

# Chapter 3

## Age and Home in Migration



### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter brings the focus to the importance of age, generation and life-course transitions in understanding migrant home and homing processes. While there is an emerging interest in the ways in which practices and experiences of home in migration are inflected by age, generation and life-course transitions, to date this literature has not been integrated into a focused discussion on the implications of an age and life-course perspective for understandings of migrant home. It could be argued that much of the migration and home literature tends to be based on snapshots in time without considering the complexities of life-course transitions or intergenerational dynamics over time; additionally, it is usually based on research with adults without consideration of children's perspectives. We address these lacunae in this chapter by reviewing existing literature to provide an intersectional perspective on how age, life-course and generation shape experiences of home in migration. We focus in particular on the ways in which regimes of citizenship, migration and residency shape homing possibilities for migrants in different ways at different ages and phases of the life-course.

First, we explain how we conceptualise age and life-course before moving on to discuss the ways in which these are bound up with the doing and imagining of home in migration. The subsequent three sections explore respectively, via reviews of existing empirical studies, home in migration through the lenses of ageing/older age, young adulthood and childhood. In each section, we also pay attention to the ways in which age and life-course stage intersect with other axes of difference, in particular gender, class and migrant status, in shaping structural im/possibilities of home in migration. Through this review, we develop an argument about how migration regimes open up and close off possibilities of making and feeling at home for migrants depending on their age, generational and life-course positions.

## 3.2 Conceptualising Age, Generation and Life-Course

While it has long been recognised that age is a key factor in understanding migration experiences, there has been a shift in recent decades away from viewing migration as an ‘age-specific’ phenomenon and towards a life-course perspective to understand the relationships between migration and age or ageing (Ní Laoire & Stockdale, 2016). The life-course perspective emphasises the idea of a continuum of phases and transitions that occur over a lifetime. Key to this approach is the recognition that while life-course phases are shaped by socially constructed normative expectations and institutional forces regarding when and how key life events occur, life-courses do not necessarily conform to expectations and are both fluid and geographically and historically contingent (Elder, 1994; Heinz & Kruger, 2001; Konietzka & Kreyenfeld, 2021). A life-course perspective emphasises how people make sense of the socio-structural contexts in which their life-courses unfold and in which age-related life events take place. Therefore, our analysis of home is organised around migration experiences linked to specific age-related life-course phases and transitions that we understand as both socially constructed and socially embedded organizing principles through which people’s biographies can be understood.

Taking a life-course perspective on migration is particularly valuable to understanding meanings of home as it recognises the temporal, biographical and relational dimensions to migration (Halfacree & Boyle, 1993; Kilkey & Ryan, 2021). It draws attention to the ways in which migrations and mobilities may be triggered by life-course transitions such as those related to the labour market or family formation, and how migration experiences are shaped by factors specific to different life-course stages (Gardner, 2009; Kobayashi & Preston, 2007). A life-course perspective can also enable a longitudinal and intergenerational perspective on migration, which is valuable in understanding how homing in migration contexts is a life-long process that is ongoing and never complete. Indeed, homing can be viewed as a search for temporal or biographical continuity in contexts of discontinuity (Boccagni, 2017). Expected life-course transitions and events can be interrupted by migration and the bordering practices of migration regimes, thus limiting the possibilities of making home and requiring adaptations and negotiations. Furthermore, migration and mobility can be strategies for finding or making home as people respond to changing circumstances associated with transitions through the life-course.

Closely connected to life-course and biographical perspectives on migration are the related concepts of generation and intergenerationality. Family relations play a crucial role in life-course and migration trajectories, and family is also intimately bound up with ideas of home (whether in positive, negative or ambiguous ways). Relations between different generations within the same family form a key part of the landscape of emotions, ties, imaginations and practices through which home-in-migration is constructed; hence a generational, or intergenerational, lens can shed further light on these processes, especially as they relate to age and life-course transitions. We pay particular attention to this aspect in our consideration of how young adults construct home in contexts of migration and im/mobility.

The next section focuses on ageing and older age, while the subsequent sections focus first on young adulthood and then childhood. Selecting these particular life-course stages is not intended to imply that others, such as middle adulthood stages, are not important or worthy of exploration in terms of their implications for constructions of home in migration. Indeed, there is scope for more migration/home research that pays attention to the role of age and life-course in middle-adulthood stages. However, here we focus on older age and youth as useful lenses through which to tease out the ways in which age and life-course transitions intersect with migration-related social structures and other power relations in framing the structural im/possibilities of home in migration.

### 3.3 Ageing and Home in Migration

The phase, or phases, of life called ‘old age’, ‘older age’, ‘ageing’ or ‘later life’ relate to a wide range of life-course transitions involving physical ageing as well as changing relationships to work, family and wider society, although it is recognised that ‘older age’ is a very fluid and broad category that can be defined in many different ways (King et al., 2017). We do not attempt a definition of it here but instead draw on the meanings given to it in studies which explore migration and home. Older migrants have become a focus of attention in policy and literature, in recent decades, in particular as the large cohorts of labour migrants who settled in expanding industrial economies of the West in the latter half of the twentieth century have aged and transitioned from temporary migrants to more long-term and settled residents in their host societies.<sup>1</sup> In addition, as transnational migration flows have become more complex, migrating *in* older age is becoming a significant phenomenon, in the form of, for example, retirement migration, return migration and ‘family-joining’ migration (King et al., 2017; Walsh & Näre, 2016). It is recognised that migrants have changing needs and priorities as they age, and there is particular emphasis by policy-makers and researchers on the importance of social policy in supporting older migrants (Wang & Zhan, 2021). However, there is somewhat less emphasis on the emotional and subjective aspects of life, such as feeling at home, for migrants in older age.

Some of the literature on older transnational migrants explores their intentions in relation to staying in their host societies or returning to countries of origin once they reach retirement age (Bolzman et al., 2006), this question itself pointing to normative expectations around the relationship between age/life-course and place (see also Ní Laoire, 2008). This question is fundamentally about the construction of

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<sup>1</sup>The use of the term ‘migrants’ to refer to people who may have been settled for a long time in their host society is questionable, but in the absence of an alternative term to refer to people who are living outside their country of origin, we use it in this chapter, with the caveat that we recognise it is not ideal.

home – where and what is home for people who have lived outside their countries of origin for a long time or people who migrate in older age? How do migrants make home in the context of ageing? Walsh and Näre (2016) point out that there has been little research on the concept of home from the perspective of transnational migrants in older age; their edited collection makes a significant contribution to filling this gap, along with a growing number of other studies exploring home and migration in older age, which are discussed in this section.

