

Housing preferences of vital seniors

Implications for smaller social rental housing

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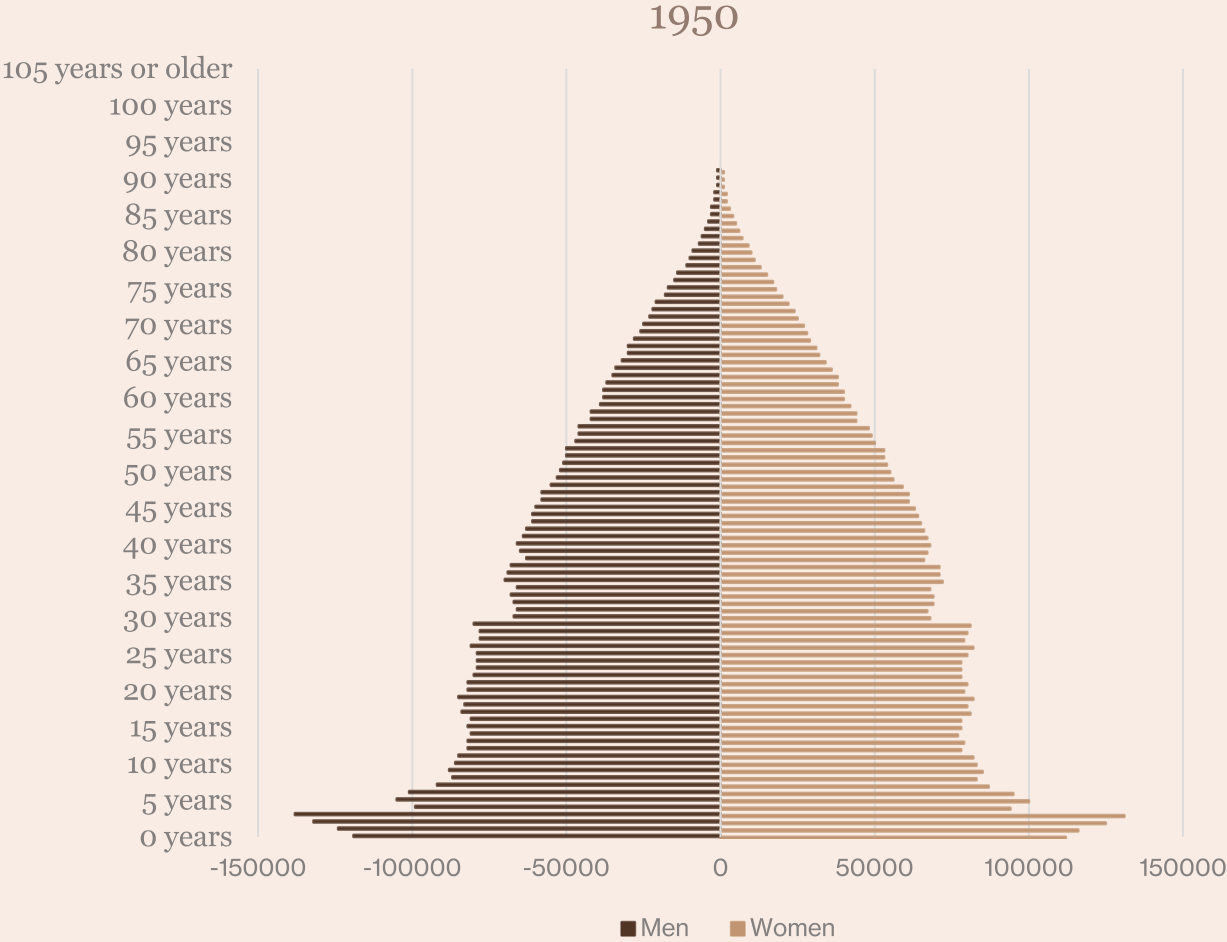
Housing market under pressure

- Shortage of housing ⁽¹⁾
- Affordability challenges ⁽¹⁾
- Limited buildable land ⁽²⁾

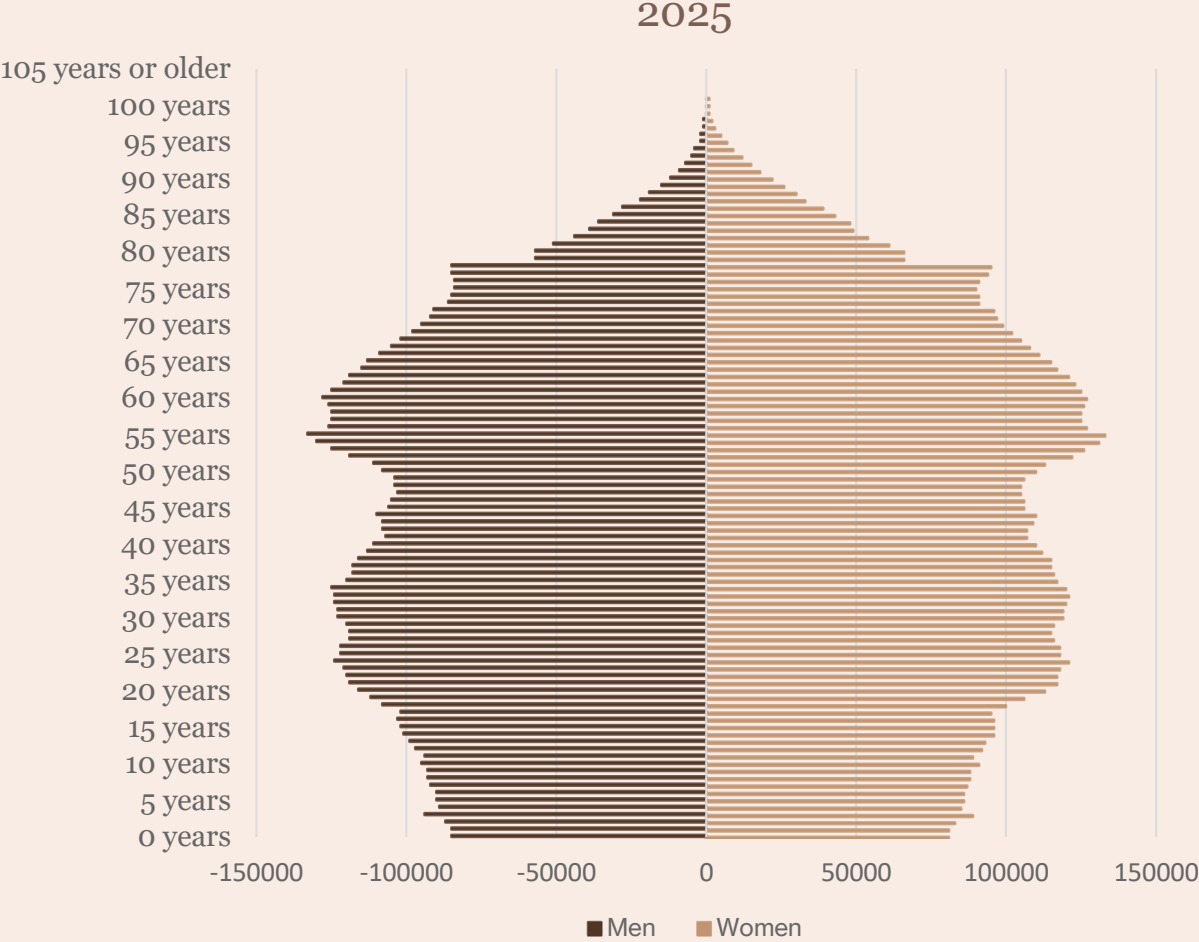
⁽¹⁾ ABF (2025)

⁽²⁾ S. Groot & De Groot (2024)

Double ageing



Age distribution of the Netherlands, 1950
Source: CBS



Age distribution of the Netherlands, 2025
Source: CBS

70.6%

of Dutch 65+ households live in under-occupied housing ⁽³⁾

Seniors are not inclined to move...

