

Foreword

Carlos Cavallé

The home as a direct subject of study has not received its due of late, yet the home as a social reality affects and is affected by most if not all trends examined by the social sciences and humanities. As a primary source of social capital, the home cannot be excluded from any consideration of social issues. Be that as it may, it is high time to focus the spotlight on the home itself: its intrinsic values and its capacity to imbue individuals and society at large with those values.

The book you have in your hands treats the home with the respect and seriousness it merits. Experts in law, health, economics, sociology, philosophy and geography directly engage with the home as an entity that both responds to and fosters new social realities.

As Chairman of the Social Trends Institute (STI), I find it especially rewarding to have helped fix scholarly attention on this most basic human building block—the home—as it is fundamental to STI’s mission.

STI was founded in 2004 with the express purpose of fostering understanding of emerging social trends by fomenting international and interdisciplinary research of the highest calibre and sharing its conclusions through publications like this one.

Issues relating to the home, family and marriage have had special relevance in STI’s research and publications. Of STI’s 40 publications to date, 17 have stemmed from Family Branch research projects, and much of the work done in STI’s other branches (Bioethics; Culture and Lifestyles; Governance; Civil Society) is also closely tied up with issues relevant to the home.

For instance, STI has been sponsoring the World Family Map project since its outset in 2011, providing a wealth of current data on more than a dozen family- and home-related indicators across the globe. This information is picked up by media all over the world that focus popular attention on the importance of the family as a wellspring of human capital. Other projects have stimulated public dialogue on marriage, or have addressed families from the perspective of globalization. And the project on ‘The Thriving Society’ challenged society to be its best self for

the good of all members. It is revealing that this project recognizes the family home environment as one of the five pillars required for the construction of a vital and prosperous society.

All of STI's work shares a root philosophy that while specific social conditions are mutable, there exist underlying permanent conditions of the human person that can serve as a foundation from which to respond appropriately to changes in the environment. Amidst all of these changes, some values, principles and practices remain the same, or at least should remain the same, no matter what innovations come along. They are unshakeable because they correspond to universal human nature, to the very essence of human beings.

The impetus for this volume on the home, then, was the desire to reconcile these two realities: recognizing, supporting and preserving what is essential, while at the same time understanding and adapting to what is changing.

I was privileged to lend STI's support to the Home Renaissance Foundation in the development of this worthy project, which has resulted in the present book, and with luck will go on to inform many discussions and initiatives to value the importance of the home in society.

Dr Carlos Cavallé
Chairman, Social Trends Institute



Social Trends Institute

FOSTERING UNDERSTANDING

The Social Trends Institute (STI) is a non-profit international research centre dedicated to the analysis of globally significant social trends. To this end, STI brings together the world's leading thinkers, taking an interdisciplinary and international approach.

Currently, STI's areas of priority study are Family, Bioethics, Culture and Lifestyles, Governance and Civil Society. Findings are disseminated to the media and through scholarly publications.

The individuals and institutions that support STI share a conception of society and the individual that combines deep respect for the equal dignity of human beings, and for freedom of thought, with a strong desire to contribute to social progress and the common good.

Carlos Cavallé, PhD, is President of the Social Trends Institute. Founded in New York City, STI also has a delegation in Barcelona, Spain. Visit www.socialtrendsinstitute.org.