# Chapter 5
# Migration Status, Class, Race and Home

## 5.1 Introduction

> For many, the concept of home is very simple. It's a place where no one questions your right to be; a place of belonging that points to your history, your past, an archive of sorts that metaphorically documents a lineage that marks you as nonalien. (Silva, 2009, p. 694)

Silva's (2009) concept of home is one that denotes the privilege of being able to claim a place as home in an unproblematic way, a privilege that is historically deeply rooted. At the same time, it suggests that for many others, home is not so straightforward – it is elusive, it is a place of not-belonging, or is a place either left-behind or imagined as being elsewhere. What Silva (2009) points to in these observations is the deeply political nature of home as an expression of the bordering processes that separate the ones who belong, without question, from those whose presence is constantly questioned.

These bordering processes must be understood in the context of historical legacies of possession, dispossession, colonization and exclusion. Complex geopolitical and socio-spatial power relations underlie the processes by which one's visible and invisible lineages (racialised and classed) mark one out as alien or not. Contemporary migration regimes, moreover, reproduce these power relations, producing migrant statuses that are bound up with economic and racial inequalities that structure the possibilities and impossibilities of home in migration.

Therefore, this chapter places migrant status in the foreground, focusing on the role of migrant status and relatedly, of race and class, as powerful differentiating forces shaping the structural im/possibilities of home in migration. In other words, we explore the role of (racializing) migration regimes as powerful forces that allow or deny individuals, in different ways, the possibilities of feeling at home, imagining home or doing home. It is critical also to acknowledge how migrant status, class and race intersect not only with each other but with gender, age, and other power relations in structuring these im/possibilities.

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M. Fathi, C. Ní Laoire, *Migration and Home*, IMISCOE Research Series,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-51315-2_5

In the next section, the focus is placed on 'privileged' positioning in migration, exploring the ways in which privilege, whiteness and coloniality overlap in notions of home. Privilege is intersectionally related to classed and racialised systems. It produces and is produced through migration status and the politics of class, race and ethnicity within migration and settlement regimes. In this regard we review some studies that focus on privileged forms of migration, such as lifestyle migration and so-called high-skill and 'expat' migration. We explore how migrant groups who have positions of privilege can draw on their available capital (and privilege) to reproduce comfortable notions of home in migration, and the ways in which different migration regimes enable this.

The subsequent section focuses on the phenomenon of enforcement, precarity and stuckness in migration, as a lens through which to explore how migration regimes intersect with social class and race to limit the possibilities of feeling at home for other migrant groups, and importantly, how they navigate these limitations and borders in seeking to find and make home in the world. Precarity is particularly related to temporal migration regimes so this section draws on the notion of temporality as an important component of home-making in migration processes. The final section presents a critical discussion of how the concepts of privilege and precarity help in understanding im/possibilities of home and migration in relation to migration status, class and race.

## 5.2 Privilege and Home in Migration

In this section, the concept of 'privilege' is deployed to shed further light on the structural im/possibilities of home in migration. Including privileged forms of migration in the discussion is essential if we are to understand the dynamics of structural *possibilities* of home. Privilege is understood here as the oft invisible benefits conferred on those who are advantaged by systems of inequality and we argue that it is crucial to focus on privilege in seeking to understand the workings of uneven power relations and structures in society. The concept of privilege has become particularly valuable in migration studies in recent years, being utilised in analysing forms of migration associated with a high degree of control over one's own mobility and the reproduction of high social status, such as those labelled lifestyle migration, high-skill labour mobility and student migration (Benson, 2019; Croucher, 2012; Duplan & Cranston, 2023). Many agree that privileged migration is that which is undertaken by relatively privileged individuals, usually from relatively rich countries and characterised by ease of crossing international borders (Benson & O'Reilly, 2018; Croucher, 2012). Some consider student migration as a form of temporary migration that is privileged, even sometimes being labelled as 'academic tourism', in particular when students originate from a wealthy country (Breen, 2012).

Robertson and Roberts (2022) argue that middle-class cultures of migration are expanding, with mobility aspiration becoming increasingly normative in the life-trajectories of middle-class migrants. Benson and O'Reilly (2018) argue further that privileged migration is integrally bound up with the global power dynamics of both neoliberalism and postcolonialism, both of which perpetuate relations of economic inequality that enable highly voluntary migration for some while imposing enforced im/mobilities on others. Thus, although privilege in migration can be related to a range of social distinctions (including gender), we focus here in particular on class privilege, whiteness and western-ness as indicators of privilege in global migration dynamics, particularly in relation to the role of neoliberalism and postcolonialism.