Popular discourses tend to associate older age with nostalgia (May, 2017) and sedentarism (King et al., 2017), suggesting that home for older migrants must be either ‘back home’ in the country of origin, or, to be found in an unchanging present location. However, many studies conducted with older transnational migrants challenge these popular presumptions. Instead, the research points to a number of key themes in older migrants’ narratives of home, which suggest that as they age, and life circumstances change, their idea of home shifts and changes also. These key themes in narratives of home among older migrants, around which this section is structured, are: temporality and home; deepening home roots in place; transnational home; and finally, ambiguous attachments to homeland.

### ***3.3.1 Temporality and Home-Making Among Older Migrants***

Temporality and the passage of time are key to understanding processes of homing and home-making for older migrants, both those who have lived a large part of their lives as migrants and those who migrate in older age. The passage of time means that relationships, attachments, circumstances and priorities shift and change with time, but time also allows for accumulation of capital (social, economic) as well as formal rights and entitlements, and the establishment of emotional connections, relationships and families, that may increasingly tie one to a particular place or places, or provide the impetus to move in order to deepen one’s place-based ties, that is, that allow one to strengthen a sense of home for older age.

Returning to the imagined ‘homeland’ or country of origin is one type of strategy undertaken by older migrants to secure home. However, this is often associated with a difficult process of re-making home and studies reveal ambivalent experiences of this process (Walsh, 2018). For some, the sense of loss for what they have left behind in their ‘migrant’ lives can be more pronounced than anticipated (Walsh, 2016). Ramji (2006) provides a more optimistic perspective. She shows that while Gujarati return-migrant retirees in India (from London) face disappointments and challenges on return, with time, they adjust and develop a sense of home that is located physically in Gujarat but also connected to London. They re-create home by holding on to aspects of their London lives, and continuously re-making their relationship to their ‘homeland’ (Ramji, 2006). Thus, home-making in older age is revealed as a continuous process of connecting past, present and future.

Deepening a sense of home that is emplaced within the host society is a strategy that is more feasible than return migration for most older migrants. Often, despite the strength of the dream of returning 'home', as time moves on this dream is relinquished due to the realities of weakening ties to past homes, together with the growing realisation that one's social and instrumental attachments are to the current place of residence (for example, Leavey et al., 2004). It seems that locality/place takes on more importance to older migrants' everyday lives, as they accumulate place-based ties over time and transition out of the labour force. As Ryan et al. (2021), point out, this does not mean that a sense of belonging in place is a given; on the contrary, it is constantly worked at through a process they term 'embedding', or developing attachments and belongings over time. Liu et al.'s (2021) study with older Chinese migrants in Australia, for example, explores the role of locality in their home-making processes, highlighting everyday routines in neighbourhoods, as well as the ways in which older migrants make houses and gardens meaningful as repositories of memory and expressions of ethnic identity, but also ways of becoming rooted in the new place. Their research illuminates how these spaces of gardens, homes and local neighbourhoods provide opportunities for older migrants to make home in ways that are firmly rooted in the 'here and now' but also connected temporally to other places and times. We explore this phenomenon of deepening home roots in the current place of residence in the next sub-section.

### ***3.3.2 Deepening Home Roots in Place Among Older Migrants***

The 'here and now' of home-making for older migrants is bound up with the nature of their ties and attachments to the current place of residence, which, as migrants age, comes increasingly to mean home to them. This can be related to a number of factors, which we explore here. One of the most important is proximity to family. The importance of living close to grown-up children (and grandchildren) is a recurrent theme discussed by older migrants (those who have children) with regard to their decisions to either move to, or remain in, their host societies (for example, Buffel, 2017; Gardner, 1999; Ryan et al., 2021; Wang & Zhan, 2021). In other words, living close enough to immediate family members so that they are part of their everyday lives is a key element of feeling at home in that place, and, for many older migrants, home is simply where their children and grandchildren are. Co-presence enables older migrants to provide care to their children and grandchildren and to construct a shared sense of home in place, in an ongoing process of meaning-making with their family members (Liu et al., 2021). Home in this sense is about the familial relationships that structure and give meaning to everyday life, and the importance of co-presence to this. Co-presence is, of course, integrally bound up with migration/staying possibilities, as the possibility of living close to one's family is tied up with *freedom* to move or stay or to be joined by family members.

This points to the crucial role of immigration status and social class as intersectional power relations that produce differential access to transnational mobility and family reunification.

A second rationale commonly presented by older migrants for deciding to stay in the host society and make their home there is access to social security, welfare and healthcare services (Buffel, 2017). For example, Hunter's (2016) research highlights the key role played by access to healthcare and welfare in France for retired labour migrants, many of whom use instrumental narratives of home when explaining their decisions not to return permanently to countries of origin. Hunter (2016) distinguishes between these instrumental narratives of home (related to access to services) and the more emotional narratives of home used by participants when referring to family and community ties to countries of origin. However, Wang and Zhan (2021), in their research with older Chinese migrants in the US, bring the instrumental and the emotional together. They propose that instrumental decisions are also about *feeling* at home in the place where one's needs can be met – in other words, pragmatic considerations are important not just for meeting health and welfare needs, but because of the sense of security and belonging that comes from knowing these needs are being and will be met in the future. In this way, the work of both Hunter (2016) and Wang and Zhan (2021) highlights how home for older migrants needs to be understood in relation to the structural possibilities of material realities related to legal status, economic security and accumulation of statutory entitlements that become particularly important in later life. Such entitlements can accumulate over time for ageing migrants who, during the life-course, can become more settled in a host society, thus enabling structural possibilities of feeling secure, safe and cared-for, and hence of feeling at home. This gives added emphasis to the notion of spatial security being at the heart of homing in migration, connecting the emotional to the legal/instrumental aspects of feeling a secure sense of belonging in place.

Local co-ethnic communities are also a key aspect of feeling at home in the place of residence for older migrants (Ballantyne & Burke, 2017; Buffel & Phillipson, 2016; Meijering & Lager, 2014). While studies that access migrant participants through ethnic community organisations are likely to find that these communities are significant to their participants, and it is important not to generalise from these, their insights are nevertheless valuable and suggest that the connections within local ethnic communities that migrants actively foster can be central to the process of making home in the here and now. In fact, local demographic shifts which change the ethnic composition of neighbourhoods, leading to the disintegration of former ethnic communities, can be experienced by long-term migrant residents as a loss, undermining their sense of local belonging and contributing to a sense of dislocation, as found by Ryan et al. (2021) in their research with older migrants in England.

