

A study by EspaceProprio

Feeling good at home

March 2023

 **EspaceProprio**
initiative de  **Desjardins**



About the study

Context, objectives and methodology

EspaceProprio commissioned Ad Hoc Research to conduct a study to understand the relationship that Canadian homeowners and aspiring homeowners have with their homes. The objective of the survey was to identify how Canadians feel about their homes, how they live in them, and what their housing aspirations are.

Data collection method

Web survey (by panel) of some 50 questions answered by 2,019 respondents.

Study population

- Canadians
- Aged 25 to 74 years old
- Homeowners or those intending to become homeowners within the next 2 years

Survey dates

November 29 to December 5, 2022.

Weighting

Data were weighted by province, age, gender, and ownership status (owner/tenant) to best represent the study population.





“EspaceProprio believes that a home is more than a place to live, it is a place of accomplishment”

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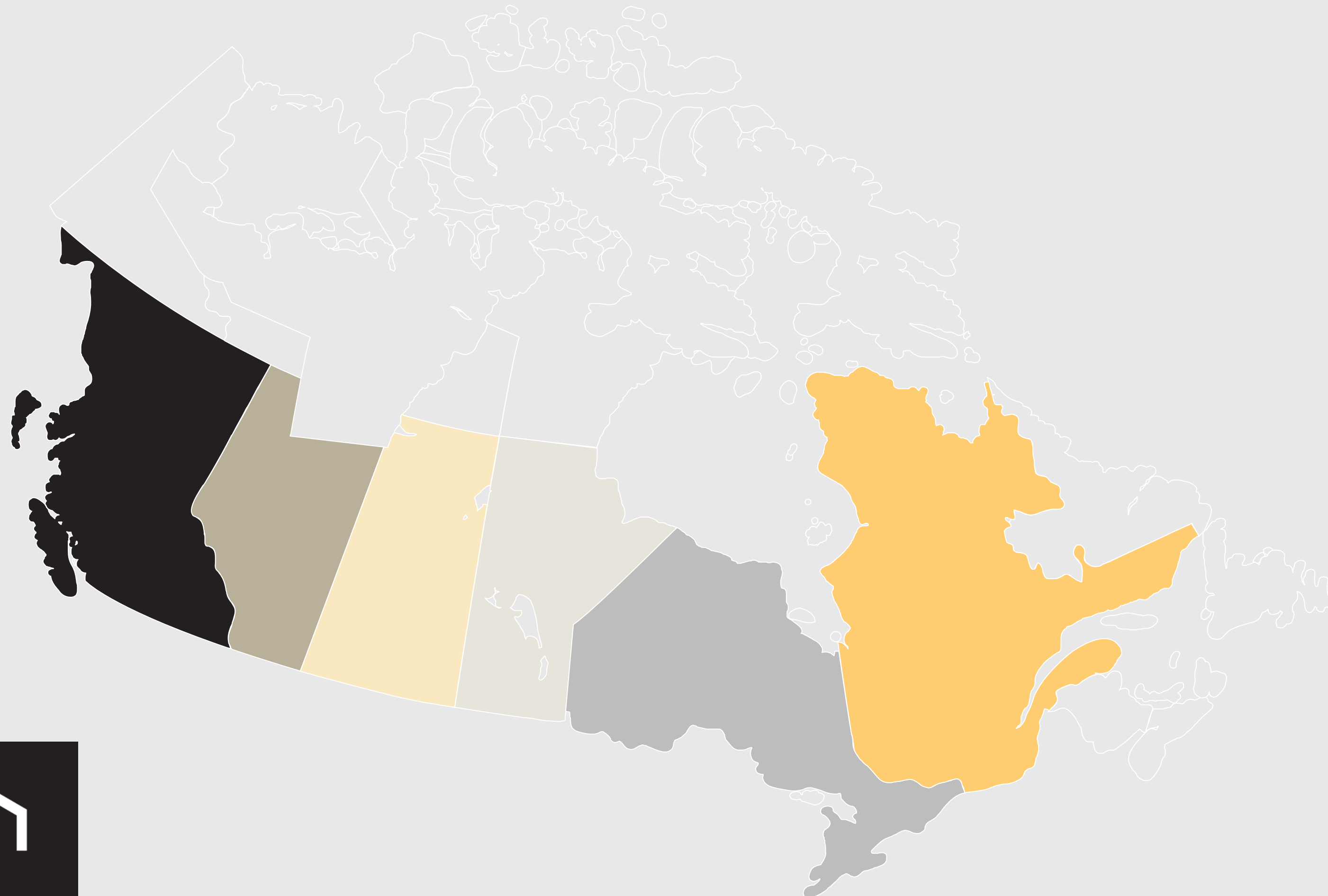
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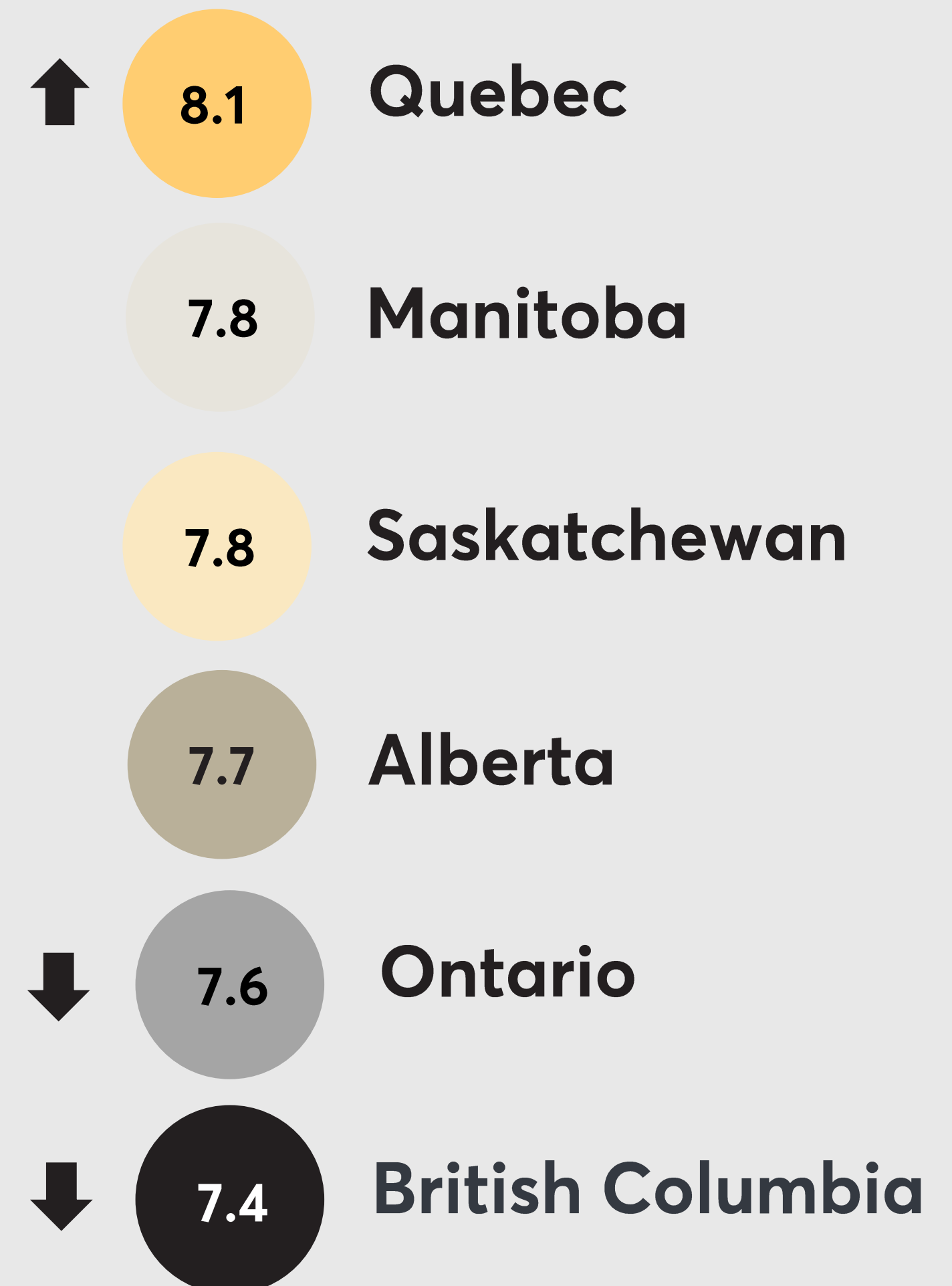
Places where people feel most at home