As argued in Chap. 1, home is always socially situated, and the ways in which it is lived, experienced and understood are shaped in myriad ways by the intersecting power relations that underpin one's social positioning and situated imagination. Home in this way is also bound up with global power structures that make it more or less possible for people to feel at home in the world. Traditional understandings of home have tended to construct home in terms of an unproblematic, even natural, connection between a person, place and community, a safe and still place to leave and return (Dawson & Rapport, 2021) connecting to discourses of romantic nationalism, which construct the nation as home. However, critics of this idea argue that the ability to feel a close, secure, safe and unproblematic emotional connection to one's dwelling-place, or place of origin, is a privilege afforded to the few (Ahmed et al., 2003). The traditional discourse of home also denies the reality that very often the ability of one group to feel at home in place is only possible because of the displacement, dispossession or oppression of others. Whether historically through the role of colonialism, or more recently through far-right claims to exclusive place-based rights to belong, the ability to claim a home and to feel at home cannot be separated from wider power relations of privilege, marginalisation and politics of belonging.

Literature focusing on forms of migration such as lifestyle migration, student migration, high-skill migration and so-called 'expat'[1] migrants is insightful in this respect. Some of this literature is reviewed here, exploring how migrant groups with positions of privilege can draw on their available capital to (re)produce a comfortable sense of home in migration, which in turn itself can contribute to reproducing privilege. The literature points to three specific ways in which this process manifests: first, the ability to feel at home in a host society; second, the idea of temporary home/s as a privilege; and third, the ability to maintain an ideal of the homeland as home. Cutting across these three aspects, we argue here, is one central unifying feature of much (though not all) privileged migration, which is the constant possibility of returning 'home' or moving onwards to re-make home. This is

[1] The term 'expat' is highly contested as it tends to be used to describe white Western people, often elites, who live outside their country of origin, with the result of placing them in a different category to all other migrants, thus reinforcing the Western othering of those deemed to be 'migrants'. We use the term here only when discussing studies that use it.

something that makes the lived experience of home-making in migration very different to that of less privileged and more precarious migrants who do not see this as a feasible option. These processes are also contextualised within the wider global and postcolonial power dynamics that produce, and are reproduced through, the imagination and making of homes in migration.

### 5.2.1 Feeling at Home in the Host Society as Privilege

Much literature attests to the structural difficulties of making a home in a new society, referring to barriers such as those related to one's migrant or citizenship status, age, gender, income level and family status (as outlined in previous chapters). This implies that privileged social positioning, on the other hand, can ease the process of settlement, familiarisation and inhabitance that is central to feeling at home in a new place, whether through the right to stay, the right to work, the ability to secure decent housing, the ability to be accompanied by family members, to forge new meaningful social connections, or to maintain transnational ties, or having the cultural capital to express one's identity in a place without fear of censure. In other words, a sense of spatial security is possible.

For example, Green (2023) reveals how white and western privilege enables later-life lifestyle migrants in Bali to comfortably make their homes in the host society, not least because of their purchasing power in terms of securing good quality housing and being able to maintain a very good quality of life, including the ability to hire domestic servants. Green (2023) elaborates on how these migrants construct a strong sense of home in the new place through the materiality of their houses, through which they nurture a sense of belonging and emotional attachment to the locality in Bali. They mobilise notions of authenticity and localness to construct and express identities through material aspects of their physical homes, but as Green (2023) points out, do so in ways that deny the unequal power relations, both locally and globally, that make it possible for them to have access to the type of housing and lifestyle with which to do so. His study finds echoes in Zhang and Su's (2020) research with lifestyle migrants in China who, they find, express strong place attachments to their places of residence, which they tend to construct as 'ideal homes', but simultaneously distance themselves from locals and often feel alienated.

Prazeres (2018), in her research with Canadian international students in Global South cities, suggests that her participants' privileged status as white western international students in these cities is a key factor in their ability to feel at home there. She relates this to their status as temporary and voluntary migrants for whom processes of local embedding are much less fraught than for other migrants. Moreover, Prazeres (2018) argues that the ease with which the students claim feelings of belonging and at-homeness in these cities is in itself a source of social distinction and cultural capital which they mobilise to enhance their social status as global citizens after they leave. Her study illuminates how they 'collect' homes throughout

their lives as they travel from place to place, as a way of accumulating cultural capital. In this way, the ability to comfortably feel at home in different places further enhances the privileged status of those who have access to this lifestyle, and further reinforcing uneven power relations shaping home in migration.

We cannot fully understand the forms of privilege enjoyed by the participants in Green's (2023) and Prazeres' (2018) studies without situating them, as they both do, in the context of global power dynamics, and acknowledging that constructions of home in migration are variously tied up with the legacies of colonialism and the uneven articulations of globalisation (see also Ahmed et al., 2003 and for an example of African migration, Ndlovu, 2010). For example, Green (2023) refers to the continuing salience of colonial 'place-myths', associated with the Dutch colonial legacy in Bali, which are mobilised by western lifestyle immigrants in their constructions of local belonging. Elsewhere, Moreton-Robinson (2003) provides a powerful critique of white migrants' constructs of home in Australia, linking these constructs to the history of colonization and dispossession of Indigenous people. She argues that the ability to claim that one 'belongs' in Australia, especially as a white person, is built on the historical racialized dispossession of Indigenous people and the continued hegemony of whiteness. Ahmed (1999, p. 335) intriguingly suggests that for the privileged migrant, 'the world is already constituted as their home', pointing perhaps to a certain quality of ease, comfort and sense of entitlement that accompanies the privileged (white, western, socio-economically advantaged) migrant on their travels and allows a sense of home to be both claimed and felt anywhere. Thus, Ahmed (1999) criticises scholarship that neglects the power inequalities that impact on how migrants come to feel and to claim a sense of belonging and home in their host societies.

