



**The shared (room) home in Sydney: A social and material assemblage**

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# Shared room housing

- Where tenants share a bedroom or partitioned living room with non-related members within a shared household (Nasreen & Ruming, 2019)
  - A distinct form of tenure:
    - Sharing with non-related members,
    - Short-to-mid-term occupancies,
    - Informal and multi-layered sub-tenancy arrangements
    - Multiplicity in private rental arrangements
  - Non-related members are collectively required to negotiate and arrange the social, economic and material aspects of their daily lives
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# Assemblage thinking and home-making

- Four capacities of assemblage thinking (Baker and McGuirk 2016; McFarlane 2011; McGuirk, Mee, and Ruming 2016; Power 2019)
    1. Revealing the relational, multiple and processual worlds of home-making
    2. Revealing the multi-scalar labour involved in configuring the (socio-material) assemblages that constitute home
    3. Identifying openings for multiple possible trajectories of home-making
    4. Providing critical insights into how home-making trajectories are constrained
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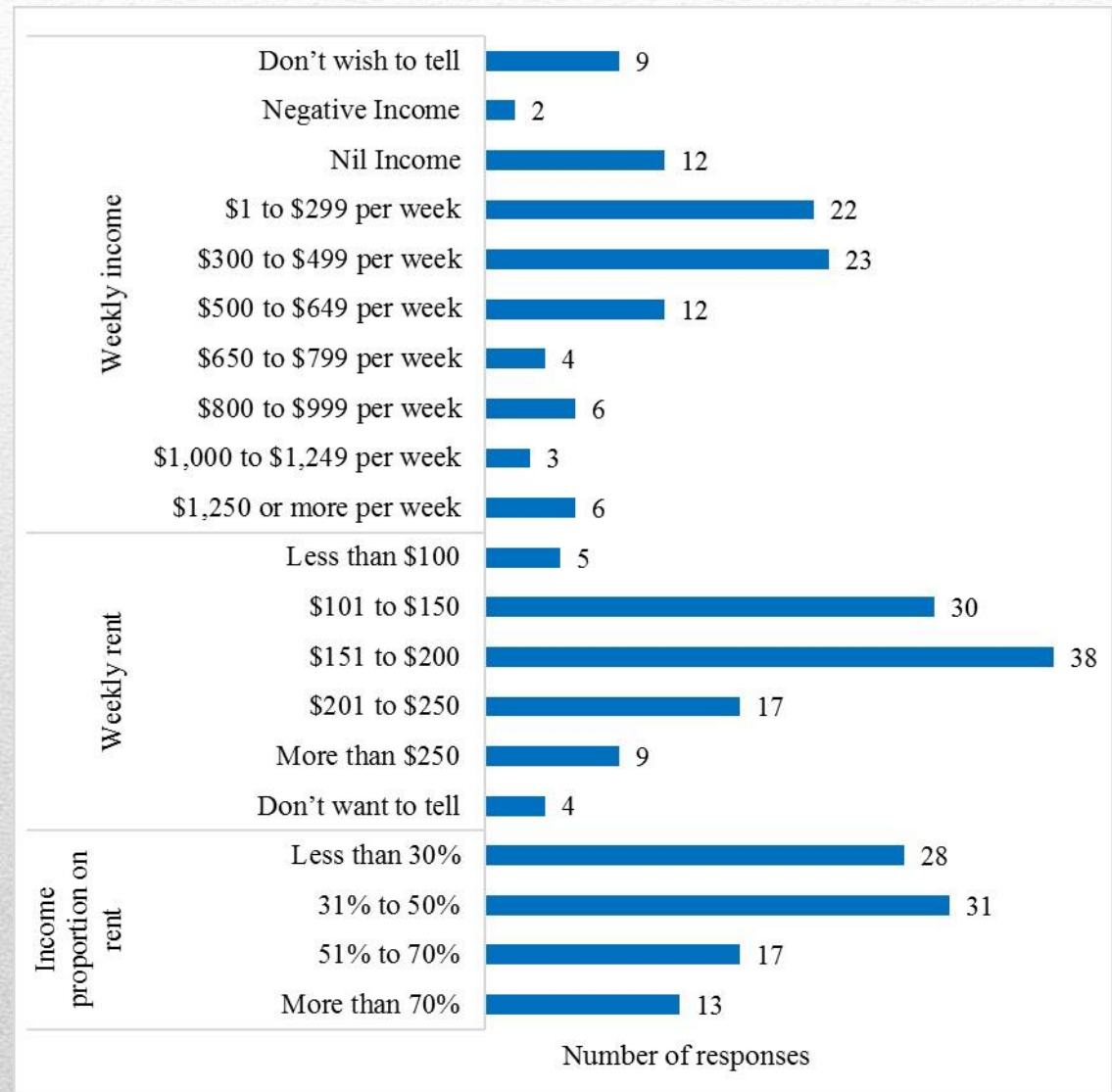


