

Chapter 2

Gender and Home in Migration



2.1 Introduction

It is now well established that gender and migration are inextricably interlinked (Cresswell & Uteng, 2012; Christou & Kofman, 2022; Yeoh & Ramdas, 2014). Gendered identities and power relations define and shape spaces and mobilities (Massey, 2013) and thus are pertinent in how processes of home-making and migration are both understood and experienced. Furthermore, gender is acknowledged as a social construct with meanings that can vary from context to context. For example, conventional understandings of migration have constructed it as normatively masculine, that is, emigration and return migration have been seen historically as naturally masculine endeavours. The archetypal conventional ‘migration story’ is one where men would leave their homes with the hope of finding success overseas and after a while return to their families, or their families would follow them (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994). Although this type of migration was and still is a common social phenomenon in different societies, this narrowly gendered idea of how migration, gender and family interrelate is one that denies the long history of female migration, child migration and family migration. Since the early 1970s, feminist voices have challenged traditional heteronormative assumptions about migration (Christou & Kofman, 2022; Kofman & Raghuram, 2015). The highly significant role played by women in global migration and global labour markets is now widely recognised; furthermore, scholarship agrees that migration is a highly gendered process and is shaped by the intersectionality of gender with race, ethnicity, nationality, class and sexuality (Mahler & Pessar, 2006).

At the same time, the idea of home-making as an unproblematically female practice has also been challenged, as feminist-inspired literature has highlighted the gender inequalities that are re-produced through dominant gendered practices of home-making in particular in the domestic sphere (Young, 2005). Feminist scholarship has highlighted how sites called ‘home’ are often places of oppression and violence against women (Blunt & Dowling, 2006; Hanmer & Itzin, 2000). In fact,

gendered identities and power relations are so deeply embedded in how we understand and do home that they cannot be disentangled. Hence, in this chapter we focus on the formation of gendered identities and their impact on understandings and experiences of home in migration. To clarify, in this chapter we do not aim to impose a binary on gendered identities, but we focus in particular on the categories of masculinity and femininity, reflecting the existing literature on home-making and migration. Our aim is to offer a novel reading into gendered practices of home-making in migration, by focusing on several dimensions of this relationship, given how central gender is to the imagining and doing of home.

Before delving into the literature on gender and home in migration, we present some insights from feminist scholarship that are particularly relevant to understanding the relationship between home and gender. This forms the backdrop to the subsequent section, which explores the shifting relationships between women's mobilities and constructions of home and homeland, before going on to explore how gendered spatial boundaries of home are re-worked and re-produced in contexts of migration. The next section focuses on migrant women's experiences of home-making and this is followed by a section that highlights emerging literature on changing gender relations and domestic masculinities in migrant homes. Finally, we address temporality, exploring how gendered notions of home in migration are connected to imaginaries of future homes.

2.2 Feminist Thinking on Home

Feminist scholarship has made a major contribution to how we understand both home and migration. Feminist scholars have been actively writing about home for a long time (Ahmed, 1999; Brah, 1996; Kaplan, 1987; Salih, 2003; Werbner, 1999; Young, 2005) as 'the home' has presented itself as the first space where gendered identities are shaped since childhood, learned through the process of socialisation and practised, and as a key site in the re/production of gendered power relations.

Feminist scholars (mainly within socialist and Marxist traditions) have criticised the division between the private sphere (associated with femininity and nurturing) and the public sphere (associated with masculinity), pointing to the role played by this division in unequal access to means of production (Fernández-Kelly, 2000). During industrialisation, private space became the sphere of so-called 'natural' practices such as reproduction and sustenance of the family, while the public arena was the site of social, economic and cultural production of capital. One of the most important assertions in feminist approaches is that home is *both* a private and public space where gendered, classed and racialised relationships are enacted and experienced (Longhurst, 2012) and where women are exploited through multiple systems of oppression (Kuhn & Wolpe, 1982; Vogel, 1983). Through socialist feminism the intersections of sexism, class oppression and racism have been illuminated (Joseph, 1981; Naples, 2003). Feminist scholarship across all its disciplines points to how, historically, women's presence in the domestic space not only has been an effect of

industrial capitalism but also a cause of their subjugation in relation to legal rights within the home sphere (Ardener, 1981; McDowell, 1999). As Fraser (2021, p. 150) puts it, the family provides ‘the social-reproductive conditions for capitalist production’. As such the domestic space earns an important role in the divisions of power based on class, gender and race.