### 5.2.2 *Temporary/Mobile Home in Privileged Migration*

The privilege of claiming to feel at home 'anywhere' implies that home for the privileged migrant may also have a mobile and somewhat free-floating character. A number of studies point to the idea of 'temporary' or 'mobile' home as a feature of the hypermobile lifestyles of privileged transnational migrants (for example, Butcher, 2010; Walsh, 2011). In this construct, home is not tied to one place but is constructed as fluid or portable, located in transnational space, or in multiple places. The ability to construct home in these terms could be understood as a characteristic of privilege. Inherent in the migration regimes that enable privileged forms of migration is the constant possibility of returning to a stable home or choosing to move on to re-make home elsewhere – in other words, a high degree of choice/control and global-movement possibilities because of factors such as citizenship status, income levels and valuable social and cultural capital. In these contexts, one can surmise that it may be possible to invest in home-making in different places, or to form fleeting attachments to different places, while maintaining one or more primary homes, or to construct a sense of home that is more tied to a type of lifestyle

than a concrete place. This is possible because the risks of these 'investments' (emotional, financial, social) are mitigated by the safety-net of the possibility of home being elsewhere.

For example, Cai and Su (2021), based on their research with 'expat' migrants in Guangzhou, China (their term, referring here to business and professional elite migrants) adopt the concept of 'temporary home'. They argue that 'the making of temporary home exemplifies the ways in which Western 'expats' undertake and experience a privileged mode of mobility' (p. 2815). They draw on Clifford's (1997) concept of 'dwelling-in-travelling' to articulate the idea of home as existing between mobility and immobility, not tied to one place but neither detached from place. Their study participants expressed a strong attachment to Guangzhou and their lives there, where they felt at home, but generally viewed themselves as visitors who would one day return 'home' or move on elsewhere (Cai & Su, 2021). Importantly, Cai and Su (2021) do not imply that 'temporary home' in mobility is a universal possibility for migrants. They characterise their participants' ability to feel at home in Guangzhou, while also remaining somewhat detached and planning to leave, as a form of privileged mobility, exemplified in the notion of temporary home, but made possible through favourable residency regulations and the global career opportunities of business and professional migrants in China. These circumstances are of course bound up with global neoliberal economic power relations that facilitate the easy mobility of some while imposing enforced im/mobilities on others.

However, it is important to point out that studies of constructions of home among privileged migrants do not usually extend to claiming that privileged migrants are completely free to create home on-the-move in accordance with their personal desires. Zhang and Su (2020) show how lifestyle migrants in China find themselves 'unmaking' home as they struggle with local social and economic circumstances that limit their ability to fulfil their image of their idealised home. Butcher (2010) draws on her research with Australian professionals in Singapore to emphasise that while 'expats' possess the cultural capital to re-make home on the move, they often feel destabilised or uncomfortable in unfamiliar environments and thus turn to more secure and familiar notions of home (such as 'expat bubbles' or nostalgia for a familiar place). Ullah et al. (2021) also find that privileged migrants originating from wealthy countries in Asia, Europe and North America who reside in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and Brunei often find themselves positioned as 'outsiders' in their adopted homes. Very often, although the host environment and culture are celebrated by 'expat' migrants as part of the communication of a cosmopolitan sense of home, this is done in a way that others and exoticises through an external gaze, while maintaining their strongest social ties to other (class- and race-privileged) expats and transnational networks (see for example, Benson & O'Reilly, 2018). In other words, home is by its nature bound up with emotion/affect, with place, and with (classed and racialised) habitus. As Butcher (2010) argues, despite claims of the mobility and flexibility of home for highly mobile professionals, home still needs to feel like a space of culture fit and familiarity.

### 5.2.3 *Privileged Migration and Homeland*

This quest for 'cultural fit and familiarity' (Butcher, 2010) means that the idea of a 'homeland' can continue to hold symbolic and material significance within privileged forms of migration. Firstly, the continuing connection to a homeland can be evident through home-making practices which involve transporting, displaying and using material belongings in the home that represent an emotional connection to the place of origin. This is particularly evident in Walsh's (2006) research with British 'expat' migrants in Dubai, in which she details how the emotional connection to the past home in Britain is part and parcel of creating a new home in Dubai. This occurs through the re-creation of a sense of continuity between the materiality of the current dwelling and past dwellings in Britain, and also through using British cultural products as part of building networks with other British (and Western English-speaking middle-class) migrants in Dubai. Similarly, Benson and O'Reilly's (2018) research with privileged British migrants in Malaysia and Americans in Panama reveals the importance of co-ethnic 'expat' networks and organisations as familiar spaces of belonging.