However, the lived experiences of migrant community life can be very different for men and women, pointing to gender as a differentiating factor intersecting with age and migration in shaping the im/possibilities of home for migrants and their family members. Gardner (1999) found that experiences of life in London were very different for the older Bengali men and women who were participants in her

research. The female participants, who had arrived later than their male counterparts and who worked mostly in the home, were more affected by a sense of loss of the community-oriented life they had left behind in Bangladesh. Gender therefore was a key factor shaping the structural possibilities of feeling at home in London; for many older Bengali women, their role as ‘home-makers’ (in the conventional sense) meant that their lives were to some extent marked by isolation and the un-homeliness of the structures of family life and immigrant housing in London (Gardner, 1999). Similarly, Buffel’s (2017) research with older Turkish migrants in Brussels points to the role of gender in shaping the possibilities of doing home for older migrants, in a context where men tend to have more access to neighbourhood public spaces than women and, hence, more possibilities for placemaking and developing the local attachments that are important to home-making for older migrants.

### 3.3.3 *Transnational Home and Older Migrants*

While ties in the place of residence (relating to family, neighbourhood, community and services) are key to feeling at home for older migrants, transnational dynamics and mobilities are also part of ongoing constructions of home for this group. Developing transnational living arrangements can be a strategy for meeting social, emotional and instrumental needs that are important for feeling at home, that change as one ages and that cannot be met in one place. For many people, retirement and related life changes can provide opportunities to live more transnational lives, whether that is in the form of retirement ‘lifestyle’ migration (often seasonal), seasonal migration to join family members who have migrated, or for existing migrants, more frequent and regular trips to the country of origin, or a more permanent return (Ciobanu & Hunter, 2017; Gustafson, 2008). For example, Tiaynen-Qadir (2016) refers to ‘transnational grandmothers’ who are key actors in transnational home-making among families living between Russian Karelia and Finland, through their frequent cross-border movements and practices to sustain their families and for whom ‘home’ can be understood in transnational and mobile terms.

However, an overview of studies with older migrants who develop transnational mobilities in later life demonstrates the very different circumstances and levels of resources that distinguish different migration types and highlights the role of inter-sectional power relations and migration regimes in shaping the possibilities of transnational home-making. For example, there are important differences, rooted in migration regimes, between the circumstances of affluent older lifestyle migrants maintaining dual homes and those older migrants for whom transnational living arrangements are a manifestation of a precarity that continues into later life and that limits the possibilities of feeling at home.

For example, middle-class retirees moving from northern to southern Europe can often afford to maintain homes (and hence social and emotional ties) in two countries (Gustafson, 2008; Huber & O’Reilly, 2004). According to Huber and O’Reilly (2004), for British and Swiss retirement migrants in Spain, who often spend part of



the year back in the country of origin, the ability to maintain these social and family connections to their countries of origin is a key factor in feeling at home in Spain. In a different context, Chi-Yan Sun's (2016) research with Taiwanese ageing return migrants shows that the predominantly middle-class backgrounds of the participants had enabled them to retire comfortably to Taiwan while continuing to visit their children in the US regularly, thus enabling a comfortable sense of home through ongoing transnational mobility.

On the other hand, a number of studies seem to suggest that for ageing migrants from working-class or low-income backgrounds, while return migration or seasonal circulation might be desired, it is often not considered to be feasible due to lack of economic resources or reliance on social security entitlements that tie one to one place of residence (Hunter, 2016; Leavey et al., 2004). In these circumstances of spatial immobility, the structural possibilities of home may be more restricted, requiring more work to create a sense of home. Some studies refer to the sense of security that ageing migrants gain from having lived in the same place for a long time (Buffel & Phillipson, 2016; Leavey et al., 2004), key aspects of feeling at home. This may be particularly significant to ageing migrants of limited means, for whom a transnational move would be a risky strategy. In this way, older migrants of limited means may experience immobility and have fewer (structural) possibilities of constructing a continuous sense of home that is connected to a place of origin. Thus, the role played by social class and its intersection with ageing and migration regimes cannot be overlooked.

### ***3.3.4 Attachments to 'Homeland' in Older Age***

For economic, personal or family reasons, many older transnational migrants decide not to return, or do not even consider returning, to their country of origin. A realisation that return is not feasible is highlighted in some studies as part of the process of ongoing home-making in the place of current residence – returning 'there' is unlikely and as a result there is more emotional investment in making 'here' home (Buffel, 2017). However, this in itself may require a process of adjustment for older migrants, reassessing relationships to place of origin and place of residence and managing the tensions between their attachments to both as they work at home-making in later life. For example, in Ballantyne and Burke's (2017) research with older Irish migrants in Australia, participants expressed both a sense of instrumental attachment to Australia and symbolic or emotional connection to Ireland, articulated in an expressed but not-realised longing to return 'home' to Ireland.

Gardner (2002) is particularly illuminating on the important symbolic role of narratives of attachment to 'homeland' for older migrants who remain in the host society. She shows how older Bengali migrants in the UK maintain a narrative of longing for the homeland, even though their personal or social connections to the



country of origin may be quite weak, given the length of time since their original migration, and return is no longer a realistic possibility. Gardner (2002) argues further that the shared narrative of longing for the homeland plays a crucial role in identity construction in the present, bound up with being part of a Bengali community in London and as a way of connecting to cultural memory and expressing dissatisfaction with aspects of life in the UK.

Buffel's (2017) research, with Turkish migrants in Brussels, finds that the maintenance of ties both to co-ethnic communities in the host society and to country of origin are very important to older migrants. A strong sense of localised social (and familial) capital in Brussels as well as a persistent connection to Turkey enable the older migrants to feel at home in Brussels while also maintaining a transnational sense of home. The latter is facilitated by the ease of transnational mobility in their case. Paradoxically, it is this ability to travel and keep in touch frequently that enables them to make their lives and homes in Brussels. Therefore, in very different ways and contexts, both Gardner's (2002) and Buffel's (2017) studies point to the importance having a relationship of some kind with the 'homeland' or country of origin as an integral element of making one's home in the host society, a suggestion which also finds resonance in research with transnational retirement migrants (Huber & O'Reilly, 2004).

This point is supported by Liu et al. (2021) in their study with older Chinese migrants in Australia, in which they argue that being able to integrate aspects of their old and new lives is a central aspect of making home in the new context. The enduring connection to 'there' makes it possible to make one's home 'here'. However, while this bifocal dynamic is a way of negotiating tensions between here and there and finding a sense of home, it can also be a constant reminder of unfulfilled longing to return for some (Ballantyne & Burke, 2017). As the bifocal dynamic is not equally available to all, older migrants of more limited means, who are by necessity tied to a less mobile lifestyle, have fewer (structural) possibilities of constructing a continuous sense of home that is tied to a place of origin. Pérez Murcia (2023) poignantly demonstrates how a sense of home is profoundly disrupted for people ageing in transnational families when geographical distance and migration circumstances make it impossible to ensure co-presence for end-of-life and death-related family obligations and expectations to be fulfilled.

