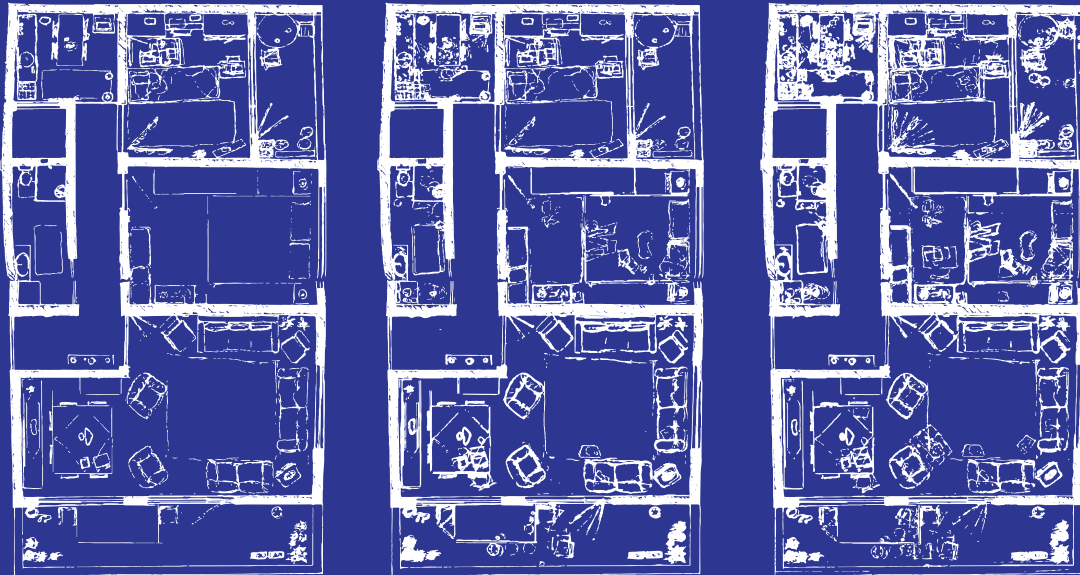


The Spatial Transformation of Home-Based Workspaces After the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Focus on Daily Breaks and Boundaries



Berrak Oğrak
2024

First and foremost, I would like to express how fortunate I feel to have had Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sevince Bayrak and Prof. Dr. Arda İnceođlu as my advisors during my master's thesis process. Throughout this experimental and challenging journey, which began amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic, I am especially grateful to Sevince Bayrak for her unwavering confidence in me and my research. I am incredibly grateful for my family, who have been my greatest supporters throughout my education. I am especially thankful for my mother and father, whose presence and encouragement have been a constant source of strength. I owe heartfelt thanks to my dear friend Hanse Yalçinkaya, with whom I promised to alleviate each other's stress during this period. She made this challenging journey enjoyable, and I am deeply appreciative of her companionship. I would also like to thank the invaluable participants in my research, who trusted me and welcomed me into their homes, contributing significantly to my academic journey. Finally, I extend my sincere gratitude to all my loved ones who never lost faith in me, and especially to myself, for staying resilient. Thank you for being a part of this journey.

Abstract

Historically, workspaces have been associated with public spaces, enabling collective relationships and professional interactions, while the home remained a private domain. The Industrial Revolution further established clear boundaries between work and home through the development of formal office environments. However, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted this division, transforming homes into temporary workspaces. Inspired by *Home and Work: Negotiating Boundaries Through Everyday Life*, this thesis examines how the integration of workspaces into the home has blurred spatial boundaries, altering individuals' perceptions and definitions of their environments. This study explores the coexistence and separation of professional and personal spaces within the home by analyzing daily activities such as meals, phone calls, and relaxation. It focuses on how five individuals working from home have adapted their living spaces to fulfill both work and personal needs. Through architectural analysis and spatial diagrams, key changes in private and shared areas are highlighted, revealing how architecture shapes the dual role of the home as both a living and working space. As homes become increasingly multifunctional, traditional concepts of space are continuously redefined. The findings provide insights into the design of modern living spaces that respond to the evolving demands of contemporary work environments, particularly in the post-pandemic era.

Key Words: Workspaces, Work from Home, Home, Boundaries, Daily Breaks and Routines

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Özet

Tarihi olarak, çalışma alanları kamusal mekanlarla ilişkilendirilmiş ve kolektif ilişkiler ile profesyonel etkileşimleri mümkün kılarken, ev özel bir alan olarak kalmıştır. Sanayi Devrimi, resmi ofis ortamlarının gelişimiyle birlikte iş ve ev arasındaki sınırları net bir şekilde oluşturmuştur. Ancak, COVID-19 pandemisi bu ayrımı bozmuş ve evleri geçici çalışma alanlarına dönüştürmüştür. Home and Work: Negotiating Boundaries Through Everyday Life adlı kitaptan ilham alarak, bu tez evdeki çalışma alanlarının entegrasyonunun mekânsal sınırları nasıl bulanıklaştırdığını ve bireylerin ev ve çalışma alanlarını nasıl algıladıklarını incelemektedir. Bu çalışma, yemek, telefon görüşmeleri ve dinlenme gibi günlük etkinlikler aracılığıyla evdeki profesyonel ve kişisel alanların nasıl bir arada var olduğunu ya da ayrıldığını keşfetmektedir. Evden çalışan katılımcıların, hem iş hem de kişisel ihtiyaçlarını karşılamak için yaşam alanlarını nasıl uyarladıkları üzerine yoğunlaşmaktadır. Mimari analizler ve mekânsal diyagramlar kullanılarak, özel ve ortak alanlarda meydana gelen önemli değişiklikler vurgulanmakta ve mimarının evin hem yaşam hem de çalışma alanı olarak ikili rolü üzerindeki etkisi gösterilmektedir. Evler giderek daha çok işlevsel hale geldikçe, geleneksel mekân kavramları sürekli olarak yeniden tanımlanmaktadır. Bulgular, modern yaşam alanlarının, özellikle post-pandemi döneminde, çağdaş iş ortamlarının değişen taleplerine nasıl uyum sağladığına dair önemli içgörüler sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çalışma Alanı, Evden Çalışma, Ev, Sınırlar, Gündelik Mola ve Rutinler

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Introduction

The concept of a "workspace," as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), refers to "a space in which work is done."¹ This term originally emerged in the early 20th century to describe specific physical locations, such as offices or workshops, designed for professional work activities.² Traditionally, a workspace was defined as a distinct, often specialized area designated for professional activities, separate from personal life. For example, during the Industrial Revolution, factories and offices were rigidly structured to maintain a clear division between work and home. This separation was both physical and psychological, ensuring that work-related activities and personal life remained in distinct spheres. However, the concept of the workspace has evolved significantly, particularly with the rise of digital technologies and the growing trend of remote work. This evolution was notably accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which expanded the understanding of workspaces to encompass a broader range of environments, both conceptually and architecturally.

Remote work, often referred to as telecommuting or working from home, gained unprecedented significance during the COVID-19 pandemic as organizations worldwide were forced to adapt to lockdowns and social distancing measures.³ Before this period, working from home was primarily associated with certain professions or roles that offered flexibility, such as freelancing or consultancy. Historically, certain professions, such as artisans and scholars, often worked from home, creating small workshops or studies within their domestic environments. Yet, it wasn't until the late 20th century, with the rise of digital technology, that home-based work began to gain widespread feasibility. However, the pandemic transformed remote work from an option into a mainstream necessity, as millions of employees shifted from traditional office environments to home-based workspaces almost overnight.⁴ This rapid transition significantly altered how workspaces and homes were perceived and utilized. Homes, which were traditionally regarded as private spaces distinct from professional life, began to serve dual purposes as both living spaces and work environments. This shift required

1. Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "workspace," accessed September 8, 2024. <https://www.oed.com>.

2. M. A. McLaren, "Spaces of Work: Revisiting the Place of Work in the Digital Age," *Journal of Workplace Learning* 29, no. 3 (2017): 187–202.

3. John Goldberg, *The New Workspace Paradigm: Adapting to a Post-Pandemic World* (New York: Business Insights Publishing, 2022).

4. Nicholas Bloom, "Remote Work and Its Impact on the Future of Office Spaces," *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 36, no. 2 (2023): 143–159.

5. Christena E. Nippert-Eng, *Home and Work: Negotiating Boundaries Through Everyday Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 35-40.

many individuals to reconsider how they used their homes, adapting their living spaces to accommodate work needs. For example, dining tables, spare rooms, and even bedrooms were converted into makeshift offices, effectively blurring the boundaries between personal and professional life.

Historically, the boundary between work and personal life was clearly defined, with early office typologies such as the Segmented and Industrial models emphasizing rigid, specialized spaces that maintained a clear division between these two aspects of life. Structures like the Uffizi Gallery in Florence and the Larkin Administration Building by Frank Lloyd Wright are important examples, where work and private life were kept distinct through spatial organization and the daily routines enforced within these environments. However, as time progressed, these boundaries began to blur with the advent of Adhocratic and Liberated typologies in the 1960s and beyond. These new office designs, like Bürolandschaft in Germany, introduced more flexible and collaborative workspaces, where open-plan designs and modular furniture allowed for greater interaction and adaptability. This shift marked a significant change in architectural planning, where the once-clear separation of work and private life began to erode as spaces became more fluid and responsive to organizational needs. While this led to more integrated work environments, it also challenged the previously distinct boundaries between professional and personal spaces.

In her seminal work "Home and Work: Negotiating Boundaries Through Everyday Life," Christena Nippert-Eng explores the intricate ways in which individuals draw boundaries between their work and home lives. According to Nippert-Eng, these boundaries are not only physical but also cognitive and social constructs that are constantly negotiated and redefined based on daily routines and activities.⁵ She argues that the way we manage these boundaries is crucial for maintaining a sense of order and balance in our lives. In the 21st century, the integration of technology and the rise of coworking spaces like WeWork further dissolved the distinction between work and life. These Liberated spaces support a mobile, flexible work culture, transforming the office from a physical space into a more abstract concept. The COVID-19 pandemic intensified this trend, leading to the realization that work could be performed from any location, blurring the traditional boundaries between personal and professional life. Consequently, the home, which was once strictly a private space, has increasingly become integrated into work life as a new kind of workspace.

Nippert-Eng's analysis of boundary management highlights the flexibility with which people manage their work-life boundaries, often adjusting them to fit their immediate needs and contexts.⁶ This fluidity has significant implications for how homes are used as workspaces, especially in the context of remote work. The evolution of these office typologies has had significant implications for architectural design, particularly in managing the boundaries between work and personal life. In the Segmented and Industrial typologies, these boundaries were clearly defined, ensuring that these two aspects of life remained separate. However, as the shift toward Adhocratic and Liberated typologies gained momentum, these boundaries became more permeable. The widespread adoption of remote work during the pandemic further transformed workspaces from physical locations into more abstract concepts, effectively merging work and personal life into a single, continuous experience.

As the pandemic began to recede, a shift occurred, with many organizations encouraging a return to traditional office environments. This decline in remote work rates can be attributed to several factors, including employers' desire to restore in-person collaboration, reinforce corporate culture, and address concerns about the long-term impact of remote work on productivity and employee well-being. However, while the prevalence of remote work has decreased, the experience of being forced into remote work during the pandemic has solidified it as a viable work model for many employees and employers. This preference for home-based work has prompted a renewed examination of the spatial and conceptual boundaries of workspaces within the home environment.

My decision to begin my Master's education and thesis research during the pandemic was deeply influenced by this global shift. Like many others, I found myself confined to my home, sharing the space with my family—my father, mother, and brother. We were all using the same home, often the same rooms, for different purposes, effectively transforming our household into four distinct workspaces. This extraordinary situation provided me with firsthand experience of how the boundaries within domestic spaces began to blur between common and private areas.

The integration of workspace into the home led to profound shifts in the spatial and temporal boundaries that traditionally structured daily life. Our home, like many others, had to be reconfigured to accommodate both professional and personal roles, fundamentally altering how each of us

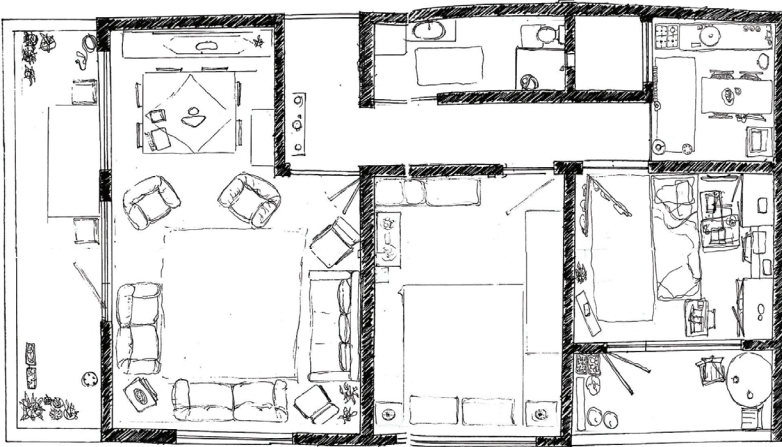
perceived and experienced the environment. Within this context, I undertook a detailed observation of our daily routines, focusing on how spatial and temporal boundaries were created, dissolved, and reconstituted through seemingly simple, yet ritualized activities. These routines included meals, brief moments of solitude, and short breaks, each serving as a temporary boundary that allowed us to mentally and spatially separate from our work.

To illustrate these shifts, I developed architectural plans that depict the functional use of space at various times of the day: 8:00–11:00 AM, 12:00–3:00 PM, and 5:00–8:00 PM [see Figures 1]. These plans show how different areas within the home transformed based on the individual needs of each family member, underscoring the dynamic and fluid use of space in a domestic setting repurposed for professional activity. For example, the kitchen was used not only for eating but also as a temporary office, with each person occupying it at different times, reshaping it to serve multiple functions throughout the day.

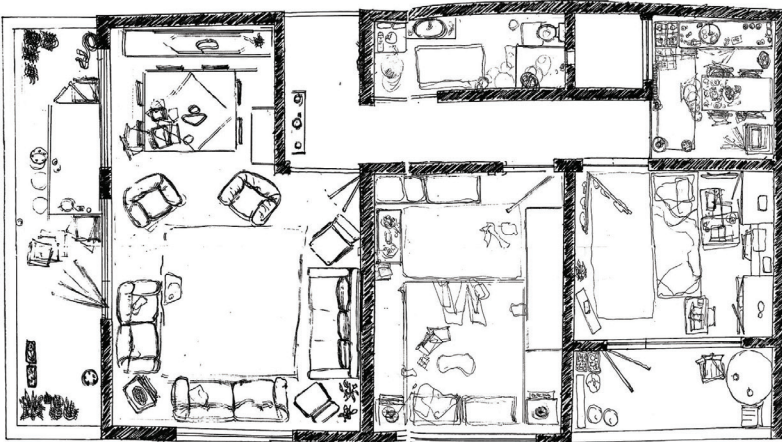
Simple actions like taking a break—a necessity often overlooked in a conventional office—became vital for delineating personal space from professional life. Breaks, such as meal times or informal conversations, provided temporary mental and physical boundaries. Unlike traditional offices, where break rooms or lounges offer clear separation, these boundaries in the home were often transient, as shared spaces had to be repeatedly redefined. This continuous adaptation challenges traditional notions of “fixed” functional spaces within a home, requiring a flexible and responsive model that allows for changing purposes as the day progresses.

Eating and drinking routines, often regulated by strict institutional timetables in professional settings, became more personalized in the home. On weekends, for instance, I would use the kitchen for meals, but on weekdays I often took breakfast to my bedroom to maintain focus and minimize interruptions. This flexibility transformed areas like the kitchen and dining room into multipurpose environments, responding to both personal and professional needs. The repetitive actions that took place in these spaces created temporary boundaries, allowing us to mentally reset and reclaim personal time within a shared domestic environment.

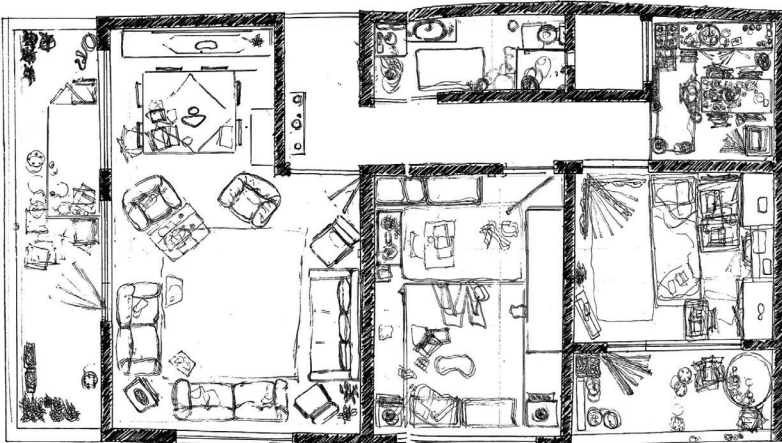
These observations highlight how the inclusion of a workspace within the home fundamentally alters the experience and management of space, as the once-clear boundaries between private and communal areas became blurred, disappeared, or were redefined altogether. By observing and



8:00- 11:00 AM



12:00- 3:00 PM



5:00- 8:00 PM

Figure 1: Diagrammatic Plan Drawings of My Family Home During COVID-19 Pandemic (2020). These drawings illustrate the spatial arrangement and usage patterns within my family home across different times of day, reflecting adaptations made during the COVID-19 pandemic. (Drawings by Berrak Oğrak, 2020).

adapting to these transitions, I developed a deeper understanding of how routines and spatial flexibility allow individuals to balance work and personal life within a single environment, contributing to a nuanced perspective on modern home design.