The ability to transport goods such as furniture and paintings between places of residence around the world, in order to re-create one's home, is of course a privilege, one that is not available to most transnational migrants. Furthermore, it must be acknowledged that Western 'expat' communities in host societies are 'classed and racialised formations' (Benson & O'Reilly, 2018, p. 217) that are made possible through deep social and cultural inequalities within host societies and globally. Thus the performance of national, racial or class belonging must be seen as a key element of processes of home-making that work to maintain valuable cultural and material connections to a globally powerful homeland identity.

Secondly, the place of origin, or homeland, can become the object of feelings of nostalgia and homesickness especially when migrants struggle to feel a sense of comfortable belonging in the host society. This is, of course, a common feature of transnational migration, but we argue that privileged migrant status is particularly associated with the construction of place of origin as home, or homeland, because the possibility of returning there exists (see the literature on remittance houses such as Boccagni & Erdal, 2021; Mand, 2010). This is evident in Wiles' (2008) research with New Zealanders in London. For her participants, return is a constant possibility; most see their migration as temporary and view New Zealand as home. They are relatively privileged migrants who choose to migrate and are facilitated in doing so by the preferential visa arrangements in the UK for young Commonwealth citizens (Wiles, 2008). In this context, a collective imaginary of New Zealand as home is constructed and reproduced among New Zealanders living in London. This is maintained through the ease of travelling back and forth between the two. The feasibility of holding a stable sense of one's homeland and staying connected to it through transnational connections points to the role of privilege (migrant status and economic means) in facilitating a comfortable sense of home in migration.

This contrasts with the relationship to country of origin among some refugees or other forced migrants for whom a return to homeland is not possible (Korac, 2009). As Pérez Murcia (2019) shows, for some the place left behind no longer constitutes a home. However, the idea of homeland as home is often maintained in a symbolic sense among migrant groups – more as a collective meaning rather than a private sense of home, a useful distinction made by Povrzanović Frykman (2002), denoting that while the homeland may be idealised as the symbolic/sacred/true home, it is necessarily not considered as a possible real home in which to live. Its symbolic importance is great, and it may even be imagined as a future home, but there are no moves to actually return. This is evident among Povrzanović Frykman's (2002) Croatian diaspora in Sweden, for whom Croatia is revered as the sacred homeland even though they may never have lived there, but its importance is central to their identities as exiled Croats. It contrasts with Wiles' (2008) New Zealand migrants, for whom the sense of New Zealand as home is very real, because it is highly possible to return there. The circumstances of the migration shape the relationship to the homeland, reflecting these differential structural im/possibilities of home in migration.

### *5.2.4 Summary*

This review of existing literature reveals the many ways in which classed, racialised and western privilege eases the path to finding a comfortable sense of home in migration, whether through making a new home in the host society, creating temporary or mobile home, or maintaining a sense of homeland as home. Feeling at home in migration is made possible through the economic, social and political resources that a privileged migrant can deploy in controlling their own im/mobility, of which one key resource is the constant *possibility* of returning 'home' or moving on elsewhere. Returning 'home' is possible due to factors such as economic and political stability and personal resources in the place of origin, while moving on is facilitated by the mobility capital associated with Western citizenship and economic resources. In other words, the structural possibilities of home are bound up with the structural possibilities of privileged mobility. Understanding privilege in migration in this way provides a different perspective on the concept of 'spatial security' (see Chap. 1), that is, the security associated with feeling a sense of attachment to place *and* having the legal and formal documentation allowing one to live and stay in a place, which is what enables home in migration (Fathi & Ní Laoire, 2023). As we argue in Fathi and Ní Laoire (2023), place attachment can be to a non-local sense of place, an imagined past or future place, that allows one to construct home in migration (even if that home is not precisely in the current place of residence). However, for spatial security to exist, place attachment needs to be accompanied by legal rights. Ironically, as much literature attests, having the legal right to stay or settle in a place is what enables one to leave that place, because of the possibility of returning to it (Lundström, 2014). Privileged migration is associated with the legal right to stay (even if not permanently) in the host society, alongside the ability to return to one's

place of origin. This, we argue, produces what could be called *transnational spatial security*, understood as the feeling and opportunity of secure inhabitance in multiple places at once. This concept helps us to understand how the structural possibilities of home in migration are integrally bound up with a complex range of processes from differential citizenship/residency rights to economic inequalities and the accumulation of cultural and social capital. As understanding privilege necessitates understanding oppression (Pease, 2010), and also precarity in migration status, the next section brings the focus to a different perspective on the intersection of migration status, class, race and home.

## 5.3 Precarity and Home

Having discussed how privilege can enhance the possibilities of home in migration, this section shows that migrants who do not enjoy the same privileges that are afforded to others, as a result of their social positionality in terms of migrant status, social class and racialised identities, face more *im*possibilities in relation to feeling at home in migration. Many migrants such as those who are in irregular situations, seasonal, undocumented, asylum seeking and those who live in temporary situations in transit and border zones, deal with precarity of work, income, housing, residence status and citizenship on a daily basis and find the possibilities of making a home in migration very limited.