Our study shows that Quebec is the place where people feel most at home. As we'll see in the following pages, the relationship that Quebecers have with their homes is unique.

The well-being index we developed also tells us that people in some Canadian provinces, notably Ontario and British Columbia, are less likely to be content at home.



EspaceProprio Index



Quebecers' unique relationship with their homes

Our study found that Quebecers have a unique relationship with their home. Quebecers scored positively on virtually every measure.

10 things that distinguish Quebecers from other Canadians:

1

The emotions they feel on a regular basis at home are significantly more positive than elsewhere in Canada.

2

In contrast, negative emotions such as stress and sadness experienced at home are considerably less frequent.

3

Their sense of pride in their homes is greater.

4

Satisfaction with various aspects of their home is higher: sun exposure, general condition of the home, space, and adaptability to future needs.

5

Their sense of attachment to their home is much stronger.

6

Their home corresponds better with their personality.

7

Their home is less frequently a source of worry or burden.

8

Their home allows them to socialize more: They receive guests more often.

9

The place they call home more closely resembles their "ideal" home.

10

Fewer of them think they would be happier if they lived in a better place.



Drivers of satisfaction

Aside from geographic location, we established that two other main factors have a strong impact on satisfaction and pride in the home.

1

Ownership status



Owning your property and being the boss of your own home has a significant impact on feelings of pride and satisfaction. Of all the factors assessed in our survey, it has the greatest potential to positively influence happiness at home.

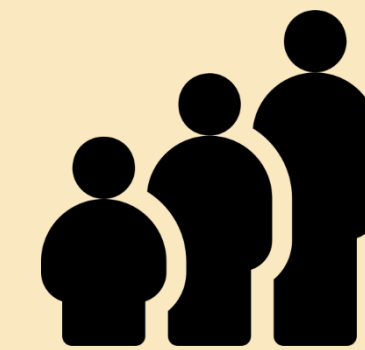
Canadian homeowners feel more positive emotions and are much more satisfied with the various physical aspects of their homes measured in our survey.

While Canadian homeowners admitted to spending more time maintaining their homes, this does not indicate a higher level of stress or concern among homeowners.



2

Age



Canadians are most satisfied with their homes after age 55. Seniors are more relaxed, proud, and happy, and have generally succeeded in finding a home that is closer to their ideal.

Beyond their income, which allows them to realize their dreams, those 55 and over seem to have toned-down their expectations for the future, which translates into increased feelings of serenity at home.



Emotions

A person with short dark hair and glasses, wearing a red sweater, is sitting on a black tufted leather sofa. They are smiling and looking at a silver laptop on their lap. The background is a dark, textured wall. To the right, there is a tall, thin green plant. The word "Emotions" is written in large, bold, yellow letters across the center of the image.

QUIET **HAPPY** **CONFINED** **SAFE** **FREE** **WARM**
ZEN **COMFORTABLE** **LOVE**
CALM **WELL** **RELAXED**
SERENE **FAMILY**
PEACEFUL

How do we feel at home?

We asked Canadians to sum up in one word how they feel about their homes. The result is clear: virtually all the words are positive.

1 Comfort

"Comfortable" is unequivocally the most common word (38%) used to describe their state of mind at home.

2 Well-being

Well-being at home is unique to Quebecers. They are 11 times more likely than the rest of Canadians to talk about well-being when describing their relationship with their home.

3 Safety

Our home fulfills one of the most basic human needs: to feel safe. Long before our individual housing dreams and ambitions, having a place to call your own where you feel safe is a basic universal need sought by all Canadians.



QA0. If you had to sum up in one word how you feel about your home, what word would you use?



There is no place like home...

Our home is a peaceful refuge. Analysis of the emotions felt by Canadians at home shows a significant tendency towards positive ones. The vast majority of the time, people report feeling happy, relaxed, and proud of their home.

Conversely, home-related sadness and stress tend to be short-lived emotions that don't linger.

Our study shows that

95%

of Canadians say the place where they feel most comfortable is at home!



Feeling attached to your home

We found that Canadians are strongly attached to their homes, especially Quebecers (86%).

Hard to feel attached unless you are the owner

Attachment to a home increases dramatically when you own the property you live in.

Memories contribute to attachment

Special moments in the home also contribute to the emotional attachment. Canadians over 55 have a pervasive sense of belonging compared to younger Canadians.

We can assume that at this age we reach a sense of stability. We plan to stay in the same place for a longer period of time. We have found a place that corresponds well to our requirements, and we have the means to realize our goals.

76%

of Canadians say that they are attached to their homes.



Our feelings about renovations and maintenance

Homeowner—for better or for worse!

Our analysis found that the issue of maintenance and renovations weighs heavily on the minds of Canadian homeowners. The dream of homeownership can be quickly overshadowed by the responsibilities that come with it, especially if we don't call on help from professionals.

In an era where life is often a whirlwind, our time has never been more precious. The 35-54-year-olds with children were particularly vocal in telling us that maintenance takes up too much of their time.

