1. Reimagining home in the 21st century

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The idea of home evokes many layers of meaning, symbolism and emotion. In many societies, home can refer to the family home, the meaning most commonly understood, and by extension it can symbolize a place of warmth and security as well as a place of fear and exploitation. At the same time, home can mean a locality in which people have close relationships with neighbours and have developed attachment to a neighbourhood square or to a local football team. Political leaders often evoke the idea of the nation as the home for all who fulfil certain criteria of birthplace and culture.

Increasingly, many people may have a sense of transnational or trans-local belonging, making themselves at home in more than one place, whether by choice or by forced displacement (Hage 2005). The situation of refugees and migrants complicates definitions of home further when homelands themselves change, and the displaced are able to return, yet face further displacement as well as reconciliation (Long and Oxfeld 2004; Markowitz and Stefansson 2004).

Images of the nation as home have been a central force in nationalism, designed to create a strong emotional bond. But, for many, the family, local or transnational home may have a stronger emotional pull than the idea of the nation as home. The persistence of home within this proliferation of lifeworlds is the focus of this book. This collection investigates the social forces that surround home in the 21st century. These forces create the possibility both of being at home and of feeling estranged from taken-for-granted structures (Berman 1988). Recent trends in the affordability of housing in western economies have pushed and pulled at families and individuals with devastating effects (Mallett et al. 2011). Home can no longer be seen as a purely self-sufficient concept and place, as it is indeed these external pressures that make us feel we are at home or not at home. Increasingly, the presence of ‘others’, challenging a comfortable sense of belonging, is highlighted by conservative forces to deflect attention from these pressures. At the same time, many people are struggling collectively
to imagine new ways of being at home against these hegemonic visions of home.

This collection builds on ongoing work in sociology and anthropology, as well as housing, migration and cultural studies, to historicize and relativize notions of home (Noble 2002; Mallett 2004; Gorman-Murray and Dowling 2007). These accounts in turn build on histories of home that have clearly set out the central, yet often unexamined, role that the domestic plays in social life. The social reformers of the 19th century advocated the privacy and self-containment of the detached family home as an antidote to the perceived ills of communal urban life (Jackson 1985). The ravages of the Second World War created the desire for a comfort zone, a space for the individual to be fostered by the nuclear family under the watchful eye of experts (Lasch 1977). Home was realized as the centre of the nuclear family in western societies in the post-war years. Although there were variations, including the extended family home, the dominant concept of home in the English-speaking world was shaped by the rise of the nuclear family, as a place where the children lived while they went to school and were expected to stay until they got married.

Despite this apparent stability, the dramatic changes to the meaning of home were created during this time. In the era of modernity, linked to processes of industrialization of societies in the 19th and 20th centuries, home and work had become increasingly separate, and the home was the site of far-reaching transformations of ways of living, which paralleled reconfigurations in gender relations (Reiger 1985). Gradually through the 1960s and 1970s, blended families and a new pluralism of definitions began to appear, although these took a while to become established in the minds of the broader society (Putnam 1993). It became much more common for young people to become financially independent and to leave home before marriage. Through the women's movement, home became a site of struggle and contestation. Similarly, migrants began to talk about two or more homes, and to politicize the very notion of home itself (Staeheli and Nagel 2006).

Home provides both a spatial and temporal sense of belonging (Blunt and Dowling 2006) that provides familiarity, a sense of security, comfort, order and permanence. The term ‘familiarize’ itself, for instance, refers to the acquisition of deep knowledge and the emergence of a certain comfort and order in the process. Home is seen as the seat of the nuclear family in some cultures, while in others the extended family provides both spatial and temporal belonging. Hence the family home is seen by many to be the locus of all that is good and safe, a private haven that should be separate from the outside economic sphere (Hochschild 1997). Nevertheless, in ‘Authority and the Family’, Horkeimer discusses how the
19th- and early-20th-century family provided protection and comfort, but also oppression and discipline (Horkeimer 2002). Research by sociologists in Britain in the 1980s acknowledged these traditions, yet questioned perceptions of home as the site of an increasing retreat into privatism on the one hand and an oppressive institution of gender relations on the other, thus offering a new, more nuanced agenda for research (Saunders and Williams 1988). Further enquiries into the meanings of home cut across class, gender and location, and demonstrated the ‘ontological security’ that a sense of home provides, and thus the grounding of identity it enables, thereby allowing people to participate in the public sphere (Saunders 1989).

