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Home and home-making in local and transnational family lives

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Abstract

In this chapter, we pay specific attention to the way migrants maintain, redefine and reinforce their conception of home through various home-making strategies. For this purpose, we revisit three fast-growing scholarships focusing respectively on “transnational families” in which the members are geographically separated due to migration, on migrant families settled in their receiving countries and on families of “mixed couples” in which the partners are socially viewed as “different” due to their distinct legal statuses, socio-cultural practices and ethnic backgrounds. The first set of studies reveals that the home-making of transnational families involves a wide range of material and non-material practices across national borders, which sustains the notion of home within expanded social spaces uniting different kin members “here” and “there”. The second body of works unveils migrant families’ pluri-local home-making strategies that encompass their domestic space, neighborhoods, urban spaces and the city in their settlement countries. In the third literature, although the home-making of mixed couples also has a transnational character, it is mainly oriented towards their countries of residence, particularly during the (re)productive period of couples’ lives when they build their own families and establish their careers. Based on these observations, home in transnational, migrant and “mixed” families appears mobile across borders, spaces and time.

Keywords

home, home-making, migration, transnational families, mixed couples, transnationalism

Introduction

In his book *Migration and the search for home*, Boccagni (2017) defines “home” as “both a material environment and a set of meaningful relationships, re-collections and aspirations to be emplaced, successfully or not, over space and time” (xxiv). This definition highlights the relational and processual dimensions of the home, which entail emotion, memory and caregiving works, among others. In the context of migration, referrals to home abound in migrants’ narratives of belonging and identities, suggesting the mutually constitutive notions of home and the self (see Ahmed, 1999).

To fully understand the meanings of home for migrants, not only their narratives but also their activities and practices are important to consider in the analysis. The concept of “homing” – “a value-laden combination of cognition (what home is like), emotion (what home feels like) and practice (how home is made)” (Boccagni, 2017: 24) – is therefore central in this regard, which the present chapter will mobilize to specifically examine migrants’ practices of home-making. To this aim, this chapter reviews three sets of literature. The first one focuses on “transnational families” in which members are physically separated from one another due to migration but maintain a sense of unity and solidarity across national borders (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002). Whereas the second body of works is devoted to migrant families settled in their receiving countries (e.g. Gram-Hanssen & Bech Danielsen, 2012), the third set of studies focuses on families of “mixed couples” in which the partners are socially viewed as “different” due to their distinct legal statuses, socio-cultural practices and ethnic backgrounds (Collet, 2012; De Hart et al., 2013). Since these families engage in various cross-national border practices, they can be described as “transnational mixed families” (Le Gall et al., 2021). “Transnational families” and “transnational mixed families” have been receiving scholarly attention for the last decades, and rich accounts about their “homing” practices have been widely analyzed through different lenses including transnationalism, citizenship and intimacy. The analytical optic of “homing” (Boccagni, 2017) offers these separate epistemologies a new lens through which migrants’ senses of home and home-making can be decorticated. How do the members of transnational, migrant and mixed families define, (re)produce and maintain their homes at local and transnational contexts?

This chapter provides answers to these questions in two ways. First, it investigates the home-making practices in transnational, migrant and mixed families separately. And second, it identifies the common but salient features of their ways of homing. In the same section, the chapter concludes with the meanings of home that the three reviewed bodies of scholarly works bring to the fore.

Transnational families and their homing practices

In the literature of transnational migrations, the countries of origin or natal countries of migrants are generally referred to as their “home countries” (Bryceson, 2019), “homeland” (Shibata, 2021) or “home” (Märtsin & Mahmoud, 2012). Likewise, studies on transnational families employ one of these terms when evoking migrants’ countries of origin and their various practices of maintaining multiple relations with these societies, where their broader family circles can be mostly found. These various practices transcending nation-states’ borders are qualified in the literature as a form of transnational caregiving (Baldassar et al., 2006), a “circulation of care” (Baldassar & Merla, 2014) and transnational “doing family” (Nedelcu & Wyss, 2016). It is not only migrants but also their stay-behind family members who engage in these practices, which invigorate and often redefine their shared conception of home. These individuals resort to overlapping material and non-material practices of homing in their “transnational social spaces” (Faist, 2004), reflecting how larger social forces and inequalities shape their actions.

Material practices: financial remittances, goods and messages

There are three material practices that migrants and their families mostly engage in. These practices underline the different symbolic meanings of material objects bearing and reinforce the significations of home for transnational family members.

