

# 5. Transcending home: citizenship and belonging in the migrant experience. By Marianela Barrios Aquino

## Introduction

This chapter focuses on the concept of home (and its construction as a social as well as a subjective process) in relation to the migrant experience and the construction of multi-layered belongings. In this paper I argue that in the context of transnational migration, the concept of home focuses on its emotional perspective rather than its territorial connection, because it is constituted as a process of change and of searching related to the construction of multiple and extraterritorial ways of belonging (Brun & Fábos 2015; Korac 2009). Furthermore, I aim at challenging the notions of home as static and territorially bounded arguing that for migrants home is something highly portable, flexible, multiple, ambiguous and emotionally constructed.

In the case of migrants, home embodies the articulation of places and social relations that go beyond one geographic location (Brun, 2001) to which particular attachments are developed. Home can be represented as a construct that overlaps identity and belonging, where both of these involve a learning process triggered by the changing socio-cultural contexts of migrants' lives. In moving across cultural and socio-political borders, transnational migrants run the risk of losing a sense of belonging. Furthermore, migrants become the living proof of homemaking as an evolving construct, in this case as a result of the experience of migration or exile, "which is a dynamic and constantly changing process" (Habib 1996:96) that destabilises the material basis for identity construction and feelings of belonging: familiar spaces, known codes and symbols, language, customs, traditions, kinship, etc. According to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) a feeling of home is developed in the fields where our *habitus* has developed (Friedman 2002, Easthope 2004:7).

*Habitus*, understood as set of learned socio-cultural tools that inform our actions based on past experiences (Bourdieu 1977) is developed in specific social fields. Migrating internationally may mean that those fields change, widen and span over time and place. Additionally, it means that migrants will find themselves in new spaces operating by norms and rules of an older *habitus* (developed in other fields). Since transnational social spaces transcend cultural and political boundaries as well as time (spanning past, present and future in the imaginaries of people) this obsolescence of codes and norms to inform action is most likely to be experienced with anxiety by those who dwell in those spaces and that construct their lives between and across places of origin and places of residence.

The result of that inefficacy of dispositions to inform action is a destabilisation of a biographical repertoire that can result in positions of disadvantage for the migrant, which in turn results in a feeling of uncertainty about their place in the world (Jarvis 2006). In a study on multiculturalism, Verkuyten states that "[t]he lack of a shared and clear set of values and norms would imply that you do not know what is expected of you and what can be expected from others" (Verkuyten 2006:153). This sense of

uncertainty will result in disempowerment due to the difficulty of putting in practice adjusting strategies when the responses from the social context are unknown and confusing. Thus, learning processes will be set in motion to counteract this disempowering experience. It can then be said that movements across social spaces represent "moments of intense learning as they have to modify the structure and meaning of their lives as adults and adapt to a new social world" (Morrice 2012: 252).

When we think of international migrants, we often think of individuals who leave their home country to start a life in a different country. That is, individuals who leave a place and arrive in another. In this chapter I offer a slightly broader perspective, where migrants never really leave a place and never completely arrive in another. They are always present and absent at the same time. This becomes more clear when we use the terminology that defines them: emigrants and immigrants, and in general migrants. Emigrants are those absent, those who left the country of origin and are regarded from a place that has been left behind. Immigrants, on the other hand, are those same individuals who are regarded as aliens from a place of arrival or destination. They are the newcomers who were not here before. Migrants, more generally, refers to a notion of movement that is more in line with the idea neither leaving nor arriving, rather of being on the move. An individual is always all three denominations at the same time.