THE CONTRADICTIONS OF HOME

In this book, we question the very possibility in the 21st century of any concept of a singular and self-sufficient home. The changes to our understanding of home have been as profuse as they are diverse. These changes build on, or deepen, pre-existing contradictions. Recent changes to the labour market and work recast the domestic sphere as the site of both consumption and production, a return to the pre-industrial formation of home as a place of work (Holloway 2007; Pink et al. 2015). The gendering of the home as feminine has been disrupted by new technologies and new visibilities of domestic labour (Cowan 1983; Lloyd and Johnson 2004; and for a contemporary, ethnographic take on the reconfiguration of gender roles see Meah and Jackson 2013). The intense marketing of goods and services to home-based consumers, the commodification of the family home in overheated real-estate markets built on debt (Tanton et al. 2008), and economic policies directed towards integrating the family and relational aspects of social life into the market (McDowell 2007) all illustrate the ways in which home is increasingly a site of power opened up to scrutiny and display.

Going beyond the notion of home as a stable, given entity has alerted us to the exclusions and gaps in the conventional meanings of home. Far from being a safe and secure anchor of identity, especially for marginalized groups, the home is simultaneously the focus of neo-liberal market forces and state interventions (see Musharbash, Chapter 5 in this book). At the same time, the realities of what constitutes ‘home’, and how people make their lives at ‘home’, are changing in an age of high rates of geographical mobility and changing local contexts. Sociologists and anthropologists have grappled with the implications of these changes, questioning whether home can be ‘placed’ at all, or whether it is more accurate to understand
a sense of home as something ‘practised’, a process rather than a stable ‘thing’ (Lloyd 2001: 182–183). By understanding home as practised, we go beyond previous approaches. Looking at home through an anthropological lens, while useful, approaches ‘the home’ as the bounded site of a set of practices of domesticity, and thus constructs a teleology of settlement (Cieraad 1999). Increasingly, sociology and other disciplines see home as a complex interactional achievement between persons, spaces and things that requires us to constantly ‘make homes’ rather than ever finally ‘be at home’ (see for example Schillmeier and Heinlein’s 2009 account from this perspective of the precipitous move of an elderly man into a nursing home following a stroke). The notion of home as practised, a process and an event opens up home for new kinds of analysis, as well as offering us a new set of possibilities to make ourselves at home in relation to others. In this sense, our home does not ‘belong’ to us; rather we ‘belong’ to home.

By seeing home from this standpoint – as a set of practices which configure our identities both individual and collective – deep contradictions and complex changes arise, revealing the tensions that exist in the modern home. For example, there is now a counter-trend to work being brought into the home as many workers attempt to find what is described as the work–life balance. On the other hand, as Duyvendak argues in his analysis of the interrelations between the individual/private and collective/public spheres of ‘home’ (2011: 112–116) in terms both of the contents of the work and of the place itself, ‘work’ has become ‘home’ for many workers. Because people are spending more and more time at work and less time at home, the workplace and the inescapable social relations that emerge become home. The constant friction of these changes and associated movements into the public sphere, however, do not override demands for home. As Putnam argued in relation to the emergence of a range of theories that emphasized social displacement and fragmentation during the 1980s, ‘Those who pondered dislocations in material culture have only recently come to recognize that they must deal with those who encounter, enact and envisage “the home”’ (1993: 152). It is this persistence of home and its ground-level permutations that this collection speaks to. Rather than home’s erasure within large-scale social processes, which appear, on the surface, to run roughshod over attachments to the time-spaces of home-making, the enduring pull of home is deeply felt.

