Integration and the struggle to turn space into "our" place: Homemaking as a way beyond the stalemate of assimilationism vs transnationalism

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Abstract

This article investigates homemaking as a set of practices and a perspective on migrants' ways of local incorporation, with its own material, emotional and relational underpinnings. Homemaking has the potential to emerge as an original category of analysis in immigrant integration, moving beyond the contraposition between assimilationism and transnationalism. Based also on our ongoing research, both in the United States and in Europe, we argue for the significance of migrants' interactions with specific local structures of opportunities, including people and institutions as much as the built and natural environment. The latter is a critical site where the meanings, opportunities and contents of integration are negotiated between immigrant newcomers and their local and transnational counterparts. Migrants' stratified rights, opportunities and aspirations to make themselves at home open a promising research perspective on group relations, as embedded in everyday materialities. While integration is a multi-dimensional and multi-scalar effort, it still rests on place-bound fields of inequalities and interaction within and between groups, and on underlying differences in views, emotions and practices of home. These are both a mirror of larger asymmetries of power and of the opportunities available to challenge them.

INTRODUCTION

Homemaking, as a set of practices and a perspective on migrants' ways of local incorporation, illuminates the material, emotional and relational foundations of the interaction between immigrant newcomers and majority populations. It has the potential to emerge as an original category of analysis into immigrant integration, moving beyond what is often seen as the contraposition between assimilationism and transnationalism. Based on our ongoing research, both in the United States and in Europe, we argue for the significance of migrants' interactions with specific local structures of opportunities, including people and institutions as much as the built and natural environment. The latter is less a background than a critical site where the meanings, opportunities and contents of integration are negotiated between immigrant newcomers and their local and transnational counterparts. Migrants' stratified rights, opportunities and aspirations to make themselves at home, in the broader economy of their housing and biographic trajectories, open a promising research perspective on how integration is embedded in everyday materialities. It is within specific social and infrastructural milieus that migrants' over-exposure to systematic violence and discrimination, but also their resilience, are played out. While integration is a multi-dimensional and multi-scalar effort, it still rests on place-bound fields of interaction within and between groups, informed by different views and emotions about home, and by unequal possibilities to make them real.

In what follows, we start from a preliminary conceptualization of homemaking, as a process that articulates people's need to "appropriate" some portions of space and exert emotional attachment to it. We then take stock of the mainstream literature on assimilationism and transnationalism. This leaves a number of blind spots which, we argue, a homemaking perspective on immigrant incorporation can suitably address. If this emerging optic is taken "seriously", that is not disjointed from the underlying patterns of inequalities, it paves the way for a contextually sensitive understanding of migrant life trajectories as a struggle to make themselves at home in their local social environments.

TOWARD A HOMEMAKING APPROACH TO MIGRANT INCORPORATION

Before we enter the debate on migrant incorporation, an essential conceptualization of homemaking is in order. In a general sense, homemaking embraces all the practices whereby people try to make themselves at home in a certain social context, on a variety of scales, given the structure of opportunities accessible to them (Blunt & Dowling, 2006). This provides an analytical lens that interrogates migrants' ways of settling in a given environment and of dwelling in it (Boccagni, 2017). The lived experience of migrants' settlement can be seen as (tentative) homemaking in itself, as it articulates both a need and a claim for "bringing some space under control"—the condition under which "home starts" (Douglas, 1991: 289)—in a country where their possibility and right to do so are often limited and contested.

Homemaking is by no means devoid of inequalities and conflicts, but it has a more extensive and flexible meaning than the set of gendered practices of social reproduction which underpin family and domestic life. In the field of international migration, in particular, homemaking casts light on three critical aspects of migrant incorporation, which are not fully acknowledged by the mainstream approaches we discuss below:

- First, it illuminates the inherent significance of people's views, feelings and practices of home, for majorities and minorities alike, albeit in typically asymmetrical conditions. This articulates an intimate dimension of their "emotional geographies", in and out of the domestic space: what of their lived environment (i.e. places, people, belongings) they care most about, thereby setting it apart from the rest, and claiming it as more "theirs" than the rest. Home, in this sense, turns into a terrain for claims and counter-claims for attachment and appropriation over space, which migration-related settlement and racialization makes particularly salient and contentious (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Pastor, 2021; Saenz & Douglas, 2015);

- Second, it draws attention to the importance of the social, material and environmental circumstances under which migrants get settled and claim some space of their own, literal and symbolic, to call home. Migrants' engagement with space is primarily a local undertaking. It is affected by socio-material circumstances as well as by their evolving position in the hierarchies of legal status, race and the labour market, among others. Local structures of opportunities critically affect the scope of homemaking;

- Third, homemaking as a perspective illuminates the minute *work* of adaptation on the immigrant side, that is the social practices through which immigrants recover a sense of stability and predictability out of their living circumstances (Lauster & Zhao, 2017). This involves their positioning both in the public domain of majority-minority relations and in their own domestic and family life. Taken together, this constitutes an invitation to look at constellations of everyday social practices and to their mutual interactions and conflicts, rather than hinging on prescriptive definitions of integration.