# Research Objectives and Methods

- This paper contributes to reveal how shared home is created, experienced and maintained in diverse shared room housing sites in Sydney
- A mixed-method approach by combining
  - An online survey [n = 103]
  - In-depth interviews [n = 35] with tenants
  - Home-visits [ n = 5], Shared room houses pictures [n = 25]
- Positionality

# Residents' socio-economic status

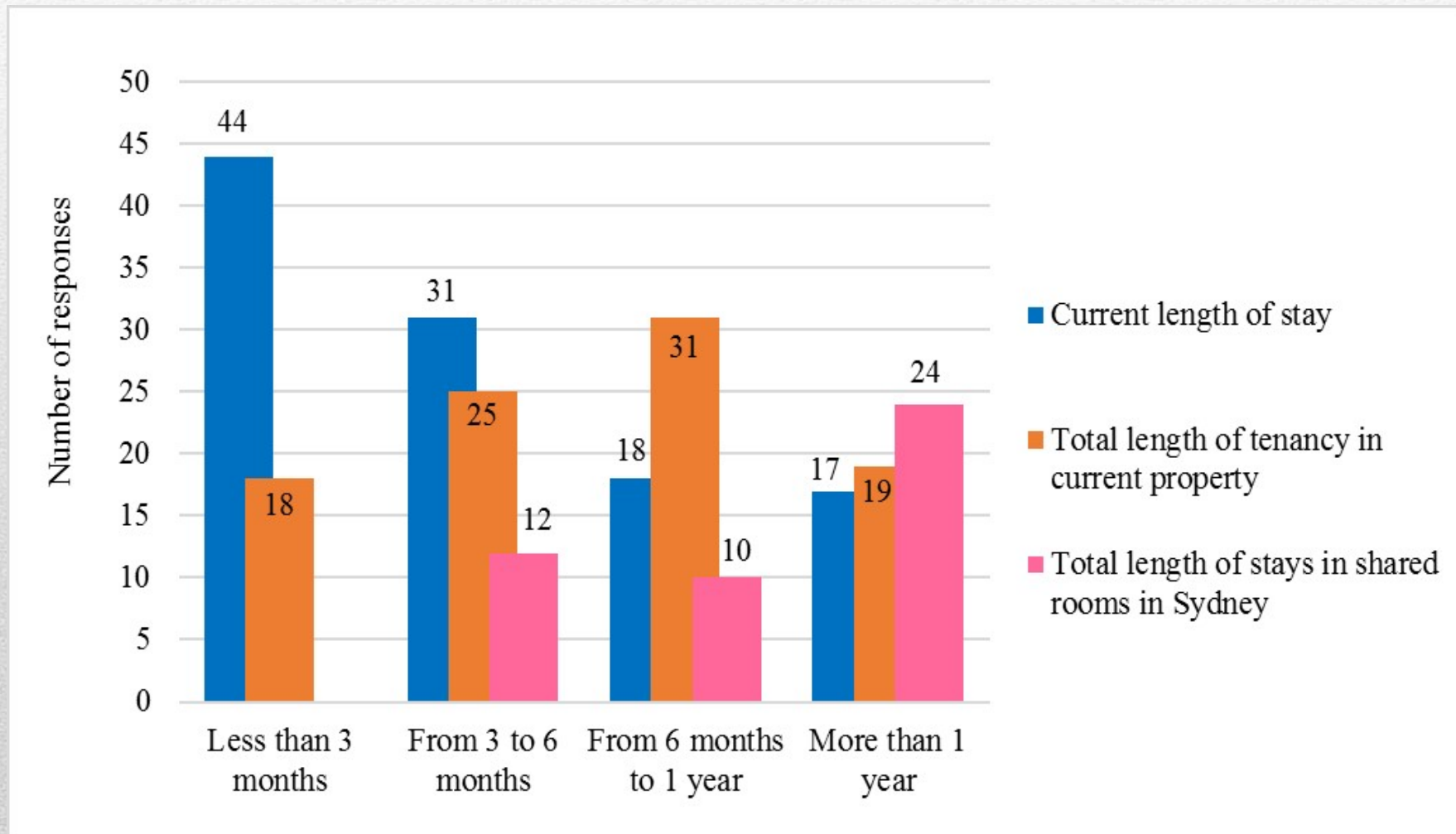
- 92% young adults (18 to 35 years)
- 75% international migrants, while 25% Australian citizens.
- 58% through online networks, 10% through noticeboard listings and 32% through social networks.
- 55% participants having bills already included in the rent