In trying to situate this notion of migrant, the concept of space is very useful, because it allows us to overcome the limitations offered by territorial conceptualisations of nation-states. In order to apply it to transnational contexts, space can be defined as a "sort of container to a socially, politically and economically relevant construct" (Faist 2000:18). Following this, migration will not simply be defined as the movement of people across nation-states, but rather "an economic, political, cultural, and demographic process which encapsulates various links between two or more settings in various nation-states and manifold ties of movers and stayers between them" (Faist 2000:8) where the roles of movers and stayers sometimes overlap due to the migration experience. Moreover, migrants are individuals dwelling and moving across transnational spaces, producing them and reproducing them with their experiences and everyday practices. Basch and colleagues linked transnationalism to migration studies by defining the former as "the process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (Basch et al. 1994). Following this logic, this chapter situates migrants' practices of homemaking in transnational social spaces. This is crucial not only for the understanding of homemaking, but also to reflect on the making of transnational social spaces, where experiences are de-territorialised and moved across and beyond the frame of nation-states and linear temporality, where the past has been left behind, the present is here and the future is a thing yet to come.

So far I have stated that migrating situates migrants and the construction of their home in transnational social spaces. Furthermore, I have argued that moving across social spaces may create disempowering situations for migrants. In this chapter, I will also argue that citizenship acquisition, as a promise of belonging, can become a strategy to fight senses of unease and uncertainty. Citizenship promises to satisfy the need to belong and can be used as a tool to construct a sense of belonging that will aid in the construction of home for migrants, even if only as a legally recognised way of being able to stay and to preserve the ongoing construction of belonging/home at the place of residence. The chapter will be divided into three sections that will focus on the the three following ideas respectively:

- Home is understood as a familiar place of security and safety, and is based on a sense of multi-layered belonging.

- Migration destabilises notions of identity and belonging, typically creating a feeling (at least initially) of uncertainty and loss of control that will trigger homemaking strategies in order to regain control
- Citizenship acquisition can be used as a response to the uncertainty caused by the migration experience and to (re)construct a new feeling of belonging, of *being at home*.

I will finish the chapter with a conclusion and some personal reflections about the question of how migrants make homes looking through the lens of citizenship.

## Multi-layered belonging and migrants' representations of home

Migrants often see home as a place "where normal life can be lived; it is a place that can provide [...] a sense of belonging" (Eastmond 2006:153). Furthermore, she and other scholars argue that those conditions can only be fulfilled in transnational social spaces, where both place of origin and of destination can be condensed (Eastmond 2006, Brun & Fábos 2015). When migrants leave their home countries, they bring along memories and a cultural repertoire that has informed their notions of home and belonging throughout their lives. Those cultural tools are context dependent and will necessarily be questioned once the socio-cultural context changes, which always happens in the case of transnational migrations. For this reason, their homemaking practices will also shift, whatever they were. They will adjust to a new reality that includes other codes and symbols, and as Donà (2015) argues, that can lead to shifting homemaking practices to deterritorialised spaces. These changes can take place in numerous different ways and the nature of the changes will necessarily vary with each individual. An example could be how migrants bring objects from their places of origin to their new homes, the foods they cook, the language that is spoken at home, etc.

Homemaking practices developed in transnational social spaces as a consequence of the experience of migration will most likely lead to multi-layered notions of belonging (Yuval-Davis & Werbner 1999) and ambiguous representations of home. This multi-layered notion of belonging is not free of conflict. It is not a mere integration of realities that act in harmonious combination with each other, but a "complex structuration of the everyday realms consisting of multiple spheres of belonging that are often likely to be incompatible" (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2013:10). These realms can be translated into being here and there, now and in the past as well as in the future, dwelling in an old *habitus* that is no longer informing the necessary dispositions. It has also been argued that migration can "foster cultural hybridity and complex, sometimes contradictory identities, as people negotiate diverse geographical spaces and cultural contexts" (Long & Oxfeld 2004 in Marschall 2017:216)

As has been argued before, *habitus* or the tools acquired to make sense of the world are key to providing a sense of familiarity and thus, a sense of belonging. It can be said that through *habitus* we are able to relate to the outside world in ways that make sense to us and to those around us, which is vital for the construction of home and belonging. In this sense, the learning processes involved in the construction of home are, in the case of the experience of migration, related to a revisit to the socialisation processes where codes and symbols for interaction (*habitus*) were learned. These newly "acquired tools" will develop into new forms of interaction through which migrants may "forge themselves in a new society" (Korac 2009) and with which they will construct new senses of familiarity that will incor-

porate notions of home from the past, material realities and representations of home from the present and hopes for future homes (Brun & Fábos 2015)

Additionally, Korac (2009) argues that home is also something of the past, a sort of negation (Eastmond 2006) of belonging and it often becomes a constant search for a meaningful place. In the context of transnational social spaces, Tuan has explored the relationship between people and places and he argues that rootedness is “a knowing that is the result of familiarity through long residence” while a sense of place is “a knowing that is the result of conscious effort” (Tuan 1980:8 in Easthope 2004). In both cases, home is represented as a sphere of familiarity in terms of knowing the social networks and codes and norms involved.