Maintaining transnational ties in older age is also a gendered, as well as classed, phenomenon. Fesenmayr's (2016) research with older Kenyan female migrants in London points to normative gendered expectations regarding their responsibilities towards family and kin in the place of origin – meaning that return is deferred or avoided. This means that life is constantly on hold as they do not view London as home, though they are also reluctant to return to where 'home' is (Fesenmayr, 2016). Thus, intergenerational and gendered tensions in transnational families regarding financial and caring responsibilities shape structural possibilities of home for older migrants.

### ***3.3.5 Summary: Structural and Intersectional Im/Possibilities of Home for Older Migrants***

This review of literature points to the importance of connections and capital, relating to family, locality, community, the state and the transnational dimension, in enabling a sense of spatial security for older migrants in their host societies. Having a sense of material security while being close to, and having everyday connections with, family and others within the local neighbourhood, including co-ethnic communities, and while not losing important transnational connections, together play a key part in feeling at home in the place of residence. For some, this sense of spatial security is further bolstered by the ability to maintain more than one home and to move frequently between them. Regardless of the circumstances, as Walsh and Näre (2016) argue, home is very much about social relationships, whether these are localised or transnational, and for older migrants, the nature of these relationships and connections may shift as they age. Contrary to popular discourses that associate older age with stasis, the literature on older migrants demonstrates the ongoing and dynamic nature of homing in later life. Hence home-making, especially for older migrants, is an ongoing process of rethinking and negotiating identities and relationships.

Feeling at home is realised through a sense of belonging linked to personal histories in place/s as well as the legal and socio-economic status that permits the imagining of future lives in that place. Most of the empirical studies discussed above have been conducted with older migrants who have some kind of citizenship or legal status in their place of residence. This is likely to be a function of the passage of time, as migrants accumulate rights and entitlements over the life-course, though may also reflect a gap in the literature in relation to meanings of home for older migrants with precarious legal status. The security afforded by legal status in older age is clearly an important aspect of being able to create a sense of home in migration. For example, although not focused on the notion of home, research by Benson (2020) reveals the implications of legal insecurity for older migrants, using the case of the post-Brexit situation of British migrants in France, pointing out that some have the resources with which to navigate the uncertainties while others do not and are left in precarious situations – indicating that there is potential for further research which explores how older migrants in situations of legal/rights insecurity construct home.

Finally, the possibilities of feeling at home in migration in older age are integrally bound up with socio-spatial structures relating to age, gender, social class, race/ethnicity and residence status, as these variably open up or close down possibilities in places of residence for feeling safe and secure, for co-presence with families and social networks and for maintaining valuable transnational and transcultural ties. Changing circumstances in older age can limit the possibilities of feeling at home as not all older migrants have the same access to capital and resources with which to manage emerging tensions surrounding ‘home’. Therefore, home as a

sense of spatial belonging and security is not equally available to all older migrants; instead, it can be elusive or problematic, and should be understood within the context of intersectional power relations and migration regimes.

### **3.4 Home, Migration and Young Adulthood**

Powerful assumptions about what home is, and where it is located, are closely bound up with questions of ‘the right time’ in one’s life to be mobile or not. While western normative ideas tend to seek to fix the very young and very old in place, young adults are expected to be on the move and free of place-based ties. Of course, the social meanings of ‘childhood’, ‘young adulthood’ and ‘older age’ vary significantly from context to context, and transitions associated with these life stages are geographically, socially and historically contingent, diverse, and much more complex in reality than the norms and expectations that surround them (for example Harris et al., 2020). The rest of this chapter draws on existing literature to challenge normative ideas about home and migration in both childhood and young adulthood, by exploring how home is understood, constructed and experienced by young people living in contexts of transnational migration, focusing firstly on young adulthood before moving on in the next section to childhood.

#### ***3.4.1 Youth, Mobility and Home***

As Thomson and Taylor (2005) articulate, young people navigate questions about home and leaving/staying while they are also navigating the journey towards the kinds of adults they want to be and becoming gendered and classed selves – processes of identity formation that are often bound up with questions of place attachment, belonging and im/mobility. Young adulthood is also a time of societal expectation, as societies impose their ideals of future full adulthood on young people, who are expected to orient towards becoming their future selves, in a sense putting the ‘here and now’ in a liminal state and putting certain human needs on hold.

In western contexts, it can be argued that ‘youth’ has become normatively constructed as a life-stage associated with mobility (King, 2018). The future achievement of personal and career success has become constructed, through neoliberal discourse, in terms that are associated with the idealisation of a kind of hypermobility, linked to normative constructions of ‘youth’ or young adulthood (Yoon, 2014). This neoliberal construct has been critiqued in studies which have explored how young people actually navigate and experience the competing tensions and pressures in their lives as they contemplate or undertake migration. In particular, these critiques highlight the need to foreground the important role of social relations,

emotions, place belonging and place embeddedness in young people's lives (Allen & Hollingworth, 2013; Cheung Judge et al., 2020; Ní Laoire, 2020). In other words, young adults are not 'unmoored' beings who can bounce from place to place accumulating experiences, but social beings who have ties and relationships to people and places, in the form of resources which they carry with them and with which they carve out a sense of home as they move (Botterill, 2014; Harris et al., 2020). We discuss this theme further here, engaging with studies that explore how young adults create a sense of home both in and against mobility. We explore the diverse meanings of home and migration in young adulthood, recognising it as a period when questions of home, migration and im/mobility take on particular significance, focusing first on the concept of 'leaving home' and secondly on 'home in mobility'.

### 3.4.2 *Young Adulthood and 'Leaving Home'*

Decisions about migration/staying are often triggered by aspects of transitions to adulthood, such as decision-making in relation to transitions to the labour market, higher education or family formation, or by wider questions of identity and belonging. As young people navigate these significant life transitions (for example, as they transition out of the school system) they consider where home is, what home means, and whether or not to migrate from 'home'. Here we discuss this literature, focusing on the pre-migration phase as one that brings questions of migration and home into sharp focus in a particular way.

