Homemaking or Placemaking? Understanding Home and Place among Vulnerable Populations

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Abstract

Home and place are two interrelated concepts that have overlapping meanings. They are both referring to physical spaces that have meanings and feelings, spaces where common experiences shape and identities are formed. The concepts of home and place are intrinsically linked and are used interchangeably but the most important line that ties these two together is through the notion of belonging and attachment that bind individuals to meaningful spaces. However, there is a gap in the home and place literature about understanding these meanings through negative attributes. This chapter explores the similarities and differences of home and place through negative

experiences of two groups of vulnerable people: homeless people and migrants. In this chapter we examine how a lack of physical attachments leads to a lack of belonging and how, together, they create ruptures that ironically help to understanding of the meanings of home and place by separating them from the notion of space. The chapter acknowledges that not all places are called home and not all spaces have the capacity to be made into meaningful places, but that one must focus on the theoretical distinctions underpinning the two terms. The authors suggest that focusing on two vulnerable populations (migrants and homeless people) can offer a pathway towards a theoretical understanding of these two generic concepts. By examining the negative experiences of marginalization and exclusion, in relation to the meanings of home and place, the chapter discusses how negative experiences of displacement and homelessness can offer valuable insights into further theorization of the concepts of home and place.

Keywords

homeless – migration – belonging – displacement – attachment

1   Introduction

A Turkish expression says, "Home is where you are missed if you are not there." Home as a meaningful space that has specific meanings that differentiates it from other neutral spaces that are not counted as home but are significant in a person's life. A place, similarly, is referred to as a space that has some form of meaning to its users that sets it apart from a neutral space. This differentiation is often missed by the critical gaze and, in this chapter, we address how we understand the two theoretically and what differences we perceive between the two terms. We draw on negative experiences that vulnerable populations are experiencing when connection to a home or a place is missing.

Home and place are often discussed across many disciplines such as anthropology, planning, sociology, geography, architecture and history. But there is still much ambiguity across all these disciplines in defining what home and place mean. These ambiguities refer to inherent complexities of their character, use and the person(s) that occupy these spaces. Most importantly, the meanings of home and place are located within the power relations that make some people feel comfortable or make meaningful relationships with these spaces. In this chapter, we are addressing a fundamentally important distinction between the concepts of "home" and "place" using two cases (migrants and homeless people). In other words, we are focusing here on the experiences

of marginalization and exclusion in differentiating a home from a non-home and a place from a neutral space when connections to such places are missing. This distinction is a new interdisciplinary approach to understanding home-making and placemaking as most of the literature refers to positive attributes of the human–space relationship. We are here focusing on the absences of such positive feelings and meanings.

To do so, we examine some examples of bottom-up actions that work towards "making a home" and "making a place". We combine our expertise from different disciplines in sociology of migration (Fathi), architecture and spatial development, architectural humanities (Mehan and Nasya), critical urban studies (Mehan), architecture and urban transformations (Mariotti and Nasya) and history (Astrouskaya) to highlight the differences and similarities that exist in strategies and understandings about home and place.

The chapter focuses on migrants and homeless people as actors of social change in making a space a home and/or a place. In this process we aim to understand how experiences of marginalization and exclusion are fundamental towards shaping these concepts. However, what constitutes practices of homemaking and placemaking is not free from negative feelings and attributes. Physical space and structure are synonymous for these two concepts and are vital to diverse functions of everyday life activities. Without space it is difficult in envisage how migration takes place, as it is in essence a geographical change that takes place when someone moves from one place to another. In relation to homelessness, a person who is deprived of a shelter, a house or a built structure experiences home (or the lack of it) differently to a person who is not going through such extreme vulnerability.

As such our focus here will be anchored in the physical materiality of home and place and how its absence can give us a fresh lens to understand the two concepts. Separating material and symbolic meanings that are associated with both home and place can offer a way forward to understand the differences but also the similarities between home and place and what constitutes these two notions from the concept of space. We argue in this chapter that through bottom-up perspectives on home and place we will be able to contribute to the ongoing debates on notions of "home in migration" and "home in home-lessness". Understanding the perspectives of migrants and homeless people is important as they offer new knowledge that cannot be found in non-migrants' understanding of home and place. Firstly, physical absence in a place (prior to arrival in a country of destination) gives migrants a distinct, fresh and novel understanding of a space that makes this understanding not only valuable but important in fostering new inclusive policies. Secondly, migrants and homeless people bring with them knowledge of other places where they lived their lives,

which leads them to be important actors of social change using their experiences pre-migration and post-migration or pre-homeless and post-homeless. However, we argue that one line that connects these two notions together and facilitates meaningful transformations from a space to a home/place is the feeling of belonging. Before we start our discussion of home and place, we offer here our understanding of the notion of belonging in this context.