One of the reasons feminist thinking has flourished in research on home is because gender is crucial to lived experiences of home and the practices that help in constructing and maintaining a home. Young (2005) writes about how gender has been fundamental in ownership, claims, boundary reconstruction, and titles relating to land and housing. Whilst men have benefitted from the privilege of being involved in construction and ownership of domestic property, women have been seen as ‘cultivating’ that space and preserving it through domestic practices, in other words, the real home makers (Young, 2005). McDowell (1999) argues that this power-imbalanced spatial division has shaped and been shaped by other social relations involving indirect control of (female) bodies. In other words, classed and racialised divisions in relation to private and public space are co-constituted with gendered power relations. Marxist and socialist feminism in particular has focused on how classed and gendered divisions in society are reinforced through and within the family (Delphy, 1984; Fraser, 1994). After all, capitalism needs the free care labour to look after society’s younger generations for its own survival.

These gendered divisions of labour at the level of the household are reflected in gendered international divisions of labour, including the expansion in recent decades of global migration of female labour to meet the demand for low-paid service work (often in sectors related to social reproduction) in countries of the Global North. Enloe (2007) argues that capital relations of gender have made women a docile and cheap workforce that can be manipulated through state, legal and physical coercion. It could be argued that the growth in migration of mostly female care workers for a global care system that attracts cheap labour from Global South to Global North countries, in effect is about making homes comfortable for some, at the expense of others being denied the possibility of having their families at home with them (Parreñas, 2008). These feminist insights have important implications for understandings of home in contexts of migration, drawing attention to the role of micro-level gender power relations within domestic (and transnational) migrant spaces and hence for the meanings of home for migrant households and families (as is explored later in the chapter).

From a different perspective, Black feminism has also been extremely influential in opening up important questions about family, home and migration. Hooks (1990) has argued that family and home have become an institution where women provide privatised care for children, older and male family members: home is the place where patriarchy and racism are experienced together. These views, alongside Crenshaw’s (1991) introduction of the concept of intersectionality, based on the interrelation of race and gender on a macro scale, have forged fresh thinking about home and gender. Hill Collins (2022) argues that the perception of motherhood and women’s housework as an unpaid ‘duty’ compared to male paid occupations outside the home has challenged the traditional view on family, but that this mainly white

model was not widespread among African American women. She argues that Black women have used a variety of strategies to undermine the oppressive power of patriarchy at home, and that the home can be seen as a site of empowerment as well as oppression. In particular, Black feminist scholarship has emphasised that for Black women, the home can be a place of refuge from a racist society (hooks, 1990). Furthermore, the recognition that experiences of home and migration are intersectional means acknowledging that migrants experience gendered aspects of home and mobility differently depending on their intersectional social positions in relation to race, class and migration history.

Thus, gender relations of home in migration have to be understood in the context of how they emerge from different histories of migration, colonialism and displacement and hence their politics of belonging. Ahmed (1999) for example is critical of the erasure of different histories of migration in narratives of home and migration. Boyce Davies (1994), by looking at the writings of Afro-Caribbean women in the USA, marks out a 'politics of location' in relation to Black women's experiences of displacement and argues that mythical representations of 'home' as a singular origin are undermined by their experiences. She points to the contradictions of the notion of home for those whose 'homes' have been colonised and for those who are regularly asked where they are from even as they are 'at home'. Hence, the meaning of home as an unproblematic place of origin and belonging is brought into question. Similarly, Brah (1996) questions notions of home in migration that assume a simple association between place of origin, identity and belonging, arguing instead that there is no essential connection between these. According to Ahmed et al. (2020 [2003]), there is a need to move beyond notions of home as something one leaves behind or that is fixed prior to migration. Instead, they argue that 'homes are always remade as grounds and conditions of family/work etc.' (p. 9) and home and mobility are seen as intertwined processes. The same geographical space can have different histories and meanings for different groups or individuals, linked to histories of colonisation, displacement and patriarchy (Brah, 1996).

Feminist scholarship from both traditions therefore has made a number of key contributions of value in analysing home and migration. First, it has highlighted how homes can be a site of both repression and empowerment for women. Second, it draws attention to micro-level intersectional gendered politics of home-making as well as situating home within the context of larger socio-political relations, economic structures and colonial histories. Third, it has undermined long-held assumptions about home as a fixed place of origin, and finally, it demonstrates how experiences of home are not equal for all.