We develop our immigrant homemaking optic by drawing also on our empirical research. Boccagni has investigated immigrant homemaking in a comparative perspective between different migrant groups in Europe, on a local and transnational scale (e.g. Boccagni & Pérez-Murcia, 2021; Miranda-Nieto & Boccagni, 2020). He has also approached the dwelling experience of asylum seekers as a matter of tentative and "reluctant" homemaking, under provisional and inhospitable housing circumstances (Boccagni, 2021a). This enabled him to get closer to the material world of migrants' experience of place, while being open to the abstract and normative views of home that inform them. Hondagneu-Sotelo has conducted numerous studies of Latino immigrant life in California, beginning with a study of undocumented settlement (1994) and most recently, a mixed-methods co-authored study of the ways in which Latino immigrants root themselves and find home in the African American neighborhoods of Los Angeles (2021). How this understanding of homemaking feeds into the debate between assimilation and transnationalism, and how it opens up towards an alternative perspective, is the question to be discussed in the next section.

ASSIMILATION VS TRANSNATIONALISM, AND THE IN-BETWEEN SPACE FOR HOMEMAKING

No single grand theory dominates research on migrant incorporation nowadays. However, two theoretical paradigms are clearly predominant, particularly in American sociology. It is worth reviewing them, even briefly, to highlight how a homemaking optic addresses blind spots in these traditional perspectives. While both paradigms have obvious merits, they fail to provide a productive framework for understanding immigrants' experience in their everyday life environments.

Assimilation, integration, and the underlying views and claims for home

Assimilation theory, based on the experiences of European immigrants in Chicago during the 1880s-1920s, endures in both contemporary U.S. scholarship and the popular imagination. Its original assumption is that as immigrants shed their cultural values, language and old ways of life over time, they will experience inclusion, acceptance and upward social mobility. They are expected to leave the inner-city and depart for better neighborhoods in the suburbs, enacting new forms of "spatial assimilation" (Massey, 1981; Massey & Denton, 1985) and participating in a "common cultural life" (Park & Burgess, 1925). In the influential formulation of Park and Burgess (1925), Southern and Eastern European immigrants in Chicago in the early 20th century would pass through stages of contact, conflict and accommodation that lead to eventual assimilation. In the mid-twentieth century, during a period of decreasing immigration, Gordon (1964) extended these ideas by adding three more stages, and

optimistically predicting that African Americans and other non-white groups would also be absorbed into the mainstream because of favorable Civil Rights policies.

One hundred years later, these ideas still prevail in American sociology, although sociologists have nuanced this framework with various modifications, including "segmented assimilation" (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Portes & Zhou, 1993) and "bumpy line assimilation" (Gans, 1992), to highlight that these processes are not monolithic. Most notably, Alba and Nee (2003) reformulated a "new assimilation theory" that draws attention to the role of institutional changes and civil rights policies, and challenging the idea of a singular Anglo-American "mainstream". Assimilation, they argue, is no linear ethnic obliteration. In fact, immigrants have systematically contributed to redefine American culture and society. Jiménez (2017) extends this idea further in terms of "relational assimilation", which shows how "established individuals" (people with three or more generations in the United States) are adapting and assimilating to social, cultural and economic shifts prompted by the latest influx of immigrants.

While many contemporary scholars continue to productively use some variation of the assimilation framework (e.g. Myers, 2007; Vasquez, 2014), the recent European debate has predominantly focused on some variant of integration. Similar to Jiménez (ibid) and Alba and Nee (ibid), this emphasizes the processual, multidimensional and two-sided bases of the relations between immigrant newcomers and so-called receiving societies (Ager & Strang, 2008; Entzinger & Biezeveld, 2003; Esser, 2004; Favell, 2003). For sure, the discursive omnipresence of integration is not without problems. Among other aspects, critics have highlighted the thin and contentious theoretical foundations of this concept (Schinkel, 2017, 2019); its blindness to immigrant acquisition of "negative" competencies (e.g. racism), no less than "positive" ones (Fox & Mogilnicka, 2019); its undue normalization of the nation-state (Dahinden, 2016) and essentialization of its borders (Anderson, 2019), ultimately instrumental to produce "gendered and racialized non-belonging" (Korteweg, 2017); indeed, its constitutive nationalist subtext, which fails to acknowledge how the categories of "citizen" and "alien" have been historically produced, and is unsuitable to address "the fundamental question – integration of whom into what?" (Favell, 2019).

In spite of these objections, and of several more (Saharso, 2019), the use of integration does not seem to have much of an alternative in the lexicon of European migration studies. It has also inspired ambitious comparative analyses on the different outcomes of integration processes across countries (e.g. Alba & Foner, 2015). As important, scholarship has put increasing emphasis on the local dimension of immigrant integration, and on its degrees of autonomy from national and supra-national policy and legal frameworks (Caponio & Borkert, 2010; Schiller, 2018). Again, the emphasis is on the need to spatialize and localize the study of immigrant-autocthonous patterns of interaction.