- Financial barriers ⁽⁴⁾
- Lack of suitable housing ⁽⁵⁾
 - Reduction in government funding for nursing homes ⁽⁶⁾
 - Forced to 'age in place'

⁽⁴⁾ APG (2024)

⁽⁵⁾ Boelhouwer & Van der Heijden (2022)

⁽⁶⁾ Morri (2024)

Pressure on care networks



Lack of housing mobility



Shortage of suitable housing

Solution

Smaller collective housing for seniors

Solution

Smaller housing

- Lower total rent and purchase price ⁽⁷⁾
 - Lower energy consumption ⁽⁸⁾
- More units on the same plot ⁽⁹⁾
- Increase in single-person households ⁽¹⁰⁾
 - 2050: 44% aged 65 and over ⁽¹¹⁾

⁽⁷⁾ Evans et al. (2015)

⁽⁸⁾ Clune et al. (2012); Souaid (2024)

⁽⁹⁾ Renn & Armlovich (2016)

⁽¹⁰⁾ CBS (2025)

⁽¹¹⁾ Staatscommissie Demografische
Ontwikkelingen 2050 (2024)

Solution

Collective housing forms

- Promotes independent living ⁽¹²⁾
- Offers a level of care when needed ⁽¹²⁾
- Creates a sense of community ⁽¹²⁾
 - Residents support and look out for one another

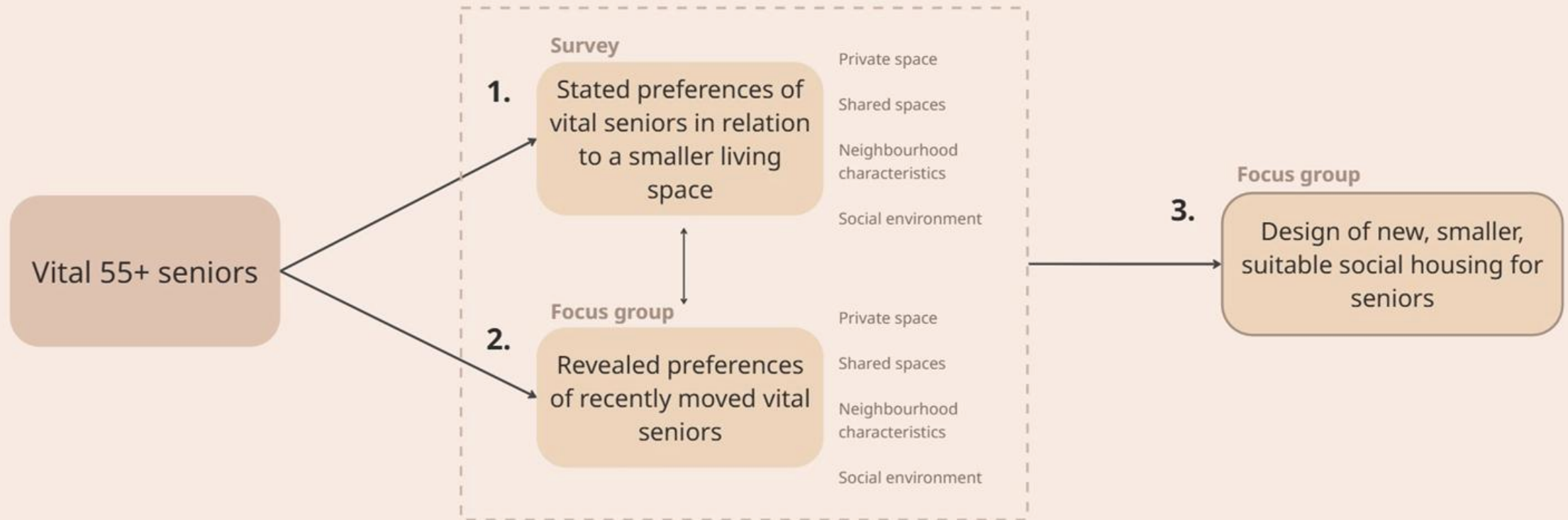
⁽¹²⁾ Rusinovic et al. (2019); Stoisser et al. (2025)

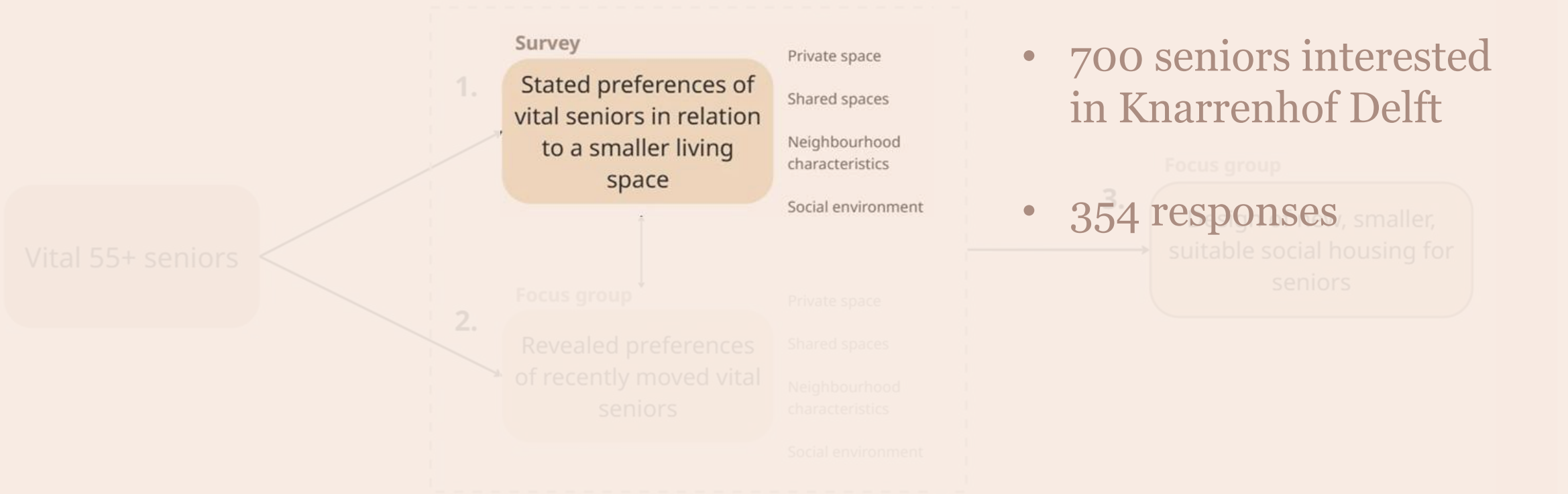
How can a better understanding of the preferences of vital seniors regarding private living space, shared spaces, neighbourhood characteristics, and the social environment improve the attractiveness of smaller social housing units in the Netherlands?