In discussing home and homemaking processes with migrants, they often make reference to a place they belong to as well as a place left behind. Both of these can coincide but they don't necessarily do so. The idea of home evokes notions of belonging, of familiarity, of security and safety, (Čapo 2015) and when trying to construct a home, migrants often try to emulate a lost feeling of belonging. Home can then be described as a place to which we feel emotionally attached and a place that helps us tell our story. A place that recognises us as familiar as much as we recognise it as familiar. It can be a place in our memories, in our everyday life, in our dreams and hopes. Home is the combination of those places and the expectations we have of them as well as our interactions with people and socio-political and cultural structures there. The familiarity of those places makes us feel comfortable and particular aspects of those places can even symbolise aspects of who we are (Rose 1995) and how we represent ourselves.

Migration does not imply that a 'homing desire' (Brah 1996) will be deleted and one will simply dwell in a nostalgia of the past. Moreover, it simply transforms imaginaries of home to reflect the transnational nature of the links, networks, everyday lives, belongings, etc. of migrants. That transformation creates a vision of home that can be more ambiguous (Sandu 2013). Home becomes more mobile, more volatile, where anchoring strategies relying on objects, symbols, aromas, etc. may be used in order to recreate familiarities. These produced or manufactured familiarities acquire a great value in the life narratives of migrants, who are constantly searching for belonging that would match their multiple attachments and loyalties.

Several scholars (Gurney 2000, Easthope 2004, Hamzah & Adnan 2016, Eastmond 2006) have argued for the emotional and experienced side of the concept of home, challenging assumptions of its territorially or materially bounded nature. When focusing on the experienced and subjective side of the concept of home, scholars are acknowledging the possibility of the relational nature of the concept. This allows for the possibility of it being experienced in radically different ways (Boccagni & Brighenti 2017) because this perspective assumes that home is never completed, never fully achieved and always changing.

Making home within the context of transnational lives is related to a process through which people “try to gain control over their lives and involves negotiating specific understandings of home” (Brun & Fábos 2015) The negotiation takes place between the migrants, their networks in the countries of origin and the context and social structures in the places of residence. Those networks and structures span beyond the borders of those geographical locations and beyond time, constructing transnational social spaces where they can fit with their fragmented stories and geographies.

## Revisiting identities in transnational social spaces: disempowerment and the experience of migration

It is worth highlighting here that neither of the three concepts of identity, homemaking and belonging exists divorced from their social context. Therefore, identification processes and identity practices can only be studied within specific frames of social processes and bearing in mind that they are constructed and developed within that frame (Berger & Luckmann 1966). With this in mind, the relationship between identity and transnational social spaces is two-fold: firstly, migrants' identity is constructed within a transnational frame and, secondly, this results in a multi-layered notion of belonging.

In the context of transnational social spaces, identity construction is a process of becoming (Pilkington and Flynn 1999) that links geographies and past, present and future (Korac 2009), turning it into a process that transcends territories/spaces/places and spans over time, questioning both a linear vision of temporality and a territorially bounded understanding of identity. This approach particularly challenges the assumption that migration is about geographical movements that start in the past and stop in the present, upon arrival in the country of destination. When in transnational social spaces, migrants find themselves navigating unknown structures with obsolete tools for those navigations. The codes and symbols that served for interaction in the past, as seen above, are not fully functional.

It is important to highlight that the fact that home can be made (Xenos 1996) is not a denial of the existence of territorially based aspects of identity, rather a reminder of the importance of the fact that territory is only an aspect of identities and of nation-state building (Korac 2009; Xenos 1996).