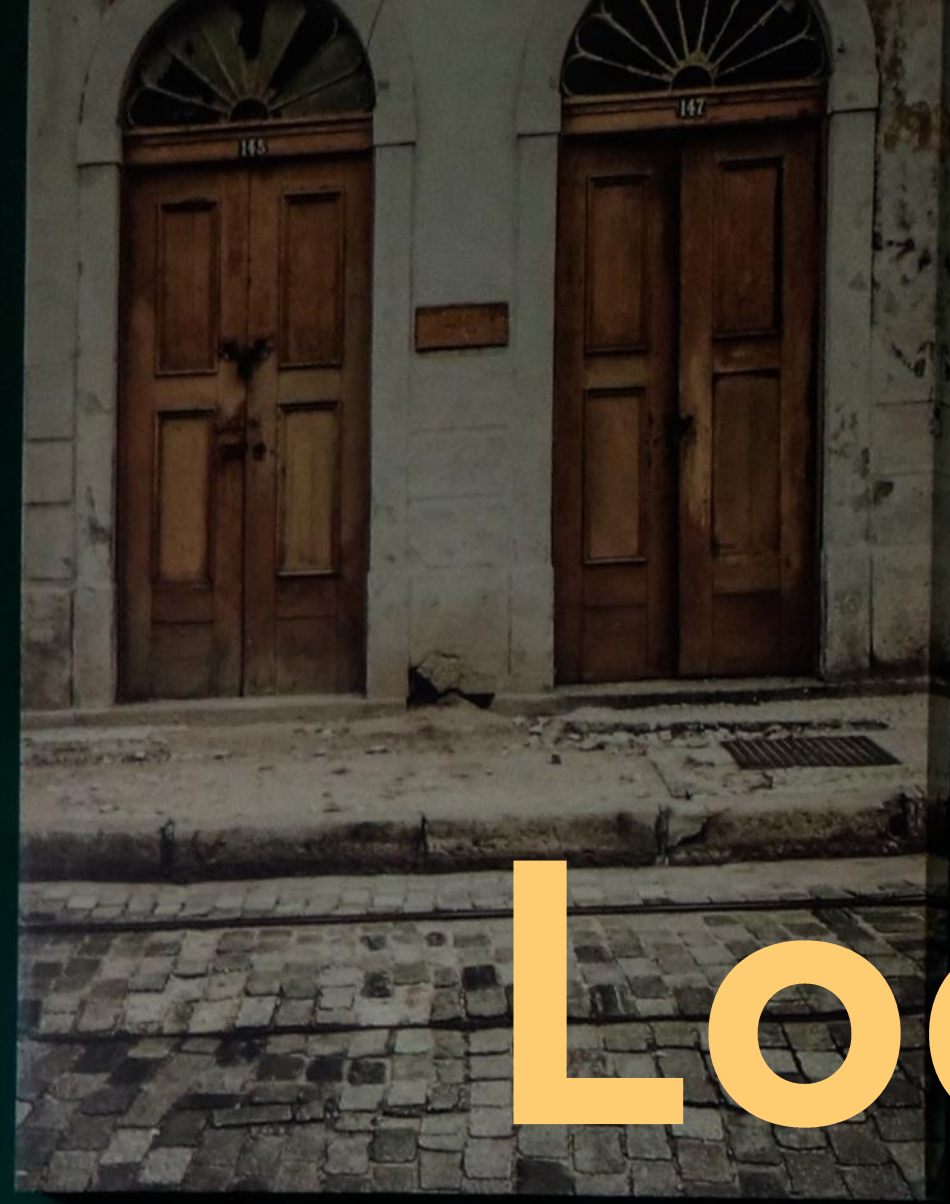
Get out your hammers!

We found that the start or completion of renovations is an element with the most potential to reduce home-related stress for homeowners.

41%

of Canadians admit that home maintenance is too time-consuming for them.





**Location,
location,
location**

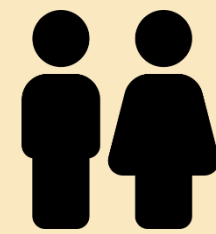


What makes us proud...