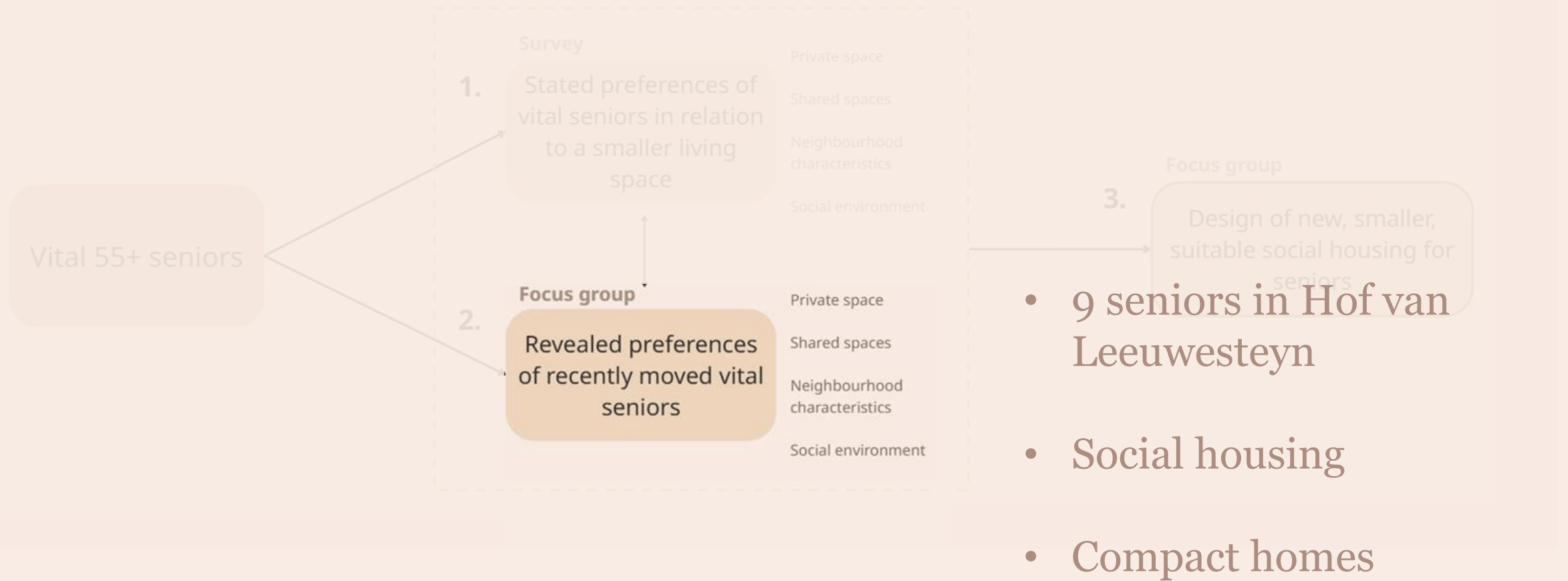
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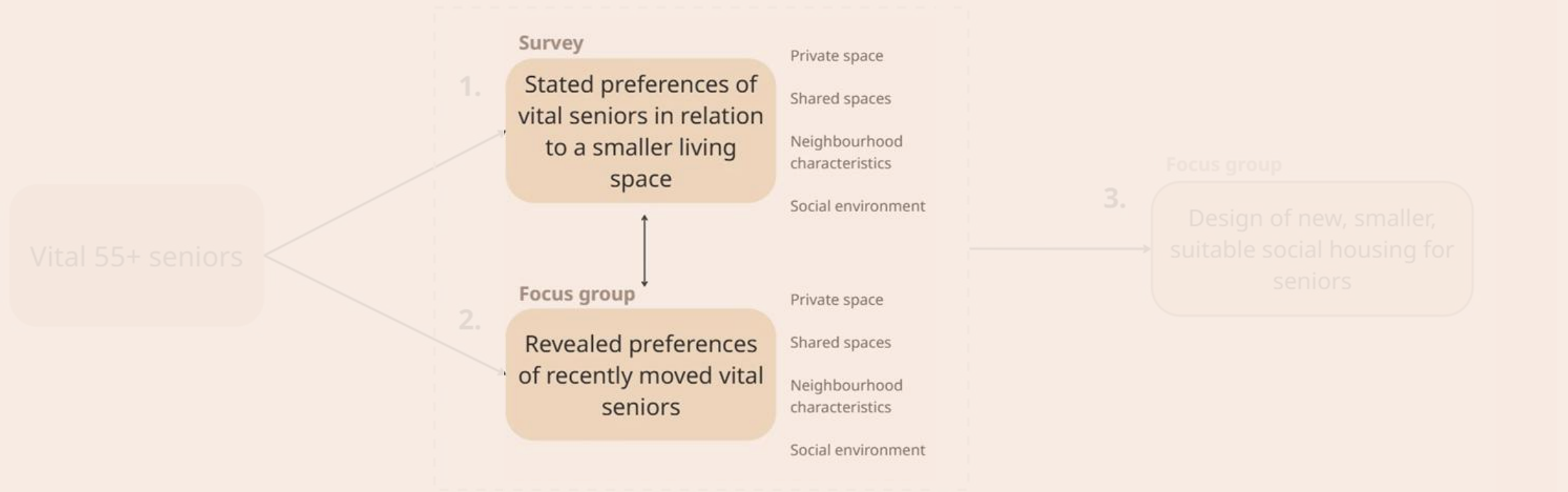
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- 7 experts
- In...
- Relocation of seniors
- Investment
- Housing development

