaries of the dwelling, as in the case of Lily and her woodlands in Study 3, or home can be felt for another environment altogether – see for example Mallet, 2004; Tomas and Dittmar, 1995; Cresswell, 2002; Pallasmaa, 1995). The notion of comfort and relaxation exists on a physical level where it is associated with the need for functionality. Yet to many, the need for comfort and relaxation also exists at an emotional

level:

*I feel that it means creating a warm and loving environment for my family to relax in. It's more an emotional and psychological sense than a physical one*

Home then can provide emotional support. This supports findings which show that disasters such as floods in the home can have detrimental effects to mental health (Carroll et al., 2009). Ideally, home is a place to feel at ease, to relax and be most fully oneself:

*A place where I can be myself*

*To create a home it must be welcoming, people must feel that they can be themselves in it*

*A place in which we can be ourselves, without worrying about making a mess*

Participants also associate home making with the creation of a sanctuary or haven from the outside world, a place to escape from the pressures that they face daily in their lives outside of the home environment, a finding which fits with dominant theory on meaning of home (e.g. Tomas and Dittmar, 1999; Mallett, 2004). This sanctuary appears particularly important in terms of work and other pressures outside of the home:

*A haven from the pressures of the outside world*

*Creating a relaxing environment where work and the outside world are shut out at the end of the day*

*Creating a home in which children identify the place as secure and a haven from modern life where they learn how to live and be happy in them selves and where I can relax and live and find peace*

*Means a place you can shut the door and forget everything and just be with my husband*

Home making also means creating an environment which feels secure and safe, again, a finding which fits with theory on meaning of home (e.g. Cresswell, 2002):

*Home means warmth, kindness, love, security. It's a bit like the womb of the family - safe*

*A place that makes me feel warm and safe*

*Security and comfort is my main concern for a happy home*

This security is important for the participants, but also for their family members:

*We both feel that is important for the children to feel secure*

Although it is not evident in the data (the comments left by participants are typically concise – one or two sentences usually), such security may relate to physical safety in terms of, for example violent crime or dangerous traffic, but it may also relate to a sense of emotional security – a sense of being able to rely on the environment (and others within that environment) for stability and predictability – something which may be of particular importance for the happy development of young children as suggested in the extract above. The notion of security is frequently used in the same sentence as “comfort” and “happiness” – lending further weight to the interpretation of security as applying not only to the physical security of the dwelling, belongings and people living there, but also a sense of emotional security experienced in that environment. Such a sense of security may result from feelings of permanence and stability – something also discussed in terms of rootedness (see below).

Do participants feel at *home*?

A number of themes related to the concept of rootedness emerged as important to participants in terms of the home making process (see Figure 16). In particular, a participant's level of commitment to the current dwelling can impact upon home making:

*I rented my flat, we are planning to move out, so I did not make a great effort to do anything to it.*

The length of residence within a dwelling can impact upon feelings of being at home. Findings suggest that the longer the length of stay, the more at home a person will feel:



*I have recently moved here so I am not completely at home yet*

*I have never lived anywhere for over 3 years until now, so this is a new experience to own and live in a home. I am slowly coming to terms with this*

This finding supports the work of Giuliani (2003) in which she argues that length of residence has an influence on place attachment and feelings of belonging to a place (see also Bonaiuto et al., 1999; Giuliani and Barbey, 1993).

In responding to the question “please tell me what the term “home making” means to you, participants’ responses most often tended to describe the kinds of qualities of home that they strive for, the people that these efforts are intended to benefit, and the behaviours engaged in to meet these goals. A few participants had negative associations with the term “home making” as illustrated in the following extracts:

*I'm probably a little sensitive about these kinds of terms, since they can often suggest someone obsessed with 'making a home' - usually for others - in 'her' life. My feminist shackles tend to rise a little when I suspect that this might be the case*

*I am not a 'domestic goddess' and the term home-making makes me think of dull, uninteresting housewives with nothing better to do with their time*

These associations are perhaps unsurprising given the usage of the term historically. The term “homemaker” probably stemmed from a time during which a majority of women in Britain and the US didn’t work outwith the dwelling, instead committing their time to cleaning, tidying and maintaining order within the dwelling as well as raising children. The term originates from the 1880s – 1890s, although for many women in this period the role was facilitated by servants, something which changed in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (Motz and Browne, 1988). Home making then is traditionally considered a female role, and even contemporary understandings of the term suggest that the gender bias remains (Dempsey, 1997; Gram-Hanssen and Bech-Danielsen, 2004).

The linguistic styles used by participants in their responses can reveal important

insights into the ways in which they conceive of home and home making. In terms of “home”, the use of the pronoun “a” in reference to the home as opposed to the pronoun “my” serves to remind us that these participants may not always be referring to their own current dwelling when they describe “home”, or define “home making”. For example the use of the pronoun “a” might often be accompanied by an account of a hypothetical home, an *ideal* home. It is not certain that this ideal is in fact the current dwelling of the participant, unless they also describe “my home” in the same account:

*A place to be happy and contented in*

*Making a home comfortable where you can relax*

The pronoun “my” applied in the following extract shows that the comment refers to the participant’s own dwelling, yet does not confirm that this dwelling *is* in fact a home:

*Turning my house into a home*

Yet when participants describe “my” or “our” home it seems probable that they are discussing their own home. The use of the possessive pronoun implies the existence of the home for these participants – that they have in their possession a home:

*Making my home clean, comfortable and welcoming*

*I like making our home comfortable and a relaxing place to be.*

*Ensuring our home is clean (not necessarily tidy - impossible with 5 year old child)*

*My home is my safe haven, a place to relax from the busyness of life*

These differences in the ways home is framed linguistically may serve as a reminder that home is an ideal concept which exists to a greater or lesser degree from person to person, and in some cases is not currently present at all (as discussed in Chapter 3 – see Section 3.2.3). Participants may, for one reason or another, feel that they are in the first stages of the home making process (for an account of home making as a dynamic process see Cresswell,

2002 and the discussion of findings from Study 3, Section 6.4.5). As argued in the literature (e.g. Mallet, 2004; Tomas and Dittmar, 1995; Kellett and Moore, 2003), home is not synonymous with dwelling – the existence of a roof over one's head does not imply the existence of home:

*We've moved into a house where we are planning large changes but have used the money set aside for this project on something else (setting up a business). I'm unhappy having to live in - what feels like - someone else's home*

*I just moved 7 March out of a place I loved and suited me into a house I am not happy with*

Home embodies a range of qualities which provide both physical and emotional support to people – both on a personal and social level. In particular, Study 2 highlights that comfort, relaxation, functionality, happiness and security (both for the self and others in the family) are of particular importance to this sample. The findings from this study suggest that where these qualities do not exist, that particular environment is not considered home. Conversely, wherever those qualities are experienced, a person may feel a sense of home:

*A home is only a home where the family feel happy and secure, so ideally that could be anywhere!*

*Making a house a home; giving it warmth and personality*

It is in qualities such as these then that the difference between *house* and *home* can be found.

#### 5.4.8.2 Personalisation

The previous section has discussed the qualities of home that are important to participants in terms of the home making process and its purpose. This section looks in more detail at responses relating to the personalisation of dwelling as a part of this home making process. This thesis argues throughout for the reflection of self in the dwelling – something that is investigated in all three studies. In Study 2, participants both responded to an item relating to reflection of self and provided qualitative data on the subject.

Participants feel that their dwellings reflect themselves, and often state that it is



important to them that their dwelling does this:

*I find it very important to keep my house tidy rather than stylish as a reflection of the kind of person I am*

*"Home making" is taking the place that you live and making it yours - putting something of your identity into the space*

The self which is reflected in the dwelling may not be a constant and unchanging entity – as illustrated by the following quote, the self may be ever changing, thereby necessitating that the home making process in a dynamic one (see Section 6.4.5 for a discussion of similar findings in the third study):

*Tend to change the look of rooms to reflect the changes in myself. Get bored with same look after a while*

So by what means do participants connect their identity to their space? A person's interests and preferences are aspects of identity which are easily reflected in the dwelling:

*To feel happy in my space it must reflect the things I love - it must have my books, music, colour, hobbies etc*

Furthermore, a person may wish to enhance their own self-definition (perhaps in order to increase self-esteem; see Section 6.4.2 for a discussion of this in reference to Study 3 findings). The maintenance of the dwelling may be one means of creating a positive self-image:

*I want it to be clean and tidy. If it looks messy I feel it says something very negative about me (lazy)*

These findings mirror findings in Studies 1 and 3 in which participants were able to discuss ways in which they had reflected their identity in the dwelling (see Sections 4.3.1 and 6.4.1.1). As discussed in Chapter 3, the reflection of self in the dwelling is argued by a number of authors (e.g. Sadalla and Sheets, 1993; Nasar, 1989; Cooper Marcus, 1995; Kellett and Moore, 2003; see Section 3.8.4). The findings provided in this study (and to a greater extent in this thesis as a whole) provide support for the notion of home as a means for the reflection of self.

Feelings relating to cleaning and tidying differ widely amongst the participants. For some, this is an important part of home making behaviour and they feel most happy and at ease in a clean and tidy dwelling. Others have more negative associations with such behaviours, particularly when other activities are seen as more important, for example in the case of spending time with family and friends:

*I would like to make it nice for my children and myself. It's important it's nice and clean for them to come home to*

*With two children I try to keep things clean and tidy but I don't obsess about it. It's more important to play and enjoy my young children at this time*

These differences in attitudes towards cleaning and domestic activities in the home are also seen in Study 3 (see Section 6.4.3.3 for a discussion of how personality factors may be involved in such differences in domestic attitudes). Gurney (1997) argues that although ideally home is a place of refuge, for some it may represent domestic servitude and in this way have negative associations for people.

Participants exhibit a range of attitudes towards Do-it-yourself (DIY) and home improvements. For some, DIY is an enjoyable way to pass the time, sometimes even being described as a hobby:

*I love to decorate I am always watching DIY programmes and in B&Q store buying things*

*I have just moved into a flat which is fine, but redecorating not only puts my own stamp on it but is also a nice hobby type thing to do*

*DIY always been hobby*

Although DIY is for some an enjoyable activity in itself, there may be a number of influences at work, for example through the plethora of television makeover programmes (as argued in Section 3.9; see Chapman, 1999; Mintell, 2005):

*All the DIY programmes have an influence and make you want to try different things to your home*

This finding echoes a finding in Study 1, as discussed in Section 4.3.3. Attitudes towards DIY and improvements in the dwelling are not always entirely positive. For some there exists a lack of confidence in their own abilities:

*I would be happy to decorate my home myself if I was any good at it but I am a bit of a DIY disaster!*

Personality also plays a part:

*I enjoy putting my mark on a new home and decorating to my taste. I don't enjoy spending a lot of time decorating and upgrading my home unless absolutely necessary - I am house proud but a bit lazy!*

Others find the disruption brought about by DIY is not conducive to a peaceful environment:

*I spent my entire childhood living in homes that were being renovated and now I hate the thought of doing it myself. I'd rather move in somewhere that didn't need work done*

The idea of DIY may even bring with it notions of domestic servitude, perhaps similar to that described by Gurney (1997) in relation to cleaning:

*DIY should never take over your life! Your house should be a vibrant, welcoming refuge that you love, but the outside world has lots to offer!*

Possessions are another means of personalising and are perhaps a stronger means of connecting a person's identity to the dwelling:

*Decorative objects provide the opportunity to show your personality more than functional items such as kitchens.*

Yet there are differences in the extent to which people value possessions, as argued by Cooper Marcus (1995) – something which was also found in Study 3 (see Section 6.4.1.4):

*Material possessions aren't too important to me*

*I do not put material things at the forefront of my everyday life*

Possessions provide a powerful means of connecting identity to dwelling due to the connection they can hold with a person's past, as argued by Pahl (2004):



*Memories are made from the things I buy e.g. different places visited, people that are with you, sunny days etc.*

*... have objects from holidays that hold memories*

*Any ornament or picture I display has got a special memory for me*

The importance of possessions is a strong area of the literature (e.g. Cooper Marcus, 1995; Gilroy and Kellett, 2006) and findings in this thesis reinforce the argument that possessions are a powerful means of connecting identity to the dwelling – which might be an important part of the home making process – something explored in more detail in Study 3.

Participants are keen to point out a range of constraints or other priorities in terms of personalising the dwelling. Financial constraints are frequently discussed:

*Doing up our home to our own personal taste is important BUT only when we have the money to do so*

Yet on the other hand, participants are aware of, and value, the potential of upgrading their dwelling to increase its financial value:

*My home is an investment for the future of myself and my family so it is important to maintain its value*

*... add value when you come to sell*

Many people cannot afford to buy their ideal dwelling in terms of size and location, and these people therefore seek to move up the property ladder over time. Such views as those quoted above reflect the migratory nature of dwelling and home for a large number of people in modern-day British society (Amaturo et al., 1987).

A person's age and their health, both physical and mental, can also impact upon their capacity to carry out personalisation in the dwelling:

*I am getting older now so cannot do as much now as I used to*

*All home making and maintenance is very much dependent upon my state of mind and finances. I had to take early retirement due to stress and depression, and this continues to restrict my enjoyment of lots of things (including my home)*

*I'm slightly disabled and restricted about what I can do to my home*

Also, when children are resident in the household this can create a significant impact upon the tidiness and cleanliness of the dwelling:

*I have 4 children and until they are a lot older or move out, I am limited to time and tidiness*

*Not tidy all the time due to children in the house*

For those participants whose dwelling is rented, there is a perception that the ability to carry DIY and home improvements is limited:

*I rent and therefore am limited to what I can do to change the physical appearance of my house*

*I guess to a certain extent your home reflects your personality, although as I rent at the moment my scope for doing this is quite narrow*

Finally, participants' comments remind us that people often have other priorities on their time and finances, in particular, activities outwith the dwelling may impact upon a person's propensity to carry out personalisation in the dwelling:

*I find I am more interested in outside activities - theatre, concerts etc. gardening too.*

*Life is too short, prefer to be active*

What's more, spending time with important others is cited as a higher priority than home improvements:

*I will not worry about my home to the extent of spending time with friends*

*Rather spend time with my young family*

Such constraints are an important consideration in the study of personalisation

of the dwelling, because they have a very real impact upon a person's choices in terms of realising their ideal home (Rapoport, 1995). A number of constraints, both physical and social in nature are also discussed in Studies 1 and 3 (see sections 4.3.1 and 6.4.5).

#### 5.4.8.3 *Social aspects*

Social aspects are an important element of home to many, and resultantly frequently commented on in the questionnaires. As can be seen in a number of extracts provided in this chapter, the importance of others in the home permeates participants' understandings of home and home making. In terms of social aspects, Family was the most prominent of themes to emerge. To a large number of participants, family are central to the experience of home (see also findings from Study 3, Section 6.4.4). This fits with Hayward's (1975) classification of home as a social unit, and the findings of key research contributions to the field, such as Case (1996) who found that for those he interviewed, a sense of *being at home* was felt more strongly when a family member was present.

As discussed above, children are frequently mentioned in terms of their impact on the home making process – their existence can create more work and act as a barrier to personalisation, cleaning and tidying. However, the purpose of home making is to make a home not only for oneself but also for the happiness and enjoyment of one's family:

*Creating a comfortable environment the family can enjoy  
living/playing/relaxing in*

*[Home making is] very very important work. Home making ensures that all  
the hardware and resources necessary to run a happy, efficient and  
effective home are in place. It also ensures that the comfort, welfare and  
development of all persons in the house is considered*

This also goes for family who have grown up and moved on from the dwelling, (also discussed by some of the participants in Study 3 - see Section 6.4.4):

*Making your home somewhere your family enjoy visiting*

The home is for many a place to nurture and nourish their family:



*Having a nice hot meal ready for my family coming in - especially when cold outside*

*A pleasant environment for myself and my family through food and facilities*

*Having friends and family round and having a comfortable home (warm and decent food)*

All of these extracts also point to another important aspect of home. As argued by Ozaki (2002), the execution of routine rituals such as cooking and entertaining can help to bring meaning to a space. The extracts provided here (and in Study 3, Section 6.4.4) suggest that such rituals may be an important part of the home making process.

The importance of friends is also evident in extracts provided by participants in defining home making:

*Creating a happy place where myself, family and friends can feel comfortable*

*To me a home is somewhere you enjoy spending your time either with your family or friends. To create a home it must be welcoming, people must feel that they can be themselves in it*

These extracts show that the social aspects of home making extend beyond the immediate family in encompassing a person's wider social circle. It is argued in the literature that home is a social process (Priemus, 1986; Kellett and Moore, 2003). Home can be a place to strengthen relationships; so much so that participants consider this strengthening of relationships to be a key part of the home making process:

*A home should be welcoming comfortable and with an atmosphere which is conducive to easy relationships with all members of the family*

*Creating a conducive atmosphere by working hard at the relationships of those who live there and the physical appearance of the house*

*Making it comfortable and conducive to the relationship*

The finding that some participants are aware of the ways in which the environment can enhance (or otherwise) interpersonal relationships supports literature which argues for this as a role of the built environment (e.g. Werner,

1987; Lawrence, 1995). This finding echoes those in the other two studies – particularly Study 3 (see Section 6.4.4 for a discussion of how relationships impact on and are affected by the home making process).

The input of others in the dwelling is mentioned by participants in terms of personalisation and maintaining cleanliness. Harmony is maintained when people work together on the home making process:

*In my case it is a responsibility shared by two people committed to improving and enhancing their private space together*

This is not always easy given that people in the same family can often differ in terms of their preferred activities, their tastes in décor and their level of domesticity:

*My partner is much more enthusiastic about making structural changes in the home. I much prefer peace, quiet and no changes.*

*I would like to ensure that my home is clean and tidy at all times but i have the world's untidiest husband and don't always have enough time to rectify the chaos he produces*

Another social issue explored in this study was the extent to which participants cared what others thought of their dwelling. Qualitative data shows that participants differ in the extent to which social issues are a concern:

*I have never considered other people's opinions of my house particularly important*

*If a home is relaxed and tidy and visitors come back it is the best compliment you can get*

In summary, social aspects are integral to participants' understandings of home. A house can become a home only when it provides physical and emotional support to all members of the family. What's more, this quality of home must be extendable to all others that the dweller holds dear – they must feel welcome and safe within the dwelling in question. When all significant others (those living within *and* outwith the dwelling) feel this sense of security within the dwelling, social interaction is facilitated. This facilitation occurs because people desire to spend time in the place, and they are at ease in the place – and therefore they are perhaps more likely to be at ease in one another's company, leading to

benefits for interpersonal relationships.

#### 5.4.9 Visual representation of the findings

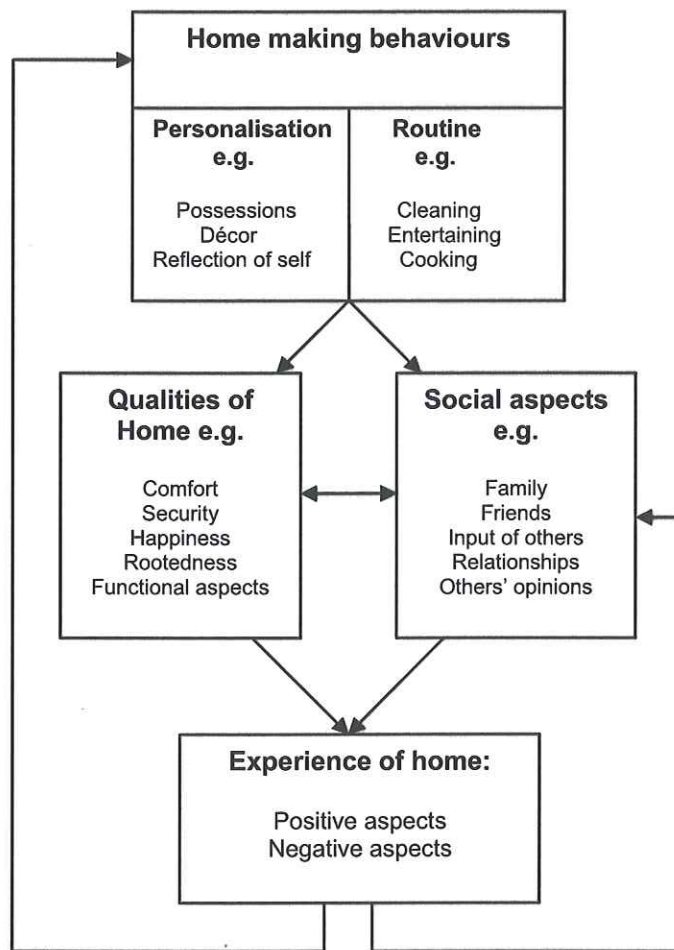
A visual model is presented in Figure 17. It presents a theoretical account of home making, based on the ways in which the key themes arising from the data interact with one another.

The elements of the model are argued to reside in psychological processes, behaviour and in the environmental and social context. The findings suggest that home making behaviours are carried out in order to strengthen the qualities of home that are important to participants, as well as to provide benefits for social aspects. These home making behaviours do not relate only to personalisation – they also encompass other more everyday activities such as cooking and cleaning, as well as other home-based rituals such as entertaining family and friends. These behaviours are an effort towards an increased sense of home not only for the self, but also for significant others (whether these live within or outwith the dwelling). Thus there is a strong connection between the qualities of home and the social aspects, as social elements are integral to participants' experience of home.

The effects that home making behaviour has on the qualities of home and social aspects then feeds into participants' experiences of home. These experiences can be positive or negative, or a combination of both – it is possible that a complex combination of emotions may be present for people in relation to their home situation. The resulting experience of home then feeds back into home making behaviour. If home is experienced in a positive sense, then the qualities of home which contribute to this must be maintained. When home is experienced in a negative sense, the qualities of home must be altered or improved. Thus, the process of home is dynamic, as suggested by participants' responses (for more discussion on the dynamic nature of home, see the findings of Study 3 presented in Section 6.5.1).



**Figure 17 - visual model of qualitative findings in Study**



The model does not claim to be an exhaustive representation of the process of home – it is acknowledged that other factors will influence the process, whether these are external and therefore outside of the person's control, or internal psychological factors. Of these internal influences, it is likely that personality must play a role. The evidence found in support of the role of identity orientations was disappointingly limited. Yet it is possible that other aspects of personality may impact upon the process of home. The third study explores the question of personality in the process of home in more detail.

#### 5.4.10 Qualitative analysis: conclusions

The qualitative data reveals a number of key qualities which are important to people in relation to home. The findings suggest that people actively strive to

create these qualities rather than expecting a home to automatically encompass them. Personalisation is just one behaviour that people engage in, in order to meet this goal. This shows that the process of home making is not merely a simple process of keeping a home clean and tidy and well maintained, or even of making a house attractive to look at. In fact, the process is a complex socio-psychological one which strives to enhance arguably the most important areas of individual, social and family life. The key themes are consistent with the literature on meaning of home as well as supporting findings in the first and third studies. The analysis is based on a limited collection of qualitative data however and only really touches the surface. Chapter 6 presents a much more in-depth study of the ways in which people connect their identity to the dwelling, and how this contributes to the process of home – as well as exploring the effect that differences based in personality might have on this process.

## **5.5 Discussion of results**

The following sections provide discussion on the limitations and overall conclusions of the study.

### **5.5.1 Limitations**

The sample in Study 2 all lived in the North East of Scotland. It is therefore noted that the results are not necessarily suitable for generalisation to other cultural groups. Study 2 measured personality in a very narrow sense, focussing only on personal and social identity orientations. A wider range of personality variables could have been measured, for example extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness. This might have led to deeper insights into the role of personality in the home making process.

Qualitative findings from the study are perhaps more insightful than those resulting from the quantitative data (which constituted the main focus of the study). This suggests that for issues relating to personalisation, home making and meanings of home, qualitative approaches might be more revealing.

### 5.5.2 Overall conclusions

The second study was designed to test two hypotheses. The first hypothesis states that the higher the SIO the higher the importance placed on behaviours which improve the appearance of the dwelling. The second hypothesis states that the higher the PIO the higher the importance placed on enhancing personal meaning and values in the home.

Significant differences exist between SIOL groups in terms of home making and the three sub-scales. Some open-ended responses appear to fit with the first hypothesis. However, all relationships in respect of SIO are low<sup>30</sup> thereby showing that, at best, SIO only has a weak relationship with home making. The same can be said of PIO – even less support is shown through the open-ended responses and correlations are even lower than those seen with SIO. It is worth noting however that findings presented throughout this chapter have tended to show that SIO is more related to the behaviours measured in the second study than is PIO.

A striking finding is the gender difference seen on home making behaviours. A strong female bias exists on the item relating to who shows the most interest in home appearance. Women place the most importance on all home making items and a significant difference is seen between gender groups on responses to the home making scale. This supports a stereotypical view of women as the primary home makers (Dempsey, 1997; Gram-Hanssen and Bech-Danielsen, 2004). However, relationships between identity orientations and home making are no stronger when gender groups are considered individually. Multivariate analyses provide an interesting insight. When gender is considered alongside identity orientations, regression coefficients with the home making scales are stronger than when identity orientations are considered alone – in multiple linear regression, gender along with identity orientations account for 19% of the variance in home making behaviour.

One finding raises questions in relation to the PIO and SIO scales. Cheek (1989) describes these as measuring distinct constructs, with only a very small

<sup>30</sup> With the exception of the finding discussed in section 5.4.6 of a moderate correlation between SIO and home making among younger participants.



relationship between the two. However, the current research found a moderate relationship between the two scales of  $r = .434$  - and this relationship is actually seen to increase dramatically for older age groups, with the eldest group showing a marked relationship of  $r = .758$ . These findings complicate the interpretation given by Cheek of two mildly related but separate constructs. It appears as though the two become less distinct with age – perhaps due to a decreasing need for identity over time. Another important age-related finding is that both PIO and SIO decrease with age – again refuting the description by Cheek (1989) of identity orientations as stable and enduring concepts.

These findings then could go some way towards explaining the lack of statistical support found for the hypotheses. However, a moderate correlation was found between SIO and home making amongst the youngest group (18-25 year olds) of  $r = .523$ , further complicating the picture. So not only do the younger group distinguish more easily between the two types of identity orientations and have higher PIO and SIO, there is also a larger influence of social identity on certain behaviours within the dwelling when people are younger. This result may point to the changing ideals and priorities of different age groups, further evidence of which is seen when exploring responses to individual items. Younger groups may place more importance on having an attractive dwelling, whereas older groups place the most value on satisfaction within the dwelling and keeping the dwelling well maintained and clean.

Qualitative findings highlight a number of areas which are important to participants in relation to their dwellings. In “making” their homes, people look to benefit a number of areas which are key to individual, family and social life. These results support other well-known accounts of the meanings of home, as discussed in Chapter 3 and echo the findings of the other two studies, particularly Study 3.

In summary, the results discussed in this chapter provide only limited support for the two research hypotheses. Although the hypotheses have not been confirmed, other interesting findings exist which reveal something of the importance of home making to participants – particularly in relation to gender differences and insights from the qualitative data.

The conclusions from this study suggest that a qualitative approach may reveal more detail in relation to the connection between personality, identity and home. Therefore, in the third study, a largely qualitative approach was employed which explored these details through the use of in-depth interviews. This study is described in the following chapter.

## **6 A study exploring the connection of identity, dwelling and home**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The first two studies presented in this thesis have explored the importance of a person's dwelling in reflecting their identity, both to the self and to others. Not only is the dwelling used in identity processes, but the ways in which the dwelling is used in such processes may differ from person to person. Findings from the previous two studies have pointed to the potential for differences based in personality to affect the approach which a person may take to the act of personalisation in the home making process (see Section 4.4 and Chapter 5).

A third study was carried out in which in-depth interviews explored the ways in which women connect their identity to the dwelling. The study was aimed at strengthening the evidence for identity processes in the dwelling found in the previous two studies, as well as addressing limitations in these studies (see sections 4.4.3 and 5.5.1). Furthermore, the study aimed to identify the factors which may affect differences in approaches between women, the impact of social elements and the extent to which such acts are an important part of the home making process.

Research questions:

1. What is the nature of the link between identity and dwelling?
2. How does this differ between people?
  - a. Does personality account for such differences?
  - b. What other factors are involved?
3. How do social elements impact upon the process?
4. How does identity contribute to the process of home?

Overall, the research questions can be summarized as follows:

How do identity and dwelling interact to create home?



These research questions are informed by the findings from previous studies, as well as responding to key themes in the relevant literature – in particular those areas of literature which are explored in Chapter 3 in relation to identity, social aspects and personalisation in the home literature (e.g. Cooper Marcus, 1995; Kellett and Moore, 2003; Lawrence, 1987).

#### 6.1.1 Taking a qualitative approach

The execution of a third study is important because there are a number of key issues in this thesis which have not yet been fully explained. Such questions require detailed exploration and as suggested by results from Study 2, might be better addressed through the use of a qualitative approach. Such an approach has the potential to be more useful where key variables are not fully identified, due to its focus on subjective meanings for individuals (Gubrium and Holstein, 2002).

In-depth interviews were carried out which sought to uncover rich detail around the research questions outlined in Section 6.1.

### 6.2 *Method*

#### 6.2.1 The Sample

In Study 3, women from a variety of housing backgrounds<sup>31</sup> were recruited in order to discuss their own meanings and interpretations of dwelling, identity and home. The only sampling criteria were enthusiasm for the subject area and a willingness to talk at length about individual experiences and meanings. Unlike earlier interviews carried out in Study 1, no distinct form of housing type was preferred. Participants were recruited as a result of having contacted the researcher in response to a press release which was placed in local newspapers *The Press and Journal* and *The Evening Express* or in response to an email sent out to staff of the Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen (see Appendix 12

<sup>31</sup> With the exception of steading converters or those who have built or been involved in the building of their own homes, because as suggested in the findings of Study 1, there is a danger that these might focus on technical issues.

for the press release and email). The sample contains only one member of staff from the Robert Gordon University.

The sample consists of 14 female participants (see Table 16). In total 25 people contacted the researcher with an interest in participating, two of whom were male. Of the two men, one had already participated in the interviews in the first study, and both cited a desire to contribute their time in order to benefit academic research, as opposed to having a true interest in the subject area. Although there exists a clear female bias in the sample it should be noted that the sample was self-selecting and as previously noted, the large majority of those responding to the call for participants were women. This adds further weight to the gender bias in home making that has been seen both in research in this thesis and in previous literature (e.g. Dempsey, 1997). The women in this sample represent Caucasian female home-owners (some owning their home with a mortgage, others owning outright, see Table 16) living in Aberdeen and rural Aberdeenshire – the demographic data collected suggests a middle class background for the majority. However, they do not represent a solely Scottish population, with 6 English participants, 7 Scottish participants and 1 American participant. The participants ranged in age from 36 to mid 80s (they were not required to provide exact ages but responded to age range items in the questionnaire). More demographic information can be seen in Table 16.

### 6.2.2 Materials

A number of approaches were taken to gathering data in this study. As well as taking part in the research interviews, participants were required to fill in and return a questionnaire by post, and also to select for later discussion cherished possessions and areas of the dwelling.

Respondents were required to complete a number of scales in the form of a questionnaire in advance of the interview. The scales were combined into one booklet for simplicity (see Appendix 13). The scales included are:

- 50-Item Set of IPIP Big-Five Factor Markers<sup>32</sup> (IPIP-50)
- AIQ IV

<sup>32</sup> See <http://ipip.ori.org/>

- Open-response identity measure
- Demographic questions, including socio-economic status

**Table 16 - Demographic information**

Name	Age	Work status	Education	Occupation	Household income	Dwelling type	Years in dwelling	Residential status
Maggie	36-50	Self-employed	Postgrad	Professional	£80,000+	House (detached)	5-10 years	Owner (mortgage)
Greta	65+	Retired	Higher ed	n/a		House (detached)	20+ years	Owner (outright)
Lily	36-50	Houswife	Standard/O Grades	n/a	£60-69,999	House (detached)	10+ years	Owner (mortgage)
Joy	65+	Retired	Degree/ equivalent	n/a	£20-29,999	House (detached)	20+ years	Owner (outright)
Lesley	65+	Retired	Postgrad	Managers/ Senior	£60-69,999	House (terraced)	1-2 years	Owner (outright)
Rachel	51-65	Retired	Degree/ equivalent	Professional	£30-39,999	Flat	2-5 years	Owner (outright)
Kate	51-65	Semi-retired	Postgrad	Professional	£80,000+	House (semi-detached/ end terraced)	10+ years	Owner
Elaine	51-65	Employed	Postgrad	Professional	£30-39,999	Bungalow	20+ years	Owner (outright)
Jennifer	36-50	Employed	Postgrad	Professional	£50-59,999	House (semi-detached/ end terraced)	10+ years	Owner (mortgage)
Maude	51-65	Retired	Degree/ equivalent	Professional	Less than £20,000	House (terraced)	1-2 years	Lives with mother
Wendy	51-65	Self-employed	Degree/ equivalent	Professional	£20-29,999	House (detached)	10+ years	Owner (mortgage)
Sheila	51-65	Self-employed	Degree/ equivalent	Professional	£30-39,999	House (semi-detached/ end terraced)	20+ years	Owner (outright)
Beth	51-65	Retired	Degree/ equivalent	n/a	£80,000+	Bungalow	20+ years	Owner (outright)
Elizabeth	51-65	Employed	Postgrad	Professional	£60-69,999	House (detached)	10+ years	Owner (outright)

The IPIP-50 (Goldberg, 1999; Goldberg et al., 2006) measures five personality constructs which were developed to measure the Big-Five factor markers reported in Goldberg (1992) and based on the five factor model of personality (Goldberg, 1981; Costa and Macrae, 1977). The five scales measure Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability and Intellect (see Section 2.2.3 for a discussion on these constructs). This measure was included in order to gain a general understanding of the personality of each of the participants. The AIQ IV was included in order to further explore the relationship of identity orientations (this time including Collective and Relational



Identity Orientations) to dwelling and home. Both measures have been well validated in previous research (Goldberg, 1992; Lemay and Ashmore, 2006) although Study 2 raised some questions regarding the extent to which the AIQ measures distinct identity constructs (see Section 5.4.7). The reader is referred to Table 19 - High and low scores on personality and identity scales for an indication of participants' scores on personality measures.

Open-response measures of identity were also included in the questionnaire. These were based on the AMI, or Aspects of Multiple Identity, in which the researchers asked participants to respond to an open question "Who am I?" (Stirratt et al., 2007). These took the format of two questions. The first asked the question "Who are you?" and suggested "in thinking about who you are, you may think about your personality, your roles in life, your family and friends, your abilities and achievements, your career or your likes and dislikes, for example". The second was a question-completion task which asked respondents to give as many responses to the incomplete sentence "I am a...." as possible, considering for example "your roles in life, your abilities and achievements, your career or your hobbies". These two measures constitute self-report measures of identity and sought to determine the ways in which the participants defined themselves and what aspects of their identity were most important to them. The purpose of this exercise was for in-depth discussion during the interview in order to discover ways in which these aspects of the participants' identities may be connected with the dwelling. Therefore, the answers were later used by the researcher as prompts during the interviews (see Appendix 15 for example responses to both questions).

Along with the questionnaire booklet, participants also received a letter with instructions involving the selection of cherished possessions and areas within the home for discussion during the interview (see Appendix 16).

#### *6.2.2.1 Piloting*

The questionnaire booklet was piloted. Questionnaires were administered to 10 individuals all of whom were members of The Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen. Each was asked to complete the questionnaire in their own time, in order to replicate the conditions for the administering of the questionnaire in

Study 3, which was to be done by post. All pilot respondents were asked to provide feedback and suggestions. This pilot stage uncovered no major problems with the questionnaire and only minor formatting changes were made.

The first participant (Maggie) was considered a pilot interviewee. However, as with Study 1, her interview is included in the analysis in order that valuable data was not lost – the interview with Maggie was rich in terms of useful data. As argued in Section 4.2.2.1, this is a common approach in qualitative research – this is not considered problematic in terms of contamination (Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001). It is therefore argued by some authors that pilot studies are not required in qualitative research (Robson, 1993; Holloway, 1997; Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001). Instead, each interview is reflected on and the researcher considers ways in which the questions and format can be improved for richer data collection (Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001; Richards, 2005). As with Study 1, therefore, interviews were reflected on during the transcribing and coding process, and subtle changes to format were made where deemed appropriate (see also Section 4.2.2.1).

### 6.2.3 Procedure

#### 6.2.3.1 *Questionnaire and pre-interview task*

Participants were first sent the questionnaire booklet (along with the instructions for the pre-interview task) and completed and returned the questionnaire booklet by post.

As explained by Johnson and Weller (2002), a number of techniques including “elicitation techniques” exist to better enable people to discuss feelings or beliefs held which may normally be difficult to articulate. They describe “visual elicitation”, suggesting that there are times at which verbal prompts alone are inadequate in eliciting data of interest. Johnson and Weller give the example of photographs of houses being used to encourage people to talk about social class and status. In Study 3 then, elicitation is used in order to enable people to more fully articulate their feelings in relation to dwelling and identity.



Instructions were included with the questionnaire (see Appendix 16), asking participants to select for discussion a favourite or significant possession, piece of furniture, corner and room and be prepared to discuss why these things are meaningful and what they might tell the researcher about the participant, as well as being prepared for the researcher to photograph these during the interview. This task was included to a) further prepare them in terms of the psychological nature of the discussion and b) find means of connecting identity and dwelling as well as acting as an elicitation technique at the time of the interview itself.

#### 6.2.3.2 *The Interview*

As with Study 1, the data collection was carried out in the field i.e. in the dwellings of respondents. This was the best place for interviews to take place, because the environment in question was visible and experienced during the discussion. Where respondents referred to particular areas or aspects of that environment, these were shown to the researcher and acted as further prompts to discussion and therefore richer detail. Photographs of the dwelling were taken with participants' consent, and observations noted by the researcher in terms of the physical qualities of the dwelling.

The questions used in the interview are designed to provide answers to the research questions (the interview questions are outlined in Appendix 17). The questions are informed to some extent by findings from the previous studies. Figure 18 illustrates the way in which interview questions and other methods of data collection are designed to provide answers to the overall research questions. The study acknowledges the distinction between dwelling and home, with the interviewer establishing whether the dwelling is thought of as home early on in the interview process. The potential importance of other people and the environment to the identity of participants was also central to the framework. Once the interviews had been carried out, these were transcribed in full from the audio recordings (see Appendix 14 for an example of an interview transcript). Once transcribed, the interviews were input into the software package NVivo8 for detailed analysis (see sections 5.4.8 and 6.3.2 for more on the use of NVivo8).



**Figure 18 - Design of Study 3**

Research question	Interview question(s)	Related method/data collection
<b>Is there evidence for a link between identity and dwelling?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How have you made your mark on your dwelling? What can we see of YOU here?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Photographs</li> <li>Open identity measure</li> <li>Pre-interview task</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you think your dwelling in turn may have affected your identity or personality?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Photographs</li> <li>Personality measure</li> <li>Open identity measure</li> <li>Pre-interview task</li> </ul>
<b>If so, what is the nature of the connection of identity to the dwelling? How does it happen?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does your role as a [insert identity attribute] affect your dwelling?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open identity measure</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can we talk about the possessions/areas you have chosen?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-interview task</li> </ul>
<b>How does this differ between people? Personality? Other factors?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*All questions*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personality measure</li> <li>Open identity measure</li> </ul>
<b>How do social elements impact upon the process?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you think some people may be influenced by what other people might think when they decorate their dwellings? Can you give examples?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personality measure (especially AIQ)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does this concern you? Is this reflected in your dwelling?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personality measure (especially AIQ)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do your relationships with others make this place feel more like your home? Are these relationships symbolized somehow?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Photographs</li> <li>Identity measure (especially AIQ)</li> <li>Pre-interview task</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you live with others? Thinking about your relationships with other members of the household – are these evident in the appearance of the dwelling?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Photographs</li> <li>Personality measure (especially AIQ)</li> <li>Open identity measure</li> <li>Pre-interview task</li> </ul>
<b>How does identity contribute to the process of home?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What does the word "home" mean to you? Is this your home?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Photographs</li> <li>Identity measure</li> <li>Pre-interview task</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What makes a dwelling feel more like a home? How did you make this dwelling feel like home?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Photographs</li> <li>Pre-interview task</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do these [selected possessions/area] make this dwelling feel like home?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Photographs</li> <li>Pre-interview task</li> </ul>

#### 6.2.4 Ethical considerations

The research design was approved by the research degrees committee and all aspects of the study met the requirements of the APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (2003) and the BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct (2009). Informed consent was secured (see Appendix 18) including the participants' consent to audio-record the interviews.

Participants were also asked prior to the interviews whether they were happy for the researcher to take photographs in their dwelling, and this request was repeated before the interviews commenced. Participants understood their right to withdraw from the study at any time.

### 6.3 *Thematic Analysis*

The study addresses a number of related areas, which can be summarised in the overall research question:

*How do identity and dwelling interact to create home?*

Previous studies within the thesis have argued for the expression of identity within the dwelling and the influence of personality traits on the way in which the home is used and personalised. Study 3 aimed to:

- Provide stronger evidence of a link between identity and dwelling/identity and home
- Provide a meaningful understanding of how personality differences can influence the way in which a person interacts with the dwelling
- Study the impact of social elements upon identity and dwelling
- Explore participants' *meanings* and *processes* of home

#### 6.3.1 The analytical framework

The data was analysed using an interpretive approach with the aim being to generate theory and meaning which is well grounded in the data. The overall analysis can be described as a "grounded theory approach" which uses the

pragmatic derivatives of Grounded Theory in discovering a rigorously argued coding structure within the data. This approach is often taken by modern-day qualitative researchers, as noted by Lewins and Silver (2007) in whose experience *"many researchers work in grounded ways, without necessarily strictly adhering to the processes of Grounded Theory"* (p84). The principles of Grounded Theory were used in informing the analysis because such an approach is bottom-up, working up from the data to the eventual theoretical contribution, ensuring that this contribution is well grounded in the data. Grounded Theory is based on an emergent philosophy (Dick, 2005) – an appropriate philosophy to the study, given that the research takes an exploratory approach.

A brief note on the historical development of Grounded Theory is helpful at this point. Glaser and Strauss, who proposed Grounded Theory as a research method in 1967, developed the methodology in opposing ways after its original conception. This led to a division in opinion on how Grounded Theory should be carried out as well as giving researchers a choice in how to conduct Grounded Theory-based research. Whereas Strauss and Corbin (1990) argued for an even more complex system of coding which analysed individual words (micro-analysis coding), Glaser (1992) argued that this heavy focus on complicated coding practice led the method away from emergence and meaning, instead forcing the data. Nowadays researchers can choose between approaches, or combine them (Goulding, 1999; Kendall, 1999). Kendall (1999) argues that neither approach is wrong – rather, the researcher must choose to use elements of the approach which is most appropriate for the research.

The analysis of this study echoes Grounded Theory in terms of four stages which investigate codes, concepts, categories and finally a theoretical contribution (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Allan, 2003). Open coding of the data was carried out – the first process in Grounded Theory; following which the data is revisited repeatedly in order to recode into more meaningful and integrated concepts. The concepts are interrogated and compared in a process known as "constant comparison". The approach most closely follows Glaser's (1992) description of the method rather than that described by Strauss and Corbin (1990) – there was a criterion of selection entailing that only data relevant to the phenomenon under investigation was coded. From the concepts, categories are then built into a hierarchical structure and related to theory and literature in the



field, in order to present the theoretical contribution of the research.

The analysis differs from Grounded Theory in its strictest form in the following ways. Glaser and Strauss (1967) argue that the researcher should bring to the study no preconceived ideas about which themes will emerge from the data. However, in the later stages of PhD research this approach is problematic. The researcher had already carried out extensive literature reviews along with two previous studies, the findings and limitations of which had informed the design of the current study. This entails that a priori themes are present in the data. This is not a problem per se, because Glaser (1978) later argues that existing theory in the field can be considered as a further informant in the study – it helps researchers to theorize the emerging themes. Even so, because some of the conclusions of the study may be led by previous literature and research, the researcher does not claim that the theoretical contribution made is a true Grounded Theory. Rather, a grounded theory approach is taken in analysing the data in order to produce findings which are as rigorously arrived at as possible – well grounded in the data despite the theoretical slant of the work. Theoretical sampling was also not strictly adhered to in this study. The interviews were carried out over an intensive time frame which did not enable the researcher to simultaneously interview, transcribe and analyse. However, in the sense that all participants were “home makers” and had volunteered to participate based on a sincere enthusiasm for the subject, the sample can be considered to closely match the theoretical underpinnings of the research. Saturation (continuing the interviewing process with further participants until no new information emerges) was not sought because the research investigates differences between people in the home making process, therefore relevant categories and concepts to the home making process are potentially unlimited.

### 6.3.2 The use of CAQDAS

CAQDAS refers to Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software. The analysis benefited from the use of the qualitative software package NVivo 8. According to Bazely (2007), NVivo supports qualitative researchers in assisting with the management of data and ideas as well as facilitating the querying and reporting of data. In this research, NVivo has been especially helpful in the thematic coding of transcripts as well as in organising concepts and meaning

arising from the data.