Similarly, research in the United States has also pointed to the importance of local climates and infrastructures of integration. Portes and Rumbaut (2001) introduced the term "the context of reception" to refer to the ways in which labour markets, state legislation and ethnic communities set the stage for ways in which the local context may be exclusionary or welcoming for newcomers. Shifting the spatial gaze away from the nation to local cities and neighborhoods, Jones-Correa (2011) offered an important conceptual and policy shift away from assimilation, towards a focus on proactively changing various dimensions of local communities, including leadership, public/private partnerships, and opportunities for contacts between newcomers and long-standing residents. In this optic, "all immigration is local" (ibid), and so is all immigrant integration and homemaking. At the same time, immigrant homemaking has become more precarious during the last two decades, with the intensification of deportation/ detention regimes and removal mechanisms, a process that began accelerating in the United States in the 1990 s and with post-9/11 security state measures, institutionalizing new forms of state power over immigrant exclusion and incarceration.

In the United States, strong deportation and detention regimes prevail, but conditions vary across places and regions. Formal sanctuary cities, many of which are traditional gateway cities, not only have laws prohibiting police from working with immigrant enforcement, but these tend to occur in cities where advocates have developed a progressive politics and civil society of reception for newcomers. For example, over the last forty years, Los Angeles has developed a strong infrastructure of immigrant rights groups and coalitions (Mollenkopt and Pastor,

2016), fortified by community organizations, labor unions, religious groups and civil rights groups that advocate for immigrant rights and services (Andrews, 2018; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2008; Nicholls, 2003). By contrast, other areas in the United States, often rural towns and agricultural areas with majority white populations, have produced overtly hostile, racist, menacing conditions that make daily existence, spatial mobility and homemaking not only difficult but possibly dangerous for racialized immigrants, especially for Mexicans (Andews, 2018; Garcia, 2019; Schmalzbauer, 2014). It is then possible to see mass deportation and the criminalization of immigrants (Golash-Boza, 2015) as state mechanisms to stop homemaking and place attachment. Alternatively, we posit cities with thick infrastructure of immigrant advocacy organizations and policies as facilitators of immigrant homemaking. But even in instances of extreme hostility, where immigrant residents are criminalized and persecuted, we can see strong feelings of attachment to new places and landscapes forming. People make collective claims to belonging even when denied formal legal rights and citizenship.

Relative to assimilation and integration, homemaking is an invitation to look at the practical and situated ways in which migrants negotiate their claims for inclusion, recognition and ultimately membership. The emphasis is on place attachment, on patterns of interaction with particular social environments, on the material circumstances—including the housing and domestic conditions—in which their life trajectories are embedded. On the subjective and experiential side of incorporation, a homemaking optic acknowledges that migrants articulate their belonging and affiliation towards different points of reference—different sources of "home feelings"—over space and time, although not all of them are equally accessible and effective.

Interestingly, the lexicon of assimilation can also embrace home as a metaphor, to emphasize its fundamental assumption: over generations, immigrants or at least their descendants enjoy increasing access to, and acceptance in, the "mainstream". This is reframed as "the home to the members of the dominant population… the assemblage of the social and cultural spaces where the members of the dominant population feel at home" (Alba et al., 2018).

Conflating the mainstream with "home" can open up to opposite understandings. One of them relies on an essentialist view of home as the place of the insiders, the established or longterm-residents—where racialized immigrants (Gans, 2017), particularly newcomers (Fox et al., 2012), do not belong and may exert claims only conditional on acceptance from the insider group (Duyvendak, 2011). This is the exclusivistic register of domopolitics, which extends the emotional power of home from the domestic space to the public domain (Walters, 2004). However, the same argument can be revisited through a less essentialized view of home. This involves feeling at home as a matter of feeling one's life environment as normal, not in question, and of being acknowledged as equally "normal" by one's counterparts. Perceiving one's country, or at least one's city or neighborhood as home—something that need not be ideal or perfect, but is anyway normal, unquestioned, and worth investing in—is a powerful, albeit implicit indicator of integration.

For sure, this is not an uncontentious claim, all the more so when it is advanced by racialized newcomer immigrants or refugees. The same emotional and moral register of home may support powerful exclusionary claims from the side of the majority group, based on deep-rooted perceptions of a country, city or community as *their* home (Duyvendak, 2011). Around the globe, we still hear numerous instances of anti-migrant groups chanting "Go back home!".