Results

Private living space

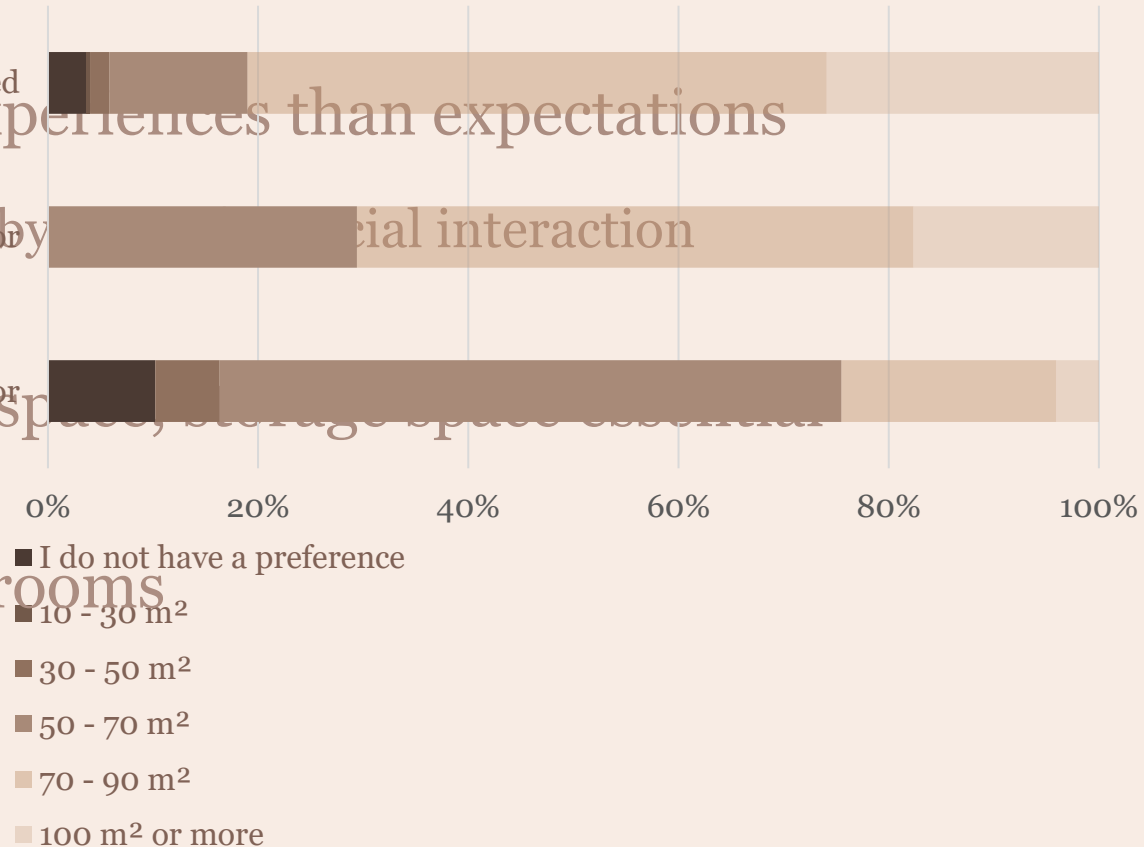
- Willingness to rightsize

- More positive experiences than expectations

- Shared hobby
 - Social interaction

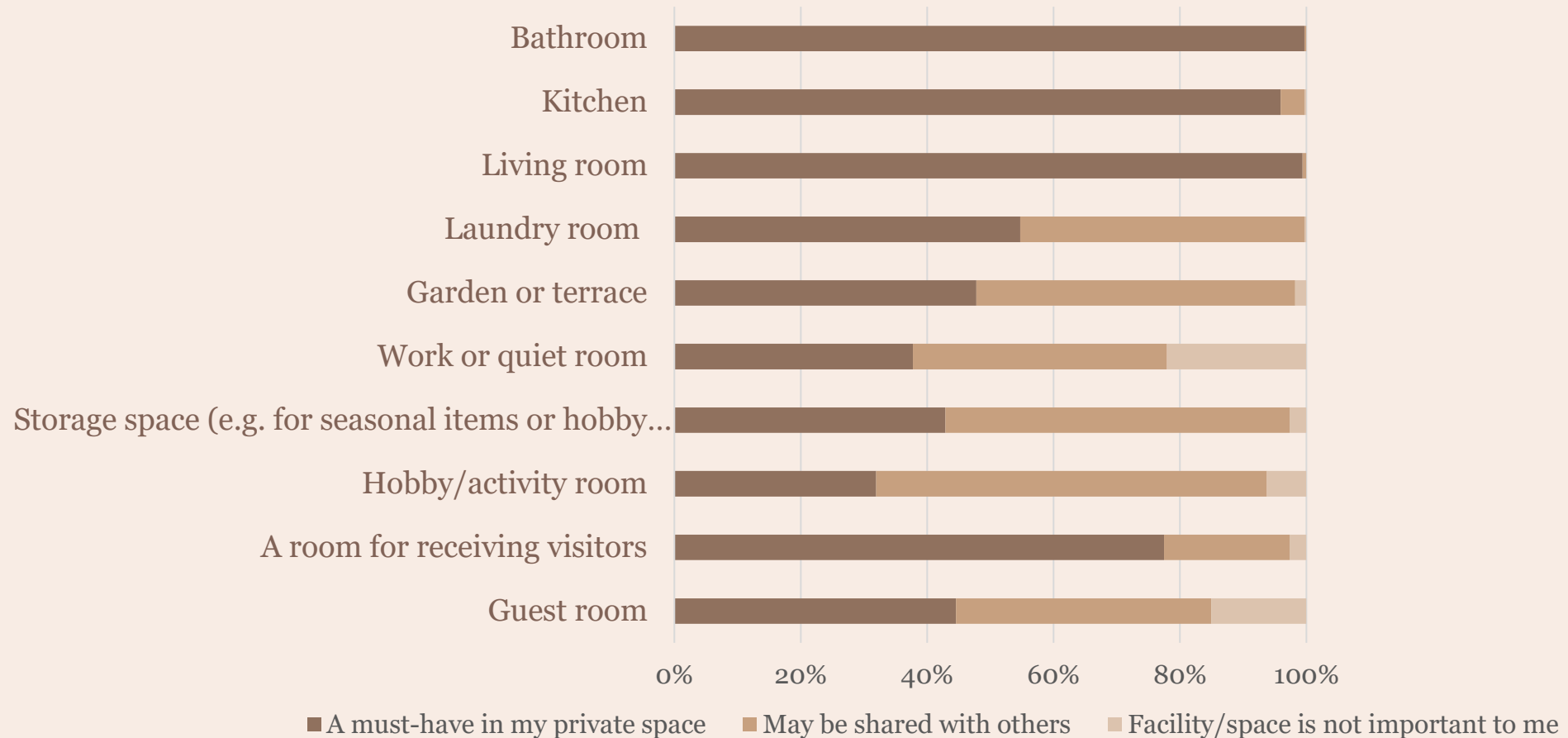
- Private outdoor space, storage space essential