As with the family home, the national home easily conjures up a sense of security, comfort, order, permanence and ownership. Feminist and postcolonial critiques have warned against the re-emergence of perceptions of the past homogeneity of the national home. As Honig warns:
The dream of home is dangerous, particularly in postcolonial settings, because it animates and exacerbates the inability of constituted subjects – or nations – to accept their own internal divisions, and it engenders zealotry, the will to bring the dream of unitariness or home into being. It leads the subject to project its internal differences on to external Others and then to rage against them for standing in the way of its dream – both at home and elsewhere. (1994: 585)

Many western countries are concerned about their historical claim to geographical territory, as contemporary practices of citizenship in a multi-cultural society reach beyond the nation-state. The Netherlands, for example, is experiencing a nostalgia for a perceived ethnically homogeneous past, and politicians have made the idea of the national home a policy matter (Duyvendak 2011: 116). Similarly, politicians make geographical and historical claims for the nation and empire as home (see Blunt and Dowling 2006). This form of liberal nationalism is based on the idea that there are moral and juridical features of the nation that all citizens should adhere to, whether colonized or not. This means that, where there are different cultural histories that come from different geographical locations or have been marginalized within a nation, then liberal nationalists base their desire for homogeneity on an assumed solidarity of the people of a nation who need to see themselves as members of a territorially bound and overarching community (Vasta 2010). Hence, the family home and the national home are both still seen as the cornerstone of neo-liberal societies.

The multi-level approach taken in this collection offers a new politics of home. This political stance poses questions: Who can and cannot speak in the name of home? Who has the power to define and regulate visions of home that exclude and deny others? Where are the visions of home that recognize rather than close off difference and diversity? Where is home practised and by whom? Without this reflexivity, definitions of home are not adequate to our times. The chapters in this book question hegemonic visions of the family home and the homogeneous national home, and inquire into the meanings and effects of home-making in contemporary society. The book contains a set of interrelated chapters, exploring current conceptions that challenge traditional, convenient and stereotypical notions of ‘home’, providing a broad and diverse representation of home. The book addresses contemporary debates in the study of everyday life, migration, mobilities, culture and policy. More specifically, the book brings into play ideas about home with current empirical social science research. It contributes to national and international discussions on the changing economic and social meanings of home. It provides an analysis of areas and locations that are rarely thought of as involved in ‘home-making’: man caves, the car and public transport. And it analyses shifting
meanings situated in specific figures, forms and practices, for example in the domestic kitchen, the migrant citizen/stranger, and transnational households.

Taking a perspective on home as practised and mobile is unsettling: a final full stop at any kind of stopping place becomes impossible to achieve. In the constant repetition of moments of home-making, essential elements always need to be remade and refigured. However, this unsettling can also give a breathing space. A home that is never settled requires human intervention, and dimensions of solidarity thus can be formed against totalizing and claustrophobic definitions of home. A crucial thread that is opened up by the practice perspective, and thus binds these contributions, is agency. The chapters, implicitly or explicitly, are concerned with the construction of innovative and flexible notions of home. The processes of migration, of displacement and of exclusion require flexible and innovative identities which intersect with modes of integration and participation in an ever-changing social, political and economic milieu. The construction of home and belonging is a subjective phenomenon concerned with self-identities and attitudes, as well as a structural phenomenon that transforms objective biographies and life situations. Thus, it is a productive process, embedded in change that entails ‘an interchange between the self and structure’ (Rutherford 1990: 14). In other words, identity is formed through the interplay of the subjective self, individual agency and structural positioning (see also Hall 1991).

UNSETTLING HOME

The unsettling and provocative framework that underpins the collection is explored closely by Norbert Ebert (Chapter 2) and Evelyn Honeywill (Chapter 10). Home and identity for Ebert are anchoring points in struggles for coherence and continuity within and between increasingly proliferating ‘lifeworlds’. Ebert does not offer a nostalgic or recuperative vision of an originary home to which the late-modern individual can and should return and hide away from this complexity. Instead he argues, following the work of the Austrian social scientist Alfred Schütz (1944), that what we have in common is our pluralized lives, characterized by the experiences ‘of permanently being [both] stranger and homecomer’ (this volume, p. 32). Understanding the condition of late modernity as one of a blurring between private, civic and social spheres, Honeywill advances understandings of socio-technological change through her analysis of Daniel Bell’s (1973) postindustrial society in the context of the home. Honeywill brings into clear relief many of the ‘invisible’ aspects of everyday life as she
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considers the home as ‘the “hub” upon which the socio-structural infra-
structure of so-called network societies increasingly relies’ (this volume,
p.150).