2.3 Women's Mobilities and Home/Land

Within discussions on mobility and home, there lies an important aspect of home in migration: Who has the power to move? Who is being left behind? How does the gender of mobile and sedentary family members determine such statuses and how

are gendered experiences changed by these movements? With the expansion of migratory journeys in the latter part of the twentieth century, the notion of homes for migrant families (both in relation to the home that is made after migration and the home that is left behind) has changed. Traditional perceptions of men being mobile and women being sedentary home-makers were to an extent exacerbated by imperialist impulses towards nation-building. For example, McClintock (1995), from a gendered angle, looks at the formation of the British Empire and particularly focuses on the 'functional' role of women in its formation (see also the classic text by Yuval-Davis, 1997). Both McClintock (1995) and Yuval-Davis (1997) argue that the role of women in building domestic space and reproduction of subsequent generations was paramount to the reproduction of masculinity and nation as a collectivity. Aitken (2009) focuses on the role of domestic space in facilitating colonial homes, arguing that the 'civilised' domestic space of home was an important symbol and means of imperialism. Others have highlighted the role of traditional constructions of womanhood, often linked to motherhood, in dominant ideas of nation as home (Gray, 2004). Women's reproductive ability has been constructed as vital in the process of creating the nation and nurturing younger generations (Yuval-Davis, 1997), an expectation that can work to limit women's mobility.

However, research on female migration has challenged traditional constructs of 'men who migrate, women who wait' (Brettell, 2014) by showing how home, through the migration of women and border-crossings has been reconfigured and transformed (Wilkins, 2017). These contributions reveal how gendered constructions of space and place are challenged by the mobilities of women. For example, Giuffré (2017) has conducted research with Cape Verdean migrant women who leave their homes to go to Europe and North America, in order to support their families on Santa Antão island. The research shows that home for women who leave their children at the hands and mercy of spouses, extended family and even neighbours, at the minimum, contests traditional gendered roles in the construction of the space of home. Where the space of home, Terra Mamaizinha, was the known, domestic, and indoors closed off from the rest of the world as a feminine space, Terra Longe was the sea, the outdoors and outside world of home that was dangerous and where only men ventured to explore (Giuffré, 2017). The more permanent migration of women in these islands, as opposed to the cyclical and short-term migration of men, has made Terra Longe a feminised space. These gendered emigrations and the remittances sent home to pay for expenses of left-behind children bestow relative power to migrant women as heads of families, placing them in 'decision-maker' positions within households. These positions were held by men before the 1970s era of the emigration of women from the islands (Giuffré, 2017). This also meant that due to the involvement of other women as carers within the space of the immediate home or extended homes, women have gradually taken ownership of the process of receiving and managing remittances and nurturing of family members who have stayed put (Giuffré, 2017). What these shifting roles and understandings of gender in the context of spaces of Terra Mamaizinha and Terra Longe show is that within marketised liberal and global caring and migration regimes, gendered roles can change and, accordingly, the notion of home can change based

on these shifting positionings. Even on a small island, notions of mobility, home and gender have been transformed drastically based on the power that women gain by becoming the main breadwinners of their families.

The shifts in gendered relations between migrant and homeland that are triggered by women migrants' greater independence as a result of migration are potentially far-reaching. For example, Constable's (1999) research on Filipina migrant women highlights their ambiguous attitudes towards returning to the place they call 'home' (back home). While on the one hand, they feel a strong attachment to this home, they are aware that their financial independence would disappear after returning; in other words, their imaginings of home change with migration. This relationship between migrant home-making, gender and homeland is complex. Studies on return migration show that the notion of homeland as a place of belonging depends considerably on the social conditions under which people originally left for other destinations. Sometimes structures such as patriarchal systems or ethnic and religious persecution reduce the tendency to return and minimise attachment to homelands. For example, Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) finds that Mexican women in the USA are more likely to integrate faster compared to their husbands and have less tendency to return to their homelands. Similarly, Graham and Khosravi (1997) in a study with Iranian migrant men and women in Sweden, find that the interest towards returning to their homeland, Iran, is higher among men than women. They attribute this to the patriarchal norms that grant men more freedom and power and place women in inferior positions socially, legally and within families. Yeoh and Willis (2005) also consider return migration as a gendered translocation which improves men's status and reinforces notions of 'masculinity', distinguishing between the experiences of men and women.

Some studies which have looked at gendered relationships with homelands see them from an intersectional lens, analysing geographies of power and positionalities in terms of privilege and precarity. One of these is Wong's (2014) research on Ghanaian skilled migrant women who returned to Ghana at their peak of productivity. She argues that these women migrants' diverse resources and their privileged class positions provided them with networks for recurrent transnational mobility and granted them choice and agency. Therefore, women migrants' positions in relation to their homelands, when considered intersectionally, can be as autonomous as those of male return migrants (Wong, 2014). On the other hand, there are studies that look at migration and transnational gendered practices from the perspective of undocumented migrant women whose transnational mothering and home-making practices are impacted by their precarious and disadvantageous positions (Brandhorst et al., 2020; Carling, 2014; Fresnoza-Flot, 2009; Lourenço & Cachado, 2012; Madianou, 2012; Madianou & Miller, 2011; Pratt, 2012; Ramirez et al., 2007). These scholars explore how transnational families manage physical caring practices in the context of immobility, resorting to different forms of maintaining family relationships such as regular visiting and maintaining intimacy through the use of mobile phones, ICTs and gift giving and sending.