A concern exists amongst some qualitative researchers (especially those who do not use CAQDAS) that coding carried out on CAQDAS is automated and the human aspect, the researcher, is removed from the process (Bringer, Johnston and Brackenridge, 2004). This was not the case in this research – the researcher carried out all coding processes manually. NVivo assisted as an organisational tool as opposed to being used in automatic coding. Such objections are becoming less frequent as such software is more commonly used, and the decision of the ESRC to encourage students to learn the use of CAQDAS can be seen as a sign that its use is becoming acceptable in the social sciences (Bringer et al., 2004).

### 6.3.3 The analytical process

Following transcribing of the interview data and input of these into NVivo8, interviews were read repeatedly and in-depth. This stage immersed the researcher in the data and allowed for a preliminary understanding of the core themes. The researcher recorded thoughts and insights about the interviews as these occurred throughout the transcribing and coding process, in the form of memos. For example, one memo referring to observations from the interview with Lesley reads:

*The participant is retired and lives with her husband in this new-build Aberdeen town house. She and her husband also have a house in Loughborough and only spend some of their time in Aberdeen. The house has got a very “home made” feel to it with lots of embroidery and tapestry on the walls, a great deal of effort has clearly been put into personalising this home. She seems to like using themes in her decorating – for example places that her and her husband have travelled to or lived. The participant is passionate about hunting for bargains and second hand items, partly because of her strong value that large sums of money should not be spent on things for the home. There are no pets.*

From memos such as these, “themes” for each participant began to emerge, although these were only truly confirmed during the coding and analytical process - memos enabled the researcher to reflect upon the “story” of each of the women.



Following this, the process of open coding was carried out. The following criterion of selection was employed: *All coded content must refer to a dwelling/home context. Where participants discuss matters outwith the dwelling/home (and not within the context of dwelling/home), this material should not be coded.*

In the sense that the study has a theoretical grounding and as such, certain focussed questions are asked in the interviews, a number of a priori themes are necessarily present in the data (as also discussed in Section 6.3.1). However, a number of themes emerged from the data throughout the analytical process showing that although the study has a strong grounding in previous research and the literature it is also revealing in the sense of emergent themes. This combined approach to coding allows for a more objective analysis because any significant themes which emerge should not be rejected. They are both important to the participants and well grounded in the data. This approach is commonplace (Lewins and Silver, 2007) and has many benefits for the research.

Each transcript was coded individually, with codes being applied to phrases, sentences or paragraphs. Extracts were frequently coded at multiple nodes (themes) and with new nodes being created only once several interviews had already been coded. As a result some interview data had not been coded at all nodes and therefore the process was repeated. This approach to coding is standard practice at this stage of an analysis using such a software package (Lewins and Silver, 2007; Bazeley, 2007). This first coding stage of the data is known as open coding in grounded theory methodologies.

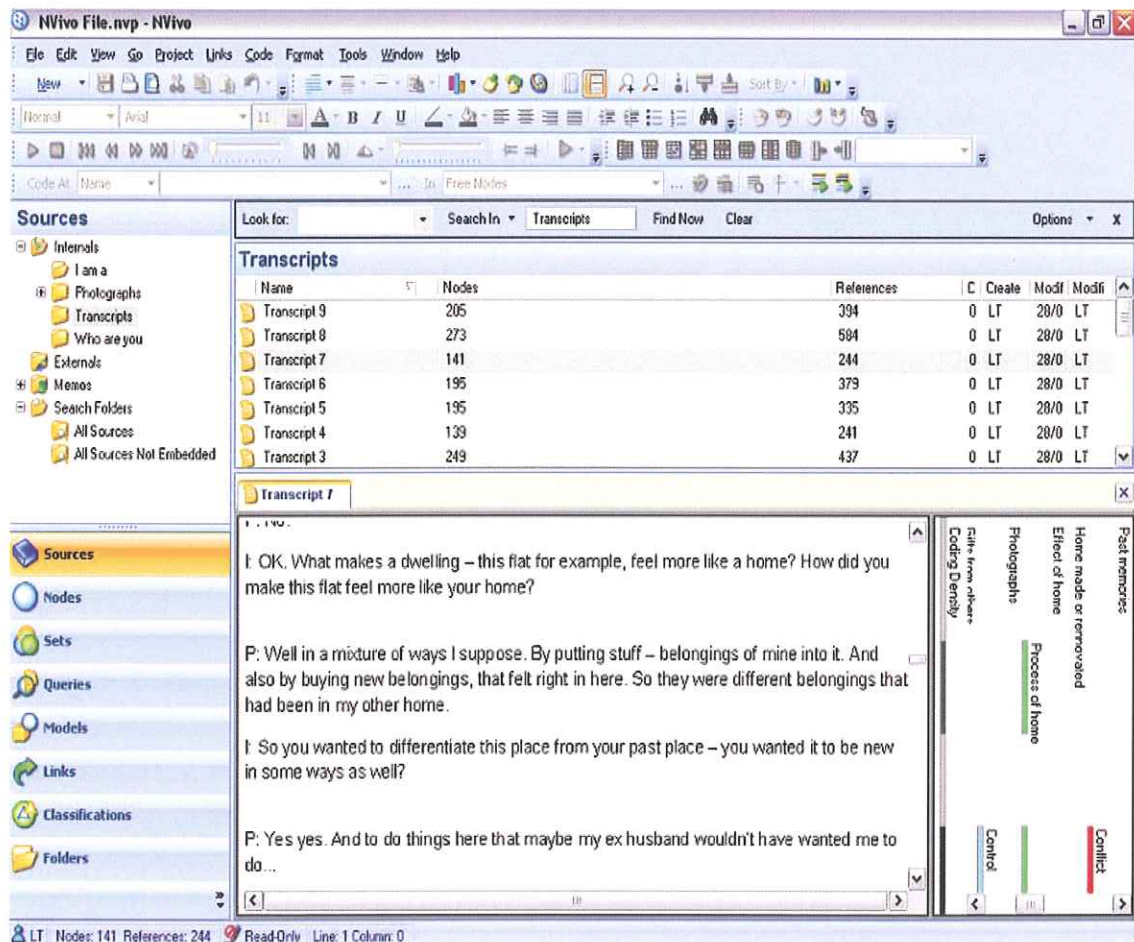
The way in which NVivo allows for the coding of extracts at multiple nodes is illustrated in Figure 19 which shows a screen shot of NVivo in which a transcript is displayed. The different coloured coding stripes on the right indicate which nodes (themes) an extract is coded at. Where the participant (Rachel) here says "Yes yes. *And to do things here that maybe my ex-husband wouldn't have wanted me to do*", this is coded at the nodes Control, Conflict and Process of home. When extracts are coded at more than one node, this later allowed the researcher to explore relationships between nodes.

As described above a large number of nodes were generated in the open coding



stage. The second stage was to reorganise these codes into more meaningful concepts. Codes were compared to one another and explored in order to understand whether or not each code was mutually exclusive – any duplicate codes (codes with different titles but containing data of the same kind) were merged. In this way codes were redefined as meaningful concepts – each one clearly defined in order to maintain the rigor of the exercise.

**Figure 19 - Screen shot of NVivo transcript with coding stripes**



Qualitative researchers continually refine and redevelop their coding structure throughout the analytical process and this was an important stage in the coding of the data in this study. Eventually, detailed reading of material coded at each node, along with consideration of insights recorded as memos enabled the researcher to restructure nodes into free nodes or tree (hierarchical) nodes and thereby refine the categorical framework of the data.

In Appendices 20 and 21 tables show the resultant free and tree nodes and the number of references at each node, along with the number of sources

(participants) that the references are derived from. Appendix 22 presents a model representing the tree nodes and their “children” nodes.

Finally, the researcher engaged in a lengthy process considering all material belonging to each category and concept, paying special attention to interrelationships between these. During this stage nuance and context in the data were explored. Through the process of writing and modelling, a theoretical understanding began to emerge, and the data revealed a “story” which can be considered both in terms of participants’ experiences and meanings as well as in comparison to existing literature and theory in the field. With particular attention to those concepts which are found to be key concepts, this final stage of the analysis is presented in Section 6.4.

#### 6.3.4 Key concepts

A number of key concepts, both a priori and emergent have arisen from the data<sup>33</sup>. In the reporting of findings, particular attention is given to those areas which shed light on the research questions. The key concepts are presented in Table 17.

**Table 17 - Key concepts**

<b>Meaning of home:</b>	<b>Connection of identity to dwelling:</b>	<b>Personalisation:</b>	<b>Meanings of possessions:</b>	<b>Social elements:</b>
Security	Personality	Artwork and pictures	Past memories	Community
Comfort	Interests	Colour	Reminder of others	Family
Control	Travel	Furniture	Gifts from others	Input of others in dwelling
Process of home	Personal history	Home-made or renovated	Made by others	Conflict
Connection of dwelling to identity	Values	Photographs	Inherited from others	Relationships in the dwelling
		Garden	Reminder of past dwellings	Impressing others
		Tastes in decor		Opinion of others
				Others' dwellings
				Pets
				Socialising in the dwelling

<sup>33</sup> Key themes are identified when both a number of participants have discussed the theme and where there are a large number of references at that theme. See Appendix 11 for coding frequencies



## 6.4 *The findings*

The following sections present the findings of Study 3. The key concepts are considered in-depth, and presentation of the findings is structured around the four research questions. In Section 6.4.1, the connection of identity and dwelling is discussed with reference to illustrative quotes from the interviews. Theories of identity are considered in terms of their usefulness in explaining identity processes in the dwelling. Section 6.4.3 considers the impact of personality and other individual differences on the way in which people interact with dwelling. Section 6.4.4 considers the importance of social elements and how these impact upon identity in the dwelling. Finally, Section 6.4.5 discusses participants' meanings of home and considers the role of identity in the process of home.

### 6.4.1 Identity and dwelling

The first research question explored in Study 3 is: *What is the nature of the link between identity and dwelling?* This section presents findings which support the argument that identity is connected to dwelling. Firstly, the nature of this connection is explored through discussion centred on illustrative quotes from the interviews. Personalisation behaviour is proposed as the principle means used for connecting identity to dwelling, with a particular focus on personal possessions. Secondly, the data is considered in light of three theories of identity: Place Identity Theory, Social Identity Theory and Identity Process Theory. This discussion reveals interesting insights into the ways in which identity processes function in the dwelling.

#### 6.4.1.1 *The connection of identity and dwelling*

The reflection of identity in the dwelling is discussed in detail in Section 3.8 – see for example Cooper Marcus (1995) and Brown (2007). Study 3 aimed to provide support for the notion that identity is reflected in and connected to the dwelling. This concept was at the heart of the interviews, being drawn on repeatedly by the researcher through various questions as well as the questionnaire and task that participants engaged in before the interviews. Participants frequently claimed to identify with some aspect of their dwelling, for example Maggie (see Figure 20):



*I've got a dressing table, which we got at the Candle Close Gallery in Aberdeen. It's German-made, and it's got mirrors curling round the sides. And I love it, because that's very me.*



Figure 20 - Dressing table, Maggie

When participants say that something is “very me” this suggests that they are identifying with something, for example a particular style of décor. A person’s tastes contribute to what makes them the person they are – it is part of them. As argued in the literature (Rochberg-Halton, 1984; McCracken, 1988) and now shown in this thesis, the things that people choose to surround themselves with are connected with and contribute to their overall identity.

Maggie elaborates:

*I look at the P&J<sup>34</sup> “Your Home” supplement... and I’ll show Neil a room and I’ll say “God look at that, that is just not us”. I think ours is full of soul, and it’s a little bit eclectic.*

Here she gives a reason - a lack of soul and eclecticism - and draws a direct link between the style of an interior and her and her husband’s identity by arguing

<sup>34</sup> The Press and Journal – local daily newspaper.

that a different style is “not us”. This statement also highlights that Maggie compares her own dwelling with that of other people – a behaviour which may enhance her own self-esteem and sense of distinctiveness (see Section 6.4.2).

The connection of identity to the dwelling is not a natural and effortless process for all people. In particular Sheila makes multiple references to the troubles she has had with home making over the years. Sheila has also struggled for some time to feel contented within the dwelling, often comparing it unfavourably to the dwellings of her childhood. Stea (1995) argues that a failure to reflect identity in the dwelling may stem from a dwelling not feeling like home (an argument that fits with the notion that the connection of identity to dwelling is a central component of home). Of home making Sheila says:

*But homemaking in general I've been useless at... it seems that a lot of my friends are very good at that and I admire it but I'm never going to be like that so I might as well face it. As I get older I think look at that – embrace it - you aren't built that way, you're not ever going to do it so stop feeling you should!*

She explains that decisions about décor in the house do not come naturally to her – they are in fact quite difficult:

*If I was like that I would strive to do better and have some notion of decorating instead of leaving it to friends to make my curtains and so on, but I'm not that kind of person... making decisions about the house - very difficult, extremely difficult.*

Social constraints may also exist upon the process of connecting identity and dwelling. For example other members of a household may also have a very strong desire or need to reflect themselves in the dwelling. This is discussed in detail in Section 6.4.4 which explores the participants' experiences and feelings relating to conflicts of identity within the dwelling.

It is when participants describe *how* the dwelling is connected to their identity that analysis begins to meet the aims of the study. The following discussion provides evidence from participants on various areas of identity that can be seen to be connected with dwelling. Importantly many of these extracts relate to (and are coded at) other key concepts in the study - where such relationships exist cross referencing in the text points the reader to the relevant related sections.

Participants often discussed their own personality in terms of how it is reflected in the dwelling, as discussed in greater detail in Section 6.4.3. The dwelling also tells us something of the participants' interests, for example travel<sup>35</sup>, or nature as in the case of Lily:

*I've got my doggy. And my frogs in the pond. And my birds! Yeah my birds, I love my birds. I've got bird houses all over the place. And I had a squirrel! I had a red squirrel, so I've got a squirrel box as well for my squirrel, in case he comes back. I've got insect boxes...*

Personal history was an emergent concept which was particularly salient to participants with all 14 participants discussing it. It seems important to participants that their dwelling tells the story of their life in some way. This supports Brown (2007) who argues for home as an autobiographical narrative as well as a route to identity formation. In particular, participants use possessions to feel connected to their own history:

*The carpet is a bit tatty, but it's ancient. I was born in Iraq, and this is from Iraq. It used to be my parents' carpet in Iraq. (Rachel)*

Values are connected to the dwelling often in terms of the choice of furniture and decorative items. In particular a number of participants held strong values in terms of not spending money excessively on things for the dwelling for example:

*I like to be surrounded by things that – I'm not just about money being thrown about. It's about being selective and inexpensive. Very important. (Lesley).*

Lesley elaborates that charitable giving is important to her and her husband and therefore it is important that the money goes elsewhere.

This section has introduced findings relating to the connection of identity and dwelling, with a focus on *which* aspects of identity are connected. Findings of the first two studies also point to the dwelling as a place to reflect self, unsurprisingly given the research questions and research designs of these

<sup>35</sup> Travel can contribute to the process of home, as argued by Case (1996).



studies. The following section considers the importance of control in this process; thereafter discussion centres on *how* participants connect their identity to dwelling, with Section 6.4.1.3 considering personalisation behaviour and Section 6.4.1.4 taking a closer look at the role of personal possessions.

#### 6.4.1.2 Control

An important emergent concept throughout the interviews, control appears to be essential in the process of home. In order to personalise and otherwise connect identity to dwelling, participants need to feel a full sense of autonomy in the dwelling. Control is a dominant theme in the literature on meaning of home (e.g. Case, 1996; Tomas and Dittmar, 1995; Kellett and Moore, 2003; Coates and Fordham, 2000) and is a prerequisite for personalisation. Findings relating to control are discussed first before discussion turns to personalisation and then the meanings attached to personal possessions.

In order to feel that a place is one's own it is necessary to have a sense of autonomy in that place – to be able to do whatever one wants *in* and *to* that place. Rachel explains:

*... it's about control as well isn't it – if you can decorate it as you want it, if you can just do what you want with it.*

For some the need for control exists where previously another person has had that control. Here Maude explains the importance of the dwelling feeling like her own – especially important given that she had moved back into her childhood home which had been decorated and personalised by her Mother (who no longer inhabits that part of the house but resides upstairs in a separate granny flat). She and her husband had changed the use of space – the living room at the front of the house became a bedroom and the bedroom at the back became a living room:

*It's ours... Yes, yes, it's ours rather than my mother's. Yes.*

This echoes the research of Gurney (1997) who cites the example of a woman who transformed the home of her mother (who had passed away) into her own home by changing the way that the space was used.

A key participant for this theme, Jennifer provides numerous comments relating to control within the dwelling throughout the interview. She explains why control is so important to her:

*I tend to think it's where I come it's where I feel secure, it's mine I think because when I was at home I was one of four, and so I never really had my own bedroom or you know. Everything was shared, shared and I had a very controlling father so I wasn't in control of you know the way I wanted things to be. So I think that's why home's really important... I think I probably may be a bit of a control freak, it is it's my house.*

She goes on to provide a number of examples of aspects of the dwelling in which she sometimes feels a loss of control, and these largely relate to the existence of others in the household (her husband and daughter). Where loss of control arises because of other inhabitants, conflict can often occur. This highlights the strong connection of control to social aspects. Conflict between inhabitants is discussed in detail in Section 6.4.4.

#### 6.4.1.3 Personalisation

Personalisation is a central behaviour in the process of home and results in a dwelling which reflects the identity of the person that lives there (e.g. Rapoport, 1989; Nasar, 1989; Sadalla et al., 1987). Personalisation is central to the research carried out in both Studies 1 and 2. Study 1 explored influences on personalisation, highlighting a number of ways in which such behaviour might be influenced. The effect of individual differences were studied in terms of their effect on home making in Study 2. Study 3 aimed both to strengthen evidence for a link between personalisation and identity, and explore the influence of personality on personalisation behaviour.

In Study 3, Participants discussed a number of areas of personalisation including DIY and structural aspects like extensions and layout as well as décor and more movable elements such as artwork and pictures and pieces of furniture. It was the latter elements which were the most prevalent in the

interviews. This is in part due to the section of the questionnaire in which participants were asked to describe aspects of their identity (see Appendix 13) which also fed into discussion in the interviews. Personalisation is strongly associated with the meaning of possessions (for a detailed discussion on this see Section 6.4.1.4). Artwork and pictures proved to be of central importance to a number of participants. For example, when asked what helps to make the house feel more like a home, Maggie says:

*Definitely the artwork – I think that's the biggest thing. We've got a lot of pieces here that are really personal to us...*

Wendy explains that a favourite piece of artwork is instrumental in choosing her favourite corner (see Figure 21):

*Right this is my favourite corner... It's when I am lying in the bath, its here, it's this picture, I absolutely love this picture... Every night I have this, its really important to me, my bath, I have to have a bath even if its 5 o'clock in the morning. I lie in my bath and I just look at this and I just feel totally happy.*



Figure 21 - Painting above bath, Wendy

Artwork and pictures can be especially useful in personalising a dwelling when money is limited as described by Lesley in reference to a previous dwelling:



*I really do like pictures, yes. Pictures – when I had this house in London first of all, and I had really very little money, the only thing that could make it look some thought had gone into it was portable things like pictures.*

In this extract Lesley is acknowledging the fact that pictures are moveable and can be used to personalise a space without making time-consuming and expensive changes to it, such as redecoration. This reiterates the findings of Cooper Marcus (1995) and Rapoport (1989), both of whom found that it was the moveable rather than the fixed elements of a dwelling that expressed self and afforded personalisation. Further support for this is found in Study 2 (see Section 5.4.8).

Drawings made by children are often pride of place in the dwelling, helping participants to feel a strong connection to their children (see Figure 22):

*I've loads of pictures – I just wanted to put all the kids' bits in here... that's Calum's hand print. That's Adam's hand print. Just things that they've made... Even their sewing is up there (Lily).*

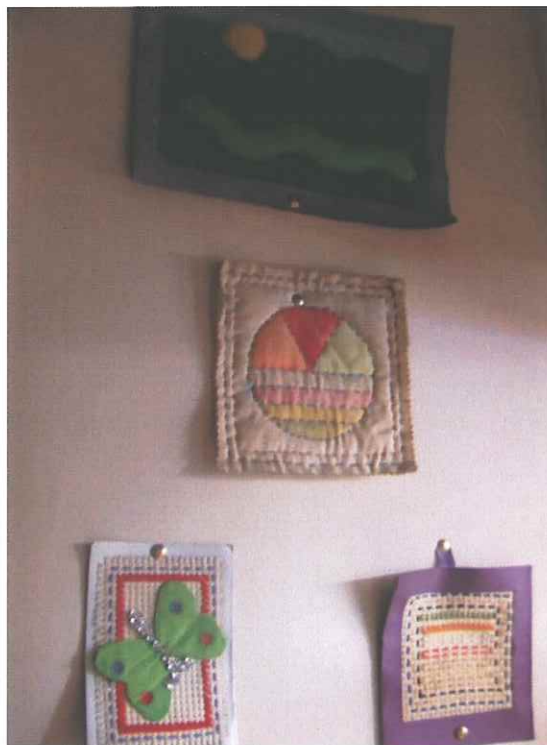


Figure 22 - Children's sewing, Lily

Colour also proved to be important to participants when discussing personalisation of the dwelling. In particular colour seems to be instrumental in helping participants to identify with a dwelling. Perhaps surrounding oneself with favoured colours can make one feel at ease in the dwelling:

*I rang up Anastasia<sup>36</sup> and said right go on the DFS<sup>37</sup> website, look at this sofa and tell me is it alright and she said yes so long as you get the white covers it will be fine, don't go for duck egg blue or gold it will be hideous [laughs] and then I thought but it's terribly white so I thought what I'm going to do is just stick this over it and it makes it more us (Wendy).*

Sheila feels that she had made mistakes over the years in a certain room with the colour. With the help of a friend she was able to put her finger on what the problem was. Despite having identified what she perceives to be the problem, she still feels that in future decisions she may take the same path:

*Sheila: The colour combination has never been quite right and I think it's partly because we did it in bits and I tended to go for more harmless colours, more plain and so there is not a real feeling here. And one friend I think put her finger on it. She said there is not a contrast in this room, it's pale. And I agree where as the room that I do like best has a contrast and that was more my creation and I feel... that one just is a happier place as far as the decor is concerned... it has a lot to do I think with choices and colour. I really feel it's a colour thing.*

*Researcher: And perhaps there is over time, that's developed a bit of a block to this room as well?*

*Sheila: Probably yes. I think you're quite right about that. I just think we are going to do the same thing we always do which is choose the more neutral colour for some reason. But I am giving it time and thinking about how I could improve it.*

Sheila has struggled over the years with the dwelling - home making does not come naturally to her. Perhaps there has always been a block on connecting to this dwelling and fully accepting it as home given her attachment to the US (c.f. Stea, 1995). In this extract she is seen to be dissatisfied with her own efforts in the dwelling and this echoes the prominent theme throughout her interview – a conflict between on the one hand feeling that the dwelling and her connection to it is inadequate and on the other hand a development in her character towards appreciating the dwelling and recognising it as home.

Another important aspect of personalisation is the use of particular pieces or

<sup>36</sup> Her daughter

<sup>37</sup> Sofa company

styles of furniture. Furniture is very prevalent in discussion on possessions (see Section 6.4.1.4). Many of the participants show a preference for older furniture, often salvaged from junk shops and passed on from family and friends. For example Jennifer explains how she makes her house feel like home:

*By bringing in pieces of furniture that I like, not necessarily new 'cos I know other people like new furniture. I like furniture which has aged and that has character.*

A further example is provided by Wendy who feels uncomfortable buying new furniture and feels the need to personalise her new sofa with something old and personal, because *"it makes it feel more us"* (as discussed previously in this section).

Maude explains her fondness for a piece of furniture, something she had always wanted and finally came to be able to afford (see Figure 23):

*... when I was a little girl, I always wanted a Welsh dresser... and when my husband & I got married, we got enough money to buy it... it's been with us for 34 years & I'll never part with it.*

Possibly, the Welsh dresser represents for Maude a sense of achievement: it may be symbolic of a realised ambition in terms of her transition between childhood (the young girl who dreams of a home with a Welsh dresser pride of place within) and adulthood (the married young woman who is able to buy a piece of furniture which has become to her symbolic of the ideal home).

Pieces of furniture are particularly appreciated when they facilitate the ways in which a participant would like to live in the dwelling. For example, Kate describes her love of her dining table (see Figure 24) which facilitates the social dynamic when entertaining, due to its design (Kate holds frequent dinner parties):

*... it couldn't have been anything else... the table is just a pure delight to use... William Morris said everybody should have in their house things which are either functional or beautiful and this I think is both because it's handcrafted, the wood's matured 10 years before the table's made. You can sit 8 people here and you never bang anybody's elbow.*





Figure 23 - Welsh dresser, Maude



Figure 24 - Dining table, Kate

Maggie also describes her dining table (see Figure 25) as one of her favourite possessions, in particular because she and her husband entertain a great deal

and socialising is very important to them (Maggie scores high on Extraversion - see discussion in Section 6.4.3.1).



Figure 25 - Dining table, Maggie

Another area to emerge within discussion on personalisation was that of things for the dwelling being home made or renovated. Participants who enjoy making things for the dwelling can often reveal something of how such creativity can help to make a place feel more like home:

*I like making things... I cover sofas and I make cushions and I do lots of art crafty things to make the home my own (Jennifer).*

Things made for the home are often symbolic of important people (see also discussion on photographs within this section) for example:

*Well there's also these cross stitch samplers that I did – up there, that one's for Robert, that one's for Laura. I did that when they were babies... I always had them in the living room, it was to commemorate them really (Rachel).*

For these participants, things made for the dwelling are a powerful means of connecting with the dwelling because they are a creation and direct expression of the self:

*I think things that you make really transcend anything you can buy, because you've put something of yourself into it (Lesley).*

Photographs are another powerful means of personalising a dwelling – Shenk et al. (2004) found that in their sample, photographs were among the most treasured possessions. The same is true of the current sample - all participants talk of photographs although they differ in the importance they place on them. Photographs are also very prevalent in discussion relating to the meaning of possessions (see Section 6.4.1.4; photographs are also discussed by participants in the first two studies, see sections 4.3.5 and 5.4.8.2). Some participants describe photographs as central to the dwelling, for example:

*... one thing that I didn't mention that is really important actually... is photos... Photos are really important to me... Basically family. Family and friends, yeah. Of special times and of times that you've really loved... We have got a little gallery going up the stairs... we've got some lovely ones of the kids but friends are so important (Maggie).*

Wendy suggests that photographs can be used to convey happy memories and relate a sense of happiness in the dwelling:

*I think we were saying how do we show happiness and I think it's probably by photographs (Wendy).*

Other participants rely less on photographs, for example:

*I don't really need photos you know, to remind me of things (Maude).*

Others simply do not like to display photographs at all:

*I've actually always been somebody who has not liked having photographs round the house, photographs of people (Kate).*

For those who find photographs important, the role of the photograph varies. For example Wendy has a photograph of her Mother as a child which helps her to face the day ahead – this extract also highlights the significance of photographs as reminders of others (see Section 6.4.1.4):

*I've got a picture of my mum who was very very important to me but she*



*was very truculent, was quite stubborn, a very strong person. I'll show it to you, it's a lovely picture of her when she was about 18 months and she sort of tilts her chin in this very truculent way so I do the same, I kind of look at her, I open the curtains, I look at the view and it sets me up for the day and that's it.*

Sheila describes how photographs can help her to capture a particular time in her and her family's life when relationships are at their best:

*...this one would have to win because it represents a day in 1987... there was this medieval fair... And the boys for once were getting along, they were very happy... It went well from beginning to end, there weren't any squabbles... it was such a lovely memory... And I'm not good at remembering what they said at different ages, my husband has a remarkable memory for that, but it's got to be images, and I do rely a lot on photographs, so that one's rather sweet, I really like that.*

This extract illustrates how people might focus on those memories which make them happiest, particularly when things have not always been optimal such as in the case of the relationship between the participant's sons. In this case, a happy, beneficial memory is brought to the foreground in being represented photographically in the participant's dwelling.

An interesting finding in terms of photographs, some participants had made (or others had made for them) collages (see an example in Figure 26) – a collection of photographs grouped together in a frame, depicting significant people, places and events. This was also the case for one of the participants in the first study (see Section 4.3.5). Some participants also talked about displaying their pictures in the style of a small gallery sometimes on the staircase wall (see Figure 27).

The idea of arranging memories in such a way may be a powerful means of manipulating the image (portrayed to self and others) of a person's past and aspects of their identity. Only the happiest and most significant memories and relationships are depicted.



Figure 26 - Photograph collage, Wendy



Figure 27 - Photograph gallery, Maggie

As shown with Sheila's fondness for a particular family day out, the manipulation and editing of memory is something that people may do in order to feel good about the past. Perhaps such creative approaches to memory also help people to feel positive about their own self-concept thereby increasing self-esteem. The constructivist and reconstructive nature of memory is researched and discussed at length in the false memory literature (e.g. Loftus and Pickrell, 1995; Loftus, 1997; Brainerd and Reyna, 2005).

Bhatti and Church (2000) talk of the importance of the garden in the search for identity. For some participants the garden was of central importance in the dwelling. Often when thinking about dwelling and home it is easy to forget the significance of the garden but participants act as a reminder of its importance, for example:

*I could talk about the garden for hours (Kate).*

For Greta and her husband the garden was more important than the house itself when choosing somewhere to live – they had both decided to buy the house on seeing the garden before they had seen the inside. Greta had always spent a large amount of time in the garden due to her husband's passion for gardening (for a picture of the garden see Figure 28):

*He had an acre of garden, he was a mad keen gardener. And we built a house there, a superb house. And we couldn't get a house in the country because he wanted a garden. So we lived in Aberdeen, and then this one came on the market and we said we'd have it before we'd even been inside. It has half an acre of garden and – at work he had to feed the world for his work. And he had to feed the world from our garden as well. There were six of us at one point – my mother and three children – yes. And so the garden was all straight rows of fruit and vegetables. And everything had to be frozen for the following year and so forth. Hundreds of runner beans and everything!*

Now she is older Greta has professional help in the garden, but the garden continues to be central to her experience of home as evidenced by the time given to the subject throughout the interview.





Figure 28 - Garden, Greta

The finding that for this participant the garden was more important than the building is echoed by other participants who demonstrate the importance of garden size as opposed to house size:

*Yes, that's why we bought this house, because of the size of the land with it... She<sup>38</sup> kept saying "oh you could push it out a bit more" and I kept saying "no, no, no" because my garden was more important than the size of the rooms in the house (Lily).*

Kate shows that the high importance of the garden over the house was the reason for building a conservatory which is now her favourite inside space in the dwelling:

*Yeah, yeah the garden is the thing that I like most and this room allows me to have the garden summer and winter.*

Findings relating to the importance of the garden echo findings in the first two studies, in which participants highlighted the importance of the garden in terms of the home environment (see sections 4.3.1 and 5.4.8.2).

Tastes in décor were discussed frequently in the interviews. Some people may be more sensitive than others to environments that do not fit with their own

<sup>38</sup> The architect who was consulted regarding a potential extension.

aesthetic preferences. For example some of the participants explained that they find unattractive environments unsettling:

*I can't bear anything around me that smacks of ugliness. I can't take it. I can understand why it gives some people a buzz, but that's not me (Lesley).*

Whereas others showed that they were able to tolerate a particular decorative feature or piece of furniture because despite finding it unattractive it had some special significance:

*There's a thing in the hall which I think is absolutely ugly and hideous, I can't bear it... It's there because it was my great-grandmother's (Wendy).*

As repeatedly stated throughout this section, possessions are central to personalisation. It is because of their significance and connections to the person that possessions can be used as a means of connecting identity to the dwelling. The following section discusses the meanings of personal possessions in detail.

#### *6.4.1.4 The Meaning of possessions*

The meaning of possessions can reveal a great deal of the way in which a person interacts with the dwelling. As argued repeatedly in the literature, possessions hold associations with many aspects of a person's life (e.g. Rochberg-Halton, 1984; Shenk et al., 2004; Kamptner, 1989; Copper Marcus, 1995; see Section 3.9.1). Possessions hold a great many meanings for participants although a number of common themes emerged from the data. In particular possessions are important in evoking past memories and in feeling connected to significant people in the participants' lives, whether those people live with the participant or not – something also found in Study 2 (see Section 5.4.8.2). Possessions can even serve as a reminder of a participant's previous home or homes which again serves as a means of evoking memories of one's past. Possessions relate to a number of other key concepts in the data for example interests and travel.

There were differences among the participants in the extent to which they placed importance on possessions in the dwelling – a finding which supports Cooper Marcus' (1995) assertion that people differ in their attachment to objects. For some participants possessions are crucial and often mean the difference between a house and a home. For example when asked to explain what makes a house a home Wendy responds:

*It's very much about family and it's very much about possessions and it's very much about what you've done to personalise it. And it's also over the years all the things that have added to that house to make it.*

She later elaborates on just how important significant possessions are to her, saying:

*I've often said what if I moved and downsized... what would I do with all my lovely old bits of furniture which are falling apart... They're very important, yeah. I'm hugely sentimental... we will just hang on to it, even though we think it's hideous.*

Lily discusses a treasured oil lamp (see Figure 29) and clearly understands its associations with her childhood home:

*... that particular oil lamp sat on the table in the kitchen... in the winter, when we came into the bottom of the driveway after school, it was pitch dark by that time. And you would see that light shining at the kitchen and you'd think "thank goodness, I'm nearly home"... I love that oil lamp. I would never part with that... just that comfort thing you know – you'd trekked through the snow for three miles after a day at school and you'd just come into the kitchen and there it is... Happy times and comfort.*

Whereas others believe that possessions are less important or unnecessary:

*... you can make a home out of anything... you don't always need to have possessions. I went backpacking round the world... you've got everything that you need in a backpack... And when we got back I just wanted to get rid of a whole lot of stuff – I thought I don't need all that stuff (Maude).*



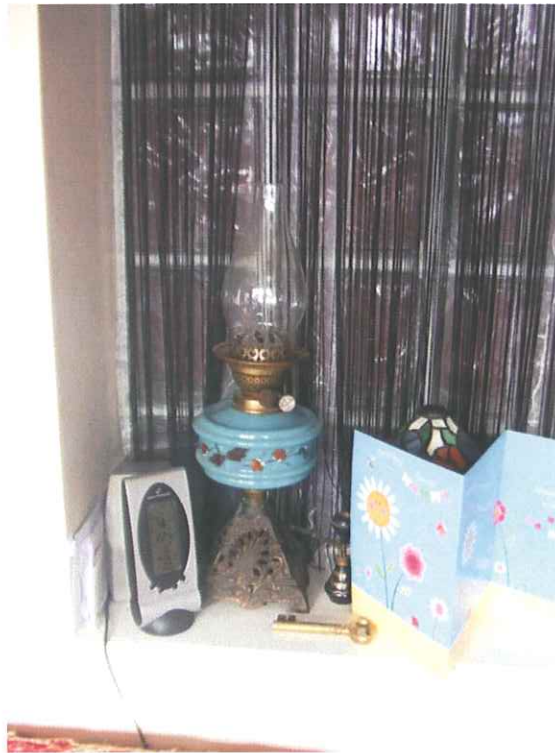


Figure 29 - Oil lamp, Lily

Maude does however talk of significant possessions such as her Welsh dresser, and a collection of pottery which is proudly displayed (Figure 30).



Figure 30 - Pottery collection, Maude

Participants are generally able to explain why a possession is significant to them. However, Elizabeth discusses a painting on her living room wall, painted of her daughter by a talented local artist:

*So I don't know whether it's there because it's her or whether it's just a picture, I'm not sure.*

She differs from other participants in that not only is she not particularly attached to many possessions (with the exception of a small number of treasured possessions such as her teddy bear and her Toby jugs), she actively seeks to be rid of them when she moves house, which she is planning to do over the next year:

*I'd like to start on a change, I'd like a blank canvas and the more that you bring with you, the more that you're sort of - well not spoiling the blank canvas, but compromising.*

Even among those participants who place a high importance on possessions, differences exist in their thoughts about losing these. Maggie finds the thought of losing her treasured things very stressful:

*...my worst nightmare would be a flood or something. I can't imagine how people deal with that, because it's taking away. You can't replace (Maggie).*

Whereas Wendy puts a more positive spin on how she might feel should she lose her possessions in a fire:

*You sort of question why you bothered to have contents insurance because if it all goes up in smoke you had a fantastic, you've got lovely memories of it, you've loved having it... none of the stuff I've got here I can replace therefore part of me thinks... enjoy it whilst it's there, if it goes up in smoke, it goes up in smoke.*

Whilst both women are illustrating the irreplaceable nature of significant possessions, Maggie suggests that she would feel a strong sense of loss whereas Wendy seems to focus on a more positive outcome – that of having happy memories of the possessions. This difference in approach suggests that personality plays an important role in the ways in which people cope with change and loss in the home environment. In fact, whereas Wendy is high on

emotional stability, Maggie is not – perhaps both participants are able to predict, as a result of this aspect of their personalities, the ways in which they would react to such loss.

Following the first three interviews an additional question was added to the interview schedule: *Do you collect anything?* Participants were often able to discuss significant possessions at even greater length once they had thought about whether there was anything that would constitute a collection in their dwelling. Collections tend to centre around something in which the participant is interested in or something that is valued – for example Figure 31 shows a collection of badges centred around an image of a cat – a type of animal loved by Rachel:



Figure 31 - Collection of badges around a cat, Rachel

Collections evolve or even change for a variety of reasons, as illustrated by Jennifer (see Figure 32):

*Well I used to collect teapots... I started getting lots of teapots given to me, and I wasn't in control 'cos I wasn't picking them and then didn't like some of the colours...so I sold all my teapots at a car boot sale [laughs], kind of started liking white and I liked the simplicity... I'm controlling the colour, so I don't mind, it's all the different shapes and I just think they all look nice put together*



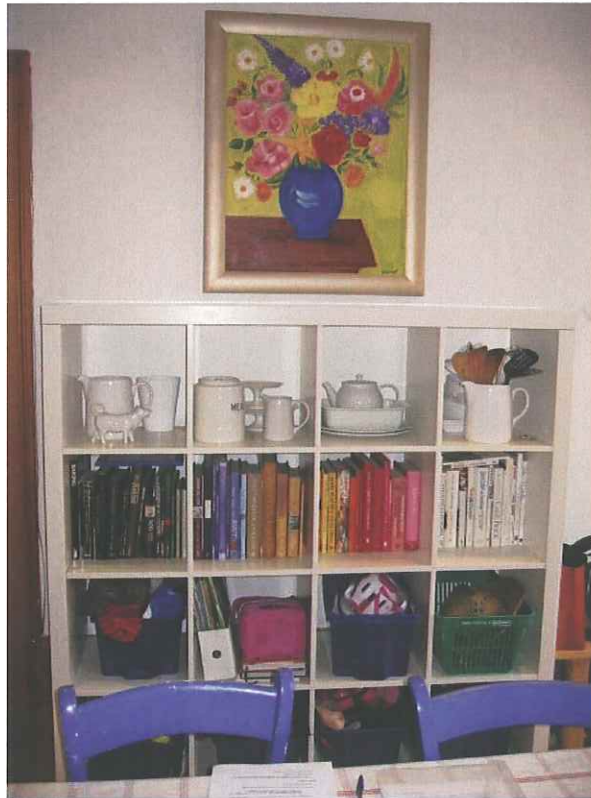


Figure 32 - Collection of white china and colour coordinated books, Jennifer

For Jennifer *control* is incredibly important (see Section 6.4.1.2) and for this reason she was compelled to dispose of her teapot collection because she had lost control over it. This finding echoes an assertion made by Chapman (1999) that the significance of possessions is such that giving household objects as gifts can be problematic if the receiver doesn't hold the same tastes as the giver.

For Wendy a collection of plaster of Paris Christmas cake decorations is symbolic of a family tradition that she wishes to keep going (see Figure 33):

*...it's a tradition in our family that on Christmas Eve when you ice the cake... you start with the youngest member of the family and everybody who is staying has to put on one decoration... and you go right through to the oldest and then you go back to the beginning and start again until the whole cake is absolutely covered...*

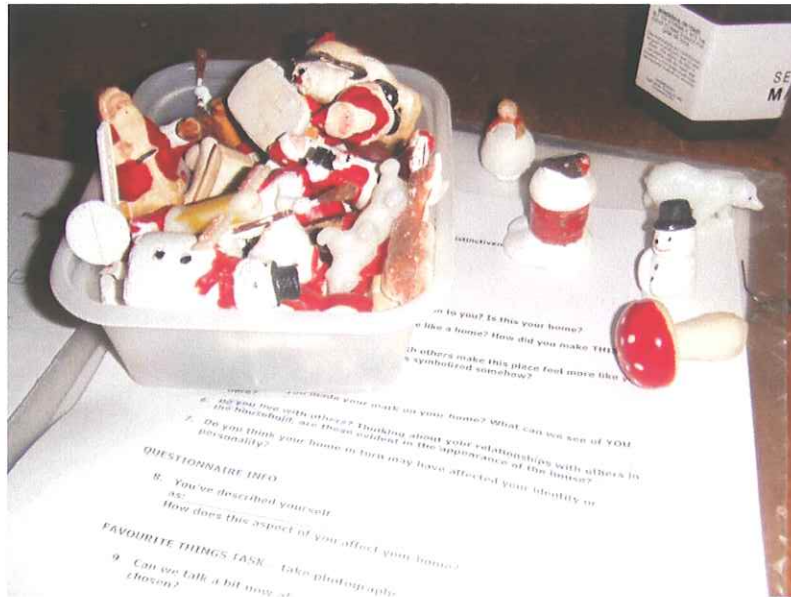


Figure 33 - Christmas cake decorations, Wendy

For others, collections can symbolise a certain way of thought or sentiments which are valued or significant. For example Elaine:

*I collect pictures of windows and I've stuck them round the mirror... there was a symbolism there, because I once met a woman on a course... she collected windows and she was a lovely woman... And I said why would you do that? She was a Quaker and she said well – it's all about letting in the light, you know. Quakers believe in an inner light.*

Elaine elaborates later in the interview that the notion of an inner light has, over the years, helped her deal with the loss of a son. Other aspects of the dwelling are testament to the value she places on this sentiment:

*I suppose the whole business of letting in the light... I've a phrase up there it's better to light a candle than curse the darkness. And that's been I think my attitude because the year David died a poor woman wrote to me whose son had died in similar circumstances to my son but 10 years previously, and she was still pouring out her woes about how her life had ended... she did me the biggest favour that woman – because I just thought I'm not going to live my life like you – David deserved better than that.*

Past memories are evoked by possessions and are a strong motivation for keeping and displaying significant possessions. This is reflected in the literature, for example Gilroy and Kellett (2006) found that old people use possessions as



a means of staying connected with their past. Past memories are strongly linked with memories of others, but sometimes a possession evokes a memory of an event itself. For example Maggie treasures a piece of artwork which was created as a design for her and her husband's wedding stationery. This image is also representative of her marriage with her husband and so is meaningful on more than one level. Others treasure possessions that evoke memories of a particularly happy or fun-filled period in their lives. Wendy discusses an old guitar which evokes memories of carefree youth and truancy:

*I like that awful guitar, do you see it's completely broken it's got holes in it...but do you see that little sticker? That's so important, that's my Biba<sup>39</sup> sticker...and that just takes me straight back to school and skiving off school... we used to go down to Biba... it was just so cool. But you see, why keep this awful old guitar but that's why... Because it just triggers this whole lovely memory of my youth at school and sort of the wicked things we used to get up to.*

As shown in this thesis and in the literature (e.g. Gilroy and Kellett, 2006) people use possessions as a means of reflecting their values. For Wendy, a certain degree of rebellion against authority seems to be an important part of her value system. So as well as representing her carefree youth it is possible that the guitar is symbolic of her values in reminding her of playing truant from school. What's more, Wendy is low on conscientiousness and this is reflected through the display of a possession which to her represents her rebellion against servitude and authority.

Possessions act as a reminder of others in a person's life (e.g. Kamptner, 1989; Shenk et al., 2004). The ability of a possession to evoke memories of significant people in a person's life is the strongest theme to emerge from discussions about possessions. Perhaps the most prevalent type of possession to remind a participant of others is the photograph (for more discussion on photographs see Section 6.4.1.3), however gifts from others, including those made by the person in question are also treasured – both for the memories they evoke of the person and for the care symbolized through the act of giving or making.