My thesis topic naturally evolved from these experiences, focusing on the architectural and spatial implications of these blurred boundaries within the home environment. Drawing on both personal observations and critical analysis, my research aims to explore how working from home has reshaped traditional spatial definitions and altered the perception of spatial boundaries between home and workspace. This study also seeks to demonstrate how homes have been reconfigured to accommodate personal, professional, and communal activities, leading to a new understanding of domestic space.

To truly understand how these boundaries between work and personal life have blurred or sharpened, it is essential to focus on daily routines and breaks. Nippert-Eng emphasizes the importance of these daily practices in maintaining or dissolving the boundaries between home and work, suggesting that the simple acts of taking a break or transitioning between activities play a critical role in how we experience and manage these spaces.⁷ These activities serve as key indicators of how individuals navigate their dual roles within the same physical space, offering insight into how spatial boundaries are maintained or dissolved throughout the day. By examining these routines, this study aims to uncover the subtle ways in which people adapt their environments to balance work and life, and how these adaptations, in turn, shape their perception of space.

Chapter 1 of this thesis, titled "Understanding and Perception of Home as a Workspace," lays the theoretical and contextual groundwork for the study. It begins by tracing the History and Evolution of Workspaces (1.1), highlighting how the concept of a workspace has transitioned from a strictly defined physical location to a more fluid and multifaceted concept. This chapter also delves into the Perception of Spaces in Home-Based Work Environments (1.2), examining how individuals mentally and emotionally navigate their workspaces within the home. Finally, the chapter addresses Daily Routines and Work-Life Boundaries (1.3), exploring how the integration of work into the home setting affects daily habits and the management of boundaries between work and personal life.

Chapter 2 examines how home spaces are adapted to serve both personal and professional needs through Individual Case Studies (2.1). This

section presents detailed observations and interviews with participants, offering insights into how they navigate the complexities of home-based work environments. Architectural plans, isometric, and perspective drawings are utilized to capture not only the spatial configurations of each participant's home but also the nuanced daily routines and transitional acts that help delineate work-life boundaries. Each case explores unique strategies, such as reconfiguring kitchens, living rooms, and bedrooms to serve as multi-functional spaces throughout the day, adapting these areas to various roles, including workspace, personal retreat, and communal area.

In Comparative Analysis of Case Studies (2.2), recurring patterns in spatial adaptation across different home environments are analyzed. This section highlights common approaches, such as the strategic use of transitional activities (e.g., taking breaks, eating meals, or setting specific work hours) to help establish a rhythm that maintains productivity without infringing on personal needs. The analysis also identifies shared challenges in managing boundaries, such as limited space or interruptions, and examines how these are addressed through personalized solutions like creating dedicated work zones or implementing structured routines. This comparative view provides insight into how various home layouts and daily routines influence users' overall experiences of remote work, underscoring the role of adaptive design in supporting a balance between professional obligations and personal well-being.

Globally, research and statistics conducted during the pandemic predicted that remote working from home models, initially seen as a temporary solution, would continue to dominate in the post-pandemic era.⁸ However, recent data indicates that the rates of remote work have declined from their peak levels in 2020. A 2024 study revealed that only 12% of full-time employees in the United States were working entirely remotely, while 61% were working fully on-site, and 27% were engaged in a hybrid model. This shift can be attributed to a clear mismatch between employers' plans and employees' expectations. While many employees favor more remote work opportunities, employers are increasingly urging their staff to return to the office. This divergence has sparked debates about the sustainability of flexible work arrangements within traditional workplaces. Although the prevalence of remote work has decreased, the experience of being forced into remote work during the pandemic has solidified it as a viable work model for many employees and employers. This preference for home-based work has

7. Nippert-Eng, Home and Work, 40-45.

8. Goldberg, The New Workspace Paradigm, 2022.

9. Barrero, José María, Nicholas Bloom, Steven J. Davis, and Brent H. Meyer. "The Global Survey of Working Arrangements (GSWA) 2023 Report." WFH Research. June 2023. <https://wfhresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/GSWA-2023.pdf>.

10. Barrero et al., "The Global Survey of Working Arrangements," 2023.

prompted a renewed examination of the spatial and conceptual boundaries of workspaces within the home environment.

A detailed analysis conducted in 2023 sheds light on the differing perspectives between employers and employees regarding workspaces and working hours.⁹ Employers have identified three primary benefits of working in the office: 62 percent of employees cited social interactions as a key benefit, 54 percent highlighted the importance of face-to-face collaboration, and 43 percent emphasized the clearer boundaries between work and personal life that on-site work provides. These findings underscore the employers' plans to restore the social connections that have been diminished by remote work, believing that in-person interactions promote a more cohesive and collaborative work environment. By bringing employees back to the physical workspace, employers aim to not only enhance productivity but also reinforce the structured boundaries between professional and personal spheres, which they believe is critical for maintaining work-life balance and overall employee well-being.

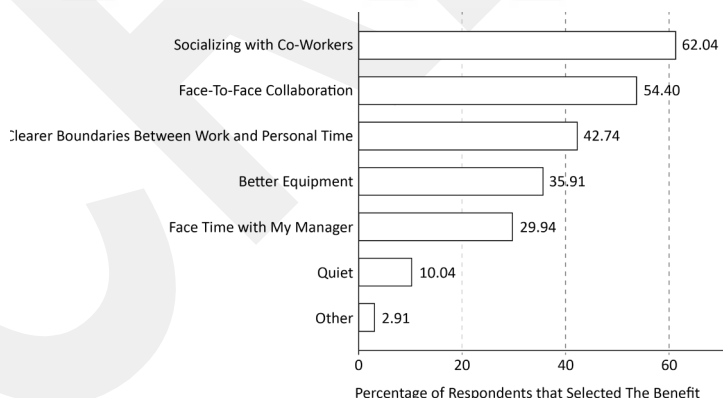


Table 1: "Top Benefits of Working on Employer's Business Premises" (Source: Barrero, Bloom, Davis, and Meyer, The Global Survey of Working Arrangements (GSWA) 2023 Report)

On the other hand, surveys conducted with employees offer a contrasting viewpoint, revealing that 60 percent of respondents consider the absence of a daily commute to be the most significant benefit of working from home.¹⁰ [see Table 1]. The daily commute, often perceived as a significant inconvenience, not only imposes a financial burden due to transportation costs but also contributes to physical and mental exhaustion. For many employees, the time previously allocated to commuting has become an invaluable extension of their personal time, which they now find themselves sacrificing for work-related activities. This shift in priorities reflects a broader reevaluation of how time is spent, with many workers valuing the ability to manage their day without the pressures of commuting. In this context, it is

unsurprising that 44 percent of respondents consider the cost savings on fuel and meals as a significant advantage of remote work, highlighting the financial benefits that come with reducing daily costs.

11. Barrero et al., "The Global Survey of Working Arrangements," 2023.

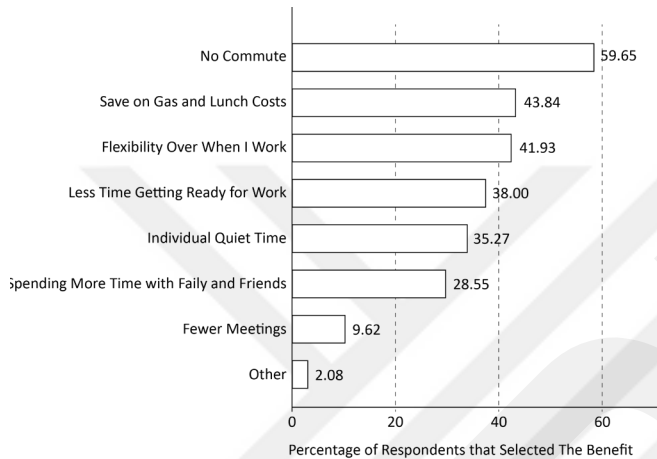


Table 2: "Top Benefits of Working from Home" (Source: Barrero, Bloom, Davis, and Meyer, The Global Survey Of Working Arrangements (GSWA) 2023 Report)

Another notable finding is that 42 percent of respondents view flexibility in working hours as one of the key benefits of working from home.¹¹ [see Table 2]. This preference for flexible scheduling reflects a growing desire among employees to have greater control over their work-life balance, allowing them to tailor their workday to fit personal commitments and peak productivity times. The flexibility to adjust working hours as needed is seen as a crucial detail in achieving a harmonious balance between professional and personal responsibilities. However, this also raises an intriguing question about the potential long-term impact of such flexibility: while employers are increasingly focused on clearly defining the boundaries between work and personal life, could employees' preference for flexible working hours inadvertently contribute to the ongoing blurring of these boundaries? This tension between structured work environments and the desire for flexibility continues to fuel debates about the future of work, particularly as organizations navigate the complexities of post-pandemic workforce management.

As the impact of the pandemic on society has diminished to almost negligible levels, it has become easier to observe the lasting effects on workspaces. This period of change has marked a crucial turning point, challenging the traditional office-centric work model and leaving enduring effects on the global business landscape. The rapid shift to home-based work for millions of employees prompted a fundamental reassessment of what constitutes a workspace, as well as the boundaries between work and home

12. Vittore Carpaccio, *The Vision of St Augustine* [Painting], 1502–1504.

13. Sandro Botticelli, *Saint Augustine in His Cell*, 1490, Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

life. Homes, now functioning as both personal and professional environments, have undergone significant transformations, requiring them to accommodate both individual and communal activities. This evolution has disrupted the conventional separation between work and living spaces, prompting a reconfiguration of domestic architecture to meet the demands of modern hybrid work models. The challenge now lies in how effectively these spaces can continue to serve their dual roles, balancing the needs of both personal life and professional obligations within the same environment.

To contextualize these changes, it is insightful to explore how historical depictions of workspaces resonate with contemporary experiences. For example, 15th-century Renaissance paintings depicting Saint Augustine provide valuable insights into the concept of home-based workspaces. These artworks present architectural features that closely mirror the work environments that became prevalent during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the continuity in how such spaces have been designed and utilized across different eras.

One such painting, “*The Vision of St. Augustine*,” created by Vittore Carpaccio between 1502 and 1504, offers a symbolic and idealized depiction of Saint Augustine’s study.¹² [Figure 2]. This space is meticulously arranged and functions as a refined study or library, emphasizing Augustine’s intellectual and spiritual work. The architectural details and carefully curated decor are not merely ornamental but also reflect the Renaissance spirit of scholarly pursuit and religious devotion. The presence of books, manuscripts, and other objects on the desk, along with the bookshelves, suggests that this room serves as both a place of knowledge and a private religious space. The natural light that enters the work area from a window further enhances the study’s atmosphere, reinforcing its role as a sanctuary for contemplation and work. The inclusion of a small animal in the scene adds a domestic touch, reflecting a deeply personal and dedicated workspace that resonates with the modern need for a private, distraction-free environment within the home.

Similarly, Sandro Botticelli’s painting “*Saint Augustine in His Cell*,” created around 1490, also depicts a symbolic and spiritual working environment.¹³ [Figure 3]. This artwork bears a striking resemblance to modern home workspaces that became prevalent during the pandemic. Key features such as a work surface, a seating area, the use of light, and the creation of an individual, isolated space are all present. The inclusion of a curtain, which acts as a physical boundary, suggests an effort to create a more



Figure 2: A painting titled "The Vision of St Augustine," created by Vittore Carpaccio, 1502- 1504, 16th Century.

secluded and focused environment, mirroring the way many people sought privacy and concentration in their home offices during the pandemic. Moreover, the solitary nature of the seating arrangement, where Augustine is depicted sitting alone at his desk, can be likened to modern workpods—compact, single-user workspaces that gained popularity during the pandemic. These workpods are designed to offer individuals a private, distraction-free environment, much like Augustine's study in the painting. Thus, these historical depictions not only reflect the intellectual and spiritual pursuits of the past but also resonate with contemporary trends in workspace design, particularly the emphasis on privacy, isolation, and focused work environments that have become crucial in the context of remote working practices.

In conclusion, this thesis aims to explore the evolving nature of workspaces, particularly within the home environment, as influenced by both historical precedents and contemporary challenges. The study will analyze how the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the integration of work into domestic spaces, leading to a redefinition of spatial boundaries and a reconfiguration of architectural design to meet new demands. Through a combination of theoretical exploration and empirical case studies, this research will provide insights into how individuals perceive and adapt their living spaces to accommodate the dual roles of home and work. Ultimately, the findings will contribute to a deeper understanding of the ongoing negotiation between personal and professional life within the context of the modern home.



Figure 3: A painting titled "St. Augustine in His Cell," created by Sandro Botticelli, 1490. Uffizi Gallery.

Understanding and Perception of Home as a Workspace

01

1.1 The Historical Evolution of Workspaces

The history of workspaces is deeply intertwined with how spatial boundaries between work and non-work activities have been defined, enforced, and redefined over time. From the rigid separations of the industrial era to the fluid environments of the modern age, the evolution of workspaces reflects broader societal changes in how we perceive and organize our lives.

The Sharp Divide Between Work and Life

During the Industrial Revolution, the division between work and living spaces became a defining feature of modern architecture, reflecting broader societal changes. Rem Koolhaas, in his discussions on urbanism and architecture, explores how these shifts in societal structures are mirrored in the built environment. He notes that the boundaries between different types of spaces—urban, rural, work, and living—are shaped by cultural values and economic necessities.¹⁴

The Segmented model of workspace design emerged from this period, characterized by the physical and conceptual isolation of work environments from personal living spaces. Buildings like the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, originally constructed as a government office, exemplify this model. The spatial organization within these structures was deliberately designed to keep professional activities confined to specific areas, thereby maintaining a clear boundary between work and home. The architecture of such buildings played a crucial role in enforcing societal norms, where work and home were seen as two separate worlds that should not intermingle. The clear delineation of space within these environments not only reinforced the physical separation but also established a psychological boundary between work and personal life.

Similarly, Frank Lloyd Wright's Larkin Administration Building (1906) embodies the Segmented model through its strict design principles aimed

14. Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1994), 89-92.

15. Jack Quinan, Frank Lloyd Wright's Larkin Building: Myth and Fact (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 85.

16. Nippert-Eng, Home and Work. 175.

at maximizing work efficiency while ensuring that the workplace remained separate from the personal lives of its occupants.¹⁵ The building's spatial arrangement emphasized the separation of work activities from the personal sphere, with clearly defined areas for professional tasks that were physically and conceptually distant from spaces of leisure and rest. This design approach was reflective of the broader industrial mindset, which prioritized productivity and order, often at the expense of personal well-being.

Physical Distance as a Boundary

The Industrial model further entrenched this separation by geographically distancing workplaces from residential areas. Factories and large production facilities were often located far from where people lived, creating a physical boundary that reinforced the division between work and home. As Christena Nippert-Eng explains, the separation of work and home is a relatively recent phenomenon, a product of industrialization. Prior to this, most people worked where they lived, and the boundaries between work and personal life were fluid, if not entirely nonexistent.¹⁶ In this model, workers often traveled considerable distances to reach industrial sites, a daily commute that underscored the separation between their work and home lives. This physical distance served as a clear demarcation, ensuring that the workplace was entirely distinct from the personal spaces where family life unfolded. These rigid boundaries were both a product of and a reinforcement for the era's societal norms, where work and personal life were expected to remain separate. The daily routine of commuting created a mental as well as a physical transition between the two spheres, making the workplace a domain entirely apart from the personal world of home and family.

Reflecting on this model today, the strict separation feels almost foreign in an era of blurred boundaries. While this division once offered clarity, it also restricted flexibility—something modern work-from-home arrangements attempt to reclaim, albeit with new challenges.

The spatial organization of the Industrial model thus played a crucial role in defining the boundaries of work and personal life. By placing workplaces at a significant distance from residential areas, this model ensured that work and personal life were not only conceptually distinct but also physically separated by substantial geographic boundaries. This separation not only structured workers' routines but also influenced their sense of

identity, as individuals navigated distinct social roles within each domain. Consequently, the Industrial model reinforced a collective understanding of work as a dedicated, external activity, shaping societal expectations around productivity, family life, and the use of personal time.

17. Frank Duffy, *The New Office* (London: Conran Octopus, 1997), 15.

The Softening of Boundaries

The mid-20th century marked a shift away from the rigid, segmented structures of the past as the need for flexibility and collaboration in the workplace became more apparent. The emergence of the Adhocratic model reflected a broader cultural shift towards environments that were more adaptable and fluid. This model introduced open-plan offices and modular designs that could easily be reconfigured to meet the changing needs of organizations. As Frank Duffy aptly puts it,

"The modern workplace is increasingly characterized by its flexibility and fluidity. Gone are the days of rigid office layouts; today's workspaces are designed to adapt to the needs of the moment, reflecting a broader cultural shift towards flexibility and collaboration."¹⁷

The Bürolandschaft movement in Germany epitomized this shift towards flexibility. It promoted the idea that workspaces should not be static but rather should evolve alongside the needs of their users. Open-plan offices and modular furniture became the hallmarks of this new approach, allowing spaces to be easily adapted for different tasks and purposes. This flexibility blurred the once-clear boundaries between work and personal spaces, as the layout of these environments encouraged interaction and collaboration in ways that previous, more rigid designs did not. The physical barriers that once defined workspaces were removed, and with them, the clear demarcations between work and non-work activities began to fade.

In these new environments, work was no longer confined to designated spaces or times. The introduction of shared spaces, such as communal lounges and flexible workstations, further blurred the boundaries between work and leisure. The spatial design of these offices encouraged a more integrated approach to work and life, where professional and personal activities could coexist in the same physical space. This shift reflected broader societal changes that emphasized flexibility, adaptability, and the breaking

18. Ludwig Heydenreich and Paul Davies, *Architecture in Italy, 1400–1500* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 97.

down of traditional hierarchies, both in the workplace and beyond.