What can be seen from these experiences is that the relationship with home and homeland is a gendered process and needs to be located within the macro politics of home-making in the countries of origin and destination. The gendered relationship one has to a homeland is always impacted by other social locations; for example, to what extent does one have freedom of expression in the country of origin as a female activist or a transgender man? When considering these delicate nuances, we can better understand how making a home is (structurally) possible and impossible in certain contexts and for some people and not for others. It is through a relational treatment of gender that one can understand the complex web of meaning-making in relation to home and notions of homeland among migrants and the families of migrants who stay put in other transnational locations (Salih, 2003; Sandu, 2013; Väänänen et al., 2005).

2.4 Spatial Boundaries and Gender in Migration

Blunt and Dowling (2006), in their book, *Home*, draw attention to the intimate spaces of home and their interconnection with power and they argue that power relations define and determine the meanings of home in migration. They differentiate between different contexts of home ('imperial homes and home-making; homeland, nation and nationalist politics; and the politics of indigeneity, home and belonging') and show how home on a domestic scale is bound up with imperial, national and indigenous politics that are articulated through geographies of home (Blunt & Dowling, 2006, p. 142). Their critical geographical perspective on home gives a central role to gendered and racialized constructions and seeks to challenge conventional public-private distinctions; they show how internal politics of home are intimately bound up with 'domestic/national' and imperial politics.

In Marxist feminist analysis of domestic home space, the person who has the economic means is the one who decides over the distribution and the use of that space (Fraser, 2021). Within the private space then, the composition of material entities and symbolic values attached to them set out how a home is structured in relation to ownership, belonging, the right to use the space and so on. One cannot separate this from how power relations in place give to and/or take away 'spatial rights' from residents in a house (Bonfanti, 2021, p. 116). These gendered (and aged) power relations are articulated spatially in terms of boundaries of and in home – boundaries between public and private, inside and outside, ownership and lack of ownership.

Research in migration studies shows how patriarchal relations can be maintained and reproduced through migration, even if they change form (Gilmartin & Migge, 2016). These power relations are manifest spatially through and in the spaces of home after migration – the spaces of migrant households and of cities and neighbourhoods inhabited by migrant groups. Much literature reveals how gendered

public-private divisions are actually maintained and even reinforced after migration. For example, Gilmartin and Migge (2016) show how well-educated migrant mothers in Ireland find themselves struggling with lack of childcare in a context where family support is crucial and thus defining themselves primarily as mothers and becoming confined to the space of the home.

The maintenance of gendered public-private spatial boundaries is a common feature of migrant communities and households with a greater tendency for migrant women to be more restricted to private home and domestic work spaces than men, who are more likely to inhabit public spaces of work and leisure. This can be related to the gendered nature of migration regimes which reinforce gendered responsibilities of caring and breadwinning after migration. For example, Buckley (1997) writes about the invisibility of Irish women in Britain in the twentieth century, despite their vast numbers, which she relates to the tendency to confine them to 'sheltered' environments such as the private home and hidden sectors of the economy (cleaning, caring, catering). Recent research has pointed to the isolation and loneliness of refugee women in destination societies who are unable to access spaces of employment, education or leisure outside the home (Casimiro et al., 2007; Ghorashi, 2010). Even among more elite female migrants, Yeoh and Khoo (1998, p. 172) found that 'the lines that divide the public world of work from the private world of home in a new environment had hardened, resulting in their relegation to the latter'; so even though they are 'at home', they may not feel at home.

The gendered segregation of intimate private spaces has been particularly evident in many Muslim contexts. In countries where traditionally a strict code of conduct is observed in relation to gender and space, women's presence and mobility are closely guarded and controlled by the male family members, extended family members and even the morality police (Samuri & Hopkins, 2023). *Purdah*, or curtain, that also extends to bodily coverage by a veil, is a practice mostly aimed at protecting a woman's chastity by hiding her physical presence from male strangers' gaze (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2001). This is a deeply religious concept that has translated into how homes are compartmentalised into private and public spaces and even dividing the time of the day and night when staying at home is encouraged or enforced to 'protect' women and girls' honours (Guglielmi et al., 2021; Mim, 2020). Relatedly, in contexts of migration, practices that seek to control the mobilities of Muslim young women are evident, for example in the everyday patterns of use of public spaces by second and third-generation young Muslims in Brussels (De Backer, 2020). Macey (1999) shows how in Bradford, in the north of England, young Pakistani girls are banned from certain activities such as going to university, school trips, or sports, due to the community male members maintaining such gendered divisions within and outside their communities, mostly against females' will. Research also shows how young migrant women develop selective strategies to challenge the patriarchal boundaries that they face both within and outside their homes (De Backer, 2020; Ehrkamp, 2013).