Sheila has been shown to use photographs as a means of remembering a cherished family moment (see 6.4.1.4). Similarly she is fond of some ornamental ducks that she has displayed in her dining room for their ability to evoke another treasured memory:

<sup>39</sup> "an iconic and popular London fashion store of the 1960s and 1970s" – source: [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)



*... those ducks are representative too... that's an association with my mother... the occasions when I actually went to a place with her seem a little rare... And we went out on a row boat together and it was just the two of us, and we loved the beauty of that. And she also loved wildlife and the ducks were there and I associate that moment as one of the happiest – just that moment that we shared – we weren't arguing for once! And so I love ducks...*

For Lily, an old blanket box is treasured as it holds strong connections with her childhood and in particular her grandparents (see Figure 34):

*...the only thing is that box... This is another sad story... it was my Granny and Grandpa's – and it was always in the spare bedroom... once we were adopted we used to get 9 weeks of holiday in the summer, and we always used to be sent down to my Granny and Grandpa to stay with them... That's another thing that I wouldn't part with... Because they were the only people that would ever speak to me about my birth parents. My sister hated it and I loved it. And we used to sit and look through all the photographs.*

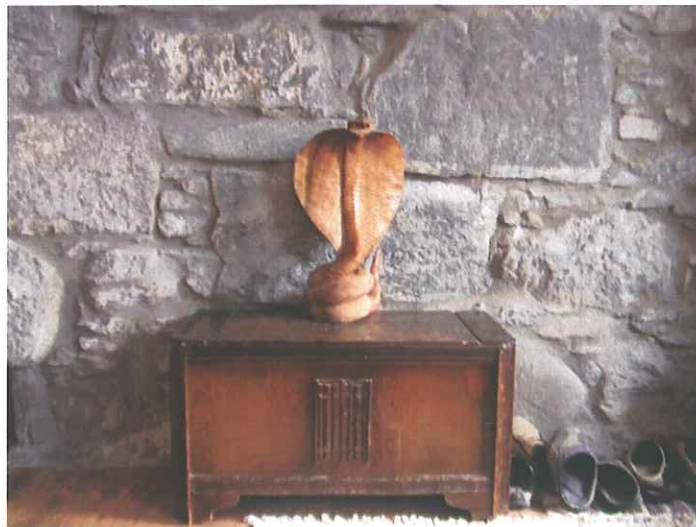


Figure 34 - Blanket box, Lily

Elizabeth explains how she took a reminder of her daughters with her when she worked abroad for a time (her dislike of photographs was discussed in Section 6.4.1.3):

*...you know, on the fridge door having the magnets that the girls had got me for my birthday.*

*I: Yes, that reminded you of them and that made you feel connected to them?*

*P: Yes whereas I wouldn't have put a photo. I still didn't take any photos or photos to put up at all.*

Maude shows that people differ in their reliance upon possessions in order to remember others. She says:

*I don't really need that to remind me – I know people who keep their father's jackets & things like that. I've never been one for that – I can just remember my Dad, you know. I don't need possessions & things to do that.*

An emergent theme which is related to being reminded of others through possessions is that of gifts from others. Gifts signify relationships with others (Shenk et al., 2004) and often hold great significance to participants although again, there are differences between participants in the meanings attached to them. Gifts can act to strengthen our understanding of how much another person cares:

*Oh my friend gave me that Paisley shawl, that one there. I love Paisley shawls and she just, I'd sort of helped her out with her children... she thought I would like it, you know. It was just so kind (Maude).*

Conversely, Wendy shows an awareness of how a gift given to friends can remind them of her on a regular basis:

*I often do that with friends. I'll go and stay with them, I'll give them something like an egg pricker so I know that every time they have a boiled egg they have to think of me.*

Gestures such as these not only show that a person cares – they also show that a friend has taken the time to really listen to what we have to say, that they understand our desires and interests, that they “get” us, such as in the case of Lily's husband:

*That's from Egypt – Graeme brought it back for me – you see he knew exactly what I would like as well – it wasn't as if he brought it back and I thought “oh no that's horrible”.*

However gifts can sometimes be a problem when the receiver does not share the same aesthetic taste as the giver (Chapman, 1999). Some feel it necessary to display the object in order to avoid hurt feelings:

*That was Arnold [whispers – Arnold is in a nearby room] I don't like it very much. But he bought it for me though (Lesley).*

Whereas others are less inclined to compromise their own aesthetic style for another's benefit:

*I don't ever feel like I have to display things... I do say thank you but that's it, it doesn't have to get displayed just 'cos somebody gave it to me (Jennifer).*

Gifts that have been made by others were often very special to participants. As demonstrated by Joy in her feelings about a bedspread and the friend that made it for her, things that have been made as a gift not only bear significance in the sense of a gift but also in the time devoted to creating the object which signifies care and friendship (see Figure 35):

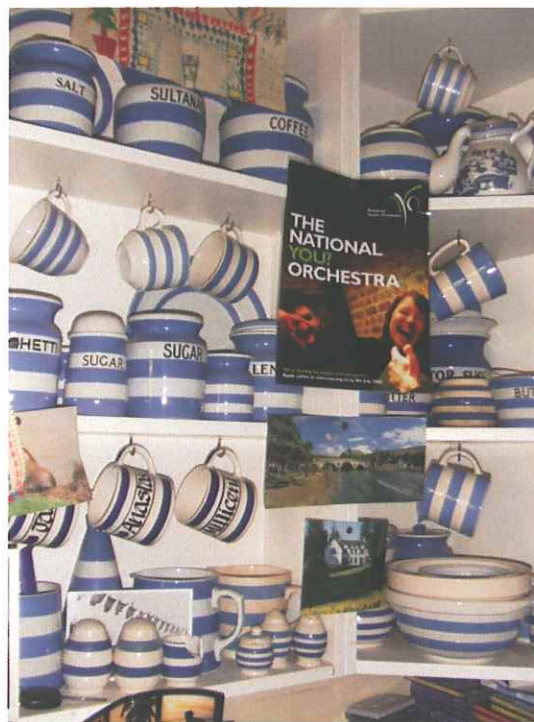
*...well when you said one of the most cherished things – I think is the bed spread... one of my very oldest friends gave it to us for our silver wedding... just the long friendship and the fact that she considered it important enough to put all this effort into it... And the fact that she made it... Means a lot to me, yeah.*



Figure 35 - Bedspread, Joy



*My grandmother had some beautiful fantastic furniture and when I was 6 she got us all in and said right darlings I want to leave you something in my will so choose... She had these amazingly valuable bits of furniture - clocks and paintings and everything and I just said, I want your Cornish ware. Which was lovely, my mum was laughing.*



Finally, possessions can act as a reminder of past dwellings, in particular these possessions are important where the participant retains an attachment and fondness to a previous dwelling and considered that dwelling a home. Such associations can also give the participant a sense of continuity (see also Section 6.4.2). For example Sheila retains a long-held attachment to her native California:

*There's one thing upstairs in the study, it's actually to do with where my brother lives in northern California, it's just a bit of a shrub and I've kept it and it's dried now but the smell reminds me a little of where he lives and it has a kind of Californian piney smell.*

In terms of personalisation then, possessions are crucial. This is because possessions have a great many associations with a person's identity and aspects of their life – their personal and family history, their relationships, their interests and their achievements. Possessions are therefore one of the most powerful means of connecting identity with dwelling. As argued by McCracken (1988), possessions act as a means of constructing and reinforcing identity – *"Surrounded by our things, we are constantly instructed in who we are and what we aspire to... things are our ballast"* (p24). Rochberg-Halton (1984) adds further weight to the argument: *"transactions with cherished possessions are communicative dialogues with ourselves"* (p347). These points remind us of the ability of possessions to assist in self-definition – but they also carry strong associations with significant other people, pointing to the importance of other people in terms of one's identity.

#### 6.4.1.5 Does the dwelling influence identity?

Much of the discussion in the interviews focused on how the participants' identity had been connected to the dwelling. Another interest of the study was to explore whether or not the dwelling in turn could affect the identity of the participants. This concept is hinted at in the literature for example by Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) who suggest that houses may help to create self by creating behavioural opportunities. The idea of a two-way relationship between identity and dwelling is important because a transactional approach is taken to the theoretical framework of the thesis (Wapner and Demick, 2000; see Section 2.4.1) – not only should the identity of the person affect the dwelling, but the dwelling should also impact upon the identity of the person.

Wendy, who repeatedly makes reference to her strong feelings of attachment to the house, explains:

*I mean it's just given me huge strength, security, confidence... we're so completely contented and at one here. You're not looking always striving*

*to be somewhere else... We're just totally blissfully happy to be... it just gives us a chance to be independent, to be free.*

It seems that the house has affected the person she is in the sense that she is more contented, more satisfied with her lot in life and less likely to strive for more in terms of housing or place. It can be argued from this extract that Wendy's dwelling contributes favourably to her self-esteem (see also Section 6.4.2).

Jennifer on the other hand (who, as previously discussed places a strong emphasis on control in the dwelling – see Section 6.4.1.2) argues that her dwelling has had no impact whatsoever on her character:

*...no I think all my personality traits are pretty kind of strong in that I'm a control freak... I'm kind of a strong character so I think, my characteristics I imposed on the house as opposed to the other way round.*

Although some of the participants are able to respond to the question relating to the effect the dwelling has had on them as a person, these responses are usually couched in terms of how a person feels, rather than identity per se. The concept of dwelling affecting identity remains interesting and some support for this can be seen. However, additional research would be required in order to make confident claims as to the ways in which dwelling and home impacts upon a person's identity.

Sections 6.4.1 - 6.4.1.4 have discussed the nature of the connection of identity to the dwelling. Findings relating to control, personalisation of the dwelling and the meaning of significant possessions have shed light on some of the ways in which people connect identity to dwelling. Differences in the participants' approaches to various aspects of personalisation are highlighted in these sections. The following section considers the data in relation to key theories of identity.



#### 6.4.2 Identity theories and dwelling

Study 3 aims to increase understanding of the ways in which identity and dwelling interact. A consideration of the results in terms of key identity theories can lead to a deeper understanding of identity and dwelling. Place Identity Theory (PIT), Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Identity Process Theory (IPT) are considered here in relation to the findings.

##### 6.4.2.1 Place Identity Theory

Place Identity Theory (PIT) is a useful theoretical contribution (Proshansky, 1978; Proshansky et al., 1983) in focussing academic attention on the importance of place in identity processes (PIT is described in more detail in Section 2.5.2). Proshansky et al. explain that how a person evaluates the place in which they live contributes to their self-definition. In this study, some participants identified so strongly with their home or dwelling that it featured strongly in their overall identity (or in the case of Wendy, her family identity – *“I think it’s very much a part of our family”*). Not only does the person affect the dwelling, but the dwelling may also affect the identity of the person (Hauge, 2006) – a view which is consistent with a transactional approach to identity and dwelling (c.f. Stokols and Shumaker, 1981). In the interviews, participants were asked if they were aware of how the dwelling may have impacted upon their identity (see Section 6.4.1.1). Findings were limited but do show how a place may contribute to the identity of a person. For example, some participants felt that qualities in the home environment affected their own character, as in the case of Wendy who argues for the restorative nature of her home environment, and Joy who argues that having a relaxing home environment helps her to be a peaceful contented person: *“if you weren’t happy in your home, then you would be a discontent”*. Other identifications relating to place are that of being a country person (in particular for Lily, who had been moved from London and believes she would have almost certainly been a city person if she had not lost her parents and been adopted, and Maggie who believes that living rurally has led to her embracing a number of country pursuits and becoming much more involved in outdoor interests), that of being an Aberdonian, the importance of being a villager (Greta), that of being a lover of the sea (Beth) and of being a Californian whilst at the same time thinking of Aberdeen – finally - as home

(Sheila). Such findings reveal how participants identify with aspects of the physical environment – such aspects are incorporated into their identity content (it is also acknowledged that other settings will also contribute to a person's identity, although these were not explored in the interviews).

Proshansky et al. (1983) argue that once a child has developed a sense of place identity (resulting from their experiences in a number of settings, but primarily the dwelling), this place identity will be used to evaluate other environmental settings. Evidence of this process can be seen in this study when comparisons are made with other dwellings (although such comparisons can also be considered from the perspective of Social Identity Theory, as discussed below). For example, when Maggie discusses other peoples' interiors as lacking in soul and being "*not us*", it is conceivable that an image of her own dwelling is drawn on in this negative evaluation. Proshansky et al. (1983) argue for such place-related schemata in cognition as being subconscious - they argue that physical settings are "backdrops" to life events. In other words, people may not be aware of the influence of certain environments on their identity and on a number of cognitive processes. This could explain the limited understanding that participants seemed to have of the way in which their dwellings may have affected their identity.

Although Place Identity Theory is an important theoretical contribution which has been extensively used in environmental psychology theory and research (Bonnes et al, 2003, Hauge, 2006), it has been criticised for being defined as separate from other identity structures (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996) – because a person is always in a physical setting, place must play a part in all aspects of identity. This is somewhat ironic given criticisms which suggest that mainstream approaches to identity and self tend to neglect the role of the physical environment (e.g. Twigger-Ross et al., 2003).

#### 6.4.2.2 *Social Identity Theory*

Social Identity Theory (SIT) can, as with Study 1, be used to explore some of the comparisons between own and others' dwellings (see also Section 4.4.1 – SIT is discussed in detail in Section 2.4.1). Social identity is explained as a person's understanding of the groups to which he or she belongs (Tajfel, 1972; Hogg and



Abrams, 1995), yet it is argued that SIT fails (as is typical of social psychological theory) to account for the physical environment (Hauge, 2006). However, Twigger-Ross et al. (2003) argue for the development of SIT to include place. Places would be conceived of as a “membership group”. But can membership categories that are related to places really enhance a person’s self-esteem? This is a central tenet of SIT and in order for the theory to be applicable to the built environment it must be shown that place-related categories (rather than merely places) can enhance a person’s self-esteem.

Place-related category memberships can be seen in Study 3. Participants described themselves as country people, or village people, and for some participants belonging to a particular community is important (as in Study 1). But they also categorised themselves at the level of the dwelling – for example, Maggie and Kate identify themselves with characterful granite houses, comparing such a housing style preferably against a dwelling on a housing estate. It is possible that finding one’s own dwelling superior in comparison to another’s can be used as a means of raising self-esteem.

Wendy compares her own clutter-rich dwelling with that of typical farmers and fishing folk in her rural neighbourhood, concluding that they are “dour” (see Section 6.4.4.1). She suggests that this could be related to age, and values, arguing for a puritanical element to their décor choices. Not only does Wendy here show us how people might make inferences as to the reasons for décor choices, she also demonstrates comparison between dwellings, again in favour of her own. It could also be argued that Wendy is stereotyping elderly farming and fishing folk in terms of their favoured décor style. Wendy also describes the dwellings of people working in the oil industry:

*I mean you get the oil lot who are very flashy – gold, status, materialism, really modern houses... Desperately trying to impress people by what they’ve got and status.*

Again, Wendy is suggesting a connection between style of décor and a group of people (the “oil lot”) – a group from which she is quite distinct, given her financial struggles over the years. Throughout the interview she assured the researcher that she places no value whatsoever on wealth, money and status and the possessions in her dwelling reflect this. Her values dictate that possessions of



sentimental value take precedent over those reflecting status. The above extract then can be seen as a comparison between two types of interiors – again in favour of her own approach. For Wendy, such a comparison places her firmly in the category which she wishes to belong to and has the potential to increase her self-esteem.

Such findings suggest that in line with the arguments of SIT, dwelling can be used both as a place-category and as a basis for comparison with others. Such comparisons may serve to raise self-esteem, suggesting SIT is applicable to environmental psychology research. What's more, as argued by Twigger-Ross et al. (2003) such findings suggest that theories such as SIT should be reconsidered in the literature and should be developed to encompass a greater range of phenomena – in particular the environmental context.

#### 6.4.2.3 *Identity Process Theory*

As with Study 1 within this thesis, an exploration of the four principles of Identity in Breakwell's model is of interest to this study. In her Identity Process Theory model (IPT), Breakwell identifies four principles driving identity processes: self-esteem, continuity, distinctiveness (1986) and self-efficacy (1992). Breakwell explains that self-esteem refers to a feeling of personal worth or social value; continuity refers to a sense of continuity of the self-concept across time and situation; distinctiveness refers to uniqueness or distinctiveness for the person (1986) and self-efficacy refers to one's perception of the ability to be effective in achieving one's goals (1992). Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996), in discussing the application of IPT to place, develop the theory in describing two types of place-related continuity – place-referent continuity and place-congruent continuity. Place-referent continuity refers to a sense of continuity which is supported by a person's environment. Place-congruent continuity refers to a sense of continuity stemming from the feeling that a person's environment is congruent with their identity (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996).

IPT has been described as a useful theory of identity in its applicability to research in the field of environmental psychology (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996; Twigger-Ross et al., 2003; Hauge, 2006). A number of research studies have explored place in relation to the identity principles central to IPT. For

example, Korpela (1989) found that favourite places of adolescents enhanced self-esteem; Speller et al. (1999) studied a community before and after a forced relocation, finding negative consequences to collective self-esteem and distinctiveness, and individual place-congruent continuity and self-efficacy.

Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) explored Londoners' attachment to their residential area, finding evidence for the application of all four identity principles to the neighbourhood. In analysing their interview transcripts, Twigger-Ross and Uzzell developed criteria for the identification of evidence for the four principles, as follows. For distinctiveness, they identified occurrences in which participants had somehow distinguished themselves from other types of person. For place-referent continuity, participants had to demonstrate how their environment enabled the connection of past histories with the present; place-congruent continuity was identified when participants demonstrated a good fit between themselves and their environment. Self-esteem was identified when participants described how their residential area made them feel good about themselves. Finally, self-efficacy was evidenced when participants discussed their ease in carrying out daily life in their environment.

Study 3 also sought to investigate the role of the four identity principles in terms of the dwelling, although no questions directly prompted participants on their feelings of continuity, self-esteem, self-efficacy or distinctiveness. This analysis of the interview data using the principles of IPT uses the same criteria for analysis as developed by Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996), which is clarified in the following discussion. The four principles are now considered in turn.

#### 6.4.2.3.1 *Distinctiveness*

Results suggest the importance of distinctiveness to participants and that this may be enhanced through the dwelling. In particular participants often refer to the type of dwelling they inhabit as being different to the sort of dwelling that another sort of person may live in. For example, Maude and Wendy both explain how uncomfortable they feel in houses that are bare in terms of possessions – comparing these negatively against their own dwellings which are rich with possessions and visually stimulating. Participants also distinguish themselves based on the location of their dwellings. In particular, those living in rural settings



generally compare these favourably against city life for example Wendy, who compares her country setting favourably against the stress of living in London. Some participants also explain that they “*couldn’t live on an estate*” (Kate) – a finding which echoes findings in Study 1. Such comparisons can also be considered in relation to SIT, as discussed above.

Such comparative identifications echo those found by Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) and Hummon (1986). These comparisons allow the participants to identify themselves as a particular type of person – country person rather than city person, for example, thus giving them a sense of distinctiveness. Importantly though, such identifications also give the participants a sense of falling into a particular social group – in telling them who they are *not* like, such identifications also tell them who they *are* like. This point reminds us that social comparison serves both to distinguish a person from others *and* to highlight commonalities between people.

Participants often have a conscious desire to be distinct from others in terms of dwelling. In arguing for the individuality expressed in her house Wendy refers to the fact that what makes it unique is the connection of the various aspects of her and her family’s life to it:

*I: “I like to be different”<sup>40</sup> – that’s a big one. Do you think that you’ve tried to make your home unique...*

*P: Definitely, I mean I can’t imagine any other home like this actually. So it’s totally unique to us... nobody could really recreate the house that we’ve got here because it’s so full of a mish-mash of so much history and different things.*

Breakwell (1996) argues that places are nested – so a dwelling exists within a neighbourhood, city, region and country, for example. She also suggests that people may mentally navigate between these levels in order to find the greatest potential for enhancing self-definitions. The above extract highlights one important distinction of the dwelling over the neighbourhood: the dwelling affords a great deal more control for the individual, resultantly a greater level of distinctiveness can be achieved through personalisation.

<sup>40</sup> Referring to one of the participant’s responses in the questionnaire.



#### 6.4.2.3.2 Continuity

Study 3 is argued to provide evidence for **place-referent continuity** in the dwelling. Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) argue that place-referent continuity in the environment is evidenced when people use that environment to relate their past to their present selves. In Study 3, a great deal of data supports the use of personal possessions in connecting a participant to their past memories (Section 6.4.1.4) and their own personal history. There are numerous examples – Lily's beloved blanket box which reminds her of time spent with her grandparents talking about her deceased parents; the pointing in the wall of Elaine's living room, on which her late son had written his name with a felt tip pen, connecting her present self with her past as a mother to her young son. For Rachel it is an orange lamp:

*I mean that orange lamp I've had all my life – well not all my life but I've had it since I've been a young woman, but it's gone with me everywhere, it's a bit tatty, I've kept that.*

Such possessions may act as a continual reminder of identity when the environmental context (and in the case of Rachel, the social context, given that she moved house following a separation with her husband) is in flux. This relates to the idea of possessions as “*our ballast*” (McCracken, 1988) – symbolic reminders of who we are and who we once were. For these participants, connection with the past is important – as argued by Breakwell (1986) it is important for a person to feel a continuity of self-concept across time. This continuity of self is comforting – for psychological well-being it is important to know oneself, to have a strong sense of who we are.

Further evidence for the role of the dwelling in continuity can be argued in cases where participants have lived in the dwelling for a long time. Not only can past memories be represented in the dwelling, the events they are based on often occurred there too, strengthening the memory for the event and hence for the past self. When Wendy argues that her home is an important part of her family's identity, she explains that it is not only the people that are important, but also the events that have happened in the house itself. Participants are able to show how their characters have developed in their dwellings, for example Elaine who says that she has grown in her home:

*"... this is the house the boys grew up in, and I grew up in too – I became the person I am ... I spent more than half my adult life here, so I've changed and grown as a person in here."*

Participants are often aware of the importance of continuity, for example Lesley:

*Well a home is about continuity – the longer you live, I never want to wipe the slate clean. I need to take things with me. It's almost like the Israelites in the Old Testament, they always take their art with them – it's symbolic. I have lots of things in this house that are very important to me.*

This provides a strong contrast to Elizabeth who claims the opposite notion – she is soon to move house and desires a “blank canvas” (see Section 6.4.1.4).

Kate demonstrates an understanding of place-referent continuity-based needs in others. When she moved in with her partner, her step-daughter was still mourning the loss of her mother. Kate felt that she could not make drastic changes because her step-daughter would be damaged by such a sudden removal of her mother's identity from the dwelling:

*So it was gradual change... which in a lot of ways echoed what had been there before, that improved on what her mother had done.*

Kate herself however does not show the same needs for continuity through possessions, showing that people differ in the extent to which they need a sense of continuity in the home environment:

*... although we have a lot of things I don't feel so attached to them. He has to drag everything through his life you know? Perhaps some of the relatives, you know they've been dead for a long time – we don't need their stuff anymore.*

It is argued that **place-congruent continuity** is also evidenced in the study. Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) argue that place-congruent continuity is evident in the environment when participants discuss a good fit between themselves and their environment. In Study 3, participants often discussed the ways in which their dwellings were suited to aspects of their own identity. For example, for Lily, a participant who is introverted and prefers her own company, living in a small village enables her to live in relative peace and quiet (see Section 6.4.3) – she talks about how her ideal home would be in total rural isolation, but explains that



due to having multiple sclerosis, it is important for her to be near to health services. Other participants express their values through their dwelling, for example Wendy who reflects her rebellious nature in her chaotic surroundings, and Lesley who reflects her strong anti-materialistic value through the use of home made possessions and charity shop finds.

The control afforded by one's own home highlights an important point: the dwelling affords the resident the ability to increase place-congruent continuity to the desired level through personalisation. Through the manipulation of aesthetic elements and personal possessions, an individual is able to increase the level of fit between their environment and themselves. Again then, as with residential environments (one's neighbourhood), the dwelling provides opportunities for increasing or maintaining place-congruent continuity, but these are different in nature and arguably more in the control of the individual.

Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) also found evidence of the existence of **discontinuity** via the residential environment. In Study 3, discontinuity is also in evidence and acts as a means of identity change for participants. This reminds us that although people value a continued sense of self, they also strive for self-improvement and positive change. In particular, for those participants whom had separated from their husbands, the new dwelling represents a discontinuity from their old selves and a distinction between their lives with their husband and their new lives as single women. For example Rachel explains how certain possessions that she had chosen for her dwelling were more valued by her because in her previous dwelling they would not have been appropriate - her husband would have disliked them. To her these possessions represent her new found freedom as a single woman in full control of her own home.

#### 6.4.2.3.3 *Self-esteem*

Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) argue that self-esteem is raised when an environment makes a person feel good about themselves. This is distinguished from a mere positive evaluation of the neighbourhood. In many of the interviews, participants alluded to a sense of pride in the dwelling, which elevates self-esteem. Pride in the dwelling is discussed in terms of the appearance of the exterior of the dwelling as well as a pride in the interior aesthetics, for example



by Maggie, who speaks of how much she loves her dwelling, and what she and her husband have done to it aesthetically.

Self-esteem in the dwelling was evidenced in other ways in the interviews. For example, participants often described how certain parts of the dwelling made them feel better about themselves. For example, Lily explains that her bedroom in particular is important when she is feeling depressed – she retreats into it with a hot water bottle and snuggles up in her duvet – this makes her feel better about herself (see Section 6.4.3). For Lily this restorative feeling extends to her outdoor environment – not only the garden, but beyond and into the nearby woods (which she includes in her definition of home, see Section 6.4.5). This is mirrored by Wendy who values the restorative view from her bedroom window, explaining that it “*sets me up for the day*”.

The opinion of other people of a participant's dwelling can increase self-esteem for some participants. Self-esteem may be raised following a positive appraisal of the dwelling, as in the case of Maggie, who explains that although her decisions about personalisation are not guided by what others may think, positive comments are appreciated. Conversely, Sheila demonstrates how she protects her self-esteem from potential negative appraisal of her home by others by limiting the extent to which she entertains friends in the dwelling.

#### 6.4.2.3.4 *Self-efficacy*

Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) identify self-efficacy when their participants discuss the ease with which they carry out their daily tasks in the environment. For example, their participants referred to manageability in terms of distances to shops and services. In the current study, self-efficacy was evidenced when participants referred to the ways in which their dwelling facilitated their everyday lives. Importantly, in some cases participants had themselves been responsible for changes resulting in increased self-efficacy, as in the case of Kate who desired increased light and proximity to the garden, hence building a conservatory, or Maggie, whose strong extroverted character encouraged the creation of a big entertaining area in the dwelling – what she refers to as her “*Mecca for entertaining*”. Two of the participants have multiple sclerosis and for them, self-efficacy is particularly important – some dwellings are more suited to

those with physical disabilities than others. Rachel discussed the importance of living on the ground floor:

*"I think that this particular flat is great for someone in my situation in that it's ground floor, and it's easier to live in than a house with stairs..."*

Lily was able to increase her sense of self-efficacy in the dwelling; having been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis not long after having moved into her dwelling (which she and her husband were partially renovating), she was able to make structural decisions about the dwelling based on considerations of her future physical condition, in particular due to the strong possibility of her using a wheelchair in the future.

When a dwelling facilitates everyday life then self-efficacy is increased. For example, Greta, who is elderly and finds it hard to walk far, is happiest in her small front room where everything is in her reach – she argues:

*"I'm not very mobile and it's easy. And I've got most of the stuff I need to do round about me".*

Social aspects of life can also be facilitated by the environment, for example as argued by Kate with her dining table. Family life can also be facilitated. In particular Wendy provides a good example of self-efficacy in relation to her role as a single mother. When her husband left she felt worried about this role, yet she went on to relish it, even desiring to act as a positive role model to other single mothers. This positive feeling of self-efficacy was, she argues, enhanced by the dwelling – firstly by the sense of success at having held onto it despite numerous near-repossessions, and secondly due to the restorative qualities of the environmental setting (her dwelling is located in beautiful countryside).

Self-efficacy then is quite likely something which can be enhanced by a dwelling. Again the point is made that what is unique to dwelling is the control afforded over the space – such control allows an individual to personalise their space in such a way as to maximise self-efficacy.

Study 3 adds to the body of work exploring the physical environment in terms of IPT (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996; Korpela, 1989; Speller et al., 1999) in evidencing the application of the four identity principles to place. In their



concluding remarks, Twigger-Ross and Uzzell suggest that further work using Breakwell's (1986) model of identity processes could explore other environmental settings such as the workplace, yet they fail to highlight the importance of the individual dwelling or home. Study 3 contributes to the field in demonstrating the importance of these drivers of identity in the dwelling and home environment. In particular, the findings repeatedly highlight that what is unique about the home environment is the control afforded, and hence, the ability of a person to manipulate the dwelling in order to maintain or enhance the four identity principles. This exploration of the data in relation to identity theories (in particular, IPT) complements and builds on the discussion presented in Chapter 4 which considers the first study in relation to such theories (see Section 4.4.1).

#### *6.4.2.4 Identity and dwelling: interim conclusions*

The findings so far discussed from Study 3 highlight a number of ways in which participants connect their identity to dwelling. Participants are aware of the dwelling as reflecting their identity and often have a strong sense of what they do and do not identify with in terms of house styles and interiors. Control is of crucial importance and for most participants something that they do have – although there are differences both in the extent to which the women hold the principal control in the dwelling, and the extent to which the need for control is salient. Control is important because it affords personalisation – a behaviour which people engage in in order to connect their identity with the dwelling. Differences exist in the approach taken to personalisation and the areas or aspects that are prioritised and such differences are influenced by interests, values and lifestyle, as well as stemming from a participant's experiences in the past. Personal possessions are an incredibly powerful means of personalisation and these are shown to hold associations on a number of levels hence their power in representing a person's identity.

An exploration of the data from the perspective of a number of identity theories offers further insights. Place Identity Theory reminds us that places constitute an important part of the identity content, as evidenced by the numerous identifications with place seen in the data. Social Identity Theory is a useful lens through which to view comparisons made by participants between their own and



others' dwellings, especially as these invariably are done in favour of the participant's dwelling, potentially increasing their self-esteem. Identity Process Theory is another useful means of considering the data, particularly in highlighting the importance of the four identity principles to participants and how these may be enhanced via the dwelling.

The study also sought to investigate the impact that differences based in personality may have on the ways in which people interact with dwelling. The following section considers this in detail.

#### 6.4.3 The role of personality in the dwelling

The second research question explored in Study 3 is: *how does the link between identity and dwelling differ between people? Does personality account for such differences? What other factors are involved?* This section considers the role of personality in the approach a person takes to connecting identity to the dwelling. The results from the personality scales in the questionnaire are firstly considered in relation to qualitative findings from the interviews. Following this discussion, further findings are presented which relate to personality and individual differences.

All 14 participants completed all items in the personality and identity scales. Table 18 shows the means and standard deviations for all scales. It is noted here that all scales have a maximum possible score of 50 with the exceptions of Social Identity Orientation which has a maximum possible score of 35, and Collective Identity Orientation which has a maximum possible score of 40.

**Table 18 - Descriptive statistics for all scales**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Extraversion	14	20	48	37.07	6.74
Agreeableness	14	27	50	42.36	6.64
Conscientiousness	14	28	45	39.36	5.05
Emotional Stability	14	22	47	33.43	7.21
Intellect	14	30	50	39.71	5.84
PIO	14	31	45	39.14	3.94
SIO	14	13	30	23.29	5.34
CIO	14	13	36	24.43	6.44
RIO	14	30	50	43.00	6.06

All scores are presented in table format in Appendix 19. As stated on the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP) website<sup>41</sup>:

*"One should be very wary of using canned "norms" because it isn't obvious that one could ever find a population of which one's present sample is a representative subset. Most "norms" are misleading, and therefore they should not be used.*

*Far more defensible are local norms, which one develops oneself. For example, if one wants to give feedback to members of a class of students, one should relate the score of each individual to the means and standard deviations derived from the class itself."*

The range, mean and standard deviation were considered by the researcher in order to make an informed decision regarding whether participants were high, low or near average on personality constructs (see Table 18). Table 19 shows on which scales each participant scores as high and low. Near average scores are not reported because it is the high and low scores which are considered in relation to the qualitative data.

The following discussion constitutes a reflective consideration of each of the scales in turn. For each scale illustrative quotes (from participants scoring high or low on the scale) are used alongside discussion in order to explore the ways in which such aspects of personality may be connected to dwelling and home.

<sup>41</sup> <http://ipip.ori.org/>

**Table 19 - High and low scores on personality and identity scales**

Participant	Extra	Agree	Con	Stable	Intell	PIO	SIO	CIO	RIO
Maggie	High					High	High	Low	High
Greta	High		Low	High		Low	Low		High
Lily	Low	Low		Low	Low	Low	High		
Joy	Low			High				High	High
Lesley			High		High		Low	High	Low
Rachel	Low		Low		High	High	Low		High
Kate		High		Low	High	High	High		High
Elaine		High	High	High	High		High	High	
Jennifer		Low	High	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
Maude				High	Low				
Wendy			Low	High	High		Low		Low
Sheila	High	High	High			High	High		
Beth	High	High	High	High	High				
Elizabeth			High	Low			High	Low	

Key: Extra = Extraversion; Agree = Agreeableness; Con = Conscientiousness; Stable = Emotional Stability; Intell = Intellect; PIO = Personal Identity Orientation; SIO = Social Identity Orientation; CIO = Collective Identity Orientation; RIO = Relational Identity Orientation.

#### 6.4.3.1 Extraversion

Extraversion refers to a tendency to seek out the company and stimulation of others. This broad domain covers traits such as talkativeness and assertiveness and in contrast, passivity and reserve (Goldberg, 1993). Perhaps the strongest link between Extraversion and behaviour in the dwelling is discussion around socialising and entertaining in the dwelling. For some of the participants scoring high on Extraversion, socialising and having friends in the dwelling is central to their experience of home. Those high on Extraversion are sometimes able to explain the ways in which they have used the dwelling as a means of enabling extroverted behaviour, for example Maggie explains that the furnishing and layout of the dwelling is deliberately designed around entertaining (see Figure 37):

*Well I think that the way we've used the table as a centrepiece is a sort of focal point. We have regular dinner parties... So I would say the sociableness [sic] – the front room. The fact that we've made a room a Mecca for entertaining, in the nicest possible way... (Maggie).*

Greta is also high on Extraversion. She does not entertain, being elderly and infirm, yet it seems just as important to her to have company. She sits in a specific location and room in order to be able to wave to passing villagers and in order that they can pop in for a chat with her throughout the day:



*Well yes this is where I always sit because I can see out of the window, I can see that, I can see who comes in through the door... they shout who they are and that's it.*



Figure 37 - Living and dining area, Maggie

Those scoring low on Extraversion, i.e. introverted participants may also reveal ways in which personality interacts with dwelling. Lily is particularly introverted. The following extract in which she discusses her childhood makes it easier to understand how she came to be introverted and prefer her own company:

*I lost my Dad. And then I had a foster Dad. And then I lost my Mum, and then I was with other people. I just had so much upheaval. And then I was adopted and moved from down South. From the middle of London to the middle of nowhere. So I found it really hard growing up – really hard... coming from London – I mean I was East End so I was real cockney. So I came from there to a country school in Aberdeenshire... and nobody could understand what I was saying. And it was just horrendous the bullying it was awful – just constant. Just the name calling, and I think emotionally I couldn't deal with it anyway you know?*

Lily's introversion stems both from the experiences described above as well as the fact that her childhood home was incredibly isolated and not within easy distance of any other houses. As she describes in the following extract, the

isolation of her childhood home meant that she did not experience a great deal of social interaction with peers:

*I don't like going to big parties, that scares me. There's just too many people... and that panics me, it really does. But that's mainly because... [we] were 4 miles away from the nearest people, you had to cycle 3 miles to catch the bus to go to school in those days... there was no other people around at all. We didn't have neighbours!*

This extract suggests that a person's home environment, particularly during formative childhood years can to some extent affect the person they become. Lily's introversion is evident in the way that she uses her dwelling. For example, she tends not to entertain – her dwelling is a haven of privacy for her and her close family:

*...if somebody arrives and I'm not expecting them and I don't particularly want to see them... it upsets me... You could have phoned and let me know you were coming, at least.*

For some of the time her husband works away and during this time she is most happy with her own company:

*... Mum keeps [saying] "oh you poor thing you must be so lonely, you must be so lonely, so lonely!". And I say "Mum you just don't understand. There is a difference between liking to be on my own and being lonely." I'm not lonely, I prefer to be on my own... there is that month where I am basically on my own. But I have to say, it's mostly through choice... [People have said] "Oh do you fancy coming..." and I've said "no". I read a lot. And I think if you read a lot and have a lot of books there's no excuse to be bored, and there's no excuse to be lonely.*

This extract shows Lily as a woman who genuinely prefers her own company, in particular enjoying reading in the dwelling. Another strong theme for Lily is a love of nature, "because you can be on your own with it", and for her this is connected with the idea of home in that she sees her home not only in terms of the dwelling itself but also in the garden and the woods beyond the dwelling in which she spends a great deal of time (this point serves as a reminder that home does not necessarily apply only to the boundaries of the dwelling itself, as discussed in Section 3.3; see Pallasmaa, 1995). In particular, her incorporation of the woods and extended natural environment into her definition of home



shows the importance she places on solitude and how this, for her is a necessary condition of home.

The above quotes illustrate how Extraversion (and Introversion) can affect the ways in which people interact with dwelling and define and create home. In particular, it is argued that in some cases those high on Extraversion use the dwelling as a place of frequent social interaction whereas those low on Extraversion use the dwelling primarily as a place of privacy and refuge.

#### 6.4.3.2 Agreeableness

Agreeableness is described as a tendency to show compassionate and cooperative behaviour towards others. It covers such traits as kindness and trust and in contrast, hostility and distrust (Goldberg, 1993). Agreeable behaviour can be shown towards others in the dwelling, most often other family members and spouses or partners, but sometimes friends. For example, a displayed photograph of important friends may serve to let them know they are valued to the inhabitant (see Section 6.4.1.3). The way in which a person uses the dwelling may be influenced by how agreeable they are. For example, Kate demonstrates warmth through her desire to provide a safe and nurturing environment for her grandchild. Elaine, who scores high on Agreeableness, explains how she has arranged for two friends to meet up at her house. They have both recently lost children and this is something that Elaine has gone through herself. The purpose of the meeting is to facilitate mutual support between the three friends. She goes on to say:

*... so in that sense, that's how I suppose I'd like to think [of her home] – you know I said a safe haven – and it's nae [not] just for me...I think maybe by putting them together, they'll support one another but also by being put together via me – hopefully which I'm hoping is that it might give them – give them some hope, to see how my life has carried on and I've found joy in life. And this is possible, and although it's hell what they're going through now, it's maybe going to give them a little bit of hope.*

Elaine is using her home as a haven not only for herself but for other people. Jennifer on the other hand (who scores low on Agreeableness) talks about how she can sometimes be selfish about her space:



*I am selfish, I'm selfish with my time... being with other people who have kids and they're just so much more giving - and I kind of would like to be but I just can't, I'm really selfish... I suppose I kind of selfishly guard my top two shelves and if ever Dougal sticks his Ipod down after he's been out running I move it... on reflection of my mum I'm very different, I'm not a quarter of the giving that my mum does.*

Jennifer does show her love for her daughter in what she has done in the dwelling, for example in making her a special bed and in creating a special corner for her in the living room. But despite this, she has a need to be the primary controller of the dwelling, including the areas which are supposedly dedicated to her daughter, such as the play corner in the living room and the hand made bed in the little girl's bedroom. By her own admission she is less keen to share the decisions about the house with other family members than some of the other participants in the study. As discussed at various points in the chapter, control is a highly valued asset to Jennifer. She mentions at one point that "it's my house" whereas other participants speak of "our" house or home. However, there are numerous works of art made by her daughter framed and given pride of place on the walls. Jennifer does reflect the importance of her relationship with her daughter in the dwelling, but on her terms – the identity of others in the household is reflected in the way that she decides.

Findings suggest that participants high on Agreeableness show compassionate behaviour towards others in the dwelling. In contrast, although those low on Agreeableness (Lily and Jennifer) can also be seen to reflect their warm feelings towards others in the dwelling, these typically tend to be significant others – spouses and children. At the same time they retain a sense of control or in Lily's case, the ability to be in her own company. It is perhaps in how welcome outsiders are made to feel that most reflects something of a person's level of Agreeableness.

#### 6.4.3.3 Conscientiousness

Individuals high on Conscientiousness tend to act dutifully, practice self-discipline and aim for achievement. Conscientiousness covers such traits as organization and thoroughness and in contrast, carelessness and unreliability (Goldberg, 1993). Such behaviours are perhaps more traditionally considered in

terms of career and workplace achievements – indeed, those participants scoring high on Conscientiousness also spent considerable time discussing their work and career, in particular Lesley. For these participants, career is often represented in the dwelling – for example in the case of Elaine, who has numerous possessions symbolic of her work role in the dwelling.

Some participants work from home in the evenings, such as Jennifer who scores high on Conscientiousness. Other participants wish to keep their work separate from dwelling, to keep it as a haven from a stressful career, such as Lesley. Lesley also scores high on Conscientiousness and whilst working was incredibly career-driven but claims to have always kept her home a work-free haven – in particular because she found her career incredibly stressful, and home was therefore a haven from work. This shows that not all conscientious people will reflect their work life in the dwelling.

Another way in which conscientious behaviour may be evident in the dwelling is in the way in which the dwelling is managed. For example, some participants claim to have no problem with keeping the house clean and tidy, such as Jennifer (who has high Conscientiousness), who was shocked to visit the house of another mother and find her struggling to maintain tidiness and cleanliness:

*I've a friend who is one of the mums who lives nearby and her house is absolute chaos – it's not just chaos but it is really dirty, genuinely dirty. And whenever I go there - well the last time I went I actually took my rubber gloves along and thought instead of just chatting for an hour I think I'll do something, I think I'll wash the kitchen floor or something but whenever I go there I come back and I just start cleaning my own house. Cos I just think I'd hate for someone to come into my house, not that my house is anything like hers but just it kind of makes me want to come home and clean and tidy and its horrible.*

Elizabeth also scores high on Conscientiousness, and in her interview explained that she finds it impossible to relax in the evening unless she has a clean and tidy dwelling. Her need for tidiness and cleanliness is such that it has influenced her choice of décor and furnishings. Others find it more of a struggle or place less importance on a clean and tidy house. Wendy (who has low Conscientiousness) explains how she can be quite happy in a messy and chaotic house for large periods:



*I'm actually quite ordered ironically, but that said for great tracts of the year will be absolutely chaos and dusty and things all over the place, and I'll suddenly have a harouche, I mean I did a big harouche before [the party].*

#### 6.4.3.4 Emotional Stability

Emotional Stability is characterised by an ability to deal with emotions as opposed to a tendency to exhibit negative emotions such as anxiety, anger or depression. It covers traits such as nervousness, moodiness and temperamentality (Goldberg, 1993). Evidence is presented here of ways in which Emotional Stability is connected to dwelling. In this extract Lily (who scores low on Emotional Stability) shows how the home may support a person during an unhappy episode:

*My favourite room – it doesn't matter what house or how the house is done up, it has to be my bedroom. I love my bedroom... It's the place that – I can go and cry in my bedroom, I can go and sulk in my bedroom, I can go and get a bit of peace in my – I can go and have an early night if I'm not feeling well and cosy up with a hot water bottle. I LOVE my bedroom.*

For Lily, personal space is crucial in order to be able to cope with the times when she is feeling depressed, angry or anxious. Perhaps this is why Kate, who also scores low on Emotional Stability, is so upset by the constant struggle to find a space in the dwelling to call her own.

As discussed previously (see Section 6.4.1.3), Wendy (who is high on Emotional Stability) believes that the loss of her treasured personal possessions would not be experienced as a traumatic event. She has also argued that her dwelling actually supports her emotional well-being – a point which leads us to wonder the extent to which the physical environment itself can impact upon such personality traits. Even though those high on Emotional Stability have a more positive outlook in terms of their emotional well-being, these participants may still think of the dwelling in terms of its potential to enhance or detract from this.



#### 6.4.3.5 *Intellect*

Intellect is described as a tendency towards intellectual curiosity, aesthetic sensitivity and a preference for variety, and contrasts such traits as imagination, curiosity and creativity with shallowness and imperceptiveness (Goldberg, 1993). A person scoring high on Intellect will typically have an active imagination and be open to new ideas. Intellect may be indicated by a person's interests, and indeed in the dwelling one would expect to see a number of clues as to how interested a person is in intellectual, aesthetic and imaginative fields. For those participants scoring high on Intellect, books feature heavily in the dwelling, for example Kate, who describes how she had brought "thousands" of books with her when she moved in with her new partner. Travel is another area in which those high on Intellect are often interested. A direct connection can be seen when participants display possessions which have been brought back from their travels, for example both Rachel and Wendy, who both display a plethora of objects from their travels, resulting in a dwelling which is aesthetically vibrant and diverse. Lesley (who is high on Intellect) explains of her various framed pictures:

*... that's France and that's Malta... We're very fond of Malta yes... Well you either love it or hate it. It's a fascinating place, lots of history. And these are Finnish – we've been on a tour of Finland... And that's the fountain in Rome.*

For those low on Intellect (participants Lily, Jennifer and Maude) such items do sometimes appear. As described above though, a person low on intellect may demonstrate such traits as shallowness and imperceptiveness (Goldberg, 1993). It is argued that in the dwelling, it is easier to find evidence of imagination and creativity than of shallowness and imperceptiveness. In general though, although they discussed an interest in reading or things in the dwelling which had been brought back from previous travels, these participants' dwellings exhibited less aesthetic diversity and multi-cultural artefacts than those of participants scoring high on Intellect. This suggests that the higher a person's Intellect, the more diverse their interests and that this might be reflected in the dwelling.