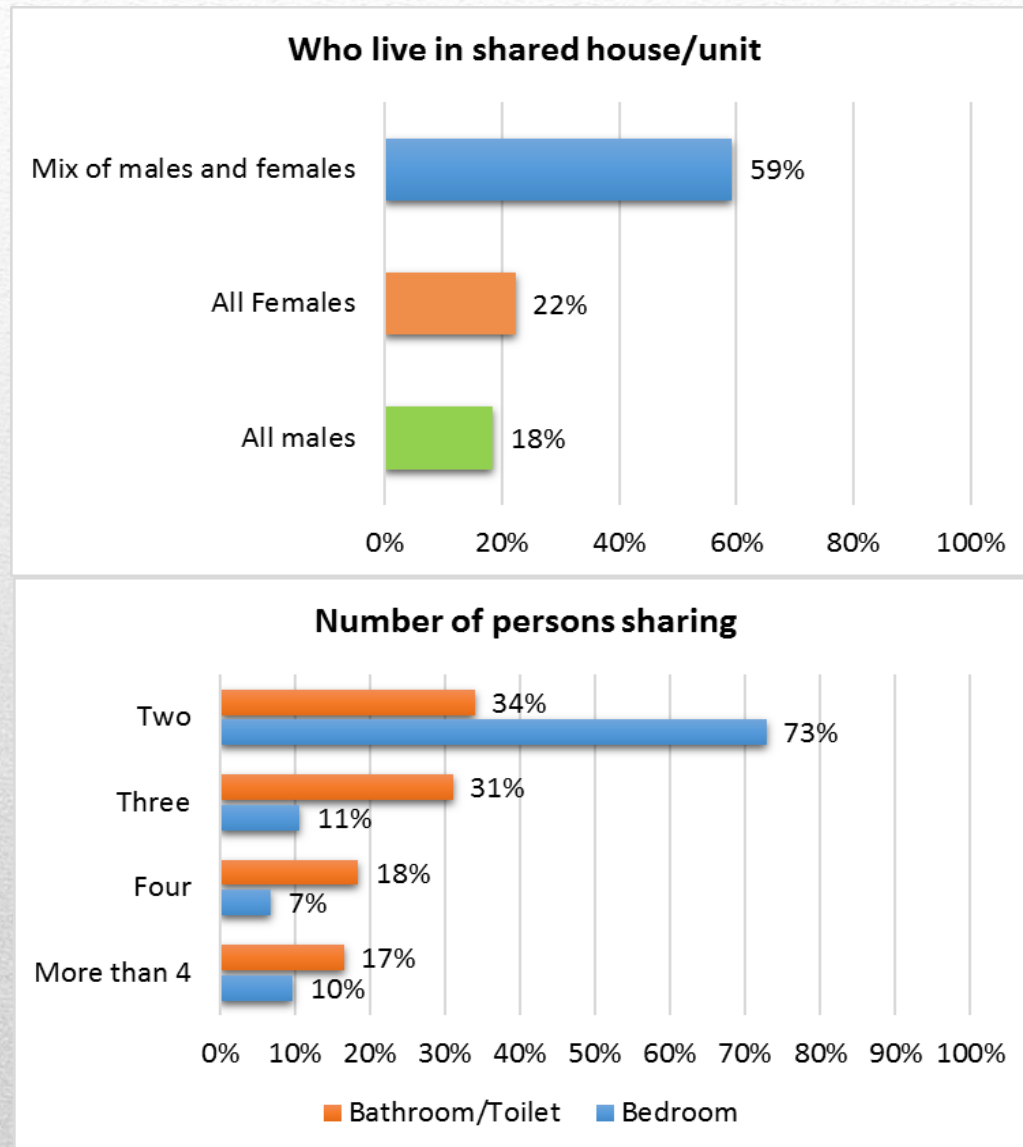
# Residents' tenancy duration

- 43% participants were not first-time room sharers, and 26% spent > a year in shared rooms housing in Sydney