2.5 Migrant Women, Home-Making and the Domestic Sphere

The domestic space of home plays a particularly important role in how gender manifests in any social arena and gendered power relations have historically shaped home-making practices and feelings at the domestic scale. Practices that make a domestic space meaningful and that denote it as 'home' are highly entangled with emotions (Belford & Lahiri-Roy, 2019; Boccagni & Baldassar, 2015; Dyck, 2018) both positive and negative (Brickell, 2012) and are historically embedded within gendered values and expectations. Hence, the domestic scale has been the focus of much research on how the micro-level politics relating to gender relations and the right to space are re-worked after migration, through a particular focus on migrant homes.

Some scholars have written about the importance of practices of cooking and eating as elements of home-making in migration and in the maintenance of transnational ties of belonging (Povrzanović Frykman & Humbracht, 2013). While food-work and the related space of the kitchen have been recognised as oppressive spaces for women, Meah (2014a) argues that for many migrant and ethnic minority women, these are also spaces of creativity, solidarity, sharing and love, from which they build new homes and develop a sense of place. In this sense, the domestic space of home can be a safe space for migrant women away from the racism of wider society. Longhurst et al. (2009), based on their research with migrant women in New Zealand, argue that for these women, the domestic space was one in which they felt very comfortable and relaxed, and for them cooking was a way of staying connected with past homes while recreating a new home.

This research points to an important argument that relates to the intersectionality of gender, race and ethnicity in migrant home-making experiences, which is that for migrant women who experience racism and denigration of their identities in their host societies, the domestic home space can represent a haven from this, and furthermore, can be a site of resistance to wider processes of home unmaking. Wallace's (2012) research reveals how Muslim women who experience anti-Muslim racism in the UK create the (domestic) home as a safe site of identity affirmation and political engagement, through their religious practice and their role as family educators. Similarly, Walter (2002) writes about the role of the private space of the home as a safe space for expression of Irish identities for Irish migrant households in Britain in the 1970s when anti-Irish hostility was common. Irish women played a crucial role in the maintenance of these homes as sites of negotiation of diasporic identities, through their roles as home-makers. Migrant women also often play a crucial role in migrant communities in host societies, as informal, often unpaid, community workers and key players in the maintenance of social and cultural migrant organisations (Buckley, 1997; Vacchelli & Peyrefitte, 2018; Yeoh & Khoo, 1998). Even though such work is often invisible, it is valuable in creating a shared sense of home (beyond the domestic space) among migrant communities (for example, Nititham, 2016).

While much of the literature on reproduction of the politics of home in migration contexts focuses on the role of migrant women and on the domestic space of home, Datta (2008) looks at how Polish men working as builders in London view their work in building homes for others as a validation of their masculine Polish identities and linked to imagined future homes in Poland. Similar to migrant women who leave their homes and children to care for other people's children and make others' homes as migrant workers (Fresnoza-Flot, 2009; Ukwatta, 2010), migrant men also engage actively in building the physical homes of others whilst temporarily live in these building sites or experiencing temporary homelessness. Therefore, practices of home-making in migration are bound up with the reproduction and re-working of both masculine and feminine identities.

2.6 Changing Gender Relations and Masculinities in Migrant Home-Making

So far, we have discussed how the gendering of home is maintained after migration and how traditional gender roles are reproduced, whether within the space of the domestic home, in migrant communities or at the level of discourses of nation or empire. However, some recent developments in discussions of gender in home-making processes tell us about how such traditional understandings of the space of a home are often challenged through the migration process (Gorman-Murray & Hopkins, 2014). An important line of enquiry here is scholarship on migrant masculinities, which points to some ways in which hegemonic masculine identities in relation to home are changing (Donaldson et al., 2009; Gallo & Scrinzi, 2016; Palenga-Möllnbeck, 2016; Walsh, 2011; Wojnicka & Nowicka, 2022). This body of scholarship opens up new ways of thinking about gender, home and migration; for example Ye's (2014) research on migrant masculinities and class is an interesting addition to this field.

Home is a material, spatial, temporal and symbolic process that rewrites itself within historical and cultural contexts, and in addition, social locations of gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality need to be understood as fluid and contingent in the process of transnational dislocation, or what Anthias (2008) calls 'translocation'. As such it is important not to presume that masculinity and femininity are fixed identities that only change when people move from one country to another; on the contrary, home as a gendered construct is constantly in process. But there are intricate differences when men and women move as opposed to when they do not, and this change of setting has important implications for their ability to make home. The questions that are raised here in relation to home and its gender, age and class power relations are amplified when migration experiences are added.