#### 6.4.3.6 *Personal Identity Orientation*

Personal Identity Orientation (PIO) is described in detail in Section 2.6.1, and was researched in relation to home making behaviours quantitatively in Study 2. In the current study, in considering participants that score high and low on PIO, some evidence can be seen for the connection of this to the dwelling. For example, Maggie who scores high on PIO has a strong sense of her own self in the dwelling – she freely talks about having things in the dwelling that reflect her life, has numerous photographs of herself on the wall and has dedicated areas in the dwelling for her love of dressing up and looking good.<sup>42</sup> Rachel, also scoring high on PIO has a number of mementos in her dwelling which reflect the person she is and her own history – for example the carpet that was in her childhood home in Iraq, and the houseplants which she feels is one way to continue the nurturing role she carried out when working as a doctor. Kate also scores high on PIO, an interesting finding given her conflicts with others in the dwelling in terms of personal space. She argues that she has no place to reflect her own identity in the dwelling. For a person who places high importance on the personal aspects of self-definition, this could arguably be detrimental to experiences of dwelling and indeed home. Kate has a strong sense of her own needs in the dwelling, and therefore perhaps a stronger sense of grievance that these are not always fulfilled.

Greta, who scored low on PIO considers her home as somewhere from which to give back to the community – in particular the garden in which row upon row of vegetables were grown and handed out to people in the village. Greta is one of the eldest participants and it should be borne in mind that age impacts upon PIO (see Section 5.4.7.2). However, Greta has always taken this approach to her dwelling (see discussion on the garden in Section 6.4.1.3). Her community work has always taken up a lot of space in the dwelling, not to mention her time. Greta scores low on collective identity orientation – a finding which is surprising given her tendency towards a more collective sense of self over the personal. Her behaviour then is perhaps best explained in terms of her high score on Extraversion.

<sup>42</sup> Although looking good may also be linked with SIO.



#### 6.4.3.7 Social Identity Orientation

SIO is discussed in Section 2.6.1. As with PIO, SIO was explored in detail in Study 2 of this thesis. SIO was explored further in Study 3 in order to identify whether the way in which a person interacts with dwelling is affected by SIO. Questions in the interview explored whether it mattered to participants what other people thought of their dwelling. Many of those participants with high SIO discussed being concerned over what other people think of their dwelling (Maggie, Sheila and Elizabeth) for example Maggie explains how a positive remark from a friend can make her feel good:

*Also another thing – it's nice to be house proud in the way that people come in - one of my friends came in and said "wow, I've got house envy" but what she was reflecting was she'd seen the house so many times from the outside. And it's a reasonable enough looking house from the outside but what she was seeing was the thought that had gone into it. And we don't buy things to have that effect. But if it has that effect it's a bonus.*

Maggie has a positive approach to the feelings that the opinion of others might encourage in her, possibly because her experience of such feelings has mostly been positive – she is proud of her dwelling, has put a lot of thought into it and is delighted with the result. Sheila on the other hand (also scoring high on SIO) has a more negative evaluation of how others might see her home, because “they probably are sizing up the place” and in some way comparing it negatively against their own. This shows that although two people may score similarly on SIO, their affective responses in various contexts may be quite different. Lily shows a similar behaviour to Sheila in tending not to have other people in her dwelling often. She does not appreciate other people calling in unexpectedly, in part due to her introversion. Her high SIO could perhaps to some extent have stemmed from her childhood as a girl who suffered a great deal of bullying. She now prefers solitude over company. Perhaps this separation of home and social life enables her to be free of concerns over what others think in terms of the dwelling.

For those showing a low SIO, concerns over what others think of the dwelling seem limited or non-existent. For example Lesley argues:



*And it doesn't matter to me what outsiders think of what I have – doesn't matter at all. As long as it has a value to me. And it may have a value other people won't see.*

These results support the notion that social identity orientation may affect the way in which a person interacts with dwelling – in particular it may be that those with high SIO may be more inclined to seek to impress others through the dwelling, whereas those low in SIO will be less inclined to make choices based on what others might think.

#### 6.4.3.8 *Collective identity orientation*

Collective identity orientation (CIO) refers to a communal emphasis on identity related to larger groups to which an individual belongs. A person with high CIO will focus on their ethnicity, religious affiliation, and country, town or village of habitation when constructing self-definitions. Study 2 did not explore CIO and this is addressed in Study 3. Some findings support the notion of CIO as connected to dwelling. For example, those high on CIO (Joy, Lesley and Elaine) talk frequently of their home town or village and these are integral to their concept of home:

*I: Going back to what home means to you, would you say it goes beyond this building then?*

*P: Oh yes, I would say so, I would say the village of Premnay is also my home (Joy)*

In particular Joy has a strong sense of community and contributes her time to helping to maintain the village hall. Community and place of habitation both appear as items on the CIO scale ("Places where I live or where I was raised" and "My feeling of belonging to my community"). Lesley also has high CIO. She identifies strongly with being an Aberdonian, despite having two dwellings (the other in Loughborough) and dividing her time between these. The importance of both places is reflected in a corner of her living room in which are displayed treasured prints of local scenes from the two areas.

Further support is provided in that those low on CIO do not include their home town or village in their definition of home. In fact, Maggie doesn't speak about

her residential area at all during the interview. Perhaps this is because her dwelling is quite isolated – it is not in a town or village although there are other dwellings nearby on the same track. Maggie is English and lives in Scotland. Perhaps this, coupled with not living in a large community affects Maggie's CIO.

#### 6.4.3.9 *Relational Identity Orientation*

Relational identity orientation (RIO) refers to an emphasis on close and intimate friendships held by an individual. A person with high RIO will focus on their friendships with close friends, family members and spouses/partners in constructing their sense of self (Cheek et al., 2002). Although RIO was not investigated in the second study, results indicated the importance of significant others; therefore, RIO was measured in Study 3 and explored in relation to the interviews. The interviews contained some questions relating to relationships in the home: "Thinking about your relationships with others in the household, are these evident in the appearance of the house?" and "How do your relationships with others make this place feel more like your home?"

Unsurprisingly given these questions, there was a substantial focus in the interviews on the input of others in the dwelling and on how relationships are signified. Some of these relationships are with partners and spouses whereas others are with children or other family members. It should be noted that the scale for RIO does not have any questions which are specific to family members (whereas the CIO scale has one family-based item: "Being part of the many generations of my family"). If the various identity orientations scales are supposed to be fully inclusive of all elements which may contribute to a person's sense of self, the exclusion of items relating to the importance of immediate family suggests a limitation in the scales. In particular, in exploring RIO in terms of this study a measure of the importance of family would have been particularly useful. Nevertheless, it is possible to consider close family members as individuals to which a participant is close (items to this effect do appear on the RIO scale) and so family members are considered alongside partners and spouses in this exploration.

For those high on RIO the input of others in the dwelling is important and welcomed for example with Maggie, whose husband's input in the dwelling is



appreciated (see Section 6.4.4). Whereas for those low on RIO, the input of others is not always a welcome thing, for example for Jennifer who has a strong need for dominance and control within the dwelling:

*I mean I like to have touches of my daughter, pictures on the wall and I like to - probably more so my daughter than my husband. Because when he came he came with a black plastic bag and that was basically his possessions... but you know he doesn't have lots of things. I think I probably may be a bit of a control freak, it is, it's my house.*

Although it is important to Jennifer that her daughter's work is displayed in the dwelling, this is something that she can be in control of – she frames the artwork and decides where it is to be displayed. It is less important to her to have her husband's input in the dwelling. The house was hers before she met her husband and there seems to be an understanding between them that the control remains with her. This could be in part due to a low RIO – her self definition relies less upon her relationship with her husband than for other participants, therefore she has less need to incorporate reminders of him in the dwelling. However, this could be due to her need for control in the dwelling as discussed frequently throughout the chapter.

Wendy also has a low RIO, which is perhaps surprising given the strong value she places on her family identity, evidenced in the dwelling through the importance she places on possessions connecting her with her family (see Section 6.4.1.4). Again though, it is noted that the scale does not contain items relating to family members. Wendy is a very strong and independent single mother. She does not feel the need of a man in her life and this may well have influenced her responses to items on the RIO scale. Her sense of independence in running the family home is experienced as an achievement, something she has relished. She wishes to be an inspiration to other single mothers.

Lesley shows that even for those low on RIO, the importance of a spouse or partner can be central to home. When talking about what home means to her, Lesley points out that it is not only her own life history which is connected to home, in arguing that her house reflects her and her husband's "shared identity". This finding contradicts expectations and therefore caution must be exercised in interpreting these results.



#### 6.4.3.10 Other aspects of personality

Although no other personality traits were directly measured in the questionnaire, participants often shed light on the ways in which aspects of their personality impact upon the dwelling. Participants in the first two studies sometimes stated that their personality was reflected in the dwelling, without providing a great deal of explanation as to how this might be (see sections 4.3.1 and 5.4.8.2). Study 3 aimed to explore these issues in greater depth. Many participants were able to describe a link between aspects of their personalities and the dwelling:

*I: so you like wood and natural materials.*

*P: Natural materials. So I suppose in that sense it maybe reflects – it's difficult to think what sort of personality you've got, but I'd like to think that I'm quite unaffected, natural, open, welcoming as a person. So maybe... down to earth, yeah. 'Cos looking outside, surrounded by the countryside, if you've got natural stuff inside, it's almost as though you're part of the – part of the place. (Elaine)*

Elaine here draws a direct link between the way in which she has personalised her dwelling and her own personality. In particular her down to earth aspect may be important to her in terms of her high Agreeableness (see Section 6.4.3.2) in making others feel welcome and at home in her dwelling – suggested here in that she discusses being welcoming together with her down to earth and unaffected nature.

Sheila has a strong attachment to her rocking chair because the movement of the chair helps her to ease away her tensions and she appreciates the simple and natural design and material (see Figure 38):

*I do like it, because they're simple, and they can be moved around. And because when I have friends I might be – might or might not be tense, I like to be able to move a bit, I like that motion. So it's comfortable – I fidget, I'm a fidgeter – this helps me to relax.*



Figure 38 - Rocking chair, Sheila

Here Sheila demonstrates an understanding of her own nature and needs as well as the behavioural affordances of the rocking chair and how these are appropriate for her own personality. This extract also highlights Sheila's tendency to suffer social anxiety in the dwelling – an issue which she discusses throughout the interview (see Section 6.4.4).

Participants also discuss things that they wouldn't choose to do in the dwelling, which often reveal something about the person in question:

*Wendy: I mean my dream is to get these curtains out of this room because I hate them, but I decided actually why do we have to have matching curtains? I'm going to have different curtains on each window... because I just thought actually, I mean I've never had anything matching, none of the bedding matches, none of the dinner plates match...*

*Researcher: Okay, so that's possibly something in you, something about your personality?*

*Wendy: That's pretty much my personality, yes... Constantly challenging, constantly questioning and not being told what to do and not necessarily conforming, so.*

This extract highlights Wendy's tendency to rebel against authority – which as discussed in Section 6.4.3.3 may be related to her low score on Conscientiousness.

As shown previously in the chapter (Section 6.4.1.2) control is important to people in terms of their dwellings. Findings from the interviews suggest that the women differ in the extent to which they strive for control of their dwelling – in particular, it is shown that Jennifer has a strong need for control, describing herself as a “*control freak*”. This impacts on the way in which she interacts with dwelling, meaning that she feels greater stress as a result of her daughter and husband making their own mark on the dwelling. Control then is another aspect of personality which can be seen to impact upon the way in which a person will interact with dwelling.

#### *6.4.3.11 Personality and dwelling: interim conclusions*

An exploration of the interview data in relation to the personality scales produced some interesting findings, for example that those high on SIO appear to place importance on what others think of their dwellings, and that those high on Extraversion view the dwelling as a place for social interaction whereas more introverted participants may create a dwelling which is a haven of privacy and refuge. Qualitative findings also reveal ways in which personality interacts with dwelling.

The relationship of personality, identity and dwelling is a complex one not least because personality can be considered as one aspect of a person's identity (Hauge, 2006). Taking this approach, it seems more likely that personality will impact upon the way in which a person personalises their dwelling. As illustrated by participants, personality can be directly reflected in the dwelling for example as in the case of Elaine with her down to earth decorative style. However, the findings suggest that differences based in personality (and other aspects of self, such as personal history) also impact upon the ways in which people interact with and utilise the dwelling. Although there are similarities and shared patterns of behaviour, each participant's approach to home making is unique and a result of differences based in personality, physical factors (e.g. health or age related), personal history and other life experiences.



It is important to bear in mind that personality scales are quantitative in nature and although all of the scales used in this study are argued to be well validated (Goldberg et al., 2006; Lemay and Ashmore, 2006) they are typically used on large samples. A sample size of 14 is low for such scales. The use of the scales in the current study was not the central component of the study, however these were included a) because differences in connection to dwelling based in personality are of interest in the study; b) an exploration of identity orientations was desirable as a continuation of results in Study 2 and c) the items encouraged the participants to consider these aspects of themselves in advance of the interviews.

These results show how some aspects of personality *might* impact upon the ways in which people interact with and personalise the dwelling. No grand claims are made about these findings – they are entirely exploratory and their purpose is to seek fresh understanding and new avenues of exploration in future research. The discussion has provided an insightful extension of the consideration of personality in the previous two studies – a more complex understanding is given through the exploration of a wider range of personality traits both through qualitative and quantitative means. Although the use of scales in comparison with qualitative data has its limitations, such an approach may be useful in future research which seeks to identify which personality traits are most evident in the dwelling – for example in researching more specific traits such as conformity. Furthermore, future research might concentrate on the theoretical development of specifically environment-based personality traits such as control over the residential environment.

The following section considers the third research question in exploring how social aspects impact on the process of home.

#### 6.4.4 Social aspects in dwelling and home

Integral to experiences of dwelling and home are social aspects. As argued by Tomas and Dittmar (1995), home is an arena for social interaction. Participants spoke often about various social aspects in connection with the dwelling.

Community was important to many participants - in particular Greta stands out as placing a huge importance on the community to the extent that much of her life was dedicated to community work:

*It's open house all the time, people come and go all the time, and unknown to me of course I was nominated for an MBE for working in the village. So – it's just a lovely place to live.*

And:

*And when I was on the council some people called me Mrs XXXX<sup>43</sup>. This did not please my husband! That was his problem, not mine. Sorry!*

In an effort to make sure that the remaining community resources survive, Joy is involved with the running of the village hall. She has only recently retired from the role of Head Mistress within the village primary school:

*... as long as it's there and the hall and the school at least there's a feeling of community.*

For Wendy, the support of the local community when her husband left her alone with 3 children was a deciding factor in whether or not to downsize and move to another area:

*I loved this house, absolutely loved the house, loved the area, fantastic community and actually the people were so supportive.*

These findings on the importance of community complement findings in Study 1 in which participants' housing preferences were to some extent guided by social aspects relating to community (see Section 4.3.2).

At the heart of discussion around dwelling and home is family – as argued by Lawrence (1995), home is construed through relationships with significant others. Family is central to all participants' meanings of home. Wendy explains that she feels that her home is a part of her family:

*We've been nearly repossessed goodness knows how many times but we're still here so it's fantastic... I think it's very much a part of our family.*

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<sup>43</sup> XXXX refers to the name of the village in which Greta lives.



The fight that she and her children have gone through to hold on to this house is a common area of discussion throughout the interview. She explains that she and her children have always faced such challenges together as a team. It is perhaps this struggle to hold on to the family home that has amplified its importance in their lives. As she points out, Wendy is keen to inspire in her children and in others (at one point explaining how she wishes to be a positive role model for other single mothers) a sense that nothing is impossible. Possibly the success behind surviving financially in this house against all odds may have helped her to communicate such a message (it may also contribute to her feelings of self-esteem and self-efficacy – see Section 6.4.2). As discussed above, the support of the community was also instrumental in the struggle.

Other participants are able to describe the ways in which the presence of family members makes a difference to their experience of the dwelling:

*If anyone asked me "oh what do you want to be when you're a bigger girl?" I wanted to be a Mummy. That's all I ever wanted to be was a Mummy... I find it quite hard just now you know because Adam is almost gone and Callum is coming to the age where he is going to be going. So my dog's taken over I'm afraid, my dog's my baby. And I've got my niece (Lily).*

Lily tragically lost both her parents as a young girl. The importance of the mother role was clear to her from a very young age and is a common theme throughout the interview. For many participants then, when their children become young adults and leave the family home there is a period of readjustment which is often quite difficult and sometimes involves a redefinition of home. However once readjusted, participants are often able to find positive aspects to such changes. For example, Wendy shows how she can appreciate the time alone but loves it when her grown up children come back to visit:

*... then they come back again and the whole house starts jumping, its absolutely unbelievable so although I love that peace and quiet and I shut the door at the end of the day and I think – bliss! And I haven't got to cook a meal, I've got to do nothing – just look after me but then they all come back in again and suddenly the whole place just comes alive, its incredible, you've got music in every corner... No, for me it's two lovely phases – I mean I'm entering a different phase. When they were obviously kids and growing up they were here the whole time so there's no respite but now I've got this lovely contrast of serene peace and quiet and then absolute chaos.*



Jennifer here argues that a dwelling should be inclusive of the children rather than having a separate playroom for them:

*Well that's really just her toy corner... I've never liked the idea of having the good sitting room you know where the kids don't go in and it's just perfect. I much prefer to see a house that's lived in with evidence of the children and the dogs and you know that's just a lived in sort of family house.*

Even when children have grown up and moved on, they are still considered an important element of the home. Often participants keep a place for their children long after they have left home so that they always feel able to return for visits, sometimes with their own partners and children:

*I deliberately wanted a flat with a bedroom for each of the children and myself – so this is their home if they want... (Rachel).*

*But also the same home that the boys can come to when they come home. Come home! (Elaine).*

These findings complement findings in Study 2 in which qualitative data analysis revealed the huge importance of family in the home making process. Home is not created only for oneself to enjoy: the dwelling is only experienced as home once it is felt that all family members feel comfortable and secure there (see Section 5.4.8.3).

Most of the participants live with other people whether these be husbands/partners or children. As argued by Stea (1995), it is problematic to conceive of how a person's individual identity may be reflected in the dwelling when there is more than one inhabitant – instead such reflected identities must be shared. The input of others in the dwelling is important to the participants and something which they are keen to discuss. These findings echo a finding in Study 1 (Section 4.3.5) in which Jenny describes a photographic gallery on her wall documenting her and her husband's work in turning the steading into a habitable dwelling. For Jenny this represents a shared identity and her relationship with her husband in the dwelling. Data in Study 2 also revealed the significance of the input of others in the home making process.

Often such input is creative and in this sense relates to discussion on home made or renovated objects. When participants talk about the input that their

partners or family members have had in the dwelling it reveals how people can build shared identities together within the dwelling. Wendy explains how decisions made about the dwelling are shared:

*It's very much their home as much as, I mean it's our home. It's absolutely our home... and we're all working together on trying to - it's very much a sort of family, you know how do we deal with this room and get it looking how we like it... you know four minds make a much better job of something than just you.*

For a number of women, husbands are equally or even more creatively talented than they are:

*Lots of him but it's stuff that I like as well – I'm not as creative, so I'm very happy to have his things (Maude).*

For Elaine a mark made by her son on the wall holds a very special significance:

*...for instance, years after he died I discovered the monkey had written his name in a felt pen on here - look! And that's lovely, isn't it?*

The extracts given here highlight the importance of others' input in the dwelling to participants and largely these are positive experiences which serve to strengthen relationships. However, such relationships within the dwelling are not always straightforward, often involving negotiation and compromise (see for example Stea's 1995 example of the typical Mexican family home). The input of others can sometimes be experienced in a negative way when inhabitants have a conflict of interests. Where multiple people co-exist in a dwelling there is always the potential for conflict, regardless of how good those relationships are. Conflict is closely linked with a need for control in the dwelling and Jennifer (who is shown in Section 6.4.1.2 to place a large value on control) describes how conflicting interests in the dwelling can lead to a loss of control:

*And then of course children come along and so you've then got to share your home. Natasha she's got her corner which completely expands all the time, so again I'm kind of losing control which kind of stresses me out a bit.*



This quote somewhat contradicts her assertion (quoted earlier in this section) of the importance of having her family's input in the dwelling. However, the contrasting assertions could also highlight a natural conflict that exists for her in her approach to the dwelling: it is important for her to make a family living space which is inclusive of all, yet at the same time her need for control leads to negative reactions to certain consequences of this shared space.

She also predicts how she may experience an even greater conflict with her daughter in years to come:

*We made the bed for Natasha when she was 1 - this was enticing her out of the cot into a big girl's bed. And she was in there for about a year and suddenly she wanted to - she's just like me - take the curtains off, take the bits off and you know and she wanted to start changing it. And I just thought oh my, you're going to be like me, we're going to have a clash.*

For Jennifer conflict exists with her husband as well, particularly in relation to her white shelves (see Figure 32) – she considers herself as the one with the main control over the appearance of the dwelling. Other participants feel it is their partner who dominates. For example:

*Also [laughs] that is very representative of my husband's interests. That's dominating. Those CDs are all his. Mine are backed up in the corner (Sheila).*

However she explains that such dynamics are a two-way process:

*I have to compromise from time to time. Those are all his books there and he also does the plants and that is something we have been talking about because I said, you know some of those wouldn't really be my choice and he is actually quite happy for me to change things if I want to. But that is the other clue - I'm too lazy to get round to do it. He's happy to do it so I'll give way but I can still complain you see [smiling].*

Kate struggles to connect her own identity to a dwelling that was an existing home for her husband previous to her arrival. This is not helped by the dominating nature of her husband's physical and psychological presence (not to mention the presence she feels of his previous wife who had committed suicide). She explains the various issues:



*So quite a lot of stuff in here is his family and of course that's a problem as well, because not only does he bring the poorly understood child, the ex wife that killed herself but he brings a whole, the family and all the history behind them as well.*

And:

*This is a study really which we don't use to any great extent. I feel annoyed about it because I brought thousands and thousands and thousands of books with me... yet again he's sort of taken over with all his bloody Jaguar magazines.*

In fact, although the house is large and there appear to be a number of rooms, Kate does not really feel that there is much of a space for her in the house – perhaps, as previously discussed because of the history of the house and the family before she came along:

*I: Do you think in any way that this house has affected your identity and the person that you've become?*

*P: Yeah because [pause] - because I've had to compromise on something which is really quite essential, which is your own personal space. Yes.*

In many cases however conflict is avoided because family members understand one another's needs and find ways to compromise, such as in the case of Kate, who is conscious of the feelings of her step daughter due to her mother having committed suicide some years before.

The way in which couples or family members work together in the dwelling is often revealing in terms of their relationships – a finding which was touched on in the first two studies (see sections 4.3.5 and 5.4.8.3). For example, when partners can show a respect for each others' opinions about the house and work together as a team, relationships can be nurtured and even strengthened:

*...sometimes I'll put things out and I'll arrange furniture and I'll come back in and he's rearranged it. But I'll sometimes think "oh actually you've done that better than I would have". I think we've got a real respect for each other. So yeah it definitely works (Maggie).*

When a partner or family member makes a contribution in terms of time and effort, the result can serve as a lasting symbol of their care and generosity and can therefore serve to strengthen relationships in the home:

*I: And it was something that he took time over for you?*

*P: It was the only thing.*

*I: But that was him showing his appreciation to you?*

*P: Yes and it made me feel totally different to Adam when he did it, you know?*

*I: So it was a bit of a turning point in the relationship then?*

*P: Totally, especially in the father-son relationship, you know? Because Graeme couldn't believe it when he came home that time (Lily).*

Certain activities carried out within the dwelling may serve as a means of connecting with others. Elaine suggests:

*... The fact that people come and you prepare food for them is a way I suppose of showing love for them as well. So I like the kitchen.*

Such findings point to the significance of others in the dwelling: relationships can be hindered or strengthened depending upon the ways in which people work together in the dwelling to build shared identities. Another important area of discussion in the interviews is aspects relating to self-presentation – this is discussed in the following section.

#### *6.4.4.1 Self-presentation*

A central idea in this thesis is that of the home as a reflection of self to others. It is argued that home may be used to intentionally reveal desired identity attributes to others and present the self in a flattering light (e.g. Cooper Marcus, 1995; Pallasmaa, 1995; see Chapters 2, 3 and throughout the thesis). Theories of self-presentation can be considered in terms of dwelling for example in the case of Jones and Pittman's five motives for self-presentation (1992: see sections 2.3.2 and 3.8.1). Results from Study 1 supported the idea that the dwelling may be used as a means of reflecting self to others, and Study 2 also provided some support for this, although differences may exist in the importance of this dependent upon differences based in personality (see section 4.3 and Chapter 5) – specifically, SIO may relate to the extent to which a participant is concerned over impressing others with their dwelling. In this section then SIO



groups<sup>44</sup> are reported alongside illustrative quotes<sup>45</sup>.

Study 3 sought to explore the extent to which participants might seek to impress other people through their dwelling – in particular in responses to the following series of questions: “Do you think some people may be influenced by what other people might think when they decorate their dwellings? Can you give examples? Does this concern you - Is this reflected in your dwelling?” (See Appendix 17 for full interview schedule).

Participants tended to provide examples of people they know who aim to impress through the dwelling, yet often they stated that they were not too influenced in terms of what other people might think. However people do differ and some participants showed how they may be socially influenced in the dwelling – particularly those high in SIO - echoing results of Study 1 in which people acknowledged taking pleasure in positive appraisal from others:

*I could see that some people would be influenced by what other people - I mean everybody is. It's lucky to get people admiring your home. And course you take influence from other peoples' homes as well. Whether you're going into them or whether you're reading about them.... (Maggie – high SIO).*

When asked if they could think of anyone who may be influenced by what others might think (see Appendix 17 for interview questions), most participants were able to give specific examples:

*It's very old and it's an absolute showpiece, there's rooms that you just don't go into they're simply there to impress guests... every time she came here when she used to come and visit she'd immediately look around the house. To her this is how she sort of reflects herself to other people, it's simply to impress (Jennifer – low SIO).*

Related to a need to impress others is feelings about the opinion of others. The importance of the opinion of others varies across participants (as also found in Studies 1 and 2 – see sections 4.3.4 and 5.4.8.3). As previously discussed some participants are more likely to seek to impress others and therefore for these participants the opinion of others in terms of the dwelling should be more

<sup>44</sup> Whether a score is high, near average or low

<sup>45</sup> For a more comprehensive discussion of the effect of identity orientations on home making, see Section 6.4.3.



important. Also, such participants tend to have a higher SIO – this is discussed in more detail when discussing personality in Section 6.4.3.7:

*Yeah and then people coming in and saying “Oh I love your place” – they’re all so comfortable here (Maggie – high SIO).*

Sheila (who has a particularly high SIO) describes how entertaining in the dwelling makes her feel:

*We came a little bit later than a lot of people in the department<sup>46</sup> – they were well-established in very large homes in certain neighbourhoods, and they were also very talented at entertaining. So it was all the dinner services with all the details. And as a Yank, I’m the one who’s happy with a knife and fork and not all the cutlery. And so I was conscious of that... It’s the pose, the pose is everything must be perfect, because you’re doing it in honour of the guest, but you’re also doing it as if to make it look like I do it naturally, and I don’t!*

Elizabeth explains that the opinion of others – in this case those who judge her as having had an easy life because she lives in a big house – are often misguided:

*... saying ‘oh its all right for you, you’re rich or something, you don’t work and you live in a big house’ and all the rest of it... It’s not that I’m some bolshy social you know. I’m not that way. I’ve had a few people say ‘you don’t know what it’s like really’... We got married, we had no fridge, no television, you know. We had to wipe the damp off the walls. You know, we’ve been there and done that (high SIO).*

Here she is alluding to the fact that people tend to gauge a person’s status from the exterior of their house (Cherulnik and Wilderman, 1986; Rapoport, 1989) – that in fact, some people make fairly large assumptions based on the appearance of her house. For her this is a problem because, as suggested by her high SIO she does care what other people think of her – as reflected in this extract:

*I care about what people think. I’d be mortified if I you’d seen a cobweb hanging down... I wouldn’t do something that I didn’t like just for somebody else to come in, I’ve got to like it but then it’s nice to know that somebody else thinks ooh you know, that’s nice or they’ve got taste. Rather than go out and think, gosh that was an awful place*

<sup>46</sup> Her husband is an academic working within a local University

Other participants however appear less concerned about what others think, as in the example of Lesley, whose attitude is congruent with her low SIO (see quote provided in Section 6.4.3.7) and Beth who says:

*I don't really care what anybody else thinks of me to be quite honest*

These findings show that the participants differ in the extent to which the opinions of others about their dwellings matters to them and what's more, SIO is a useful means of exploring such differences (see also Section 6.4.3.7).

Participants talk about others' dwellings for a number of reasons although generally comparisons are in favour of their own particular style or approach (such comparison is also discussed in relation to identity theories, see Section 6.4.2). Participants sometimes give examples of other sorts of dwellings to help the listener to understand why they have taken a particular approach in their own dwelling. Here Maude is trying to explain why she prefers her own dwelling to be visually stimulating and for there to be more possessions on display.

*... there's 2 big leather chairs & no pictures on the walls, very stark & I think "oh I'm scared to sit down, oh I might spill my drink, my cup of tea"  
... But there've been places that are like a tip & I've felt very at home (Maude).*

For Wendy the display of personal possessions and decorative objects by other people in their dwellings is important. Here she explains why:

*...when I go into other people's houses and I've got nothing to look at I feel terribly sterile and cold and I don't feel it's a very warm place.*

It is perhaps useful to bear in mind that Wendy can be described as having the most visually stimulating and clutter rich house of all the participants (see Figure 39 for an example). So what she is describing in the quote above is very much the antithesis of how her own dwelling is.





Figure 39 - Wendy's kitchen

Pets are another area of importance to a number of participants. Discussion about pets serves to remind us that in fact pets are often an important part of the family and in turn, of the home:

*Yes yeah we go there<sup>47</sup> most weekends but in the odd time that maybe Dougal and Natasha and the dogs go up and I'm here by myself it just doesn't feel the same without the people in the house which I think is significant because it's just – it's not a home without them, especially the dogs (Jennifer).*

Jennifer further explains that the dogs are given an important place in the home – instead of being kept in a separate area they are included in the family living room:

*... they don't get banished to outside - they kind of have their beds and in the evening when we sit down you know in the late evening the dogs and beds come through so they are included.*

Tomas and Dittmar describe home as an arena for social activities and interactions (1995). A lot of participants demonstrated a love of socialising in the dwelling. For these participants, welcoming others into the home is an important part of their home life. This echoes findings in Study 2 in which a large number

<sup>47</sup> The family own a holiday cottage in nearby Royal Deeside.



of participants talked about the importance of welcoming friends and extended family into their home (see Section 5.4.8.3).

Maggie in particular is a very keen entertainer. She explains:

*We have regular dinner parties – and it's not always the same group of friends... actually the whole house reflects the social side.*

Kate is another keen entertainer. She chose for discussion a table as a treasured piece of furniture. She explains that one of its values to her is that it facilitates social interaction during dinner parties:

*It's a fantastic shape because you can have a conversation right round the table not as you would get quite often with eight, you know up and down. You know it's great for that.*

Other participants prefer to have a smaller more intimate gathering of friends, for example Maude:

*I love having friends, you know, 2 or 4 friends come round for a meal or just to sit and chat in the evening. Yes, I'm more that type of person.*

However, entertaining is not an enjoyable activity for all participants. Jennifer shows how a person's desire to socialise in the dwelling may change due to circumstances such as having children:

*I used to be more sociable before Natasha came along, now I just feel knackered.*

Sheila, as previously discussed finds entertaining in her home incredibly stressful:

*Major dinner parties if it was something that was associated with my husband's work would be a real trial for me.*

And:

*And I know in myself that I'll be more successful if it's a last minute creativity – the creation – that I'm really better at that way. But there's something in me that feels that I must rehearse something and then I will really relax when it's all done, but by then you're a wreck.*

It can be seen then that, as with other areas of discussion, the participants differ in the extent to which they treat home as a venue for social interaction. Such differences can be considered in terms of participants' scores on personality measures – Section 6.4.3 for a more in-depth discussion.

#### 6.4.5 Participants' meanings and process of home

One of the questions asked early in the interviews is "What does the word home mean to you?" This section discusses the meanings given. It should be borne in mind that central to the design of this study is the understanding that dwelling and home are not necessarily the same. The researcher sought to determine for each participant whether they thought of the dwelling as home. This was the case for almost all participants with one notable exception in Kate (the reasons for her failing to make the house a home are discussed throughout the chapter). Common meanings of home for participants reflect the key themes already discussed in this chapter.

In defining what home means to them, participants often discussed family and friends:

*I think home is where the people are, not the building (Joy).*

These findings supports much of the literature which posits that significant others are integral to meanings of home (see Section 3.6), for example Lawrence (1995) who argues that it is through relationships with others in a dwelling that home is construed – again, something which was found in the previous studies, particularly in relation to making a house a home in Study 2 – see Section 5.4.8.1).

For some participants home means a place of safety or security, for example:

*Sanctity, it means to me. When we first moved into here it was definitely a house. It didn't feel like ours. So a home to me is somewhere where you feel secure, you feel safe, and that you enjoy being (Maggie).*

Again, this finding echoes a strong theme in the literature (e.g. Tomas and Dittmar, 1995; Mallett, 2004; see Section 3.2.3) and was a dominant concept to emerge in Study 2 (Section 5.4.8.1).

Comfort is another important meaning of home:

*... you could slob around, you could walk around in your underwear if you want to – you know? It's just comfort, you know (Lily).*

This extract also alludes to the importance of privacy in the home (e.g. Tomas and Dittmar, 1995; see Section 3.2.4). Comfort was the most frequently cited quality of home desired by participants in Study 2 and as described in Section 5.4.8.1, holds implications of psychological as well as physical comfort.

Another important theme to arise in meanings of home was that of home as a place where a person can be most fully themselves:

*And it's the place where you belong I suppose, where you feel comfortable in, where you can be yourself in – you know, you're unreservedly yourself (Rachel).*

Control is an important element of home, for example:

*... doing things the way I want to... (Jeniffer).*

Control is also argued in the literature as being a central requirement of home (Case, 1996; Kellett and Moore, 2003; Coates and Fordham, 2000; see Section 3.2.2) and is exercised in a number of ways, not least through personalisation of the dwelling (see Section 6.4.1.2 for more discussion on control).

Another finding important to the study, participants made reference to the fact that a home is something that you make:

*It is something that you have made your own. THAT'S home (Maggie).*

However, participants do differ in the extent to which this is a time-consuming process:



*to be honest we've been in so many places, you know, I can make a home anywhere, home isn't, you know give me a day and it's home (Beth).*

The idea of home as an active construction or process is central to literature in meaning of home research (e.g. Kellett and Moore, 2003; Priemus, 1986). So how do people make a home? Wendy reveals that for her, home making involves personalisation and the use of personal possessions:

*... it's very much about possessions and it's very much about what you've done to personalise it and it's also over the years all the things that have added to that house to make it (Wendy).*

Possessions are a strong theme in the interview in part because of the design of the interview questions and pre-interview task. However, the fact that participants mention possessions so early in the interviews is encouraging – it supports the argument that possessions are a useful way to personalise and make a home.

Perhaps the most important finding in participants' definitions of home is that of a home being something which is created – all participants understand that there is a crucial difference between dwelling and home. What's more, they imply that this difference relates to the extent to which their own identity has become connected to the dwelling. Home as a process is discussed in Section 3.4. As argued by Cresswell (2002), places are “always becoming – in process” (p20). Pallasmaa (1995) states that home “cannot be produced at once; it has its time and dimension continuum and it is a gradual product of the dweller's adaptation to the world” (p133). These arguments point to the view in this thesis of a home as necessarily a creation of the person or people that live there.

As discussed above, the process of making the dwelling one's own is an important meaning of home to some participants. Importantly these comments were made before the researcher had prompted the participants to talk about the difference between dwelling and home (for the order of questions in the interview, see Appendix 17). Following the discussion on meanings of home, participants were asked: How did you make this house feel more like a home? This question prompted a great deal more discussion about the home making

process. It is seen that the importance of the self in the process of home is understood by many participants:

*You're imprinting your personality on a building. It's not the bricks and mortar – it's everything (Maggie).*

Responses almost always pointed to the act of personalisation, through the use of possessions (often photographs), furniture and choices in décor. Maggie says:

*I think décor obviously, your choice of décor. And for me creating a warmth with photographs and artwork. And yeah, just choosing furniture, having little touches that are important to you – that reflect your life, really.*

Whilst personalisation and possessions were the most prevalent concepts in responses to this question, participants also pointed to other aspects in the process of home. Other people are hugely important in the process of dwelling becoming home (c.f. Lawrence, 1995). Joy explains that the dwelling felt like home as soon as important others were there:

*I think when we moved our furniture from Inch, and there was friends here helping us to move.*

One notable difference between participants was the length of time that they felt it took for the dwelling to become home. For some participants this took a while. As this extract illustrates, participants are often able to explain their reasons:

*When did it start to feel like a home?...for me probably about 4 or 5 years in – but that's simply because I had been so used to moving on, it took me that long to actually settle into it (Lily).*

For others the process is much faster. For example Elaine responds:

*I suppose it felt like our home from the minute we moved in, just because it was the first house we'd ever owned. So it's always felt like a home<sup>48</sup>.*

<sup>48</sup> This quote also points to the importance of home ownership to some people – see Saunders (1989).



However Elaine eventually separated from her husband – following this she gradually did things to make a stronger connection between herself and the dwelling. This quote acts as a reminder that just as identity is dynamic and an ongoing process, so is the process of home. Perhaps it is precisely because identity is ever-changing that the process of home is necessarily ongoing:

*I've lived here as I say 31 years with more than half of that time would have been on my own, you know after we separated. So I suppose over the years I've just made small changes to just make it more like mine (Elaine).*

When Elaine's husband left she not only had to redefine her own sense of self, she also chose to redefine her home. This demonstrates further evidence for the connection of identity to dwelling in the home process. But more importantly, such a finding suggests that because of the importance of identity in home, and because identity is ever changing, the process of home is necessarily dynamic. Although participants reach a stage where they feel they have achieved home, the process is ongoing, something to be maintained - or regained when things change.

Finally, the process of home is not always straightforward as there may be other constraints on it, for example for Kate who moved into an established family home. Sheila spent many years making comparisons between her existing dwelling and the dwellings she had inhabited in California. These comparisons were largely in favour of the Californian dwellings, possibly stemming in part from a feeling of homesickness. She explains how she slowly ceased her longings to be somewhere else as she gradually came to appreciate her own dwelling and think of it as home:

*I kept comparing with different houses we had had and thought "that would be nice" and that would come and go and I got a little impatient but after the boys moved out I thought this is perfect for us because it's just the right amount of room, we can put them up when they come for holidays and Christmas or whatever – it's just about right and neither of us is a gardener, so the garden, though small, is just about manageable... And so I began to improve my attitude and realise that we were really lucky, that it's been perfect all those years and I had empty notions of what would be an ideal home for most people, you know, something of this type of size, easy to care for and that you don't need more than that, in fact we could probably be just as happy with... fewer rooms...*



These extracts suggest that the process of home differs from person to person. For some it is swifter and more straightforward. For others it is a longer journey – often one on which the individual gains self-knowledge and experiences character development. In this way dwelling and the process of home can be argued to be interconnected with identity – when identity changes, the relationship with dwelling or home changes and the process continues. It is argued then that home is not just something to be created, it is also something to be maintained – an ongoing process. Importantly, in order to make a dwelling a home it is necessary to make the home one's own, to connect one's identity to it. This suggests that the process of home is central to identity process and content.

## **6.5 Summary of key results**

Participants' meanings of home have supported some of the key areas argued for in the literature such as social aspects (including family), security, comfort, privacy and control. Participants conceive of home as being something that is created, rather than something pre-existing in a dwelling. This summary of the results is structured around the 4 research questions.

### **1. What is the nature of the link between identity and dwelling?**

The study has provided numerous examples which evidence the connection of identity to dwelling. Participants make references which draw direct links between aspects of the dwelling and aspects of self. These include personal aspects such as personal roles, personality, interests, values, personal history and achievements, as well as social aspects including social roles and relationships. Participants differ in the ways in which they connect identity and dwelling and in the extent to which this is an effortless process. Personalisation is a key behaviour in connecting identity and dwelling. Control is a prerequisite of personalisation behaviour – although a need for control differs in importance between participants. Possessions, in holding associations with multiple aspects of identity are central to personalisation.

Place Identity Theory provides a useful framework for exploring data: participants include dwelling in their overall identity, and may use this as a basis

for environmental evaluation. Social Identity Theory is shown to be applicable to the findings: dwellings may be construed as category memberships and used through comparison with other dwellings in order to raise self-esteem. It is Identity Process Theory however which is the most useful theory in explaining identity processes in dwelling. All four identity principles (self-esteem, self-efficacy, continuity and distinctiveness) can both affect and be affected by dwelling.

## **2. How does this differ between people? Does personality account for such differences? What other factors are involved?**

The approaches of participants to all aspects of home making differ based on aesthetic preferences, personality and personal history as well as the nature of social relationships within the dwelling. A number of aspects of personality may affect the approach taken to dwelling, for example a need for control, a down to earth nature, level of conformity and social anxiety.

Personality measures are revealing in terms of behaviour within the dwelling. The five factors of personality may influence home making behaviours. For example, Extraversion may impact upon the extent to which a dwelling is used as a basis for social interaction versus a place of privacy and refuge. Agreeableness may affect the extent to which dwellings are used as a means of extending compassion and support to others. Conscientiousness may affect the extent to which career and work are reflected in the dwelling, it may also affect the success with which a participant manages the cleanliness and tidiness of the dwelling. Emotional stability may affect the extent to which dwelling is relied upon for emotional support. Finally, Intellect may affect the extent to which dwelling reflects a diverse range of intellectual, cultural and aesthetic interests.

Identity orientations may also influence a person's approach to home making behaviours. Personal Identity Orientation may affect the extent to which the dwelling is used as a means of personal growth and achievement as well as the importance of personal space. Social Identity Orientation may impact upon the extent to which participants are affected by the opinion of others, leading to differences in the ways in which dwelling is personalised, and the approach taken to social interaction in the dwelling. Collective Identity Orientation may determine the extent to which a community or neighbourhood is included in a



participant's definition of home; what's more, memberships to particular groups may be more evident in the dwelling of someone with high Collective Identity Orientation. Finally, Relational Identity Orientation may impact upon the extent to which input of others is welcomed in the dwelling, and the importance of developing shared identities and strengthening relationships within the dwelling.

### **3. How do social elements impact upon the process?**

A number of social aspects are central to participants' experiences of dwelling in particular: community; family; the input of others (in terms of personalisation); pets and socialising in the dwelling. Cohabiting with other inhabitants (whether spouses, children, or other family members) can lead to conflict. The presence of others can be a constraint to fully connect one's identity to dwelling. However, when people compromise and work together, relationships are strengthened and shared identities are built. Self-presentational aspects differ between participants and may be attributable to differences based in personality (especially Social Identity Orientation).

### **4. How does identity contribute to the process of home?**

Participants were asked to give their meanings of home. A number of areas were discussed, which support the literature on meaning of home (e.g. Lawrence, 1995; Tomas and Dittmar, 1995; Kellett and Moore, 2003; Mallett, 2004). Key meanings of home for participants are: family and friends; security; comfort; a place to most fully be oneself; control; and home as something you create.

The process of home was discussed with participants at length with a number of important findings. Home is created with other people and over time in the dwelling. Home is created through personalisation with significant possessions. Dwelling becomes home only once a participant has connected their identity to that dwelling - and this encompasses both personal and social aspects of identity as suggested by the points above. Finally, the process of home is ongoing – home is something to be maintained, or regained when things change.