The first practice revolves around financial remittances, which helps sustain the basic needs of transnational families, such as food, clothing, shelter and education of children (see Parreñas, 2005; Raijman et al., 2003). These remittances also facilitate the building or improving the houses where stay-behind families reside (Boccagni & Bivand-Erdal, 2021). Migrants most often entrust their kin to supervise the building of their houses in their countries of origin and send them money for it (Akesson, 2011), which suggest the key role of kin in the realization of migrants' home-making projects. Buying of cars, furniture and home decorations become possible thanks to migrants' remittances. There are accounts showing that most of the houses built through migrants' remittances modify the conventional mode of home-making. For example, many Western-style houses mushroom in many origin places of migrants in the Philippines (e.g. Aguilar, 2009). In rural highland Ecuador, Codesal (2014) observes how the "remittance-houses fever" alters the housing landscapes in the region and leads to many "neatly painted houses" but empty inside or inhabited by only very few persons of the migrants' family (see 269-270). In Albania, migrants build their houses to ensure their "dynamic 'proxy' presence" in their home villages even though they do not intend to live in their country permanently (Dalakoglou, 2010). Homing practice through financial remittance sending appears to result in changing landscapes of home.

Aside from financial remittances, migrants send goods and other material objects to their stay-behind family members. For instance, the sending of packages or "balikbayan boxes" by Filipino migrants to their stay-behind kin has been widely observed. In these boxes, migrants send appliances and even food to their families, which is "a sign of migrants' success abroad and strong attachment to the family" (Patzner, 2018: 138). Likewise, Brazilian migrants in Boston send packages to their families and friends in Brazil, notably electronics and "brand name items" such as "shoes, handbags, sunglasses and perfumes" (de Assunção, 2012: 70). This flow of goods is not unidirectional as food items are also sent from Brazil to the US by migrants' family members and friends (ibid.). Such "circulation of care" (Baldassar & Merla, 2014) between migrants and their families creates transnational social spaces, wherein the meanings of home become mobile and stretched across state borders through material objects.

Finally, the third major homing practice of migrants is sending messages to their stay-behind families. Before the advent of the Internet and other digital technologies, postal letters, postcards, voice tape and video recordings were the widely adopted ways of homing (e.g. Kane, 2014; Madianou & Miller, 2011; Pribilsky, 2004). These messages are mostly accompanied by images, notably photos showcasing migrants' lives and often signaling their (re)invention of home in a new land. In recent years, digital technologies mediate the homing practices of migrants who increasingly express their care and love to their families via chatting, video calls, subscription in social media platforms and others (e.g. Baldassar et al., 2016; Francisco-Menchavez, 2018; Madianou & Miller, 2013). Despite the variety of homing practices among migrants, scholars observe that in many cases these individuals and family members conceal their real situation to one another (e.g. Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002; Fresnoza-Flot, 2014; Schmalzbauer, 2008). Hence, homing practices do not always lead to transparency and more emotionally closer relations among transnational family members. This can be attributed to the fact that individual members of transnational families often have "dissimilar interpretations and expectations of their place in the home" (Olwig, 2002: 205).

All these material practices in transnational families have symbolic significations. Migrants fulfill their roles in their larger kin networks through these practices. For instance, migrant parents accomplish their parental roles from afar and negotiate their physical absence from home thanks to these practices (e.g. Dreby, 2010; Parreñas, 2005). In this case, the material dimension of caregiving acquires the meaning of home-making and caring. It is not devoid of emotions and sentiments as each member of a transnational family strive to (re-)create home through interpersonal interactions across borders (see Mazzucato et al., 2018). Home-making, in this sense, appears akin to "global householding" (Douglass, 2006) reproducing the notion of "home" through the fulfilment of various familial roles and obligations in transnational social spaces. "Global householding" refers to the complex ways in which a household is created and sustained—"a

continuous process of social reproduction that covers all life-cycle stages and extends beyond the family” (Douglass, 2006: 423). It encapsulates post-migration home-making practices that enable migrants to stay connected with their pre-migration lives within “asymmetrically governed spaces” (Burrell, 2017).

Non-material practices: social remittances, home visits and performing gender role(s)

Migrants and their transnational families resort to non-material home-making centered on visits and gender role(s) performance. These practices entail “social remittances” (Levitt, 1998), that is, the cultural flows of information, emotions and care (Levitt & Lamba-Nieves, 2011; Boccagni & Decimo, 2013) that occur during exchanges of messages through calls, emails, letters or during return visits. Non-material home-making practices are influenced by factors such as the legal status and gender of the migrants as well as the political situation in their countries of origin.