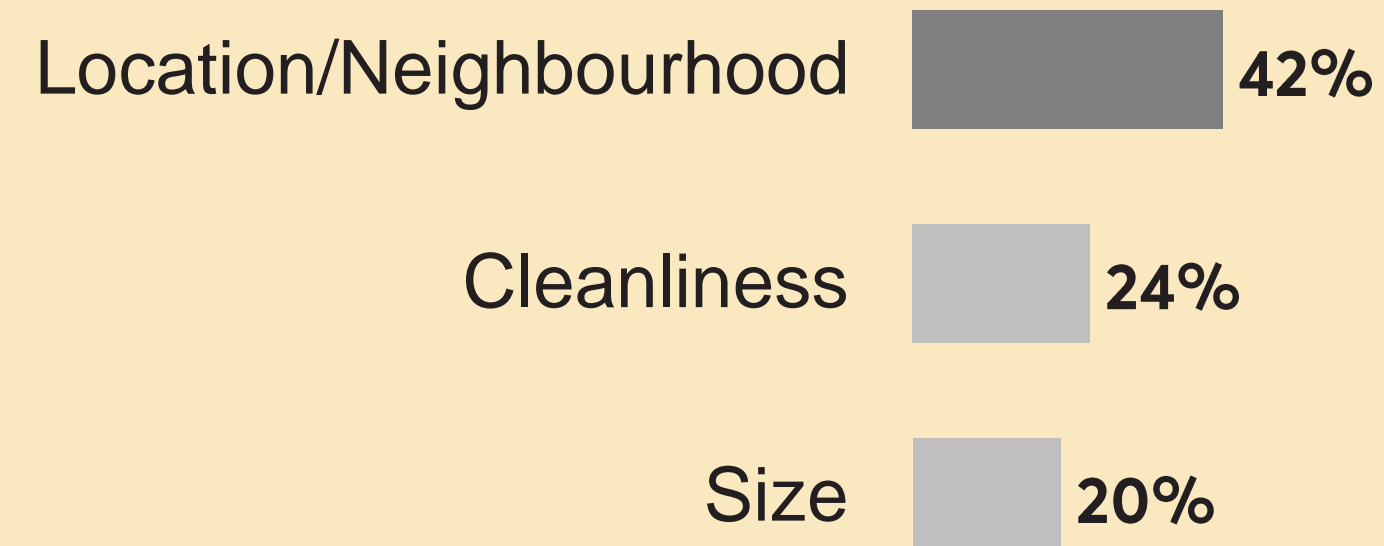
Our neighbourhood

The location/neighbourhood (42%) clearly stands out as the aspect that gives the most pride, ahead of cleanliness (24%) and size of the home (20%). In Montreal, about one in two people (48%) cited their neighbourhood as a source of pride.



Men and women: each to their own

We learned that home cooking, decorating, and customizing are a greater source of pride for women, while men tend to take pride in renovations or maintenance.

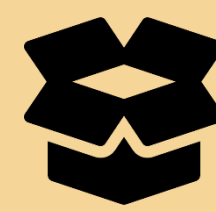


Brightness—vital for Quebecers

One out of four Quebecers mentions brightness (26%) among the aspects that make them proud, compared to only 3% of those living outside Quebec; a very significant difference. Brightness is even more important than cleanliness (23%) and the size of the home (18%) for Quebecers. Regular exposure to daylight appears to be essential, especially to get through the harsh Quebec winters.



And less proud...



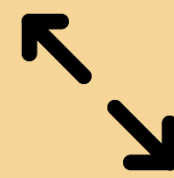
The unfortunate tendency to accumulate things

Too much stuff/clutter (22%) is the most cited aspect that undermines pride. This tendency increases significantly with age.