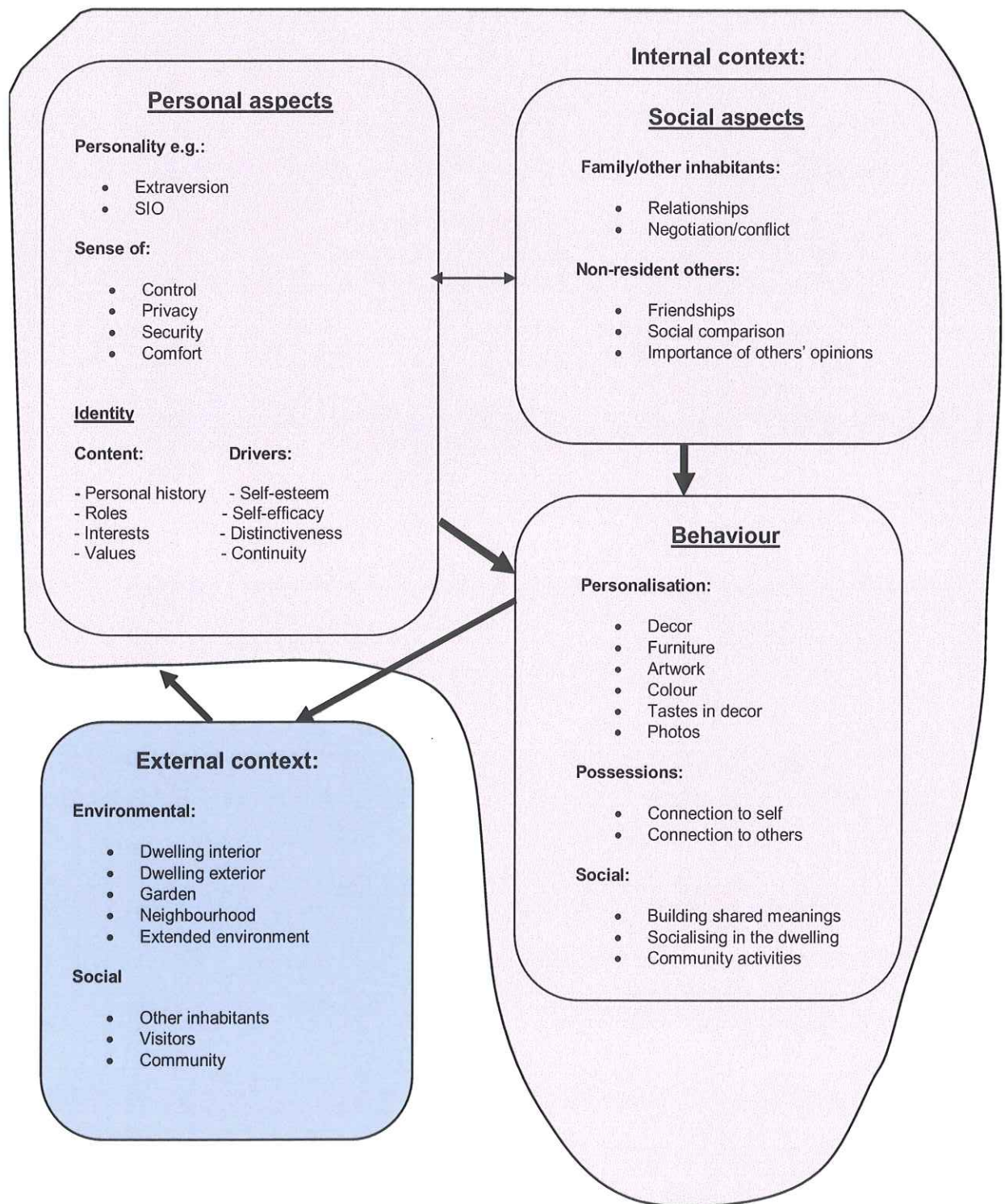
### 6.5.1 Visual representation of the findings

In Figure 40, the findings of the study are demonstrated in a visual format. The process of home is conceived as residing in the individual's mental processes whilst simultaneously belonging in an external context, in particular the social and environmental context. Research in this study has focused on the dwelling interior yet it is acknowledged (and confirmed in the study) that home exists beyond such physical boundaries.

It should be noted that Figure 40 is not a complete model of the process of home – it is acknowledged that other factors must contribute, such as daily routines and activities. Other factors however did not emerge as strong themes in the interviews – this visual representation concentrates on the process of home as uncovered in *this* study alone. Although the figure illustrates a dynamic process which contributes to a feeling of home, it is acknowledged that elements represented within each box on the figure (the social and personal aspects, behaviour, and the external setting) will all be important to participants in their definitions of home to varying degrees.

The pink bubble represents the internal context – the mental processes of the individual. These are subdivided into personal and social aspects, and corresponding behaviour. The personal aspects include personality traits (in particular extraversion and SIO as these were found to be the most influential in terms of the dwelling) and identity. Identity is explained both in terms of content (in particular personal history, roles, interests and values) and in terms of the identity principles in Breakwell's model (1986, 1992) – self-esteem, self-efficacy, continuity and distinctiveness. Personal aspects of the self also include certain evaluative properties which participants felt as necessary conditions of home, such as control and privacy. The importance of these various conditions will differ from person to person due to factors based in personality and identity.

**Figure 40 - The process of home**





Social aspects refer both to the people that reside in the dwelling with the individual and those others who do not live with the individual but are in some way significant to them. This part of the figure refers to an individual's feelings in relation to such social factors – their evaluation of their relationships and negotiation behaviours with others in the dwelling and their friendships with those outside the dwelling, as well as a tendency to value the opinion of others or to compare the self against others.

An arrow shows that the personal and social aspects of self influence one another and cannot be conceived of as entirely separate. For example, a person's level of extraversion will affect their relationships and friendships in some way. Likewise, SIO will affect the extent to which a person values the opinion of others. As illustrated by Jennifer, a high need for control in the dwelling can lead to a greater degree of conflict with others in the dwelling. Finally, a need for distinctiveness can lead people to compare themselves with others in terms of dwelling. These examples highlight the interrelationships of personal and social aspects of self.

The personal and social aspects of the self in turn influence the behaviour of the individual. In the figure, the behaviours described are those discussed in the interviews and relating to the dwelling or home environments. These behaviours allow a person to connect their identity to their dwelling – an important part of the process of home. Personalisation is a particularly useful means of connecting self to dwelling – as the figure shows this is achieved in a number of ways, for example through the use of decor. Possessions are highlighted as being of heightened importance in this process, because of their ability to connect a person with their own identity and with significant others. The social aspects of such behaviours are also acknowledged because people often work together in personalising a home, resulting in the building of shared meanings. Socialising is important particularly for those who are extroverted. Finally, activities and socialising in the community is important particularly to those whose definition of home extends to the neighbourhood and community.

The personal aspects of self influence behaviour in a variety of ways. For example, extraversion influences a person's propensity to use the dwelling for socialising – likewise, a need for privacy may reduce behaviour which encourages welcoming others into the home; a sense of control will enable a



fuller degree of personalisation; personal history, interests, roles and values all influence the way in which a person personalises the dwelling and in particular the possessions which a person will find most significant. The four drivers of identity (Breakwell's principles of identity, 1986; 1992) have all been shown to impact on the dwelling, for example a need for continuity leads to the use of possessions which connect a person with their own history; a need for distinctiveness leads a person to personalise in such a way that the dwelling is identifiable to them as opposed to someone else (as in the case of Maude making the home hers rather than her mother's); the need for self-efficacy leads to a value being placed on achievements in the dwelling such as decorating; finally a need for self-esteem influences behaviours which increase the enriching and restorative qualities of home.

Social aspects of self also influence such behaviour. In particular, relationships with those in the home can be strengthened through the building of shared meanings when people work together in personalising the dwelling – in creating a home together. These relationships along with friendships with those outwith the home are often symbolised through personal possessions. Negotiation or conflict will affect the nature of personalisation which takes place, and the degree to which such personalisation is a shared activity. Social comparison may also affect the nature of or degree of personalisation which takes place – either in trying to be distinct or more like those that the individual is comparing themselves against. Likewise, an importance placed on others' opinions may influence a greater degree of personalisation behaviour in the home.

Behaviour carried out affects the external context – in particular the environmental context. The environment (in particular the dwelling and the garden) are changed as a result of such behaviours – in particular personalisation results in a direct change to the physical environment. Social behaviours such as socialising or partaking in community activities also have a resultant impact, particularly the social context – the presence of other people and interactions with those people.

The external context in turn affects the internal context – for example the nature of the dwelling interior impacts upon a person's self-esteem, continuity, distinctiveness or self-efficacy. The evaluation of the dwelling impacts upon a person's sense of privacy or security, for example. Even the identity content is

altered by the very nature of having lived experiences which occur in the external context (as highlighted by Wendy who argues for her home as a part of her family's identity). Social aspects may also be affected, for example feelings of closeness may be strengthened as a result of efforts made in the dwelling by others. Behaviour is also affected – for example, a positively evaluated dwelling may require less personalisation and encourage greater socialising and vice versa. So it can be seen that the relationships between the internal and external elements of the process are bidirectional – showing that the process of home is ongoing and dynamic. In particular the strong emphasis on the mental processes of the individual in the process of home supports the notion of home as something which is not only created but also altered, maintained and regained when things change – home is “... *always becoming – in process*” (Creswell, 2002, p20).

#### 6.5.2 The results compared with those of the previous two studies

Many of the findings of this study echo those of the previous two studies, in particular the qualitative findings from Study 2. In Study 1, participants were to some extent able to discuss the ways in which their dwellings reflected aspects of themselves, although this wasn't always easy for participants. In Study 3, participants were able to discuss this area with more confidence and in greater detail – something which was probably assisted by the study design, particularly in terms of the press releases and correspondence with participants, as well as the elicitation techniques used and the design of the interview questions. In Study 2, responses to open-ended questions revealed a number of aspects of personalisation which were also important to participants in Study 3, such as the value of personal possessions. Also, the importance of the garden to some participants was evident in all three studies.

The meaning of home was not explored in any detail in Study 1. However, in both Studies 2 and 3, participants described their own meanings of home. Studies 2 and 3 mirror one another in a number of findings – in particular, both studies found that comfort and security are important aspects of the ideal home.

Finally, social aspects are something which participants discussed in all three studies. All three studies highlighted the importance of community, the opinion



others have of the dwelling, the importance of family, friends and even pets, and the use of the dwelling in building relationships and shared identities. Study 3 explored these issues in greater depth than the previous two studies had done. In doing so, Study 3 revealed interesting insights concerning social factors such as conflict between residents and the importance of the input of others in personalising the dwelling.

Study 3 then builds on a number of the findings of the previous two studies. However, Study 3 explores these areas in much greater depth, leading to a better understanding of the ways in which identity is connected to dwelling, the process of home, and the ways in which social interactions and relationships affect these processes. Finally, despite the inclusion of a measure of personal and social identity orientations in the questionnaire used in Study 2, the role of personality in the home making process is best understood through the findings of Study 3. Of all three studies, it is the final one which most deeply explores the ways in which people differ in their approach to home making.

#### 6.5.3 Theoretical contributions of the study

The study provides strong support for the reflection of women's identity in the dwelling. Participants show a good understanding of how their identity is reflected. Although participants connect personal aspects of self to the dwelling, the importance of social aspects such as relationships with friends and family is central to the process of home. Importantly, the women have shown that personalisation of the dwelling as a means of connecting one's identity to it is a central component of the home making process.

Study 3 has made a number of original contributions to the field. The study differs from others in focusing on differences between women rather than what they hold in common. Although there are common themes for all participants, differences are discussed throughout the chapter. A number of factors affect the participants' approach to the process, including personal history, social aspects and personality traits. An important focus of the study was an exploration of the impact of personality on approaches to home making. The study has demonstrated that personality factors relate to the way in which women interact with dwelling, thus adding to the field on meaning of home.



Finally, the study has contributed to research using Breakwell's (1986, 1992) Identity Process Theory Model. Previous research has explored the model in terms of residential environments (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996), communities (Speller et al., 1999), and housing (Hauge, 2009). Unlike these studies, Study 3 focused on meanings and processes of home for female participants who had not experienced any significant recent change to their residential environment, and hence no visible identity threat in terms of place was present (as with the other studies). Support for the use of the model in a more everyday home setting is provided. The dwelling, being within a person's control can tell us much about the ways in which people's identity-based needs affect their interactions with their environment. Results from this study support the existence of the four identity principles in the dwelling. What's more, Breakwell's model is a useful lens through which to consider the importance of various behaviours within the home environment.

## **6.6 Conclusions**

In conclusion, Study 3 has added useful and important findings to the thesis (see Section 6.5 for a summary of the key findings) and builds on the findings of the first two studies, both of which were more limited in terms of contributions to the field. Many dominant themes in the literature on meaning of home are supported. A much stronger case is made for the connection of identity to the dwelling. The study also provides a convincing argument that the connection of identity to dwelling is a central behaviour in the process of home. One important emphasis of the findings is that the ways in which participants interact with dwelling varies based on a number of aspects of self and identity – and these differences echo differences in the meanings of home to participants (although there are certainly similarities and common themes). Such aspects of identity and personality can combine to produce unique patterns of living in and connecting with the dwelling, and unique meanings of home.

Data also shows the importance of social relationships in the dwelling and how these can affect the experience of home felt by participants. A conflict of identities can occur when people are unable to compromise and negotiate in the dwelling. Relationships then can be strengthened (or conversely weakened)

depending upon the ways in which people interact with one another in the dwelling.

Finally, the findings strongly suggest that the process of home is ongoing. Home is never a finished product, it is always "in process" (Creswell, 2002) – an assertion which goes hand in hand with the idea of identity as a dynamic and ongoing process. This study has made some novel contributions to the field, in particular in relation to individual differences in the process of home, and in exploring the identity principles proposed by Breakwell (1986; 1992) and Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) in terms of dwelling.

#### 6.6.1 Limitations

Although the study provided rich findings a number of limitations should be borne in mind. All participants in the study were female with the majority being between 51-65 years old (8 participants). That the sample is entirely female (largely due to the self-selecting nature of the sample) adds further weight to literature arguing for a strong gender bias in home making (e.g. Dempsey, 1997; Gram-Hanssen and Bech-Danielsen, 2004). It is therefore acknowledged here that all findings and conclusions relate to women only. That is not to say that men do not carry out such behaviours as well, but further research would be necessary in order to determine whether they do so to the same extent as women.

In terms of socio-economic status, it should be noted that the respondents are generally middle class with the exception of Lily who has a lower level of education and employment (although she does not work now, and has a considerable household income due to her husband working in the oil industry). This assessment is based on overall reasonably high levels of education, employment and household income. Although some have criticised housing studies carried out with people from the middle classes (e.g. Cahill's 1996 criticism of Cooper Marcus' 1995 study of a middle-class sample), all social groups are valuable in research. The current sample was self-selecting and the researcher had little control over the resulting dominant social class of participants. Research with people with less disposable income would have perhaps led to different findings, although it is likely that among women the key

findings would have remained – that is, that various aspects of identity are connected to dwelling, that this is part of the process of home, and that possessions play a vital role in this personalisation of the dwelling. Perhaps the nature of the possessions (and indeed the dwellings themselves) may have varied somewhat, however, one dominant finding was that photographs are of key importance to people. Photographs are less likely to be constrained by income, being generally within the financial reach of many people.

The sample (although not all Scottish) is based in the North East of Scotland - the findings may not be applicable to people living in different cultures. All participants owned their own home, either outright or with a mortgage. The home making process may be different for those who rent. Finally, the research did not study participants longitudinally – future research into the home making process would benefit greatly by following participants over a period of time in order to understand more about how the process of home unfolds.

Chapter 7 provides insights and further discussion on the implications of the findings of this study.



## 7 Conclusions

This chapter discusses the findings of the research in a wider context. Contributions and the value of the research are discussed and limitations are outlined. Finally, directions for future work and areas of applications of the research are considered.

### 7.1 *Overall conclusions*

The research presented in this thesis has provided a number of insights into home and identity. In meeting the research objectives (see Section 1.3), the work in this thesis has achieved the following: a multi-disciplinary literature review explored the relevant theoretical and empirical work and informed the design of a first study. The first study explored a number of psychological phenomena which are active in peoples' interactions with and feelings towards the dwelling. Results from this study were used to guide a second study which took a quantitative approach in seeking relationships between personality traits and home making behaviour. Results from this study suggested that a qualitative approach may provide richer insights, so a third study explored the connection of identity and home through the use of in-depth interviews as well as measuring personality through the use of a questionnaire. The aims of the research have been met in a number of ways as follows (the reader is again referred to Section 1.3):

**Aim: to deliver a greater understanding of the ways in which identity is connected to dwelling.**

The connection of identity and dwelling has been explored through an in-depth literature review and through both qualitative and quantitative research. In particular, the qualitative research delivers insights into the ways in which people connect identity with dwelling, for example in terms of individual approaches to personalisation and the different uses of personal possessions and reminders of important others such as photographs and gifts. Personal history has a powerful impact upon a person's identity and is something that people reflect by various means in the home environment. The connection of

such aspects of identity provides a sense of continuity of self. One's interactions with home may provide other positive benefits for identity, for example through strengthening feelings of self-esteem, increasing confidence in one's physical abilities and providing a sense of individuality.

**Aim: to explore the ways in which personality affects this process.**

The ways in which personality impacts upon this process have been explored in particular in studies 2 and 3. In both studies, personality scales were included as a means of investigating how personality differences may affect a person's approach to home making. Study 2 did not find a significant relationship between personality and home making. However, Study 3 combined the use of personality scales with qualitative interview data – a useful approach in considering how differences in personality might affect both approaches to home making, and individual meanings of home. The qualitative data provides insights into the role of personality in addition to that provided by the personality scales, for example in the case of Jennifer who has a strong need for control in the home environment, something which manifests in how she personalises the home, and in how she interacts with significant others in the home. This exploration of the role of personality in the home making process constitutes a novel contribution to the field.

**Aim: to research the extent to which identity and personality impact upon the process of home**

Studies 2 and 3 in particular explored the ways in which both identity and personality impact upon the process of home and it is shown that the process differs from person to person because it is the connection of identity to dwelling which can make the difference between a dwelling and a home. Differences based in personality can impact upon the ways in which identity is connected to the dwelling, for example for those high on extraversion who emphasise those qualities of home which can facilitate social interaction.

## **7.2 Contributions of the research**

### **7.2.1 Theoretical contributions**

In this section, a brief synopsis is given of the research findings from the three studies, following which a summary of the theoretical contribution of the research is provided. The following section then discusses these contributions in relation to existing literature.

#### **7.2.1.1 Home and Identity**

The research presented in this thesis constitutes three studies: two qualitative interview studies and one questionnaire study which was largely quantitative in design. The first study was intended as an exploration to open up the field in terms of relevant variables, which would then be studied on a larger scale through the use of quantitative method.

The findings from the first study highlighted a number of areas which were of importance to participants in relation to home making (see Section 4.4). Participants were sometimes able to discuss the ways in which their identity was connected with the dwelling, for example in terms of values. Housing choice was discussed and a common theme emerged – a major advantage of steadings over other forms of housing was their tendency to be located close to community whilst at the same time affording a good degree of privacy. Findings also suggested that personality differences existed which might affect the extent to which participants sought to impress others through the home environment. It was this finding which was developed in the design of the second study.

In the second study, a scale was developed to measure peoples' attitudes towards a range of home making behaviours. Quantitative findings did not support the notion of a relationship between home making and identity orientations (see Section 5.4). A qualitative analysis of the open-ended data collected in the questionnaire provided some useful insights (see Section 5.4.8). In thinking about home making, participants tend to discuss the qualities of home that are important to them, be these physical, psychological or social. Home making can be thought of as a process by which people seek to



strengthen or maintain these qualities of home, both for the self and for significant others (be these within or outwith the dwelling). These findings are arguably more revealing in terms of home making than the quantitative data, suggesting that a qualitative approach is more suited to this particular area of research. What's more, many of the key concepts which emerged in this analysis mirror those which emerged in the third study.

In the third study, participants discussed a number of aspects of identity which were connected with dwelling, and the importance of social aspects – these being, after all, another aspect of a person's identity (see Section 6.4). Personality and life experiences impact upon the ways in which participants carry out this process – a process which contributes significantly to feeling at home. The analysis of the data revealed that many of the key categories which had arisen are interrelated. A theoretical contribution was made based on the findings, which adds fresh insights to understandings of the process and meanings of home (see Section 6.5).

Gender differences are strongly indicated by the findings of all three studies but particularly in the second study (see Section 5.4.5). There is a large female bias in terms of most home making behaviours. The third study indicates this gender bias in a different way – the sample was self-selecting and almost all who volunteered to participate were female. This suggests that there are well-defined gender roles in the home, at least in north-east Scotland - supporting argument in the literature for home making as a female domain (Dempsey, 1997; Gram-Hanssen and Bech-Danielsen, 2004). Age differences are also marked, particularly in the second study, with older people showing less concern over aesthetic aspects (see Section 5.4.6). These findings suggest that aspects of identity such as age and gender will affect the way that people interact with and behave in their home environments.

#### *7.2.1.2 Personality*

One of the key areas of investigation in this thesis was the ways that home making may differ between people as a function of differences based in personality. This interest in individual differences was developed during the review of the literature – although individual differences are considered in the

identity literature there is little work exploring their role in personalisation. Findings in the first study suggested that one way of studying such differences might be through identity orientations, especially given the basis of these constructs in self-definition (see Section 4.4.2). These were therefore measured in participants in the second study. Although relationships were found, on the whole these were weak, leaving the hypotheses unsupported (see Section 5.4).

The third study measured five factors of personality: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and intellect, along with personal, social, collective and relational identity orientations. The participants' scores on these scales were considered in relation to the qualitative data collected in the interviews (see Section 6.4.3). It was possible to make a meaningful interpretation of how these personality constructs might have affected the participants' approach to home and home making. For example, those higher on extraversion appeared to think of home more in terms of social interaction whereas those higher on introversion valued the home for enabling privacy. These constructs then appear to affect the ways in which a person makes a dwelling a home. Therefore, the addition of personality scales to the study materials is considered a useful exercise, but not one which replaces the importance of meanings which emerged from the qualitative data in terms of personality and home. For example, findings from the interviews showed that the women are able to discuss the ways in which identity – including aspects of their personality – is connected to the dwelling. These findings revealed a number of differences between the women such as a lesser or greater need for control – differences which are no doubt based in personality but are not picked up by the more general measure of personality included in the study.

Two methodological approaches have been taken in this thesis, in investigating the effects of personality on home making: a largely quantitative approach and a mixed method approach in which personality scales complement qualitative data collection. Much richer findings were gathered in this latter approach. It is argued then that qualitative enquiry has more to offer this particular area of research than a quantitative approach, although the addition of personality measures to qualitative enquiry adds value to the findings.



### 7.2.1.3 Overall contribution

The research contributions can be summarized as follows. The research adds to a body of work which explores meanings and processes of home. The studies in this thesis show that not only does home making seek to strengthen key qualities of home, it also functions in connecting identity to dwelling, this being key to the process of home. The research has shown that this connection of identity and dwelling can be achieved through a number of means, in particular through personalisation of the dwelling. Key to personalisation is the use of personal possessions. The research has shown that personality differences can function in influencing both individual meanings of home, and individual approaches to home making – it is this exploration of the role of personality in the home making process which constitutes a unique contribution to the field. Identity is not fixed, it is constantly changing. Qualities of home such as control, security and social aspects such as privacy also change over time and situation. This necessitates that home making is an ongoing activity – home is a dynamic process.

### 7.2.2 Contributions to existing theory and research

The three studies carried out in the thesis contribute to a number of disciplinary fields such as environmental psychology, personality and social psychology, and built environment research. This section discusses the value of the research to three areas in the literature – meaning of home, built environment studies and work relating to identity.

#### 7.2.2.1 Meanings of home

The studies provide support for a number of areas which are argued in the literature to be important psychologically in terms of home. In all three studies it emerged that social aspects are integral to peoples' meanings of home. This provides further support for the social importance of home that is argued in the literature (e.g. Case, 1996; Gram-Hanssen and Bech-Danielsen, 2004; Lawrence, 1995). According to Tomas and Dittmar (1995) home is "an arena for social activities and social interactions, with friends and family, enabling intimacy



as well as the performance of our social and personal roles" (p. 496). This is supported by the research presented in this thesis – home making is a drive not only to connect one's own identity to the dwelling, it is also an effort to ensure that the psychological benefits of home are extended to all members of the family, as well as to significant others when they visit. Furthermore, feelings of home are enhanced when significant others are present, a finding which supports previous research (Case, 1996). As argued by Kellett and Moore (2003) and Priemus (1986), home can be considered as a social process – the research in this thesis supports this in showing that home can be used as a stage for social interaction and a place to build and strengthen relationships. Conversely, privacy is an important quality of home to some – another key theme in the literature (Tomas and Dittmar, 1995; Lawrence, 1987; Mallett, 2004).

Comfort is an important quality of home and one which people strive for through personalisation. This adds to much literature which argues for home as a place of shelter and comfort (e.g. Dovey, 1985; Mallett, 2004). The research findings, particularly studies 2 and 3 suggest that comfort is understood in psychological as well as physical terms. The ideal home provides psychological support to its inhabitants. Home therefore has huge significance to people in terms of psychological well-being – and it is this quality of home which people often strive for through their home making behaviours.

The literature also argues for control as an important quality of home (e.g. Case, 1996; Tomas and Dittmar, 1995; Kellett and Moore, 2003; Coates and Fordham, 2000). The research in this thesis found support for this argument – control is central to home and essential in terms of personalisation. Control is closely linked with conflict. Study 3 found that issues relating to the input of others in the dwelling sometimes lead to conflict – although when people work together and understand one another, relationships can be strengthened and shared identities built, a point which supports Stea (1995).

The connection of identity to the dwelling has emerged as an important part of the home making process. This supports literature which argues for the reflection of identity in the dwelling (e.g. Sadalla and Sheets, 1993; Nasar, 1989; Cooper Marcus, 1995; Brooker, 2006). Particularly in Study 3, participants were able to describe numerous aspects of the dwelling which in some way

corresponded with their identity, such as the choice of decorative style, the level of domestic organisation or the extent to which the dwelling is used in social interaction (see Section 6.4.1). Personalisation is a behaviour which participants had intentionally engaged in, in order to make a place feel like home. Possessions were found to hold significance to people on a number of levels, enabling people to remember important events and relationships, with photographs being particularly useful in this respect (see Section 6.4.1.4). These findings support the literature (e.g. Cooper Marcus, 1995; Rechavi, 2009; Shenk et al., 2004; Gilroy and Kellett, 2006) which argues that possessions are a means of contemplating relationships and a way of keeping memories alive. Brown (2007) talks of home as a biographical narrative: for the women in Study 3, a variety of artefacts in the dwelling could be said to describe the significant events in their lives, supporting Brown's view of home.

A major interest of the thesis is the ways in which the home making process might differ between people as a function of personality. The importance of such differences in the home literature has been neglected; personality is typically researched more in terms of how it is reflected in the dwelling, without paying attention to the ways in which personality differences might influence a range of home making behaviours (e.g. Sadalla et al., 1987). The findings (particularly Study 3, see Section 6.4.3) highlight a number of ways in which personality differences might affect the approach that a person takes to a number of behaviours within the dwelling. Some people strive for home as a place for social interaction, for others the home is a haven of privacy. Some people value control in the dwelling above other qualities. The exploration in this thesis of personality in relation to such behaviours has found ways in which such differences might be explained, and constitutes a novel contribution to the field. Personality affects individual meanings of home, and is therefore deserving of further attention in this area of research.

#### *7.2.2.2 Built Environment Research*

The research findings can be applied to a number of areas within built environment research. Although the research presented here has focused on the home environment, it contributes insights for a variety of environmental settings. Built environment research focuses not only on the home environment,



it is also concerned with urban settings, schools, workplaces, prisons and healthcare settings amongst others (e.g. Macnaughton et al., 2005; Brunia and Gosselink, 2009; Wells and Thelen, 2002). The importance of personalisation behaviour in such settings is not yet fully understood. It is highly probable that such behaviours are important in other environments – particularly those where a person must spend a great deal of time, and build relationships or group memberships within these places. Such environments may include workplaces, educational settings, community centres, prisons and residential homes, to name but a few. For example, the ability to personalise may give a person a stronger sense of control and ownership over a work area, thereby leading to a strengthened identity as a member of the working team in question. This could have implications for both employer and employee well-being which may provide benefits for example in terms of productivity, as suggested by previous research (Wells, 2000; Wells and Thelen, 2002).

Housing preference studies research attitudes towards a variety of attributes of housing, in the hope of providing insights into improved housing design. Research shows that preferences may be based not only on practical aspects but also on a number of other factors, for example values (Coolen and Hoekstra, 2001; Lindberg et al., 1989), characteristics of the local community such as race (Darden, 1987) and symbolic aspects such as congruence with self-identity (Sirgy, Grzeskowiak and Su, 2005). The results presented in this thesis add to this body of work – participants in the first study often compared their own dwelling favourably against others and in particular there was found a dislike for typical new housing design. Participants cannot identify with such housing or the social setting it occupies. Instead, they chose to convert an old farm building to home use. This is often argued in terms of new housing lacking character – for the participants in these studies, a need for distinctiveness may have driven their choices. Older housing is often located in the countryside – and the increasing desire for a house in the country equates to a growing migration from towns and cities which places a considerable strain on resources and infrastructure in rural areas (Boyle and Halfacree, 1998) as well as contributing to environmental problems through increased vehicle emissions due to larger numbers of commuters on the roads (Findlay et al., 2001). For planners and policy makers then, the issue of identity in housing preference is one which deserves more attention.



A further area to which the research could be argued to contribute is that of participatory design. Participatory approaches are valued in responding to the socio-political rights of end-users; participation allows end-users of buildings to engage in architectural design (Jenkins and Forsyth, 2009). The importance of personalisation and the connection of identity to dwelling adds strength to the argument for participation. In the case of housing, it is possible that empowering end-users with control over the design may strengthen or even accelerate the process of home. Furthermore, this benefit may be applicable to other built environments, such as community centres or schools. Certainly, the participatory design of a school in Kingsdale, London resulted in a community of students who identified with their new environment in a much more positive way (Forsyth et al., 2009). Perhaps participation allows people to connect their identity to the built environment in question, resulting in stronger attachments and an improved sense of being at home.

#### *7.2.2.3 Identity*

This thesis has shown that identity is connected to the dwelling in a variety of ways – personalisation is a powerful means, especially through the use of meaningful possessions. Social interaction also connects aspects of identity to a space, especially in terms of relational, or shared identities. A number of aspects of identity can be reflected in the dwelling, including place identities, personal and social identities, group memberships and occupation, amongst others.

The thesis contributes to existing literature on identity theories and place. Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) describe how elements of Identity Process Theory (or IPT) can be applied to the physical environment and they describe “place-referent continuity” which is having a sense of history and continuity in a certain environment. Further, distinctiveness is argued to be important in terms of this theory (Breakwell, 1986). The research presented in this thesis, particularly in the third study adds to a growing body of research which applies this theory to the home environment (see Section 6.4.2). Participants show a desire for continuity – something that can be enhanced through the physical environment itself as well as through the use of possessions. The desire for a distinctive home found amongst participants supports previous work which shows that people desire to have a unique home in terms of decor (Gram-

Hanssen and Bech-Danielsen, 2004). This relates to the key components of IPT. These findings can be linked back to the argument made by Uzzell et al. (2002) that continuity and distinctiveness are important factors in the formation of place identity. Furthermore, evidence of self-esteem and self-efficacy were found, suggesting that home has strong psychological significance in terms of identity processes.

### **7.3 Limitations**

Despite the contributions of this research a number of limitations should be pointed out. The first study was qualitative and sought to explore personalisation behaviour in steading converters. However, the design of the interview led to a focus on other issues such as planning as well as lengthy discussion on the structural elements of the dwelling. What's more, the interviews made one fundamental flaw in assuming that the steadings were home to the participants – something which did not do justice to the critical examination of home given in the literature review presented in Chapter 3.

Despite considering home as a social process, and exploring socio-psychological aspects of home, the subject of multiple peoples' identities within the home was not addressed in the second study, for example in the form of relational identity orientation. Findings from both studies suggest that the home may be used to reflect shared identities of family members. In terms of constructing and displaying identities, households generally have a number of people all with identity-related needs. Further, findings of Study 2 suggest ambiguity over the true nature of the identity orientation scales. Perhaps the study would have benefited from measuring a number of personality scales, rather than focusing only on personal and social identity orientations.

The third study addressed many of these limitations. For example, volunteers for the study were very clear on the psychological nature of the discussion and were further primed through personality measures, open-response identity measures and elicitation techniques, prior to the interview date (see Section 6.2). Home was not an assumption in the research design. In fact, feelings of being at home were explored in detail with participants. Shared identities and the input of others in the home making process were also a focus of the



research. A greater number of personality constructs were measured. The resulting data is a great deal richer than that gathered in the first study. What's more, findings suggest that a qualitative approach is much stronger in relation to this particular area – particularly given the exploratory nature of the subject. The exploratory and qualitative nature of the work, particularly studies 1 and 3 is stressed, and contributions are offered in terms of fresh understandings and insights into the field. It is noted, however, that the sample was entirely female and therefore care must be taken as results may not be as relevant to men. What's more, the participants all lived in the North East of Scotland – it is likely that cultural differences exist in the ways in which people make a house a home.

#### **7.4 *Directions for future work***

Research into identity and home should further explore the interrelationships of personality and home. In particular, case studies in which individual meanings are explored in great depth could be beneficial. How does personality interact with home making behaviour? How do multiple personalities interact in the dwelling and with what consequence? Another area of interest is emotion and mood – how do these affect and be affected by home? To what extent are home making behaviours a drive to benefit these psychological aspects? Longitudinal qualitative research might be particularly useful in exploring the effects of mood (which differs across time and situation) on home making, feelings of being at home and meanings of home. Given that the sample in the third study was entirely female, a study looking at the ways in which men interact with the dwelling may be beneficial in understanding the process of home from their point of view.

The relationship of identity processes to the home environment could be studied in the context of more specific user groups, particularly where a deeper knowledge of such groups could prove beneficial for those providing policy and housing for them. For example, a large number of people in the UK live in institutionalised settings and their experience in these places is often far from the experience of the ideal home (see for example Kellett and Moore, 2003; Tomas and Dittmar, 1995). Personalisation and home making behaviour for such people may take on different meanings or functions. These would be interesting in terms of meaning of home research, as well as in terms of



designing better buildings for such groups. A deeper understanding of identity processes carried out in the home environment could also result in improved policy for example in terms of settling people in places such as children's homes, refuges, half-way houses and homeless shelters.

Findings from all three studies pointed to the importance of the garden in the reflection of self. Future work could explore personalisation of the garden and the exterior appearance of the home and would add to a body of research which has explored identity in relation to external physical contexts (e.g. Sadalla and Sheets, 1993; Bhatti and Church, 2000). Bhatti and Church argue that the garden has been neglected in the literature on home, despite the fact that *"it figures quite highly when people begin to talk about their homes"* (2000, p187) – an argument supported by this thesis (see sections 4.3.1, 5.4.8 and 6.4.1.3). Further research into the importance of the garden to people is therefore required in order to add to understandings of meanings of home.

An important question has arisen in relation to identity orientations. These are described in the literature (e.g. Cheek, 1989) as stable and distinct constructs. This research has shown that sizeable relationships can exist between personal and social identity orientations. As outlined in Section 5.4.7.2, such relationships are larger in older groups, suggesting a lack of distinction between the scales for older people. What is more, identity orientations decrease with age. Future work is needed to determine the extent to which identity orientations are enduring and stable or whether they change over time and context. More work is also needed to determine the extent to which the various identity orientations (personal, social, relational and collective) can be considered as distinct from one another.

## **7.5 Concluding comments**

This thesis has made a significant theoretical contribution to our understanding of identity and home. When identity is connected to the dwelling, particularly when this is done in collaboration with significant others, feelings of home are strengthened. Furthermore the approach taken to this process varies as a

function of personality. In ideal situations, home can have positive outcomes for the self-concept.

The research carried out in this thesis has created a new area of inquiry which connects home with identity and personality. Future work has the potential to contribute much to further understandings of this area. This thesis constitutes a first step in considering personality in relation to identity and home – it is hoped that this area of study will bring exciting theoretical developments in the future.

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## 9 Appendices

### 9.1 *Appendix 1 - Press release for sample of steading converters*

#### **First press release**

A research project at the Scott Sutherland School (The Robert Gordon University) is looking into the psychological importance of the home environment. Research student Leanne Townsend is investigating the approaches people take to modifying their home, and their various reasons for doing so. The research is based on the idea that people modify their own environment for a number of reasons over and above the obvious practical ones. For example, a person may wish to express a particular aspect of their personality through the way in which they present their home, be that through the layout, the decor, or the overall style of the property. Leanne intends to talk to people who have converted non-domestic properties (particularly steadings) to home use, and is currently seeking more people who would be willing to be interviewed. The research would particularly benefit from interviews with people who have been involved in the conversion of their own home, although the researcher is also interested in hearing from people who have changed their home environments drastically in some way, or who consider their modifications (or their home itself) to be highly unusual.

If you think that your experiences could be of interest to the research, have roughly one hour of your time to spare and live in Aberdeenshire or Aberdeen City, please contact Leanne at The Scott Sutherland School, The Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, tel. 01224 263725 (email: [prs.townsend@rgu.ac.uk](mailto:prs.townsend@rgu.ac.uk)). Alternatively, if you do not wish to be interviewed in person, it may still be possible for you to contribute to the research by post or email.

#### **Second press release**

A new research project at The Robert Gordon University's Scott Sutherland School in Aberdeen is looking at the psychological importance of the home

environment. Research student Leanne Townsend is investigating the approaches that people take to modify their home and the various reasons for doing so.

Leanne's work is based on the idea that people modify their own environment for a number of reasons over and above the obvious practical ones. She said, "A person may wish to express a particular aspect of their personality through the way in which they present their home, such as the layout, decor, or overall style of the property."

Leanne is keen to make contact with anyone who has converted a non-domestic property, particularly a steading, into home use and would be willing to speak to her about their reasons and experience.

Leanne explained. "The research would particularly benefit from interviews with people who have been involved in the conversion of their own home but I would also be interested in hearing from anyone who has drastically changed their home environment in some way or who considers their modifications or the home itself to be highly unusual."

If you think your experiences could be of interest to the research and you live in Aberdeenshire, please contact Leanne at The Scott Sutherland School, RGU on 01224 263725 or e-mail [prs.townsend@rgu.ac.uk](mailto:prs.townsend@rgu.ac.uk).

ENDS

16 January 2004



## 9.2 *Appendix 2 - Letter sent out to steading converters*

Leanne Townsend  
The Scott Sutherland School  
The Robert Gordon University  
Garthdee Road  
Aberdeen  
AB10 7QB

Tel: 01224 263725  
Mob: 0781 0887930  
Home: 019755 63822  
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e-mail: [prs.townsend@rgu.ac.uk](mailto:prs.townsend@rgu.ac.uk)

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Leanne Townsend and I am a PhD research student at The Scott Sutherland School, The Robert Gordon University. My research is concerned with the process of modifying the home environment, and in order to investigate this I am hoping to speak to people who have converted a steading or similar building to home use.

I am writing to you in the hope that you will be able to spare about an hour to an hour and a half of your time, at a time that suits you, in order to contribute to this research. I regret to say that as I am a research student, I do not have large funds so there is no means with which I can reward you for your time. However, participants so far have found the interview to be a rewarding experience in itself.

If you feel that you can spare the time to participate in an interview, I would be grateful if you would contact me, either by email, or by phone on my work, home or mobile number.

I hope to hear from you soon!

Yours sincerely,

Leanne Townsend

### 9.3 Appendix 3 - Demographic data on Study 1 sample

Participant	Gender	Age Group	Years in current home	No. in household	Level of education	Occupational status
Rick	Male	45-59	Over 10 years	1	Postgraduate certificate	Retired
Fred	Male	45-59	Over 10 years	5	Postgraduate degree	Self employed
Mark	Male	45-59	Less than a year	4	Postgraduate degree	Retired
Jack	Male	45/59	Over 10 years	2	Professional qualification	Retired
Gina	Female	45/59	Over 10 years	2	Degree	Retired
Claire	Female	45-59	Over 10 years	3	Degree	Employed part time
Thomas	Male	45-59	6-10 years	2	O Grade or GCSE	Employed full time
June	Female	45-59	6-10 years	2	O Grade or GCSE	Housewife
Connor	Male	35-44	Less than a year	2	Higher education	Employed full time
Sylvia	Female	45-59	Over 10 years	2	Higher or A Level	Self employed
Colin	Male	45-59	1-5 years	3	Higher education	Self employed
Jenny	Female	25-34	6-10 years	4	Postgraduate degree	Employed part time
Frank	Male	45-59	1-5 years	1	Higher education	Employed full time
Shelley	Female	35-44	6-10 years	4	Higher education	Housewife
Annie	Female	45-59	6-10 years	4	Higher education	Employed part time
Harry	Male	45-59	6-10 years	4	Degree	Employed full time

#### 9.4 ***Appendix 4 - Briefing and consent form, Study 1***

##### Briefing and Consent

Thanks for agreeing to take part in this study. The point of this interview is to find out about your home. I'm interested in learning about why you chose to live here in this type of home, and why you converted it in this particular way.

I'd like you to answer the questions you feel comfortable with in as much detail as you would like.

Please be aware that you have the right to withdraw from this interview at any time, and you do not need to give me any reasons for doing so. You also have the right to withdraw your input from the study at a later date. However, your responses today will remain anonymous and confidential. If you have any more queries, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Leanne Townsend



### 9.5 Appendix 5 - Study 1 Questionnaire

It would be useful if you could provide some background details about yourself. Please only answer the questions that you are comfortable with. Many thanks!

What is your gender? Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	
What is your age?	16-24	<input type="checkbox"/>
	25-34	<input type="checkbox"/>
	35-44	<input type="checkbox"/>
	45-59	<input type="checkbox"/>
	60-74	<input type="checkbox"/>
	75 and over	<input type="checkbox"/>
How long have you lived in this home?	Less than a year	<input type="checkbox"/>
	1-5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	6-10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Over 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
How many people live in your household (including yourself)	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	More than 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
What is the highest level of education you have obtained?	Postgraduate degree	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Degree or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Higher education	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Higher or A Level	<input type="checkbox"/>
	O Grade or GCSE	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Other qualification	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<hr/>	
	No qualification	<input type="checkbox"/>
What is your occupational status?	Employed full time	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Employed part time	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Self employed	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Full time student	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Housewife/husband	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Volunteer work	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Retired from work	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Unemployed	<input type="checkbox"/>
What is your occupational group?	Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Managers and senior officials	<input type="checkbox"/>

(e.g. office/restaurant etc. manager, police inspector)

Professional ☐  
(e.g. teacher, lawyer, scientist, engineer)

Associate professional & technical ☐  
(e.g. nurse, police officer, IT technician)

Administrative and secretarial ☐  
(e.g. personal assistant, receptionist, clerk)

Skilled trades ☐  
(e.g. electrician, builder, mechanic, chef, florist, baker)

Personal services ☐  
(e.g. travel agent, hairdresser, childminder, care worker)

Sales and customer services ☐  
(e.g. sales assistant, customer care, call centre staff)

Process, plant and machine operatives ☐  
(e.g. factory line worker, bus/taxi driver)

Elementary occupations ☐  
(e.g. labourer, kitchen worker, cleaner, waiter, courier)

## 9.6 *Appendix 6 - Study 1 Interview*

1. Why did you choose this particular building?
  - Did you consider other types of building?
    - i. new
    - ii. self build
    - iii. older house
2. Who was involved in the conversion?
  - To what degree was an architect or designer involved?
3. What is each room used for?
4. Does your home work well as a living space?
  - which areas work best and why?
  - which areas work least well?
5. Did anything influence your ideas about how the conversion should look
  - design
  - interior decor
6. What is important to you in terms of the decor?
7. Is there any style or type of decor which you wanted to avoid?
  - Why?
8. How has your taste in home decor evolved over the years?
9. Does your home reflect aspects of you? Was this intentional?
10. How do you define public and private areas in your home
  - was this intentional in the design process?
  - Do visitors understand which areas are public?
  - Is there an area that guests seem to be more comfortable?
11. Which areas of your home do you really like
  - which areas make you happy?
  - which areas make you unhappy?
12. How long do you intend to live in this conversion?
  - Is the conversion intended as a home for you, or for someone else?



13. How important was the saleability of this home to you?
14. What does this home mean to you, now it is complete? Does it represent anything for you?
  - if I say the word "home" to you, what do you associate with it?
15. How often do people visit your home?
16. Do you like entertaining here?
17. Do you think other people like your home?
18. Does it matter to you whether or not other people like your home?
19. Are there any other issues or experiences relating to this home which you feel are relevant to discuss?
20. Were someone to buy your house from you, what kind of person do you think would be happy here?
  - tastes
  - personality

### 9.7 *Appendix 7 - Debriefing sheet, Study 1*

Thank you for your participation in my Postgraduate research. The interview today was designed with the intention of revealing the reasoning behind why people make particular choices regarding home modification. I am interested in the hypothesised link between home modification and aspects of the self. It has been argued that modification of the home environment is an important part of the construction of the self, and particularly aspects such as personal and social identity, values, tastes and personality. The reason why you were chosen is that, in converting an old building into a home, you have taken part in a high degree of home modification, and I am interested in the different approaches to such a project.