With that in mind, I use this paper to ask how do migrants dwell and make homes in those transnational spaces? I argue that they can do this through identification processes that keep them connected to various locations and times simultaneously, which turns them into architects of a new belongings, building networks and structures in new social contexts with tools brought from another social space, across borders and cultures. New and old, here and there, familiar and foreign, all are sides of the transnational construction of identities in the experience of migration.

Migration, thus, can be seen as much more than a geographical relocation. This means that the relocation also occurs at a cultural level, because it entails new ways of understanding social relations and new ways of positioning oneself in front of new groups for comparison (host community, community of origin, other fellow migrants, etc.). As Benmayor puts it: "migration is a long-term if not a life-long process of negotiating identity, difference, and the right to fully exist and flourish in the new context" (Benmayor 2007:8) or in Sayad's words, the individual "does not emigrate (i.e., one does not cut the ties with one's own social, economic, cultural, customary universe) and does not immigrate (i.e., one does not aggregate, even when in a marginal and very superficial way, to another social system) with impunity (i.e. without consequences), among immigrants, is produced an inevitable conversion of their attitudes toward themselves, towards their home country and toward the society in which they live" (Sayad 1998:65). It is not possible to remain unchanged while migrating. When crossing cultural borders migrants are faced with the limits of their own tools to interact because they don't have the knowledge that we usually classify under the category of "common sense". Paradoxically, there is nothing less common than common sense in this context. Manners, values, basic behaviour rules

such as queuing or buying groceries can become important barriers to interaction in everyday life when one is not acquainted with the ways of a place.

The ignorance of certain basic rules of interaction can represent a very disempowering facet of the experience of migration, since disorientation and anxiety can overcome the individual when faced with the necessity of asking a question without speaking the language or being invited to somebody's house and not knowing whether to keep their shoes on or not. Simple everyday tasks can entail a long process of discovery and become the object of moments of intense learning (Morrice 2012). Furthermore, through those learning experiences migration changes the migrants' perception of the world and of themselves, and constitutes a moment of identity reconfiguration. In line with this Dubar argues that changing norms, habits and models may result in the destabilisation of symbolic systems (Dubar 2006) and consequently the migrant can be left in the dark when it comes to anticipating someone else's behaviour. This can result in a feeling of uncertainty and even unease about everyday activities, like taking the kids to school or meeting the kids' teacher.

This paper is based on an understanding of identities as tools that inform action for interaction (Goffman 1959) acknowledging that they are in turn informed by codes and symbols learned in interaction. This theoretical approach defines identities in terms of agency and looks for their representations in embodied habits of social life (Billig 1995) and everyday practices, like for example, homemaking practices.

Identities are context-dependent. When the social context changes, as happens in the experience of migration, migrants will find that what they learned in another context no longer applies to their current reality. Those symbols and values that once enabled them to classify others and be classified in a more or less expected way become obsolete when entering in direct contact with a foreign culture or society. As a result, migrants may perceive a limitation in their capacity to make sense of the social context and react accordingly, which in turn will translate into a feeling of loss of control. This sense of uncertainty will result in disempowerment due to the difficulty of adjusting strategies, action and goals, when the responses from the social context are unknown and confusing, or cannot be classified into a known category.

In addition to configuring the migrant's vision of the world, identity is at the same time configured by "resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not "who we are" or "where we came from", so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves" (Hall, 1996:4). Identity is thus defined as that active creation and performance of a narrative of the self, which provides a sense of order (Yuval-Davis, 2011; Wetherell, 1996) and that translates social domains and locations into strategies of action and self-representation, providing information about symbols and codes for interaction. In other words, identity is vital for migrants to be able to draw on their experiences to participate in social life along with others. Therefore, identity is about agency, about an ability to act meaningfully and about interaction with others. According to Hashmi (2000) migrant identities involve the re-evaluation of oneself because migrants find themselves surrounded by new (possibly unknown) traditions, customs, etc.