In our earlier research on home and belonging in Cork, the migrant men we interviewed discussed the act of cooking as a marker of their domesticated masculinities (Fathi, 2022). This led us to explore this new shift in relation to home and

gender and the idea of alternative masculinities. Recent studies of masculinities show that the practices and spaces of home cooking, previously considered a female domain, are arguably becoming more connected to men and masculine worlds (Cox, 2014; Gorman-Murray, 2014; Meah, 2014b). Szabo (2014) discusses how hegemonic masculinities become contested when men engage in home cooking as a feminine practice. Their study shows that the act of cooking, set in the kitchen space, is not an act devoid of any home politics. Gendered relationships within the space of home are complex but migration adds a new layer of complexity as new gendered relations can be formed after mobility.

When ethical and political values within a home do not correspond with the hegemonic values prevalent in the host society after migration, the space of home can become a site of contestation. Some studies with different migrant groups in family homes show that within the same family, gendered practices can change as a result of transformations in expectations of gender roles within the wider context of ethical and political values. For example, Shahidian (1999) in his research with Iranian migrants in Canada, argues that gender relations and sexuality change drastically as a result of migration when Iranian families move from Iran to Canada. He finds that in Iranian families in his study, leaving a misogynist regime, women find their public and private lives in many ways transformed in terms of their choices regarding gender roles, family life, occupation, dress code, and sexuality. Shahidian's (1999) findings are consistent with studies conducted with Iranian families in other countries (Graham & Khosravi, 1997; Fathi, 2017). These studies find that women in general can access the labour market more easily compared to men, which in many cases, leaves men to do more of the domestic chores, a position that contrasts with the traditional roles that men perceived for themselves (see also Hamada's 2017 research on Japanese house husbands). Shahidian (1999) argues that Iranian men in his study referred to themselves as *matarsak* (scarecrow), indicating the decline in patriarchal gendered divisions at home and undermining of their masculine identities. Hamada's (2017) research with Japanese migrant men who take on the role of house husbands finds that most men in her study expressed discomfort with taking up domestic chores that they would not do in Japan and they would not disclose their participation in them after migration.

Another similar study is Charsley's (2005) on Pakistani families living in the UK, where British Pakistani young girls marry young men in Pakistan who migrate to the UK subsequently. The reversal of the traditional roles within homes in such scenarios (the migrant groom being dependent on the wife and her family) is a traumatic experience for migrant men, as the new couple's idea of home is usually tied to traditional gender roles (the man being the sole breadwinner and the woman being a housewife). However, the new groom's dependence on his in-law family, as a result of his inability to find a job and thus to live separately from the in-laws, shows a reversal of this ideal home scenario (Charsley, 2005). This is mainly due to the fact that the purchasing of a house or affording to rent a place at the start of such transnational movements is not possible. The term *ghar damad* (meaning imported son-in-law who lives with the wife's family, or what is called house son-in-law) is then used as a term to define the reversed gender and social positioning roles and

specifically refers to the intersection of gender and home. It describes dependency and lack of individuality and in practice it is a derogatory term that participants in Charsley's (2005) study avoid using to refer to themselves. Yet they still see themselves as controlled heavily by their lack of financial and housing independence within restructured gendered household relations of power that redefine their gendered identities and bind them to the home sphere in a negative way (Charsley, 2005).

Hamada's (2017) research with Japanese migrant men in Australia focuses on transnational domestic masculinity and these migrant men use the domestic space, as house husbands, to perform practices such as home cooking that were/are seen as women's work in Japan. However, as Hamada (2017) argues, in post-migration contexts these traditional arrangements change mostly due to the positions that each spouse occupies outside the home and the necessary roles that need to be performed accordingly. Percot (2012) looks at the situation of migrant men from Kerala who emigrate as spouses dependent on their nurse wives or as 'followers' (no page number) to their wives who act as the main migrant applicant. She argues that these men find their positions disturbing, not knowing what careers they can pursue when arriving in a western country (in this case, Ireland). "This is not a man's job" explains Matthew, one of the participants who describes how as a family they decided he would look after their toddler child until she goes to school and Matthew can start a 'proper' job (Percot, 2012, no page number). Although we are mainly dealing with questions around socio-economic status and position of the migrant working spouses, at a deeper level, these testimonies tell a lot about how financial necessities are providing a new gendered reality to the home-making practices of migrant families.