The Adhocratic model represented a significant departure from the rigid, hierarchical structures of the past. By embracing flexibility and collaboration, it paved the way for more fluid, dynamic work environments that were better suited to the needs of a rapidly changing world. However, this also meant that the clear boundaries between work and personal life that had been established in earlier models were now being challenged and redefined.

Early Adaptations: The Origins of Home-Based Work

Historically, the concept of working from home has deep roots in the practices of artisans, merchants, and scholars who integrated their professional activities within domestic spaces. Before the Industrial Revolution, homes often served dual purposes, acting as both living environments and workspaces. For instance, Palazzo Davanzati in Florence, a Renaissance-era home, was designed not only for family life but also for trade and craft activities. The ground floors were dedicated to commercial uses, while the upper floors were reserved for family living, illustrating the fluidity of spatial boundaries in domestic architecture.¹⁸

This blending of professional and domestic spaces is also evident in Renaissance art. Vittore Carpaccio's "The Vision of St. Augustine" (1502-1504) and Sandro Botticelli's "Saint Augustine in His Cell" (c. 1490) both depict workspaces within domestic settings, emphasizing the integration of intellectual, spiritual, and professional activities within the home. [see Figure 2,3]. These historical examples resonate with modern home-based workspaces, especially during periods of significant social change like the COVID-19 pandemic, when individuals adapted their homes to serve both personal and professional functions.

The Reemergence of Home Workspaces: The Shift to Flexibility

In the late 20th century, technological advancements and evolving work cultures led to the reemergence of home-based workspaces. The rise of personal computers, fax machines, and early internet connections enabled more professionals to work from home, blurring the boundaries between work and personal life once again. This newfound flexibility allowed individuals to

integrate work tasks into the rhythms of home life, reshaping the traditional concept of a workspace.

The Digital Age: Eroding Boundaries Through Technology

The integration of digital technology into everyday life has had profound implications for the spatial organization of work. The widespread availability of high-speed internet, mobile devices, and cloud-based services has made it possible to work from virtually any location, effectively erasing the physical boundaries that once separated work from personal life.

This digital transformation has led to the rise of remote work and the concept of the "digital nomad"—individuals who can work from anywhere, untethered by the need for a fixed office space. As work and non-work activities blend within the home, traditional notions of the workplace as a distinct, physical location have been replaced by more abstract, virtual workspaces that exist wherever there is an internet connection.¹⁹

The erosion of these boundaries is particularly evident in the way homes have been adapted to accommodate professional tasks. Rooms that were once strictly personal, such as living rooms or kitchens, are now multifunctional, doubling as workspaces during the day and reverting to their original purposes afterward. This shift has led to a rethinking of domestic architecture, where flexibility and adaptability are paramount.

Coworking Spaces: Redefining the Work-Life Boundary

The rise of coworking spaces represents a further evolution in the relationship between work and spatial boundaries. These spaces are designed to accommodate a wide range of activities, from focused individual work to collaborative projects, often within the same environment. The flexibility of coworking spaces allows for a more integrated approach to work and life, where the boundaries between professional and personal activities are intentionally blurred.

Coworking providers like WeWork have capitalized on this trend by offering environments that blend work with social interaction and personal development.²⁰ These spaces are not just places to work; they are communities where people can network, learn, and engage in activities that go beyond their professional roles. The spatial design of coworking spaces

19. Space Matrix, "The Rise of the Digital Nomad: How Remote Work is Changing Office Design," accessed September 8, 2024, <https://blog.spacematrix.com/rise-digital-nomad-how-remote-work-changing-office-design>.

20. "How WeWork Experiments On Itself to Advance the Field of Office Design," ArchDaily, accessed September 8, 2024, <https://www.archdaily.com>.

21. Sabrina Syed, "The Spaceship Has Landed: Apple's New Campus Opens," ArchDaily, published May 19, 2017, <https://www.archdaily.com/871559/the-spaceship-has-landed-apples-new-campus-opens>.

often includes elements like lounges, cafes, and wellness areas, further blurring the lines between work and leisure.

The success and popularity of coworking spaces have influenced how home workspaces are conceived. As work becomes more flexible and less tied to specific locations, the need for rigid spatial boundaries diminishes. Coworking spaces reflect this shift by offering environments that foster a sense of community and belonging, concepts that are increasingly being integrated into home office designs. Home workspaces are now often multifunctional, supporting not just professional tasks but also personal well-being and social interactions, similar to the environments created in coworking spaces.

The COVID-19 Pandemic: A Turning Point for Home Workspaces

The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated the adoption of home-based workspaces on an unprecedented scale. As millions of employees were forced to work from home, the home office became central to daily life. Dining tables, spare rooms, and even closets were quickly transformed into makeshift offices, reflecting the urgent need for functional and flexible spaces within the home.

Norman Foster's Apple Park serves as an inspiration during this period, with its emphasis on integrating workspaces into natural environments and promoting employee well-being. Foster's principles of flexibility, sustainability, and user comfort have influenced how home offices are now designed, prioritizing environments that support both professional and personal activities in a balanced manner.²¹

As the pandemic receded, the lessons learned continued to influence the design and use of home workspaces. The concept of the home office evolved to meet the ongoing need for flexibility, with many workers and employers recognizing the value of remote work as a permanent option.

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only transformed the nature of work itself but has significantly altered the way workspaces are designed and utilized within both the home and public environments. Before the pandemic, remote work was largely confined to certain industries such as tech, freelance, or creative sectors, and the traditional office remained the hub of professional life. However, as millions of people transitioned to home-based work almost overnight, the pandemic initiated what Emma Goldberg called "a two-year, 50-million-person experiment" in how we work, redefining

the boundaries between professional and personal spaces.²² This sudden and extensive shift has had profound implications for how we design and organize our environments to accommodate both work and personal life, sparking a reimagining of architectural solutions for flexible and adaptable spaces.

The initial phase of the pandemic exposed the inadequacies of most homes, which were not designed to accommodate long-term professional work. Nicholas Bloom emphasized that many households were forced to turn living rooms, bedrooms, and kitchens into makeshift offices, leading to a blurring of boundaries between work and home life.²³ This fusion of work and personal environments led to increased stress and difficulty in managing productivity and well-being. Homes, which were once seen as sanctuaries from work, became places of dual roles, forcing people to adapt quickly to the physical and psychological demands of remote work. Jane Levere, writing in *The New York Times*, highlighted how spaces had to serve multiple purposes: one room might serve as an office during the day and revert to its original function in the evening.²⁴

Architects and designers began responding to this new reality by rethinking how domestic spaces could function as workspaces. As Eric Gannon pointed out in the *Journal of Architectural Innovation*, there was a pressing need for modular designs—spaces that could easily transition between personal and professional uses. This included the introduction of movable walls, sliding partitions, and convertible furniture that could help transform living areas into temporary offices and vice versa.²⁵ The integration of these flexible architectural elements helped address the immediate need for privacy and focus, particularly in small apartments where space was limited.

Multifunctional design became a key principle for addressing these spatial challenges. As Levere emphasized, homes with limited square footage had to adopt solutions such as fold-away desks or partition walls that could be deployed during work hours and retracted afterward to return the space to its primary function. This flexible approach allowed people to create distinct work environments even in compact living spaces, managing the delicate balance between work and personal life in environments where those boundaries were increasingly blurred.

Another critical element that emerged during this period was the emphasis on biophilic design. Research has shown that exposure to natural elements such as plants, sunlight, and views of nature can have a significant impact on mental well-being, reducing stress and improving focus. As the

22. Emma Goldberg, "A Two-Year, 50-Million-Person Experiment in Changing How We Work," *The New York Times*, March 10, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/10/business/remote-work-office-life.html>.

23. Nicholas Bloom, "How Working from Home Works Out," Stanford University, June 2020, <https://siepr.stanford.edu/research/publications/how-working-home-works-out>.

24. Jane Levere, "Redesigning Homes to Accommodate Work and Play," *The New York Times*, May 25, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/25/realestate/homes-work-spaces.html>.

25. Eric Gannon, "Architecture and Adaptability: Modular Designs for a Pandemic-Era Home," *Journal of Architectural Innovation*, July 2020, <https://journalofarchitecturalinnovation.com/modular-design-pandemic>. chitecturalinnovation.com/modular-design-pandemic.

26. "Neurodiversity and Biophilia: The Future of the Workspace in the Post-Pandemic Era," ArchDaily, accessed September 8, 2024, <https://www.archdaily.com>.

27. Dana Cuff, "Bringing the Outdoors In: More Companies are Embracing Biophilic Office Design," Jefferson Group, accessed September 8, 2024

28. Nicholas Bloom, "The Five-Day Office Week is Dead," The New York Times, April 23, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/23/business/remote-work-five-day-office-week.html>.

29. Goldberg, "A Two-Year, 50-Million-Person Experiment in Changing How We Work."

30. Dana Cuff, "How Coworking and Shared Spaces Are Impacting Work: Navigating the Post-Pandemic Opportunities," HOK, accessed September 8, 2024, <https://www.hok.com>.

pandemic progressed, architects integrated biophilic elements into home offices to help mitigate the psychological toll of working in confined indoor environments for long periods.²⁶ Incorporating features like large windows, indoor plants, and natural materials not only made workspaces more aesthetically pleasing but also promoted a healthier, more sustainable environment. Dana Cuff, a prominent urban planner, noted that biophilic designs, originally used in corporate spaces, were being adapted to home environments as a response to the growing demand for healthy, natural spaces in the remote work era.²⁷

As the pandemic continued, it became clear that remote work was not just a temporary solution but a long-term shift in how work would be conducted. Nicholas Bloom, in his New York Times piece "The Five-Day Office Week is Dead," pointed out that hybrid work models, where employees split their time between the home and the office, were becoming the new norm. This trend posed a significant challenge for architects and designers: homes would need to be equipped with permanent or semi-permanent workspaces that could seamlessly blend into the domestic environment without overwhelming it.²⁸ For larger homes, the creation of dedicated home offices became a priority. These spaces were designed with soundproofing, ample natural light, and ergonomic furniture to support long-term productivity. For smaller homes, architects continued to focus on multifunctional solutions, ensuring that workspaces could be easily adapted or concealed when not in use.

Incorporating smart home technologies into workspace design also became a significant trend during the pandemic. As Emma Goldberg described, digital tools such as video conferencing platforms, cloud-based collaboration tools, and smart lighting systems became essential for remote work.²⁹ These technologies enabled workers to optimize their environments for productivity, with temperature controls, noise-canceling features, and even acoustic management systems integrated into the workspace to create a comfortable and efficient working environment. The fusion of smart technology with flexible architectural design represents a critical shift in how homes are equipped to handle hybrid work models.

Meanwhile, co-working spaces, which initially seemed doomed by the rise of remote work, have also evolved in response to these changes. As Dana Cuff noted in her discussion of post-pandemic workspaces, these shared environments are being reimagined as collaborative hubs, where

employees can gather for occasional in-person meetings while maintaining a remote or hybrid work schedule.³⁰ The focus in these spaces has shifted from open-plan designs to health-conscious environments that prioritize privacy, flexibility, and well-being. Modular layouts, better ventilation, and hands-free technologies are becoming standard in co-working spaces, reflecting the evolving needs of the post-pandemic workforce.

Looking ahead, it is clear that the pandemic has triggered long-term changes in how workspaces are designed. Future homes will likely be built with adaptable layouts, featuring rooms that can seamlessly transition between personal and professional uses. Smart technologies will continue to play a role in optimizing these spaces for productivity and comfort. Eric Gannon suggests that homes will increasingly feature modular walls and reconfigurable layouts, allowing workers to adjust their environments based on their needs throughout the day.³¹ This trend represents a fundamental shift in how we think about the relationship between work and home, as architects focus on creating spaces that prioritize flexibility, well-being, and sustainability.

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly transformed the concept of the workspace, leading to innovations in architectural design and technology integration. From the reconfiguration of domestic spaces to accommodate work to the evolution of public co-working environments, the future of workspaces will continue to prioritize flexibility, health, and adaptability. As hybrid work models become the new norm, architecture will play a crucial role in shaping the environments that allow people to thrive both personally and professionally.

1.2 Perception of Space and Boundaries in Home-Based Work Environments

To understand the spatial perceptions and definitions within the home and workspace, it is crucial to consider how bodily movements and physical interactions with space shape our experience of it. This approach draws from the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, the prominent French philosopher known for his contributions to phenomenology and existentialism. In his seminal work *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty argues that space is not simply an abstract, external reality that we observe from a distance; rather, it is something we experience and perceive through our bodies, structured

31. Eric Gannon, "7 Design Guidelines for a Safe Post COVID-19 Transition," ArchDaily, June 25, 2020, accessed September 8, 2024, <https://www.archdaily.com/941517/5-design-guidelines-for-a-safe-post-covid-19-transition>.

32. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge, 1962), 98–103.

33. Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "kitchen," accessed September 8, 2024. <https://www.oed.com>.

34. Ernest Klein, *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* (Amsterdam: Elsevier Publishing, 1971).

by our embodied interactions with it.³² This insight highlights the importance of designing spaces that resonate with human sensory experiences and align with our perceptual capabilities. In the context of home-based work, this phenomenological perspective takes on particular significance. The home, traditionally understood as a private, personal space for rest and socialization, has become a hybrid environment where the boundaries between work and domestic life are blurred. As individuals move through and interact with different areas of the home, their bodily actions help define the functions and meanings assigned to those spaces. For instance, the repetitive action of sitting at a desk, opening a laptop, and focusing on professional tasks transforms a corner of the living room into a workspace, even if only temporarily. This process of spatial transformation is both cognitive and physical, influenced by how we use our bodies in relation to specific environments.

When we examine the boundaries and definitions within the modern home, we find that they are largely shaped by our physical and functional experiences. For instance, we label the bedroom as such because it is primarily defined as a space for lying down or sleeping. The bed, as a central object in this room, organizes our bodily movements—lying down, resting, or sleeping—and in turn, influences our perception of the room as a restful environment. Similarly, the dining room is where we fulfill our eating and drinking needs, its spatial identity defined by the presence of a dining table and the actions of sitting, eating, and conversing. The kitchen is a designated area for cooking and preparing meals, where countertops, appliances, and utensils shape the spatial layout and our physical interactions within it.

These everyday activities, tied to specific physical movements, underscore how bodily actions define the way we name, use, and perceive different spaces within the home. Etymological analysis of room names further reinforces this relationship between function and space. For instance, the word "kitchen" is derived from the Latin word "*coquina*," which originates from the verb *coquere*, meaning "to cook."³³ This etymology highlights the direct relationship between the act of cooking and the function of the space we now call a kitchen. Similarly, the term "bathroom" is derived from the Latin word "*balneum*," which refers to bathing activities, indicating that bodily movements such as bathing, showering, and other hygienic practices have shaped our understanding of what a bathroom is.³⁴

The bedroom, with its origins in the Latin word *cubiculum* (meaning "to lie down"), has evolved from a simple sleeping area in ancient Roman

homes to a more private, multifunctional space in modern times.³⁵ The salon, or living room, serves as a shared space for social interactions, much like the atrium did in ancient Roman homes.³⁶ The atrium was a central, open space that connected different areas of the home and was used for both social gatherings and family life. Today, the modern living room functions similarly, acting as a hub of social interaction and communal activities, though its spatial boundaries are often more fluid and adaptable to various uses. The vestibulum of ancient Roman architecture, which refers to the entrance hall or transition zone between the home's interior and the street, has evolved into modern entryways and corridors that connect private and shared areas.³⁷ These spaces are designed to facilitate the movement between different rooms, serving as transitional zones that mediate between public and private spheres within the home.

These historical and linguistic insights demonstrate that our spatial definitions are not static; they are continuously shaped and reshaped by the physical actions, social practices, and cultural expectations associated with each room. Over time, as activities, interactions, and our mental and physical relationships with space evolve, so too do the definitions and perceptions of the spaces we inhabit. In a modern context, particularly with the rise of home-based work, these transformations are even more pronounced. Spaces that were once reserved exclusively for personal activities—such as bedrooms, living rooms, or even closets—are now repurposed as workspaces. This shift raises critical questions about how the boundaries between private and shared spaces change, blur, or sharpen as our spatial needs and perceptions evolve.

The phenomenon of boundary blurring is a central theme in the discourse on home as a workspace. Traditionally, the home has been seen as a refuge, a place of retreat from the demands of professional life. However, with the increasing prevalence of remote work, this boundary between work and home life has become increasingly porous. Christena Nippert-Eng, in her work *Home and Work: Negotiating Boundaries Through Everyday Life*, explores how individuals manage these boundaries, noting that the way we perceive and structure our spaces is deeply tied to our daily routines and rituals.³⁸ For example, the act of closing a door to a home office can create a psychological barrier that helps individuals transition between work and personal life, even within the same physical environment. Similarly, the creation of temporary workspaces—such as converting a

35. John R. Clarke, *The Houses of Roman Italy, 100 B.C.-A.D. 250: Ritual, Space, and Decoration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

36. Penelope J.E. Davies, *Roman Domestic Art and Architecture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 67–70.

37. Vitruvius Pollio, *Ten Books on Architecture*, trans. Ingrid D. Rowland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

38. Nippert-Eng, *Home and Work*, 45-50.

dining table into a desk during work hours—illustrates how physical and mental boundaries can be adjusted depending on the activities taking place.

In this thesis, the goal is not merely to examine the evolving definitions of physically and conceptually separated rooms but to explore how the boundaries between private and shared spaces are shifting within the home. The rise of home-based work has necessitated a reevaluation of spatial boundaries, prompting individuals to reconsider how they engage with their domestic environments. The study seeks to uncover how these boundaries evolve, blur, or become more defined in response to changes in work habits, daily routines, and the overall perception of space within the home. By analyzing these changes through an architectural lens, this research will contribute to a deeper understanding of how modern homes are being redefined to accommodate the dual roles of personal and professional life. As our interactions with space continue to evolve, so too will our understanding of the home—not just as a private refuge but as a dynamic, multifunctional environment that responds to the complexities of modern living.