Transnationalism and the persistent significance of local embeddedness

The transnational framework emerged in the early 1990 s. This perspective begins with the observation that new forms of transportation and communication have eased movements across nation-state borders, intensifying "social circuits", associations, practices and institutions that span across national borders. Initially advanced by anthropologists working on migration between the Caribbean and the United States (Glick-Schiller et al., 1992) and Michoacan and California (Rouse, 1992), the transnational perspective resulted in classic studies in a number of domains, including transnational migrant communities (Levitt, 2001; Smith, 2005), religious initiatives (Hagan, 2008), civic and

political associations (Portes et al., 1999) and family life across borders (Baldassar & Merla, 2014). Within three decades, scholarship on transnationalism from "below" and "above", involving private and public institutions in cross-border activities, has grown into a distinctive theoretical tradition. Whether this makes for a paradigm in its own right, however, is not uncontentious. Many early proponents from the sociological side (e.g. Portes et al., 1999, 2017) see transnationalism as a "mid-range concept" rather than a theoretical perspective, because of a less than coherent "set of core assumptions, explanatory concepts, typologies and theories" (2017: 1488). Such an assumption co-exists with an alternative view that emphasizes the analytical distinction between transnational processes, institutions, relationships and outcomes (Levitt & Glick-Schiller, 2004). Moreover, while immigrant integration and transnationalism were initially seen as antithetical, most scholars by now recognize that they are compatible and may even feed into each other (Aranda et al., 2014; Erdal, 2020; Erdal & Oeppen, 2013; Waldinger, 2017). This acknowledgement has the merit of leading to a more nuanced understanding of migrant life conditions and prospects. However, it does not make yet for a way beyond the deep-rooted "division of labour" between assimilation, or integration, and transnationalism. This, instead, is precisely the potential of a homemaking perspective, in our argument.

Overall, the transnational turn has yielded innovative and often multi-sited research. That said, it has also been subject to significant objections and re-writings (Fitzgerald, 2014). Among other aspects, hometown associations, as much as most transnational social practices (Jones, 2019), have a selectivity and a life course of their own. Stages of sustained development, in which they emerge as vibrant transnational civic organizations, promoting ethnic solidarity, political empowerment and grassroots development (FitzGerald, 2008) may be followed by decline or withdrawal. As the US–Mexico experience suggests, this may have to do with problematic management of development projects, security threats, and immigrant acquisition of U.S. citizenship (Waldinger & Duquette-Rury, 2016). It is no coincidence, for instance, that in Hondagneu-Sotelo's recent study of Mexican and Central Americans in South Los Angeles, few—if any—first-generation respondents participated in transnational hometown associations, or in social events in their country of origin (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Pastor, 2021). At the same time, nearly all of them did send money home to relatives, and relied on cell phones and social media to stay in touch. Only those who could afford the cost of travel and met the legal status requirements of border crossing did return occasionally for family events such as a wedding, or a funeral. This is no isolated case, as research has noticed a trend of declining transnational circulation and increasing permanent settlement in a variety of contexts (Alarcon et al. 2016; Jones, 2019; Waldinger, 2015).

In short, most of Hondagneu-Sotelo's respondents have embraced living in the United States in general and South L.A. in particular. At the core of their narratives lie pragmatic concerns and struggles with affordable housing, education, jobs and other elements of quotidian existence, more than any transnational engagement. This reveals the need for an analytical frame that, while acknowledging their potential for transnational involvement and their exposure to social exclusion, racialization and even deportation, provides a better match with the perceptions and experiences of immigrants themselves. Along these lines, a homemaking perspective highlights the need to ground transnational practices to specific contexts of settlement, life-course positions and structures of opportunities. Migrants' ways to construct and emplace home in more than one locality are highly revealing of the distribution, contents and reach of their transnational connections over time (Boccagni, 2021b). Migrant transnational practices can be reconceptualized as forms of homemaking over a distance (Sandu, 2013), as they articulate their need to retain and materialize a deep-rooted sense of home toward a place from which they are physically distant, but socially proximate (Carling et al., 2012).

HOMEMAKING AND MIGRANT LOCAL INCORPORATION: A MACRO–MICRO UNDERSTANDING

If neither assimilation theory nor a transnational perspective fully captures the daily experience of immigrant newcomers in particular local settings, a novel entry point into it can be inspired by the notion of home. This lies

at the core of everyday life, but is generally taken for granted rather than interrogated as a concept. There is a significant promise, however, in looking at how people, including migrants, see and feel home to be like, and how this informs their social practices on a micro–macrocontinuum. A number of researchers around the world are asking how people on the move establish a sense of place and rootedness, the rights of belonging, and feelings and practices of home (Ahmed et al., 2003; Blunt & Dowling, 2006; Bickham-Mendez & Deeb-Sosa, 2020; Rapport & Dawson, 1998). In a sociological perspective, home can be defined as "a special kind of relationship with place", which involves both materiality and the realm of emotions, memories and symbols. Most fundamentally, home is expected to provide a sense of security, familiarity (both in terms of intimacy and comfort) and control (Boccagni & Kusenbach, 2020). It is also a place for hope and future-making (Hage, 1997; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Pastor, 2021). In these terms, home ends up being a claim, an aspiration or a desire related to particular places—something that is tentatively *made*—rather than a place as such.