In this section the focus is placed on the concept of precarity as a lens through which to explore structural impossibilities of home in migration. As Lewis et al. (2015) argue, precarity is a condition that is increasingly associated with contemporary global migration, referring to lack of security in relation to livelihoods, along with the vulnerability to exploitation, violence and exclusion that comes with that. Precarity is closely connected to the idea of spatial security that is essential to feeling at home in place; insecure and uncertain migrant and residency status, insecurity of income or vulnerability to practices such as eviction or job loss, inevitably prevent a sense of spatial security. In particular, inadequate housing intersects with temporal limitations for migrants in circumstances of precarity. One aspect of this is that multifaceted systems of marginalisation (where migration regimes and other axes of difference intersect) often make sedentariness, through enforced immobility in migration, the only option for such migrants, adding to their sense of non-belonging and dissatisfaction with their surroundings.

### *5.3.1 Refugee Accommodation and the Structural Impossibilities of Home*

Over 60% of the world's refugee population (19.5 million) resides in urban areas (UNHCR, 2017) and Brun and Fábos (2015) argue that nearly two-thirds of the world's refugees are in a seemingly never-ending exile with an average length of

waiting reaching 20 years. In the EU, cities offer opportunities in terms of the labour market (Van Liempt et al., 2015) and networking with other migrants, but at the same time, urban space also offers harsh conditions of settlement due to the lack of competency of cities to offer basic services (Van Liempt & Miellet, 2021). States also employ various policies to spatially segregate the communal housing arrangements often put in place for migrants or asylum-seekers to designated areas within or outside the spaces of towns and cities across Europe (Van Liempt & Miellet, 2021). These temporary accommodation structures, such as shelters, hostels and 'direct provision' (DP) accommodation centres, are normally devoid of any signs of what would suggest the notion of home (Thorshaug & Brun, 2019). In fact, what these 'empty' spaces (Fathi, 2023) show is displacement more than home (Van Liempt, 2023).

Beeckmans et al. (2022) in a recent edited collection, identify four types of socio-spatial contexts for home in displacement – camp, shelter, city and house. They show that the ways in which camps and shelters, as institutionalised forms of housing, are regulated by states means that they prove to be ineffective in giving a sense of home. Brun and Fábos (2015, p. 11), in another edited collection, discuss similarly how encampments and detention centres, or indeed any other precarious and temporary living conditions, emerge from 'policies of limbo', that is, a limbo 'created materially, discursively, and politically by the refugee regime' and which has profound implications for migrants' home-making. Fathi (2023) draws on the concept of unhome to refer to refugee accommodation centres, which are marked by solitude and exclusion unlike a home that is set within a community and is entangled with a social life. She argues that the soulless and empty housing structures of refugee accommodation or homeless shelters produce a sense of non-belonging as a way of reducing the time spent there by the residents. A considerable body of research demonstrates how reception centres cannot provide the basic elements of home, despite the fact that they are places where many people live for extended periods of time (Thorshaug & Brun, 2019) where their experiences of forced migration can be considered to become experiences of 'forced arrival', that is, of enforced conditions of living after arrival (Kreichauf, 2018). Studies point to the role of constant surveillance, lack of autonomy, cramped living conditions, lack of privacy, inability to prepare their own food and boredom as factors that militate against enabling a sense of home (Grønseth & Thorshaug, 2022; Howlett-Southgate, 2021; Van der Horst, 2004). As O'Reilly (2020) shows, these accommodation policies, by producing insecurity, fear and lack of autonomy, deny residents the basic attributes of home and function as mechanisms of social and spatial exclusion.

However, it is important to recognise the different social positionalities of residents of refugee accommodation. For example, research with children living in these kinds of arrangements suggests that they can experience them differently to adults. White (2012) illustrates the many ways in which children living in Direct Provision (DP) centres in Ireland, who participated in his research, were able to develop meaningful place attachments and social connections, despite the apparently isolated and unhomely nature of DP. He relates this to the ways in which spaces and daily interactions of communal living offered the children opportunities

for cultivating peer friendships with other children living in the centre and also offered access to informal spaces for playing. This insight points to the importance of incorporating children-centred perspectives in discussions of home in migration.

The development of informal makeshift accommodation for migrants in transit shows how home-like spaces can emerge in the gaps left by the inadequacies of state provision of migrant accommodation, though these are highly vulnerable to removal or destruction by authorities. A well-known example of such temporary makeshift housing compounds was the Jungle, in Calais, France, located at the final stop for many migrants before reaching the UK. The Jungle was destroyed in October 2016. Migrants in Calais' Jungle resisted several attempts of expulsion and destruction of the camp by the French authorities. In February 2016, they were given a week to evacuate the premises, to which they appealed basing their argument on the right to respect for private and family life as well as on the right to respect for a home (Slingenburg & Bonneau, 2017). The Jungle was eventually destroyed only to push the residents who were stuck at the borders of France and the UK to other parts of France. As Van Liempt (2023, p. 991) argues, the destruction of these kinds of housing structures and social spaces is not limited to the destruction of materialities; it is as much about destroying 'a notion of rights and recognition, or even existential legitimacy'. Similarly, Massa (2022) writes about an incident of forced eviction, by law enforcement operators, of African migrants from a squat in Rome as not just the removal of their physical dwelling but of the feelings and values bound up with a sense of home.