- At least two bedrooms



Shared spaces

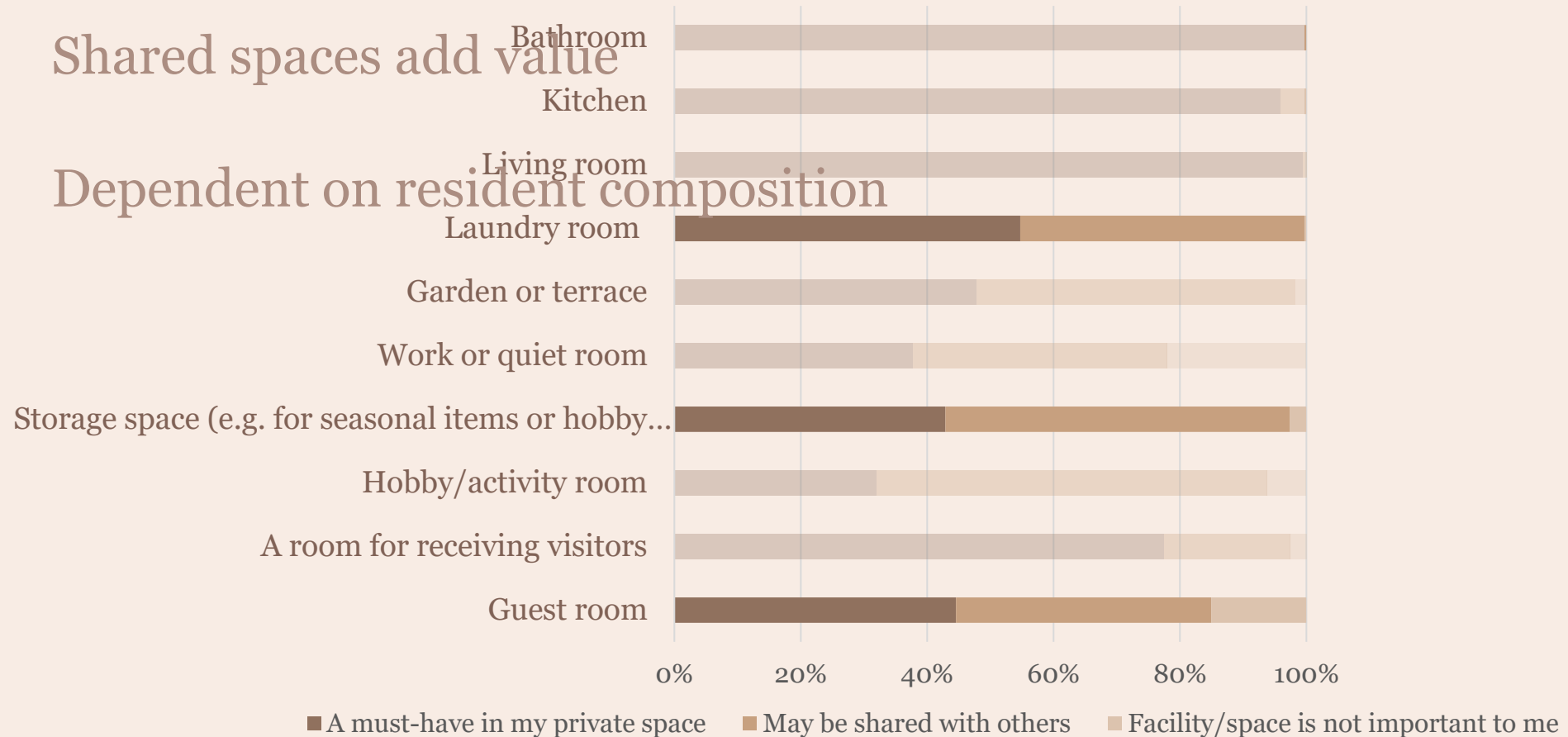
- Opportunity: Shared laundry, storage, guest rooms