The question of neo-liberal social policies’ impact on home is opened
up in several chapters. Aleksandra Ålund, Carl-Ulrik Schierup and Lisa
Kings (Chapter 9) describe how youth urban justice movements have
responded to the latest riots in Stockholm. They address new ways of
home-making in the context of several youth urban justice movements that
are (re)claiming welfare in their suburban areas, heavily hit by welfare cuts.
Yasmine Musharbash (Chapter 5) provides fine-grained evidence of how
punitive policies in the name of welfare, such as the Northern Territory
Emergency Response (also known as the Northern Territory Intervention),
have disrupted indigenous patterns of home-making and relationships
to country. Adam Stebbing (Chapter 7) examines the need for a critical
approach to definitions of homelessness in the policy context. Generally
policy-makers are only able to understand a framework of ‘housed’ versus
‘houseless’. A critical approach ensures that people experiencing home-
lessness are not represented as lacking agency in their struggles to be heard by
policy-makers.

While some might be unreflective conformists, others develop inno-
ватive identities that inhabit rebellious spaces. The process of making
oneself at home in these spaces entails negotiating and manipulating our
identities to suit the context as a way of retaining agency over the process
of home-making. Deslandes and Humphry (Chapter 11), as well as
Lloyd (Chapter 8), investigate how unhomely, anonymous non-places of
transit and commerce are temporarily occupied and tactically transformed
by mediated belongings, as well as protest movements. Deslandes and
Humphry outline a set of actors who have converged on Sydney’s Central
Business District and the home-making practices, and inequalities, that
intertwine in space and time as a result. Lloyd gives an account of everyday
mobilities and how sense of home is challenged by public acts of racism.

Many of the chapters expose everyday forms of agency which are
demanded by these diverse practices of home. There is both local accom-
modation and resistance to power structures as well as to global condi-
tions (Giuffrè, Chapter 4; Redshaw, Chapter 6; Ålund, Schierup and
Kings, Chapter 9). One way of resisting the power of the state’s gaze is by
becoming invisible. On the other hand, a localized construction of home
and belonging develops right there in the localities where people live and
work (Vasta, Chapter 3; Stebbing, Chapter 7; Browitt, Chapter 14). While
this local accommodation and resistance appear to be happening off-stage
(Goffman 1959), they also occur right under the surveillance of the state
(Musharbash, Chapter 5; Lloyd, Chapter 8; Deslandes and Humphry,
Chapter 11). Agency is not always about a reaction to or some form of struggle against a more powerful state or social group (Scott 1985, 1998). There is also a *constructive subjectivity* occurring that includes the construction of home, identities and belonging as a *productive process*, embedded in multiple lifeworlds (Vasta, Chapter 3; Hamilton, Chapter 12; Vanni Accarigi, Chapter 13; Supski, Chapter 15).

The book is divided into four parts which elaborate key themes that interpret these questions through an important theoretical axis: firstly, the figure of the stranger; secondly, practices of dwelling; thirdly, conditions of homeliness and unhomeliness interwoven into public domains; and, fourthly, the materialities that choreograph our senses of home.

**THE STRANGER**

The figure of ‘the stranger’ in classical social theory has acted as a marker of difference or incommensurability for home subjects (Simmel 1950), and this is where we start in Part I. In his chapter entitled ‘Reflections on Home and Identity in Late Modernity’ (Chapter 2), Ebert argues that, in late modernity, meanings of home become increasingly precarious. Following Schütz (1944) among others, he suggests that ‘we are simultaneously strangers and homecomers in multiple hyper-differentiated lifeworlds’ (this volume, p. 31). In this situation, Ebert argues, ‘it is not the normative stability of a lifeworld that can be taken for granted, but its plurality’ (this volume, p. 32). Ebert’s line of argument provokes us to consider, how, owing to fragmentation of shared experience, ‘it is more difficult and precarious for individuals to establish identities and a sense of home on a shared normative basis’ (this volume, p. 32). Thus, one’s sense of home cannot be derived from a strong sense of sharing. Through his lens on home through precarity – thereby questioning traditional sociological views of modernity itself as a site of extraordinary progress and potential as well as the harbinger of humanity’s demise – Ebert uncovers how home has been shored up as a centre of gravity for modern individuals, but only through the profound displacement of shared experience. The ambivalence that emerges from this loss of home, both a loss of rigid norms and a gain of freedom, is a paradox that increasingly defines late modernity.