1.3 Daily Breaks, Routines, and Work-Life Boundaries

In the context of working from home, daily breaks and routines serve as critical tools for detecting the boundaries between workspace and home. Unlike traditional office settings, where the physical layout and structured schedules provide clear cues for when and where workers engage in professional versus personal activities, home environments often lack such predefined boundaries. This fluidity requires home-based workers to create their own routines and breaks to differentiate between these two realms.

In *Home and Work*, Christena Nippert-Eng highlights the importance of creating "territories of the self," where individuals use space, time, and behavior to separate their work identity from their personal identity. These territories, which may take the form of different rooms in the home or specific times dedicated to work versus personal tasks, allow workers to manage the overlapping demands of home and work.³⁹ For example, where meals are eaten, where coffee breaks occur, and where personal phone calls are made can all serve as markers of these boundaries. In traditional office settings, meals are typically taken in designated areas such as cafeterias, cafes or break rooms. These spaces are designed to facilitate a mental and physical break

from work, allowing employees to step away from their desks and engage in social interactions or relaxation. At home, however, meals may be taken in a variety of spaces—at the kitchen table, in the living room, sometimes in the bed, or even at the desk where work occurs. Similarly, another example of a daily break is smoking, which in an office is often restricted to outdoor spaces, and can occur in various locations at home—balconies, backyards, or even at the desk—adding to the fluidity of space in home-based work environments. This flexibility can create challenges for maintaining boundaries between work and personal life, as eating at the same desk used for work can blur the mental separation between these two activities.

Merleau-Ponty's theory of embodied perception further elaborates on how these breaks and routines are experienced.⁴⁰ He argues that space is not an abstract concept but is lived through the body's movements. When home-based workers move from their workspace to another room for a coffee break or step outside for fresh air, they engage in a bodily transition that helps to reinforce the mental shift from work to personal time. These physical transitions are crucial for maintaining a sense of balance, even when the physical environment is the same.

Temporal boundaries are also important. Eviatar Zerubavel, in *The Seven Day Circle*, emphasizes the significance of routines in structuring time. In traditional offices, break times are often fixed—lunchtime in the afternoon, coffee breaks at regular intervals—helping workers segment their day into periods of work and rest.⁴¹ In the home environment, the lack of formal break times gives workers greater flexibility, but this can also result in a blurring of temporal boundaries, making it more difficult to mentally "clock out" of work tasks. As a result, home-based workers must create their own temporal markers, such as setting regular lunch or coffee breaks, to maintain this separation. This situation also forces us to rethink the definition of spatial areas such as private or shared at the home.

Spatial Definition Through Daily Activities

In a home-based work environment, areas like the kitchen, living room, or even the bedroom take on dual or multiple roles. For example, the kitchen is not merely a space for preparing meals—it might also serve as a place for short breaks, informal meetings, or even a workspace. This fluidity challenges traditional notions of spatial boundaries. As Nippert-Eng notes,

40. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 112–118.

41. Eviatar Zerubavel, *The Seven Day Circle: The History and Meaning of the Week* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 134–138.

42. Nippert-Eng, *Home and Work*, 76-79.

43. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 112-118.

44. Nippert-Eng, *Home and Work*, 86-88.

these spaces become "territories of the self," where boundaries between work and personal life must be constantly negotiated and redefined.⁴² The routine of eating lunch, which in an office might occur in a cafeteria, happens in different places at home depending on the worker's needs and preferences. The act of moving to the dining table or a different part of the house to eat can reinforce a boundary between work and personal life, allowing the worker to reclaim the space as part of their non-work identity. However, for some, eating at their desk while working can blur these spatial distinctions, turning what might traditionally be a break from work into a continuation of professional tasks. Thus, the home's spatial definition is directly influenced by how routines like eating, coffee breaks, and phone calls are performed.

Merleau-Ponty's concept of embodied perception helps explain how workers actively redefine their environment through bodily engagement with space. According to Merleau-Ponty, space is not passively experienced but is shaped by the body's movements and actions.⁴³ Therefore, when a worker steps away from their desk to make coffee or takes a break in another room, they are physically and mentally redefining the space around them. The kitchen, living room, or backyard temporarily becomes a space for relaxation or personal activities, rather than a continuation of the workspace.

Daily routines are essential in managing spatial boundaries within the home, particularly when the same spaces are used for both work and personal activities. In a traditional office setting, routines like commuting, scheduled coffee breaks, or formal meetings occur in designated spaces, providing clear spatial boundaries between professional and personal realms. However, in home-based work, the flexibility of space means that workers must rely on routines to transform the meaning and function of their surroundings.

For instance, the simple act of changing clothes at the end of the workday, as discussed by Nippert-Eng, can serve as a powerful ritual that helps transform both the mental and spatial boundaries between "work mode" and "home mode".⁴⁴ In traditional office settings, changing into more casual attire after returning home is a common way to signal the transition from the professional to the personal sphere. However, when working from home, this routine is often altered or even eliminated. The absence of a commute or a clear boundary between work and home life can result in people staying in the same clothes all day, further blurring the line between professional and personal time. Moreover, the reverse scenario is also worth analyzing: many home-based workers no longer feel the need to dress

formally for work at all. In a traditional office, the act of getting dressed in work-appropriate clothing helps establish a professional mindset, preparing the individual for the workday. At home, however, the informal environment often leads workers to forgo this ritual entirely, choosing instead to remain in casual or even leisurewear throughout the day. This shift not only reflects a physical comfort but also illustrates how the boundary between personal and professional identities is altered in home-based work. The lack of this routine can affect the worker's ability to mentally transition into "work mode," potentially undermining the distinction between professional and personal roles. In both scenarios—whether through changing clothes at the end of the day or opting not to change at all—the transformation of spatial and mental boundaries becomes a critical reflection of how routines influence the work-home dynamic.

Routines also serve as temporal boundaries that complement the spatial redefinition of the home. Zerubavel's analysis in *The Seven Day Circle* emphasizes how routines help workers structure their time by marking the transition from one activity to another.⁴⁵ In home-based work, these routines are critical for maintaining a sense of structure and discipline, as they help workers delineate when and where certain activities should occur. For instance, setting a regular lunch break away from the desk ensures that the dining area becomes a personal space, separate from the work environment.

The fluidity of home spaces demands that workers actively manage these boundaries. For instance, in small apartments or shared homes, workers may need to redefine the living room, kitchen, or bedroom multiple times throughout the day. In the morning, a kitchen might serve as a space for work-related activities, such as reading emails over coffee. By lunchtime, the same kitchen transforms into a personal space for eating and relaxation, before transitioning again into a work-related zone later in the day.

Merleau-Ponty's idea of *habitual space* helps explain how daily routines shape the way workers experience and define different areas of their home.⁴⁶ According to Merleau-Ponty, the spaces we move through regularly, like the kitchen or living room, become meaningful because of the actions we perform in them. For example, when a worker makes coffee every morning in the kitchen or steps outside for a break, these actions aren't just routine—they are shaping the worker's experience of those spaces. The kitchen is no longer just a place to prepare food; it becomes associated with a mental break from work.

45. Zerubavel, *The Seven Day Circle*, 145–147.

46. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 128–130.

47. Clive Thompson, "What If Working From Home Goes on ... Forever?" The New York Times, June 9, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/09/magazine/remote-work-covid.html>.

As these actions are repeated over time, workers develop an *embodied understanding* of how certain areas of the home should be used. This means that their bodies, through repetitive actions, naturally recognize certain spaces for specific purposes—such as work, relaxation, or personal activities. These habitual actions, like making coffee in the kitchen or stepping out for fresh air, help reinforce the mental distinction between "work spaces" and "personal spaces." Over time, this helps home-based workers clearly separate their professional activities from their personal lives, even when both occur within the same physical environment.

Clive Thompson's 2020 article in The New York Times, titled "What If Working From Home Goes on ... Forever?", features illustrations by Max Guthrie that are both strikingly realistic and visually compelling. [See Figure 4, 5, and 6]. These illustrations, set during a time when millions of people were working from home, offer detailed insights into the spatial boundaries and definitions associated with remote work. Guthrie's depictions vividly capture the overlapping of work and personal life, illustrating how the newly created "workspaces" at home can be flexible yet sometimes uncomfortable, and even absurdly surreal in their arrangements. Examining these images provides a deeper understanding of how daily routines and spatial definitions shift in home-based work environments, offering a window into the often awkward blending of public and private realms.⁴⁷



Figure 4: Clive Thompson, "What If Working From Home Goes on ... Forever?," The New York Times, June 9, 2020.

In Figure 4, a bathroom—traditionally a very personal and private space—has been transformed into a workspace, with the person working on a laptop while sitting on the toilet. The presence of formal office equipment (printer, documents) contrasts sharply with the intimate setting, symbolizing the fluid boundaries between work and home life in remote work. This image starkly illustrates the irony of a private moment intruded upon by work tasks, capturing the awkwardness of a world where personal sanctuary can double as a workspace. Here, routines like coffee breaks, meals, or even bathroom breaks are no longer distinct but have become intertwined with professional activities. In a traditional office, stepping away to a designated break room or cafeteria signals a transition between work and personal time—a refreshing mental shift. However, here, those boundaries dissolve, as the person continues to work even during an activity as personal as using the bathroom, highlighting both the adaptability and the challenges of working within the home's unconventional spaces. This visual commentary underscores the extent to which our living spaces—and our lives—have been redefined by the



Figure 5: Clive Thompson, "What If Working From Home Goes on ... Forever?," The New York Times, June 9, 2020.

demands of modern remote work.

In Figure 5, we see a chaotic kitchen scene. There are multiple members of a household using the same space for different purposes. One person is multitasking, cooking eggs while talking on the phone and working on a laptop, while a child runs around, and another person is working at a cluttered table. The kitchen—traditionally reserved for personal and family activities like cooking and eating—has now become a multi-functional space where both work and home life overlap. This image illustrates how meals and breaks can occur in the same space where work is conducted, making it harder to mentally separate the two. In a typical office, lunch breaks would happen in designated areas, reinforcing clear boundaries. At home, routines like eating or preparing meals are blended with work, undermining the mental shift needed to step away from professional duties.

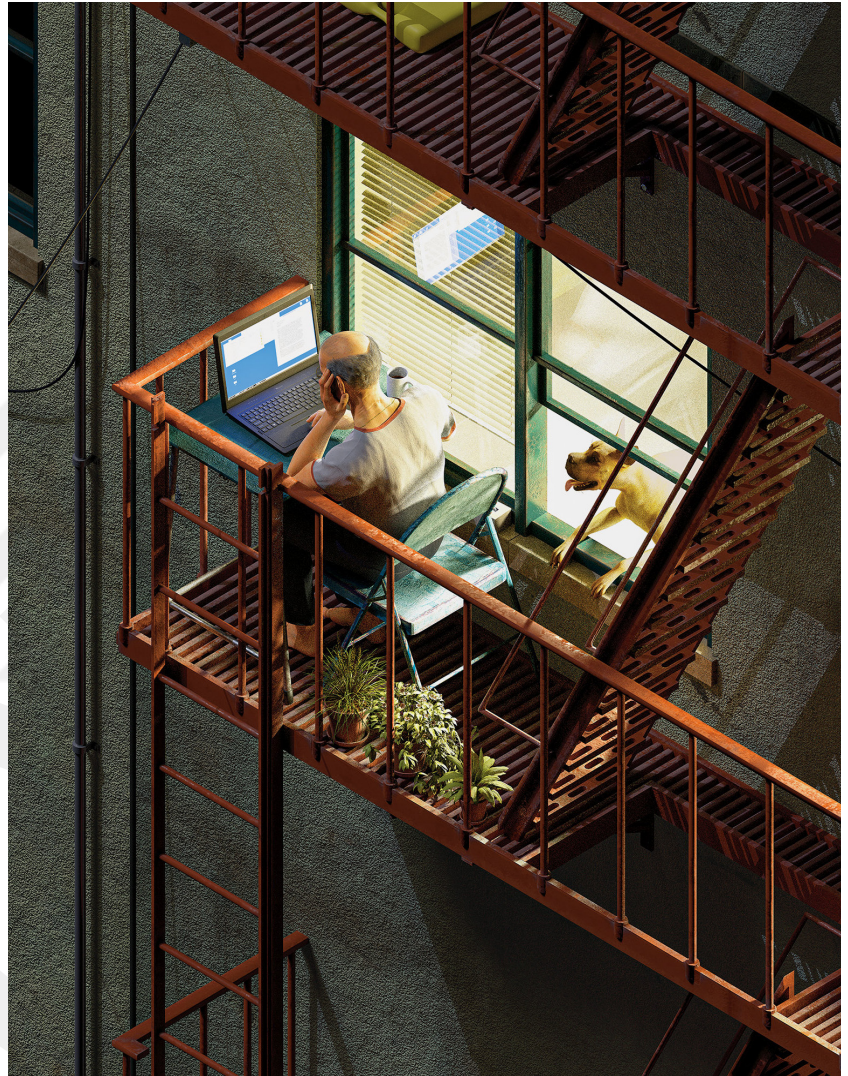


Figure 6: Clive Thompson, "What If Working From Home Goes on ... Forever?," The New York Times, June 9, 2020

Figure 6 shows a man working on a fire escape, seeking to create a more isolated and focused workspace outside his home. His use of the fire escape illustrates the lengths to which home-based workers must go to find physical separation from their daily routines. The balcony (or fire escape) is a space traditionally associated with relaxation or stepping away from indoor activities. In this case, the man uses the space as an extension of his workspace. This setup connects to the idea of spatial transitions, where a home-based worker physically moves away from indoor distractions to create a new zone for concentration. While this could be seen as a substitute for a typical break (going outside for fresh air), the fact that he continues to work means that even the physical act of stepping outside no longer guarantees

a break from work-related tasks. These illustrations highlight the blurred boundaries between work and personal life, where daily routines like meal preparation, breaks, and even bathroom time are no longer clearly separated from professional tasks.

Routines that once marked transitions between work and personal life—like eating meals in designated spaces, taking breaks, or even stepping outside—are now disrupted in home-based work. The kitchen, bathroom, and outdoor areas serve multiple purposes, leading to a breakdown of spatial and temporal boundaries. Traditional breaks that occur in separate, restful areas in an office now merge into the same spaces where work happens. This results in routines losing their mental reset value, as seen in the kitchen scene where the person prepares food but continues to engage in work tasks. Merleau-Ponty's idea of how we inhabit space through bodily movement is evident in these illustrations.⁴⁸ Workers inhabit spaces that once held different meanings—bathrooms, kitchens, fire escapes—but now those spaces are redefined to accommodate professional roles. The way people move and engage with these spaces reflects the adaptation of their daily routines to fit the demands of home-based work.

In conclusion, these images visually encapsulate the disruption and fluidity of daily routines in home-based work, where personal spaces become "territories of the self" and the separation between work and personal life becomes harder to maintain.⁴⁹

Breaks and transitions serve as key moments when workers redefine the spatial boundaries within their home environment. In traditional office settings, breaks are typically taken in designated areas, such as break rooms or outdoor smoking areas, providing clear physical and mental separation from work tasks. These spaces are designed to promote relaxation and disengagement from professional roles, reinforcing the boundary between work and personal time.

Nippert-Eng emphasizes the importance of creating physical and mental separations during breaks, as these transitions help workers maintain a clear boundary between their work identity and their personal life.⁵⁰ A well-defined home workspace can enhance this separation, as it allows workers to "leave" their office by physically moving to another area of the house. However, in homes where the workspace is not clearly demarcated—such as in open-plan apartments or shared spaces—these breaks and transitions become even more critical for managing spatial boundaries.

48. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 137–140.

49. Thompson, "What If Working From Home Goes on ... Forever?"

50. Nippert-Eng, *Home and Work*, 90-92.

51. Witold Rybczynski, *Home: A Short History of an Idea* (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), 174–177.

52. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 137–140.

Architectural design plays a crucial role in supporting these spatial transitions. For example, homes with clearly defined workspaces, such as separate offices or distinct zones, provide workers with the physical boundaries needed to take effective breaks.⁵¹ Similarly, flexible home designs—such as movable partitions or furniture that can be rearranged—allow workers to create temporary boundaries between their work and personal activities, reinforcing the spatial distinction between these two roles.

In conclusion, the spatial definition of the home in work-from-home environments is continuously redefined through daily routines and breaks. As workers engage in routines such as eating meals, taking coffee breaks, making personal phone calls, or smoking, they actively reshape the meaning and function of their home spaces. This redefinition of space is not static; rather, it is dynamic and shaped by the worker’s bodily movements, temporal routines, and mental transitions.⁵²

Through interviews with home-based workers, this thesis will explore how daily routines and breaks contribute to the redefinition of space within the home. The study will provide insights into how workers maintain or blur the boundaries between work and personal life by examining where meals are taken, where coffee is enjoyed, where personal calls are made, and how time is allocated for these activities. The comparison with traditional office settings will highlight how these routines differ and what strategies home-based workers employ to manage the fluidity of their environments.

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Case Studies of Home-Based Workspaces

02

2.1 Individual Case Studies

This chapter presents a series of in-depth case studies of individuals working from home, focusing on how they have adapted their living spaces to serve as both personal and professional environments. The purpose of these case studies is to explore the spatial and psychological boundaries that emerge or dissolve when work is integrated into the domestic sphere. By examining different home setups, daily routines, and personal strategies for managing work-life balance, this section aims to provide a detailed understanding of how architecture, space, and individual behavior intersect in the context of home-based work.