2　　Belonging and Space

Belonging is often used either instead of identity (particularly national or ethnic) or alongside identity at best, denoting tightly associated meanings (Antonsich, 2010). Bhimji (2008, p. 414) suggests that belonging "encompasses citizenship, nationhood, gender, ethnicity and emotional dimensions of status or attachment". Belonging can have different "modes" such as belonging to a place, a group or a culture (Sicakkan and Litman, 2005) or belonging as a performance (Bell, 1999; Anthias, 2016). Allen et al. (2021) in a recent review of the term in different disciplines argue that belonging has "a deep connection with social groups and physical spaces and individual and collective experience is a fundamental human need" (Allen et al., 2021, p. 87). However, in other reviews of the literature home, place and space are seen as being centrally attached to the concept of belonging and the relationships between home and place to belonging are hardly interrogated (Ralph and Staeheli, 2011; Boccagni, 2017). One major contribution to the notion of belonging separates the "feelings" associated to a sense of belonging from the "politics" that define belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2006). In this separation of the two components or dimensions of belonging, the first one is related to what Antonsich (2010) calls "place belongingness" and the second dimension is about the discourses around inclusion/exclusion that produce macro narratives around who belongs and who does not.

These notions of belonging mostly discuss the importance of the term in relation to social relations. We argue in this chapter that there is much overlap between social and spatial belonging and that this relationship is accentuated when the spatial relationship is disrupted, especially when one is separated from society for any of a variety of reasons, such as imprisonment, forced displacement or homelessness. Although we are dealing with both dimensions here (as it is vital to note both the personal and the spatial dimensions of what makes a space a home and a meaningful place), we argue that in interpretations of "place" and "home" within our disciplines, the importance of spatial elements and its absence in relation to the sense of belonging needs to be emphasized further. A focus on this lack or absence (spatial elements of

belonging) can transform the direction of the current literature on placemaking and homemaking.

2.1 *Place*

We start our discussion with a focus on place to consider what constitutes a place as a significant space, particularly in the context of migration and homelessness. In geography, the distinction between space and place is well argued. Notably, Tuan (1977) examines how adding subjective values to spaces turn them into meaningful locations. A significant place as such emerges from a dialogue that we make with ourselves and others about the meanings that we associate wit spaces and through the performance of certain acts that make that place a locality of interest. However, such a relationship between self and locality in the age of hyper-mobility and super-diversity is constantly questioned. Vertovec's (2007) concept of "super-diversity" implies that modern societies are characterized not only by a diversity of cultures but also by a diversity of variables that affect the integration process, including immigration status, labour market experiences and access to social networks. This highlights the importance of promoting inclusion within these super-diverse societies. "The concept of place is a highly contested term, definitions of which show little consistency across the academic discourse" (Dovey, 2010, p. 3). For example, Agnew (1987) argues that a place has three different necessary features attached to it: geographical location, material form and experiences which provoke meaning and values. Geographical location and materiality of a space are the ones that can be seen (observed) but at the same time are open to interpretation by different actors and can provoke different meanings. So, although the geographical and material aspects of a place are tangible and visible, their meanings can vary based on context and actors. Soja (1998), like Agnew (1987), differentiates between forms of spaces: the first as "real", geographical spaces that can be seen; the second as representational spaces; and the third as imagined spaces, that is, one related to the individual and collective experience of actors. In this chapter and within this classification we are mainly concerned with the first and the second categorizations. We are interested to explore further the tangible differences between home and place that can be seen and described. We argue that comprehending the physical, structural and material differences helps understanding the actions that take place within home and place better. In effect, the outcome of this understanding is to have a clearer idea about the actions that take place within the physicality of spaces.