Ellie Vasta (Chapter 3) also explores the idea of the stranger, using Georg Simmel’s ideas on proximity and distance, individuality and community. Based on research conducted in Sydney, Vasta examines how migrants negotiate ‘Australian values’ in their quest to construct a new home. Her work offers a fine-grained analysis, grounded in extensive
empirical research in Sydney, to recast debates about cultural conflict into a more reflexive and critical approach to ‘affinities’.

Vasta deepens her focus on the figure of the stranger with an exploration of the ‘migrant stranger at home’. For the migrant, home is defined as an ambiguous space, a challenge for the national imaginary where the migrant is indeterminately an insider and an outsider. Because of their ‘outsider–insider’ position, migrants are able to actively construct ‘home’ from various vantage points, and observe and practise both affinities and differences with the cultural others surrounding them.

Both Chapters 2 and 3 challenge conventional views of home, one because of the precariousness of the lifeworld and the other based on the migrant’s ambivalent position in constructing new identities. While Ebert explains that the plurality of lifeworlds is ‘not easily reconciled collectively or individually with notions of home and identity’ (this volume, p.31), Vasta shows how migrants construct home in the plurality of lifeworlds and through the simultaneity of being both integrated and marginalized. While migrants can fall between the cracks and experience exclusion from institutions of citizenship and the economy, Vasta’s focus on ‘affinities’ shows that we are all insiders and outsiders at the same time. Ebert extends this analysis by showing how home is no longer a homogeneous place as a result of our exposure to multiple lifeworlds.

**DWELLING**

Part II, on ‘dwelling’, extends our focus on practices of home-making. The ‘practice turn’ opens up for investigation sites and situations of home-making that go well beyond the four walls of the house and thus intersects with a growing body of work within the ‘mobilities’ paradigm. This work is in part indebted to Martin Heidegger’s essay on ‘Building Dwelling Thinking’ (1971), which has been taken up by John Urry in his book *Sociology beyond Societies* (2000) to explore the ways in which ‘contemporary forms of dwelling almost always involve diverse forms of mobility’ (2000: 132).

Giuffrè, in Chapter 4, explores the ruptures of home created in the process of migration for residents of the West African island republic of Cape Verde. The home-making practices of the migrating Cape Verdean women decentre location and recreate boundaries, in a creative and critical form of dwelling in a society defined by mobility. Via an ethnographic frame, Giuffrè investigates the challenges that migration poses both to the physical space of home and to processes of identification. She describes how established categories of gender are being rewritten in the
‘transnational matrifocal’ home of Cape Verdean communities, as women move between the archipelago on the west coast of Africa through emigration to Italy and Portugal. Her research shows how a shift has occurred ‘from the idea of home as the stable physical centre of the universe, a place of departure and return, to home as a place of habitual practices and interactions, creating another way of being-in-the-world . . . [M]igrants often feel at home in transit’ (this volume, p. 57). In Cape Verde, female emigration has completely renegotiated the meaning of home.

In Chapter 5, Musharbash draws out the complex definition of Warlpiri home which reflects cosmology and experiences of space–time in mobile formations: ‘ngurra as a term encapsulates a great number of meanings, beginning with the most generic idea of shelter to the incorporation of the Warlpiri cosmos into a single term’ (this volume, p. 77). Further, ‘Home, from this perspective, is experienced through the interdependence of domestic structures, social practices of dwelling within them, and values embodied through such dwelling and within those structures – or a series of building–dwelling–thinking’ (this volume, p. 72). Historical changes in settler–colonial policies of management of Aboriginal people are demonstrated to have spatial consequences, and contribute sharply to senses of displacement and un-belonging for communities under the recent ‘Intervention’. At Yuendumu, community members are increasingly confined to their homes and disciplined to stay within them, under the gaze of the Northern Territory housing authority. For the Yuendumu people, there now is a ‘radical and novel split between home as the inside of a house, where much time is spent, and “the world”’ (this volume, p. 84).

Redshaw, in Chapter 6, ‘Mobile My Spaces’, explores dwelling as home and freedom in commuter cars, tradesmen’s vans and utes and backpacker campervans. Through the work of Paul Virilio, Redshaw shows how technologies of mobility have created new spatial orders, which in turn require new practices of home-making within them: ‘The car as a place to dwell is related to home in the privacy, refuge and “staying with things”’ (Urry 2000: 291).