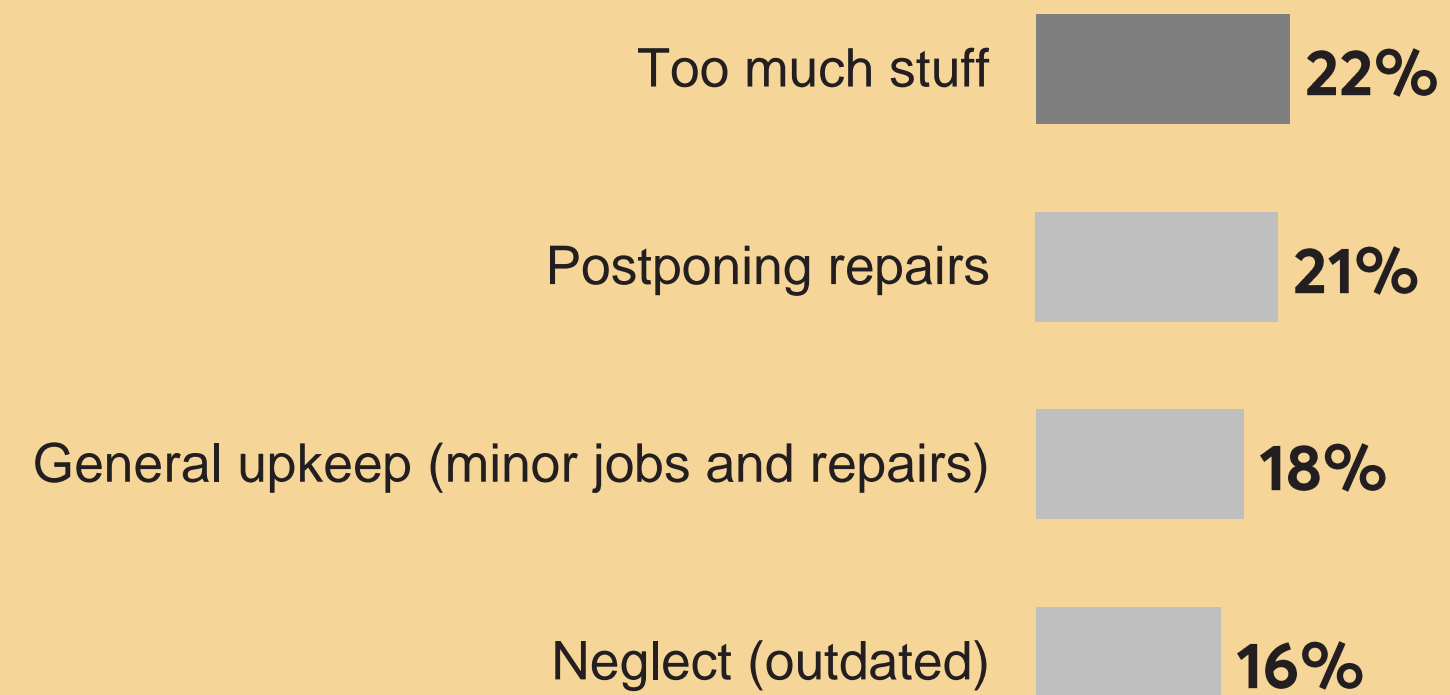
Overdue repairs

The other most frequently mentioned elements are related to maintenance and repairs, especially for homeowners. Respondents mentioned the postponement of repairs, regular maintenance/small jobs, and general neglect.



Lack of space weighs heavily on younger people

For 25-34-year-olds, lack of space has the greatest negative impact on pride (24%).



QA3E. Beyond rooms and physical space, what other aspects of your home are you LEAST proud of?

Mirror, mirror on the wall...

Don't be fooled by appearances.

While it's often said that appearances can't be trusted, almost all Canadians told us that the appearance of their home is important. Nearly one in three said that the appearance of their home is very important to them.

90%

of Canadians consider the appearance of their homes to be important.





Where's the party?

The living room is far ahead of the kitchen (20%) and the dining room (20%) when it comes to having guests over.

My kitchen is off-limits!

Our analysis shows that those with less pride or satisfaction in their home tend to stay in the living room. This is especially true for those who are renting.

49%

For half of Canadians, the living room is the favourite room for entertaining.

QB1. As a general rule, when you entertain at home, the evening takes place mainly...



The "Kitchen Party" in Quebec is very real

Twice as many Quebecers entertain in the dining room (31%) and are also more likely to choose the kitchen (26%) for receiving guests. Conversely, other Canadians have a strong penchant for the living room (56%).



The basement and garage: a male domain

Not surprisingly, the basement (15%) and the garage (7%) are a source of pride for about twice as many men, proportionally.



The bedroom for the younger, the kitchen for the older

When you're younger, the bedroom (34% among 25-34-year-olds) brings the most pride, while the kitchen becomes more important as you get older (44% among 55-74-year-olds).

QA3A/QA3c. Which rooms or physical spaces in your home make you MOST/LEAST proud?



Our habits



We spend a lot of time at home

As seen earlier, home is the place where we feel most comfortable. No wonder we want to spend as much time there as possible. It's been found that most Canadians are very homebound, a phenomenon that was likely accentuated by the pandemic.

Satisfaction and pride in our homes positively influence the amount of time we spend there. Canadians who have a home that suits their needs and lifestyle wouldn't want to be anywhere else!

Women spend more time at home

Women spend more time at home than men, proportionately.

93%

of Canadians spend most of their time at home, outside of work.

And in an ideal world, only

12%

would like to spend less time there.



QC1. I am home...

QC2. In an ideal world, I would spend ... at home?

What we do at home

The need to relax is universal

Our study reveals that relaxation and self-care top the list. We're all human and our home is the perfect place to get away from it all and unwind. This is not lost on men, who tend to take proportionally more time to relax and enjoy themselves.

It's great to relax, but who'll make the meals?

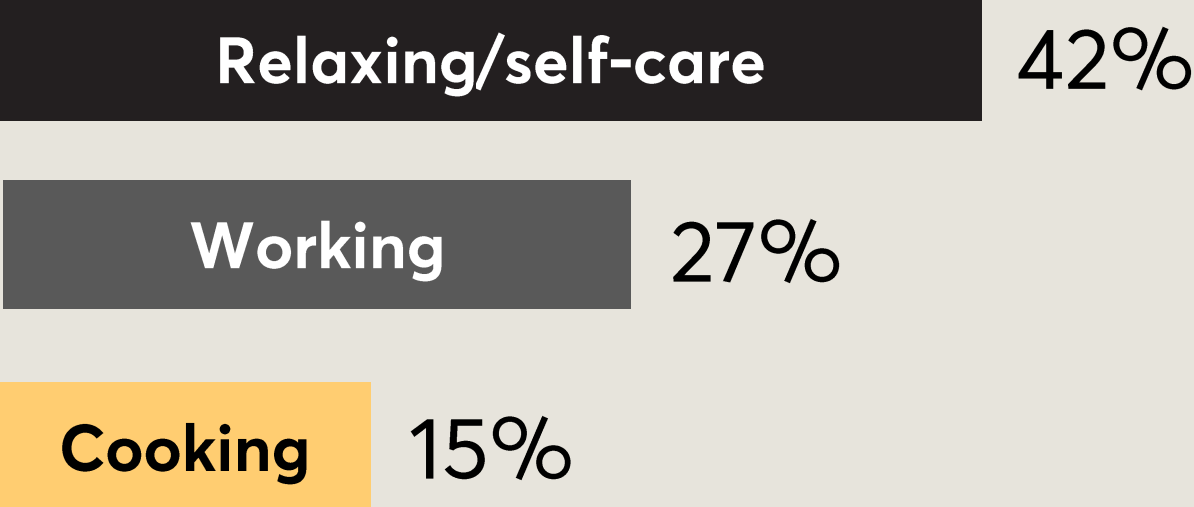
It may be cliché, but according to our study, women still spend significantly more time cooking than men. Furthermore, the amount of time spent cooking increases with age throughout our lives, whether by choice or by necessity.