Dovey (2010, p. 3) argues that a deeper and ontological relationship between self and place underpins our identities in the world: "Places are experienced

primarily in terms of stabilized contexts of everyday life, and they are a primary means by which we stabilize our identities in that world" (Dovey, 2010, p. 3). It is in this argument by Dovey (2010) where we position ourselves to provide a definition of a place through acute geographical changes (migration and homelessness) that disrupt the familiar everyday life. Additionally, Dovey (2010) argues that the notion of who we are in the context where we find ourselves physically and routinely: the everyday aspect of life. What Dovey (2010) implies here is that when there is a rupture in the continuity of the everyday, then the meaning of a space (place or home) changes. When individuals are on the move from one place to another, their embeddedness and roots that have been developed in that geographical location or locality are disrupted. Whilst we know that the length of time one spends in a place provides the opportunity to meet other people in a particular location, we question what leaving these places and people behind means for the understanding of these places from the perspective of a homeless person or a migrant. In other words, when people emigrate or are forced to leave their physical houses, what happens to their existing and built-up connections and relationships to people and places that they made over time? Although addressing all aspects of this fundamental question is out of the scope of this chapter, we aim to highlight the importance of providing a theoretical opening into such critical perspectives about them in the different contexts of studies on which we base our writings.

2.2   *Home*

Like the place, a home is usually referred to as a space where strong feelings and attachments to material physicality are expressed and experienced. These feelings and experiences are usually given symbolic meanings and are contextualized within collective histories and personal biographies of those who "occupy" the space. "Home" is also where users of a space can claim a form of ownership and/or control with physical boundaries such as a shelter or a house that designates a specific area that is separated from the rest of what is not counted as home. These are not the only features of a home but are amongst the most important characteristics of a space that is called home.

Home for migrants is shaped differently (albeit similarly in many ways) compared to non-migrants. The first difference between home in migration and non-migration is about the "right" to ownership and occupancy, as the most important structural difficulty of calling a space home is about whether the person is "allowed" to call that place a home or not. This issue is directly linked to citizenship rights and is widely debated in citizenship and refugee studies (Bauböck, 1991; Ahmed et al., 2003).

The second difference between a home for migrants and non-migrants is about the length of occupancy: when occupancy of a space is for a short term,

it leads to attachments being broken with both the physicality of the space and the development of symbolic meanings that are developed over time. So precarity of housing, as a main reason for the lack of attachment among temporary migrants, causes ruptures in the process of homemaking (turning a space into a home) and the development of a sense of belonging as a result. Such precarity in housing (and, in sense, of belonging) applies to multiple locations (countries), localities (cities/towns/villages) and transnational locales (houses/dwelling places/shelters).

A third important difference about a home for migrants is the matter of periodical absences and presences that create not only long-term absences but also repeated acts of being present and absent from either of the homes (Canepa, 2020). Take the example of millions of guestworkers who jump through the hurdle of leaving their lands and moving to another country for periods of temporary employment. The periodical absence and presence (potentially connected with the rights and obligations in both places) in different countries disconnects them from making a meaningful attachment to their home, as such, making the process of homemaking much more complicated. Therefore, the feeling of "being in a home" and the feeling of "being at home" become complex processes of making sense of personal and contextual elements. Such relationships with space need much more analysis. Home is not just a spatial concept – it is a temporal, legal and personal one.

As discussed here, then, home is a meaningful space where time, people, objects, as well as feelings, rights and values need to be acknowledged, fulfilled and felt. And these elements do not just apply to a specific shelter or house, but also to larger scales of residence. For example, attention to city as a public home (Fathi, 2022) shows that the city space for migrants can offer an emotional involvement in making a transnational home (Svašek, 2012). Moving beyond the traditional meaning of home as a still and stable place of comfort and safety, the experiences of people who are dislocated from family, community and/or work need to be understood when they try to transform a non-home into a home (Rajendran et al., 2021). Amongst this growing literature on non-home spaces, attention to the spatiality and physicality of homes is greatly missing.