These new practices of domestication are creative but ultimately temporary. As Redshaw shows through a series of abject objects, the car cannot be a secure home. As an ‘alternative’, temporary home to those who travel long distances, are on holidays or are perhaps testing their relationship to home, the car-as-home offers liberatory potential that ‘offers a domestic(ated) space of intimacy’ [Noy 2009: 103] . . . as an extension of the house that has an intimacy and sociality that was perhaps not built into it’ (this volume, p. 89). The car as housing, however, tests the limits of the agency of home-making practices, as such mobile homes are ontologically vulnerable, are detached from wider networks and, despite providing
shelter, render their occupants existentially and practically homeless. In the end, the car as home detaches building from dwelling and thinking: a container for one’s possessions, but never a home.

In Chapter 7, ‘Without House or Home?’, Stebbing suggests a new approach to homelessness. In his exploration of counter-examples of home-making, Stebbing uses the notion of dwelling via Urry to emphasize its potential to allow young people experiencing homelessness to articulate when and how they have ‘home-like’ feelings, and therefore allow a form of agency to develop. As Stebbing explains, attention to how homelessness is defined within policy debates is much needed, because such definition is ‘a political act that separates “the homeless” from “adequately housed” members of society in political discourse that influences policy choices and, ultimately, resource allocation. It follows that divisions arising from definitional debates have the potential to distort the understanding of homelessness and hinder policy responses’ (this volume, p. 102). Through critical sociologies of homelessness and qualitative research with young people, Stebbing, '[r]ather than highlighting what homeless people lack', shows ‘how homeless individuals express their agency in the midst of significant social and spatial constraints’ (this volume, p. 116)

Giuffrè (Chapter 4) has shown how some migrants move between houses in different locations; for others home is represented by mobility itself. Musharbash (Chapter 5) uses Heidegger’s essay to demonstrate the grinding injustices of normalizing indigenous home-making practices within a neo-colonial framework. While Musharbash does not refer to Urry’s ‘mobilities’ framework, the ethnographic narrative begins in nomadic practices of home-making that Warlpiri people have practised for thousands of years. The accounts that Musharbash gathers demonstrate the impossibility of extricating being and dwelling, and the ways in which the built environment is a banal but ultimately devastating means of regulating ways of being together and knowing the world. Redshaw (Chapter 6) engages with Urry’s provocation to think through the intertwining of mobility and stasis within home-making practices; and Stebbing (Chapter 7) takes up Urry’s notion of dwelling explicitly, in order to recast an impasse in debates about housing through interviews with people experiencing homelessness.

PUBLICNESS

Part III on ‘publicness’ illuminates the ways in which contemporary dimensions of home exceed and trouble conceptions of home as a bounded, physical place that belongs only to the private sphere. Following on from
the explorations of dwelling as a potentially mobile practice, the chapters in this part move home-making into the public sphere.

In Chapter 8, Lloyd examines how home lines are drawn in public through a set of inclusions and exclusions. She investigates a series of recent incidents of racism on public transport in Australia to explain how the ability of some social actors to draw boundaries and exclude others is related to a sense of belonging which is underpinned by institutions, such as migration regimes, as well as everyday and mundane practices of mobility. Home-making is understood as relating to temporary publics-in-motion which undergo performances of meaning that exclude certain identities. She argues that ‘It is important to understand the continuities between feeling “at home” in one’s own home and feeling at home in a public place in a multi-ethnic and multi-scalar world’ (this volume, p. 123).

For Ålund, Schierup and Kings (Chapter 9), home is a flexible ‘metaphor’, which contains multiple layers, therefore needing contextual definition. Ålund, Schierup and Kings also apply Simmel’s notion of the stranger, providing his reflections ‘as an analytical notion for unravelling processes of alterity in the present times of migration’ (this volume, p. 135). Reporting on research with young people who are second-generation migrants, Ålund, Schierup and Kings demonstrate that struggles for home-making (hemmastadiggränder) are related to residency, including formal citizenship (hemmahörande). In the case of the second-generation Swedish migrant youth, ‘a shared consciousness of institutionally embedded residential segregation and social subordination creates a sounding board for claims for social justice’ (this volume, p. 137) among contemporary youth. Framing the right to the city as a home-making practice, urban activism is shown to bring about the ‘formation of new voices and hybrid identities’ (this volume, p. 139), related to the ways in which these young people articulate minority positions that are expansive and inclusive.