The case studies are based on interviews with five individuals, each with unique living situations, professions, and approaches to working from home. Through these interviews, we gain insights into how they navigate the dual functionality of their homes, the challenges they face in maintaining boundaries between work and personal life, and the ways in which their physical environments influence their productivity and well-being.

By comparing and analyzing the spatial layouts, daily routines, and adaptations made by these individuals, this chapter seeks to highlight the evolving role of architecture in shaping home-based workspaces. These personal stories not only reveal the practical changes in their living environments but also provide a deeper understanding of the emotional and psychological adjustments required to transform homes into effective workspaces.

Mecit, 25

Mecit has been working full-time from home as a business partner in the e-commerce sector for nearly two years. Recently, his work brought him to Belgrade, where he has been living for the past six months. Upon his arrival, he moved into a fully furnished apartment, anticipating a short stay. For this

reason, he did not personalize and design the space much, but the lack of a dedicated office area required some adjustments. Mecit reconfigured his living space by moving furniture around, transforming part of the living room into a functional workspace.

Unlike the conventional preference for placing a desk near a window to benefit from natural light, Mecit made the deliberate choice to position his desk with his back to the window. [see Figure 7]. This unorthodox decision reflects his desire to minimize external distractions, prioritizing focus and task completion over a view of the outside world. The armchair and small round coffee table, which were initially intended for relaxation or socializing, have been repurposed as practical storage for work-related items like his backpack and chargers. This shift in usage demonstrates how functional needs can override the original design of a space.

Mecit's adaptation of his living space underscores a broader trend in contemporary residential architecture, where spatial boundaries are fluid. The living room, traditionally conceived as a social and recreational area, has been redefined to serve his professional needs. This transformation challenges conventional definitions of domestic spaces, showing that architectural design is often reinterpreted by the occupant based on necessity. The absence of a clear separation between work and leisure in Mecit's home further highlights this shift, as the living room no longer serves its original function but is now a dedicated workspace, utilized both day and night. [see Figure 8]."

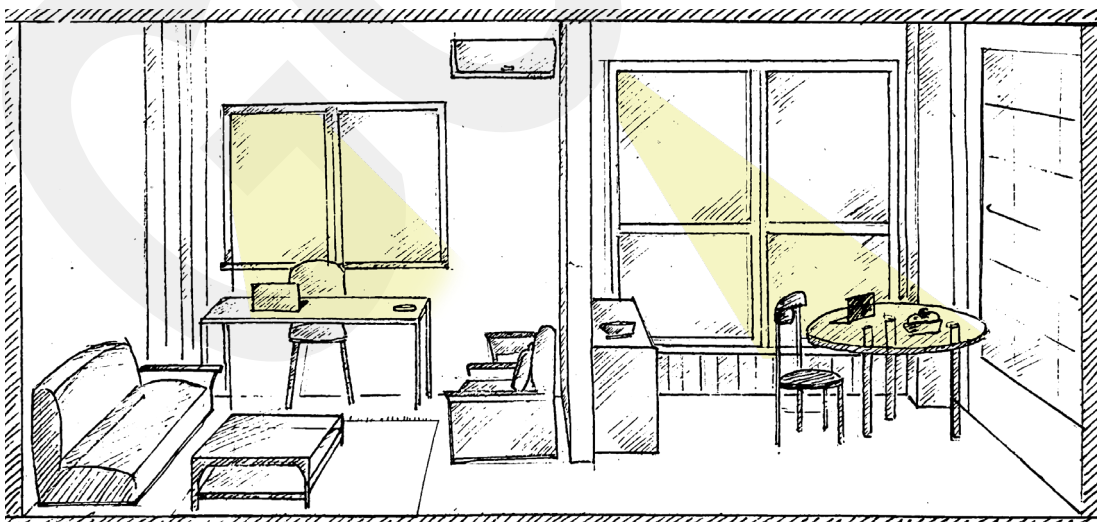


Figure 7: Section Perspective Drawing Illustrating the Workspace in Participant 1 (Mecit)'s Living Room and the Kitchen (Drawing by Berrak Oğrak, 2024)

Given his newness to the city, Mecit has limited social connections, resulting in few visitors to his home. When he does host guests, he typically entertains them in the kitchen, a space traditionally reserved for food preparation and casual gatherings. [see Figure 9]. This further emphasizes how Mecit no longer perceives the living room as a social space. Interestingly, the living room's intended role as a place for leisure—watching TV, relaxing on the sofa—has been entirely replaced by its role as a workspace, reinforcing the notion that functional use can override the original architectural purpose of a space.

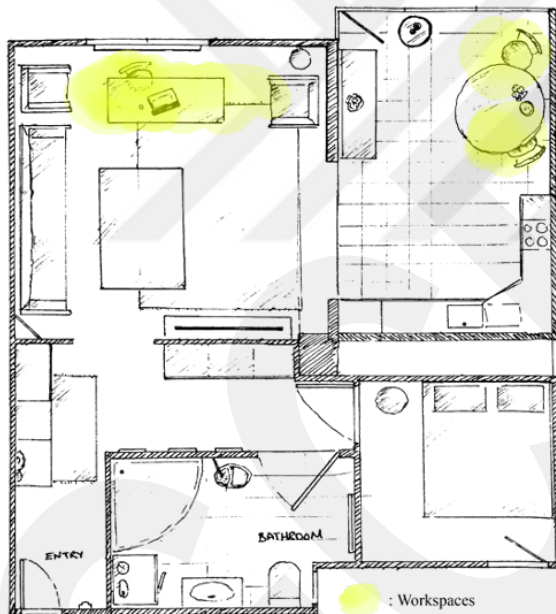


Figure 8: Floor Plan of Participant 1 (Mecit)'s Home, Showing Workspace Layout (Drawing by Berrak Oğrak, 2024)

Conversely, the kitchen plays a multifaceted role in Mecit's life, embodying the flexibility of modern living spaces. Its open-plan design, large windows, and views of the Danube River create a bright and airy atmosphere, making it an adaptable and appealing space. Although Mecit's workspace offers the same view, the combination of the kitchen's large glass façade and strategically placed mirrors enhances the natural scenery, making it particularly attractive on clear, sunny days. On such occasions, Mecit prefers to work at the kitchen table, demonstrating how architectural elements like window placement and the interplay of light can influence the emotional and functional appeal of a space.

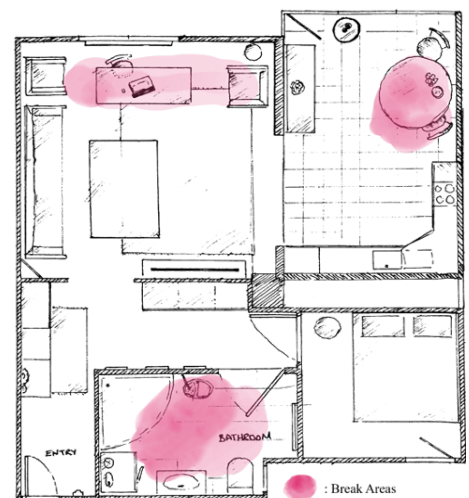


Figure 9: Floor Plan of Participant 1 (Mecit)'s Home, Showing Break Area Layout (Drawing by Berrak Oğrak, 2024)

When considering Mecit's daily routine, it becomes evident that his work-from-home lifestyle has developed its own structure. His day begins with breakfast, but before preparing his meal, he takes a walk to the nearby grocery store. He mentions that he intentionally avoids keeping large stocks of food, drinks, or cigarettes at home, which makes these daily walks a necessity. This routine mirrors the daily commute that many office workers experience, offering Mecit a chance to add some physical activity to his otherwise sedentary work-from-home lifestyle. Notably, he dresses appropriately before heading to the store, as though preparing for a day at the office. This act of getting dressed reinforces the structured routine he has established in his home-based work environment.

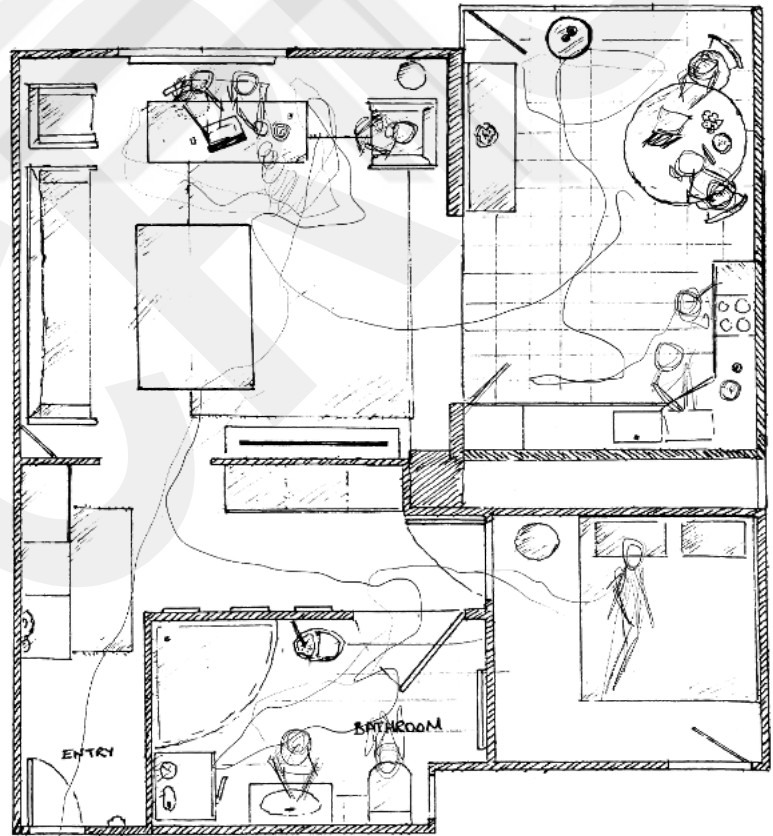


Figure 10: Floor Plan of Participant 1 (Mecit)'s Home, Illustrating Spatial Utilization and Circulation Flow During Daily Work Hours (Drawing by Berrak Oğrak, 2024)

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After breakfast, Mecit drinks coffee and smokes a cigarette at his desk, further emphasizing how central his workspace has become in his life. Even outside of working hours, he spends the majority of his time in front of his computer. During work hours, Mecit doesn't take breaks specifically for smoking or drinking Coke, his favorite beverage. Instead, he consumes these while continuing to work at his desk, blurring the lines between personal and professional activities. He even occasionally eats meals at his desk, a habit that demonstrates the flexibility with which he uses different areas of his home to meet both personal and professional needs. [see Figure 10]. As a result, the boundaries between his work life and personal life have become increasingly difficult to distinguish.

In conclusion, Mecit's living situation exemplifies how modern living spaces are often repurposed beyond their original architectural intent. Despite living alone and not having a dedicated home office, he has successfully transformed his living room into a functional workspace. This adaptation challenges traditional concepts of domestic space and highlights the flexibility required in contemporary homes. The furniture arrangement in his living room still mirrors that of a typical sitting room or guest area, yet Mecit has reinterpreted the space to serve dual purposes. When asked to describe this area, he refers to it as a "work or living area," emphasizing its multifunctionality. Similarly, the open-plan kitchen in his home functions as a versatile space for cooking, eating, working, and even socializing. The architectural features of the kitchen, particularly the large window and open layout, create a comfortable and enjoyable environment, further demonstrating the adaptability of modern residential design.

Murat, 30

Murat Usta, a 30-year-old architect and project manager, has been working from home for nearly two years. His transition to remote work began during the pandemic, and he has continued this practice while co-managing the architecture firm he co-founded. Murat lives with his family in their custom-designed home in Istanbul's Beykoz district, a rural and scenic area compared to the more urban parts of the city. [Figure 11] This house, a product of Murat's architectural vision and family input, is a testament to their expertise and serves as both a family residence and a dynamic workspace.

The household consists of five members: Murat, his mother, father, sister, and brother. This bustling family environment requires constant negotiation of space, where different rooms serve multiple purposes throughout the day. As an architect who values spatial design, Murat is acutely aware of how the family's use of space complicates the distinction between personal and professional boundaries. The house's architecture, while initially designed for communal family living, has evolved into a hybrid environment that accommodates both leisure and professional activities.

Murat's official working hours are structured from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., aligning with traditional office hours. However, these boundaries are often stretched due to the demands of international clients and time zone differences. His business partner, located in the United States, requires Murat to participate in late-night meetings or work sessions, leading to long, unconventional workdays. This irregular schedule underscores the erosion of traditional work-life boundaries, where time and space are dictated more by professional obligations than by the architectural intent of the home.

Murat's mornings begin with a light breakfast, typically prepared by his family, who leave for work or school early in the day. While his family members adhere to more structured routines, Murat enjoys a slower, more flexible start. On days without early meetings, he lingers over breakfast, often still in his pajamas, drinking coffee and mentally preparing for the work ahead. This casual approach contrasts with the formality of traditional office settings and reflects the broader freedom that remote work affords. The choice to remain in informal attire until later in the morning emphasizes the blurring of boundaries between his personal life and professional responsibilities.

Despite the informal start to his day, Murat adheres to specific rituals that help him transition into "work mode." After breakfast, he retreats to

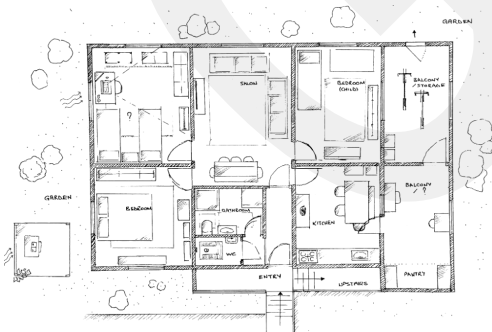


Figure 11: Floor Plan of Participant 2 (Murat)'s Home, Illustrating Spatial Utilization and Circulation Flow During Daily Work Hours (Drawing by Berrak Oğrak, 2024)

his bedroom to enjoy coffee and a cigarette, avoiding communal spaces like the kitchen or living room, which he associates with family interactions. His decision to isolate himself in his room, even for casual activities, underscores his need to establish some level of personal retreat within the home. These small, deliberate choices, such as drinking coffee in his private space, create a sense of separation between his roles as a family member and as a professional architect. [see Figure 12]

One notable aspect of Murat's routine is his approach to meals. While many professionals who work from home opt for quick lunches, Murat often indulges in a "serpme kahvaltı," a traditional Turkish breakfast spread, which he prepares later in the day. This extended, relaxed meal serves as a break from work, allowing him to reconnect with family or take a mental pause. The freedom to enjoy a leisurely breakfast illustrates the flexibility that home-based work offers, allowing Murat to personalize his daily routine in ways that would be impossible in a conventional office environment.

Murat shares his bedroom with his brother, but during the day, when his brother leaves for work, the room becomes Murat's personal workspace. This shared space poses challenges for Murat, who struggles with the lack of clear physical boundaries between his sleeping area and his professional environment. When asked whether he views the room as a bedroom or an office, Murat admits to feeling conflicted. The ambiguity of the space highlights a broader issue in home-based work environments: the difficulty of maintaining a psychological separation between work and personal life when both occur in the same physical space.

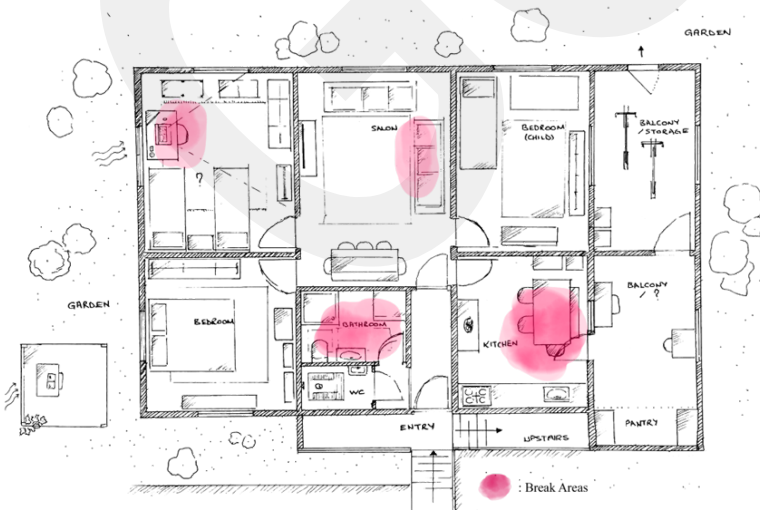


Figure 12: Floor Plan of Participant 2 (Murat)'s Home, Showing Break Area Layout (Drawing by Berrak Oğrak, 2024)

To create a clearer distinction between work and rest, Murat has rearranged the room's layout. His primary goal was to ensure that the bed—a symbol of relaxation—was not visible while he was working. The bed's presence acted as a visual and psychological distraction, tempting him to lie down during work hours. By repositioning his desk so that his back faces the bed, Murat has successfully minimized this distraction, allowing him to focus more effectively on his professional tasks. However, he remains conscious of the ongoing tension between these two functions of the room.

Murat also adheres to strict rules regarding eating in the bedroom. While many people working from home might snack or even have meals at their desks, Murat avoids eating in his bedroom, believing that food belongs in communal spaces. This self-imposed boundary is part of his broader strategy to maintain some division between his work and personal life. He acknowledges that, if he were in a traditional office, he would likely snack at his desk throughout the day, but the home environment allows for more deliberate choices about how he uses different spaces for different activities.