At the roots of homemaking lies precisely a de-essentialized and constructive understanding of home, as an emplaced social relationship that is co-produced by different and unequal actors. Homemaking is more than an all-encompassing metaphor for the ways in which migrants get settled in a place over time, up to calling it home. It is rather an analytical category, which singles out the ways in which emotions, ideologies and imaginaries of home inform concrete relationships and practices, parallel to migrant incorporation. Homemaking defines the relational struggle to make oneself at home, subjectively speaking, and to create a (new) home, at an intersubjective and societal level. In this sense, it covers all forms of place appropriation that are driven by the strongly affective and somewhat exclusivistic register of home (Brickell, 2012; Easthope, 2004; Mallett, 2004).

Migrants' homemaking does not operate only on a local or national scale. It has also a transnational side, which can co-exist with the local one, particularly among first-generation migrants. A revealing example is the study of Aranda and colleagues (2014) on Latino and Caribbean immigrants in Miami. They gain a sense of safety and confidence that their reality is what it appears—Giddens' (1990) ontological security—"by embedding themselves in relationships with emotionally significant people and places that are territorially positioned in the country of origin and in Miami, which constitute two poles of translocal space". In doing so, immigrants establish a "translocal social citizenship" (cit: 8). Yet it is primarily with regard to local contexts of settlement, and to locally spatialized life trajectories, that a homemaking optic innovates the state of the art beyond assimilation *vs* transnationalism.

At a local level, immigrant homemaking operates in terms of *(re)territorialization* and of *(re)production*. The former is a claim migrants make for some place of their own. This is expressed in the need for decent housing, but it may be also a claim for continuity with the past views, emotions and practices of home, so that immigrant newcomers may "imbue" the everyday life space "with their own memories and meanings" (Cancellieri, 2017). This is selectively displayed through quotidian life, material cultures, and relations with the built and natural environment. Migrants' sensorial and mnemonic connections with the past home can inform the domestic space (e.g. Walsh, 2006) as much as public ones (e.g. Botticello, 2007; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2017a; Schmalzbauer, 2014). They are also mediated by more "portable" vehicles producing home-like feelings, such as music, religion or food (Miranda-Nieto et al., 2020). To an increasing extent, such a process is critically mediated and shaped by social media and digital technologies. These infrastructures, while enabling day-to-day communication across borders, are instrumental to reproduce home-related imaginaries and emotions whenever migrants keep framing people and places located elsewhere (most often, in the countries of origin) as their only "real" home (e.g. McKay, 2016; Cabalquinto, 2017).

Homemaking processes extend beyond the domicile into neighborhoods and communities. Natural landscapes may facilitate this. As Schmalzbauer (2014: 76) notes, "when migrants move to a place that geographically approximates home, their geographic habitus is reinforced". Similarly, social activities that unfold in nature may help create a sense of belonging (Peters, 2016) and the possibility of sensorially experiencing "alternative homelands" (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Ruíz, 2014: 169). Sociologically speaking, all these instances reveal a significant degree of continuity between past and present ways of navigating place, based on distinctive social routines and material cultures. This, however, should not lead us to essentialize either migrants' ethnic or territorial backgrounds. For

one thing, such backgrounds tend to be highly diverse, just like the class and educational ones. Moreover, migrants are not necessarily bound, or even interested to reproduce them in a literal sense. As much ethnographic research shows, things are far more complex and contradictory than that. Among the immigrant customers of the main "Ecuadorian" restaurants in Madrid, for instance, having "ethnic" food is not just a way to articulate nostalgia, symbolic ethnicity, or national pride (Miranda-Nieto & Boccagni, 2020). Homemaking, here, means also to co-produce informal spaces in which people from the same country share leisure time, gossips, possibly mutual help. Rather than reproducing a hypothetical Ecuadorian identity, immigrant customers engage in sensous forms of reconnection with, and recollection of, smells, flavours and mundane rituals (e.g. in the rhythms of eating, or drinking) that were ordinary in their past lives. As important, they enjoy an unusual opportunity to "domesticate" a semi-public space by enacting domestic routines in it, having full control of the implicit rules and expectations that define that particular social setting. In short, feeling at home in a restaurant does not necessarily mean feeling (like) in Ecuador. It does mean, instead, feeling in control, free to articulate one's tastes and not in a position to justify why one does things in a certain way.

In practice, immigrant homemaking is an uneven, unequal and multi-scalar process, within and between groups, relative to different realms of societal inclusion (i.e. labour market, housing, education, language learning). It is articulated through microsocial practices that exert an aggregate effect on urban environments and cultures, while being also critically affected by macro, societal conditions. While it starts from mundane domestic routines, it may involve forms of claims-making regarding who has the right and opportunity to make oneself at home in the public space (Duyvendak, 2011). Researching migrants' homemaking, therefore, scales "down" to the realm of domesticity but also "up" to immigrant access and visibility in the urban and natural environment.