### *5.3.2 Protracted Displacement and Precarity*

Precarious livelihoods, lack of access to formal or legal representation or protection of those transnationally displaced or of millions of IDPs (Internally Displaced People) results in long waiting times, at times more than two decades, for settlement. The majority of the world's protracted refugees are settled (or better to say are stationary) in developing countries (for example sub-Saharans in Tunisia and Algeria, South Americans in Mexico, Rohingya in Bangladesh and Afghans in Iran). This approach to managing the resettlement of displaced people has been termed 'warehousing' of human beings (Smith, 2004); rather than offering a 'durable solution' to refugee displacement, many of these policies that still continue to this date are based on the unrealistic and inhumane premise of simply ensuring migrants' survival until they return home.

Brun (2015), referring to the case of IDPs from Abkhazia who resided for more than 20 years in temporary housing near Tbilisi in the Western side of Georgia, argues that the only durable solution that is perceived by various stakeholders is their return. In this case, the next durable solution to the thousands of displaced people was a scheme to accommodate the displaced residents of the camps in housing cottages built outside cities. This strategy in effect did not change the precarity of their living conditions. Brun (2015) proposes the two concepts of immanence and

transcendence to shed further light on the effects of this. According to Brun (2015) transcendence refers to 'a mode of temporality in that the living subject is future oriented' whilst immanence refers to the act of sustaining life, as repetitive and cyclical. She argues that when transcendence is not available, individuals cannot fulfil their subjectivity. They have feelings of stuckness, being trapped in time with no foreseeable future oriented life, because according to Brun (2015, p. 47), 'future lies too far ahead'. What is important and relevant to our discussion in Brun's (2015) argument is that when we are talking about precarity of home-making, we deal with regimes of temporality that go hand-in-hand with policies and political processes that hold individuals in the present time and impose on them immanence without transcendence.

The translation of Brun's (2015) argument can be witnessed in the precarity of home for millions of marginalised forced migrants, which is embedded within their lack of legal rights, and leads to such protracted and long-lasting in-between situations. In other words, the temporality regimes have profound implications for how migrants can envisage a future life that includes everyday practices of education, work and leisure in making home. Their situations also remind us that perhaps the territorial aspect of a home is not as important as the emotional and relational, as according to Brun and Fábos (2015), drawing on Eastmond (2006), after so many years of being displaced, home as a fixed location, either in the place of origin or location of current residence, loses its meaning. Home, as a place where 'a normal life can be lived […] with economic security, social context and […] a sense of belonging', instead, they argue, lies in multiple places, or a 'trans-local' space where each locality becomes part of a new home (Brun & Fábos, 2015, p. 8; Eastmond, 2006). In fact, perhaps it is out of necessity, in order to feel ontologically secure, that many migrants relate home to mobile elements such as practices, materialities and relationships, as opposed to geographies and placed-based attachments. Massa (2022) suggests that it is more productive to talk about home as a set of practices through which migrants in situations of extreme precarity and vulnerability deal with the situations in which they find themselves and work at making and re-making home, than as a static concept.

### *5.3.3 Intersectionality, Selectivity and Everyday Bordering of Home*

Precarity has become embedded in the living situations of migrants in many different types of circumstances and is bound up with the proliferation of different types of migrant status including forms of temporary migrant status and those falling within what Menjívar (2006, p. 999) calls 'liminal legality' as well as with precarious labour regimes and gendered vulnerabilities. Inequalities, especially in relation to housing for migrants, are produced not just by government policies but also by the actions of key players in housing markets, such as the financial sector and the

labour market. Housing inequalities are also integrally bound up with less tangible social, cultural and legal factors that differentiate between who can make a home and who cannot.

Within this complex picture, there are policies that determine which migrants 'deserve' to be housed (in destination countries) or relocated (from transit contexts) based on constant assessments in terms of their eligibility for housing or refugee status (Dhaliwal & Forkert, 2015). Similarly, increasingly neoliberal approaches to migration are based on the benefits migration brings to host societies, a model that sifts through migrants and applies a selectivity based on factors such as age, social class or education level. For example, Theresa May (Former British Prime Minister and Home Secretary) said in 2010:[2]

> Let me deal with a myth that has arisen in recent months. We can reduce net migration without damaging our economy. We can increase the number of high value migrants: the entrepreneurs, the investors, the research scientists – at the same time as we reduce the total number of people coming to Britain through the economic routes. We can attract more of the brightest and the best at the same time as we reduce the overall number.