Whilst place can be understood as a public concept, home usually refers to a domestic, closed and private space. In architecture, for example, home is often associated with domestic space and "[a]ll too often, home is regarded as a place upon society impacts, rather than a place that impacts on society" (Chapman, 2001, p. 136). Walker argues that:

> Investigating the home from an architectural perspective, it is clear that
> it is no longer possible to speak of architects' understanding of home

without reference to interdisciplinary approaches and discourses out-
side architecture. By the same token, the concept of the home, produced
at intersections of language, space, and social dynamics, is not fixed but
changing over time. (Walker, 2002, p. 831)

It is also important to understanding the actions that take place within the
boundaries of a home that could lead to the understanding of that place as a
home. Parsel (2012, p. 160) calls this relationship between space and action a
"mechanism", arguing that home provides "a mechanism to identify and inter-
rogate lived experiences".

3   Vulnerability as a Learning Lens on Home and Place

In urban planning and architecture, we rely on systematically elaborated
standards and the understanding based on the needs of average persons.
There are many groups of people who have different needs than the "average".
In fact, marginalized people may even have conflicting needs. For instance,
elderly people might seek a calmer environment which gives them a positive
feeling, while young people might be looking for lively spaces. These differ-
ent requirements from spaces – to accept, like or feel at home – are very lit-
tle explored and urban planners have typically been more concerned to meet
technical requirements and national guidelines in providing housing rather
than to create homes. Similarly, placemaking can increase the feelings for the
space towards positive perception, but the interactions can be approached in
very different ways (e.g. having a lively pedestrian street can also increase the
feeling of home). Currently the premise is built on the planning culture, which
relies on top-down controls, large-scale inputs and an inability to deliver the
kind of places that people need (Varış Husar et al., 2023; Mehan and Mehan,
2020). Campbell (2018) sets out a manifesto which encourages and celebrates
radical incrementalism. Homemaking is often associated with domiciled fam-
ily life, community and secure work (Mehan, 2022).
    As we can see, although home and place can be created through the devel-
opment of a sense of belonging to a space, there are physical and material
elements that need to exist before the sense of belonging takes root. In the
next two sections we separate the notions of home and place in the contexts
of homelessness and migration to elaborate on the differences and similarities
of home and place in conditions of vulnerability that focus on the absence of
these material characteristics.

3.1   *Homelessness: Home and Place*

The phrase "to stay at home" has developed an enhanced meaning for us all since the global Covid-19 pandemic, but it also highlights how vulnerability is experienced by certain groups of people in relation to the notion of home, such as homeless people, migrants, victims of domestic abuse, etc. Such acute transformations in how we live in and experience home emphasizes the importance of personal issues such as risk and public and global issues associated with mobility and status.

Much contemporary research has focused on the factors that lead people to become homeless, but little attention is given to the everyday life of people living without shelter (Lenhard et al., 2022) and what this means in their understanding of home and place.

A homeless person's efforts to make a home on the streets is always difficult. The lack of social ties, employment and a domiciled abode positions the person very differently in the urban fabric compared to people who have access to housing. Groot and Hodgetts (2012) refer to their interviews with Daniel, a rehoused person, to outline the challenges of being homeless. Homelessness carries with it a profound sense of loneliness. The imagination circulates around a domiciled home beyond and the creation of meaningful relationships. This perspective led to the creation of the social housing project VinziRast-mittendrin in Vienna (Solidarity City Vienna, 2022). The organization brings former homeless people, refugees and students under one roof to establish a solidarity network and create synergies beyond shelter for the residents. The co-living starts within the housing units, where the tenants live together in shared flats. But generous co-spaces, like additional living rooms, a kitchen, study rooms, workshops, a roof atelier, a terrace and roof gardens create co-spaces to create, meet, collaborate and unite. Parsel (2012) visualize how periodic the housing demands of forced migrants arose over the last decades and see the homemaking aspect for (forced) migrants to be a systemic demand to be addressed fully and not to be considered an exception. This example indicates that the presence of people who are not related by blood or other ties but in a convivial situation can lead to feelings of attachment – but, equally important, it is the physical design and architecture of the space that has facilitated such co-living conditions to take place. This is an important aspect that is missing from social science discussions of home- and placemaking.

The practices of homemaking that we have in mind refer to the ways of inhabiting a space. This is more relevant for people experiencing homelessness, as well as vulnerable migrants and refugees, lone adults, couples and families, evicted tenants, young people and children experiencing family

breakdown, vulnerable people provisionally hosted by friends or family, victims of domestic violence, people released from prison, patients exiting hospitalization or rehabilitation without having a home to return to and victims of environmental disasters.