Identity construction is thus a relevant issue when exploring the variegated nature of homemaking or the construction of home in transnational scenarios, because it can be seen as a process "of being and becoming, belonging and longing to belong" (Probyn, 1996; Fortier, 2000 in Yuval-Davis, 2011:15). Feelings of belonging refer to emotions that evoke attachment and a sense of place to individuals, which are closely related to issues of identity. Identity, belonging and homemaking can be regarded as

key overlapping aspects of the experience of migration. Home is where we can be ourselves. When our selves are fragmented and destabilised as the result of our experiences, in this case the experience of migration, our strategies will necessarily turn to try to recover a loss sense of who we are and of our place in the world. Individuals seem to feel a need to construct a home wherever they are, whatever the circumstances. Scholars like Brun and Fábos, who study forced migration, argue that even those individuals in the most precarious situations develop homemaking practices, wherever they are (2015).

## Citizenship as construction of multi-layered belonging as homemaking strategy

Citizenship scholars (Isin & Nielsen 2008, Erel 2013, Morrice 2016, Koopmans et al. 2005) address the concept of citizenship beyond its legal status, acknowledging that it is also a social process that involves everyday practices. Citizenship is also seen as a practice that creates a certain *way of being*. Some scholars (Isin, 2012; Yuval-Davis, 2011; Fortier, 2013) have described citizenship as a learning path that is incorporated into the *habitus* of the subject and is activated even when performing other 'individual' actions like mothering (Erel, 2013). In terms of homemaking strategies, citizenship can represent a way of protecting oneself from the threat of being removed from a place. Immigration policies are perceived as being constantly changing and becoming ever increasingly restrictive, threatening to break the continuity of migrants' constructions of home in the place of residence.

Citizenship regimes are also an example of how policies can determine boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, where some subjects are allowed to gain membership into a polity while others are kept out of those boundaries (Yuval-Davis 2011). On the other hand, scholars like Bloch (2014) consider citizenship regimes only a part of the experience of citizenship. Even when they constitute an important part they don't tell the whole story of experiencing citizenship and the shape that it can take in everyday life. In her study of Moldovan migrants, Bloch argues that "migrants relate to and strategize around citizenship regimes in very different ways depending on the types of subjectivity" (Bloch 2014: 464). This approach acknowledges that citizenship regimes and institutional notions of citizenship affect migrants' relationship to citizenship only in part and that although they may determine the process or access to citizenship, they cannot control migrants' dreams, expectations and experiences of citizenship.

I would like to argue that citizenship is a particular political project of belonging that also activates very specific discourses of belonging and community. Citizenship regimes enforce cultural requirements that tell the story of a cohesive national community, of a homogeneous population of like-minded people to which the aspiring citizen would have access to once complying with all the policy requirements. A definition of citizenship that incorporates notions of identity, belonging, rights, status, moral values and that is *practiced* in different domains of social life (Bosniak 2006, Morrice 2016) is important when talking about migrants because it acknowledges the experienced side of citizenship. Yuval-Davis complemented this definition by saying that it is also about membership in several communities and that "people's lives are shaped by their rights and obligations in local, ethnic, religious, national, regional, transnational and international political communities" (Yuval-Davis 2013:7). This addition is very useful due to the necessity of enlarging the definition of citizenship to fit those who are members of more than one community, with multiple belongings and who – for that very reason – may experience citizenship in a radically different form, because transnational mobility necessarily complicates notions of citizenship and belonging (Bloch 2014:449). Here, the study of be-

longing is not limited to individual or collective emotional or ideological attachments to groups or geographies, but also encompasses the dissection of a wider social and political structure that determines who belongs and how to belong, and that can have an impact on the individual's experience. As a personal, subjective phenomenon, the individual constructs her belonging to a polity within a political context, which in turn shapes that construction. Belonging is also about boundaries and rules of attachment. Those boundaries are collectively and politically constructed but subjectively internalised by the individual. I don't intend to deny those boundaries, I merely have argued for citizenship being regarded and often experienced as guarantee for a more stable, more plausible construction of home.