If you are interested in seeing my results and conclusions, please feel free to contact me:

Leanne Townsend  
The Scott Sutherland School  
The Robert Gordon University  
Garthdee Road  
Aberdeen

[prs.townsend@rgu.ac.uk](mailto:prs.townsend@rgu.ac.uk)

Thanks again!

## 9.8 *Appendix 8 - Example interview transcript from Study 1*

### Interview 3 = "Conner"

L = researcher; C = participant

[being shown round at first]

L: Good size isn't it?

C: Yep.

L: Do you know what the building was originally used for?

C: It was just an ordinary farm building.

L: Typical farm steading?

C: Typical farm building yeah. Cowshed, that sort of stuff.

L: OK. Were you involved at all in the conversion?

C: Not hands on, we came to it with the conversion partly done. But it was at the stage that internal walls were not in. They were just drawn on the floor as to where they would be, but a lot of the plumbing, the pipe work and stuff had been done.

L: So does that mean that predetermined where the kitchen was going to be and this kind of thing?

C: That main detail was done but we had the scope to change things that we felt strongly about.

L: OK. I won't ask you what each part of your home is used for cos we've just been through that, so no. Which part of your home do you feel works best as a living space? Which are you the most happy with?

C: Erm, that's quite a difficult question. The whole package actually works remarkably well. The living room is fantastic. It's big, but it's not big in an oppressively big way. Even with just the two of us in it's nice and cosy. And the kitchen, again it's a nice size, and since we've put the extra units in, it works very well.

L: Actually the tape recorder was off when you were telling me about that, so you put those in for extra storage?

C: I think if we'd been starting from scratch with getting equipped, then it wouldn't have been a problem. But as there were two of us both coming from decent sized houses and having collected all sorts of stuff over the years, there's a lot of doubling up...

L: You've kept it then have you? You haven't been selling things?

C: We've got rid of some of it but having got used to it, we're not rushing into the getting rid. So there's a lot of things that we have doubled up. We've got a lot more in the sort of plates and saucers department than we really need. But it's a you know, what would we actually choose to part with?

L: I know, whose stuff gets to stay?

C: Yeah [laughs]. So that's probably something that we'll probably get rid of a lot of stuff over the next year or so.

L: Just gradually?

C: Yeah, just find out what we're not using and...

L: That's the best way to do it isn't it, rather than just rashly...

C: When we know of friends or relations or friends of relations that are just setting up their first home, that sort of thing, we can say, you know, we've got a spare set of... if you need a dinner service or something rather than going out and buying it, you know, students setting up their first flat or something, we can say "here have this to get you started".



L: I'd like to think that we would do that at some point in the future as well, I know what it's like to be the skint student so. So there's no area in particular that you're a bit disappointed with, that you would have changed the way that it had been done?

C: I think we would have benefited with some extra wardrobe space in the two smaller upstairs rooms. That's the only real thing.

L: To have it structurally built into the room you mean?

C: Yes. Because of it being built into the roof, there's not a lot of easy wall space to actually put a wardrobe in, in those rooms. So something built in probably would have been the best option. But it's not an easy thing to do with those rooms.

L: We have the same problem in our room, you can't put an upright wardrobe into those rooms, you just can't. Why did you choose this particular building?

C: It was here.

L: OK, practical reasons?

C: Yeah, and if we'd had our own way, we were going to get a plot of land, and build something probably similar to what I was in before. But the next size up, and to try and incorporate the wish list that we both had. And there were a couple of things that were not as flexible or ideal there, one of them being the big en suite bathroom, and shower upstairs, where you had to go through the last bedroom to get to it.

L: This was at your last house?

C: Yeah, so the only shower was on the other side of my bedroom, and a lot of visitors would be wanting a shower and it did kind of intrude on the privacy a bit. So, things like that we were going to do differently, and have a bit more space for families and stuff.

L: Yeah. When you say you both had a wish list, was it quite similar?

C: A lot of overlaps yeah.

L: Which helps!

C: Yeah. So when we had a meeting with the planning department and found out there was actually very little scope to get anything in the area to build, just because of planning restrictions, we had to be looking at conversion, or somewhere where there was a building already that could be removed and replaced.

L: So it's to do with services and so on.

C: So it was really down to what the planning policy at the time was.

L: So you went from that to thinking "well we'll have to either convert an old building or buy an existing house"?

C: Yeah. So we looked round, really to see what was being built, or where places were being converted, to see if there was anything we could get that would be the right sort of shape and size for our plans.

L: So you were mostly looking at places that were being newly built or newly converted?

C: Newly converted, mostly, cos a lot of the new builds were tending to be on estates of a dozen houses or more. And that doesn't really fit with the way that I've lived for a long time, and I prefer the sort of real community that we enjoy around here.

L: The more extended community?

C: And I like the nature of that. I didn't want to move very far, I wanted to be within the same sort of basic area, and this was a very good site, and we just caught it in time to make the few changes...

L: Right ok, so they would have carried on had you not shown an interest they would have just carried on with their own ideas?

C: They would have just carried on with the original plan. And we just added a few extras like the porch. And the sauna and things like that.

L: And did you make some changes to the layout?

C: Well, making an extra room downstairs instead of having a larger hall. And in fact the doorway through to the living room was further over, so we had that moved as close as we could to the stair, which allowed us to put the partition across. And that's what gave us the extra room. And that's the biggest sort of change.

L: And what about the materials, you know the flooring and the carpets and the fittings, how much input into those did you have (the kitchen as well)?

C: Right well they had a standard kitchen layout, and the kitchen equipment again, I didn't have much input myself into that. Felicity went round and they were saying "we're proposing to put this that and the other in" erm, fridge freezer, dishwasher, cooker. Erm, so I didn't really know what we were getting until it was in. And that's the one sort of draw back, in that we've only got a single oven there. And I would have gone for a double.

L: Christmas dinner is a bit tricky in a single oven isn't it?

C: Yep. I've gone part way to remedying that by getting a fairly large multi use unit. It's a microwave, and a grill, and a convection.

L: Oh I see, it's a combi microwave oven?

C: Umhmm. It's not as easy to use as ideal, but if I practise on it [laughs] I'll get better.

L: I mean most of the time you will just need the single oven so I suppose in that way I suppose, it's alright. But it's just like you say, when you have more people to cater for.

C: Yeah, it was quite hard work doing dinner for nine, just on that. Well, that and a microwave. And after that I decided that I had got to get something else.

L: So is there a grill that goes into that?

C: There is a grill in there as well. But you can't be having things in the grill and in the oven at the same time.

L: We've got a similar situation in that we've got an oven that we inherited with the house, and it's a fine oven, but I don't think it's even as wide as that cos it's an older one, you know. And it's got the grill up above and then the oven. But in every oven I've had in the past, the grill has doubled up as another oven space. This one it doesn't, you know. Christmas dinner, that's the biggest...

C: Yeah. So we basically chose, or Felicity looked at the catalogue they had to choose the kitchen units.

L: So did she just choose the ones that she preferred the look of?

C: Yeah. So then she showed me the brochure and said "are you happy with that?" And I said "yeah that's nice" and then we decided to look into having a granite work surface, which is a moderately expensive extra!

L: I know.

C: But is a lot nicer than the fake ones. So we got an estimate from the granite man

L: Was this the granite man in Elrick?

C: Tarland.

L: Oh right, I didn't realise there was a granite man in Tarland.

C: So we chose that. I went to his workshop and he said about there being three main versions that you can have. And we went by together to make the final choice, and he said "of course there's this", and flicked a finger and wiped over this bit of granite, which was so much nicer than the ordinary ones. And he said "well that one's a bit more expensive!" But we said "that's the one!" so we chose that.

L: It's really shiny, it's got that metallic fleck in it hasn't it?

C: Yeah.

L: It is quite special, it's lovely [both of us have walked over to inspect the worktop]. It's amazing what it looks like when it's all polished up isn't it?



C: If you have a look on the underneath of that you can see what it's like when it's just untreated.

L: Goodness! You would never think would you, looking at that, that it could turn out like this! I suppose it's the same with a raw diamond isn't it, you would never think, looking at it, what it could be. So it's important to you to have some good quality materials in the house?

C: Yes, absolutely. We're in a position with selling two houses and buying one, that we'd got a fair amount of capital to do it. We had the view that, if we're going to do it, we might as well start off with doing it as well as we can. And instead of saying oh well, do we really want to pay £1500 just on the kitchen work surfaces, and then we thought "oh well we can, and it is a surface which is going to still be beautiful in 100 years time". As opposed to something that will have degraded and whatever, with your Formica tops and stuff.

L: Start crumbling away and going rotten and things, yeah.

C: So you know, we thought if we get that and sort that from day one, it makes a really nice feature. I mean, the main units are not that special, you know. I mean they're good quality but they're not particularly expensive units. But there's not too much problem with that you know, cos they're fairly elegant, they're not the sort that would date too badly, whereas if you had the things with the frilliness round the edges, they may be in fashion at the moment, but I don't really see this dating.

L: So you think it's more a timeless type of design?

C: Yeah.

L: Do you prefer things to be less fussy then in that way?

C: Generally.

L: And how about the tiles – there's tiles in here and tiles in the bathroom, and the colour that the walls were painted. How much choice did you have in that?

C: We had... within the ordinary cost we had the choice of up to four different paint finishes.

L: What for colours?

C: Colours yeah. If we'd wanted more we'd have had to pay extra. And we chose just three. And we did that in about, between five and ten minutes. Looking at colour charts, and looking at the main bit we went for that honeysuckle. It's just a little bit more intense than just your ordinary magnolias. But it gives it just that little bit more warmth. And again the sort of lilacy blue in here offsets the granite nicely. And it's a nice contrast, but unlike a lot of sort of blues, it's not a cold blue. And it works very well. It's very difficult to look at a colour chart where you've got a square inch or half a square inch of colour and project it, and the bedrooms we went for a slightly yellower one, which, when I first saw it on the walls I thought "oh no, that's terrible" because in a bare room it did look a bit overbearing. But once the furniture was in and a few pictures on the wall, it was really fine, no problem.

L: So you feel comfortable with all the colours by the sounds of it. And what about the tiles in the bathroom, did you choose them?

C: Yes. Again, we had a family get together, just the weekend after we put the deposit down on the house. And that was down in the Lake District. And in our bathroom there we had very similar tiles to what we have here. We thought it was really nice. So we went along to the tile place in Aberdeen.

L: So what, did you take a photo of it down there?

C: I did actually yeah. And we saw tiles that weren't identical, but a similar sort of design. So what we did was to have the same design downstairs and upstairs, but with one being in the blue, and the other in the green. So you've got the same patterns, so you've got the continuity, but it wasn't like having it exactly the same in both rooms. But again, we chose those, plus these tiles [kitchen] which my mum had had a small area of her kitchen done, and she got



a these beach ones, and a few of these little fossil ones to split it up. And we thought that worked very nicely. We wanted it a bit lighter, so we went for the ivory, with a few beach ones, and a few of the motives. Just to be random, and break it up. In fact today I've just thought of tiles to do the back there.

L: Oh behind the worktop?

C: Yeah, so that will just round it off. So we changed those, so the tiles for here, the tiles for the bathroom and the slate porch, and again we were about ten to fifteen minutes in the tile place, and said "right, these ones, these ones, these ones". And we got just what we wanted in a remarkably short time. And the owner of the tile shop [puts on accent] "we never have people choose that quickly! People that come in by themselves maybe, but it's the first time we've had a couple come in and agree on all these things so quickly". So that worked very well!

L: Now the next question I think we've covered partly – did anything influence the way your steading should look. So you've said the bathroom tiles and that, anything else that you can think of?

C: Erm, hmmm.

L: I know it's a difficult question.

C: It is difficult. The thing is, in my original training in yacht design, I've been used to the design side of things and thinking about using space.

L: And aesthetics as well?

C: And aesthetics yes. So there's that. And there's the various comforts that we enjoy. So all the things that we want to incorporate.

L: So it's almost what you've taken from your experiences?

C: Yeah. The one thing that we couldn't get was a cellar. I've always wanted a cellar but that was the one thing that wasn't really going to happen.

L: They aren't really integral to steadings are they?

C: No. That's the sort of thing that if we had a place on a hillside

L: That you'd built yourself?

C: That we'd built from scratch, that would have been the sort of thing that would have been very nice to the different layers, and maybe a sort of upstairs living room, or something like that. But that really wasn't going to be doable in this particular building.

L: So possibly building yourself would have given you more freedom, you might have done things quite differently?

C: We would have done things a bit differently, but most of the things we wanted were going to be available in here

L: The most important things?

C: Yeah. And it was a fairly sensible layout. And you know, you could have wanted for a slightly bigger bathroom, but then again you're compromising on other rooms so it's pretty good really.

L: Is there any way that you would define which areas are public and which are private, just for you and Felicity, and have you somehow defined that, maybe with a staircase or something? Say you were having a party – where wouldn't you want people just to wander into?

C: Er, I would block off... I would shut the door through to the master bedroom and the office bit.

L: That's your space?

C: That's more... for sort of parties, with guests staying they would use that loo as well, but for parties I would say well we'll just use the downstairs toilet and keep the upstairs shut off. But I do tend to, if there's kids about I tend to have a room set aside that they can have a TV or video or guitar or whatever.

L: It's quite a good idea actually.

C: Just so they have the chance to either be part of the main party, or go and do kids things.



L: Yeah which they tend to do don't they. Do you think that your home reflects aspects of you or maybe you and Felicity, maybe your personality or anything?

C: Erm [big pause]. Could do. We're both quite keen on good quality artefacts, good quality ornaments and things like that, but not in a very loud way, and I think we're both very calm controlled people. And so the way the house is done is in line with our characters.

L: OK. Is there an area of your home that you find the cosiest, that you would choose to spend the most time in?

C: The big living room is very cosy, in spite of its size. You'd think we'd have a little area but because of the way we've got the furniture organized, we've got the different areas within the big room. So we've got the living area, we've got the dining area at this side, we've got the armchairs in the corner, the chessboard and so on. So you can have your little cosy in the corner bit, or your cosy round the fire bit, or the formal eating area.

L: So it's quite a flexible room then?

C: It's very flexible.

L: How long do you intend to live here, at this moment in time?

C: Erm, I think we would look at this as being our home, until we have to go into sheltered accommodation or something.

L: That's good, considering the amount of effort that's gone into it. A good thing. How important was the saleability of this home when you were, you know, maybe the granite worktops, were you thinking "well we can justify that cos that is going to improve the value of the home".

C: I think that because we're looking at a long term home, I think the value would be very interesting. I'd like, once the garden has settled down, once we've done things (we'll probably tarmac the drive and things like that in due course when everything has settled nicely) erm, it will be interesting to get a valuation to see what it is worth. But that's really just for interest, the value. I think it's probably quite a good investment; it's always hard to tell, particularly around this area. If we were ten miles closer to Aberdeen or something, then your values are much more predictable. I think the quality of life in this area is just unbeatable, and that Alford is a fantastic little town. Why would you want to be anywhere else?

L: Yeah, absolutely. Now that this home is complete and you're living here, do you feel settled in?

C: Yeah, we felt settled within a week or so.

L: Oh that's really nice.

C: It's chaotic because the carpets weren't done when they should have been. So we moved in, it was about a day late that we actually moved in, and then the carpets weren't finished, and we had the living room one down, and we had most of the tiling done in here. But then we had the whole contents of Felicity's house brought in, and that's a four bedroom house, and the whole contents were put in the one room. So that was a bit heavy going. But once we got the rest of the carpets down, we were able to start putting things in their appropriate places. It was two weeks after moving in that we had our wedding.

L: What a busy time!

C: Er, quite a few friends and relations visiting, and people came and thought "wow, they've only been in here two weeks! It looks really lived in and really settled". No, it was hard work doing it, but I get quite a warm feeling with how well we achieved the settling in, in such a short time. So it's a very easy place to live.

L: Now that your home is complete, does it represent a sense of achievement for you or anything? Is there anything that it represents for you?

C: Well really, a lot of what I've just said. It represents a...

L: The pride?

C: Pride isn't a word I like to use. But there is that warm feeling of having made the right choices and erm...

L: The contentment maybe?

C: The contentment yes. Excellent word. And we've made good choices of what to put where, and the bits and pieces that we've bought have fitted in nicely, and all the finishes and everything... You can never be sure when you look at things in a catalogue or in a shop...

L: I know, how will they work, how will they look?

C: It's only when they're actually there and they look right that you know that they are actually working out. So that's been very satisfying.

L: Always a good thing. I think I know the answer to this question: do you like entertaining here?

C: Yes [laughs]. We haven't done much so far. We've had a party for the immediate neighbours, just a sort of pre dinner drinks, after we'd been in a couple of months and settled things down a bit. We'd not really spoken very much so. Next door on that side we'd spoken to a couple of times. Felicity had spoken to the lady on the other side about once, and we hadn't seen the people in the house, it's about seven years now that they've been there. So they're the long standing members of this little community. So we have the three households here, plus the people in the little cottage. So we had them round really just to get everyone, er...

L: Break the ice a bit?

C: Yeah break the ice. Whatever, plus we had a couple of other friends, Peter and Lorna our previous next doors, just to have a different slant on it. So we did that, we had our party this weekend, and we had one big dinner party, plus we had some friends come over for a weekend, so we did a bit of nice meals for them and what not.

L: So you've warmed the house up a bit?

C: So that's what we've done so far, but it's been a fairly busy year.

L: I mean, how often do people, you know, friends or locals or neighbours just pop in?

C: Er, it varies. A lot of the time I'm sure people try to pop in and we're not here. It can be just about every day sometimes, or you can go a couple of weeks and not see a soul unless we're actually going out to see people.

L: But, in general this house is open to other people, there are other people seeing it. Does it bother you whether or not other people like your house, do you care about that?

C: Erm, it doesn't bother me, but I do enjoy it when people come in and say "ooh, that's nice" and "wow what a room" and things like that. It's really nice that people do come and approve.

L: Do you feel it reflects well on you, almost if you were able to make a good first impression as a person that you could do so through your home?

C: Er, hmm. I don't know about that. I think that if you have an absolute slum, people may look down their noses a bit. I think different people get opinions from different influences. Some people may look at your house and think that you're a certain sort of person because of it, and it's maybe not a very good way of judging people.

L: But you don't think that in order to make a good impression of yourself, that that needs to be done through the house as well?

C: I don't think so no. Impressions may be reinforced by it, but I don't think it a primary thing. And most people when you meet them first time are in a different setting any way.

L: That's true.



C: So people would form an opinion prior to that, and if they become on visiting terms then they would probably have a fairly well established view already.

L: They may change it slightly?

C: They may form reinforcement, see a reflection of the character. Because there's a lot that goes towards your character, and ones' taste in a whole range of things are what goes towards that.

L: Are there any other issues or experiences that you think are relevant to what we've been speaking about?

C: Hmm [long pause] I think we've covered it pretty well actually.

L: OK, I've got one more question for you, and it's a hypothetical question cos I know you're not going to sell your house in a hurry, but just imagine that you are selling the house. Were someone to buy this house, what kind of person do you think would be happy here, in terms of their personality and their preferences and so on?

C: Alright, well I think all sorts of people would be happy here. I think anyone that would appreciate good rural country sort of dwelling, and loved community rather than being isolated. I think they'd enjoy it here. I don't think particularly fashion conscious up to date sort of flashy types would like it particularly. But I think most others would. I think maybe your inherently city orientated people would feel a bit exposed perhaps.

L: OK, good answer. That's it for the actual interview.

## 9.9 Appendix 9 - Study 2 Questionnaire



The Scott Sutherland School  
The Robert Gordon University  
Garthdee Road  
Aberdeen  
AB10 7QB

Tel: 01224 263725  
Email: [prs.townsend@rgu.ac.uk](mailto:prs.townsend@rgu.ac.uk)

Dear Householder,

I am a postgraduate research student at The Robert Gordon University. As part of my PhD I am carrying out a survey which is concerned with the various behaviours that enhance a person's experience of their home environment. I would be very grateful if a member of your household could take the time to fill in the enclosed questionnaire. A stamped addressed envelope is included for returning the survey.

Some of the questions relate to general things that are important to you, and other questions are more specifically about the kinds of things that you do to your home to make it more attractive and suitable to your needs. Your responses will remain fully anonymous which is why I haven't asked for your name.

I would like to thank you for taking the time to participate in this research.

Yours sincerely,

Leanne Townsend

The following items describe different aspects of identity. Please read each item carefully and indicate how important each is to your sense of who you are by placing a cross in the appropriate box. Please only check one box for each question.

		Extremely important to my sense of who I am	Very important to my sense of who I am	Somewhat important to my sense of who I am	Slightly important to my sense of who I am	Not important to my sense of who I am
A1	My personal values and moral standards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A2	My popularity with other people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A3	My dreams and imagination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A4	The ways in which other people react to what I say or do	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A5	My personal goals and hopes for the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A6	My physical appearance: my height, my weight, and the shape of my body	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A7	My emotions and feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A8	My reputation, what others think of me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A9	My thoughts and ideas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A10	My attractiveness to other people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A11	My gestures and mannerisms, the impression I make on others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A12	The way I deal with my fears and anxieties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A13	My social behaviour, such as the way I act when meeting people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A14	My feelings of being a unique person, being distinct from others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A15	Knowing that I continue to be essentially the same inside even though life involves many external changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A16	My self-knowledge, my ideas about what kind of person I really am	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A17	My personal self-evaluation, the private opinion I have of myself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

In the next part of the survey you will be asked to answer questions relating to the home you live in at the moment. I am interested in what you do as an individual as well as what you do with your partner or family. However, I am keen for you to complete this survey on your own. If you have recently moved home, answer the questions based on your new home, bearing in mind the kind of approach you are likely to take in the future.

1	Please indicate with a cross in the box which of the following statements most applies to you:	
A	I am the only adult in my home	<input type="checkbox"/> Please go to question 3.



B	I live with a partner/other adult(s) <input type="checkbox"/>																																															
2	If you ticked the second box in the question above, please indicate which of the following three statements most applies to you:																																															
A	I show the most interest in what our home looks like inside <input type="checkbox"/>																																															
B	It is my partner/other adult(s) who show(s) the most interest in what our home looks like inside <input type="checkbox"/>																																															
C	My partner/other adult(s) and I show an equal amount of interest in what our home looks like inside. <input type="checkbox"/>																																															
<p>Please read the following statements. By each statement, please check the box that most describes the extent to which you agree or disagree. After every few questions you will be given an opportunity to provide further comments (this is optional). Please answer as honestly as possible, bearing in mind that your answers remain anonymous. Again, please only check one box for each question.</p>																																																
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Strongly agree</th> <th>Slightly agree</th> <th>Neither agree nor disagree</th> <th>Slightly disagree</th> <th>Strongly disagree</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>I like to have an "open house" – I am happy for people to come round unannounced</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>If I like my home I feel better about myself</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>My home is a place where I like to spend a great deal of time</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td>I feel very much at home in the place where I currently live</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td>When I find a nice home I like to stay there for a long time</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>8</td> <td colspan="5">Further comments:</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	3	I like to have an "open house" – I am happy for people to come round unannounced	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	If I like my home I feel better about myself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	My home is a place where I like to spend a great deal of time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6	I feel very much at home in the place where I currently live	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7	When I find a nice home I like to stay there for a long time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	8	Further comments:				
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13	It is important that my home reflects my personality and interests	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	It is important to me that the inside of my home is very stylish	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	Further comments:					
		Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree
16	Upgrading my home is one of my financial priorities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	I enjoy making physical changes to my home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18	I am happy to spend my spare time making changes to my home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19	Further comments:					
		Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree
20	I put effort into finding the right decorative objects for my home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21	I put a lot of thought into how things like cushions and curtains can change the appearance of my home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22	I mostly display decorative objects that have some personal meaning to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23	When I buy functional items (such as things for the kitchen) it is important to me what they look like	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24	Further comments:					
		Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree
25	I often do things to change the atmosphere of my home environment (such as changing the lighting or putting on music)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26	If I am expecting people round for dinner, I spend a lot of time creating a nice atmosphere in my home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

27	I enjoy decorating my home for cultural celebrations such as Christmas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28	Further comments:					
		Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree
29	I like to ensure that my home is clean and tidy all of the time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30	My home is cleaner and tidier when I know people are coming to visit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31	I am fairly organised about cleaning and tidying my home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32	Further comments:					
33	Please tell me what the term "home-making" means to you:					
<p>You will now be asked to provide some information about yourself. Please indicate your answers to the following questions by placing a cross in the appropriate box.</p>						
B1	<b>Gender:</b> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>					



B2	<b>Age group:</b>  18-25 <input type="checkbox"/> 26-35 <input type="checkbox"/> 36-50 <input type="checkbox"/> 51-65 <input type="checkbox"/> Over 65 <input type="checkbox"/>	B3	<b>Employment status:</b>  Employed <input type="checkbox"/> Self-employed <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed <input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Retired <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
B4	<b>Residential status:</b>  Renter <input type="checkbox"/> Owner (outright) <input type="checkbox"/> Owner (with mortgage) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	B5	<b>What kind of home do you live in?</b>  Flat <input type="checkbox"/> House (terraced) <input type="checkbox"/> House (semi-detached/ end terraced) <input type="checkbox"/> House (detached) <input type="checkbox"/> Bungalow <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
B6	<b>Which of the following best describes your household?</b>  Living alone <input type="checkbox"/> Living with partner <input type="checkbox"/> Living with flatmates/housemates <input type="checkbox"/> Living with a partner and our child/ children <input type="checkbox"/> Living as a single parent <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	B7	<b>How long have you lived in your current home?</b>  Less than a year <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 years <input type="checkbox"/> 2-5 years <input type="checkbox"/> 5-10 years <input type="checkbox"/> More than 10 years <input type="checkbox"/> More than 20 years <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!</b>			

### 9.10 Appendix 10 - Mean responses to all home making items

Item	Statement	Mean response	Standard deviation
6	I feel very much at home in the place where I currently live	1.55	.94
30	My home is cleaner and tidier when I know people are coming to visit	1.65	.93
5	My home is a place where I like to spend a great deal of time	1.67	.85
7	When I find a nice home I like to stay there for a long time	1.70	.96
4	If I like my home I feel better about myself	1.78	.86
26	If I am expecting people round for dinner, I spend a lot of time creating a nice atmosphere in my home	1.82	.96
12	If someone compliments me on the appearance of my home, it makes me feel good about myself	1.92	.87
29	I like to ensure that my home is clean and tidy all of the time	1.93	.99
22	I mostly display decorative objects that have some personal meaning to me	1.94	1
13	It is important that my home reflects my personality and interests	2.05	.96
27	I enjoy decorating my home for cultural celebrations such as Christmas	2.06	1.22
9	I like to spend a lot of time making sure that my home is nice	2.10	1.01
31	I am fairly organised about cleaning and tidying my home	2.13	1.12
23	When I buy functional items (such as things for the kitchen) it is very important to me what they look like	2.17	1.12
10	I try to make my home as individual as possible	2.23	1.04
25	I often do things to change the atmosphere of my home environment (such as changing the lighting or putting on music)	2.30	1.16
20	I put effort into finding the right decorative objects for my home	2.33	1.17
3	I like to keep an "open house" – I am happy for people to come round unannounced	2.35	1.29

11	Even if a home I had just moved into met my physical needs and was in good decorative order, I would still decorate it to my own taste	2.35	1.29
17	I enjoy making physical changes to my home	2.47	1.13
21	I put a lot of thought into how things like cushions and curtains can change the appearance of my home	2.48	1.27
18	I am happy to spend my spare time making changes to my home	2.56	1.2
16	Upgrading my home is one of my financial priorities	2.62	1.24
14	It is important to me that the inside of my home is very stylish	2.93	1.19



### 9.11 Appendix 11 - Coding frequencies in Study 2

Tree node and branch	Number of references
<b>Feelings towards home or dwelling:</b>	
Being settled	9
Happy in the home or dwelling	85
Importance of area	9
Not ideal home	4
"Not my home"	4
Pride and achievement	7
<b>Home making (definitions of):</b>	
Sexist connotations	8
Negative connotations	3
Full time home maker	3
House to home	15
Old fashioned	3
<b>Meanings and qualities of home:</b>	
Cosy	10
Comfort	207
Functional	34
Just a shelter	1
Shelter	1
Relaxing	82
Sanctuary	10
<b>Personalisation:</b>	
Christmas	18
DIY	60
Garden	5
Financial gain	16
Reflection of self	28
Possessions	39
Other things more important	21
Stylishness	25
<b>Domestic aspects:</b>	
Cleanliness/tidiness	124
Effort	1
<b>Interests:</b>	
Travel	3
<b>Constraints:</b>	
Health	
Old Age	8
Renting	6
Other constraints	37
<b>Social aspects:</b>	
Family	153
Friends	36
Bad neighbours	3
Importance of others	6
Input of others	17
Others' dwellings	1
Others' opinions	14
Pets	4
Privacy	5
Relationships	9
<b>Having others in the dwelling:</b>	
Entertaining	18
Open house	10

Welcoming others	85
<b>Rootedness:</b>	
<b>Commitment to current dwelling:</b>	
Downsizing	1
Moving on	1
No intention of moving	3
Restlessness	1
<b>Temporal factors:</b>	
Length of residence	15
New to dwelling	1
Not moved much	1

### 9.12 Appendix 12 - Email and Press Release for Study 3

#### Email

I am a psychologist at the Scott Sutherland School carrying out research into the connection between home and identity. I am interested in the ways in which dwellings can be seen to reflect the person or people that live there. For example, meaningful possessions displayed within the dwelling may enable a person to connect their identity to that place, in order to make the dwelling feel more like a home. I am looking for people who would be interested in being interviewed as part of a pilot study exploring these areas. Interviews would take place in the participants' own home. Participation would also involve completing a measure of personality and taking some photographs of meaningful possessions or parts of the dwelling. The main criteria for taking part are a genuine interest in ones' own home and a willingness to discuss psychological aspects in relation to it. If you are interested in taking part, please email Leanne at: [l.c.townsend@rgu.ac.uk](mailto:l.c.townsend@rgu.ac.uk) or contact her on 07810887930.

Many thanks

Leanne Townsend

#### Press Release

A psychologist from the Scott Sutherland School at the Robert Gordon University is carrying out research into the connection between home and identity. Leanne Townsend is interested in the ways in which dwellings can be seen to reflect the person or people that live there. For example, meaningful possessions displayed within the dwelling may enable a person to connect their identity to that place, in order to make the dwelling feel more like a home. Leanne is looking for people who would be interested in taking part in interviews exploring these areas. Interviews would take place in the participants' own home. Participation would also involve completing a measure of personality and taking some photographs of meaningful possessions or parts of the dwelling. The main criteria for taking part are a genuine interest in ones' own home and a willingness to discuss psychological aspects in relation to it. If you are interested in taking part, please email Leanne at: [l.c.townsend@rgu.ac.uk](mailto:l.c.townsend@rgu.ac.uk) or contact her on 07810887930.



## 9.13 Appendix 13: Questionnaire for Study 3 participants

### Information sheet

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

This study is being carried out as part of a PhD thesis and investigates the ways in which people connect their identity to their dwelling. For example, people may use the dwelling as a place for expressing their identity. The expression of self in the dwelling may also be used to make a dwelling feel more like a home. These kinds of behaviour may vary based upon differences in personality.

The research in this study will be carried out over two stages. This questionnaire constitutes the first stage of the study. I need to know about you as a person, which is why this questionnaire includes questions relating to your personality and identity, as well as more demographic questions (e.g. gender, age group etc.). Information collected in the questionnaire will also be used in the PhD thesis, on an anonymous basis.

You will be asked to complete a number of sections of the questionnaire in your own time. This should take you approximately 30 minutes. Once complete, please return it to me using the stamped addressed envelope provided.

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and you do not need to give a reason. Your participation in this research would be of great benefit in terms of furthering our understanding of the topic area.

All information collected from you will be kept strictly confidential. Data generated in the course of the research will be kept securely in paper or electronic form for a period of five years after the completion of the research project.

If you are interested in the results of this study or would like further information, you can contact me on [l.c.townsend@rgu.ac.uk](mailto:l.c.townsend@rgu.ac.uk). Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

Many thanks

Leanne Townsend

Consent

Please tick box

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for this study.

☐

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time, without giving reason.

☐

I agree to take part in this study.

☐

On the following pages, there are phrases describing people's behaviours. Please use the rating scale below to describe how accurately each statement describes **you**. Describe yourself as you generally are now, not as you wish to be in the future. Describe yourself as you honestly see yourself, in relation to other people you know of the same sex and roughly the same age. So that you can describe yourself in an honest manner, your responses will be kept in absolute confidence. Please read each statement carefully, and then circle the number which most applies to you.

Example:

Very  
inaccurate

Neither  
Inaccurate  
nor Accurate

Very  
accurate

Am relaxed most of the time.....1.....

2..... 3..... 4..... 5

Response Options

- 1: Very Inaccurate
- 2: Moderately Inaccurate
- 3: Neither Inaccurate nor Accurate
- 4: Moderately Accurate
- 5: Very Accurate

Name of participant

Date

Signature

Very  
inaccurate

Neither  
Inaccurate  
nor Accurate

Very  
accurate

Am the life of the party.....1.....2.....3.....4..... 5

Feel little concern for others.....1.....2.....3.....4..... 5

	Very inaccurate	Neither Inaccurate nor Accurate	Very accurate
Am always prepared.....	1.....	2.....3.....4.....5	
Get stressed out easily.....	1.....2.....3.....4.....5		
Have a rich vocabulary.....	1.....2.....3.....4.....5		
Don't talk a lot.....	1.....2.....3.....4.....5		
Am interested in people.....	1.....2.....3.....4.....5		
Leave my belongings around.....	1.....2.....3.....4.....5		
Am relaxed most of the time.....	1.....2.....3.....4.....5		
Have difficulty understanding abstract ideas.....	1.....2.....3.....4.....5		
Feel comfortable around people.....	1.....2.....3.....4.....5		
Insult people.....	1.....2.....3.....4.....5		
Pay attention to details.....	1.....2.....3.....4.....5		
Worry about things.....	1.....2.....3.....4.....5		
Have a vivid imagination.....	1.....2.....3.....4.....5		
Keep in the background.....	1.....2.....3.....4.....5		
Sympathize with others' feelings.....	1.....2.....3.....4.....5		
Make a mess of things.....	1.....2.....3.....4.....5		
Seldom feel blue.....	1.....2.....3.....4.....5		
Am not interested in abstract ideas.....	1.....2.....3.....4.....5		
Start conversations.....	1.....2.....3.....4.....5		
Am not interested in other people's problems.....	1.....2.....3.....4.....5		
Get chores done right away.....	1.....2.....3.....4.....5		
Am easily disturbed.....	1.....2.....3.....4.....5		
Have excellent ideas.....	1.....2.....3.....4.....5		
Have little to say.....	1.....2.....3.....4.....5		
Have a soft heart.....	1.....2.....3.....4.....5		
Often forget to put things back in their proper place.....	1.....2.....3.....4.....5		
Get upset easily.....	1.....2.....3.....4.....5		
Do not have a good imagination.....	1.....2.....3.....4.....5		
Talk to a lot of different people at parties.....	1.....2.....3.....4.....5		
Am not really interested in others.....	1.....2.....3.....4.....5		
Like order.....	1.....2.....3.....4.....5		
Change my mood a lot.....	1.....2.....3.....4.....5		
Am quick to understand things.....	1.....2.....3.....4.....5		



Very inaccurate      Neither Inaccurate nor Accurate      Very accurate

Don't like to draw attention to.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5

Take time out for others.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5

Shirk my duties.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5

Have frequent mood swings.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5

Use difficult words.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5

Don't mind being the centre.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5  
of attention.

Feel others' emotions.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5

Follow a schedule.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5

Get irritated easily.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5

Spend time reflecting on things.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5

Am quiet around strangers.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5

Make people feel at ease.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5

Am exacting in my work.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5

Often feel blue.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5

Am full of ideas.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5

The following items describe different aspects of identity. Please read each item carefully and consider how it applies to you. So that you can describe yourself in an honest manner, your responses will be kept in absolute confidence. Please read each statement carefully, and then circle the number which most applies to you.

**Example:**      Not important      Somewhat important      Extremely important

My popularity with other people.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5

**Response options:**

1 = Not important to my sense of who I am  
2 = Slightly important to my sense of who I am  
3 = Somewhat important to my sense of who I am  
4 = Very important to my sense of who I am  
5 = Extremely important to my sense of who I am

Not important      Somewhat important      Extremely important

The things I own, my possessions.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5

My personal values and moral.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5

	Not important	Somewhat important	Extremely important
Being a part of the many generations of my family	1.....	2.....	3.....
My dreams and imagination	1.....	2.....	3.....
The ways in which other people react to what I say and do	1.....	2.....	3.....
My race or ethnic background	1.....	2.....	3.....
My personal goals and hopes for the future	1.....	2.....	3.....
My physical appearance, my height, my weight, and the shape of my body	1.....	2.....	3.....
My religion	1.....	2.....	3.....
My emotions and feelings	1.....	2.....	3.....
My reputation, what others think of me	1.....	2.....	3.....
Places where I live or where I was raised	1.....	2.....	3.....
My thoughts and ideas	1.....	2.....	3.....
My attractiveness to other people	1.....	2.....	3.....
My age, belonging to my group or being part of my generation	1.....	2.....	3.....
My gestures and mannerisms - the impression I make on others	1.....	2.....	3.....
The ways I deal with my fears and anxieties	1.....	2.....	3.....
My sex, being a male or a female	1.....	2.....	3.....
My social behaviour, such as the way I act when meeting people	1.....	2.....	3.....
My feeling of being a unique person, being distinct from others	1.....	2.....	3.....
My relationships with the people I feel close to	1.....	2.....	3.....
My social class, the economic group I belong to whether lower, middle, or upper class	1.....	2.....	3.....
My feeling of belonging to my community	1.....	2.....	3.....
Knowing that I continue to be essentially the same inside even though life involves many external changes	1.....	2.....	3.....

	Not important	Somewhat important	Extremely important
My self-knowledge, my ideas..... about what kind of person I really am	1.....	2.....	3.....4.....5
My commitment to being a..... concerned relationship partner	1.....	2.....	3.....4.....5
My feeling of pride in my country..... - being proud to be a citizen	1.....	2.....	3.....4.....5
My physical abilities, being..... coordinated and good at athletic activities	1.....	2.....	3.....4.....5
Sharing significant experiences..... with my close friends	1.....	2.....	3.....4.....5
My personal self-evaluation - ..... the private opinion I have of myself	1.....	2.....	3.....4.....5
Being a sports fan - ..... identifying with a sports team	1.....	2.....	3.....4.....5
Having mutually satisfying..... personal relationships	1.....	2.....	3.....4.....5
Connecting on an intimate level..... with another person	1.....	2.....	3.....4.....5
My occupational choice and..... career plans	1.....	2.....	3.....4.....5
Developing caring relationships..... with others	1.....	2.....	3.....4.....5
My commitments on political..... issues or my political activities	1.....	2.....	3.....4.....5
My desire to understand the true..... thoughts and feelings of my best friend or romantic partner	1.....	2.....	3.....4.....5
Having close bonds with other..... people	1.....	2.....	3.....4.....5
My language, such as my..... regional accent or dialect or a second language that I know	1.....	2.....	3.....4.....5
My feeling of connectedness..... with those I am close to	1.....	2.....	3.....4.....5
My sexual orientation, whether..... heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual	1.....	2.....	3.....4.....5



**Who are you?**

**Question 1:**

You will now be asked to respond to a question to do with how you think of yourself. In thinking about *who you are*, you may think about your personality, your roles in life, your family and friends, your abilities and achievements, your career or your likes and dislikes, for example. I am interested in finding out what *you* think makes you the person that you are today.

Your response can be written in any way you wish – be that in the style of a bullet-pointed list, or a more detailed answer. You can write as much or as little as you wish. Although there is no time limit for completing this question, it is best that you do not deliberate over your answer for a long time – I am interested in knowing all of your thoughts on this, rather than the ones you consider most appropriate. Please complete your response in the box provided – if you need more space, please use a separate sheet of paper.

**Please complete this sentence:**

You are now going to be asked to carry out a sentence-completion task. I want you to think about all the ways in which you can describe yourself, and give as many responses to the incomplete sentence "I am a..." as you can think of. There are no right or wrong responses. In responding you may think about your roles in life, your abilities and achievements, your career or your hobbies, for example. I am interested in finding out how you categorise yourself.

You will first be asked to provide as many responses to this sentence-completion task as you can. You can take as long over this task as you need, however it is better if each response is short – preferably one or two words. Again, I am interested in knowing all of your thoughts on this, rather than the ones you consider most appropriate. Please complete your responses in the spaces provided – if you need more space, please use a separate sheet of paper.

**Please continue overleaf.**

**Question 3:**

I now want you to consider your responses to the previous question (Question 2). I would like you to consider which three of these responses are *most important* to you in relation to your identity – what makes you the person you are today.

When you have decided on the three most important responses, please write them down again in the spaces provided below, in order of importance (with 1 being the most important).

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Finally, please complete the following general questions.

Your gender:

Male ☐  
Female ☐

Your age:

18-25 ☐  
26-35 ☐  
36-50 ☐  
51-65 ☐  
Over 65 ☐

Employment status:

Employed ☐ Student ☐  
Self-employed ☐ Retired ☐  
Unemployed ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_



The highest level of education you have obtained:		Skilled trades (e.g. electrician, builder, mechanic, chef, florist, baker)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Postgraduate degree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Personal services (e.g. travel agent, hairdresser, childminder, care worker)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Higher or GCE A level (including trade recognised Apprenticeship)	Sales and customer services (e.g. sales assistant, customer care, call centre staff)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Degree or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>	Process, plant and machine operatives (e.g. factory line worker, bus/taxi driver)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Higher education qualification (below degree level)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Elementary occupations (e.g. labourer, kitchen worker, cleaner, waiter, courier)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your occupational group:			
Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/>	Your gross household income:	
Managers and senior officials (e.g. office/restaurant etc. manager, police inspector)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Less than £20,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
		£20,000 - £29,999	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional (e.g. teacher, lawyer, scientist, engineer)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£30,000 - £39,999	<input type="checkbox"/>
		£40,000 - £49,999	<input type="checkbox"/>
Associate professional & technical (e.g. nurse, police officer, IT technician)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£50,000 - £59,999	<input type="checkbox"/>
Administrative and secretarial (e.g. personal assistant, receptionist, clerk)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£60,000 - £69,999	<input type="checkbox"/>
		£70,000 - £79,999	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please tell me who you share your dwelling with, giving the ages of any children - e.g. "my husband, daughter (3 years old) and son (6 years old)". If you live alone, leave blank.

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Residential status:

Renter ☐

Owner (outright) ☐

Owner (with mortgage) ☐

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Your dwelling type:

How long you have lived in your current dwelling:

Flat	<input type="checkbox"/>	Less than a year	<input type="checkbox"/>
House (terraced)	<input type="checkbox"/>	1-2 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
House (semi-detached/terraced)	<input type="checkbox"/>	2-5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
		5-10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
House (detached)	<input type="checkbox"/>	More than 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bungalow	<input type="checkbox"/>	More than 20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your input is greatly appreciated. Please post the questionnaire back to me in the reply paid envelope provided. I look forward to meeting with you soon.