Migrants visit their families in their countries of origin for many reasons. One of these is to keep and/or renew familial ties. As Marschall (2017) remarks among African migrants in South Africa, “(w)hat makes the personal visit home important is the sense of togetherness, sitting, eating and doing things together as a family” (144). It is also a way for them to affirm “national identity and belonging to the home country” (ibid.: 145; see also Baldassar, 1998). These home visits appear more widespread among documented migrants than undocumented ones, who cannot easily go back to their countries of origin and return afterwards to their receiving countries due to their irregular migration status (Fresnoza-Flot, 2009). In a case study, Stodolska and Santos (2006) show that some of these irregular migrants attempt to do return visits while being aware of their precarious situation as undocumented workers. Those who were able to regularize their migration status visit their home country to catch up with their family members whom they did not see for a long time. A home visit is also the time for migrants to inhabit their new houses in their countries of origin, as “the prospect of actually “consuming” them keeps being procrastinated to a future that has very uncertain contours” (Boccagni, 2014: 290).

The capacity to do home visits appears influenced by gender: women migrants tend to visit more their home countries than their men counterparts probably due to their expected care role in the family (O’Flaherty et al., 2007). Return visits in their countries of origin present an opportunity to perform their gender role(s) as “good” family members to satisfy the expectations of their larger kin group. Migrant women, for example, fulfil care role to their aging parents (Aranda, 2003) or accomplish domestic tasks they usually do prior to their migration (Lutz & Palenga-Möllenberg, 2012). Single migrants often visit their home countries to look for potential marriage partners who share the same socio-cultural values and/or religion (e.g. Thai, 2006, 2008). In other cases, the political situation in the country of origin can impede or motivate migrant women and men to return there for a visit. For example, following the lifting of restrictions to the war zones in northern Sri Lanka, many Sri Lankan Tamils in diaspora paid visits to the country (Gerharz, 2010). These migrants “share a collective, diasporic, identification with the homeland and desire to travel and confront the locality” (ibid.: 156).

Home for migrant families at a local level

In the context of migrant settlement, the intimate home space is also a product of the homing process of “reclaiming and reprocessing of habits, objects, names and histories that have been uprooted” (Ahmed et al., 2003: 9). These shifting experiences of belonging are visible in the way migrant families (re)create their home environments. Examining this (re)creation of home sheds light on migrant families’ home-making practices at the local level, which may be different from those of transnational families.

In their receiving countries, migrants furnish and arrange the interior of their homes in ways that convey multiple feelings and meanings (Walsh, 2006; Cieraad, 2010; Burrell, 2014). For example, immigrant homes in South London and their everyday domestic objects such as furniture, photographs, music and clothing evoke feelings of nostalgia and aspirations (Parrott, 2014; see also Svasek, 2014). Aside from affective meanings, the housing conditions of migrant families

emphasize the need for security and privacy. As a case study on Turkish, Somali and Iraqi immigrants in Danish social housing reveals, their interior décor is not merely the result of their aesthetic taste. It also underpins meaningful appropriation of what a secured and private home looks like. Their intricate oriental-style curtains are relevant “not only as sign of cultural identity but also as important safeguard of privacy” (Gram-Hanssen & Bech Danielsen, 2012: 101). As important, the cultivation of a sense of home does not rest exclusively, or primarily, on the domestic domain. For undocumented Latino migrants such as the informants of Hondagneu-Sotelo (2017), in crowded substandard apartments in Los Angeles, green spaces such as community gardens function as “surrogate homes.”

As a matter of fact, much of the current literature on home and belonging of migrant families at a local level pays specific attention to the role of neighborhoods, urban space and the city (Glick Schiller & Çağlar, 2011; Degen & Rose, 2012; Burrell, 2016; Wilkins, 2019). “Urban domesticities and domestic urbanism” (Blunt & Sheringham, 2019) are ways of home-making in the city and of conceiving the city as a home. So far, the bulk of these studies has focused on local sites of everyday encounters and place attachments, often organized around (multi-)ethnic meeting places and shared places in the city (Hall, 2009; Smets & Watt, 2013). For example, Law (2001) describes how Filipino domestic workers appropriate public spaces in Hong Kong by turning them into culinary centers where these migrants frequently gather to eat home-cooked Filipino meals. Due to food consumption, ethnic shops elicit patronage and nostalgia among migrants and do not just symbolize “consuming diversity” (Parzer & Astleithner, 2018). Likewise, ethnic restaurants do not only serve as sites for the “globalization of cuisine” (Sunanta, 2005) but also as semi-public places of domesticity and belonging. Miranda-Nieto and Boccagni (2020) examine Ecuadorian restaurants in Madrid both as familiar gastronomic retreats among migrants and as home-like spaces through their material culture. These restaurants display national Ecuadorian emblems and perform familiarity and identity.