Literature on migration/staying decisions often focuses on young people growing up in economically disadvantaged, geographically peripheral or rural areas in the Global North, where there may be a 'mobility imperative' (Corbett, 2007) or economic/social pressures to migrate (Bjarnason & Thorlindsson, 2006). Another area of literature focuses on a broader mobility imperative associated with discourses of cosmopolitanism and neoliberal competition in which 'migration experience' is idealised as a qualification for entry into successful professional adulthood for all young people (Holdsworth, 2017; Ungruhe, 2010). Both of these sets of pressures bring the question of 'home' into sharp relief for young people as they consider whether to 'leave home' or where their homes in the future might be located. Such dilemmas are often conceptualised in terms of a tension between social/spatial mobility aspirations on the one hand and attachments to place/home, on the other (Cairns, 2013; Thomson & Taylor, 2005). For example, Cairns' (2013) research demonstrates the tensions in young people's narratives of the future between imaginaries of modest homes 'in place' and imagined futures that take them elsewhere. Studies such as those by Stockdale and Haartsen (2018) and Forsberg (2017) highlight the agency involved in electing to stay, to make and sustain homes in contexts where leaving is associated with success. It can be said then that these types of tensions frame the contexts in which young people develop narratives of home and belonging and within which they make decisions about, or enact, trajectories of mobility and immobility.

What emerges most potently from the body of research with young adults facing ‘leave or stay’ choices are the emotional struggles inherent in this dilemma, in which young adults find themselves at the coalface of contradictions embedded in their life-worlds, contradictions reflected in different visions of what and where ‘home’ is now, was in the past, or will be in the future. At the heart of these dilemmas are questions about identity and social relations; home is not just about where one belongs, but ‘who I am’, a negotiation that is influenced by prevalent local and global discourses of youth, gender, social class, sexuality and other social and cultural identities, and is navigated in the context of social relations such as gender and social class in which young people are involved.

Allen and Hollingworth (2013, p. 513) draw on the concept of place-based and classed habitus, referring to the structural conditions that shape the possibilities of aspiration and desire, to demonstrate how ‘localised sets of material, social and imagined relations are central in producing young people’s sense of place in the world and their possibilities of mobility’. Their concept of the ‘sticky effect’ of social class illustrates how young people’s dispositions and desires relating to home and mobility cannot be easily disentangled from the (im)possibilities thrown up by their localised social class positions. Indeed, research suggests that there is a strong association between staying and working-class or low-income status (Corbett, 2007), and some studies point to the role of factors such as the safety of home or family obligations in this. In other words, there is a sense in which electing migration/mobility is potentially too risky and costly for those with limited mobility capital, and therefore they hold onto, and invest in, the sense of home that already exists, or that is more secure, by not migrating (Ní Laoire, 2020). Migration/leaving can produce or increase precarity; this risk is not universal but is highly classed and is intimately connected to meanings of home. In addition, contrary to popular constructs of young people as independent of family ties, the sense of home that is ‘at risk’ is usually relational – it is formed through ties of care, love and obligation that young people have to family members, ties that are place-based, gendered, and cannot easily be stretched across space in contexts of limited resources.

Young people growing up in *migrant* families, or with familial migration histories, occupy a very particular position in this dynamic of im/mobility and home-making. For these young 1.5, second or even third generation adults, whose parents or grandparents were migrants, the experience can be one of growing up in one place (‘home’) and simultaneously having a sense that the familial home is elsewhere. In other words, intergenerational and transnational relations form a key part of the landscape of homing and home-making. For example, Nikielska-Sekula’s (2021) research with Norwegian Turkish second-generation youth in Norway finds that in different ways, they identify with ‘home’ in both Norway and Turkey; she develops the idea of *transdimensional home* to capture how different dimensions of home are more or less intense in the different places deemed to be ‘home’. She argues that this transdimensional and transnational way of constructing home is not about connecting past and present lives (as it is for first-generation migrants) but about different dimensions or aspects of what makes home being experienced in relation to here and there simultaneously (Nikielska-Sekula, 2021).

For some young descendants of immigrants, who are navigating the emotional and complex landscape of home between the place in which they grew up and their parental or ancestral ‘homeland’, their life journeys may even involve a ‘return’ migration to the parental/ancestral ‘homeland’ in an effort to make their home there. A rich body of research has explored this phenomenon, labelled second-generation return migration or ancestral return migration, or even ‘homecomings’ (King & Christou, 2011; Tsuda, 2009). What is striking about this phenomenon is its foregrounding of the desire for home, a home that might be physically distant from where one grew up but is emotionally, symbolically and perhaps socially and culturally felt to be very close. ‘Returning’ to an ancestral homeland can be viewed as an expression of enduring connections across generations within families. In fact, Ní Laoire (2023) argues that we need to pay more attention to intergenerational im/mobility legacies in transnational families. Meanings of home are made, passed on and transformed between different generations in transnational families; young adults in such families form their own attachments and home journeys but do so against the backdrop of family migration histories, transnational family entanglements and the lived experiences of growing up in im/migrant households.

In other words, social class, geography, migration regime, generation and gender all play a role in shaping the meanings and structural possibilities of home, vis-à-vis im/mobility, for young adults contemplating migration or staying ‘at home’ or constructing home in contexts of family migration histories. And importantly, by focussing on the meanings of home for young adults, our attention is drawn to the material, social and emotional dimensions of their lives, challenging prevailing discourses that construct young people as detached, free-floating, flexible workers and consumers. Young people are of course also agentic in mobilising the resources available to them, as classed and gendered beings, in working towards shaping and finding their sense of home in the world. This can be by staying ‘at home’ geographically while being mobile in different ways – for example, commuting, travelling, forging new global and local connections or identifying with cosmopolitan identities (Thomson & Taylor, 2005; Yeh, 2014). For many more young adults, a sense of home is sought through migration (either by leaving the childhood home, seeking another home, returning home, remembering home or by home-making on the move) which we explore in the next section.

### ***3.4.3 Young Migrants and Home in Mobility***

Given the globally interconnected nature of the world in which transnational youth migration occurs, conventional notions of ‘leaving home’ are no longer adequate to capture how home is understood and constructed by young migrants on the move. Cheung Judge et al. (2020) draw our attention to the under-recognised role of emotion in young people’s mobilities and the complex entanglements of emotion, relating to both past and present, that characterise the lives of young transnational migrants. The concept of home can help to illuminate young migrants’ emotional

worlds, drawing attention to the less visible relational and affective dimensions of youth migration. While youth mobilities often disrupt and complicate normative assumptions that associate home with settlement and immobility, a significant body of research points to the importance of different, sometimes unexpected, ways of feeling and doing home among young migrants on the move, challenging conventional understandings of home.