It is thus inevitable to speak of citizenship in broader terms due to the complexity of the concept itself, which in the case of migrants, refers to a membership that is multi-layered, implies several political communities, and is "composed of local, regional, national, cross-national and supranational political communities" (Yuval-Davis 2011:49). For this paper, it is important to take into account all dimensions of citizenship in order to better understand its relevance in the homemaking processes or the construction of belonging of the migrant. There is always a connection between citizenship and belonging, where citizenship is considered a project through which migrants naturalising as citizens have to go in order to be *awarded* the right to belong. That *right to belong* comes with a sense of security and stability that the experience of migration often lacks or has taken away. Whether this may actually be realised in everyday life is another issue, but citizenship in itself is a concept loaded with (*illusions*) of equality and full membership.

In drawing on the idea that everyday notions of citizenship are related to a sense of belonging and to feelings of stability, I want to argue that migrants may acquire citizenship as part of a search for belonging (Bloch, 2014). Given that citizenship can be experienced in a variety of ways, I believe this idea does not clash with the limiting and normative nature of citizenship regimes and naturalisation processes, which I consider act as restrictive gateways to belonging (Morrice, 2011). Furthermore, I believe citizenship regimes also send a message (through a discursive construction of national identity) of being the doorway to a supposedly cohesive and integrated society. Thus, naturalisation processes require of aspiring citizens that they learn to think of themselves as members of a specific community (Fortier, 2010). This is how citizenship is constructed as the *perfect* path to building a home and making oneself *at home*; as the promise to satisfy the longing to belong. In most cases<sup>7</sup>,

whether migrants believe in that promise or not, this at least means that the search for belonging is not limited to one single place of attachment, rather it reflects a search for belonging in various "systems of national belonging" at the same time (Fouon & Glick Schiller, 2001). This is what I refer to when I talk about multi-layered belonging.

The search for a lost home, for a certain type of rootedness in the place of residence can be satisfied (at least initially) with the acquisition of citizenship, even when all that is gained with citizenship is the (*potential*) access to the right to preserve the current home, the right to continue to develop a sense of belonging in the place of residence although always in connection with the place of origin. This can be interpreted as the final realisation of a multi-layered belonging, where the place of origin, the status of alien, other or migrant no longer pose a threat to the continuity of one's construction of home. Thus, citizenship is here also understood as the right to stay permanently, to fully access all rights to stay and construct a home in the place of destination. Citizenship is often perceived by migrants as a level of stability that allows them to feel *more at home*. This will potentially have a great impact on the perception of the ability to construct a home. Ong (1999) call migrants that naturalise in their countries of residence "flexible citizens" (Ong, 1999:214) because their everyday lives and practices take place in



various locations and they seek to acquire multiple passports to guarantee the continuity of this mode of life.

Citizenship is considered as the ultimate sign of a successful integration, which means that the migrant can potentially become something different than an alien. Theoretically and according to policy, acquiring citizenship is to be thought of as a rite of passage, where the migrant can begin to feel at home and develop a deeper sense of belonging in the place of residence. Reality, however, often looks a bit different. Migrants often instrumentalise citizenship in terms of acquiring a new passport that allows them to travel more freely, or to preserve their current lives and constitute a guarantee against the ever changing and politically laden nature of immigration policy. In either case, whether the migrant actually feels a new attachment to the place of residence through the acquisition of citizenship or simply instrumentalises it in order to preserve the continuity of their experience, citizenship is a guarantee of safety and a protection against discriminatory immigration policies that threaten the permanence and quality of life of migrants in the host community.

## Conclusion

Migration, typically involves such a change of scenario and of the codes and symbols operating in that scenario, that it has (at least initially) a disempowering effect on migrants' lives. This can be directly related to a loss of home and of a sense of belonging. This situation pushes migrants to set in motion a series of strategies to try to counteract that disempowerment and regain control over their lives. One of those strategies can be the acquisition of citizenship, which will provide a sense of certainty and security that can facilitate the continuous construction of home.