Shared spaces

- Opportunity: Shared laundry, storage, guest rooms

- Shared spaces add value
- Dependent on resident composition



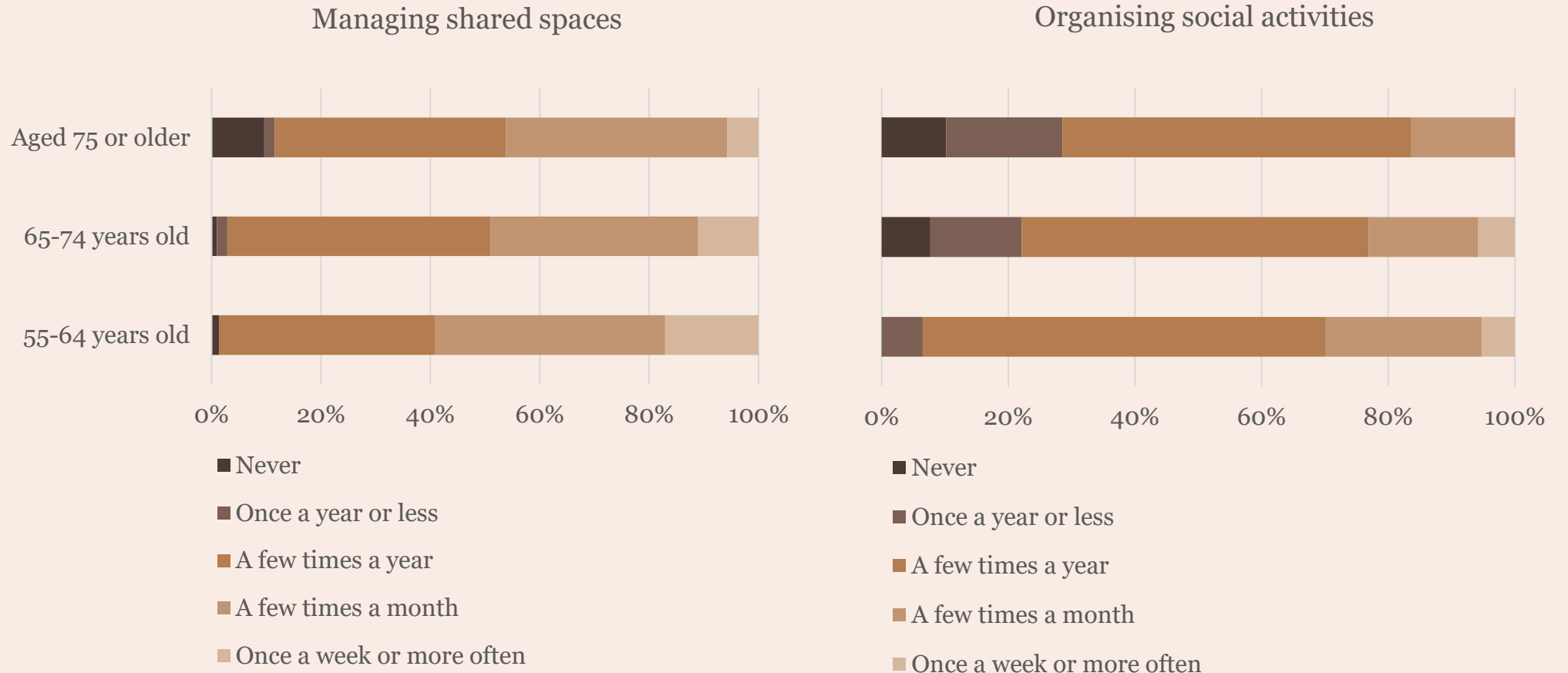
Neighbourhood

- Finished neighbourhood preferred
- Daily amenities within walking distance



Social environment

- Community manager is essential

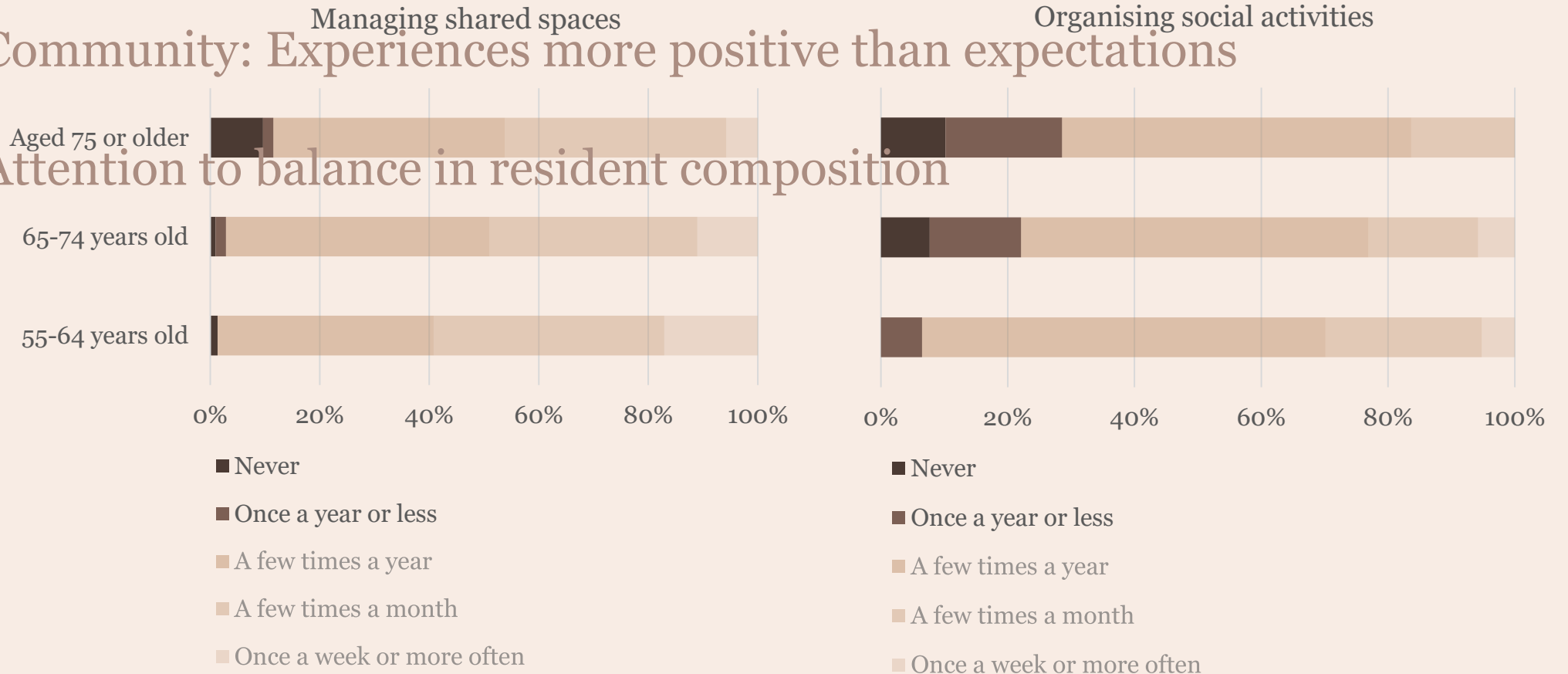


Social environment

- Community manager is essential

- Community: Experiences more positive than expectations

- Attention to balance in resident composition



Regulations

- Conflicting
 - Incentive Programme for Common Areas in Senior Housing
(*Stimuleringsregeling ontmoetingsruimten in ouderenhuisvesting (SOO)*)
 - Service Costs Modernisation Act
(*Wet modernisering servicekosten*)

Limitations

- Geographical limitation
- Selection bias

*Rightsizing is not about asking seniors to accept less,
but about offering them something better*

Thank you!

References

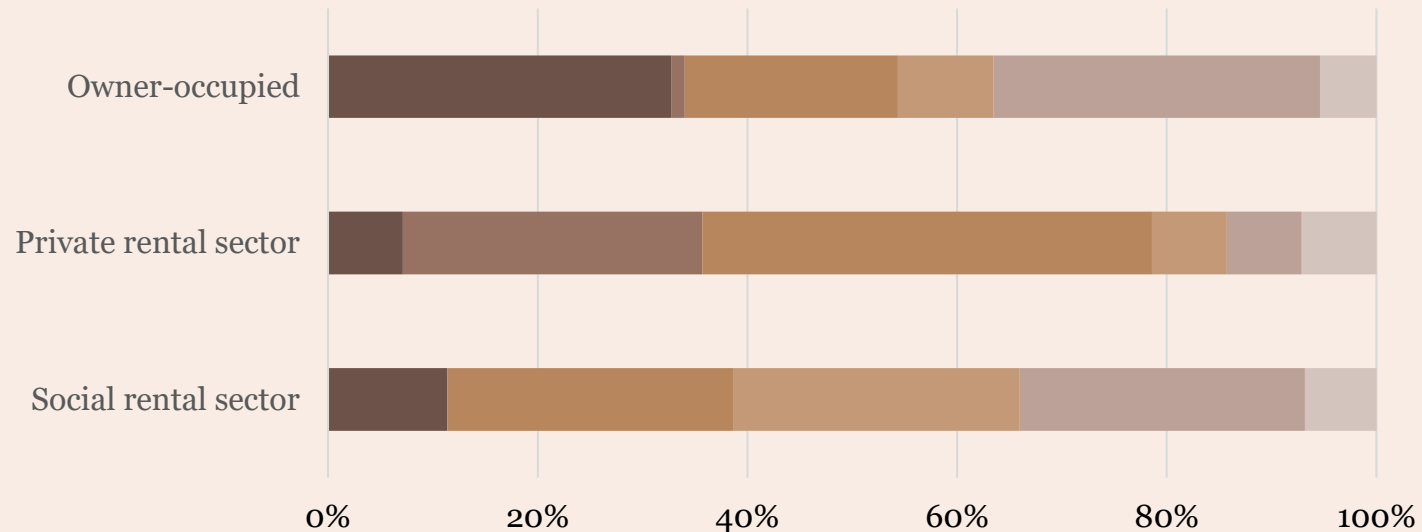
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Data collection and analysis

	Methods	Data collection	Data analysis
<p>SQ1: What stated preferences do vital seniors interested in living in a new senior housing project have regarding the characteristics of their private living space, shared spaces, neighbourhood and social environment when the private living space is smaller?</p>	Survey	Primary data; questionnaire with vital seniors aged 55 and over who are interested in living in a new senior housing project by Stichting Knarrenhof®.	<p>Closed-ended questions; descriptive analysis</p> <p>Open-ended questions; thematic analysis through ATLAS.ti coding</p>
<p>SQ2: What revealed preferences do vital seniors who have moved to a recently developed senior housing project have regarding the characteristics of their private living space, shared spaces, neighbourhood, and social environment?</p>	Focus group	Primary data; focus group with vital seniors who already live in a recently developed senior housing project in the social rental sector.	<p>Thematic analysis</p> <p>Comparative analysis</p>
<p>SQ3: To what extent do the stated and revealed preferences of vital seniors align with what is feasible in the development of new, smaller, collective senior housing in the social rental sector?</p>	Focus group	Primary data; Focus group with experts on housing development in the social rental sector (e.g. developers, housing associations, municipality, investors).	<p>Thematic analysis</p> <p>Interpretative synthesis</p>