For example, youth migration can disrupt expected life-course transitions relating to home-making. According to Harris et al. (2020), mobility complicates notions of the right time and right place to settle, form a family and make a home. Contemporary transnational migration is characterised not so much by linear trajectories of youthful mobility followed by settlement, but by fragmented and diverse transitions tied up with more complex migration journeys (King, 2018). This can often mean that gendered heteronormative expectations are not easily fulfilled as young migrants face challenges in establishing and maintaining social and intimate relationship across borders and long distances and in contexts of transience and uncertainty. In this context, Harris et al. (2020) argue that young transnational migrants' engagements with places may not be about long-term integration in specific places, but about wider networks of relationships that are developed and maintained across and through places. This idea coheres with conceptualisations of home as a transnational or mobile construct, suggesting that for many young migrants, home may be 'made' in mobility, as they move, often alongside peers, maintaining meaningful ties to, and through, different places, often virtually, and constructing a feeling of home that is not about place embeddedness in the sense of deeply rooted local lives, but about dynamic transnational *and* local relationships.

Ahmed (1999) draws attention to the complexities of the migration-home nexus, highlighting the ways in which migration can be a movement towards home, or a way of being at home that is not fixed or rooted, in contrast to normative notions of migration as leaving home. In this sense, while home as a concept denotes feelings of belonging, security and familiarity, these qualities are not necessarily found through fixed rootedness in place. For example, Parutis (2011) conducted research with Polish and Lithuanian migrants aged 18–40 in Britain, and argues that, unlike families with children, these young migrants do not look for stability or physical comfort in the present and do not attach great value to the material culture of home. They value the freedom of their mobile lives. However, even though they avoid settlement in one particular place, according to Parutis (2011), they still find ways of making unhomely temporary accommodation more homely, such as through developing friendships with flatmates. This points to the importance of interpersonal relationships as well as a sense of freedom in cultivating a feeling of home. 'Freedom' in this sense refers to the ability to change life decisions as circumstances change (Parutis, 2011) and indicates the value young migrants place on agency and autonomy. Similarly, Damery (2021), in her research with young adults from migrant families in Brussels, points to the young people's agency in home-making: importantly, she argues that the young people were not always willing to accept the choices that were being made for them by others that in effect would have limited their possibilities of feeling at home. The young people created spaces of



belonging and family-like relationships for themselves despite the lack of stability of their migrant and family statuses (Damery, 2021). Home for young migrants like those in Parutis' (2011) and Damery's (2021) research then can be understood in terms of a meaningful space in which they can develop interpersonal relationships and make life decisions on their own terms.

However, forming intimate relationships and making home in transnational mobility is not easy and requires resources and mobility capital that are not equally available to all young migrants. The task of home-making can be challenging, elusive and uncertain. Fathi's (2022) research exploring constructions of home among young migrant men (aged 18–35) in Ireland finds that, for many, home is something that is 'on hold' due to the temporary and transitory nature of their migrant status and socio-economic positions in the host society. Particularly in the case of young men who have refugee status, their life-course transitions have been interrupted and disrupted by an asylum process which puts their lives on hold for a long time. This means that 'home' is something that does not exist in a meaningful way in the present but instead is an ideal to strive for in the future. Similarly, Sirriyeh's (2016, p. 13) research with young refugee women in Britain (aged 16–25) explores the intersections of life-course transitions (related to young adulthood) and forced migration experiences, highlighting how life-course time becomes 'stretched, contracted and otherwise constructed in the migration process'. Her research shows how the young women work to create homely spaces even in contexts of disruption and instability but also draws attention to the costs of this disruption.

These costs can be understood through the lens of structural im/possibilities of home, intersectionality and disrupted life-course transitions. Being a young adult while going through the disruption and uncertainty of an asylum process can mean that expected life-course events such as finding a life partner, settling down and forming a family are postponed, while simultaneously ties to families of origin may be severed. Moreover, these family and life-course disruptions can continue after achieving refugee/settled status due to the legacy of the asylum process in terms of its disembedding and isolating effects (Howlett-Southgate, 2021). Gendered heteronormative expectations are not fulfilled and home is often envisaged as something in the future, that is, it represents a hope and an ideal rather than something that exists in the here and now. Kim and Smets' (2020) research with young-adult Syrian refugees in a housing project in the Netherlands points to the importance to them of the private domestic space for creating a sense of home that is origin-oriented, by enabling them to recreate familiar surroundings and practices. However, although this sense of home is transnationally connected to other Syrians, it does not seem to extend to wider Dutch society (Kim & Smets, 2020). Similarly, in our research in Ireland, young migrant men experienced a paucity of opportunities for meaningful connections to others locally and for spaces of care that could provide them with the spatial security that could make a sense of home in the city and wider society possible (Fathi & Ní Laoire, 2023). These impossibilities of home must be understood in the context of migration histories that have temporally disrupted lives and intimate relationships during crucial youthful life-course transitions as well as the racialised exclusion and segregation of refugees in European cities. In this way,

states seek to control migration through strategies of temporality, disrupting young migrants' expected life-course transitions, denying them spatial security in the present and delaying future home. Thus, the structural im/possibilities of home for young migrants are closely linked to intersections of migration regime, age and race.

The ways in which migration regimes intersect with structures of class, gender, race and age to circumscribe the possibilities of home differently for different groups of young migrants are complex. However, some studies provide further glimpses of how these complexities manifest. For example, in their research on international students' constructions of home, Wu and Wilkes (2017) find that for some students, the host society cannot feel like home because of their experiences of racism and cultural dislocation there, while for others, home is felt to be wherever in the world they want it to be, an outlook that indicates a degree of privilege and freedom not available to all young migrants. The significance of meaningful local and city-scale feelings of attachment among young-adult migrants, particularly those in privileged positions, contrasts sharply with the young refugees in Kim and Smets' (2020) research above. For example, Prazeres' (2018) research with Canadian international students in Global South cities reveals how they form a sense of home in their host societies through their attachments to local neighbourhoods and the city itself. Prazeres (2018) clearly positions this urban/local sense of home as a function of these young people's privilege as white western international students in being able to comfortably feel at home in a new place.

#### **3.4.4 Summary**

Bringing the focus onto young-adult migrants in the discussion of migration and home is valuable as it draws our attention to the multiple meanings of home and its fluid and shifting nature. It also reveals how particular ideas about home can become normative, in ways that are bound up with expectations about young adulthood, mobility and migration. These norms and expectations form an integral element of the structural im/possibilities of home in migration. Migration regimes seek to facilitate the hypermobility of young people, as part of neoliberal regimes, and supported by assumptions about young adulthood being a life-stage when home is not a priority. Thus, the temporalities of migration regimes are revealed, firstly in the ways in which they are imbricated with biographical time and secondly, how many young migrants become caught in protracted waiting in migration, that is, immobility in migration, thus delaying their possibilities of home-making.