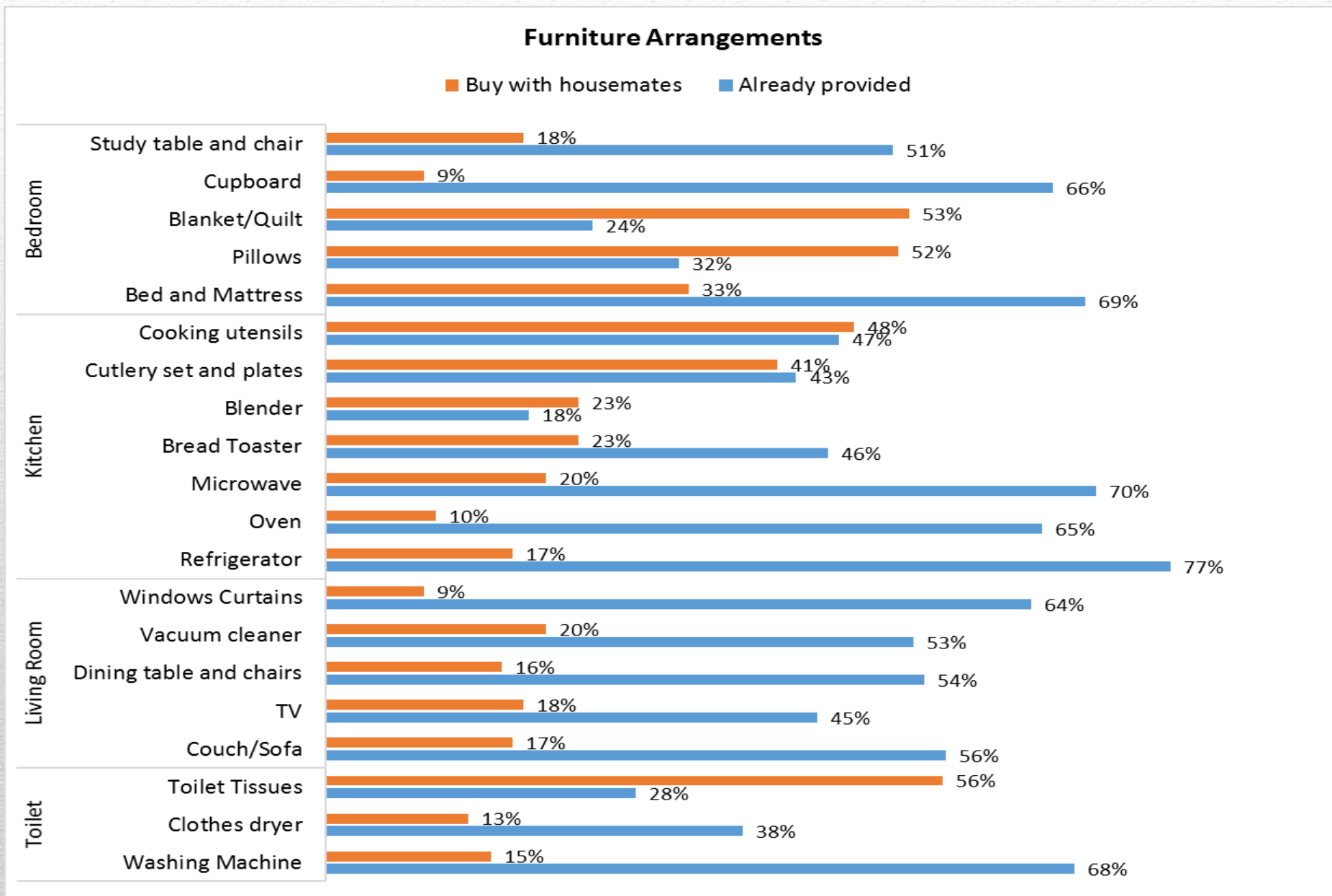
# Socio-spatial alignments

- 53% participants moved alone, while the remainder moved in with at least one friend
- 18% of participants were living with live-in landlord/head-tenant.
- 18% participants mentioned conversion of living room into bedroom or couch surfing