Such policies are not limited to the UK. Across many countries in the Global North, we are witnessing how structurally it is impossible for certain groups of migrants to make a home, as preferential treatments, and systems of everyday bordering that treat migrants differentially, are in place before they arrive in destination countries. These preferential arrangements, both before and after arrival, reveal how migration policy regimes are integrally bound up with intersectional power relations, such as those relating to social class, age and race, and in this way, shaping the structural im/possibilities of home in migration for different social groups.

Situations of precarity that limit the possibilities of feeling at home manifest in different ways for different migrant groups. For example, Wilkins' (2019) research with Vietnamese migrants on temporary visas in London shows how practices of border regulation impact on their ability to feel a sense of home and belonging in London. She relates this to the geopolitics of immigration in the UK, which has shifted towards a selective points-based system which gives preferential treatment based on factors such as skill levels, language fluency, age or health. As a result of the uncertainties of their temporary status, together with their vulnerability to poor housing and working conditions, many migrants in Wilkins' (2019) research live with a sense of being unable to create a long-term home.

What Wilkins' (2019) research demonstrates is that precarity and related feelings of insecurity and un-belonging are not just about legal status. Even in situations of legal status, the uncertainties attached to some forms of status have a profound effect on the possibilities of home in migration. Furthermore, precarity as a condition can have effects on a person's life that persist even when legal status becomes more secure. For example, Howlett-Southgate (2021) demonstrates the complexities of home-making for people who have achieved refugee status in Ireland, because

[2] https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/immigration-home-secretarys-speech-of-5-november-2010.

of the ongoing effects of having spent long periods of time in the asylum system along with broader processes of exclusion experienced by refugees. Kox and Van Liempt (2022) make a similar argument based on their research with refugees in the Netherlands. Howlett-Southgate (2021) argues that problems in accessing housing and work, together with experiences of racism, and separation from family members, mean that creating a new sense of home for refugees in Ireland is extremely challenging.

Wimark's (2021) research with queer refugees in the Swedish countryside reinforces this point. He finds that even when queer refugees move out of state-controlled spaces, they find it difficult to feel at home in 'normative' spaces. He suggests that this 'blurs the border of a specific timeframe of leaving/losing a home (country) and creating a new home since many queer refugees find it difficult to find belonging that fully embraces them' (p. 649) and he points to the importance of moving beyond state-controlled spaces to the norms that govern home-making (Wimark, 2021).

### 5.3.4 Making Home in Displacement and Precarity

Despite living in situations of precarity and displacement, existing research shows how migrants in such circumstances continue to work at making home, finding home or re-creating home. Strategies to find a sense of home can include making current living conditions more home-like, finding home-like everyday spaces, maintaining ties to former homes or imagining future homes. Brun and Fábos (2015) provide a detailed framework of the process of 'making homes in limbo' among individuals in protracted displacement. Their concept of 'constellations of home' refers to the diverse and complex ways in which migrants living in protracted displacement continue to 'make home' through their present practices and hopes for the future, despite the many ways in which their current circumstances are marked by hardship and uncertainty (Brun & Fábos, 2015). They caution, however, that even when home-making practices occur in a location like a refugee camp, this does not necessarily mean that the place becomes a home.

Research has explored how residents of asylum-seeker accommodation centres manage to make home even in such unhomely spaces. For example, Boccagni (2022) points to four different types of home-making practices through which residents of asylum reception centres seek to shape their environments to make them more familiar, normal and personal. These are: ways of improving space, ways of enabling cultural reproduction and biographical continuity, ways of privatising space and ways of beautification. Others point to strategies of inhabitance such as restoring short-term temporal predictability through establishing daily routines (Gil Everaert, 2021). Going outside the institutional accommodation centres to find home-like spaces elsewhere, for example, outdoor green spaces (Van Liempt & Staring, 2021), is a strategy that is important for some. However, Gil Everaert (2021) argues that even as residents of such centres enact home-making practices, they do so as a way of 'inhabiting the meanwhile', that is, of building temporary homes without letting go of their future plans for a more permanent home elsewhere.

Some scholars have looked at how precarious housing is intersected with materiality, how objects of significance are used for personalisation and how small-scale acts attempt to give new meanings to spaces of non-home (Boer, 2015; Neumark, 2013; Trapp, 2015). Motasim and Heynen (2011) show that IDPs in Sudan design their own space, establishing it as a mode of resistance against the forceful urban environment of Khartoum (the capital city) which is different to the lands they have had to flee from. By doing this, they make home into a mobile form of habitat that allows them to take it with them where they go. In other contexts, migrants living in precarity create a sense of home through practices that build a diasporic identity or create 'intimate bubbles of homeliness', for example, through sharing food (Vandevoordt, 2017, p. 606) or participating in social, cultural or religious rituals with other migrants (Nititham, 2017).

### *5.3.5 Summary*

The multiple ways in which precarity limits the structural possibilities of home are outlined in this section. We pay particular attention to migrants in situations of extreme vulnerability and protracted displacement, highlighting the impossibilities of home in such circumstances. However, the literature also reveals the complexities of home for migrants in different types of precarious situations, and reveals that circumstances that reduce spatial security (both in terms of legal status as well as wider possibilities of place belonging) provide an ongoing challenge to efforts to making home in migration. Despite these challenges, migrants continue to work to make home in different ways.