Murat's workday is punctuated by frequent video meetings with clients and colleagues, both in Turkey and abroad. The layout of his room has been carefully adjusted to accommodate these meetings. Initially, Murat was concerned about the bed being visible in the background of his calls—a concern both for his professional image and for his personal comfort. To address this, he moved his desk in front of a window that receives natural light in the evening. This change not only eliminates the visual distraction of the bed but also improves the lighting for his video calls, making the room feel more professional. [Figure 13]

Murat's decision to position his desk by the window reflects his understanding of architectural principles, particularly the importance of natural light in creating productive work environments. The soft evening light creates a welcoming atmosphere, enhancing both his mood and his professional appearance during video conferences. When asked whether this change was driven more by privacy concerns or professional considerations, Murat acknowledges that both played a role. The strategic use of natural light and background control highlights his ongoing efforts to create a workspace that aligns with both his personal comfort and professional responsibilities.

Despite the convenience of working from his bedroom, Murat has considered using other rooms in the house for work. From an architectural perspective, he believes the living room would be the most comfortable



Figure 13: Floor Plan of Participant 2 (Murat)'s Home, Showing Workspace Layout (Drawing by Berrak Oğrak, 2024)

option, offering ample space, natural light, and a more open layout. However, the living room functions as a central hub in the family home, with all rooms opening into it, similar to the traditional "sofa" layout in older Turkish homes. This communal design presents challenges for a modern work-from-home setup. The constant flow of family members through the living room makes it difficult for Murat to focus, forcing him to retreat to the privacy of his bedroom. Interestingly, even though his bedroom is a shared space, Murat often locks the door during working hours. This small act of creating a physical boundary is significant, as it allows Murat to assert control over his workspace and minimize interruptions from family members. The locked door becomes a symbol of his need for privacy and focus, compensating for the lack of a separate office. Murat's experience underscores the importance of perceived boundaries, even in spaces where clear physical divisions do not exist.

Murat's use of space within the home is also influenced by seasonal conditions. In the warmer months, he frequently works in the gazebo outside, enjoying the fresh air and connection to nature. This outdoor workspace provides a quiet and peaceful environment, away from the distractions of the house, allowing Murat to focus on his work while feeling rejuvenated by the natural surroundings. The gazebo becomes a retreat during the summer, offering an alternative workspace that blends the boundaries between indoor and outdoor living. During the winter, Murat moves to a "winter balcony," a small, stove-heated area that was originally designed as a seasonal outdoor space. The stove transforms this area into a warm, productive environment, making it a cozy and secluded spot for late-night work. This seasonal migration

between spaces illustrates Murat's adaptability and the dynamic nature of his home environment. Different architectural features, such as the heated balcony or the outdoor gazebo, are leveraged to meet Murat's evolving work needs throughout the year.

Murat's experience working from home highlights the fluidity of modern living spaces, where traditional architectural boundaries between personal and professional life have dissolved. The home, initially designed for family living, has been transformed into a hybrid environment that must accommodate both work and leisure. The constant negotiation of space, whether between family members or different uses of the same room, reflects broader trends in contemporary architecture, where flexibility and adaptability are key. [see Figure 14]

In Murat's case, the home is not just a living space but a constantly evolving environment where the lines between work, rest, and social life are continually renegotiated. The challenges of maintaining clear boundaries between work and personal life are exacerbated by the shared nature of the home and the multifunctional use of rooms. Yet, Murat's ability to adapt to these challenges, whether through physical rearrangements or psychological boundaries, demonstrates the resilience and flexibility required in a remote work environment. Murat's story serves as a broader reflection of how architectural spaces are being reinterpreted in the wake of increased home-based work. The rigidity of traditional space planning gives way to more fluid and adaptive environments, where the needs of work, rest, and social interaction are all balanced within the same walls.

Sercan, 36

Sercan, 36, has been working as a marketing manager for a software company for the past 22 months. Initially, he commuted to the office for the first two months, but the onset of the pandemic led his company to adopt a hybrid work model. Over the last 18 months, Sercan has chosen to work primarily from his home in Kuzguncuk, a decision driven by the convenience of avoiding the long commute to the office. His official working hours are from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., but he admits that these boundaries are flexible. He rarely works in the evenings or on weekends unless urgent matters arise, showing a clear commitment to maintaining a work-life balance. Though his daily routine typically spans around eight hours, he occasionally shifts

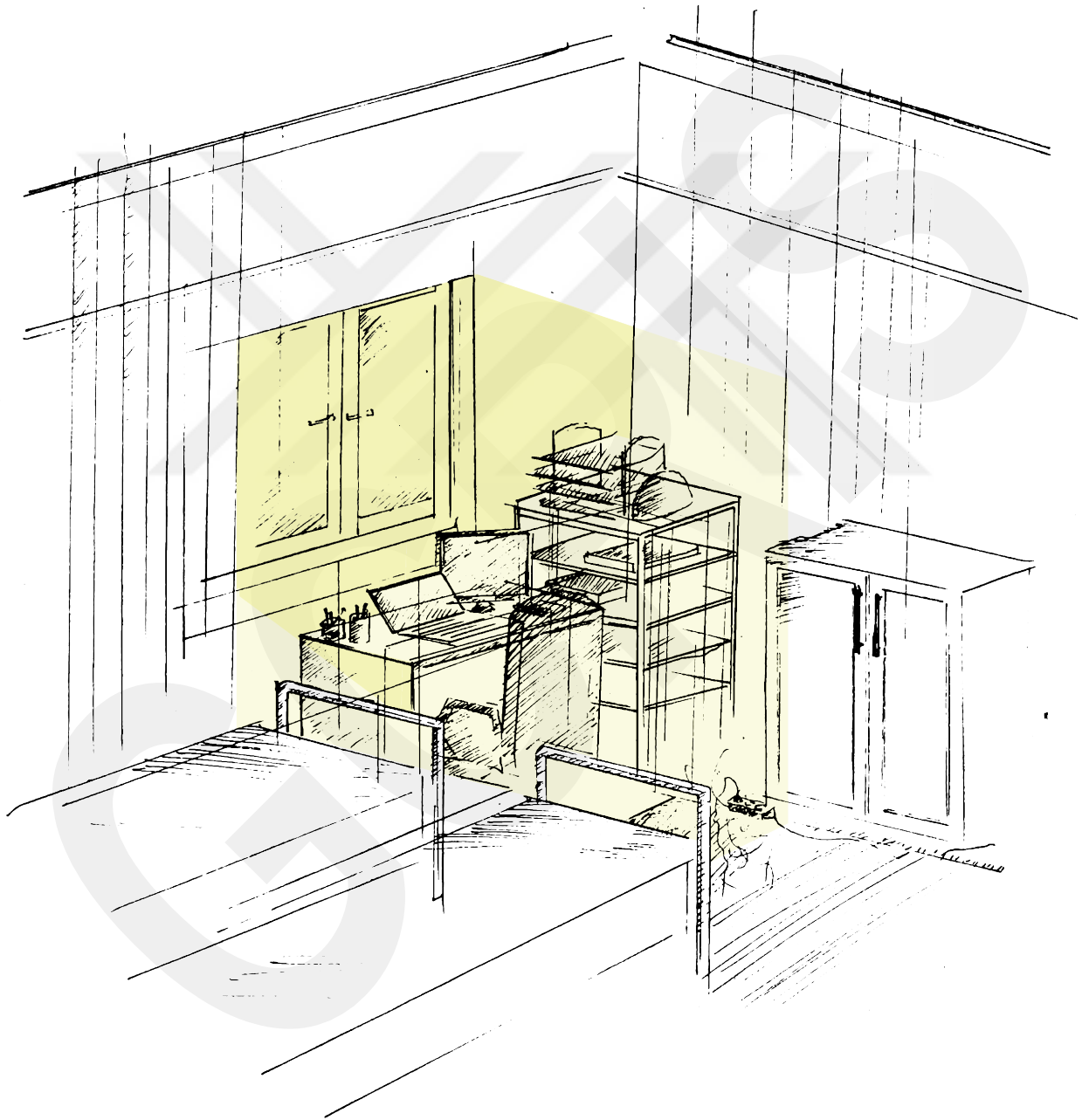


Figure 14: Isometric Drawing Showing the Workspace in Participant 2 (Murat)'s Bedroom, Organized According to Daylight Exposure and Furniture Layout (Drawing by Berrak Oğrak, 2024)

tasks to the evening to lighten the workload for the following day. However, this flexibility doesn't extend to consistently exceeding his set work hours, reflecting his effort to maintain limits on his professional time.

Sercan aspires to a structured pre-work routine that includes a seaside walk, a relaxing shower, and coffee before starting his day. However, he confesses that this ideal routine often gives way to extra sleep, a reflection of the more relaxed approach he has adopted while working from home. Instead, he enjoys a leisurely breakfast in the comfort of his living space, and before beginning his workday, he often attends to household chores such as cleaning and organizing. This intertwining of personal and professional tasks highlights how the boundaries between work and home have become increasingly fluid in his daily life.

When it comes to meals, Sercan's approach reflects the flexibility of his home environment. He typically enjoys light snacks for breakfast and allows himself the freedom to eat wherever he feels most comfortable—whether at the dining table, on the sofa in front of the TV, or even while standing at the kitchen counter. [see Figure 15]. The lack of a designated eating space during work hours illustrates how home-based work has blurred the lines between different spatial functions, merging areas traditionally reserved for personal use with professional duties.

Until three months ago, Sercan worked primarily from his sofa, where he could easily access both the television and the kitchen. However, the discomfort caused by poor posture and the temptation of lounging for extended periods led him to relocate his workspace to the dining table. This shift marked a turning point in how he manages the boundary between work and relaxation at home. The dining table, with its better lighting and proximity to power outlets, has provided a more structured and organized work environment. Despite the open-plan layout of his home—which blends the kitchen, living room, and dining area into one large space—this change has helped Sercan establish clearer work-home boundaries. By creating a more focused and intentional workspace, he has improved both his productivity and his ability to separate professional tasks from personal leisure.

One of the key benefits of Sercan's flexible work arrangement is the freedom to take breaks as needed. He explains that while there are times when he works for several hours uninterrupted, he also enjoys taking more frequent breaks to engage in personal activities. These breaks might include watching TV, browsing social media, or doing household chores—small tasks



Figure 15: Floor Plan of Participant 3 (Sercan)'s Home, Showing Break Area Layout (Drawing by Berrak Oğrak, 2024)

that allow him to mentally disengage from work. Interestingly, Sercan finds that performing household chores during his breaks helps him reset mentally and alleviates work-related stress. This illustrates how his flexible approach to breaks is essential in managing the blurred boundaries between work and home life, as it allows him to switch between roles with ease.



Figure 16: Floor Plan of Participant 3 (Sercan)'s Home, Showing Workspace Layout (Drawing by Berrak Oğrak, 2024)

Smoking presents another challenge to Sercan's effort to balance work and personal life. While he often smokes in his work area, he occasionally steps out onto the terrace for a cigarette. This flexibility in where he smokes further underscores the ongoing negotiation between personal habits and professional space within the home. Sercan also finds that working from home offers him greater freedom to handle personal phone calls, particularly those with family members. He even takes personal calls from friends while working at his desk if the situation allows for multitasking, demonstrating how his professional and personal tasks are intertwined throughout the day. Despite this overlap, Sercan maintains one firm boundary: he rarely enters the bedroom during work hours, reserving it solely as a space for rest. This conscious decision helps him create at least one clear distinction between his work life and personal life within his home.

In terms of his workspace setup, Sercan prefers a minimalistic approach. [see Figure 16]. His home office consists of only his laptop, chargers,

and headphones, all nearly organized on the dining table. He doesn't require additional storage or equipment, though he notes that clutter in his living space is a significant distraction and one of the primary factors that hinders his productivity. Since he works in the living room—an open-plan space where the kitchen, dining, and living areas merge—any clutter in these shared spaces directly impacts his focus. The absence of distinct physical barriers further complicates his ability to fully disconnect from household distractions during the workday, highlighting the challenges of maintaining a clear division between personal and professional spheres in an open-plan home.

Sercan and his spouse have worked to maximize the functionality of their small living space, designing it to be as flexible as possible. The open-plan layout, with no clear divisions between the kitchen, living room, and dining area, has created a seamless, multifunctional space that adapts to their varying needs throughout the day. Although Sercan now prefers working at the dining table, he acknowledges that he could theoretically work anywhere in the house due to the flexibility of the layout. [see Figures 17, and 18]. However, he also mentions that if they had a larger home with separate rooms, he would prefer to designate a specific space for work. This observation highlights the impact of the home's design on one's ability to maintain boundaries between work and personal life. For now, the open-plan design of the home allows for fluid transitions between personal and professional activities, reinforcing the adaptable yet blurred nature of these boundaries in his daily life.

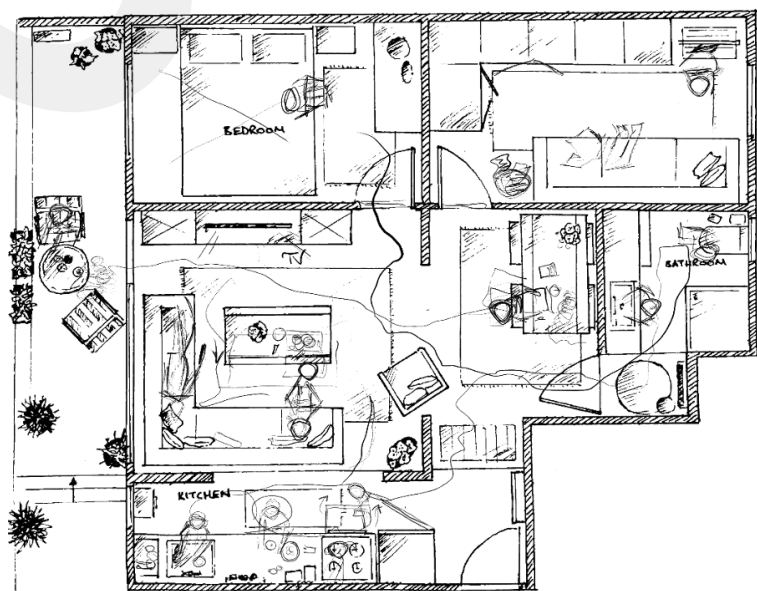


Figure 17: Floor Plan of Participant 3 (Sercan)'s Home, Illustrating Spatial Utilization and Circulation Flow During Daily Work Hours (Drawing by Berrak Oğrak, 2024)

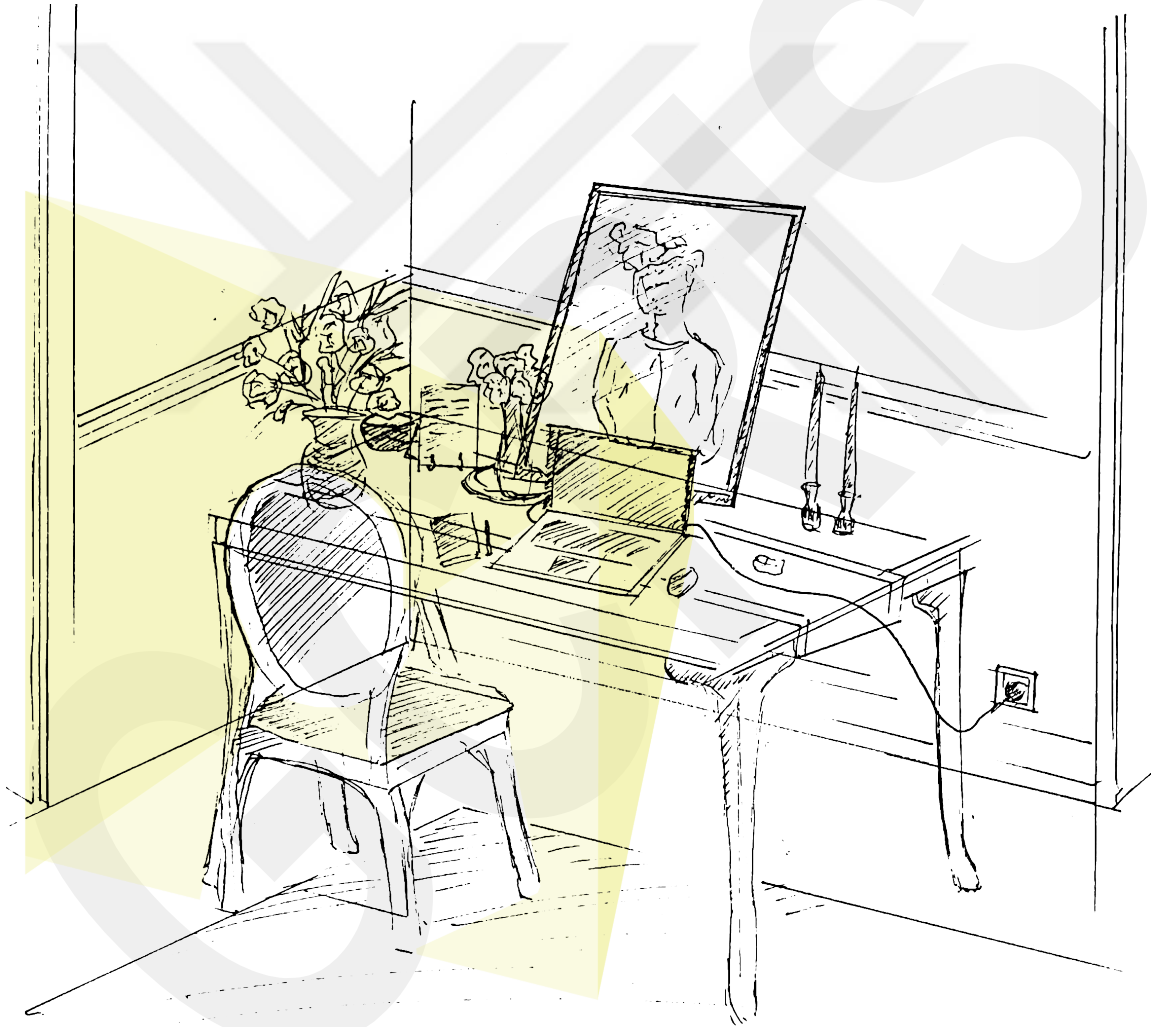


Figure 18: Isometric Drawing Showing the Workspace in Participant 3 (Sercan)'s Living Room, Using the Dining Table as a Workspace During Working Hours (Drawing by Berrak Oğrak, 2024)

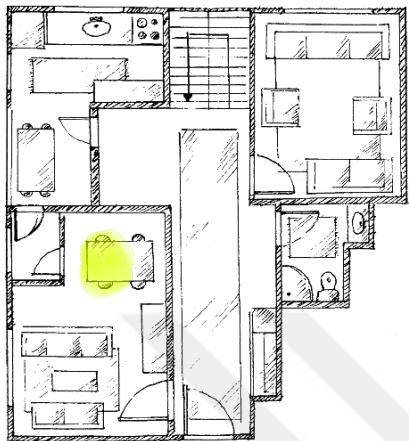


Figure 19: Floor Plans of Participant 4 (Yavuz)'s Home, Showing Workspace Layout (Drawing by Berrak Oğrak, 2024)

Yavuz, 30

Yavuz is a 30-year-old graphic and UI/UX designer who has been working remotely for nearly a year and a half. His transition to remote work began during the pandemic, when he initially worked full-time for a company. More recently, in the last two months, Yavuz has moved into freelancing, focusing on UX design projects. He lives with his father and two brothers in a duplex apartment. His home situation and family dynamics play a significant role in shaping how he navigates his workspace and the daily boundaries between personal and professional life.