Shifting the focus from analysing the space towards the practices will open new avenues to analyse how acts of homemaking among vulnerable people shape their experiences of a space. After all, what makes a space a home and a place is the experience of the space. It is our perceptions and innate feelings and our everyday experiences that matter in the meaning making of spaces. In the case of homeless people, a shift in how people experience homelessness instead of focusing on the suffering from homelessness passively can be seen an active development of practices of "struggling along", including homemaking and placemaking. What the contributions show is that homelessness is in fact a phenomenon that involves engagement, production, resistance, adaptation and strategic planning. Another important matter about the notion of home and place in homelessness is the lack of ownership of a space that shapes one's experiences (or lack) of home. These pose serious questions in relation to home in homelessness situations. How does meaningful community engagement look with marginalized people? How do engagement models establish local and global community partnerships for the common good? With glocalization pedagogies, the concepts of homemaking and solidarity can expand and contribute to the common good as people aim to create an ownership feeling, which is close to the feeling of "being at home". So much of interventions (an example above in Vienna) is to increase the sense of ownership amongst people for a targeted place. This matter can be seen in how homeless people try to "separate" or privatize their area, their sleeping place, so that, even if it is a small space, its designation in the corner of a public arena makes it into a private space (see Figure 2.1).

Small-scale changes in real space can bring about massive positive feelings. In the process of looking after places we might establish the home feeling. In our projects we are seeking active citizens to test out new ideas, community groups coming together or local politicians "stepping outside the mainstream". The actors in this new approach are everyone. Yet how everyone is to be included and empowered is the question – different people have different needs. The starter condition is the wish to create a place where people feel "better" than they felt before the intervention. If users of a space are also enabled to take care of it, this is the behaviour related to home, then we might find a homemaking action and not only placemaking.

The smallest intervention can be the right to decide what is allowed (or not allowed) in each space and what provokes certain feelings in a space. Systems

FIGURE 2.1 A homeless person separating the public space from his private space in Cork, Ireland
SOURCE: FATHI (2022)

and actions that nudge people into making positive choices and enhance small changes can be crucial in creating a "feeling of home". Homemaking for people in later life might differ very much from the one for younger families or even children. For example, Visser's (2019) findings in a study with eight older people in England show how gardening can form the basis of a time framework, which structures life. Gardening can be an essential part of homemaking and a guide to decision-making process (for instance, not to move to a residential living place). As a result, home can be seen as a temporal process that shapes the spatial limits of a location. People's concept and experiences of home develop throughout their lives. While they may change over time, those in vulnerable positions – when people are deprived of a basic need such as a home – is when it is felt the most. The next section deals with the migration context in understanding home and place.

3.2   *Migration: Home and Place*

Homemaking and/or placemaking processes are tightly linked to concepts of citizenship, belonging, integration, attachment, identity and community building, exclusion, loneliness, racialized and classed discrimination, among others. This section explores these dimensions and their intersections in the context of immigration, focusing on the critical role of homemaking in two case studies of male and female migrants' lives.

Immigration, as a process and an existential experience, is profoundly influenced by the concept of "home". Simply, migration means leaving *from* a home, and/or leaving *towards* a home and/or leaving *to make* a home. The act of mobility then constitutes not only aims and intentions of making a home, but also contains a series of acts in relation to homemaking that shape a person's attitudes and practices in a transnational and trans-local place.

Transnational migration as a phenomenon that affects migrants' ability, methods, possibilities and legal frameworks of making a home and shapes migrants' experiences differently to those who are not counted as migrants in the same context. This differentiation does not mean that migrants' methods of homemaking are essentially different, but it does mean that meaning making of a space for someone who is present for a shorter time in a space is different to one who has lived in a space longer.

The other aspect of living in a transnational migration context is the experiences of exposure to the "other". Amin (2002) suggests that "the multicultural city is a fertile ground for observing how ethnicity and diversity are lived out, with different groups interacting and co-existing". Within this setting, immigrants engage in the process of homemaking being aware that their heritage sets them differently to those who are not and awareness about this matter impacts their sense of belonging (Mehan, 2023a; Novak et al., 2023).