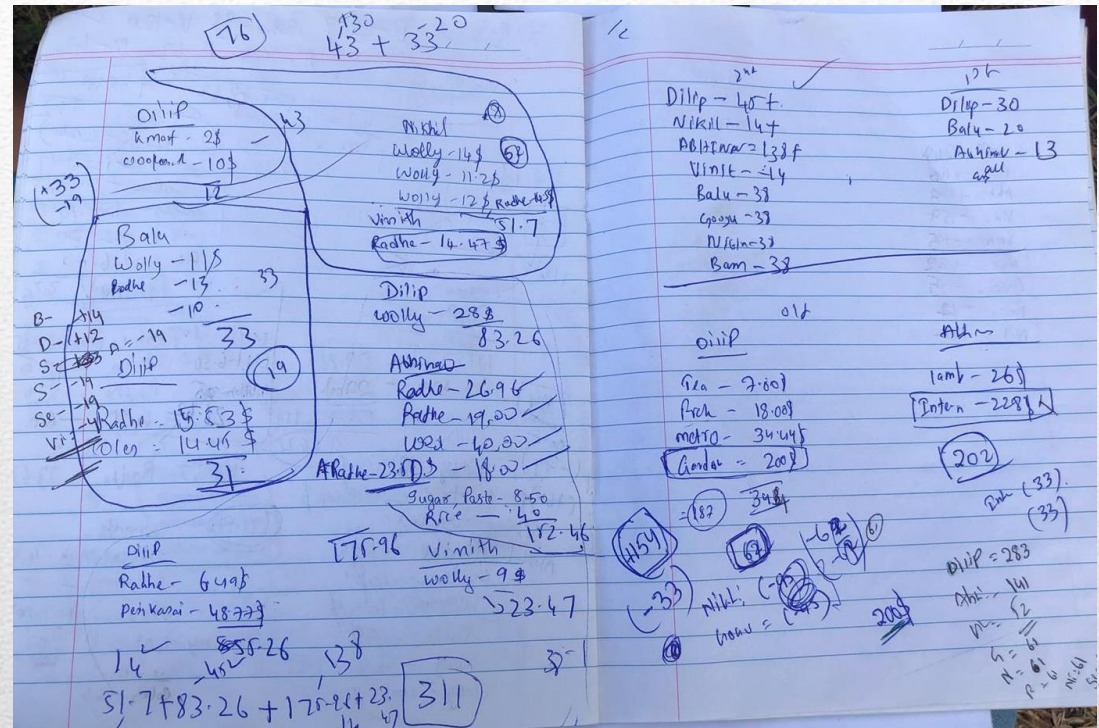
# Multi-scaler labour: Furniture arrangements





# Multi-scalar Labour: Who will bring grocery?

‘When the toilet paper is finished I will buy it. So we just alternate... I generally tend to go for the more **inexpensive** one whereas she might be fine with paying a bit of a **premium**.’ P 1