The literature reveals how certain aspects of what makes home become particularly significant in the context of youth migration, such as, the importance of autonomy over one's life choices and the maintenance of interpersonal relationships across long distances while on the move. Research with young migrants themselves shows how they challenge some of the normative assumptions about youth, mobility and home/homing. Young migrants in very different contexts, through their practices, challenge expectations of what home should be – whether that is by leaving

childhood homes, or choosing to stay despite pressures to leave, or choosing between family and asylum status (Damery, 2021), making homes in situations of uncertainty, maintaining familial relationships virtually, or in the emphasis they place on emotional over material qualities of home.

### 3.5 Childhood, Migration and Home

Holloway and Valentine (2000), over two decades ago, pointed out that normative Western constructions of childhood have contributed to powerful assumptions that the best place for children is ‘at home’ (understood as a domestic familial space) and that the existence of mobile, nomadic or homeless children has often resulted in moral panics. Inherent in this construct is the notion that the ideal childhood is one that is marked by immobility and rootedness in place through a singular domestic home. However, this notion has been challenged by research that has emerged over the past two decades to bring child-centred and social constructivist perspectives to bear, drawing also on the mobilities and transnational turns in social science, to understandings of childhood, home, mobilities and migration (Dobson, 2009; Knörr, 2005; Moskal, 2023; Ní Laoire et al., 2010; Tyrrell & Kallis, 2017; White et al., 2011). Some of this literature demonstrates the many ways in which ‘normal’ childhoods are marked by mobility and migrancy and reveals how children construct complex and fluid notions of home in these contexts. In doing so, this body of literature highlights the importance of taking a child-centred perspective in any study of home and migration. Children are social beings who are active agents in shaping their own social worlds and constructing their own sense of home, in ways that are often different to those of adults. However, despite this, most literature on home and migration is based on research conducted with adults (Moskal, 2015; Damery, 2021). Because of the nature of childhood itself, children’s worlds are not easily entered or grasped by adult researchers or stakeholders. Therefore, to avoid an adult-centric view of home and migration, we need to look to studies that have attempted to engage with children on their own terms if we are to understand what home means to children who have migrated or whose worlds are marked by migrancy and transnational mobility.

#### 3.5.1 *Children and Home-Making in Migration: Agency and the Everyday*

Over the past two decades, many researchers have engaged directly with children who have experienced migration or mobility, to explore their constructions of home and belonging (for example, Ní Laoire et al., 2011; Tyrrell et al., 2019). A key insight of this body of research is, first, to highlight the creativity and agency of

migrant children's complex constructions of home and belonging. Thus, the active nature of home-in-migration as an ongoing process for children is emphasised – children do not simply inherit or absorb a given sense of home but they actively construct it, and they do so in contexts of different structural im/possibilities of which they are more aware than they are given credit for. Second, many authors also agree that everyday social and familial relations and materiality are central to how home is constructed and experienced by children in contexts of migration/mobilities. As argued by Ní Laoire et al. (2010, p. 159), “‘home’ emerges as a concrete site of social relations and practices, involving familial and other social relations, daily practices and materiality, often conducted and experienced across territorial boundaries”. We explore both of these insights further by looking at three importance themes in relation to how children construct home in the context of different migration-related structural im/possibilities: family, materiality and the everyday/small-scale.

First, across numerous studies, and perhaps unsurprisingly, family is emphasised as a particularly important site of belonging at the very heart of what home means to children (for example, McGovern & Devine, 2016). For children who migrate with family members, family may replace ‘home’ as the main pillar of identity after migration. Christopoulou and de Leeuw (2005) point to the role of family as the main mediator between past and present, between old and new worlds, as migrant children negotiate shifting meanings of home. This highlights the particular difficulties experienced by migrant children living in contexts of enforced family separations. However, children can and do develop strategies to cope with such ruptures. For example, Zhang's (2015) research with children in China who are separated by internal migration from family members points to the children's resourcefulness in constructing a sense of home on the move, for example, through their work to maintain family ties despite physical separations or to create new family-like connections. According to Zhang (2015), the emotional importance of a sense of home to these children cannot be overstated; even though the household structure may be broken, the children maintain a feeling of home through new and different spaces and practices of familial belonging.

Second, the importance of material objects (see also Chap. 4) takes on a particular significance to constructions of home among children who have experienced sharp ruptures in their lives due to migration. The importance of keeping and displaying family photographs as a way of maintaining happy memories of past lives and of distant family members is highlighted in some research with migrant children (Christopoulou & de Leeuw, 2005). Often there is an understandable reluctance to talk about the past among refugee families (Chase, 2010). Christopoulou and de Leeuw's (2005) research shows that photos are a way for children of keeping it alive (even while being silent); they write about what they term an ‘economy of memories’ (p. 120) where only those memories of past lives that are useful in the present are remembered. In other words, contrary to popular belief, children are often very aware of the structural im/possibilities of home as shaped by the migration realities of their lives, and they adjust their constructions of home accordingly. Hatfield's (2010) research with children in elite migrant families reveals that they do

not invest a lot of emotion in physical places but in more portable objects and practices that make home on the move. In these ways, the children adjust their understanding of home in response to the knowledge that their place of residence is temporary and that future places of residence may also be temporary, and in doing so, demonstrate their capacity to grasp the material (structural) possibilities and impossibilities of their lives as children in migrant families.

Finally, Hatfield (2010) makes a particular case for recognising the importance of the everyday and small-scale for understanding what home means in the social worlds of children who move. She argues that the small-scale, mobile and transient nature of home-making among children means that adult-centred ways of understanding home-in-migration cannot suffice for theorising about children's worlds. She pays particular attention to the ways in which the migrant children use material objects and domestic practices to make and transport home (Hatfield, 2010). She finds that children are active participants in home-making and that they use material objects (such as soft toys) and domestic practices (such as eating together as a family) that are easily transportable from one home to another as they migrate as a family. In this way, these small-scale material objects and practices enable them to maintain an element of continuity between homes while also adapting to the changes brought about by migrating (Hatfield, 2010). Focusing on the materialities and everyday social practices through which home comes into being for children draws our attention to the immediate surroundings, the daily routines and the social connections that make home/s even as they are stretched across space (Mand, 2010). In other words, the every-day of migrant children's social worlds in their context-specificity, their child-ness and their materiality, even though such worlds are often transient, provide the material with which they construct home, and they do so on the basis of their competence as social agents who have an understanding of the structural im/possibilities of home for them as children in mobile transnational families.