As migrants move from their home countries to new environments, their notion of "home" becomes less about a fixed geographical location and more about a space they can shape and define according to their cultural backgrounds and preferences. Nowicka (2007) provides an interesting perspective on this, discussing the concept of "mobile locations" in her study of transnational professionals. This also resonates with the perspectives of Rapport and Dawson (1998), who argue that perceptions of home are intricately tied to movement and migration whilst the movement does not mean that home becomes meaningless, but it means that it can include multiple and often scattered homes and belongings (Ifekwunigwe, 1999).

In this context, homemaking becomes a form of placemaking as the absence of familiar networks, landscapes and materialities bring the two concepts closer to each other. But at the same time, this absence allows immigrants to adjust to their new environments and create new knowledge about their surroundings. Manzo and Perkins (2006) emphasize the importance of "place attachment in community participation and planning" in migrants' lives. In the existing literature on home and migration, immigrant women play a pivotal role in showcasing what home means in migration (Tolia-Kelly, 2004; Salih, 2013; Erel, 2011). These meanings are drawn on memories of past homes and their connections to the present homes (Ahmed et al., 2003), to material attachments and the importance of emotions in transnational family and experiences as "co-presence" (Skrbis, 2008). In these arguments about how gender and experiences of being a migrant shape one's perspective, homemaking is mostly about creating familiar environments that can serve as a foundation of belonging for migrants' participation in their new (and old) communities.

Thinking of a place as home can enhance integration beyond physical adjustments and private spaces. As Anthias (2016) argues, "identity and belonging are interconnected boundaries constantly negotiated within transnational mobility contexts". Indeed, when migrants are othered (racialized and publicly excluded), these experiences of feeling at home diminish over time. The act of homemaking, therefore, also becomes an act of identity negotiation and assertion of who one is and who one is not (Yuval-Davis, 2006) as immigrants infuse their new homes with elements of their cultural identities and adopt and acquire new ones after migration. Age as well as gender is important in the extent to which migrants feel at home. A recent study of homemaking (see Figure 2.2) in Cork city, Ireland, by two groups of young migrant men (international students and refugees) shows that young migrants are aware of the systems of racialization and othering in the public spaces of destination countries (Fathi, 2021). These young migrant men tend to resort to small pockets of belonging within the city and mostly to their private spaces in usually shared accommodation more than spending their time in the public spaces

FIGURE 2.2   A Turkish restaurant where an Iranian migrant man in Cork feels at home
SOURCE: FATHI (2019)

of the city. This is because they find the domestic spaces of their homes safer and bestowing them more control and power, hence giving them a sense of belonging (Fathi, 2022; see also Boccagni, 2017). Another angle of migration important in homemaking is in relation to the temporality of making a home. For young migrants, a home is about the present time directed towards a future home, as they aspire to create a "desired home" where they can have a family of their own. In this sense, a place becomes different to a home. Anyone can inhabit a "place", whilst a "home" is a somewhere that is exclusive to the "I" and "my significant others", even if they are imaginary and the "home" only exists in the future, as Fathi (2022) connotes.

4   Discussion

The examples above show how the meaning of home and place are multifaceted and complex. Particularly in the case of vulnerable people, home and place become contested topics. The one element that runs through both examples is the importance of absences. If we connect "home" with the notions of security, exclusivity, control and comfort, then we are tightly linking this

particular space to the notion of belonging. In a similar fashion, place is also a space that has significant connotations. In both notions of home and place, elements of time, identity and belonging are important to change a neutral space to a meaningful one. Both concepts have three elements in common:

1. Home and place are made based on new knowledge due to absence of the person (migrant or homeless) in a place (both in migration and in homelessness situations people are absent from those meaningful places – homeland and home)
2. Old knowledge of other homes and places (pre-migration and homelessness)
3. The power and importance of spatial belonging (how migration and homelessness deprive a person from having the feeling belonging)

Although there is no direct link to location or locality, feelings about significant others and the sense of ontological security are fundamental to the roots of one's belonging. Being in a place that is called home evokes deeper feelings (Ahmed, 1999) and a sense of self in relation to the place one has in the world around them. In a theoretical modelling of the notion of belonging, Yuval-Davis (2006) discusses identifications and emotional attachments at length. She adheres to the idea that narratives of who we are and who we are not are linked to our personal attachments. These attachments to a place and home develop over time and they are reflected on when they are challenged, when their absence is felt harder. However, attachments to a place called home do not always have positive outcomes for all age groups. For example, Visser (2019) shows that gardening, which usually is counted as an act of positive homemaking, can pose complications in later life as people are preparing for death and dying, and such attachments can cause dilemmas.