Post-pandemic surge in remote working

For more than a quarter of survey respondents (27%), working remotely is now the primary activity at home. This is consistent with the latest Statistics Canada data¹ that 32% of Canadian workers do the majority of their work hours at home compared to only 4% in 2016.

We know that Canadians spend a lot of time at home, but what exactly do they do at home?

The activity we spend the most time on at home:



QC3. Rank the activities below in order of the time you spend on them.

¹ Statistics Canada, *Working from home in Canada: What have we learned so far?* 2021

Interactions

A photograph of two women sitting on a balcony at night, laughing joyfully. They are wrapped in a thick, grey, knitted blanket. The woman on the left is wearing a white fuzzy hat, and the woman on the right is wearing a brown knitted hat. The background is filled with warm, glowing Christmas lights, including a large star-shaped light decoration. The scene is set on a balcony with a white railing and a white folding chair visible in the background.



How we feel about visitors

The majority (54%) of people in our survey told us that it's okay to have visitors once in a while, but not too often. Now that you know this, think twice before dropping in on your friends!

The bottom line is that Canadians feel good when they are quiet at home.

Are you one of those people who clean up before guests come over? If so, it's probably because a clean home contributes to a sense of pride. We've found that the more pride Canadians have in their homes, the more they want to entertain.

Only
26%
of Canadians receive
guests on a regular
basis.

Quebecers and youth like to entertain more

The tendency to socialize and entertain on a regular basis is significantly higher among Quebecers (30% vs. 24% outside Quebec) and among 25-34-year-olds (32% vs. 23% among 35-74-year-olds).





And about the neighbours...

We don't choose our neighbours! While some people develop a close bond over time, the majority of Canadians know very little about their neighbours.

Quebecers tend to be more aloof with neighbours

In the Prairie provinces relationships between neighbours seem to be the strongest (55% know each other well), while Quebecers (38% know each other well) are slow to develop these interactions.

Relationships that take time to build

Our study shows that those 55 and older are more likely to help their neighbours, and sometimes even become good friends. The fact that they have lived in the same place for a long time and plan to stay there also encourages cooperation, mutual aid, and friendship between neighbours.

Interesting fact: Residents of the Quebec City area don't see the value in hanging out with neighbours. More than three in four (76%) know very little of their neighbours.

58%

of Canadians don't know their neighbours.

And only

13%

want to have more contact with them.



Aspirations



Is it your “ideal” home?

We asked Canadians if they consider their current home to be their ideal home. Only one in five (21%) rated their current home as a 9 or 10.

Homeownership undeniably seems to be the most important ingredient toward achieving this ideal (7.1 on average versus 5.1 among tenants).

The magical age of 55

As we’ve seen throughout the study, it’s around age 55 that the relationship with our home seems to become more positive. (7.3 for those aged 55-74 versus 6.5 or less for those aged 25-54).

Quebecers (7.3 out of 10) feel closer to having their ideal home, a significant difference from the rest of Canada (6.5 out of 10). The regions (outside the urban centres of Montreal and Quebec City) have the most positive view of their current home (7.5 out of 10).



Canadians give their homes
an average rating of
6.8 out of 10



Current home

Ideal home



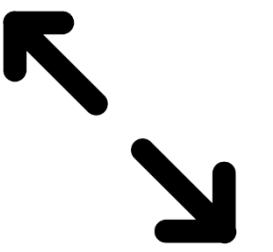


Our need for space changes over time

Our survey showed that our relationship with space changes greatly as we age. Not surprisingly, younger people are looking for more space, while those 55 and older are looking for less living space to limit maintenance and responsibilities.

The need for additional space is most acute in urban areas. One in three Montrealers (34%) feels the need for more space.

For many Canadians, the solution to the space issue appears to be owning a home.



57%

of tenants want to live in a larger space
(26% of homeowners).