In this paper I have tried to argue that cross-cultural contacts have an impact on migrants' identities and perceptions of themselves. One of the main results of the experience of migration can be a sense of being lost and/or having lost a home. Whether the migration has been forced or voluntary, the reason for this feeling of loss is related to a divergence between the known tools for interaction and those in use at the place of destination, a divergence that destabilises the ability of the subject to know what to expect from others and, therefore, to know their place in the world. Moreover, that gap will trigger learning processes that will imply a transformation (whether a positive or a negative one is impossible to know).

I have also tried to argue for the impossibility of using national borders or single national allegiances to explore homemaking processes in migrants' lives, since migrants themselves dwell between (Bhabha, 1991) nation-states, across cultural and socio-political borders, their imaginaries are informed by a multiplicity of images, smells, places, geographies, stories, languages, that will render a single territory inadequate to explain their sense of belonging, their construction of self and homes. Thus, I argue, transnational social spaces are the only possible scenario that can reflect the reality of migrants' everyday lives and homemaking strategies, because only they allow conflicting notions of home and belonging to coexist. Only in transnational social spaces can migrants construct homes that integrate various memories and desires, a broad notion of temporality that spans over geographies and time frames, condensing past, present and future into one imaginary home that can fulfil a search for belonging.

The thread that I have tried to present represents an idea of migration that is destabilising, due to the loss of familiarity with the social context and structure in which the individual needs to act. It connects this idea of migration as a disempowering experience (because of the anxiety linked to the initial

ignorance of new rules, values, codes and symbols) and contrasts with a concept of home, here presented as a feeling of belonging that can be equated with security, stability, familiarity, and acceptance. Although both migration and homemaking are contrasting phenomena or concepts, they are not mutually exclusive. That is, migrants don't stop making homes and searching for homes when they migrate, since I don't believe home is static and therefore opposed to movement (migration). In that search, migrants often find that citizenship is the promise of finally arriving and fulfilling the need to belong to a place.

It is important to highlight here that equality through citizenship in terms of rights and responsibilities as well as in terms of status is an illusion. Failing to do so, would imply disregarding all other types of social, cultural, gender, race, etc. inequalities. For that reason I presented the citizenship regime as promising (as well as limiting and restricting) a sense of belonging. Moreover, equality is as much an illusion as the bonded community described through notions of national identity that aspiring citizens have to adopt and adhere to.

Leaving a place that is familiar, a place that *knows* us, leaves us out of place. We no longer belong here or there. In good days this will mean that we can belong anywhere, in bad days it may mean that we belong nowhere. But the feeling of longing to construct a familiarity that binds us somewhere, that keeps us from moving, from being uprooted, does not leave us. Anchoring strategies may be placing a lot of value on an object that we take along with us, treasuring memories and idealising ideas of a past home, a warm place that we often imagine is still there where we left it. We are often surprised by the fact that the reality of those familiar places, our networks and stories do not match our memories. This is probably the moment we realise that we have been uprooted, and that our roots have taken another shape.

What strikes me as the biggest dilemma is that even when realising that, we persevere, almost blindly and pointlessly in the search for a home even when being uprooted has become a part of our stories of self and home, that places and geographies no longer tell our stories, also not those that once did. In that search, almost a need, we hold on to anything that is a promise of recovering that familiarity, that sense of belonging, of being *in place and not out of place*. Acquiring citizenship worked for me as a promise, as the opening of a door, and it did transform my strategies for constructing belonging. However, it did not stop the search and now I think of my roots as growing in water, like I have them in a glass that I can take with me wherever I go. Even when I stay, I am moving, I am revisiting past and future projects of migration. And even then, I am always trying to stay, to manufacture a familiarity and a belonging that although illusory, would fit my fragmented geographies, my fragmented homes.

In this chapter I have tried to argue that although migration relativises so much and turns us inside out, the longing to belong, the need to make a home is always there, and that citizenship is constructed as a promise of satisfying that need. Although I don't know if citizenship actually satisfies the need.

I would like to finish with Bhabha's words saying "a transnational 'migrant' knowledge of the world is most urgently needed" (1991) because really, what I here described as being true for migrants, may be true for everybody.

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1. The cases where dual nationality is allowed and migrants don't have to renounce their citizenship of origin