In general, the migrant experience refers to multiple locales in ways they inhabit and experience home in their everyday encounters and sociality. In some instances, migrants’ conceptualization of home is characterized by a multiplicity of belonging and the idea of home stretches beyond the “here” or “there” to include also both or neither (Al Ali & Koser, 2002; Bivand, 2014) as well as “here” and “now” (Ahmed et al., 2003), making migrants’ home “pluri-local” (Nowicka, 2007). The enactment of home depends on “local liveability, that is, the micropolitics of everyday social contact and encounter” (Amin, 2002: 959). While migrants within transnational family arrangements identify homing experiences within this larger scheme of the migratory experience, their experience of transnational family life is intertwined with (im)possibilities of family reunification after prolonged separation, whether in their host society or through return migration (di Belgiojoso & Terzera, 2018; Fresnoza-Flot, 2018b; Anschütz & Mazzucato, 2021). However, these studies are mostly focused on the social and legal forces, processes, and routes, and little is known about the domestic, home-making consequences of family reunification at a local level. There is therefore a need for further studies of home-making of migrant families following their reunification in their receiving countries.

Transnational mixed families’ pursuit of home and homing

Mixed couples’ ways of belonging are fundamentally maneuvered around strategies of social incorporation in their countries of residence. While mixed unions transcend ethnic boundaries, they arouse “societal interest, hostility and curiosity, especially given the historical and current obsession with ‘mixing’” (Song, 2009: 337; also see Rodríguez-García, 2015; Alba & Foner, 2015). While mixed marriages can lead to the inclusion of minority groups, they can “entail a complex co-mingling of economic and social integration and marginalisation” (Song, 2009: 343). As Collet summarizes about mixed couples, “it is not so much the presence of two cultures that constitutes their mixedness, but rather the fact that one is *at home* and the other a foreigner or an immigrant” (2015: 132, emphasis in original). Empirical studies reveal that even in super-diverse urban centers, state policies may encroach upon mixed families’ private life, “bordering intimacy”

(Maskens 2015) and placing migrant spouses in vulnerable and precarious situations (Grillot, 2015; also see Piper & Lee, 2016). These cases exemplify the complexities of mixed couples' home experience in their countries of residence as they navigate the legal and sociocultural contexts of their belonging. Similar to migrant families, the homing practices of these couples appear oriented towards a more local perspective. Nonetheless, they also experience home in transnational terms like transnational families. In this case, their experiences develop further the conception of home as continual and processual ways of adapting and mixing.

Homing at local level: domestic labor and lived experiences

As much research shows, in the domestic space of mixed couples the partners' home-making is gendered and is linked to the matters of domestic reproductive labor and care work. Within this gender perspective, in some cases, mothering practices and expectations restrict women to the domestic sphere to perform their role in the reproduction of the family and the household.

Empirical studies suggest that even in mixed marriages "the division of domestic labor was consistent with traditional values" (White et al., 2015). For example, in the case study of Filipino and Thai migrant women in mixed unions living in Belgium, the mothering role influences the decisions of these women to participate in the labor market. They may deliberately opt to stay at home to care for their husband and children (Fresnoza-Flot, 2018a). In a parallel study among Filipino men in Belgium and the Netherlands, age, gender and country of origin influence the division of labor at the domestic level. These men with Western wives, who come from less economically developed countries, have less bargaining power and participate more in domestic chores while they simultaneously embody and enact the idea of masculinity of their country of origin by seeking "strategies to regain their masculine self" (Fresnoza-Flot, 2021: 102). In contrast, Western men in mixed couples migrating to Southeast Asia present themselves as self-realized and good husbands, and "practice privilege in the form of new-found masculinity, sexuality and status that ageing has deprived them of in Western societies" (Scuzzarello, 2020: 1606).