Honeywill in Chapter 10, ‘The Coming Home of Postindustrial Society’, diagnoses home as a mixed zone of public and private, thus a ‘social space through which private, public and market activities flow’ (this volume, p. 150). She updates Bell’s (1973) postindustrial thesis to look at the transformations of the domestic in the impact of wide-scale shifts in economic structures on the role of the home. In doing so, she surveys a range of new forms of service labour and modes of efficiency that encroach on everyday life, such as ‘pocket-ready software [that] invites an “efficiency drive” into our personal lives and home-based activities’. These networked cultural forms capture ‘aspects of the everyday that had previously escaped the purview of system logic and rationalization . . . highlight[ing] the ways in which the home itself [has become] a space of increased complexity’ (this volume, p. 155).
This part concludes with Chapter 11, ‘Staying in Place’, by Deslandes and Humphry, which investigates the tactical uses of space in a central city square. Practising home-like activities in public leads to power relations being transgressed and reinforced. The authors explore ‘the visible and invisible meanings and practices through which publicness is performed and legitimized at Martin Place’ in Sydney (this volume, p. 166). They trace the movements and still moments of mobile workers, Occupy movement activists, and people experiencing homelessness. Their focus on being-at-home in public brings together a mobilities paradigm with urban justice movements, to reconceptualize public space. They highlight the ways that bureaucracy and corporate power spread out into public space, and the tactical re-appropriations of public space that are enacted at moments of political protest and rough sleeping, thus creating a possibility of ‘expanded publicness’ (this volume, p. 172).

The loosening of boundaries between inside and outside, home and world, while felt in very different ways in each case study, propels communities into the public sphere and constitutes them in very different ways: the family in relation to technology (Honeywill, Chapter 10; Deslandes and Humphry, Chapter 11), racialized others in relation to mediated publics (Lloyd, Chapter 8), and second-generation migrants in relation to transformations of the welfare state (Ålund, Schierup and Kings, Chapter 9). The connection between home and public has different stakes for each group, but within this publicness lies a radical route to finding spaces to belong.

MATERIALITIES

In Part IV on ‘materiality’, we find precise reflections on the affective processes of home-making: of feelings of home emerging through the senses, of home symbolically defined through the material and sensory qualities of objects. While home is defined through material culture in migration (Hamilton, Chapter 12; Vanni Accarigi, Chapter 13), it is also a constructed space (the man cave, the kitchen) that creates a specific identity (manliness) or attitude to domestic labour (functional or convivial). The man caves described by Browitt (Chapter 14) and his participants are delineated by special material objects, for example ‘cars and car parts, motorcycles, tools, collectibles and memorabilia, musical and gym equipment, televisions, home theatres, alcohol paraphernalia, weapons, books, games and so forth’ (this volume, p. 207). The changing kitchen designs encountered by Supski (Chapter 15) reflect the changes in women’s roles as well as the emergence of new technologies.
In Chapter 12, Hamilton’s engagement with materiality both defines the senses as home and defines how the senses embody experiences of home, in relation to migration and the migrant’s sense of home. Sensory experience such as sounds, sight or a scent, in other words ‘sensing, and making sense of, home[,] involves a constant interaction between people, places and memories’ (this volume, p. 181). Following explorations of embodiment in the work of Ahmed and Ingold, home here is not limited to a house where one physically lives. Hamilton’s respondents describe their sense of home as extending beyond the domestic sphere to include the suburb (see also Spark 2003), as well as the city, the landscape, and the ground and air, with which we develop intimate relations through daily interaction, as well as through shared memories and histories. Using Ahmed’s theorization of locality, Hamilton shows how place intrudes on to the senses and quotes Ahmed to describe how ‘the lived experience of being-at-home . . . involves the enveloping of subjects in a space which is not simply outside them: being-at-home suggests that the subject and space leak into each other, inhabit each other’ (Ahmed 1999: 341, emphasis in original).

The site of the home also functions as a repository for complex, interrelated and at times contradictory socio-cultural ideas and spaces about people’s relationships with one another, especially with family, places, spaces and things. The sensory instabilities put in train by processes of migration are investigated by both Hamilton (Chapter 12) and Vanni Accarigi (Chapter 13). Vanni Accarigi asks her interviewees to tell their stories of meaningful objects that have accompanied their owners around the world, bringing the materiality of home to the fore, and surprising us with the intimate reflections that treasured possessions provoke. In these two chapters we find that people adapt, but they find their own way of doing it within a world of objects and material presences.