Affordability is a priority

It's great to have the home of your dreams, but you still need to be able to afford it. Many Canadians have told us that one of their hopes for the future is simply to pay less for their home. This is especially true outside of Quebec because of the skyrocketing real estate prices in recent years in large urban centres like Toronto and Vancouver, among others.

In Quebec, twice as many Montrealers would like to reduce their housing costs versus those living in regional areas.



Two times more homeowners outside Quebec want to pay less.



Live in the city or the suburbs?

We asked Canadians whether their current living environment (urban, suburban, regional) corresponds to what they want. The vast majority of Canadians we spoke to said they would not change their environment.

Education seems to be the most important factor in determining whether people are more interested in living in one place versus another. The appeal of the city is much stronger for university graduates while living in regional areas is more desirable for those who have not attended university.

We also determined that the appeal of urban life tends to diminish progressively with age in favour of life in regional areas.

About one in five people (23% in Montreal, 21% in Quebec City) living in a large urban centre in Quebec would like to move to a regional area.

29%

of Canadians would like to live in a different environment (more urban or more rural).

2 X

Almost twice as many Canadians with a university degree want to live in the city.



QE3a. Where is your home located?

QE3b. And if you think about your ideal home, would it be in the...?



An ecological house? Yes, but not at any cost

In Canada, 4% of homeowners consider their homes to be "green". Although this type of housing remains marginal for the moment, it's gaining in popularity around the world.

Two out of three Canadians (67%) say they're interested in a green home in the future. However, for the majority of them, their interest is conditional on the financial benefit.

They are more motivated by economic gain than by a real desire to reduce their environmental footprint.

48%

**For one in two
Canadians, interest in a
green home is
conditional on financial
benefit.**

In Quebec, the appeal of green homes is greatest among Montrealers (69%). Elsewhere in Canada, interest varies from province to province, from only 58% in the Prairies to 75% in British Columbia.



Money does not buy happiness, but it certainly helps...

While money is not the key to happiness, it can contribute to it in the eyes of half of the respondents in our study. In British Columbia, as many as two-thirds of respondents (65%) said they would be happier if they lived in a nicer home, compared to only 40% in Quebec.

Our study also found that 80% of aspiring homeowners believe that a nicer home will make them happier. This perception that happiness is just around the corner can certainly put a lot of pressure on them in their search for a first home.

Nearly three in four Canadians (72%) also told us they would like their homes to be more current. Understandably, money is a limiting factor for many.

50%

One in two Canadians say they would be happier living a nicer home.

42%

of Canadians can't afford their housing dreams.



Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:
EQ5a. I can afford my housing ambitions/dreams.
EQ5b. I would be happier if I lived in a nicer place.



A second home: Dream come true?

We found that the dream of acquiring a second property is primarily a matter for those aged 25-34 (48%). It gradually fades as one gets older (only 13% among 55-74-year-olds).

30%

of Canadians plan to buy a 2nd home in the future.

The idea of a second home is much more popular in Montreal (30%) than in Quebec City (17%). The need to get away from the chaos and be closer to nature seems to be more prevalent among city dwellers.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:
EQ5d. I plan to buy a 2nd property in the future.



And for fun...



What type of homeowner are you?

Only fools don't change their minds... 60% of Canadians report having a dual personality as homeowners. Some days they're motivated to get things done, others they just want to crash and not worry about tomorrow or everything that needs to be done around the house.

**Men: Hardworking or lazy?
Men more often describe themselves as hardworking but are also statistically more likely to admit to being lazy around the house.**



QF1. Which type of homeowner is most like you?

About the holidays...

**A party is a permitted or even ordered excess.
– Sigmund Freud**

As many as one in two people (50%) join the holiday madness somewhat reluctantly, getting caught up in excessive buying and decorating because of social pressure.

More women admit to an extreme love of holidays, while many more men simply want nothing to do with them, some going so far as to turn off all their lights on Halloween to make sure they aren't disturbed.

QF2. Which type of homeowner is most like you when it comes to holidays and celebrations during the year?





Maintenance—burden or...

Pastime or pass the buck...

While those aged 55 and over see maintenance more as a pastime (45%), those aged 25-34 say they lack the skills to get it done, so they stick to raking a few leaves in the fall (49%).

The art of procrastination

Fun fact: Montrealers are the champions of procrastination when it comes to maintenance. They are almost twice as likely as people living in regional areas to repeatedly put off doing these tasks.

QF4. How would you describe your relationship with home maintenance?

Who to call for your next move?

Student moving chaos: A myth?

Nope. It's true! Young people between the ages of 25 and 34 freely admit to being last minute when it comes to moving, just the opposite of their elders who plan everything carefully.

Women's quiet strength

A little advice for your next move: Don't just call in the guys to help. Data from our study shows that women are much more organized when it comes to moving. They'll save you precious time just by packing and unpacking.

QF5. Which statement best describes you in the context of moving?



A study conducted by