### ***3.5.2 Multi-scalarity and the Politics of Home in Migrant Childhoods***

Therefore, even though children's constructions of home are often grounded in the small-scale and the everyday, this does not mean that children's home-making processes are insignificant, or local-only, or limited to the micro-scale; on the contrary, they reflect at a micro scale the macro-scale processes that are shaping migrant childhoods and being shaped by them. Indeed, homing in migrant childhoods is recognised as a multi-scalar and complex process, in which children's constructions of home and belonging involve complex navigations at the domestic, local, national and transnational scales (Den Besten, 2010; Mand, 2010).

The small-scale and everyday relations and practices that make home for children are intimately interconnected with wider local, national and transnational frames of reference, and this is particularly the case for children who grow up in

contexts of transnational migrations and families. This understanding also challenges the hegemonic Western tendency to tie notions of childhood home to the domestic sphere only and highlights the different sites and scales of belonging that are meaningful to children. For example, in different contexts, both Ní Laoire et al. (2011) and Vathi and King (2021) explore how children in return-migrant families navigate and disrupt hegemonic *national* constructs of return migration as ‘homecoming’, which are contradicted by their everyday experiences of more ambivalent belongings at *local* level in the presumed ‘homeland’. Other studies illustrate how migrant children actively draw on frames of belonging at different scales. For example, White (in Ní Laoire et al., 2011) illustrates how African/Irish children blend domestic, local and transnational spaces in the making of a home-space that connects them into transnational family networks. Mand (2010) similarly sheds light on the complexities and multiscalarity of children’s constructions of home in a transnational context. Her research with children in transnational Bengali families between London and Bangladesh illustrates the translocal nature of home for the children, as they locate their homes as being in *both* London *and* in their family’s village in Sylhet, and as such, linked to familial ties and relationships that are lived out through concrete social practices in both places. Their constructions of home reflect their own age-specific and generation-specific attachments to London as home, though these may be different from those of their parents, while simultaneously maintaining familial connections to a home elsewhere (Mand, 2010). In other words, they form complex constructions of home that reflect the realities of their translocal lives and that do not conform to normative (or parental) expectations of a singular home-place or homeland.

In this way, children-centred research draws attention to children’s small-scale negotiations of, and resistances to, normative, adultist or hegemonic constructs of home and emphasises how they respond to the ways in which migration regimes seek to limit their possibilities of home. Even in apparently unhomey and precarious living conditions, children are active players in doing and making home. Beazley’s (2000) research with street children in Indonesia shows how these children challenge national/state ideals of home and family by leaving and often rejecting their family homes, which are often experienced by them as oppressive. Instead they construct multiple homes on the move, including spaces attached to street-child subcultures where they have strong and meaningful connections and investments. In this way, they make home in very difficult and dangerous circumstances, and according to Beazley (2000), in doing so they subvert dominant state and familial ideological constructions of the ideal childhood home. Research such as this highlights children’s agency and creativity in shaping home and at the same time resisting narratives of what a home should be, in particular resisting narratives that marginalise them. McDonnell (2021) makes a further valuable contribution here. Based on her research with migrant children in Ireland, she argues that while their home-making narratives and practices may appear on the surface to be small-scale and unimportant, they can also be a site of everyday politics and negotiation of possibilities of belonging. Through a case-study of one child living in the Direct Provision system in Ireland, that is, in an apparently and intentionally unhomey

institution (see also Howlett-Southgate, 2021), she shows how he makes home through forging connections and attachments that are meaningful to him, in this way, challenging practices of spatial exclusion that seek to limit his possibilities of making a home (McDonnell, 2021).

### 3.5.3 *Summary*

Emerging literature on migrant childhoods presents an important challenge to scholarship on migration and home. That challenge is: how can the existing scholarship move beyond adult-centrism and take children's migration worlds seriously? We argue that this is both essential and possible. Engaging with children's social and cultural worlds sheds a different light on how home is constructed, experienced and done in migration. It draws attention to the everyday and small-scale nature of how home gets done, in its materiality, its apparent banality and its interpersonal nature. But this does not mean that home from this perspective is only banal or small-scale – it is through these practices and connections that the wider structural im/possibilities of home in migration are lived and experienced by migrants, children and families. Migrant children actively challenge exclusionary migration regimes and adult expectations by forging and sustaining the ties and connections that mean home to them. Therefore, they are key players in the doing of home in migration and the specificities of their homing and home-making experiences need to be acknowledged.

## 3.6 **Conclusions**

Drawing on the existing literature from across the different life-course stages discussed in this chapter (older age, young adulthood and childhood), a number of key points can be made about the relationships between age, home and migration. The first is that it is clear that both the emotional/subjective and the material/practical are important aspects of home for all migrants – however, each one takes on different significance, and in different ways, at different stages of the life-course and migrant journey. Second, feeling at home in migration is a constant process. It is through a life-course perspective that this processual and life-long aspect of home in migration becomes clear – it is never finished but is constantly worked at through childhood and into older age, usually involving a negotiation of tensions between the emotional, the social and the material/practical aspects. Third, the possibilities of feeling at home in migration are integrally bound up with age and life-course as socio-spatial structures. In addition, the ways in which these intersect with gender, social class, race/ethnicity and residence status means that the possibilities of home in migration are contingent on migrants' complex social positioning, of which age and life course are crucial components that should not be overlooked.



These im/possibilities of home are also bound up with migration regimes; migration regimes treat migrants differently depending on age, and in turn are experienced differently at different life-stages. These dynamics open up and close down possibilities of feeling and doing home, whether through, for example, the im/possibilities of maintaining multiple transnational homes in older age, or of building a future home during young adulthood, or for children of re-constructing a sense of home in the face of disruptions. Therefore, home as a sense of spatial belonging and security is not equally available to all migrants who may share a social positioning in terms of age; instead, it can be elusive or problematic for many, and should be understood within the context of age-related intersectional power relations and migration regimes.

The overview of literature suggests a few areas for further research. While much migration research tends to focus on adult migrants in middling age groups and life-course stages, this research does not always consider the role of age/life-course in their experiences of home. Therefore there is space for research that explores how norms and expectations of middle-adulthood life-stages are tied up with the structural im/possibilities of home in migration. Secondly, more research is needed on home in migration that incorporates children's perspectives, but without siloing them. In other words, we have much to learn from children's perspectives when conceptualising home in migration. Finally, intergenerational perspectives that span long time-periods within families or migrant communities or networks could add considerably to existing understandings of how home is constructed and re-constructed in migration over time and across generations.

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