Homing practices of mixed couples at the domestic level reveal the peculiarity and diversity of their experiences in everyday life. This is seen through, for example, how they practice hospitality (Rancew-Sikora & Żadkowska, 2017), how their cooking and eating practices change (Châm, 2014), how they choose the objects to display at home (Marilla, 2022), how they redefine distance and intimacy (Statham, 2020), how they choose the name of their children (Cerchiaro, 2017), how mothering techniques influence the choice of citizenship for themselves and for their children (Fresnoza-Flot, 2018a) and how mixed couples transmit culture and identities (Le Gall & Meintel, 2015). So far, the literature highlights the ways of adjustment of the migrant spouses in these partnerships, even in a micro-level perspective. Less is known about the experience of the sedentary local partner whose life course is considerably transformed as well. Djurdjevic and Girona (2016) urge to shift the attention to the more mutual and constitutive intercultural adaptation of both partners in which home can be defined and portrayed as "cosmopolitanism on a micro level" (390). This discourse can further enrich the evolving homing practices of mixed couples throughout their conjugal life course, especially during the reproductive stage, where they render their "children's diverse origins visible" (Le Gall & Meintel, 2015). This is reminiscent of what scholars earlier observed: understanding the everyday lived experiences of mixed couples is revealing of the growing diversification of forms of home-making and family life, where home can be redefined as an active socio-cultural hybrid space (Rodríguez-García, 2006; Brahic, 2013).

Homing within transnational social spaces: invigorating ties with the homeland

While mixed couples seek to be socially incorporated into their countries of residence, some of their homing practices are geared towards keeping ties with their homeland. Migrant spouses in these couples have often stay-behind children from previous spouses (Fresnoza-Flot, 2017; Rodríguez-García, 2006) and/or maintain transnational ties with their natal families in their countries of origin (Yeoh et al., 2013). Likewise, their ethnically mixed offspring are inherently positioned and exposed to multiple localisations and cultural contexts between here and there (Le

Gall & Meintel, 2015; Le Gall et al., 2021). Migrant spouses share similar experiences as most migrants—sending remittances, gift-giving, return visits, material and digital flows. However, the nature of their experience and the meanings they impute to these practices are shaped by their mixed-marriage trajectory.

The flow of remittances from receiving countries to countries of origin of the migrant spouses has been well studied in the literature as transnational means of maintaining ties and kinship support. Notably, some studies delve deeper into how social class, cultural norms and gender expectations in the country of origin influence this practice. For example, Cole (2014), using the case of Malagasy women in France details how being in a mixed couple is an achieved social status in Madagascar. Being a part of a mixed union affords them the status of being a *vadimbazaha* that means the spouse of a European. However, for these women, being married to a Frenchman does not automatically qualify them for that title. Instead, they earn such stature through frequent money flows from France to Madagascar (Cole, 2014: 86). Thus, union with a foreign man intensifies further the social expectations of these women to perform their moral obligation as dutiful daughters or sisters. These women simultaneously perform their nursing and nurturing roles to care for their husbands and children in the receiving country while at the same time maintaining ties with their kin in their homeland. Divergences and failure to meet these gendered expectations “here” and “there” is likely to cause marital conflict, weaken ties and social reputation in their country of origin (Fresnoza-Flot, 2017). These remittances also facilitate acquiring properties, building remittance houses and engaging in philanthropic work. Accumulating resources is also a strategy for migrant spouses to change their economic and social status in their countries of origin. For example, Statham (2020) shows that for Thai women who partner a Westerner, acquiring properties in Thailand such as house or car and being able to help and lend money, enhances their status and counterbalances the stigma attached to being a *mia farang* (women in relationship with foreign men). Moreover, remittances also accelerate the social mobility of the natal families of the migrant spouses through in-house renovations and elaborate house gatherings and celebrations that their families perform. For instance, “the Malagasy women in France may only be able to send small amounts of money home, but the public display of wealth and power in a ceremony can extend the social effects of their position, helping their kin in ways that exceed any simple monetary calculation” (Cole, 2014: 91). Maintaining ties with families in the homeland also impinges upon the foreign partner. In some cases, they participate and support extended families to legitimize their kin membership as esteemed sons-in-law (Thompson et al., 2016).

Engaging in gift-giving across borders is also a common practice. Those who came from more rural backgrounds are likely to have a strong attachment to the principle of gratitude and gift-giving (Thai, 2008: 77). Through gifts, migrants in mixed couples project their newly acquired economic and social status by bringing or shipping boxes or containers filled with Western products, used clothes and other home objects (Marilla, 2022). This mobility of objects and gifts flows in transnational spaces and is influenced by the couple’s life course, citizenship and socioeconomic capital in the country of residence. Aside from the multi-directional circulation of things, visits to and of the natal family are also commonplace (see Fresnoza-Flot, 2017).