Leanne Townsend  
The Scott Sutherland School  
The Robert Gordon University

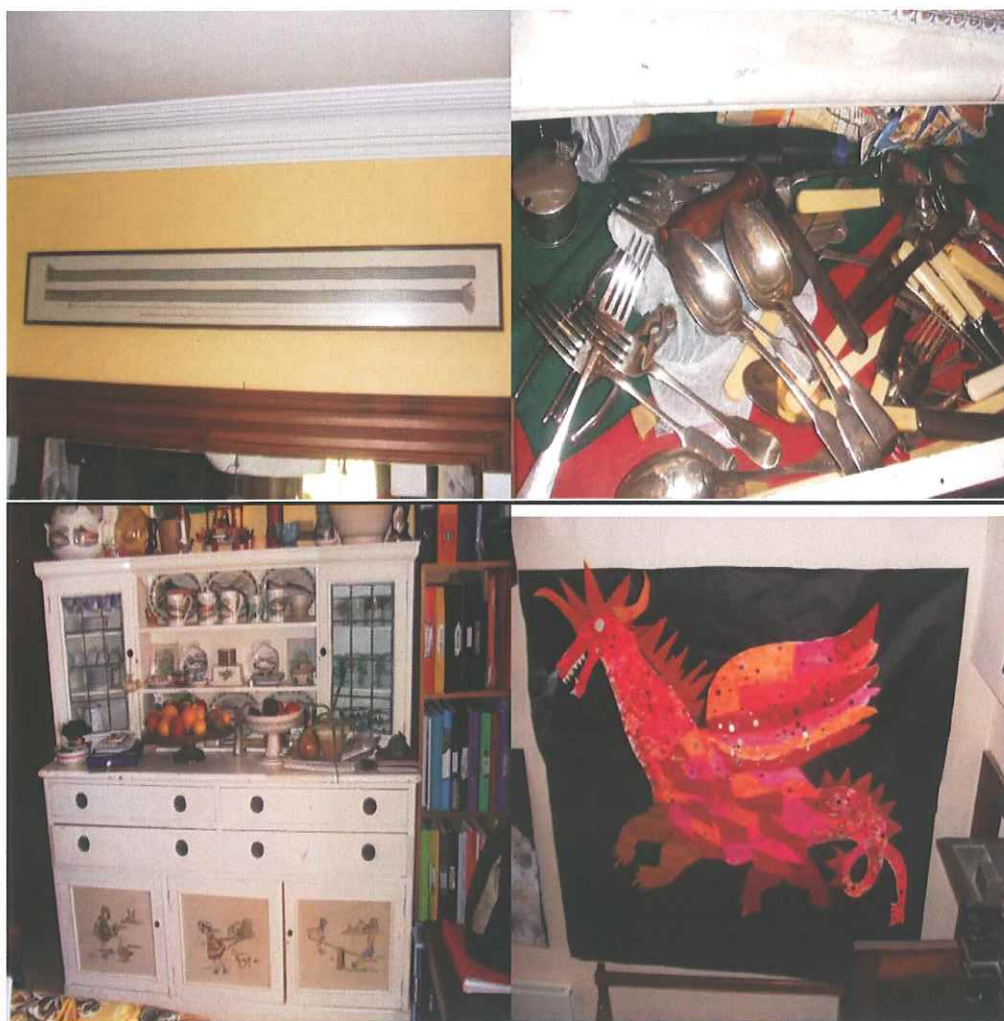
### 9.14 Appendix 14 - Example transcript from Study 3

Interview 12: Wendy

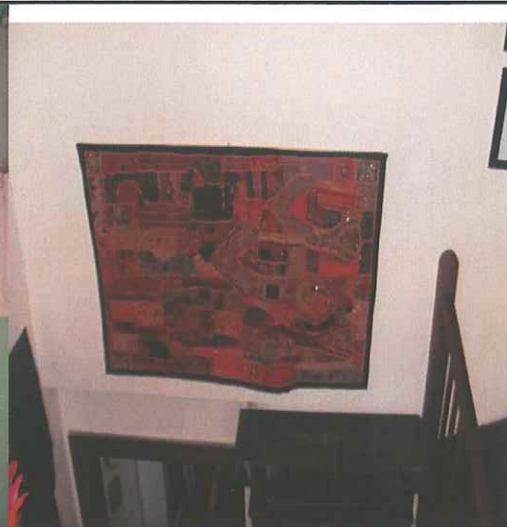
#### Interviewer Observations

The participant lives in a very large old detached house in a small rural settlement in Aberdeenshire. She lives alone (with no pets) but is frequently visited by her two young daughters who stay for long periods during the University holidays. At the time of the interview the participant had just thrown a large party and still had family staying. The house has a cluttered country style and is packed with treasured possessions and furniture along with lots of paintings and drawings done by her children when they were young.

#### Photographs













## Interview

I: Okay, so we're running. Okay, so the first question is tell me how long you've lived here and how you came to be here.

P: Okay, I moved up here with my husband, my ex-husband who was in oil so we got compulsory transferred from Lincolnshire. So moved up here about 19....ooh 1989 something like that and the kids were tiny, well the youngest hadn't been born so the oldest was about two and the middle one was five weeks old and we all came up on the sleeper train

I: Oh wow.

P: and the company were really good, they put us up in a flat in Aberdeen while we found this and so that must have been about 18 years ago (pauses) and then my ex-husband took off about 18 months later

I: Right.



P: and the children were tiny so they were like 4, 2 and 1 and I, everybody said you'll have to sell up, you'll have to move and because I had only been here for 18 months I didn't really have a huge support network because all my friends were really from the south, from London. I had some family, some cousins up north in Brora and Golspie .

I: It's up right past Inverness isn't it?

P: Yes, yeah, you've got Golspie then (phone rings)

I: I'll pause it, don't worry (recorder is paused and unpaused).

I: So you were saying that most of your friends at that point were down south.

P: Yes, so, so we went off on this sort of house-hunting mission and I thought – why? Actually I so loved it up here.

I: You loved this house?

P: I loved this house, absolutely loved the house, loved the area, fantastic community and actually the people were so supportive.

I: And you already felt that?

P: What's interesting, I think being a nuclear family it's much more difficult to settle in an area. Since I became a single mum because all the neighbours and everyone in the community realised what had happened they were phenomenally supportive and I thought you know I'd be crazy to try and move into another area, you know, obviously I couldn't afford to live where all my family were living in Cambridge and London, moving as a sort of new person who nobody knew with three small children why not stay here in a house I love so erm,

I: Make a go of it here?

P: Yeah, but I mean it's been a real battle to keep this house, you can imagine.

I: It's a big house.

P: It's a big house, but it's just also just in terms of finance, and being a single mum, you know having to fight for it through the courts and everything but you know we're still here by hook or by crook. We've been nearly repossessed goodness knows how many times but we're still here so its fantastic so it's very much, I think its very much a part of our family.

I: So you've fought for this house really?

P: It's a kind of fight, yes (laughs) a fight that we've had because we absolutely love it and you know, that's what we all want. And you know, despite disadvantages like the kids, you know, teenagers stuck in the middle of the countryside, you know they still, just this weekend when all their friends came back and they were just saying "oh this is just absolute paradise on Earth" you know, it's just that's what's so important for me, that it's not just bricks and mortar.

I: So you very quickly felt very connected to the home hence why you wanted to fight for it and to stay here?

P: Yep, absolutely, absolutely. And this was every single person, I cannot think of one exception who didn't say you must downgrade, you must sell, it's ridiculous to have a house this size given your financial status, the fact you're a single mum.

I: But you had three children?

P: Three children who were 4, 2 and 1, so tiny and erm, I just felt, you know it's got tremendous potential, it's got a basement, which we can, which we now rent out to Polish farm workers.

I: Okay.

P: and erm, you know I just thought if you move, I didn't want to move into Oldmeldrum, I always wanted to be right in the middle of the countryside and you know I just thought if I can hang on in here and of course its paid off you know. Now everyone's eating their words because house properties, well not at this precise moment but house properties have risen dramatically so just by living in a house....

I: Makes it...

P: Makes it, you know it's gone from negative equity to now you know having quite a lot of equity in the house.

I: So it's worked, it's been worth the struggle?

P: Absolutely. Well oh God yeah. I mean I couldn't have been any....I knew emotionally I couldn't actually have held it all together.

I: You were too attached?

P: ....if I had been made to move.

I: Right, okay.

P: I just knew I couldn't.

I: It would be too much to lose.

P: With three small children, husband had just walked out, in a new community and I thought you know, if on top of that I've got to recreate my home for me and the kids – forget it, I can't do it.

I: So you were well aware of how much the place already was your home?

P: Absolutely.

I: And how hard it is to make a home.

P: Yes, I mean how hard it is to find a home, someone the other day was saying in the recession should you not be selling up and I thought but you know if I'd driven around just the area and thought gosh that's a lovely house I'd love to live there, fine, you know I might think about it but in all the years I have been here I've never coveted somebody else's house or...

I: Because of....

P: This is where I want to be.

I: You've never seen anything you would want more or it's never been grass is greener?

P: Never, ever. No, never. So I just sort of think lets just hang on in here if we can.

I: Good okay. Well my next sort of area to discuss is the difference between a house and a home, and you've already, you've already, one of my questions is "do you think of this place as home" I can't always assume that people do

P: (Nods)

I: So I don't really think I need to ask you that question?

P: (Shakes head, smiles)

I: Can you tell me what the word home means to you?

P: I think it means the soul of the family; it's the sort of erm....

I: So it's very much about family?

P: It's very much about family and it's very much about possessions and it's very much about what you've done to personalise it and it's also over the years all the things that have added to that house to make it.

I: And happened in it as well?

P: Yes.

I: Okay, so....

P: Absolutely, I mean we've done, when they're 21 for big birthdays I do big photograph collages and it's actually events that you're doing rather than people. It's quite interesting, you're not pulling out things because of people, you're pulling it out because of events like when I had a tree chopped down, they've never forgiven me for it so there's this one of all the kids, all their friends lined up on this tree with me as the mass murderer.

I: Oh no!

P: and its just little events like that that have happened within the house that are so important like the ceiling falling down all these sorts of things that go on the whole time its just that's what is important I think in it.



I: and it gives you, its somewhere that gathers together everybody's sort of personal history as well.

P: Yeah, and its also things like possessions, when I got a lot of furniture from my grandmother which is lovely furniture but its very sort of tatty, its old and erm you know, I was in some new houses with my husband when we were being placed in different places and it looked so shabby and sad because it was this pristine new modern house and then this incredibly shabby old furniture whereas in a house like this you know it just blends in beautifully.

I: It actually gets a new life.

P: and I've often said what if I moved and downsize how would I, you know, what would I do with all my lovely old bits of furniture which are falling apart.

I: and they're important to you?

P: They're very important, yeah. I'm hugely sentimental which is quite interesting because my brothers and sisters, there's two of us who are very sentimental about furniture, two who are not and they say "oh, I'm going to sell it and get something minimalist and fashionable" whereas we will just hang on to it, even though we think its hideous.

I: Even if it's ugly?

P: There's a thing in the hall which I think is absolutely ugly and hideous, I can't bear it.

I: You still love it, you can still love it?

P: It's there because it was my great-grandmothers and duh, duh, duh.

I: So it gives you a sense of connection to people that aren't here anymore that were important to you?

P: Absolutely, absolutely.

I: and your family history as well.

P: Yep, exactly.

I: Okay, erm, well, you've already been talking about this anyway but erm, no, there's always you know you get to a question and there's already been some discussion on it.

P: Yeah

I: What makes a house feel more like a home to you then? What did you do to make this house feel like your home?

P: (long pause) I think I've got heaps of, I mean what, a way of answering that possibly is when I go into other peoples houses and I've got nothing to look at I feel terribly sterile and cold and I don't feel it's a very warm place.

I: So there's no....

P: So I would much rather.....

I: ....visual stimulants

P: .....untidy clutter and colour and, look at this room it's just absolutely every single...

I: I keep get drawn to everything, oh is that Cornish ware?

P: yes

I: Lovely

P: Well that came, actually that's another really nice route, I'll tell you because it's quite funny. My grandmother had some beautiful fantastic furniture and when I was 6 she got us all in and said right darlings I want to leave you something in my will so choose.

I: When you were 6?

P: She had these amazingly valuable bits of furniture clocks and paintings and everything and I just said, I want your Cornish ware. Which was lovely, my mum was laughing.

I: Ah, and your taste has remained the same?

P: I absolutely love it, it's the colour, there's just something about it and so I've always collected it all my life but of course being in North East Scotland it's hopeless because it comes from Cornwall.

I: Yeah, yeah

P: But actually when the children, because we never have any money, when the kids have reached big milestone birthdays what I've said so okay you can choose, so like their 18<sup>th</sup> they got to choose china or something like that so my eldest chose that rosebud china which is there.

I: Oh yes

P: And the middle one chose this lovely sort of dumb waiter in the dining room which is, and then my son said "it's not very boyish is it having to choose china" but he actually went all round the house and said "I'm going to have that" he said

I: So he went for that

P: He went for the Cornish ware

I: It's not quite as girly as the flowery ones is it?

P: He said "it may have to wait until I'm living in the country with a Labrador but

I: So does he intend to live in the country with a Labrador do you think

P: Well I don't think so no, he says he's going to be in a minimalist flat in London to start off with it and we'll just see what happens or New York or somewhere.

I: I still think you can do Cornish ware in a minimalist way.

P: I think you can as well.

I: Just put it in a big white thing

P: Yeah, exactly, exactly

I: Okay,

P: So, I don't think I answered that question at all!

I: You did, you did, you were talking about stuff really, putting your things around you.

P: Yeah, and actually just all the paintings from the kids you know ever since they've been tiny.

I: Yes, I saw that, I noticed that.

P: Because I (pauses) come in come in. Do you want to pause it?

I: Hello, nice to meet you.

P's father: Good luck, I've had to do a PhD myself, I know what very very hard work it is, it's a killer

I: Especially with a baby and a 4 year old and not very much childcare

P's father: That's brave of you

I: Well, I didn't have any children...(pauses and unpauses)

P: Yes, okay so I believe we were talking about what makes a house a home and you started to talk about how having stuff around to look at and the importance of that.

I: Yep

P: Was that how you made this house feel more like a home do you think?

I: I don't think I set out to turn it into a home. I think I just....

P: It was a natural....

I: Yeah, yeah, I can't bear bare walls and I think, I mean I think what you were saying earlier about being visual – I'm certainly very visual and I'm very into colour. So that's what...

I: And it makes you feel better and happier to have it?



P: and I am a collector of things, a huge variety but I mean my dream is to get these curtains out of this room because I hate them but I decided actually why do we have to have matching curtains I'm going to have different curtains on each window.

I: Okay, on all three windows, yes

P: Yeah, because I just thought actually, I mean I've never had anything matching, none of the bedding matches, none of the dinner plates match

I: Yes, yeah it's about like you say, being eclectic...

P: about challenging order I think and just not...

I: Okay, so that's possibly something in you, something about your personality

P: That's pretty much my personality, yes

I: So you like to have that....

P: Constantly challenging, constantly questioning and not being told what to do and not necessarily conforming so.

I: Okay, alright that's brilliant that you're able, that's a direct link really then between

P: It is really yes.

I: the way things look around you and you know that you've directly done yourself and your personality.

P: Yeah, yep.

I: Okay. We'll talk about all that more anyway, because we going to go through this, and that, we've done the home, what that's about. Erm, okay, in terms of the other people who live here and your relationships with them how do these people make the house feel more like a home?

P: Well I think it's very noticeable when they all go away; they all go off to university which has just happened because the two younger ones are in the first year and the older ones in the second year.

I: Okay

P: So this year was the first year they'd all left. Although two of them have done gap years abroad in Malawi and India, so we kind of got used to it being emptier, but then they come back again and the whole house starts jumping, it's absolutely unbelievable so although I love that peace and quiet and I shut the door at the end of the day and I think – bliss! and I haven't got to cook a meal, I've got to do nothing – just look after me but then they all come back in again and suddenly the whole place just comes alive it's incredible, you've got music in every corner and

I: So you would feel it feels more like home when they are here or?

P: No, for me it's two lovely phases – I mean I'm entering a different phase. When they were obviously kids and growing up they were here the whole time so there's no respite but now I've got this lovely contrast of serene peace and quiet and then absolute chaos.

I: and just being able to do things for you?

P: Yeah,

I: Okay, erm but perhaps when they're not here are there any visual reminders of them?

P: Oh constant.

I: Yeah.

P: Not least the two paintbrushes which (laughs) the two paintbrushes in the freezer

I: In the freezer?

P: When my daughter went off to Malawi she had a big party and I don't know what we were painting but one of her friends dads said oh Helen don't bother t....Helen, Helen just come here quickly. What was the story about the paintbrushes? You don't have to clean them if you put them in the freezer.

M: Yeah, if you wrap them in cling film and put them in the freezer then you don't have to clean them right away, you can take them out defrost them and then clean them after that and they won't stick

I: Oh so it's like a lazy way of

M: Prolonging cleaning

P: Anyway she went off to Malawi not having cleaned the paintbrushes, so there was a reminder

I: So they were still in the freezer?

P: A lovely visual reminder every time I opened the freezer

I: and you didn't take them out and deal with them because it was nice to have

P: It was nice but also it was her job to do so I'd rather they stayed they stayed in the freezer for seven months and in fact just the other day before the party Helen said "mum, why don't we just throw them away" so we did! We had this ceremonial throwing away of the paintbrushes which had stayed in the freezer for so long. So constant visual reminders.

I: And there's lots of their artwork from growing up

P: Oh god, yes so I mean all over the kitchen. I'm just disappointed because they're not doing it anymore so I'd quite like

I: some more up to date artwork

P: I would yes but they don't do it now so

I: Okay it's important that they're signified in the home, that they're able to put themselves into it as well

P: It's very much their home as much as, I mean it's our home. It's absolutely our home

I: Yep, and its shared space, communal

P: and we're all working together on trying to improve this room – because this is very much a leftover from my ex-husband actually

I: Right

P: He kind of, I mean he didn't design it, but he certainly chose the curtains and it was very, we had this dreadful old sofa from my grandmother which literally had a mouse nest in it and the whole back had fallen off from the side so these are very brand new sofas you're sitting on, you're almost christening them. This is typical of us actually, as I had to ring up, because, we got the sofas from DFS and I was thinking, God I've never bought a sofa in my life how do you choose, you know, how do you know if a sofa is vulgar or not right or shouldn't be here

I: So it's a new thing

P: and I had a complete panic because I had never ever in my life bought a new sofa. So I rang up Sarah and said right go on the DFS website, look at this sofa and tell me is it alright and she said yes so long as you get the white covers it will be fine, don't go for duck egg blue or gold it will be hideous (laughs) and then I thought but its terribly white so I thought what I'm going to do is just stick this over it and it makes it more us so

I: It makes it more you

P: Yes. But you know this is very much, it's very much a sort of family, you know how do we deal with this room and get it looking how we like it.

I: It was important to you that you had their opinion as well because they would be living in it too

P: Definitely, absolutely. Yeah.

I: It's not just imposed on them, they're part of it

P: and also it's you know four minds make a much better job of something than just you

I: So you're a team in terms of the house and the home, you work together

P: Absolutely

I: Okay. We've talked about it already obviously but how do you think you've made your mark on your home, what can you see of you here, can you say anymore about that?



P: I think possibly it reflects that a) I'm very proud of my family and the background and we're a real mish-mash of nationalities

I: Oh right

P: and different sorts of people and I think that all comes through. I think it's a very, we keep using the word eclectic house, it is a very eclectic house because it's got all sorts of different things from all sorts of places, and

I: So what is the mish-mash of nationalities then?

P: Well we've got Mexican and we've got Irish and we've got English and we've got Scottish and we've got French so just a complete...

I: and have you got

P: ....bubbling pot.

I: and have you got something French and maybe something Mexican somewhere?

P: I'm quite sure, yes

I: Probably have

P: Yes, absolutely. And also just things like you know, I don't know, pictures from my grandmother and you know the other side of the family and pictures of my kids and photographs and

I: Yeah, so it's just all your lives

P: Again its events but also people as well reflected in – you know like that hideous chair which is all completely falling apart but it was my mums chair she always sat in it every night so it's hugely important

I: So you wouldn't get rid of it

P: No I would never dream, obviously you can't but for me it doesn't matter, it doesn't matter there was a mouse nest in the sofa

I: You probably wouldn't even want...

P: It's that, that it's there because it's a very important possession of a sentimental nature and it reminds me of mum and I think what I love is that I like to be reminded of people everyday, like the paintbrushes in the freezer – lovely visual reminder of Helen in Malawi. You know, I couldn't see her because she was so far away but I could think about her every time.

I: And so it's...

P: I often do that with friends. I'll go and stay with them I'll give them something like an egg pricker so I know that every time they have a boiled egg they have to think of me

I: Yeah. Exactly.

P: But you know, I remember the friend who gave me the egg pricker, I remember the friend who gave me the colander, it's nice.

I: So you're aware of how that can work in reverse for other people

P: Yes, absolutely

I: and how you can put a little bit of yourself in,

P: Make them think about you

I: (laughs) kind of force them to you, yeah, I know what you mean. So erm,

P: I like that awful guitar, do you see it's completely broken it's got holes in it?

I: Yes

P: but do you see that little sticker, that's so important, that's my Biba sticker.

I: Oh wow yeah

P: and that just takes me straight back to school and skiving off school because I was at school in London, skiving off school and we used to go down to Biba.

I: Oh wow

P: It was just so cool.

I: What a glamorous way to skive!

P: It was just fantastic.

I: I used to go down to Greggs the Bakers when I skived (both laugh).

P: We used to skive and go to Biba and then we'd skive and go to Wimbledon tennis that was the two occasions that we would skive.

I: Goodness me, that's very glamorous skiving! I'm impressed. Very impressed.

P: But you see, why keep this awful old guitar but that's why.

I: That's why.

P: Because it just triggers this whole lovely memory of my youth at school and sort of the wicked things we used to get up to.

I: So you're very aware of how possessions can help connect you to those memories?

P: Absolutely

I: and remind you of how important people are to you and how important you are to other people

P: Yeah

I: when they've given you a gift and that's something that is very important to you so that's reflected in the environment. Okay, and this is a trickier one, but we've talked a lot about how your personality, your identity has affected in terms of how it looks, the things that are up, what you've done to it - could you say anything about the way in which possibly this home and having lived here might have affected your identity and the person that you are?

P: Yes, erm, (pause), I think it's made me very aware of the importance of the community, I don't know, can I talk about something outside of the home as well?

I: Of course you can. Yes, yes.

P: Several things. One is this view; I mean having been brought up in London all my life, every day I look out of the window and I just, it sets me up for the day it's quite extraordinary. So, in terms of spiritual richness, living in this home has been hugely important and actually being in this home is I think what got us all through the break-up of the marriage, my husband going off, because it was such a lovely environment to be in and such beautiful surroundings and the community

I: its restorative do you think

P: Hugely restorative and everyday, I mean I've got a picture of my mum who was very very important to me but she was very truculent, was quite stubborn, a very strong person, I'll show it to you, it's a lovely picture of her when she was about 18 months and she sort of tilts her chin in this very truculent way so I do the same, I kind of look at her, I open the curtains I look at the view and it sets me up for the day and that's it.

I: Yes, okay

P: Okay, that's me. And its just erm, its enriching I think is the best way of describing it

I: You think it's something you would never have got in London or in a city

P: No, I wouldn't have got it anywhere else, I mean even in Oldmeldrum, I would have felt stultified, I would have felt - it just gives us a chance to be independent, to be free. But also, I mean the community, there's very little community in Folla Rule - the neighbour, the very first time the neighbour came past I'd lived here for over a year before she bicycled up and came in for a cup of tea and I thought, living in London I thought that's extraordinary you know that's she's been here, but she knew all about us as a family, where we'd come from...

I: But she eventually made the move

P: But she had never come and yet they're all there and the support for this party was unbelievable.

I: And all the locals were at the party?



P: Everybody was at the party but everybody was helping put tents up and lay down floor area, everyone brought their own alcohol you know it was all done on a shoestring but everybody just pulled together as a community.

I: And in order to have a great time together

P: Yes, exactly, just to have fun, to have a party. We're all fed up with the recession; let's just have a good time. And so its just it's taught me the importance of privacy but also the fact that people are there so if you need them they are absolutely there and they will look out for you and they're not in your face.

I: So this house enables you to have the best of both worlds.

P: Yes, exactly and in fact its quite funny because an English person moved into the church at some stage whilst we've been here and on the second day she was around knocking on all the neighbours taking cakes and introducing herself and I thought

I: Ah that's nice

P: Well yes but I just thought that's ghastly I thought

I: Oh right, okay

P: I thought, that's just so alien in here, in this community you know, the way they do it is that they wait a year and then they come

I: Okay, but she didn't know that

P: But she was forcing herself on everybody and just being very...

I: too forward

P: Hearty and English and just you know imposing her character on the village rather than letting the village welcome her and absorb her in the way they wanted to do it. And if it takes five generations, it takes five generations to be accepted but you need to – you know, I just thought, I thought you know I wish I wasn't English sometimes because its so embarrassing just when they're just so insensitive. I mean she's since moved away and she was in oil and its fine but just for me it was quite interesting.

I: I feel guilty because I didn't do that when I moved in but I'll now think about it differently.

P: Also, as well in terms of this house, it used to be two houses.

I: Oh did it?

P: Yeah, we did a huge huge amount of work and in all credit to me

I: So it was like one big building separated

P: It was one building separated, it was on the market as two semi-detached buildings

I: Because it used to be a school did it?

P: It used to be the school house which is where the teachers lived

I: Oh I see

P: So the school was opposite, that was the school

I: Right, okay

P: This was the school house and it had women on one side, men in the other and

I: So all the teachers lived in here did they?

P: Yeah

I: Wow

P: and it was obviously quite a big school, I mean people used to walk miles to school here and I think the school roll had about 65 at one time which is amazing. Anyway they had Miss Wiseman and miss somebody else who lived in this bit and Mr so and so

I: So there's a lot of history

P: A lot of history in the house and we got it, and we just really wanted it. We wanted to have liked a 5 bed roomed house so all credit to my husband whose architecturally much more savvy than I am, I haven't got a clue or what its going to look like.

I: So he did stuff before he went?

P: He did a lot of the kind of design of the house and changed things before he took off

I: Okay

P: So there's been a lot invested in the actual, we did invest a lot into the actual design of it to get it exactly how we wanted it.

I: Okay. So it wasn't, the layout wasn't like this when you moved in?

P: No, no.

I: Okay. Right, so yeah, we've talked – have we done justice to that question about the way that the house has affected you I think we have haven't we because we've talked about...

P: I mean it's just given me huge strength, security, confidence,

I: It's empowered you

P: It has yes, it has.

I: and encouraged a strong side to your personality

P: because I'm not you know, we're so completely contented and at one here. You're not looking always striving to be somewhere else.

I: Always wanting stuff

P: We're just totally blissfully happy to be.

I: Yeah

P: and we're prepared to fight to stay here as much as we have to

I: Yeah, obviously, yeah. Okay, now what we'll do is we'll look at what you've written in the open-ended questions and go through it and see if we can pick out stuff in the home. I like to be different – that's a big one. Do you think that you've tried to make your home unique and very much....

P: Definitely, I mean I can't imagine any other home like this actually. So it's totally unique to us and it's just, nobody could really recreate the house that we've got here because its so full of a mish-mash of so much history and different things

I: Yeah, okay. Don't like to be told what to do – I think that came across with what you said about the curtains didn't it. I reflect a lot – what do you mean I reflect a lot, do you reflect a lot of yourself

P: No, I reflect I a lot on life.

I: Oh sorry, self-reflecting, I see, yeah

P: It's actually just thinking about, all the sorts of things that I'm doing like being a parent, being a teacher, all these different things, I'm constantly thinking how can I improve – not necessarily what I do but also how can I improve the system, you know, how can I improve a room, how can I improve, I don't know, the things that we do.

I: How can I give back as well, into different environments and different groups?

P: Yeah, definitely that, I've got a very strong feeling about you know giving back to the community the whole time and you know, I've tried to give that to the kids as well.

I: Yeah

P: So that we all do voluntary work as much as we can just because I think it's important and it's empowering in itself, you get a huge amount out of it yourself, but erm, I can't remember what it was we said

I: So, that you were reflective, so do you think that



P: Yeah, I do this walk every morning and on that walk I just absolutely sort out things in my head. It's just constantly

I: trying to process

P: constantly trying, yes, all the areas of things that I do and the children's panel, just trying to work out how we can improve

I: So do you think that you do that with your home?

P: See, well in terms of this room, you know that this room's been a real, I mean it's by no means there yet but we're working on it so

I: So there's always a project?

P: We're constantly thinking can we, yes, how can we make this room more us as a family and less alien because none of us really wanted to sit in it before but now it's getting there bit by bit.

I: Yeah, yeah. Okay, un-ambitious and un-materialistic? Poor but very happy – poor because of the struggle to keep the house?

P: Yeah, just financially. We just never ever have any money, because I'm not

I: That's not important to you?

P: Simply, I'd far rather be happy than, than, be, have money.

I: and that is possibly something that's been helped again by being here then do you think?

P: Absolutely, because it's...

I: Because you can be poor and happy here

P: enriching here, yes exactly. Whereas I couldn't be, it's very difficult to answer

I: Poor and happy in London

P: Absolutely, absolutely not you'd be poor and very unhappy

I: You feel rich because of, you feel rich

P: Well because all the things that are free you know, yes,

I: The very best of life

P: Absolutely and you can afford to do things on a shoestring here and not, it doesn't matter you know. That's largely to do with this part of Scotland as well, it's something that doesn't matter, there isn't this....having been brought up in London where they're very class conscious, they're very materialistic, they're very ambitious and

I: Yes and maybe wouldn't accept you if they realised how much money you do or don't have depending on what group they're from.

P: Absolutely, yeah, I think they probably would you know, but I go down to London to see the kids and I've also got heaps of friends there and family and so they accept me because I've been there all along but you know, to bring up children in that environment, ugh, I just don't know how people do it.

I: It's very competitive.

P: They have to go and work, they can't, I mean like this week because Dad's up here I've said right we're not teaching this week because it's far more important that I spend time with him

I: Yeah, that's nice, so does he live in London then?

P: He lives in Cambridge

I: Right

P: And so I just thought well look, you know, so it's the freedom to be able to do that which if you're in London and you've got to support mortgages and public school fees and nannies and heaven knows what else

I: You just can't do it.

P: And interestingly my ex-husband was very materialistic, very status-driven, I mean he still is, you know, it's still very much what he is, partly I think because he hasn't got the incredibly strong family tradition that we have got so identity has very much been created by who we are and who's fed into that

I: Yes

P: So we have no need for status symbols and materialism and, because we feel its inside and it's what we are as a family.

I: Yes, okay

P: and if we choose to walk around looking incredibly scruffy with holes in our jumpers, we don't care

I: That doesn't affect your self-esteem at all

P: Not in the slightest.

I: In fact it's probably quite liberating

P: Yes, it's totally liberating and also in a funny way people accept you. I mean I actually felt I'd made it the other day because my daughter was going out with some friend and her mum had said "oh who are you" and she said "I'm Helen Fawcett" "Mary Fawcett's daughter the eccentric one" and I'm going "yes"

I: The eccentric one

P: I'm eccentric!

I: People finally get me

P: Yeah, it's brilliant so you know, it is its liberating, you're absolutely right, that it doesn't matter that you don't look immaculate

I: I was thinking I wonder if Mary's going to mind if I turn up in my Converse.

P: No I love them, I've got Converse.

I: It's awfully unprofessional

P: Actually, do we have to wear the same colour Converse, one in one colour and one in the other so

I: Oh that's a good idea (both laugh).

P: Exactly, why conform.

I: Exactly, alright, so where are we then. I like to make people laugh, very optimistic and positive - I think this all comes through doesn't it. Although I'm not, some things are a little more difficult to draw direct links. Optimistic, positive, happy – is that something that I can see in the home do you think?

P: Erm

I: The happiness, the family.....  
(long pause)

P: I don't know, I mean you've met them all, I don't know

I: I've come in and seen all the things that you've got up, all the pictures that the kids have painted and yes that to me it's a happy family home even though they're obviously not those little small children anymore but some things are just harder to articulate.

P: Yes

I: But you can feel them you know

P: and I think it's the fact that there is still chaos left over from the party and

I: that you're comfortable in your home

P: Exactly, and you're just going to have to take us for me, its all part of the home

I: I've not picked up really on anything that I've noticed as chaos, because well, you've not seen my house

P: You haven't been upstairs either, no I mean it was unbelievably, because I'm actually quite ordered ironically, but that said for great tracks of the year will be absolutely chaos and dusty and things all over the place, and I'll suddenly have a harouche, I mean I did a big harouche before



I: and is that something that you find therapeutic?

P: Yes, God I just love it. I mean like this room is in any sort of, the music, the music was falling all over the room before and I thought right I've got to get this, partly because my Dad needed two bits of music that an old relation composed and given it to me years ago and he sent me an email because he's just come back from South Africa – "where are these contrails because I need them for this book I'm writing". And I thought "oh my God I've got to find it" so I had to sort the whole music out to find them – found them brilliant, got that sorted

I: but you also sorted out all the music out

P: actually hugely therapeutic, yeah. I love coming in here now, looking thinking yes, yes

I: excellent okay

P: So I don't know how you demonstrate happiness in the home except you just have to feel that as you walk in I think

I: I think so yeah, I think its, I don't think I've talked about actual happiness with anybody yet, well I mean they will have talked about being happy in their home but finding that link and yeah, I don't think it is something that you could say a particular kind of picture or a particular this or that reflects it. No, I think it's just a combination.

P: You could think of it on colours? I don't know, I mean they're a very happy sunny the whole house is very

I: Yeah, yeah possibly colour yeah, yep. Yes.

P: You know it's not kind of grey is it

I: No, not at all

P: I do remember my husband when we first moved up here and we were sitting in his office and he said "it's so bloody grey in Aberdeen isn't it, everybody's in grey suits, my carpets grey, my desk is grey, there's lots of grey haired men going around".

I: So let's not have a grey house

P: The granite is grey. Well I did it all the colours and everything in the house but you know I hate grey and I hate beige

I: Especially on a rainy day Aberdeen can be awfully, yeah

P: Oh God, I've yet to find it sparkling

I: Oh the sparkle thing

P: It bloody doesn't sparkle at all, it's complete crap

I: It's just people trying to make themselves feel better isn't it!

P: It such a dour place and I love it down by the beach but otherwise I hate Aberdeen, I think it's ghastly.

I: My house is pink as well

P: Is it? Yeah

I: and my little girl loves having a pink house

P: Well I think, I just think it's lots of lovely Mediterranean sunny colours.

I: Yeah and it brightens the place and it helps your mood as well

P: Absolutely, yeah

I: Okay, how about this – we like problem-solving and lateral thinking? Is that something that...

P: I think what I was trying to say is we're quiet ingenious as a family so it's kind of like

I: You've found some ingenious solutions to things in the house I imagine?

P: Yes just to life and to things in the house

I: So it's reflected again maybe in the working out of the layout in turning it from this old school house to a home.

P: Yes, and just nothing is impossible, I mean that's the sort of a family motto is everything is possible you've just got to work a way round it and

I: Okay

P: you know, you've got to do it with no money but you will do it and you will get there. So it's huge sort of, almost stubbornness.

I: and it's a value as well I would imagine.

P: Absolutely, yes

I: Yeah, okay. And being creative...

P: and if somebody says no it can't be done it adds absolute fuel to the fire and it will be done

I: Yeah, that you will find a way to do it

P: Yeah, absolutely. And that's been reflected in all the kids, and all things that they've gone and done, just trying to find the money to support them to do things and just all these things.

I: University, yeah

P: and you know just taking opportunities whenever we can and grabbing them and moving on and

I: Yes, yeah, okay. How about you're a creative person? Do you make things?

P: I am creative, but I think I'm creative in a sort of, I don't quite know why I said creative. It's quite difficult to....

I: Yeah. It's in you being visual and putting things together?

P: I teach music so sort of music creativity and I think it's just in terms of a visual

I: yeah, and the way that you put things together

P: Yes, I have these very strong clear ideas like the party. I was absolutely determined that it was going to be in this scruffy old tent, it was going to be really old fashioned

I: So did you get a big marquee or something?

P: We got the biggest scout tent

I: Oh right!

P: Which is just great because it's absolutely massive, and its 60 foot by 40 foot

I: So describe your party to me a little bit, because that's part of your home, which was obviously, and I think that would be nice

P: Yes okay, well we all just thought okay, well the kids and I just decided we wanted to celebrate all the birthdays that we'd all ever had together so it was like my 50<sup>th</sup>, even though my 50<sup>th</sup> was two years ago I thought well I'll put it on the invitation because it makes it more respectable, so it was 18ths, 21sts, 50ths and then just emerging from winter and then we just thought general joie de vivre, just general let's have a party - all the relatives, all the family, all ages, so its like 0-80 you know, just everybody.

I: Well I wish I knew you now, that would've been a brilliant party to be at!

P: So we planned, well we didn't really plan it to be so chaotic because it's all just come together and the first thing was to order, you know I just, somebody said have it in the village hall and I thought no, I want something completely different

I: At home

P: I want it as us, in the scout tent because it's this lovely big white, it's like a circus tent, it's fantastic, 60 foot by 40 foot.

I: So where's this, you knew about the scout tent

P: Well just because my son was in scouts and

I: So you had already seen the tent? You knew it was about?



P: So I knew they'd complained about having to put this bloody tent up for people's dos, so I knew all about it and got Brian my neighbour to come and measure up the garden and he said well you can't fit a tent that's 60 x 40 into the garden, so I thought shit! So I went to see the farmer, and he agreed that we could have one of the fields that was flat

I: Just down....

P: Just down over there yes, yeah. So it kind of, once we'd started out, then I decided okay how do you feed you know because I've got no money, okay that's fine because every party we've ever had people have always brought alcohol

I: Pot luck kind of thing

P: and bring their own food, exactly but I thought actually, because there was about 150 people there its going to be quite difficult and also people coming up from London and the South - I can't expect them to bring sort of lentil pies and things, it's quite difficult.

So I thought okay, let's have a hog roast. I thought this would be a complete hoot

I: Yum, yeah

P: So none of us had any idea about hog roasts and we went on the internet and of course it's humungously expensive and you get this sort of chef in a white hat and everything else. But then a friend met somebody at a party who is a farmer who did hog roasts, rents out the machine that does it so my brother-in-law in France who is a real foodie and just great said I'll deal with it, I'll take responsibility for it so he sat for 9 hours in this field

I: Roasting a hog

P: Roasting a hog, and everybody just brought salads and everybody brought buns.

I: So people still brought stuff?

P: Yes, all the locals and all the people nearby, I said can you bring salad

I: So does a hog feed 150 people?

P: Yeah, and more. It was just amazing, absolutely brilliant. SO I just said bring 10 baps and salad and you know it happened and the band, you know, I didn't want crashy banging music as I thought we've all got so much to catch up on and there's people coming from all over the place, so we just had this really old fashioned clattering - I don't know if you know Ruth Harding?

I: No, no.

P: Just an accordion player and a fiddle player. And she calls the dances.

I: Just background music?

P: No, we had all the dancing.

I: Oh right!

P: So this whole tent was just people dancing. And then I've got a cousin who is in catering and she does sort of wedding events and so on so she just took over the decoration, well she just went round the house collecting plastic bottles and jam jars and she just decorated the whole tent.

I: What did she do with the, I mean jam jars she put in tea lights did she?

P: We just had daffodils in jam jars on the tables and that's all, but she created this wonderful, she wrapped napkins around them so they all just sort of were different colours and she had ivy going all round the poles and outside then we had lanterns and candles and you know we borrowed the electricity from Esther the neighbour so we got the cable over the fence and used her, because I suddenly thought oh my God, we've got no electricity, everything's going to be plunged in darkness and then I thought oh my God we've got no tables and chairs so we're all going to be sitting on the ground plunged in darkness eating our hog roast.

I: but you didn't?

P: No it was fine, we borrowed chairs from the hall, you know just people are just so good they say borrow it from me or the hall, they lend them out and so it was endless trips with cars to go and get everything but that is what was lovely was actually the whole preparation the days before with everybody

I: joining in together

P: people were camping in the garden so they were all helping lay flooring and put up tents, it was just brilliant, just such fun.

I: Oh great.

P: Really good.

I: What fun.

P: So I don't know how we got on to that anyway

I: No, I thought it would be a good extension of what we were talking about really and it is, its about bringing people together – sort of almost in your home, I mean yes down the field a bit but you know, I still think you considered that you had a party at home really didn't you?

P: Absolutely, oh absolutely, yeah.

I: Aright, I'm just going to go through these as well. Extrovert, independent thinker, individual – I think we've covered these really. Rebel – again with curtains and things not following strict rules. Questioning things, challenging things.

P: You can see where I got that from.

I: Yes (laughs)



P: Sitting in the kitchen eating his boiled egg (referring to her father).

I: Constantly trying to improve situations we've talked about. Passionate mum, you've put up all the pictures of the, children have done as they've grown up.

P: Well, they, I've always very much thought of myself as a mum, not a wife, and I think that's possibly, I think possibly that I'm too independent and too much of a free spirit to actually be married and conform and be a nuclear family. So although I never would have said it, when it all happened it was a huge ruction, it was absolutely ghastly, but now I have absolutely loved being a single mum.

I: Good, okay.

P: Just the key, I think that was exactly what was meant to happen.

I: So just a strong part of your identity as being a mum, nurturing.

P: Very strong part, absolutely, yeah and so everything I have done has been for the kids and I think people were desperately worried this time last year when they were all going off to university.

I: What? yeah.

P: You know when your whole identity really is about being a mum and for your kids

I: And how's that going to work when they're gone.

P: everything has revolved; my whole life has revolved around my kids. I wasn't worried at all because I just knew that I would be entering a different phase so now I'm hoofing off down to London and down to Edinburgh endlessly to see concerts and see drama productions and things like, Helen the middle one, she's there of course Central School of Speech and Drama in London and they do their drama production at the Minack open air theatre right down in Penzance and I just thought that's so typical, here am I in Aberdeenshire and she's doing her production in Penzance in June.

I: It's just an opportunity for you to travel isn't it!

P: Absolutely brilliant! So you know, I'm staying with friends in Cornwall and we'll just have a fantastic weekend. So I think, yeah, it's just a different phase but it's still very - my whole life is totally children-orientated, but you know, what fun I've had, and what opportunities I've had just through them

I: because of them

P: vicariously, because of things that they've been involved in.

I: Yes, yeah.

P: So one minute you're timing swimming heats in the swimming pool and then you're off doing some scout challenge and you know just the musical things they've got involved with

I: but you've really embraced that? You haven't resented anything?



P: Absolutely, oh God no, I just love it to pieces.

I: Okay, we've talked about you being a people person and the way that you have brought the importance of other people in to the home, with possessions and with your party – literally bringing 150 people in. How about very bad at taking criticism? Is that something we can see in the home do you think?

P: I don't know how can we....

I: I don't know. This might be one that is just difficult to articulate really. Well let's not worry too much about that and move on. Totally un-materialistic – could this be reflected in the fact that you say that you've done everything, you must be quite proud of how you have done to create a home like this with not very much money then?

P: Well I think it's made me realise that you don't need money. You need money obviously to survive but don't need money – I don't feel the need to demonstrate to other people in terms of status symbols and money.

I: Yes.

P: Who I am as a person, and exactly in my scruffy appearance, and my scruffy house, to me it doesn't matter because it's all warm, its loving, its colourful, its nice things to look at.

I: It's embracing.

P: and in amongst there will be very valuable bits and bobs but to me it doesn't really matter, I mean it's exactly like....

I: It's not what the things are about.

P: You sort of question why you bothered to have contents insurance because if it all goes up in smoke you had a fantastic, you've got lovely memories of it, you've loved having it

I: But it's not something you can buy again

P: No, exactly none of the stuff I've got here I can replace therefore part of me thinks

I: the money would be useless.

P: enjoy it whilst its there, if it goes up in smoke, it goes up in smoke.

I: Okay, buildings insurance is a different matter.

P: I think you have to by law have that don't you?

I: Well yeah, I think

P: I do actually have contents insurance for some bizarre reason I think because it was all part of the deal but I don't think I'd use it, I wouldn't really know how to use it because

I: because of how stressed you got just buying a new sofa! Can you imagine!

P: and then sort of hating it because it's so new – it's a bit like new shoes you sort of hate them for the first year because they're new and shiny and

I: yeah, they're not part of you

P: which is why I've had to cover it with this awful holey old quilt, just to make us feel

I: a bit more at home with it, yeah?

P: Although I do quite like the fact it's very nice and comfortable and hasn't got the mouse in it.

I: Yes. Although I'm sure the mouse was just as much a part of the home (both laugh). Okay, well we've done that so let me just.....see where we're at. We're at the favourite things task as I call it, did you have a think about, I think we had favourite possessions

P: Endless thinks and endless discussions

I: Right

P: and everybody's come up with different things.

I: Aha, okay. So what shall we do first, shall we do possessions? Your favourite possession or possessions?

P: So possession...

I: Almost meaningful rather than...

P: Okay, we can do that first. What are they – possession, room – do you want a room?

I: Possession, furniture, room and corner.

P: I've got my corner but its quite funny how everybody had completely different things they would have you know,

I: Oh right, did you talk about that with the others

P: Yeah, I did, I talked about it endlessly and I just sort of said what do you think I would have chosen. My dad said I think you'd choose the piano and you know, we just came up with completely different things, but anyway I've chosen mine so I'll show you.

I: Okay.

P: It's a piece of furniture we couldn't have because my bedroom is so horrible but I'll show you it to you.....but this is my favourite possession.

I: Oh, do you know, I've forgotten my camera; can I just run back and get it?

P: Yes, yeah.

I: Okay, this is interesting.

P: Okay, these are wedding garters, which go back to 1744, see the date on them.

I: Yeah, yeah.

P: and they've been handed down through the female line of the family.

I: Wow

P: all the way through, and dad got them – we got them from Gran, your Mum

P's father: I got them from my parents because my parents didn't have a daughter, and so they said it was to go to whichever of their sons first had a daughter.

I: To carry on down the female line?

P's father: In my case, we had Mary before my brother had his Carolyn quite a lot afterwards so they came to us.

I: Right, so you were the first

P: and they ditto - Sarah was the first granddaughter,

I: Right, okay.

P: So she will get them, but dad got them in a brown paper bag just with a few notes of the names.

I: Oh so they weren't in the frames.

P: He actually got them framed like this and all those names of the women who've had them all the way through since 1744.

I: So that was scribed when it was framed?