In light of this, we point to Brun and Fábos' (2015) proposal for a dynamic political understanding of home in migration which recognises that even in conditions of liminality (as opposed to 'limbo'), people continue to work to make home, improve their current living circumstances and imagine a better future home. They argue that binary 'here-there' or 'past-future' understandings of home fail to capture the realities of what home comes to mean in such conditions and instead it is important to recognise home as existing between places and in the active doing of home. This point is reinforced by others, such as Pérez-Murcia (2019) and Boccagni (2022), who argue for the need to conceptualise home in displacement in non-essentialised ways.

## 5.4 Conclusion

Understanding home and migration in relation to migrants' status draws the attention to a politics of home and migration that informs one's conditions of mobility and settlement. The underlying forces, including policies and political acts, that enable some groups and disable others from entering, remaining, leaving or even fleeing a context mean that governments and nation-states play an important role in

the structural im/possibilities of home-making. Immigration status impacts migrants' access to housing, labour market, and ability to create a sense of belonging. Bloch et al. (2014) argue that young undocumented migrants are very likely to stay in their countries of residence for good or a long time. This means that a form of 'legal precariousness', if they are children or young migrants, can add to their limbo situation and defer their feeling at home and belonging. Others transition into precarity from some form of 'legal' status such as visitor visas and student visas and overstay and breach the terms of their entry (Koser, 2005, cited in Bloch et al., 2014). What is noteworthy though is that conditions of privilege and precarity can change, as life circumstances change.

A relational understanding of privilege and precarity will help then to address these nuances. For example, how do migrants move from one position to the other? How do their privileged positions turn into precarity and vice versa? Drawing boundaries between the two is difficult as social locations of migrants are not static, as policies change, locations and onward mobilities happen and aspirations and life situations alter all the time and, perhaps most importantly, due to factors such as changing technologies and labour markets and climate change, new forms of migratory journeys and settlement strategies take place.

As such, people who, at some point in time, experience privilege in one aspects of their lives but not in others, might see their position as precarious. Fathi (2017) in her research with Iranian migrant doctors and dentists in the UK, shows that before registering as medics with the British medical and dental councils, these skilled migrants experience extreme precariousness and they may resort to work in non-related positions. However, once they pass that hurdle, become more privileged migrants, with many spatial rights and security, they use consumption practices to place themselves in their 'correct' places as middle-class citizens rather than migrants. In her research with Vietnamese migrants in East London, Wilkins (2019) notes that housing precarity for these migrants led to some form of more established conditions after decades. Some long-established migrants managed to buy accommodation that had been allocated to them through housing associations, whilst renting was the only viable option for more recent migrants (in the last decade) (Wilkins, 2019). We see here that the duration of residence in a country but also the era of entry are important factors that can lead to more security or precarity. Sometimes, renting is considered to provide more flexibility but as Wilkins (2019) argues, drawing on Parutis (2011), renting can also be an acceptable option for those who see their time in the country as temporary and who plan to make their future homes elsewhere.

Research by Soudy (2017) with middle-class Egyptian migrants in Qatar and with 1.5 and 2nd generation Egyptian-Americans in the US sheds further light on the complexities of structural im/possibilities of home. According to Soudy (2017), for Egyptian-Americans in the US, their permanent residency status was a key factor in their seeing the US as their home due to the sense of security it bestowed. In comparison, Egyptians in Qatar, though they felt an everyday sense of home there, did not feel it was their long-term home, which Soudy (2017) attributes to their second-class citizenship status there. She argues that citizenship regimes shape

migrants' relationships to their host society in terms of their willingness to invest in that society and their feelings of belonging. However, the research also reveals that Egyptian-Americans experience feelings of outsider-ness in the US due to racism and Islamophobia. In other words, citizenship status intersects with racism to complicate privileged status in migration. Even though Soudy's (2017) participants are middle-class and largely professional, with permanent residency status in the US, their spatial security in the US is undermined by the prevalence of racism and Islamophobia there.

This chapter has considered a very important player in possibilities of home making. Migration status is the category that is defined by states, large institutions and socio-economic systems such as labour markets, which control what kind of capital migrants have access to and whether these forms of capital are transnationally accepted. Lewis et al. (2015) argue that precarity, which is an effect of not having access to those resources and capitals to which privileged migrants do, is associated with neoliberal globalised systems that value certain capitals over others. When considering privilege and precarity together we realise that states and their tools such as migration policies, borders and time limitations placed on entries and settlements make them the key players in structural possibilities of home. Furthermore, it is important to note that focusing only on policies on migration and settlement in relation to privilege and precarity also increases the risk of assuming methodological nationalism (Wimmer & Glick-Schiller, 2002). Although methodological nationalism, or the role of nation states in understanding migration and home-making experiences, is important, privilege and precarity are two concepts whose meanings are not bound only to this but capture the interrelationality of structural and personal elements that is so important in understanding home in migration.

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