In the public domain, the empirical question is how far, under what conditions and for whom neighborhoods, cities and entire nations become "home", and how exclusive this emplaced feeling is. Valuable insights on this come from research on the lived experience of diversity in urban neighbourhoods, where the transformative effects of immigrant ethnic agency are more tangible and contentious. Among others, Rojas (1993) showed how unique urban identities, such as the one of East Los Angeles, are defined not by the built environment, but by the "enacted environment"; in this case, the ways Mexican immigrant and Mexican American residents inhabit homes, front yards, driveways and streets. In another context, examining Chinese immigrants in Vancouver, Lauster and Zhao (2017) draw attention to the often overlooked work of homemaking, as both physical and emotional efforts that are required at different stages of settling in, settling down and often, "settling for" circumstances that may be less than those that were initially anticipated. There is a gendered component to the work of making home and establishing community claims and resources, with women often doing the bulk of this work (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1995; Mendez & Deeb-Sosa, 2020). All across majority-minority cities one can easily encounter comparable examples of "domestication" (Kumar & Makarova, 2008; Koch & Latham, 2013), whereby immigrants, among other minority groups, give a visible imprint to the public urban space and associate a sense of home with selected parts of it (see Blunt & Sheringham, 2019, for a synthesis out of research in London). In neighborhoods referred to as immigrant ethnic enclaves, barrios or banlieus we see concentrations of familiar homeland foods and aromas, places of worship and art, murals or graffiti that symbolize home. Urban areas such as these may be described as suffering spatial stigma, but residents also approach these as sites of spatial comfort and familiarity. This is true for second-generation as well as first-generation immigrants. In this regard, we can see multiple scales of home established, from the micro, to the domicile, to broader public, community places and institutions.

In similar instances, the emphasis is on the ways in which immigrants try to make themselves at home through their lived experience of particular natural and built environments. Their "success" in doing so depends on the historical stratification and racialization of immigrant settlement, and on the local structure of opportunities that coalesce around it. Homemaking is a multilateral process. Ethnic majorities and long-resident groups enact it as much as newcomers and other minorities. The latter are more visibile as long as they question the pre-existing arrangement of the public space—what ethnic "imprint", if any, the public space bears; how far public environments like streets or parks are inhabited, rather than just crossed, by different groups; what conflicts stem out of the

attendant claims for visibility and recognition, particularly from marginalized social groups; and how the urban "sense-scapes" and infrastructures change over time, and to the (dis)advantage of whom (Boccagni & Duyvendak, 2019). In all these respects, immigrants' homemaking practices reveal that the supposed neutrality of the public space conceals the predominance of the functional needs and lifestyles of the ethnocultural mainstream (Gallegos, 2019). Some scholars have also approached in a homemaking optic the claims for visibility and recognition of twice stigmatized groups such as immigrant LGBTQ and queer minorities (Gorman-Murray, 2009), including queer refugees (Wimark, 2019). Global migration may be posited as a search for an LGBTQ-welcoming home (Carrillo, 2017). These are cases using a moral repertoire of home to support claims for social and legal equality vis-à-vis the societal mainstream.

Researching migrant incorporation as homemaking is also an invitation to scale *down* the debate on immigration, from metanarratives of ascribed difference in values, ideas and cultures, to the everyday ways of reproducing or contesting them. It is by engaging with particular socio-material environments that migrants articulate their claims to make themselves at home. This calls for research on their ways of (re)territorialization and (re)production of home, either in natural or built environments (Ho & Hatfield, 2011), and on the material cultures underpinning these efforts. Immigrants can resignify a variety of inconspicuous objects and lived environments to co-produce positive emotions and memories of home out of them, even under sub-standard housing and living conditions. The ways in which they decorate a certain space (e.g. Tolia-Kelly, 2004; Giorgi & Fasulo, 2013), take care of an urban garden (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2017b), or turn an empty square into "their" space to have food and gather together (Law, 2001) are all exemplary of this. Analytically speaking, the study of these socio-material settings provides insights that are richer than immigrants' oral accounts alone—in fact, they complement them, and facilitate their deeper articulation (Miranda-Nieto et al., 2020).

In short, a homemaking optic captures the phenomenological and subjective side of the immigrant experience, by focusing on immigrants' struggle to make themselves at home in the particular socio-material circumstances in which they live, rather than "integrating" in the mainstream, or keeping one' foot in the country of origin, as a priority. However, homemaking is no uniform, linear or equal process. Whether in the domestic or the public sphere, it is informed by deep-rooted inequalities and power asymmetries along axes of race, gender and class, among others.

HOMEMAKING REVISITED THROUGH INEQUALITIES

Intersecting systems of inequalities connect society and processes of migration. In this section, we discuss the ways in which inequalities of social class, legalities, gender and racialization undergird migrant homemaking practices and projects. Although we take the intersectionality perspective that these are interlocking and mutually constitutive systems of inequality, we begin with a discussion highlighting social class.