P: Yes, yeah.

I: From the notes that you had, can I take a picture of it?

P: Of course you can, then what we've got to do is un frame it and write in me and Sarah.

P's father: Do you want to stand on the table?

P: On a chair, would it be easier to stand on a chair?

I: Should I kneel, well I've got, do you want me to take my shoes off?

P: That's fine if you want to, no it's fine.



I: Okay.

P: and actually a friend at the moment is doing research into all the women – you know a historical sociological context for Sarah so we can write a little book about all the women and what they were doing in their lives and people had their wedding garters.

I: I wish I was a better photographer, there must be a way of getting you know, well maybe there's a not. I'm just trying to get it so that it's...it's because my hand keeps wobbling. That's it! Okay. Not that it really matters I suppose, how centred it is, but it matters to me. That's quite fascinating then.

P: I know, and it just, for me it just says everything about our family actually.

I: Can I read it?

P: Yeah of course you can. Take it down.

I: Sarah Handy daughter of Thomas Handy of Newcastle and Mary Hilary married John Pemberton son of Henry Pemberton and Elizabeth Lackey is it? 15<sup>th</sup> March 1744. Daughter Mary, is that the second Mary as well, yeah. So there are Marys in the family then?

P: Yeah, absolutely.

I: Their daughter Mary married John Hetton 17<sup>th</sup> October 1780. Wow it just keeps on going through the lines then? Their son John married Ann Alexander 16<sup>th</sup> September 1803; their daughter Elizabeth Hetton married John Joshua Pimm 27<sup>th</sup> July 1826.

P's father: He was a Quaker

I: Oh right.

P: Their daughter Elizabeth Dawson married Joseph Archibald Maxwell

P's father: That's my grandfather

I: Oh right! So now we're coming into people that have been in memory, 30<sup>th</sup> June 1859, their son Thomas Henry married Isabella Pollack 8<sup>th</sup> August

P's father: My grandparents

I: Right, 1889. Their daughter Elizabeth

P's father: That's my mother

I: Yes, married Charles Cameron Courtan – he's got lots of names! 27<sup>th</sup> August 1917. Their son Anthony Derek, is that you? Maxwell, married Margaret Geraldine Oxley, your mum?

P's father: That's right.

I: 17<sup>th</sup> September 1955. Wow, that's lovely.

P: It's just fantastic.

I: I can see how important it is then.

P: Why it's lovely is because it's come through the female line which was so important as it's not the sort of male...

I: It's quite empowering as well, that it starts

P: It's gone through all these hands

I: and why was the decision made for it to be going down the female line as well, because they were the garters? Yes, yeah.

P: But it's still quite interesting that they started to be handed down isn't it?

I: It's lovely; I want to start a tradition like that!

P: I mean you wouldn't hand your wedding dress down would you? So it's fascinating that they....

I: It's a good idea as well, because

P's father: There is some significance about garters because they were very often given as a present I think to the chief bridesmaid or somebody like that, I don't know, I haven't found, we need a bit of sociological research on that.

P: Yeah we do which is what Janet's trying to do, because what Janet was saying is what was a poor Quaker lass in Dublin doing with this very fancy pair of garters with her name embroidered on it and dated and everything else, and these fantastic symbols. Have you seen the symbols?

I: Yeah, I can just pick them out.

P: Like the Irish harp and

P's father: and isn't it wonderful

P: It's extraordinary and crowns

I: They won't come out in the photos so it's good that you've mentioned it for the recorder.

P: They're made of Irish linen anyway.

I: Okay

P's father: We must get them updated darling.

P: I know, I know we must.

I: Oh are you going to do that and keep it going?

P: Oh Lord yes. Yeah. Absolutely, I mean it's already gone to Sarah so much easier to decide how she hands it on.

I: Ought to keep that going!

P's father: We've got to hand them on to Sarah updated.

P: Okay, so that's, the piece of furniture is this actually. It's this nursery dresser.

I: Oh yeah!

P: She's laughing (referring to her daughter Helen), because I have such a lovely chest of drawers – I am going to show her my bedroom even though its horrible – it's a beautiful chest of drawers in my bedroom but it's so messy I don't think I can really take Leanne in here.

I: Oh you can, I live in a messy house.

P: Anyway, there's all these nursery pictures, its fascinating and this came from my grandmother.

I: Okay, and did that and when she had it did it have those on?

P: She obviously lived in, she was one of 13 and they lived in a massive house in Dorset.

I: Can I move this chair because I think I'll get a nice picture of it then?

P: Yes.

I: It's just lovely. Okay, sorry, right you can carry on telling me about it.

P: Well I think it's just got lots of memories, its, we always used to hide in the cupboards when we were little.

I: You hid down there?

P: You know, normally dressers are dining rooms or kitchens; this was obviously kept in the nursery and I think you know, they obviously had lots of, all their life revolved in the nursery and I just think it's great that it has survived

I: And what you were saying about the...

P: the nursery rhymes on here

I: ....importance of, to you of being a mum?

P: It's childhood, the being a mum, exactly. It's that

I: So it reflects that.

P: very strong side of me and



I: yeah, yeah and then

P: my life

I: and I imagined filled with things that you love as well, that you've collected over the years, all this china and

P: like this silver, oh actually that's a lovely story about the family silver actually.

I: Yep.

P: which is here, this is my mum actually. My mum, she was determined, she had a whole heap of Victorian silver vegetable dishes which of us never, we were never going to use, so what she did was she sold them all and she used the money to get collections of silver for each of her four children. My brother got the family silver but the three girls, she went and she used to go to Bermondsey street market in London at 5 o'clock in the morning with her little torch and she would, she asked us what style do you want, what style of silver do you want, do you want fiddle and thread, or do you want like, I can't remember what this is called, is it called old English or something

I: I'm not good at this but it's lovely anyway

P: So she set about collecting over the years – one big spoon, one fork, so if you look at them they are all, look do you see, they're all, part of its stolen I think, but that's got like that family crest,

I: Part of it's stolen? What stolen and then sold on the market?

P: Yeah, absolutely! You know, so she, do you see they're all completely unconnected and that's for me

I: That's perfect for you because of this love of

P: I love it

I: eclectic and mixing things up.

P: Yeah, so she collected this whole set of twelve of everything.

I: So do you use them at Christmas and things like that?

P: Well we do, she always used to use her silverware the whole time.

I: Can I take a picture of this, just like that yeah?

P: and, what was so funny was that my husband when he left he actually did a burglary on the house and he took six of everything.

I: Your husband nabbed things from the house?

P: No but yeah, he took all things that he thought belonged to him but he took the silver she'd actually given to us, not as a wedding present but she'd given to us on our wedding. It was the last gift I had from mum before she died and he helped himself to six big spoons, six big forks....

I: Why would he do that? What did he think?

P: And so, I don't know, have you ever seen it in his house? (addressing her daughter Helen).

M: No, because we used to go and do a raid

I: to try and get them back?

P: Earlier I was telling you about giving the kids heirlooms at their big birthdays,

I: Yeah

P: Well I said to Jack, why don't you get the silver and then you can ask Dad for the other half, you know and you can reunited it again.

I: What a shame.

P: But that was such a Mum thing to do, because she never had any money either but she wanted us to have silver.

I: But she was thinking of you.

P: You know, you need to have a set of silver.

I: It's lovely, really traditional isn't it.

P: I know! So she collected them and I just love the fact that they're all completely different.

I: Yeah, that's great.

P: So, that's what's in the dresser.

I: That's something that is special that she did for you.

P: Absolutely, yeah, absolutely.

I: That she really wanted to do.

P: Such a wonderful idea.

I: It is nice

P: And she, just the fact with Dad being in law and some of it was definitely hot silver I am convinced of it.

I: This ironic...

P: When I use it, people are going to come and say oh this is our old family crest, what it is doing in your drawer.

I: There you go – that's your connection with humour because you're finding things funny, making people laugh with this thing about them being nicked.

P: I know, exactly. It might not be but I'm fairly sure most of them are from Bermondsey market. So what else are we doing, we're doing...

I: So that was possession and piece of furniture. We're also doing room and

P: I think that one would have to be the kitchen wouldn't it.

I: Yeah, okay. This is a great staircase, that's amazing as well.

P: This is this hideous thing I was telling you, I find it absolutely hideous.

I: Is that the thing you think is ugly but you can never get rid of?

P: Dad will tell you the history of it, it's fascinating, it was made by something like the Pigeon Chapel in London, well I'll have to ask him and it was, well he'll tell you all about

it. I think it's absolutely hideous but I would never not have it.

I: It's not quite your normal style judging by the rest of the things here.

P: No. This staircase is quite interesting because it was two houses divided here

I: Oh that's a good idea; did the kids actually get to climb on that?

P: What's the history of this? It was the Pigeon Chapel or something in London. Estate joiner, came from grandma's house but the wood was got from some church in London.

P's father: Mary's great-grandfather was quite a wealthy, I'll have to do a bit of thinking, but it was, what happened was Mary's – they knocked down a chapel just by, damn my memory is so bad now,

P: Was it not something like the Pigeon Chapel?

P's father: Yes it was near Holborn viaduct and it was knocked down and he went up and bought quite a bit of these pew ends and things like that, and the estate carpenter made them up into a set of pieces of furniture.

I: Oh okay.

P's father: Now, I'll tell you who it was, it must have been

P: Yes it wasn't Gran.

PF: Mary's great-grandfather erm....

P: It doesn't matter, it was just to try and explain to Leanne.

I: Yes, yes.

P's father: These are all pew ends and bits out of a chapel.

I: and transformed and given a new lease of life.



P's father: Transformed and turned but the estate carpenter into, there was various things

I: Amazing isn't it.

P's father: There were a couple of long ones which used to be in the hall, things like that, yes.

I: There's an incredible amount of work in it isn't there?

P's father: Gosh, I know, amazing isn't it.

I: And it's not to your taste but you appreciate the history

P: These banisters are quite interesting because the house was dividied in half.

P's father: It wasn't the Pigeon Chapel it was something like...

P: But it was some name like that wasn't it? Erm, the house was divided here so we knocked this bit down to make into one house and this staircase

I: Oh right, okay.

P: This is the original staircase and it used to come up the side of the wall and so we got them to build, so this is completely brand new this staircase here

I: oh but matching

P: Yeah but built to match

I: Oh brand new when?

P: Well I mean when we moved in sort of 20 years ago.

I: but already was matching, they managed to get...

P: well it's not, if you feel – that's completely different to that do you see?

I: Yeah

P: But they just stained it, and done it.

I: And made it look, tied it in

P: So it looks exactly like it's always been, and actually where you are standing they widened it all the way down the middle.

I: It's a great staircase.

P: But this is my husband, he designed the whole thing which is absolutely brilliant.

I: It is.

P: It's a very attractive

I: It's not just a landing is it, obviously you use it.

P: It's a big space, its just lovely.

I: And this is where you...

P: and these, and this is paintings done by a friend, he gave them to me and that's Indian. For my 50<sup>th</sup> birthday my family sent me to India for a month.

I: Oh lovely.

P: and that's just one of the things I brought back from there.

I: You wanted to bring something back as a reminder of...

P: Absolutely just loved it, I just thought it was the most beautiful thing.

I: Can I take a picture of the dragon?

P: Of course you can. The dragon, he should have a plastic cup as an eye but the kids,

I think it was Sarahs class at school they were doing a project, and we were the only house big enough to, I think she's called Bronwyn,

I: And the alien as well is quite cool

P: Yeah, the alien,

I: I'll take a picture of him further down

P: Right this is my favourite corner,

I: Okay

P: Which is slightly random. It's when I am lying in the bath, its here, it's this picture I absolutely love this picture.

I: Aha

P: And it's just after, I bought it at the Gordon's art exhibition and it cost something like £125 but to me that was just such a huge amount of money at the time when my husband had just left.

I: Yeah

P: But I remember a friend saying Wendy you'll look at it every day, you'll love it....

I: It is amazing

P: ....in a few years time £125 will just be nothing and it's so right. Every night I have this, its really important to me, my bath, I have to have a bath even if its 5

o'clock in the morning. I lie in my bath and I just look at this and I just feel totally happy.

I: Put back together.

P: So this has got to be my corner.

I: Okay. That's your corner then.

P: Which is probably slightly unusual but never mind! I hope you've got my washing line; do you like my washing line? That's a very important part of my life.

I: Oh that's sweet

P: It kind of goes together in the corner.

I: Yeah, and then you've got some photo collages as well.

P: This is all kids in France, yeah.

I: On holidays in France?

P: Yep.

I: My sister lives in France, in this beautiful bit of France.

P: Ah gorgeous, look at that.

I: I know, that's the sort of view out of her window.

P: Wow.

I: So lots of happy days.

P: Its incredible, look at that view.

I: Wow, wow, wow.

P: Yes and I think we were saying how do we show happiness and I think it's probably by photographs

I: Reflecting back through the happy times, yeah that's true actually because we talked about colour. Can I take a picture of it?

P: Yeah of course you can.

I: This is something that these interviews have made me realise how much benefit I could get from putting some photos up of people. How you can make other people that are important to you feel special. When I go to Andreas house and you see things like this and there's you, you know and there's your little girl playing with her little boy, it makes you realise you know how special... and I'd like to do that for them so yeah I'm going to be doing that.



P: Like my kitchen wall, it's quite funny, the next generation, my nieces and nephews

I: Yeah, yeah

P: it's a real honour if they get, I say okay I'm going to put that on my kitchen wall – they just think wow!

I: It's up on the gallery.

P: They've made it on to the kitchen wall. This is where the mess starts.

I: I'm just going to take a picture of your Indian rug wall hanging. So this is where I get to see...

P: Do you want to look at all the, I don't know, do you need to see all the bedrooms?

I: I don't have to, but I'm interested to.

P: This room is quite nice and tidy. This is Helen's, the middle one.

I: Wow, that's a brilliant bed.

P: Oh yes, that's another lovely possession. You can take a picture of that as well if you want to.

I: and how old is Helen?

P: This bed, Helen is 20, 19.

I: I will take a picture of it, if only for all the personalising she's been doing behind the....

P: Will Young on the bed.

I: She likes Will Young!

P: It's kind of really old fashioned. We don't know anything about the history of this bed.

I: But that you came to own it.

P: It was my Grandmother's.

I: Alright, okay.

P: and I don't know. We wonder if it's French, painted, I keep meaning to take it to the Antiques Roadshow and get someone to tell me about it or you know, but that's very much our family this kind of, Will Young on a really old fashioned bed (both laugh)

I: I'm just trying to work out who else is in there because its kind of not just Will Young is it, its erm, him. What's he called again?

P: I don't know.

I: Lord of the Rings guy and Josh Hartnett.

P: Orlando Bloom.

I: That's him.

P: This is Jacks room.

I: Okay

P: Which has always been a disaster actually, we just don't like this room. We never really have but he's just, I don't know, it's a boy, he's always laughed, we've always laughed about the curtains.

I: but does he like his room?

P: No, he doesn't particularly like it, it's sort of on the North side of the, it's just a non-room really.

I: Okay, its just one that hasn't really worked

P: It's just; we've never really got our head round it.

I: And he's reflecting what's important to him, his achievements?

P: Well no, because he's never, he's actually never reflected his personality in his room.

I: Oh okay, okay.

P: These are just football, something he did.

I: Right, okay.

P: He's actually a musician, he's at the Royal College of Music doing percussion.

I: So he didn't have that same way of reflecting himself perhaps, these are just films that he's enjoyed or something?

P: Well he had a friend staying for the party, he was up here for a week and he was taking him up to look at the view and just, those sorts of things are very important to him

I: Yeah

P: and he'll just go off driving and say "I so miss the countryside", that's what's important to him, I think, and I think just sort of the kitchen and

I: That's maybe more the heart of the home for him than, oh look, this is good. It's the woman in the shoe.

P: Yeah, it's again sort of very family-orientated.

I: Yes.

P: You know we've never really grown actually us lot.

I: A that's funny, that's about the size of my little one just now.

P: Yeah, its brilliant isn't it, but that's actually very much like us I sort of feel.

I: Yes, all mucking in together.

P: That's my mum's dolls house which is beautiful.

I: That's lovely. A thatched doll house.

P: This is Sarah's room in here, which is lovely. I come and lie in here actually

I: Oh this is nice.

P: and pretend it's my room because it's so nice.

I: Yeah, yeah.

P: She's got more taste

I: Yes, the way that the colours are all put together, she's going to, you know when she grows up and has her own home its going to be gorgeous isn't it.

P: The collage we did for her 21<sup>st</sup>.

I: Oh lovely! That's so cute, yeah.

P: That's just all the sort of events in her life over the twenty-one years.

I: Can I take a picture of it?

P: Yeah of course you can.

I: I might copy some of the ideas in there, like the putting the little roses in and the pictures of other things in.

P: Well it's just wrapping. This is Pedlars, my cousin use to run Pedlars Clothes. Tinkers Clothes and Pedlars Clothes the mail order company, I don't know if you've heard of it.

I: Yeah, Pedlars are now, they've got like home

P: Yes, yeah

I: and garden, oh goodness me.

P: Well they bought it off my cousin who is down in Dundee.

I: I just love it but it's really expensive.



P: Hugely expensive. So we used to do lots of sales for Pedlars for Kirstie.

I: Oh right.

P: And the kids used to model in the catalogue so

I: really? Wow

P: Yes. So this is Sarah here on one of the jeep things here, but put, we just thought we'd put that catalogue in because it was very much part of their lives.

I: Yeah, absolutely.

P: So, its good fun. Right, my bedroom...

I: This is Sarahs and that's Helen's there isn't it?

P: Yeah, yep.

I: And that's a picture of Sarah there.

P: That's why, it's quite nice, Sarah was the only one my mum really knew so its just nice that we had a few of mum in there.

I: Yeah it sort of brings that, connects it all up doesn't it.

P: This has been used by all the adolescents at the party so I'm just not even going to start

I: Oh god, it's not that bad. I don't know what I was expecting but this is perfectly normal.

P: It's so covered in dust and awful.

I: I can't take a picture of it?

P: No you can if you want to of course you can.

I: Thank you. Sorry I shouldn't be bullying you into letting me

P: No its fine!

I: But I can see it's covered in lots of important things you know. Brilliant.

P: And actually what you've got to, actually should I show you this, my secret drawers?

I: Yes

P: What happens if burglars kept hold of your pieces (both laugh). If you look down there.....

I: There's a bit at the back

P: Do you see? A little secret...

I: Oh NO, I didn't see that! Oh, and that's where you keep your precious jewels and

P: heirlooms

I: yeah, your heirlooms. What a clever idea, yeah. I thought you were talking about the way that it dropped at the back, oh great,

P: So actually what's quite interesting....

I: and that was part of the design of it?

P: Yeah, this is the most valuable piece of furniture in the whole house

I: So that's got a bit...

P: I think it's just shallow actually.

I: Yeah, yeah.

P: and what's quite interesting I suppose from my point of view, my own personality is that this is the most valuable and expensive piece of furniture in the house

I: Right

P: and it's worth a huge amount of money

I: but you didn't buy it, you inherited it?

P: Yes and I got it from my grandmother but look at it, it's the one that's completely neglected with dirty old bras sticking out of the drawer.

I: It's got sellotape.....

P: It's got sellotape on it, you know complete

I: and swatches of fabric that you're going to do something with?

P: because I wear all the pedlars trousers so I've got to make patches, so that's quite, I suppose that that's quite an interesting part of me.,

I: Absolutely yes, yes.

P: That's the way I treat my most valuable piece of furniture in the house!

I: Buts its, your treating it in a loved way really aren't you?

P: Oh it's completely loved and this was the one I was swithering between that and the dresser downstairs.

tl: Yeah, and there's pictures of your children on it

P: Yeah, and interestingly my ex-husband.

I: Oh yeah,

P: He's still there, but I just feel he's still very much a part of us as a family and he's the kids' dad and

I: and they still see him?

P: yeah they do and so you know, I mean he lives in America so you know, I think

I: with your silver

P: with the silver, exactly, yes half the silver!

I: yeah, so

P: this is the picture of mum which I was telling you about, with that sort of truculent look

I: Oh yes!

P: You look at that and then open the windows; you think yeah okay, I can cope with today.

I: What a gorgeous view. The big windows are great as well aren't they? You've got to put big windows in for a view like that.

P: I mean how can you not be happy with this?

I: I know. Gorgeous.

P: So!

I: Lovely. Thank you for showing me your bedroom.

P: My horrible bedroom, well it will be nice one day.

I: Oh its fine, there's always got to be one room in a house hasn't there.

P: Yes

I: Can I use the loo and then come back down?

P: Yeah, of course you can, yep.

I: Okay, so we're in the kitchen and you would say this is the heart of the home really would you?

P: Yes, definitely.

I: Sort of this and through into the dining room maybe?



P: Yes, I mean, yeah. Just the whole room. This is very much where everybody congregates.

I: Yeah and what do you think this room tells me about you as a person? It's got all the pictures that the kids have done and just lots of things that are special to you up.

P: Just very colourful, very bright, very mish-mash of everything and

I: exactly, everything that we've been talking about

P: different types of, you know like India and flags

I: Yeah I was going to say what's that, right okay.

P: and then kids' medals, swimming medals and also I am trying to self-improve - this year, its History.

I: Right okay.

P: So I'm learning this little poem at the moment. So I've tackled Henry VIII, I'm quite good on Tudor England now actually.

I: great, well done

P: and we're going backwards and forwards from there. I just, I don't know, just funny things that have happened.

I: The collections of....

P: Like this puffin, the first time I sang in a concert in the town hall, with the choral society and we had these hideous waistcoats, ghastly, my son gave me that because that's what he thought exactly what we looked like.

I: Oh no

P: Have you seen it? It's so funny.

I: But it's funny, can I take a picture of the puffin and then you've got a few other little penguin type things as well.

P: This was a thank you from ages ago.

I: Ah sweet.

P: Be nice to your kids, they choose your nursing home (both laugh) Oh and then my son, there was a picture of him in the poster so we stuck that up.

I: Oh that's him in the poster?

P: Yep

I: Wow! Puffins in there, and we'll get national and the Cornish ware in there as well. Great. Okay. I think we've done all of them now, haven't we? We've done possession, furniture, corner and room.

P: Yeah

I: But there's lot of corners in this room as well obviously and possessions and they're all sort of....

P: I mean they're just everywhere so....

I: Exactly.

P: You did say....

I: I did say?

P: we could choose several so that's fine.

I: We're nearly, we're getting, we're nearly done really I think. Okay, do you have anything that you know, that you're consciously aware of as a collection, do you collect anything at all?

P: Well the Cornish ware.

I: That's right, yes, okay. Anything else or that's evolved or is that pretty much....

P: Oh yes, plaster of Paris Christmas cake decorations

I: Wow! I don't, I can't even picture that.

P: I'm very glad you asked me that actually, it would be awful if we'd missed that bit of conversation (both laugh). Which is where.....

I: Oh my Gran had a little box like this but it didn't have as much stuff in it as that!

P: ....we are storing it at the moment.

I: So where do you get such things? Ebay?

P: You see, it's really hard to get these. Mum used to have them and she always used to make this wonderful Christmas cake and it's a tradition of our family to erm, well there's a whole heap of these.

I: See how many of those that you can use?

P: No, no, no it's a tradition in our family that on Christmas Eve when you ice the cake, these big square Christmas cakes, we ice them and then you start with the youngest member of the family and everybody who is staying has to put on one decoration. And you go right through to the oldest and then you go back to the beginning and start again until the whole cake is absolutely covered.

I: Ahh that's lovely.

P: But they have to be, I mean he's a bit of an imposter this plastic thing, because they have to be this plaster of Paris.

I: Does he get put on anyway though?

P: Yes he does, yeah.

I: He gets to wander about on there.

P: Yes, but, there's a whole, absolutely massive....

I: Can I take a picture of them?

P: ....there's masses more here as well

I: So how big is this cake? As big as a table?

P: There's a whole heap of them here as well actually

I: Oh wow

P: You see?

I: Yes. So you don't have to use them all then?

P: Well what I am doing, a bit like mum did with the silver, I'm doing with the kids with Christmas cake decorations.

I: Yeah. So you're going to...

P: It's just they need repainting, a whole heap of these are new ones from Ebay that I've been collecting over the years.

I: New but not new.

P: They need kind of touching up.

I: Yeah, yeah so he could be a bit whiter.

P: Yes, he could be. But I haven't, this is one of the jobs that I have not got round to doing yet.

I: I've got a real thing about, at Christmas, I've got a real thing about deers and reindeer, I think they're great.

P: Oh right.

I: Oh there's another one of those.

P: Yes, you see, because these are Ebay ones which aren't really the original ones from Mum.

I: What's that?

P: I don't know, you just get them, take the whole collection and grab it while you can.



I: Yes. Great.

P: You can't get these plaster of Paris ones anywhere any longer.

I: You can't buy them?

P: You can't buy them new, no.

I: No.

P: So that's my, that's what I collect!

I: Great. Okay, and that's got a connection to the family

P: Also for the kids, so when they get married

I: and something happy that you do at Christmas to have one of these little traditions.

P: It's their wedding present It's going to be Christmas cake plaster of Paris decorations.

I: Oh right! Ah that's really sweet.

P: They've already celebrated their weddings in this party we had, because I said I'm not doing that again so you'll just have to, that's your wedding party (laughs).

I: Right.

P: Oh dear, so yes.

I: But I bet if when it happens you'll embrace the opportunity for another party, I'm sure.

P: I'm sure we will, I'm sure we will.

I: Okay.

P: I don't think there's anything else I collect really.

I: That's alright. Okay, this is something that differs from people to people but thinking about other people do you think that some people are very much guided in their choices and what they do to their homes in order to impress others, in order to erm, make an impression on other people?

P: Well I don't think so up here, because what struck me up here was people don't do anything to their houses.

I: You talked before about this difference that you'd noticed.

P: Yes, it's completely practical. I mean, you go into a farmhouse and it's just bare, it's got a cooker, table and everything's bare.

I: Is that maybe the older generation or are you talking about younger people as well?

P: I think it is the older generation but I think you've got a very big contrast up here in the North East of Scotland whereby you've got the farming folk and the fishing folk and the people, sort of traditional old people, who, I don't know whether they're just not interested or whether they're dour and its grey and its cold and its about keeping yourself warm and almost there's a puritanical element to it.

I: Right.

P: Why do you want frippery, dust collecting clutter in your house? Why do you need to have something beautiful to look at, you've got fantastic scenery. I don't know but it's quite strange, is that they're very dour, and unwarm people's houses. I mean you get the oil lot who are very flashy – gold, status, materialism, really modern houses.

I: So they are trying to impress other people?

P: Desperately trying to impress people by what they've got and status.

I: But it's about money – impressing people in terms of "I'm rich" it's not about "I've got great taste" or maybe it is about that as well? I don't know?

P: I don't know. I can't really work it out.

I: Maybe a status thing?

P: I don't think people try to express themselves, apart from the oil industry and I see them very much as incomers but round here I don't think people try to, I don't think they're bothered by status, I don't think it's important to them, I think you know, class, status, all these things are completely not important but then you go up to somewhere like Gordonstoun and Pennan and you get these incredibly wealthy gold gates, everything else.

I: Oh really?

P: Yeah!

I: Right, okay.

P: You know phenomenally wealthy fisherman and you just think "wow".

I: What about trying to be....

P: So that's quite a difficult question that one.

I: It is isn't it, because there are so much massive differences between people. What about a need to be fashionable, or you know?

P: Definitely, definitely and certainly the friends I've got in the oil industry, you know, they change their sitting room every two years so they have a new sofa. God, could you imagine the stress of doing that every two years!

I: Because such and such minimalist isn't in anymore and it's now

P: yeah and its very much like clothes, completely I mean I'm totally not interested in fashion and clothes and what's in, what's out. I couldn't tell you, I don't care, not bothered but I think people are very influenced by that, about what's in fashion and ditto with furniture so they will look at you know, Homes and Gardens and they will get the latest thing in because they can afford it, and I don't know.

I: Okay.

P: Bizarre.

I: Yeah, yeah. So they extend that to their home which is even more expensive than clothes.

P: Yeah

I: Okay, erm, this isn't something that, thinking not just about expressing yourself but about what other people think – does it matter to you? Do you like other people to like your home and what you've done to it?

P: Definitely. Definitely, definitely, definitely but I mean it wouldn't worry me if they didn't.

I: Okay.

P: And I think probably people are too polite to say they think it's absolutely hideous.

I: Oh yeah, yeah.

P: But I love it, like all the kids friends will say "oh we feel like we've come home and we just love it here"

I: and that gives you a pleasant feeling?

P: I love it; it makes me feel really sort of, yes! Sort of like Mother Earth-ish.

I: So you're nurturing and that kind of...

P: yes, and you know the more people here the better, I just love it.

I: and there's something nice about seeing people relaxed in your home or at home in your home?

P: Absolutely, absolutely, yes,

I: So it matters to you in the sense that you want people to be happy here and if they like what you've done you know that they're even happier here and then it gives you a warm feeling but you're not concerned about whether people share your taste in things for example.

P: No, exactly.



I: Okay.

P: But like you say you might nick some of those ideas, I think "yeah, that's good"

I: Yeah

P: Because I've always wanted to be kind of like, because I'm a single mum I've always said if I can be a role model, because I was convinced when I became a single mum that you had to wear brown and live in a council house and smoke, and I thought God, this is so depressing.

I: and that's not you, yeah.

P: that was my sort of vision of what single mums were and I thought God, this is just awful.

I: So you take it as a challenge?

P: It was quite a long time before I realised that actually I could be me and that I could be a single mum me. I don't have to be like this stereotypical, as I saw it.

I: You don't have to change your identity that much.

P: No you absolutely don't and you can in fact build on your identity and become not a role model but you know, if people can see that actually you can be blissfully happy and love being a single mum that's great for them.

I: and be proud of the way that you've done being a single mum as well.

P: Absolutely, absolutely.

I: Rather than it being kind of this tag, this erm, what do you call these things? Not a tag, a label. A label.

P: And I've you know, I've now come to realise after sort of 17 years that actually I'm absolutely the ideal candidate and that you know I wouldn't have wanted to change anything. I would have quite liked the unpleasant bit at the beginning to have gone, but ever since, I've just absolutely loved being a single mum. I just think for me it's completely been the most empowering and enriching thing that could have happened. It totally suits my character and it's just been great

I: It's just been great for you.

P: You know, it's been much easier to bring up the kids in a way because I haven't had Mr Grump coming home from the office all busy.

I: Yeah, exactly and disagreements about how you should discipline them

P: Yeah, so you can take full responsibility.

I: Yeah, yeah.

P: and you can take full benefit and glory as well!

I: Exactly!

P: I mean the turning point came at bath time when bath time used to always be a complete nightmare when they were so little, they were 4, 2 and 1 and it was summertime and it was just the end of the day and everybody was tired and fractious and it was just a nightmare. I just used to steel myself for bath time and then my husband would come in and he'd be having his needs and his demands and supper on the table and the whole thing was just hideous.

I: A nightmare, yeah.

P: And obviously there was that sort of trough of complete misery and everything when it all went wrong and but then suddenly there was a sort of turning point when I thought bath time is bliss actually because I haven't got any more demands it's just us.

I: Coming from down in the kitchen.

P: So bath time then took about 10 hours, you know, there'd be endless singing at night-time you know, it would just take forever and there's no pressure.

I: Something to enjoy rather than get through?

P: And gradually they'd all go to bed in their fluffy pyjamas and it was just one of the most precious times of the day, but it was that what turned me around completely from a sort of resentful single mum to absolutely loving it and from then on it's just been brilliant.

I: Great.

P: But it was that funny that bath time when suddenly,

I: The significance of it all.

P: You think, no actually, I'm seeing this as a huge demand and pressure and a nightmare but actually.....

I: Yeah it's now not that.

P: Yeah.

I: Yeah. Okay, the last question is how long can you see yourself living here? Is this your forever home?

P: At the moment, yes but I can, I don't know, I mean part of me wants to go and do 50+ volunteering in India and Nepal.

I: Okay

P: I've always loved travelling; I've got an absolute ambition to go to Mongolia. The Amazon and Mongolia were one of my two goals when I was about 10. I managed the Amazon.

I: Have you been to the Amazon?

P: I've never got to Mongolia. We were meant to go on honeymoon but then my ridiculous husband said we had to go to Mablethorpe instead, so.

I: Go where?

P: To Mablethorpe in Lincolnshire.

I: Oh. That's a bit different.

P: He said why the hell do you want to go to Mongolia? I think he just freaked out and panicked, so anyway I still haven't been.

I: So this is something you need to do?

P: Actually I'll show you something.

I: Oh right.

P: This was a present somebody brought to the party on Saturday

I: What is it?

P: It's a Mongolian hat!

I: Oh right!

P: And the card in it said "Hopefully you'll get your hat back home"

I: Yes!

P: "one day you'll manage to get to Mongolia and you'll be able to take your hat back"

I: Ah that's really thoughtful isn't it?

P: So that's their 50<sup>th</sup> birthday present to me is a Mongolian Hat.

I: I think you should put it on and let me take a photo for my thesis! I'm kidding!

P: Thank god for that! So, erm [puts hat on].

I: Wow!

P: I know, it's outrageous isn't it?

I: Isn't it? But its great that someone's you know, thinking about what's important to you.

P: Exactly, yeah, but it's just a lovely country so hopefully one day I'll take the hat back home.

I: And if you do that, would you want to come back here?



P: So there's that, there's also living on Lewis or Harris or one of the Western Isles.

I: It appeals to you?

P: Buy a little cottage, just right by the sea.

I: Okay.

P: That also appeals, so you know I'm just, I'm very much

I: You would never say never about moving?

P: No. I just live each day as it comes. I'm hopeless as I've said about insurance and pensions, I haven't got a pension, I cannot see the point as I might be run over by a bus tomorrow so why on earth would I be investing money in some fund for the future. My philosophy is very much things will sort themselves out and you just deal with it if they don't and...

I: That makes me feel better about the fact that we don't have pensions either!

P: I can't see the point; I mean it's such a depressing thing to have a pension.

I: It is very depressing actually yeah.

P: People say "oh my god, how are you going to survive?" Well you do survive, you do, you manage, I mean we'd probably sell this house, whatever so I don't know. I may well be here, I may well land up in India or somewhere.

I: But you, because you're a free spirit you don't tie yourself forever?

P: That's absolutely it.

I: It was important to you that this was the home that the kids grew up and got to be here growing up

P: absolutely

I: but it's not something that will hold you back in the future?

P: Exactly.

I: Okay

P: and interesting the only person who agrees with me on this is the bank manager.

I: Oh right?

P: She's so sweet and she said you must never never; you mustn't sell this house yet. Just because they've gone to university and everybody's saying "oh you need to sell now they're at university" she said my parents sold our family home when I was 35 and I felt like I'd gone into foster care. I never went to the new home, I hated it and I thought she's so right and that's what I've always felt. This is such an important part of all our lives.

I: And how that really helps them psychologically to have this strong foundation.

P: They've got to have this to come back to; they've got to be able to bring their friends from London here for them to see their upbringing, their background, their life, their home and you know she's got such friendships now with friends who were at the party, were able to help, they can now visualise Helen at home and the sort of life she leads.

I: And such a strong identity that she's had here and still part of her?

P: It's so important to her, yeah.

I: I'm quite jealous, because my parents, well, I'll stop the interview there.

**9.15 Appendix 15 - Example responses to open identity measures**

Who are you?

The following example shows the response of Kate:

- A grandmother
- A friend and mother
- A daughter and wife
- 57
- An ex-academic, who thinks she might have quit too early and is still looking for a role in life
- A gardener and cat lover
- Like art, antiques
- Like socialising with friends in the local
- Have a commitment to social justice; do a lot of voluntary work
- Give large parties
- Am a reflective bon-viveur
- Read a lot, like board games

I am a:

The following example shows Lesley's response:

- I am a "values-driven" individual
- I am a wife of 49 years of marriage
- I am a mother to 2 children: son aged 47, daughter aged 44; son in Bradford, daughter in York
- I am grandmother to 5 grandchildren: Abigail (21), Calum (14), Isaac (11), Isobel (8), Hannah (6)
- I am a practising Christian – Presbyterian in Scotland, Baptist affiliate in England
- I am pleased to have been able to travel with my husband abroad to many diverse places – some work related.
- I am fascinated by education practise abroad and have visited, in this respect, USA (Boston, New York, Philadelphia – urban education), Portugal, Denmark.
- I am enjoying a varied retirement marred only by my only daughter's divorce 4 years ago.



### 9.16 Appendix 16 - Letter to participants

Mrs Leanne Townsend  
The Scott Sutherland School  
The Robert Gordon University  
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AB10 7QB  
Tel: 07810887930  
Email: [l.c.townsend@rgu.ac.uk](mailto:l.c.townsend@rgu.ac.uk)

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for volunteering to be involved in my research. I am hoping to talk with you about your dwelling and the way that it reflects certain aspects of you – for example your identity, personality and values.

In order to first find out a bit more about you I have sent you a questionnaire to complete which includes some general questions about personality as well as some open-ended questions asking you to tell me a bit more about yourself. I am hoping to find out a bit more about you and what is important to you. This will assist me during the interview process to more fully understand how you have expressed yourself through your dwelling. Please complete the questionnaire and return it in the stamped addressed envelope as soon as possible. Rest assured that all the information provided by you will remain anonymous and confidential.

During the interview I would like to talk with you about some of the things in your dwelling which have a special significance to you. I want you to think of your favourite or most meaningful:

- Object or possession
- "Corner" (by corner I mean a small area within your dwelling of which you are particularly fond or proud. An example may be a mantelpiece displaying attractive ornaments, a corner of a bedroom with your favourite pieces of furniture in it, or an armchair with a favourite picture on the wall above it).
- Piece of furniture
- Room

If you are struggling to choose only one of each of the above you can think about more than one, but we may not have time to discuss everything in the interview. In particular, I want you to consider and be prepared to discuss:

- Why are each of these meaningful and special to you?
- What do each of these say about you as a person?
- Particularly in relation to your favourite possession or piece of furniture, what is the history of how you came to own these? Is there a story behind them?

During the interview, with your consent, I would like to photograph the possessions and areas within the dwelling that you have selected for discussion. In terms of the possessions, it would be great if you could have these to hand so that we can photograph them and look at them while we talk.

If you have any questions, please feel free to get in touch with me by telephone or email.

I hope that you find these activities and our discussion interesting and enjoyable. I want to thank you once again for volunteering to be a part of my research – your time and contribution are greatly appreciated. I look forward to meeting you soon.

Yours faithfully,

Leanne Townsend.

### 9.17 Appendix 17 - Interview schedule for Study 3

1. How long have you lived here? Tell me the story of home you came to be here.

#### DWELLINGS AND HOMES

2. What does the word "home" mean to you? Is this your home?
3. What makes a house feel more like a home? How did you make THIS house feel like home?
4. How do your relationships with others make this place feel more like your home? Are these relationships symbolized somehow?

#### IDENTITY

5. How have you made your mark on your home? What can we see of YOU here?
6. Do you live with others? Thinking about your relationships with others in the household, are these evident in the appearance of the house?
7. Do you think your home in turn may have affected your identity or personality?

#### QUESTIONNAIRE INFO

8. You've described yourself  
as: \_\_\_\_\_  
How does this aspect of you affect your home?

#### FAVOURITE THINGS TASK – take photographs.

9. Can we talk a bit now about the possessions and areas of the home you've chosen?
  - Why did you choose this? Why is it significant to you? What do you like about it? What does it say about you as a person – your personality, history or relationships for example?
10. Do these [favourite things] make this dwelling feel like home?
11. Do you collect anything?

#### SOCIAL ASPECTS



12. Do you think some people may be influenced by what other people might think when they decorate their dwellings? Can you give examples?
13. Does this concern you?
14. Is this reflected in your dwelling?
15. How long do you intend to live here? Is this your forever home?

### 9.18 Appendix 18 - Briefing and Consent

Thank you for agreeing to take part in my research. I am investigating the ways in which people connect their identity to their home environment and how this may help a dwelling become a home. The main focus of our interview therefore will relate to your identity and how it is reflected in your dwelling.

I'd like you to answer the questions you feel comfortable with in as much detail as you would like. With your consent, I also need to audio-record the interview in order to transcribe the conversation fully.

Please be aware that you have the right to withdraw from this interview at any time, and you do not need to give me any reasons for doing so. You also have the right to withdraw your input from the study at a later date. However, your responses today will remain anonymous and confidential. If you have any more queries, please ask.

Leanne Townsend

#### Consent

Please tick box

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for this study.

☐

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time, without giving reason.

☐

I agree to take part in this study.

☐

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Date

---

Signature

### 9.19 Appendix 19 - Results for personality and identity scales

Participant	Extra	Agree	Consc	Stable	Intell	PIO	SIO	CIO	RIO
Maggie	48	47	38	31	42	42	30	21	49
Greta	39	50	34	37	36	35	20	23	45
Lily	20	30	36	22	30	31	28	25	44
Joy	32	42	36	42	40	39	23	35	49
Lesley	35	40	45	30	43	40	18	33	37
Rachel	30	45	28	31	43	45	18	21	50
Kate	40	46	41	28	50	45	26	21	47
Elaine	40	50	44	41	46	40	30	36	42
Jennifer	35	27	45	27	32	35	19	18	30
Maude	37	41	40	37	32	37	23	23	45
Wendy	39	44	35	38	43	40	13	22	32
Sheila	43	45	43	33	36	43	29	25	45
Beth	43	45	44	47	44	38	21	26	44
Elizabeth	38	41	42	24	39	38	28	13	43

Key: Extra = Extraversion; Agree = Agreeableness; Con = Conscientiousness; Stable = Emotional Stability; Intell = Intellect; PIO = Personal Identity Orientation; SIO = Social Identity Orientation; CIO = Collective Identity Orientation; RIO = Relational Identity Orientation.



## 9.20 Appendix 20 - Free nodes

Name of node	Number of sources	Number of references
Discussion of family members	6	15
Environmental concerns	4	7
Finances	5	15
Health	3	9
History of dwelling	5	17
Housework	9	19
"I am a"	15	15
Lifestyle	6	11
Ownership	1	1
Personal and family history	15	56
Personality	7	10
Reuse and recycle	7	19
Role of a particular room or space	14	45
Sense of achievement	6	7
The future and housing	6	14
Travel	14	51
"Who are you?"	15	15
Working from home	4	5

### 9.21 Appendix 21 - Tree nodes

Tree node and branch	Number of sources	Number of references
<b>Home:</b>	10	14
Being settled	1	2
Comfort	7	8
Connection to self	16	112
Continuity	4	5
Control	7	33
Corner	12	26
Disliked area or room	3	7
Effect of home	13	18
Extended environment	7	12
Family	8	12
Happiness in home	7	23
Meaning of home	13	19
Process of home	14	39
Security	7	11
Territory	2	4
<b>Interests:</b>	0	0
Crosswords and games	1	3
Culture and history	2	2
Food and cooking	9	22
Music and dance	6	8
Nature	4	20
Needlework and crafts	4	5
Personal appearance	3	16
Photography	2	3
Reading and writing	9	13
Sport and outdoors	6	14
Volunteer work	1	1
<b>Meaning of possessions:</b>	14	47
Bought for self	5	8
Collecting	8	33
Comfort	2	2
Connection to local area	2	2
Function	4	10
Past memories	14	53

Quirkiness or fun	1	2
Reminder of past home	6	14
<b>Social aspects:</b>	0	0
Family history	3	10
Family relations	6	9
Passing on to family	2	6
<b>Reminder of others:</b>	16	116
Gifts from others	14	58
Inherited	6	31
Made by others	9	31
The future	1	2
<b>Personalisation:</b>	7	11
<b>Decorative aspects:</b>	0	0
Artwork and pictures	14	74
Colour	13	30
Contrast	1	2
Furnishings	5	11
Furniture	11	11
Home made or renovated	8	26
Houseplants and flowers	1	2
Photographs	15	64
Theme	3	7
Garden and gardening	9	47
<b>Improvements:</b>	0	0
DIY and home improvements	13	64
Feature	6	9
Heating	3	3
House extensions	5	15
Layout	8	18
Lighting	4	5
Structural	4	7
Unchanged	1	4
Unfinished projects	1	6
Individuality	3	5
Tastes in decor	15	55
<b>Social aspects:</b>	0	0
<b>Community:</b>	4	17
Community politics	3	5
Community work and activities	5	8



Not fitting in	2	3
Relations with neighbours	5	10
Social isolation	1	1
<b>Family and other inhabitants:</b>	12	38
Adapting dwelling for family	4	8
Conflict	6	17
Input of others	15	70
Other inhabitants	12	63
Relationships and home	10	31
Impressing others	8	14
Opinion of others	13	39
Others' dwellings	13	38
Pets	10	30
Privacy	4	6
Socialising in the dwelling	12	58
<b>Values:</b>	1	5
Giving back	1	2
Non materialistic	6	12
Not throwing good things away	1	5
Pacifism	1	1

## 9.22 Appendix 22 - Tree nodes' structure