Another example of the importance of belonging is people who are not privileged enough to own (or reside in) an exclusive home or who choose to house-sit on a full-time basis. In these scenarios, the security aspect might not exist at all. This special form of house sharing is perhaps the shadow side of the sharing economy trend. Increasing prices of housing are forcing people to follow unconventional pathways and to experiment with alternate means of "home"-making. The practice of house-sitting among older people, particularly those with no permanent housing, highlights the needy situation of a particular excluded subgroup of our society. Findings from semi-structured interviews suggest that house-sitting is an affordable shelter that provides rent-free accommodation for older people experiencing financial insecurity and increases their capacity for care-related expenditure. This is also practiced among migrants without proper opportunities and homeless women.

How viable is this option in the long term? People have unstable and insecure collaboration conditions and increasing health issues as they grow older. For people engaged in seeking their legal rights (permission to work, residency, pension payments, healthcare), this kind of solution is counterproductive.

Besides, forced migrants feel trapped in a vulnerable situation in temporary shelters, which they must call home. The lifespan of displacement camps around the globe is often measured in years or decades. The camps to house people are depicted as "temporary" spaces and are often poorly equipped to be called home. Fathi recently called these forms of housing "unhomes" (Fathi, 2023). The primary goal of refugee camps is to provide shelter, aid and support until such time that the people can return to their "homes" (which is often not possible anymore). As such, these establishments are poorly designed for people to feel they belong in them, as they are perceived as a temporary solution to "shelter" the displaced. Hart et al. (2018) analysed the practices of homemaking in two refugee camps in Jordan. Caught between a "temporary" and a "permanent" status (for children born in the camps, the camp life is the only life they know and therefore a "permanent" situation), the camp homes are shaped by residents' ideals of home in combination with the constraints imposed by institutions responsible for funding, hosting and managing the camps. This precarious framework leads to fragility and contingency of homemaking for displaced people. Interviews with families from Syria placed in small- to medium-sized towns in the Netherlands reveal that the processes of homemaking and place attachment, as Van Liempt and Miellet (2021) show, are not successful as migrants wish to live in places where other co-ethnics reside. At the heart of all these examples is the issue of belonging and how hard it is to achieve it when one is alienated from the structures of living around them. What makes a space a home, or a meaningful place, is the degree to which a person can feel belonging to that space, the architectural, legal and social structures around it. While homemaking practices concentrate on actions in and around the house rather than private activities, the place-related activities occur in public spaces instead. The wider transnational and public social environment of migrants and homeless people show how they experience life temporally.

5   Conclusion

Concepts of home and place have been included in scholarly literature in the past decades, acknowledging the complexities associated with these concepts. In this chapter, we reviewed the notions of home and place separately and in

relation to two vulnerable groups: migrants and homeless people. We argued that the processes of homemaking and placemaking play a central role in their integration, identity formation and community participation. Theoretical insights into home and place can deepen understanding in architectural humanities and social sciences by linking architectural design with the cultural significance of spaces (Mehan, 2023b). As such, in this chapter we attempted to show the crucial acknowledge and value that understanding homemaking in immigration and the rehousing of homeless people can offer which goes beyond providing shelter and warmth. The impact of thinking deeply about the value of place and home goes deeper than their face value.

Future studies could focus on theoretical perspectives and unpacking the concepts of home and place through a multidisciplinary framework. Future research on placemaking and home could focus on specific strategies made by homeless people and migrants who have very limited or no social support and how they make a home in their marginal and ultimately vulnerable positions. Understanding such strategies would help mitigating the conditions under which vulnerable people make homes or meaningful places. Further critical analysis of home and place can help policymakers to understand the situation and needs of the homeless and migrants better. Another recommendation for further research is the importance of the "everyday" in the construction of home and place. The lived experiences of everyday life in various spaces will help address new dimensions of belonging at scalar levels (e.g. house, neighbourhood, city, country) which are vital in fast-changing societies.

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