International migration to the global north has become increasingly segmented by socio-economic class in recent years. In the United States, this has resulted in what Portes (2020: 3) describes as the "bifurcation of the foreign-born population both geographically and educationally". We can easily see race in this pattern too, as racial-ethnic and national-origin concentrations characterize these two groups. One distinctive stream consists of high human capital migrants from Asia, primarily from India, China and South Korea, and the other consists of labor migrants from Latin America, primarily from Mexico and Central America, and also from the Caribbean. As Portes suggests, these new formations reflect the hour glass structure of the U.S. labor market, with consistent demand for manual labor jobs at the bottom of the labor market (e.g. construction, services, especially cleaning and caring jobs, agriculture, assembly) filled by migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean and demand for high-tech and engineering professionals at the top (e.g. coders, engineers, scientists) drawing primarily from Asian migrants.

Immigrants at the top of the class spectrum have more resources to expend on home, and in some cases, they have enough to secure multiple homes. Focusing on elite, transnational Chinese entrepreneurs, investors and engineers, Ong's (1999) classic study, *Flexible Citizenship*, underscores transnational mobility, but these strategies and practices of mobility also include efforts directed at maintaining multiple homemaking projects. Ong examines how the logics of regional business networks in the Pacific Rim rely on Chinese-origin investors with multiple passports and multiple houses and businesses that may stretch from Vancouver, to Hong Kong and California. The vocabulary developed to describe the family dynamics of these subjects as "astronaut fathers" or "parachute kids" (Tsong & Liu, 2009; Zhou, 1998) calls attention to mobility and flexibility, but also to the ways family members, practices and "homes" are dispersed and emplaced in particular spaces, ones that are best advantaged for business and educational opportunities. In this respect, homemaking may become an instrumental project that enables class social protection, reproduction and mobility. For example, Asian business elites may invest in real estate in suburban California in order to place their children in schools that will likely lead to admission to elite American universities.

This global circulation among class-privileged Asian elites results not only in multiple homes, but also in the changing materiality of houses. In *The Global Silicon Valley Home*, Chang (2006) examines the material aspect of migrant "home identity" among Taiwanese engineers in California's Silicon Valley, and finds strong evidence of the changing ideals and malleability of houses. The Taiwanese subjects, high-tech trans-Pacific engineers who operate as "global commuters," were mostly raised in vertical apartment buildings, but in the United States they experience new types of detached, suburban homes and subsequently adopt new ideas of what home and house should look like and how they should be inhabited. Chang (2006: 169) develops the notion of "mirror homes" to show how Taiwanese engineers in the Silicon Valley embrace the single detached suburban home, often with a front lawn garden and red-tile roof. This type of house represents a status marker for those who have obtained high human capital, migrant legality and high positions in transnational corporate firms. And it is one that is then subsequently translated and replicated in housing developments in Asia. We can see similar processes in the architectural styles and forms of "migrant homes" in Latin America built with remittances earned in Europe (Boccagni & Pérez-Murcia, 2021) and in the United States (López, 2015).

In the context of the European Union, Favell's (2008) study of "Eurostars" shows how seemingly effortlessly young urban professionals took advantage of new EU mobility rules and their own high human capital to easily establish new careers and lives in London, Brussels and Amsterdam. While Favell finds them enjoying cosmopolitan lifestyles, city amenities, and feeling at ease with mobility, he suggests age is an important vector, bringing about questions and concerns about their abilities to participate in national welfare coverage, pension systems and property ownership. Another study of "middling migrants" (Cervantes and Duyvendak 2017), specifically professionals from Mexico living in Madrid, finds that these highly mobile migrants realize "homemaking experiences" less in private dwellings, but more in commercialized "generic" places (e.g. airports, or chains such as McDonalds, Starbucks). A generic familiarity with commercial establishments and access to speedy and free Wi-Fi are critical features of this "home-like" experience. These studies suggest the ease with which those with economic, educational and legal status resources may feel at home in various contexts.

The homemaking practices undertaken by the subjects in Ong and Chang's studies are well-endowed with a set of socio-economic and legal resources: legal visas and multiple passports, high educational attainment and highly remunerated positions in the formal sector of the economy, and financial capital. For Asian Americans who are further down the socio-economic ladder and racialized through the lens of colonial relations, such as Filipino immigrants, a different set of homemaking practices have been emphasized by Espiritu (2003). Her book *Home Bound* focuses on Filipino immigrants and Filipino Americans, an Asian American group with a long history of displacement as a colonized and racially marked group in the United States. Based on a study conducted in San Diego, California, Espiritu shows how they rely not on multiple homes and passports, but on symbolic ties to the homeland, and the memorialization of the homeland. These practices serve as acts of resistance. A large body of research focuses on transnationally mobile Filipina domestic workers, and the ways in which home is maintained

through the Internet, text messaging and remittances (e.g. McKay, 2016). For Filipino Americans living in San Diego, California, homemaking becomes more of a symbolic, collective practice of community making to affirm ties to the homeland. Making home may signify an achievement, but one that comes with significant loss and disappointments. In turn, working-class Mexican and Central American immigrant workers and refugees in the United States may simultaneously experience extreme labor exploitation in the job market, economic precarity, criminalization in legal status hierarchies, and racial-ethnic subordination. This constellation creates different modalities of home. Immigrant homemaking is made more difficult, but not impossible. In some ways, homemaking processes and achievements may become even more meaningful in this context.