Like globalized ways of forming and sustaining households (see “global householding” in this chapter), the migrant spouse performs multiple home-making roles. As studies reveal, this imposes an inherent familial role on women (mostly from developing countries) to perform care work in multiple spaces. However, how men in mixed unions participate in these transnational activities and how they reproduce and connect to their past homes is missing in the literature. How these men sustain ties with their homeland (both from developed and developing countries) is also interesting, especially among those with stay-behind children, as often is the case for older migrant men. This area of inquiry brings to the fore the experience of men in these mixed unions as relatively new (Scuzzarello, 2020; Fresnoza-Flot, 2021). Nonetheless, these studies give a glimpse of everyday practices of bridging and maintaining ties with their homeland. For the migrant partner, their rootedness, experiences in their past home and (re)connections to their stay-behind kinship networks are also means of belonging. These ties that the migrant partner maintains also

influence their home-making practices in their present homes.

Discussion and conclusion

The main strands of inquiry discussed in this chapter—on migrants whose family members are geographically separated due to migration, on migrant families settled in their receiving countries and on mixed unions of people from different nationalities and/or ethnicities—point to the processual and relational dimension of home. Transnational family life substantiates the notion of home as the everyday reenactment of past and new experiences, connections and personhoods. Home-making practices in local and transnational contexts are fluid and represent a continuing process of belonging.

As an emerging analytical frame, “homing” (Ahmed et al., 2003; Boccagni, 2017) is crucial in understanding these dynamics of their home experience. For migrants in transnational families, home is often attributed to home countries or homeland as countries of origin. To these migrants, maintaining familial ties is a predominant homing practice where the circulation of care transcends nation-states. On the contrary, the home-making practices of migrant families who settle in their receiving countries appear geared towards (re)creating a home environment beyond the realm of domestic space at the local level. In-between transnational and migrant families, we can find mixed families’ homing practices that are embedded in their conjugal trajectories and exhibit continual adjustment strategies to their countries of residence. While analyses on mixed couples point to home-making at a local level, they also sustain ties with natal families, especially among migrant spouses. Hence, for both cases, “global householding” (Douglass, 2006) is an integral part of their ways of belonging and practices in their present homes. However, care work expectations position migrant spouses to perform their nurturing or productive roles both here and there—as responsible mothers or fathers in the receiving countries while at the same time performing their familial duties of being good daughters, sons, sisters or brothers in their countries of origin.

Material homing practices of migrants such as flows of remittances, communication and objects in transnational spaces also redefine the changing landscape of homes and family life. The migrants’ means of bridging connectedness in their everyday life are intimate and tangible ways of “home as everyday relational social process” (Boccagni, 2017: 21). Both material and symbolic practices reveal that ways of homing are deeply embedded within social, ethnocultural and gendered contexts in their home countries that these migrants negotiate. While these strategies are also true for the migrant spouses in mixed unions, their transnational practices further highlight their identification and reputation of being with a foreign partner that highly influence their engagement in transnational gift-giving as performative of that social status. As the studies reviewed in this chapter suggest, transnational activities exist among mixed couples (so do among migrant families) but not of the same degree as that of migrants with stay behind families and children. Mixed couples’ reinvention of home in the host society is stronger among migrants in mixed couples than other migrant groups. While mixed couples share commonalities with non-mixed couples (migrants or not), their homing experiences appear diverse as suggested by the overall idea of mixedness—the interrelation of “citizenship, nationality, culture, religion, “race”, social status, gender” (Collet, 2017: 149). To mixed couples, home is a product of negotiation of difference and we-ness across the couples’ life history and trajectories. As Brahic (2013: 708) clarifies, “when starting a family of their own the couples rediscover, celebrate and ultimately engineer their bi-nationality, seeking to seize what they perceive as an opportunity to move beyond bi-nationality to realize mixedness”. These couples thus create a new sense of home as a fusion of multiple home cultures and on-going experiences.

The literature on transnational, migrant and mixed families have illuminated many aspects of home and transnationalism as consequences of changing practices, familial relations, new patterns of marriages and intimacy. While the transnational homing practices of migrants have been well studied and thriving in recent decades, the literature on the home experience of migrant families and mixed couples is relatively new and calls for further research and analysis. Through the lenses

of home and homing, new ways of domesticity, family patterns and dynamics will emerge and necessitate more empirical explorations. Similarly, research on “conjugal mixedness” (Collet, 2012) can further diversify and enrich the discourse on home and migration.

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