In Chapter 13, Vanni Accarigi is curious about how objects and everyday practices play a role ‘in the uncoupling of the idea of home from the idea of place’ (this volume, p. 192). Her chapter takes up this question in the ‘specific context of transnational mobility, [where home] is assessed as part of a continuum rather than as a point of departure or origin . . . or as a point of arrival’ (this volume, p. 192). She argues that ‘the shift from conceptions of belonging to a place to belonging through a practice is mediated and translated by objects’ (this volume, p. 193) – ‘the materiality and sensory qualities of the objects’ (this volume, p. 194). These everyday objects (teapot, teacup, books) transport migrants back to a past, but they also create a present and future. These objects create home for those who feel out of place. In this aspect, Vanni Accarigi draws on contemporary feminist and postcolonial scholars’ questioning of the concept of home as origin, stasis and belonging and documents
the ‘creative tensions’ around home that engaging with material practices can offer.

In Chapter 14, Browitt takes us on a tour of contemporary masculinity through ‘man caves’. He posits the idea of the man cave as a ‘home within home’, marked by ‘nostalgia for the largely unbounded, pre-marital freedom from major responsibility that is perceived to disappear with family making’ (this volume, p. 222). This study thus approaches man caves through the objects contained therein, including things which might be considered trivial or ‘kitsch’ by a certain cultured or intellectual gaze but which may have deep significance for their owners and their idea of home. Browitt explores the shifts in gendered meanings of home and complex interplays between social categories and material culture that give rise to the contemporary man cave phenomenon.

Concluding this part on materiality, and the book as a whole, Supski’s study of the transformations of ‘kitchen as home’ in Chapter 15 starts out from the kitchen as underpinning women’s pivotal role in the management of home in the 20th century, where they asserted their efficiency and authority in a modernist paradigm. Interweaving architectural manifestos and her own kitchen biography, Supski tracks how ‘the design of kitchens has moved from a greater emphasis on efficiency to one more concerned with sociality’ (this volume, p. 225). Kitchens are posited as ‘sites of intersection between work, gender and family relations, and objects’ (this volume, p. 225). Her account of the history of kitchen design in the western domestic ideal maps a nostalgia, where the now dominant open-plan kitchen echoes aspects of the pre-modern sociable and communal kitchen.

Each of the chapters in Part IV offers an innovative way of understanding how, by engaging with the presence of materiality, we deal with the absences in our lives. In each case, the process of home-making is provoked by loss: for Hamilton (Chapter 12) and Vanni Accarigi (Chapter 13), in migration; for Browitt (Chapter 14) and Supski (Chapter 15), in permutations of roles which change the centrality of gender within domestic arrangements (masculinity retreating to its ‘cave’; women’s culture being disciplined into efficiency and then a more gender-neutral conviviality). Following Young (2005), these innovative notions of home provide a sense of agency to the men and women portrayed in these chapters. They construct and negotiate their sense of self for themselves and in their relations with others.

Duyvendak (2011) questions why in western democracies ‘feeling at home’ has become such a dominant theme in public and political debate. He examines the perceived ‘crisis of home’, taking into consideration both endogenous and exogenous changes in our construction of ‘home’. He suggests that, because the traditional notions of home are changing and
are in a state of flux, there is a growing nostalgia for home, a nostalgia for the social order of the past. The authors of this book show that an alternative to the drive for nostalgia also exists. So, while on the one hand there is a desire, a nostalgia, for the safety of the past, on the other hand there is a lived reality of multiple lifeworlds. This is the ambivalence that we all inhabit. Hence, this collection offers a vision of the multiplicities of home, by examining various practices, tensions and critical debates. The authors speak to the idea of home from within and across disciplines. Their work sets out to question home as a static entity and to provoke us to rethink belonging as a social process in which we are all implicated but which can never be finalized or settled.

CONCLUSION

Taken together these analyses advance an interdisciplinary conversation about the possibilities of home as an analytical category and a foundational space for human identities. Home is much more than domestic space, as the discussions of migrant and pluralized homes attest: it is also where we ‘are’.

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