The apartment is shared by four people, and each family member's schedule varies, especially since Yavuz's younger brother is still in high school and his father works as a farmer. Previously, the household included five members, but Yavuz's mother passed away recently, which has reshaped the family dynamic and how they use the shared space. Despite the emotional shifts, the home has remained the base for Yavuz's work life, requiring him to adapt to the evolving circumstances within his family.

Yavuz does not have strict working hours, a condition that allows him to manage his day according to his personal preferences and project deadlines. His company operates within flexible time frames, meaning he is not bound to a rigid schedule, though meetings and communication with clients typically occur between 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Outside these hours, Yavuz has full control over when he works, whether early in the morning or late at night. This flexibility is both a benefit and a challenge, as it gives him autonomy but also requires discipline to maintain productivity.

Before starting his workday, Yavuz follows a loosely structured pre-work routine. Despite not being a fan of breakfast, he insists on not starting his workday on an empty stomach. His mornings begin with a light snack, often accompanied by coffee, which he drinks while preparing for the tasks ahead. Coffee plays a central role in his routine, acting as a marker for the start of his workday. Unlike traditional office settings where morning routines might involve a commute or preparation to leave the house, Yavuz's routine is grounded entirely within the home, reflecting the shift in how spatial boundaries are negotiated in a remote work setting.

Yavuz's workspace is set up in a bedroom that he originally shared with his brothers. [see Figure 19]. However, when he began working remotely, his brothers made the decision to relocate to other rooms, leaving Yavuz

with a private space to use as his office. The decision was driven by Yavuz's irregular working hours, which often extend late into the night. His brothers, who needed uninterrupted sleep and personal space, voluntarily moved out to accommodate Yavuz's work schedule. This spatial adaptation within the home demonstrates how domestic spaces can be redefined based on evolving needs, where shared rooms transform into dedicated workspaces. The bedroom now serves as both a sleeping area and a home office. Yavuz has arranged the room in a way that maximizes natural light, positioning his desk near the window. However, he chooses to face away from the window to avoid distractions and to control the lighting. The room contains two beds, and Yavuz switches between them based on the time of day and the temperature. During the day, the bed by the window receives too much sunlight, making it uncomfortable for rest. In the evenings, however, Yavuz prefers the bed that is bathed in the morning sun, finding it more motivational to wake up to natural light. This small but significant adjustment shows how Yavuz has created personal systems to optimize his work-life balance within the same room.

When it comes to meals, Yavuz has a practical and flexible approach. While he avoids eating at his desk to maintain a separation between work and dining, he frequently enjoys breakfast or snacks on the terrace next to his room. [see Figure 20]. The terrace offers a peaceful space with a view, which Yavuz uses as a break from his workspace. On sunny days, he drinks his morning coffee there, reflecting on the day ahead or tending to his plants, which he keeps on the terrace. This simple activity of tending to plants becomes an essential part of his daily routine, providing a moment of calm amidst the blur of work responsibilities. Yavuz's use of his room as a multi-functional space blurs the boundaries between work and relaxation. While he initially preferred working in the living room, he soon realized that the overlap between his workspace and leisure space disrupted his focus. The open-plan design of his home, particularly in the shared areas like the living room and kitchen, made it difficult for Yavuz to fully separate personal life from work. As a result, he now confines most of his work activities to his bedroom, where he can control the environment and maintain some degree of separation from family interactions. Despite the physical confines of his workspace, Yavuz is highly adaptable. He occasionally shifts between rooms when he needs a change of scenery, although his primary workspace remains the bedroom. For meetings or moments of focused work, he ensures the space around him

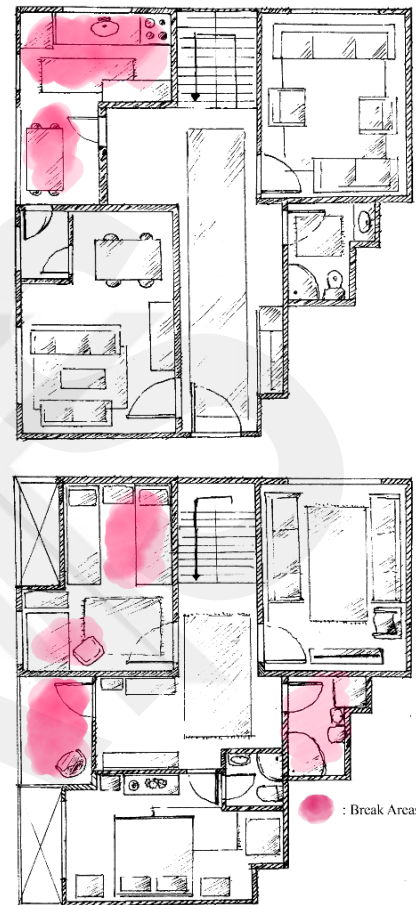


Figure 20: Floor Plans of Participant 4 (Yavuz)'s Home, Showing Break Area Layout (Drawing by Berrak Oğrak, 2024)

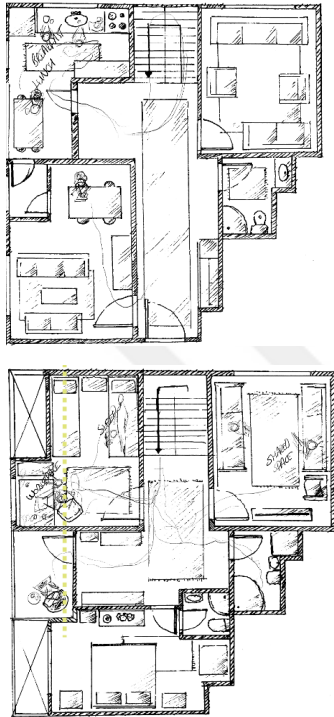


Figure 21: Floor Plans of Participant 4 (Yavuz)'s Home, Illustrating Spatial Utilization and Circulation Flow During Daily Work Hours (Drawing by Berrak Oğrak, 2024)

is clean and organized, helping him maintain mental clarity. His minimalistic approach to his workspace includes only the essentials: his laptop, a charger, and headphones. This simplicity allows him to move his setup easily if needed, reflecting his desire to maintain flexibility in both his schedule and environment.

Yavuz's home-based workday blurs the lines between work and relaxation, especially since he spends most of his time in the same room for both activities. His ability to adapt to different areas within the home, such as the terrace or dining table, adds a layer of flexibility to his routine. His breaks often involve stepping out to the terrace for fresh air or tending to his plants, illustrating how remote work can redefine traditional notions of what constitutes a "break" or a "workspace." [see Figure 21, and 22].

In conclusion, Yavuz's case study highlights the evolving nature of domestic spaces in response to remote work demands. The shared family home, which once had clearly defined functions for each room, has now adapted to accommodate Yavuz's professional needs. The fluidity of his work schedule, combined with his creative use of space, reflects the flexibility required in modern home-based work environments. Yavuz's working-from-home life shows how, even within a shared home, individuals can carve out personal spaces that meet their professional and personal needs in tandem.

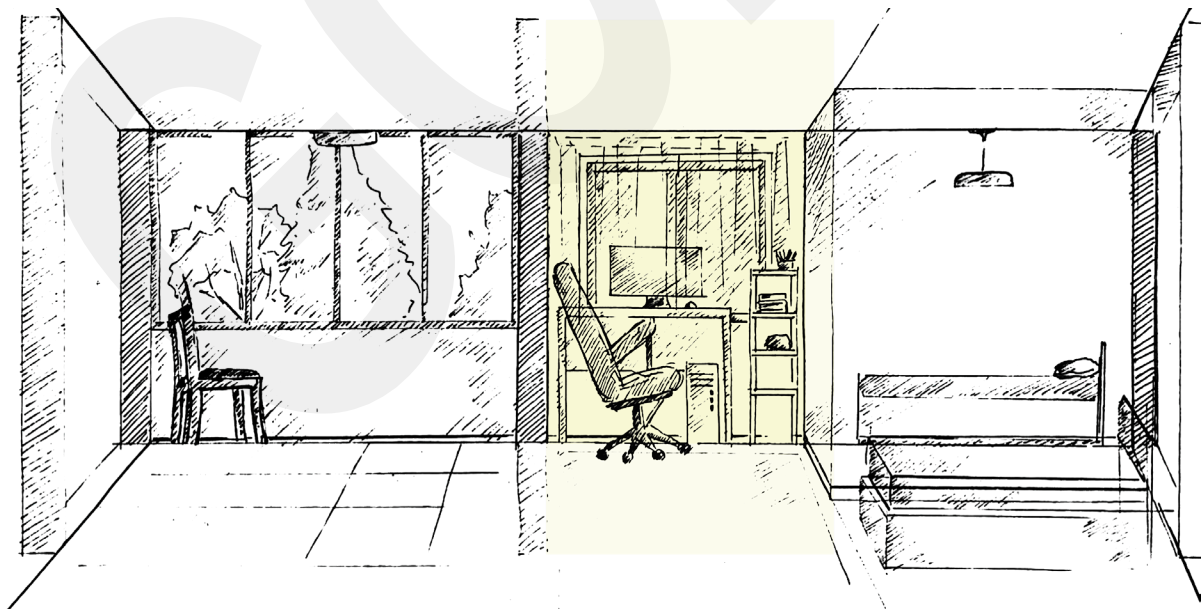


Figure 22: Section Perspective Drawing Illustrating the Workspace in Participant 4 (Yavuz)'s Bedroom and the Terrace Area (Drawing by Berrak Oğrak, 2024)

Arif, 29

Arif, a 29-year-old architect, has been working from home since the pandemic, transitioning fully to remote work once he started his own architecture firm. Before the pandemic, Arif worked in a traditional office setting, but the forced move to remote work revealed new possibilities for increased productivity and flexibility. Today, he manages a team of architects remotely, coordinating projects and client meetings from his home, which has evolved into a multi-functional workspace.

Arif's day starts early, driven in part by his responsibility for walking the family dog. This new addition to his household has reshaped his morning routine, ensuring that he begins his day at a fixed time, even though his work hours remain flexible. This early morning structure contrasts sharply with his pre-pandemic life, when commuting to an office allowed for a slower start to the day. Now, his mornings are anchored by this shared responsibility, which provides a sense of routine in an otherwise fluid schedule.

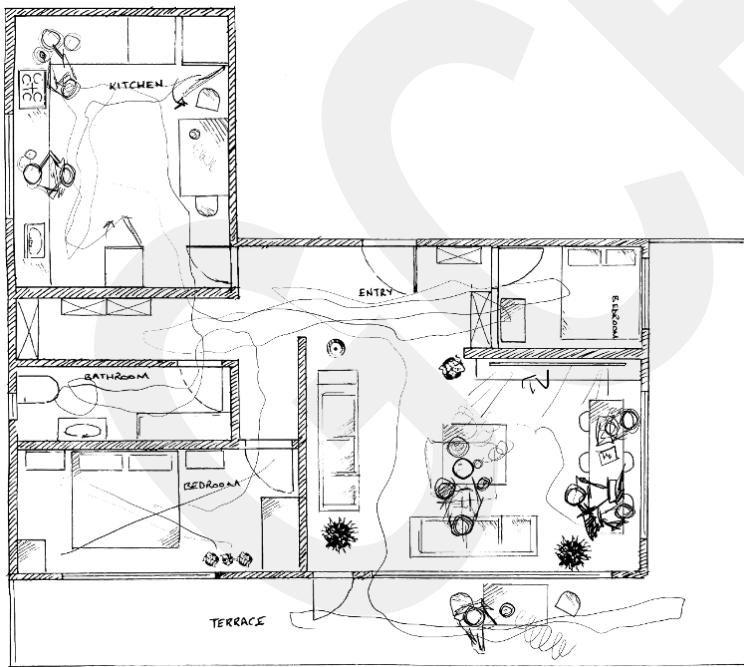


Figure 23: Floor Plan of Participant 5 (Arif)'s Home, Illustrating Spatial Utilization and Circulation Flow During Daily Work Hours (Drawing by Berrak Oğrak, 2024)

Breakfast is a central part of Arif's morning routine. He enjoys a traditional, leisurely breakfast, often stretching from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m., depending on the day's demands. While breakfast is prepared in the kitchen, Arif prefers to eat in the living room, [see Figure 23], where he can watch TV

and browse the news. This part of his morning helps him transition mentally from personal time to work mode. news. This part of his morning helps him transition mentally from personal time to work mode. His breakfast habits have changed since he started working from home; the absence of a commute allows him to take his time, something he could not do when he was working in a traditional office. After breakfast, Arif spends some time engaging in what he calls "distraction activities," such as watching videos or reading articles. This ritual helps him ease into work without feeling pressured. Arif believes that creative work, especially in fields like architecture, cannot be forced into a rigid schedule. For this reason, he allows himself the flexibility to start work when he feels mentally ready. On some days, this might be mid-morning, while on others, it could be closer to noon.

Arif's workspace is not confined to one area of the house. He prefers to move around, working from the living room, terrace, or even his bedroom, depending on his mood and the task at hand. The living room, where he spends most of his time, is set up with a desk facing the window, allowing him to work with natural light while keeping his back to the noise of the street. This positioning is deliberate, as Arif finds that the layout of his workspace has a significant impact on his focus and productivity. [see Figure 24]. However, when working on tasks that require creativity or brainstorming, Arif tends to move around the house, a habit. These walks around the house help him clear his mind and approach his work with a fresh perspective.



Figure 24: Floor Plans of Participant 5 (Arif)'s Home, Showing Workspace and Break Area Layout (Drawing by Berrak Oğrak, 2024)

Arif's flexible work routine extends to his breaks. He does not adhere to a strict break schedule, choosing instead to take breaks when he feels the need. These breaks might involve stepping out to the terrace, having a coffee, or even taking a short walk around the neighborhood. Smoking is also a part of his routine, and though he used to smoke only in the kitchen, the addition

of an air purifier has allowed him to smoke in the living room. This shift demonstrates how the home's functionality has evolved to accommodate his work habits, blurring the lines between personal comfort and professional space.

Lunch is typically eaten between 1:00 and 2:00 p.m., and Arif often prepares his meals in advance. He enjoys cooking, and the flexibility of working from home allows him to take his time with lunch, often preparing something fresh in the middle of the day. While his workday is fluid, Arif tries to maintain some structure, especially around meal times. If he has a busy schedule, he will work while waiting for his food to cook, using this time efficiently to stay productive.

When it comes to his work habits, Arif's approach is highly adaptable. He often shifts between tasks based on urgency, and his workspace is constantly evolving. The living room, which once served purely as a social space, has been redefined as a multifunctional area where Arif conducts most of his work. He uses the terrace for more relaxed work, like phone calls or meetings that don't require his full attention. His bedroom, once a place reserved only for rest, has also become a space for focused work when needed.

In terms of professional interactions, Arif and his team operate under a flexible working model, where team members are not required to adhere to a strict schedule. Instead, they focus on meeting deadlines and completing tasks, with team meetings held periodically throughout the day. This flexibility allows Arif to balance his professional responsibilities with his personal life, although he acknowledges that it can be challenging to switch off work when the home also serves as the office.

In conclusion, Arif's case illustrates the adaptability required for remote work, especially in a creative field like architecture. His ability to shift between different areas of his home reflects the fluidity of modern workspaces, where traditional boundaries between work and home life are increasingly blurred. Arif's home has adapted to meet his professional needs, transforming living spaces into functional work areas without sacrificing comfort. His story exemplifies the challenges and opportunities that come with working from home, where flexibility and structure must coexist in a constantly evolving environment.