Reasons for willingness to move

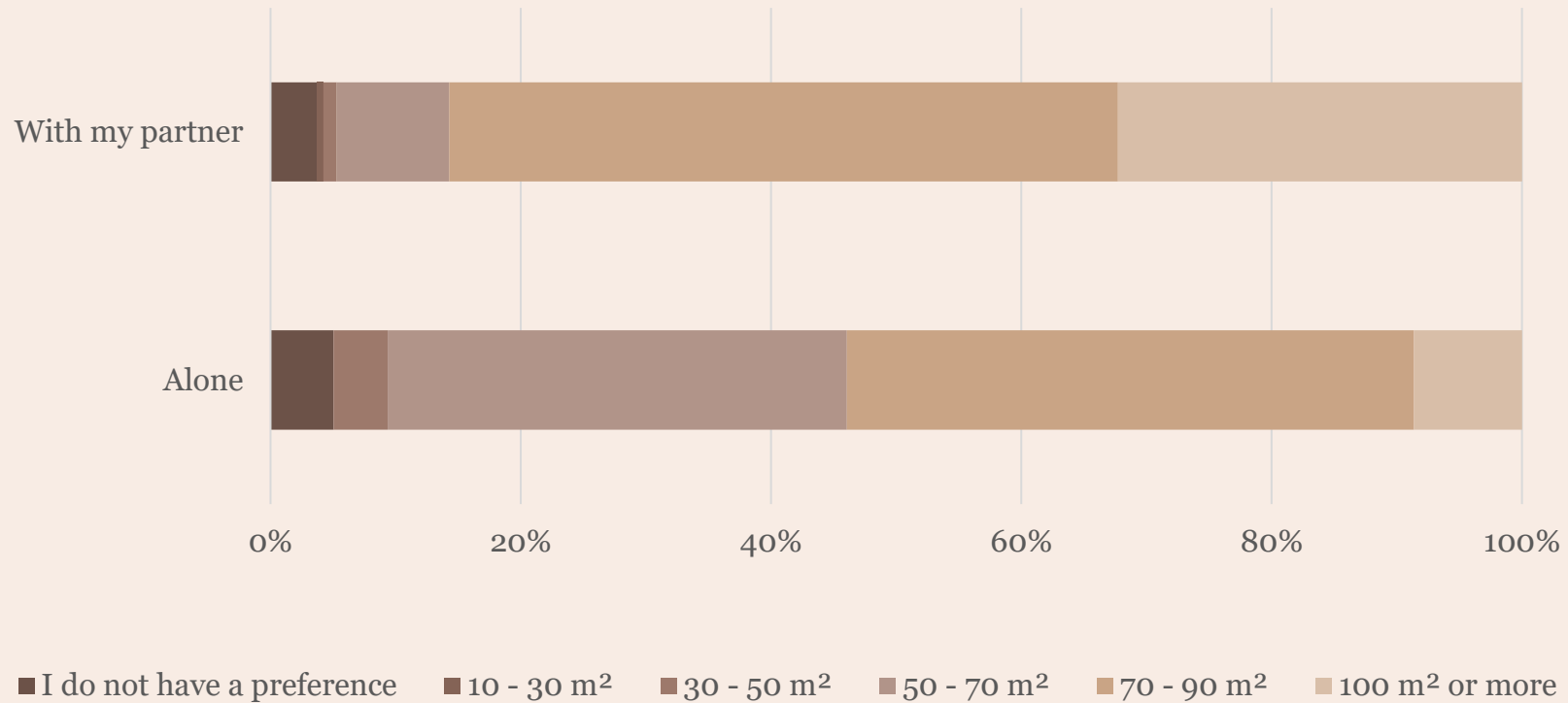
Across sector



- I currently live too big and would like to live smaller
- I would like to reduce my housing costs
- I would like to have more social contact around me
- I would like to live in a neighbourhood that better suits my preferences
- I would like to live in a stair-free home
- I would like to have lower energy costs / a more sustainable home.