Furthermore, processes of migration are gendered. While gender relations shift through migration, it is often women, in their roles as mothers, who take on the critical work of making home, consolidating new settlement and provisioning resources for their children (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994). This occurs not only in the domicile, but in public spheres as women seek social services, clinics and education (ibid). In this process, women create new place attachments and feelings of belonging and home (Mendez & Deeb-Sossa, 2020). Their individual and collective struggles thus produce new politicized claims to inclusion, home and access to community resources (ibid).

Race is yet another factor of stratification of migrant homemaking. In the United States, in particular, racial hierarchies have been deeply interwoven with immigration incorporation, and colonized systems of labor following the institution of chattel slavery. The history is long and deep, but begins with the first federal immigration legislation passed in 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act, which restricted Chinese laborers who had been recruited for dangerous work of building railroad infrastructure in the booming West. We can think of the 1882 Act, the 1907 "Gentlemen's Agreement" which limited Japanese labor migrants, the Bracero Programs which recruited thousands of Mexican male workers first during WWI, and later, at a scale that included nearly 5 million labor contracts issued during WWII, and which continued well-beyond until 1964, as a series of legislation designed to recruit manual, colonized, racialized labor while restricting permanent immigrant homemaking projects. Similarly, the U.S. government's incarceration of people of Japanese descent during WWII can be seen as racialized relocation, displacement and dispossession of home. Economic disruption, racialized violence, a preference for the recruitment of male colonized labor and the deliberate tearing apart of families characterized these systems. Massive deportation movements, such as the euphemistically named "Repatriation", which sent nearly half a million Mexicans and Mexican Americans to Mexico during the Great Depression ensured the impossibility of homemaking. In the late twentieth century, with passage of the 1965 Immigration Act and family reunification principles of legalization, the pathways to permanent immigrant homemaking were opened a little wider. Since the 1990 s, we have seen the multiplication of many precarious immigration statuses, what Menjívar (2006) called "liminal legalities". Rather than viewing immigrant illegality or undocumented status as an individual trait, analysis by Menjívar and Abrego (2012) directs us to see the effects of state power and the imposition of "legal violence" on migrant lives. In turn, this complicates migrant homemaking projects. Immigrant homemaking unfolds unevenly, side by side with deportation and coerced returns (Boehm, 2016; Hagan and Wassink 2020). Nevertheless, struggles for legal rights, future-building and homemaking continue. It should come as no surprise that social movements such as the struggle for the DREAMers have adopted slogans such as #HereToStay or "Home is here".

CONCLUSION

As we have illustrated in this article, a homemaking perspective can innovate and nourish, in several respects, the analytical space left unattended by the assimilation/ transnationalism binary in the study of migrant incorporation. As a concept, homemaking is far more than a metaphor, or a catchword for a disperse set of social practices. However, more systematic research is needed on the determinants of the unequal diffusion of homemaking practices, their typologies, and possibly the ways to measure them, for this concept to reach an epistemic status comparable to the mainstream approaches discussed (and criticized) above. As of now, homemaking is primarily a

critical lens to contextualize and nuance the lived experience of immigrant incorporation "from below", as a matter of claims for inclusion and recognition, within specific socio-material and environmental circumstances. In fact, migrant homemaking practices can scale up from the everyday and the domestic to a variety of ways of engaging with migrants' counterparts in the public space, and even in the "diasporic" one.

One core message across the emergent literature on homemaking is this: place and materiality still matter, even under mobile and multi-sited life circumstances. To focus on home, as the dwelling in which people live or "just" as a material and symbolic condition they struggle to reach, means precisely to bring back place. This is no slip back to methodological nationalism or sedentarism. It is rather a way to capture a fundamental point, which is disregarded both by the transnational emphasis on almost placeless mobilities, and by the "values" and "cultural traits" priorities of assimilation. Even in the midst of trauma, state violence or long-term poverty, human beings are compelled to make homes. This holds true also for people on the move, including forcibly displaced people. As the literature shows, even after protracted displacement, rank-and-file migrants keep seeing home, and aspiring to it, as anchored in a particular material location in which they hope to settle at some point (Brun & Fabos, 2015).

At the same time, the focus on material and spatialized practices that informs this article by no means overlooks migrants' "imaginative homemaking" (Roberts, 2019), that is the production of shared narratives, imaginaries and memories about their past or desired (including future) homes. It is rather an invitation to explore the contextual conditions in which this process occurs, and the forms of sociability and domestic routines which underpin it. Moreover, such a perspective draws attention to the resources migrants have access to, and to the different contexts of welcome or hostility they face. These factors shape their scope for homemaking in the first place, resulting in unequal opportunities for migrants, as well as for anybody else, to make themselves at home. Overall, then, homemaking is not only a promising optic for researchers. It can also prompt policy makers and local leaders to take into account the multiple significances of seeking home, and their practical—even existential—implications.

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