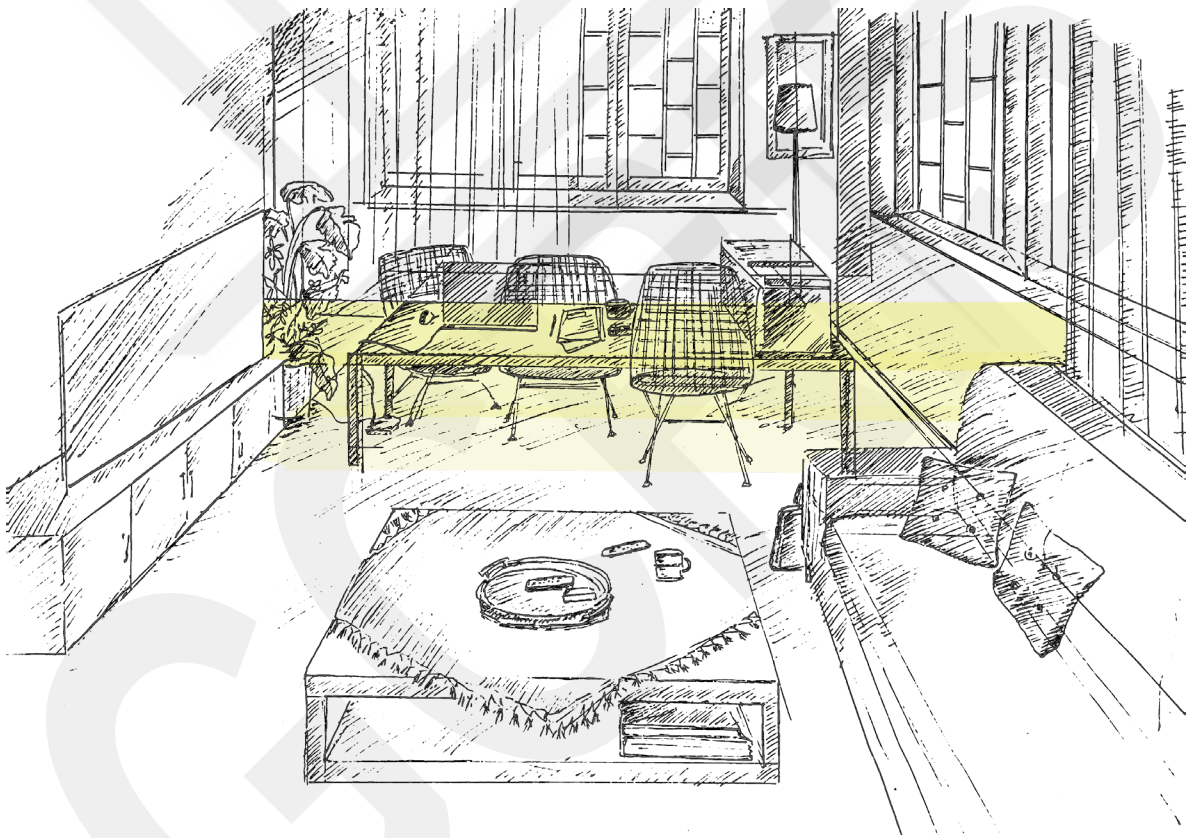


Figure 25: Perspective Drawing Showing the Workspace in Participant 5 (Arif)'s Living Room, Using the Long Table as a Workspace During Working Hours (Drawing by Berrak Oğrak, 2024)

2.2 Comparative Analysis of Workspaces

For those working from home, the constant overlap of personal and work spaces presented an ongoing difficulty. Since homes were not originally intended for dual purposes, participants had to adapt their living environments to accommodate their work needs, which had a detrimental impact on their mental health. How participants coped with these blurred boundaries varied depending on their living spaces, layout, and personal habits. This challenge is closely related to Merleau-Ponty's theory of "embodied perception," which asserts that spaces are not passively experienced but are shaped by the body's interaction and movement within them.⁵³ For people working from home, didn't the inclusion of workspaces into their homes change their bodily and mental interactions? Haven't these spatial and mental boundaries evolved? Christena Nippert-Eng's concept of "territories of the self" further explains how individuals attempt to separate their work and personal identities within the same physical environment.⁵⁴ Observing the participants, we can see some changes in the perception and definition of spaces, as well as in their identities.

For Sercan, Mecit, and Arif, the living room—traditionally a space for relaxation and social interaction—was transformed into a workspace, blurring the boundaries between work and home. This change caused significant psychological tension as participants struggled to make mental and physical distinctions between professional and personal time.

Sercan used his dining table as his primary workspace, and the absence of physical barriers between his workspace and the rest of the living room resulted in a continuous overlap of his work and personal activities. During working hours, the dining table became cluttered with laptops, cables, and documents, turning it into a professional area. However, by the evening, it needed to revert to its original function for family meals. Even when he worked from the coffee table, Sercan experienced the space in a way that suited both work and leisure without changing the position of objects. Despite taking breaks in the kitchen or in front of the TV, the proximity of his work equipment made it difficult for him to mentally relax. Visual work objects were always visible from anywhere in the living room or kitchen. Sercan's experience underscores Merleau-Ponty's idea that the body's interaction with space actively shapes how we experience environments—without clear spatial transitions, the body remains in a state of ambiguity between work and

53. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 112-130.

54. Nippert-Eng, *Home and Work*, 35-50.

55. Nippert-Eng, *Home and Work*, 35-50.

56. *Ibid.*

relaxation.⁵⁵ However, due to the strict time boundaries set by his company, Sercan undergoes a sharp mental transition after a specific time when he exits the workspace at home. His spouse, who is not present during work hours, continues to experience the living room and kitchen in their traditional definitions, unaffected by this transition.

Mecit faced similar challenges in balancing work and personal life in his living room. As a short-term renter, most of the furniture in his home belonged to the landlord. Therefore, Mecit did not bring many personal belongings into the space. Nippert-Eng discusses how personal objects function as "identity kits" within a space; however, in Mecit's case, the lack of personal items and the sole use of technology, such as his laptop, created a more undefined environment where boundaries weren't clearly drawn.⁵⁶ Due to his heavy workload, both for professional duties and personal projects, Mecit mainly used his living room as a workspace. When he tried to relax, the ongoing negotiation of space meant that even when he attempted to wind down in the evening, the sight of his work materials constantly reminded him of pending tasks, making it difficult for him to mentally disengage from work. On the other hand, for Yavuz and Murat, the bedroom offered a more private workspace, but this also introduced challenges in maintaining clear boundaries between rest and productivity. Traditionally associated with privacy and relaxation, the bedroom now served a dual function as both a workspace and a personal area, leading to blurred mental boundaries.

Murat found the privacy of his bedroom useful, but he still faced challenges. Murat's bedroom was spacious, allowing him to separate different zones for work and rest. Since he frequently participated in video conferences, he needed to create physical distance between his bed and the camera, so that personal spaces like his bed wouldn't be visible. This required him to rethink the spatial and design arrangement of the room. Despite this physical separation, working in a space meant for sleep blurred the mental boundaries between rest and productivity. Even after turning off his laptop and lights at the end of the day, the proximity of his desk to his bed caused the mental remnants of work to persist. This blurring reflects Nippert-Eng's notion that mental markers must be as strong as physical ones for spatial boundaries to fully exist.

Murat also found that, despite working from a personal space, he had to lock his door during work hours to establish clear boundaries. This action created a sharp distinction between work and personal time. The

crowded nature of his home required him to draw some spatial boundaries. Furthermore, the fact that he shared his room with his brother in the evenings introduced another boundary issue. His defined workspace sometimes shifted to the kitchen, winter garden, or gazebo, depending on seasonal, temporal, or household factors. This flexibility offered Murat a significant advantage and highlighted changes in how multiple areas of the home were defined.

In contrast, Yavuz adopted a more minimalist approach to his bedroom workspace. By keeping his work materials strictly on one side of the room and his personal belongings on the other, he was able to create a clearer division between his work and personal life. This deliberate spatial organization allowed him to maintain a sharper mental separation between his professional and personal activities. The separation also gave Yavuz a sense of control over his space, enabling him to more easily transition from work mode to relaxation. By maintaining minimal overlap between his workspace and personal space, Yavuz was able to avoid the blurred boundaries experienced by the other participants. However, while Yavuz tried to mentally reset by taking breaks on his balcony, these short breaks were often insufficient for establishing a long-term mental separation. Merleau-Ponty's theory of embodied perception asserts that the way our bodies interact with space defines how we mentally experience it, and for Yavuz, the proximity of his bed to his desk often made it difficult to transition between his professional and personal roles.⁵⁷

Participants used various personalization strategies to adapt their workspaces to home environments, adding personal touches to make the spaces more comfortable and familiar. However, in many cases, this personalization contributed to the blurring of boundaries between work and personal life, as the presence of personal items in workspaces made it difficult to maintain a clear mental and spatial distinction between professional tasks and private activities. The integration of these two roles in a single space complicated the process of mentally disengaging from work. This situation reflects Christena Nippert-Eng's theory, which explains how personal objects can change the perception of space, turning it into a blurred territory where work and personal activities overlap.⁵⁸

Participants, even without being fully conscious of the blurred boundaries between work and home life, relied heavily on routines and breaks to manage these boundaries. Daily rituals were essential for mentally transitioning between professional tasks and personal roles, but the

57. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 112-130.

58. Nippert-Eng, *Home and Work*, 45-50.

effectiveness of these routines varied depending on the spatial layout of each participant's home.

Both Sercan and Arif, working from their living rooms, saw coffee breaks as an opportunity to mentally reset. They would move to the kitchen for short breaks, hoping to create physical distance from their workspaces. However, the open-plan structure of their homes meant that their workspaces remained visible even from the kitchen, weakening the impact of these breaks. Arif particularly struggled to disconnect during breaks, as his work materials were always visible on the couch and nearby tables, making it difficult for him to fully switch off. The lack of physical boundaries between the living room and the kitchen hindered his ability to mentally transition from work to rest. The constant visibility of these workspaces aligns with Merleau-Ponty's idea that movement through space is crucial for mental transitions; without clear spatial separation, the mind struggles to shift from work to relaxation.⁵⁹

Yavuz and Murat, working from their bedrooms, were more successful in using routines to mentally reset. Yavuz often used his balcony for breaks, stepping outside for fresh air to distance himself from his desk and bed. This brief environmental change allowed him to physically and mentally disconnect from his work tasks, though only temporarily. The balcony became a symbolic boundary between work and leisure, helping Yavuz take a mental break from his professional duties. Murat, on the other hand, had the advantage of taking breaks in his garden or winterized balcony. These clear physical separations enabled Murat to more effectively transition between work and personal time, as moving away from his workspace reinforced his mental shift from work mode to relaxation mode. This aligns with Merleau-Ponty's theory that movement between spaces facilitates mental transitions; for Murat, these spatial shifts provided the psychological distance needed to balance his professional and personal roles.

Working from the living room, Mecit developed a routine of spending time in the kitchen or walking around the apartment during breaks. While this offered him some mental respite, the constant visibility of his workspace—even from other areas of the apartment—limited the effectiveness of these breaks. Even when he moved to the kitchen or hallway, the thought of unfinished work remained in his mind. The lack of a separate workspace made it even harder for him to fully disconnect, reinforcing Nippert-Eng's theory that blurred territories can emerge when spaces are used for multiple overlapping purposes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the concept of working from home is not a recent development but has deep historical roots, stretching back to times when homes served both personal and professional functions. Before the Industrial Revolution, homes often doubled as workplaces for artisans, merchants, and scholars. However, the establishment of factories and offices during the Industrial Revolution led to a distinct separation between work and domestic life, reinforcing traditional spatial and societal boundaries. This separation evolved into the office typologies we know today, which have undergone significant transformations over time. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, brought about a dramatic shift, thrusting the home back into its original role as both a living and working space. This sudden change challenged longstanding architectural and societal norms regarding the division between professional and personal spaces.⁶⁰

From an architectural perspective, the pandemic-induced integration of workspaces into homes has blurred the clear boundaries between personal and professional environments. Homes, which were initially designed to support leisure and familial activities, now must accommodate the demands of professional life. This fusion of roles has tested the limits of traditional residential design, pushing architects and homeowners alike to rethink the use of space within the home. The fluidity of space has become essential, as rooms such as living rooms, kitchens, and bedrooms now serve multiple functions throughout the day.⁶¹

Furthermore, this transformation challenges traditional notions of space and how we interact with it. When we explore the Latin origins of room names like *cubiculum* (bedroom) and *coquina* (kitchen), we see that these spaces were historically defined by the activities performed within them.⁶² Merleau-Ponty's theory of embodied perception supports this, suggesting that space is experienced and defined by the body's movements and interactions.⁶³ The pandemic has forced us to question these definitions as rooms once dedicated to specific activities now serve multiple purposes. For instance, living rooms have become workstations, bedrooms have transformed into offices, and dining tables have become places for both meals and professional meetings. This shift prompts the question: have our spatial

60. Rybczynski, *Home*, 64–75.

61. Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 112–115.

62. "The Etymology of Room Names and Their Origins," *Etymology Online*, accessed September 10, 2024, <https://www.etymonline.com/room-names>.

63. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 140–150.

64. Joyce Leung, "The Impact of Open-Plan Living on Work-Life Balance," *Journal of Work-Life Studies* 14, no. 2 (2021): 100-105.

65. Nippert-Eng, *Home and Work*. 35–40.

66. Leung, "The Impact of Open-Plan Living," 105-110.

and mental definitions of home evolved to accommodate this new reality?

To investigate this, I conducted interviews with individuals who have transitioned to working from home, focusing on how they navigate the physical and mental boundaries between work and personal life. I examined the daily routines of these individuals, paying particular attention to where they perform personal activities like eating, drinking coffee, and taking breaks. The interviews revealed that participants employ various strategies to manage the blurred boundaries between their professional and personal lives. However, the effectiveness of these strategies varies depending on the architectural layout and design of their homes. For example, those living in open-plan spaces reported greater difficulty in maintaining boundaries, as the absence of walls and partitions made it challenging to mentally disengage from work.⁶⁴

Christena Nippert-Eng's concept of "territories of the self" provides a useful framework for understanding how individuals reclaim personal time and space within a professionalized home environment. According to Nippert-Eng, daily routines and breaks serve as opportunities for individuals to mentally reset and establish boundaries between their work and personal lives.⁶⁵ My research found that while these routines are essential for maintaining mental well-being, their success is heavily influenced by the physical environment. Homes with clear divisions between rooms, such as those with separate offices or distinct zones for work and leisure, allowed participants to maintain stronger boundaries. In contrast, participants in homes with open-plan layouts found it more difficult to compartmentalize their professional and personal activities.

The architectural design of a home plays a crucial role in shaping how individuals experience and navigate the blurring of these boundaries. Factors such as the size of the home, the number of rooms, the presence of natural light, and the number of household members all contribute to how effectively one can manage the intersection of work and home life. For instance, homes with multiple rooms or designated workspaces provide clearer physical boundaries, which help in maintaining mental separation. On the other hand, homes with open-plan designs or limited space present challenges in delineating where work ends and personal life begins.⁶⁶

In addition to physical boundaries, this thesis also explores the mental and emotional aspects of the home-work dynamic. The interviews highlighted that even in homes with clear spatial divisions, the mental transition from work

to personal time can be difficult to maintain, especially when professional tasks and personal activities occur in close proximity. The presence of work-related materials—such as laptops, paperwork, and office supplies—within personal spaces serves as a constant reminder of professional responsibilities, further complicating the separation of roles.⁶⁷

Ultimately, the redefinition of home spaces due to remote work underscores the need for flexibility and adaptability in architectural design. The modern home can no longer be seen as a static environment with fixed functions. Instead, it must evolve to meet the changing needs of its occupants, serving both personal and professional purposes. This reconfiguration of space, prompted by the demands of remote work, challenges architects and designers to rethink how homes are organized, structured, and designed.

As we look to the future, it is clear that the boundaries between work and home will continue to evolve. This thesis contributes to the ongoing discourse on the future of architectural design in the context of remote work. By examining the spatial and mental challenges faced by individuals working from home, it offers insights into how homes can be designed to better support the fluidity of modern life. Moving forward, architects must consider how to create adaptable spaces that can seamlessly accommodate both personal and professional activities without compromising the well-being of the occupants.

67. "Home Office Design and Mental Health Implications," *Architectural Digest*, May 12, 2021, <https://www.archdigest.com/mental-health-home-offices>.

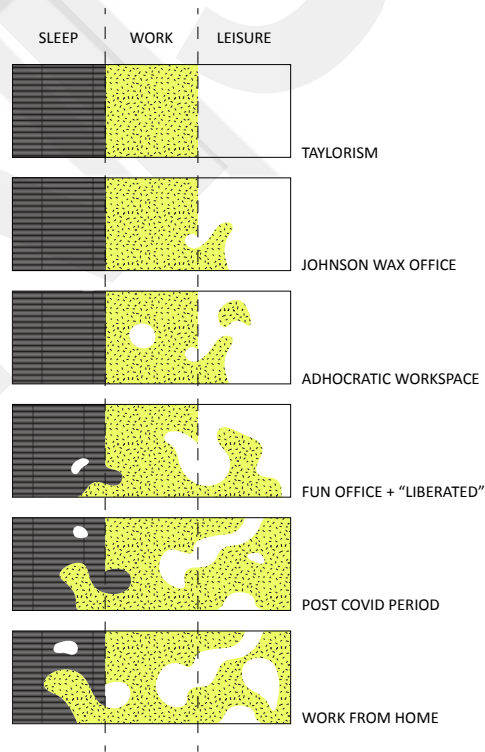


Table 3: Diagram of the Spatial and Conceptual Boundaries of Work, Leisure, and Sleep in Workplace Typologies (Created by Berrak Oğrak, 2024) "This table illustrates the architectural evolution of spaces allocated for sleep, work, and leisure across different historical and design contexts. It compares spatial arrangements in models like Taylorism, the Johnson Wax Office, Adhocratic Workspaces, "Liberated" Fun Office designs, the Post-COVID period, and remote work environments. The table highlights how each design philosophy addresses the boundaries between professional and personal life, with post-COVID and remote work setups revealing a significant overlap of spaces, underscoring the need for flexible and multi-functional architectural solutions."

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