P 35: Parramatta, 18 Nov 2018

‘**Cooking oil** I still share it. But one of my friends doesn't because she thinks that she uses it least, so she doesn't share it with us. Sometimes I don't use it at all, but I don't want to have a say in it, that's why I just share.’ P 18



# Multi-scalar labour: Who will do cleaning?

‘Actually I’m the only one who’s **doing cleaning** for now. I vacuum the floor - the carpet, and sometimes I will clean the tables and also the kitchens. Oh, and also toilets. Because the other two tenants... **they have high tolerance of the dirtiness...** [But] I will leave dirty dishes alone for them to handle, because the dirty dishes are their property, so **I don’t have rights to touch it** or do anything with them.’ P 2



P 35: Parramatta, 18 Nov 2018

‘If I find some **hair on the shower** and I am taking a shower after that, if I take my hair from that, **I’ll have to take other people’s hair as well**, and I don’t want - I think it’s quite disgusting.’ P 17



# Multi-scalar labour: Who will do cleaning?



P 11: Ultimo, 18 Apr 2018

‘Sometimes it’s a bit difficult for shared room to clean... even if I wish to clean the room like I cannot be the one who’ll be doing the cleaning of whole myself... the partner who is there should also take the responsibility to keep his portion clean. **But that’s the shared room policy, we just can’t force him** because he might have his own things when he is tired he doesn’t want to clean it now or maybe something like that’  
P 14



# Socio-material assemblage



P 19: Haymarket, 23 June 2018



P 20: Haymarket, 23 June 2018

‘I also find it's very important to have **enough power points** because sometimes one shared room only have one power point and that **you're fighting with others** to have the power point.’ P 10

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# Socio-material Assemblage



P 28: Marsfield, 27 Aug 2018



P 12: Wentworthville, 24 Apr 2018

‘I do tell the girls that you can't use **the lights** where I'm sleeping... or you use your **mobile to navigate** yourself. Especially you've got to wake up 5AM, you can't distract me... Even in terms of **alarm clock**. Everybody has their mobile and some of the girls they just **keep snoozing**. We tell them straight away in the morning, next day girl your alarm clock woke me up.’ P 7

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# Socio-material assemblage



P 27: Eastwood, 20 Aug 2018

‘Because we're seven. We have **only one laundry machine**. So sometimes you're like okay, it's laundry time. Oh shit, there is already clothes in there... It's done and another person came to take the laundry and you're like, **I will do it tomorrow.**’ P

‘We're **limited with the furniture**, because we have **several pans... but only the specific size**. So everyone only cooks for one person so we're all using the same pan. So just me, I know that if someone is using the pan, I won't be able to cook the thing I want.’ P 27



P 35:Parramatta, 18 Nov 2018



# Socio-material assemblage

‘Another thing that is a little complicated here is that we don’t have a **trash bin** in the apartment so all of us... what we have to do is just put in a plastic bag and throw in the garbage room later. This guy was just keeping the trash inside [the bedroom].’ P 19



P 8: Homebush, 08 April 2018



P 23: Burwood, 17 July 2018

‘It’s annoying, because you have to wait to use the **toilet**, waiting for **cooking**, and too many people living here... Also **fridge**, it’s always out of space... And you buy **food** and you write your name, and some of people stole your food.’ P 8



# Socio-material Constraints

‘Some of the other rules, he didn't told me until I was already there. Like **you're not allowed to use the living room**, you're not allowed to talk loudly or laugh, even between - in phone calls or with the flatmates... If we can make a joke or whatever, he will tell us to keep it quiet. We're not allowed to talk or chit-chat or whatever... **He mentions the times that you take in the shower, and that's kind of awkward**’ P 24



P 30: Enmore, 02 Sep 2018



# Conclusion

- Shared home is a far more challenging entity of dependence, ongoing configurations (both material and emotional), and a continuous process of (re)negotiations and exchanges
- Sharers do engage in quasi-family practices to maintain and sustain home
- Assemblage thinking helps to reveal taken-for-granted experiences and socio-material configurations
- There is no single experience of home in shared room housing, rather it in a continuous process of making and unmaking



***THANK YOU***

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QA

**Advice  
&  
Suggestion**

# References

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