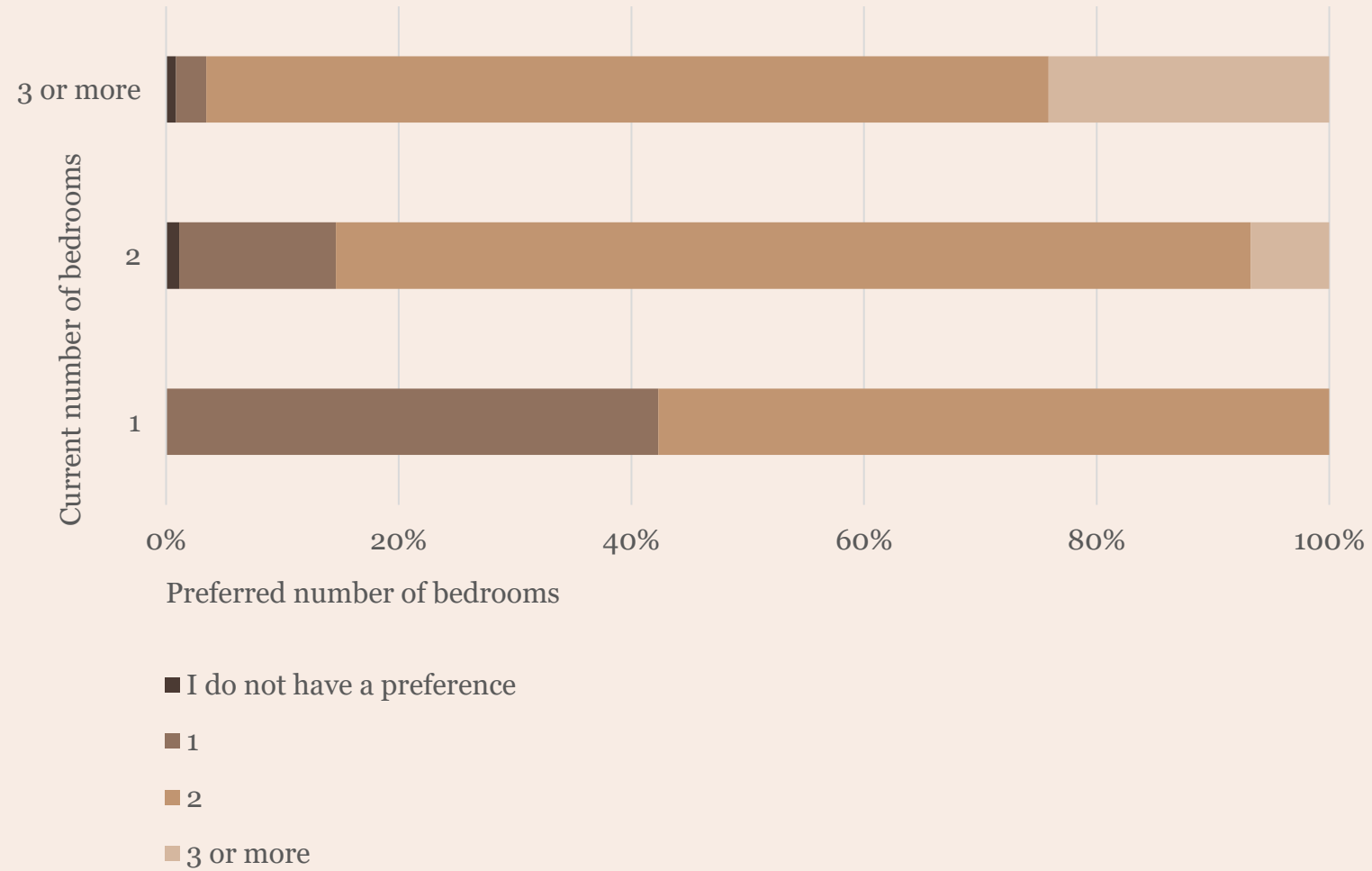
Private living space

Expected household composition – Preferred size of the home



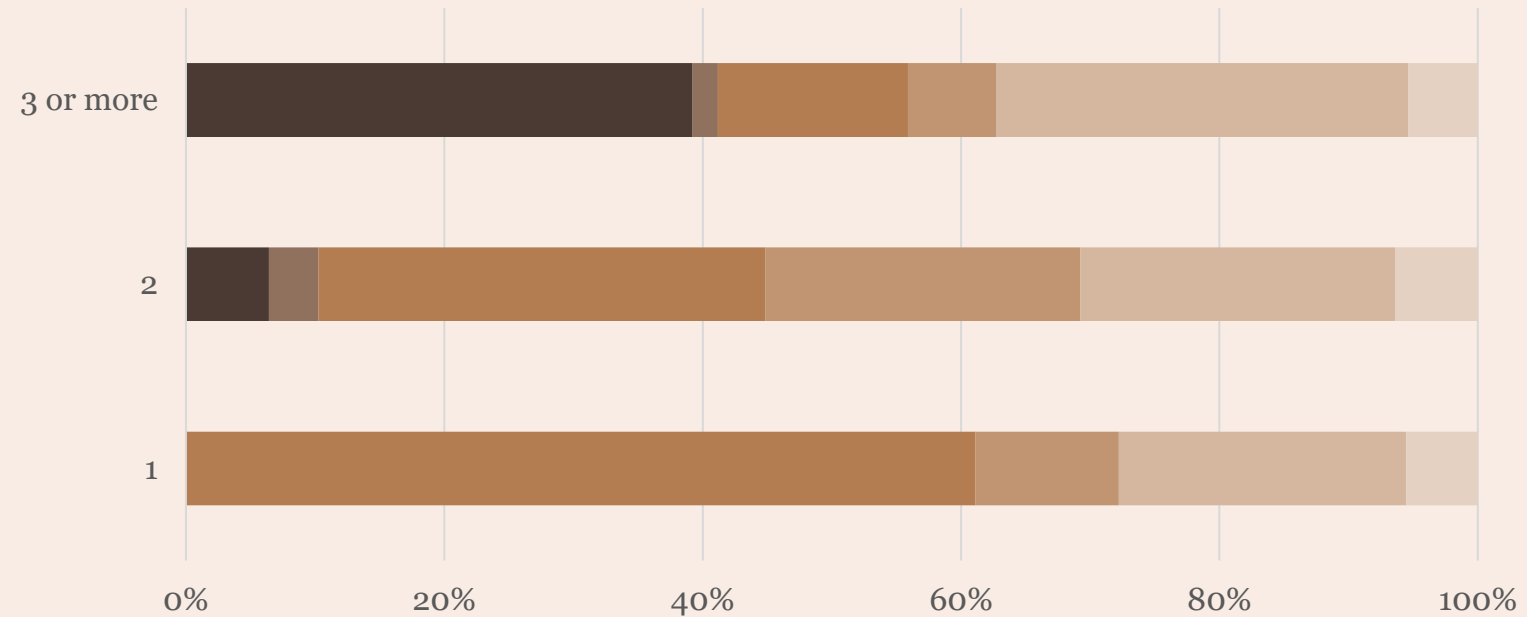
Private living space

Current number of bedrooms – Preferred number of bedrooms



Private living space

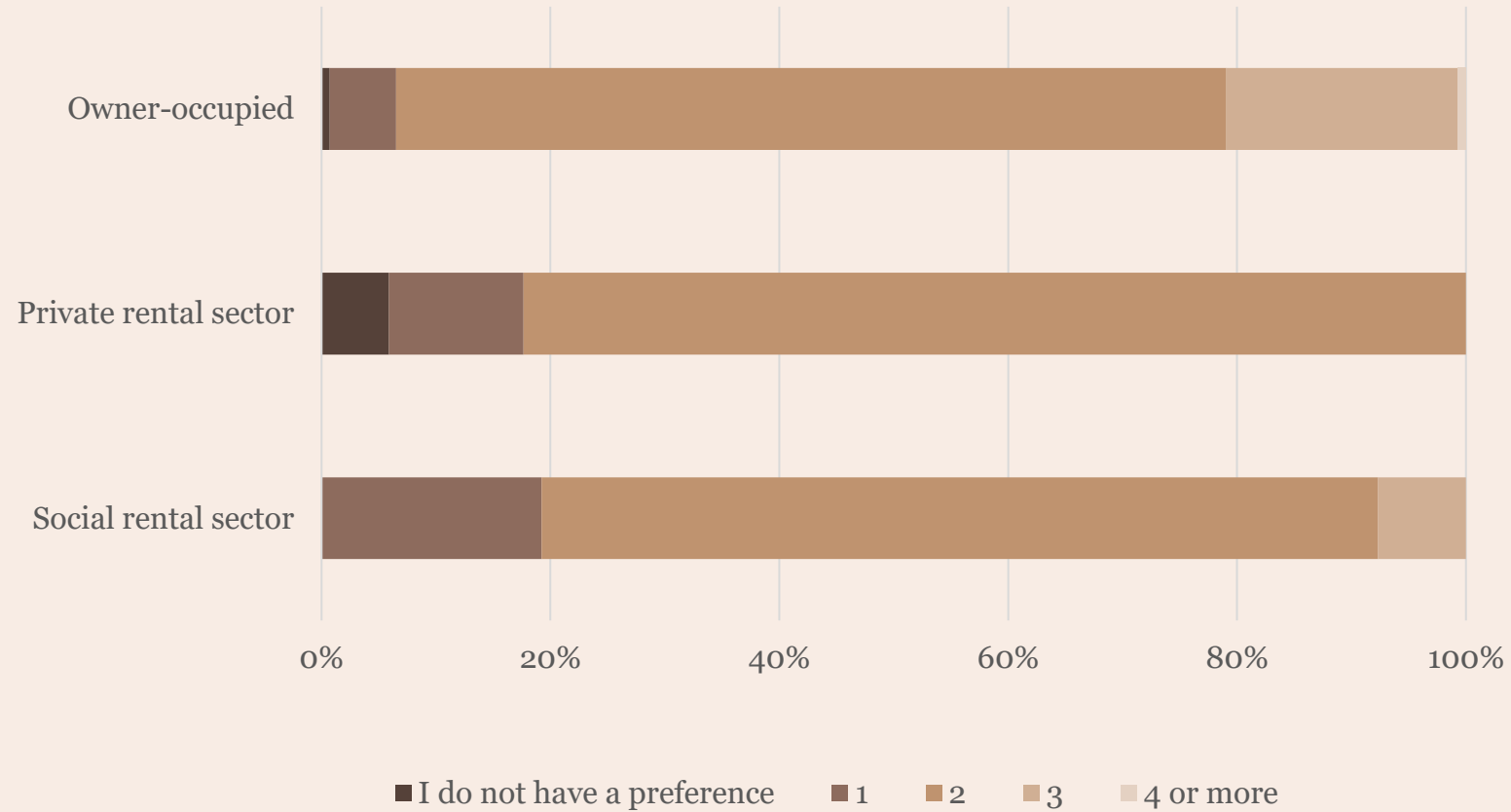
Current number of bedrooms – Reasons to move



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Private living space

Sector– Preferred number of bedrooms



Private living space

Concerns smaller dwelling