Changing notions of masculinity and femininity, in relation to home-in-migration pathways are also intersected with global systems of racialisation and class. In the provision of care for families, cheap labour is provided by female migrants who travel to more developed countries to undertake caring positions, contributing to what Hochschild (2000, p. 131) calls 'the global care chain'. In affluent countries privileged women (and men) buy domestic help at low wages to raise their families, a form of employment that Gallo and Scrinzi (2016, p. 1) call 'outsourcing' of domestic/care tasks, mostly employing women in exploitative conditions who migrate transnationally to look after others' elderly, children, or the sick within families. They question the general tendency to view men as 'outsiders' to the domain of home and this matrix of the transnational caring system, and they argue that, despite more men taking up transnational domestic roles, this issue has not been taken up in the scholarship in home and migration.

In fact, migrant men working as domestic workers provide the focus for a notable line of research in relation to issues of gender, home and power. Whilst most of the literature that concentrates on 'hired help' or domestic workers focuses on women (Dodson, 2008; Fresnoza-Flot, 2009; Oishi, 2005), the provision of care for families using the cheap labour of migrant men who travel to more developed countries is also on the rise. Studies on migrant men working in internal spaces of homes as employees, workers, and helpers, reveal that they often do so as undocumented migrants, which facilitates their exploitation and sub-standard work conditions

(Gallo & Scrinzi, 2016). The implications for migrant masculinities are revealed in the constructions of gendered roles in relation to home-making. For example, Gallo (2006) in research with Malayali men in Italy finds that although practices such as cooking and laundry were seen as feminine, performing them was accepted with some unease. For this group of migrant men, who worked as domestic carers, performing jobs that usually belonged to realm of women meant that their gendered positions were seen as complex and ambiguous – on the one hand the men asserted their respectability due to their status as employees but on the other hand their Malayali masculine identities were threatened (Gallo, 2006).

Some have criticised the representation of the domestic space as essentially a feminine space and the view of men in domestic space as ‘out of norm’ (Gorman-Murray, 2008). It is important not to over-state the transformations in gender relations of the migrant home. Walsh (2011) argues that the site of home in the UK has become more gender egalitarian with a more even division of labour and that this shift is also visible among British ‘expats’ who live in Dubai. She shows that men in these households engage with housework as part of a practice of home-making, but importantly, even these activities remain limited and minimal.

Gorman-Murray (2008) argues that although feminist scholarship about home has helped a lot in understanding power relations at home, describing it in relation to femininity, it does little to help in understanding other gendered identities being shaped in the home sphere. This is an interesting and valuable reading of home and gender, as bringing masculinities (even as privileged subjects) into the home sphere helps to understand the processes through which marginalised positions are shaped. The shifts in gendered identities within households, especially migrant households, must be understood in the context of the larger social changes that have happened globally. These include women’s increased participation in the labour market, their higher rate of solo migration (with families and children left behind), of migrating as the main applicants in migration processes or as sole breadwinners after migration (thus becoming integrated within the social spaces of host countries faster their male spouses – Shahidian, 1999). However, when considering the structural im/possibilities of home, intersectional understandings of home and gender are important. For example, women in middle-class migrant families have different access to resources compared to those in economically fragile families. Peinhopf (2014) argues that when gender is intersected with class, different roles can be assumed and practised. We also need to be mindful about how other identity categories, such as sexuality, impact gendered experiences of migration (for example see Fortier, 2020 [2003]).

What we see here is that gendered roles are complicated particularly when we consider other identity categories and how they intersect with gender in migration contexts. In host countries, language and employment requirements, pre-migration histories of employment, sexual identities, ability and disability, number of children, language proficiency (among others) impact gendered identities and roles. After all, in the post-migration settings dominant and mainstream masculinities and femininities are continuing to exist in their traditional forms alongside new alternative forms because these intersectional identities are never fixed, even in the countries of origin

(see Anthias, 2008). As such, gendered practices still conform to ‘accepted’ and normalised roles for men and women, alongside alternative understandings of gender and home.

2.7 Gender and Future Homes in Migration

As discussed in Chap. 1, home in migration has a strong temporal element. Some research has pointed to the ways in which the temporality of home is related to certain gendered aspects of the experiences of home. For example, Datta’s (2008) research with Polish migrant men working in construction in London reveals how their plans to build houses in the future in Poland are highly significant to their constructions of home in migration. Though they have no immediate plans to return to Poland, the planned house is symbolic of a secure future home for either themselves or other family members and is bound up with their masculine identities as builders (Datta, 2008).

In our study with migrant men (international students and refugees) in Cork, Ireland (see Fathi & Ní Laoire, 2023), we realised that these young men had many aspirations towards fulfilling their dreams as outcomes of their migrations. All of them had invested a lot financially, emotionally and temporally to be in Cork at the time of the study (2019–2020). Some of them had been in the asylum process for almost a decade, others had spent tens of thousands of euros to obtain a degree from a western university to expand their human capital. However, the circumstances of their lives in Cork meant that their quest for a home was not achieved at the present time; they also did not think much of their homelands as homes anymore (they expressed no intention to return) but resorted to presenting their plans for making a home as a future endeavour. As such their active participation in either university or the labour market was viewed as a pathway to obtaining ‘reputable’ degrees, and/or saving up money to invest in purchasing a house, and ultimately, making a home of their own in the future. The most important aspect of these efforts at making a home, however, was the (gendered and heteronormative) aspiration to form a family with a wife and children (all identified themselves as heterosexual). Their aspiration to form such a family within a material home (thinking about or attempting at purchasing a house) and their imaginings about how it would look, where it might be (often outside Ireland), could be seen as a bridge towards a future place of belonging. This was envisaged as somewhere that would be different to their experiences of unbelonging and seclusion in Cork in the present time. A considerable number of the participants in this study did not feel a strong sense of belonging to Cork. Although they did not find much hostility as migrants, Cork as a city was not seen for them as a place they would call home; it was not homeland, and neither was it seen as cosmopolitan enough to secure a smaller network of likeminded people around them. Instead, as Fathi (2022, p. 1113) argues, for these young migrant men in Cork, the home in the present was only ‘a vehicle to achieve a home in future’. She cites from

a participant, Ranit, an Afghan refugee who had just become an Irish citizen and whose family lived in Manchester in the UK, as follows:

Ranit: I want to go to Manchester. Me and my brother we want to set up a business. Like I worked here for a few years in a mobile phone shop. I'm good with technical stuff, like computers and—he [his brother] said, 'If you come there, we might open up a shop'. Plus he said, 'I could find you a wife there!' (Fathi, 2022, p. 1113)

Here Ranit's masculine identity makes a link to this imaginary future home that will revolve around a business venture with his brother but also the possibilities of an arranged marriage there. What is important about Ranit's account is that he did not find his present (at the time of the interview) homely, even though structurally he was able to make a home. He was an Irish citizen (with an Irish passport) at the time and had full-time employment in a factory. What was missing in his life was the presence of significant others. Their absence impacted his sense of self, but also his masculine identity. The presence of a wife, in Ranit's family and culture is an important indicator of establishing a masculine identity, being a breadwinner and being heterosexual. This example reveals how gendered identity, home and temporality are intimately interwoven in migrant men's aspirations for home in the future: even if some aspects of home exist, there are still other factors needed to make a place feel like a home.

2.8 Conclusion

When discussing the intersection of gender and home, the politics of home that produce structural im/possibilities of home need to be considered. Home can include a variety of positive and negative meanings, a variety of traditional and alternative practices, and the reinforcement and reformation of gendered identities. This chapter looks at studies that examine changes, continuities and re-workings in traditional ways of understanding home and mobility through a gender lens. We examine how these hegemonic gendered understandings have shifted through the mobilities of men and women and how mobility and exposure to new value systems or new life opportunities have transformed migrants' relationships to home. Furthermore, the literature on migration, home and gender helps us to understand that masculinity is not necessarily equated to mobility or femininity to sedentariness. The processes of displacement and translocation add to the complexities that shape new meanings attached to home, homeland and imaginations of home in future, because they become intersected with systems of patriarchy, racialisation, discrimination and transnational class systems.

To conclude, the home space, traditionally seen as a feminised space, is constantly shifting in response to changing economic and social power relations before and after migration. It is evident from the literature that the economic power of one spouse (gender) can change the meanings of home in light of changing positions within domestic and public space. This gender dynamic is tightly linked to

economic power relations, underlying relationships of race and ethnicity, relationships between migrants and their significant others and the restrictions as well as opportunities of migration regimes. Thus the structural im/possibilities of home in migration always involve complex entanglements of gender with other power relations.

In examining the literature on home and gender, it is evident that there are several areas that are in need of further research. The first is how experiences of home among migrant men are impacted by intersections of class, race, gender and sexuality in migration. Our research suggests that single migrant men in their endeavours to make a home often link home-making to their future homes, but how these imaginaries are shaped by class, race and sexuality needs further research. Secondly, given that there is still a dearth of research in relation to LGBTQ+ identities and home in migration, this field is in desperate need of further research (Thongkrajai, 2022; Fortier, 2001).

The impact of divorce and spousal splitting on migrant men and women in their experiences of home-making is another area that merits further research. Some research suggests for example that there is a link between relationship breakdown, return migration and ideas about home (Ní Laoire, 2008). This area could be explored in relation to pre- and post-migration home-making, relationship break-ups and divorces given that many migration regimes necessitate a marriage or official civil partnership proof for granting or continuation of different forms of visa and such separations may contribute to structural impossibilities of making a home after migration.

Finally, given the rising number of migrant women and men who leave families behind with the aim of providing for them, the process of making home when one is aging while still separated from families is another area for further research.

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