

Towards a progressive home-making.

The ambivalence of migrants' experience in a multicultural condominium

Adriano Cancellieri

University Iuav of Venice

Department of Design & Planning in complex environments,
University IUAV of Venice, Ca' Tron, Santa Croce 1957, Venice, Italy,
adriano.cancellieri@iuav.it

Following the rhetoric of globalisation and hyper-mobility, the ideas of placelessness and detachment from place seem to be the essential features of contemporary cities. This conceals the human necessity to constantly create new senses of home and new home-making practices. Starting from ethnographic research in a multicultural condominium (called Hotel House) in Italy, the paper uses the urban experience of migrants to look at different home-making practices by analysing them as multidimensional (spatial, social and emotional) processes. Firstly, migrants living in Hotel House produce 'home' by imbuing domestic spaces with their own memory and meaning and creating public and collective spaces characterised by 'homely relations'. In both cases they produce material, emotional and symbolic resources. Secondly, the paper analyses the 'dark side of home-making', inasmuch as the social density of the home-making practices in Hotel House's domestic and public spaces also favour strong forms of social control, particularly relevant for women and young people. Thirdly, the paper analyses how the sense of home sustains a collective intercultural mobilisations against Hotel House's institutional abandonment and stigmatisation that reveal the threshold-crossing capacity of 'home'. Home, in conclusion, is not a romanticised, fixed and bounded place to protect. It is a plural and conflictual field of action that can support social exclusion but can also open new interconnections and possibilities of peoples' empowerment.

Keywords: Home-making, migrants, domestic space, affective turn, social control, intercultural mobilisation.

1. Introduction

The rhetoric of globalisation, hyper-mobility and detachment from place have been prevalent in contemporary literature since the end of the 1980s (Harvey, 1989). Scholars such as Virilio (1991) have asserted that the concept of space is dead because space-distances and geography

have been replaced by time-distances and chronography. Whether celebrated or decried, the condition of placelessness seems to be the essential feature of the modern condition (Escobar, 2001).

The recognition that things are increasingly ‘speeding up and spreading out’ (Massey, 1994) does not imply the undermining of the human necessity of settlement and territorialisation. As underlined by Deleuze and Guattari (1980), one cannot deterritorialise without simultaneously re-territorialisingⁱ somewhere else (Brighenti, 2010). Social actors are always ‘spatial actors’ (Gotham, 2003; Cancellieri, 2013) who negotiate the world around themselves trying to create meaningful and ‘ready-to-hand’ spaces (Simonsen, 2013). This continuous process of place-making sometimes results in the construction of a spatial, emotional and social ‘realm’ where you can repetitively find symbolic and material resources: in this case we could speak of ‘home’ and ‘home-making practices’ (Tucker, 1994). Many authors have underlined that the most violent form of exclusion is to prevent somebody from the possibility of creating his/her own ‘home’ space and to materially and symbolically domesticate it (Haesbaert, 2001). This is visible in homeless studies (Rossi, 1989; Dordick, 1997; Borchard, 2013), total institution studies (Goffman, 1961; Dear and Wolch, 1987) and in research on political deportation (Bisharat, 1997).

For many years there was a tendency in academic literature to consider ‘home’ as a fixed and bounded place to protect. In particular, humanist geographers contributed to romanticise and essentialise the notion of home (and, more in general, of place), inspired by philosophical writings on the power of place-attachments (Bachelard 1958; Heidegger 1971). This ‘static’ conception inspired the classical idea of home as an original private realm where people can withdraw from communal life (Mallett, 2004) and find control and security (Dovey, 1985). The conservative idea of home seems increasingly common in larger society where the desire for ‘a home’ in too many cases comes laden with reactionary resonances. This equation ‘home = exclusionary identity’ is often exploited by ‘political entrepreneurs of fears’ to support (supposedly) coherent and homogeneous communities against newcomers and ‘outsiders’ (Massey, 1994). In recent years, many scholars have begun to problematize the ‘sedentarist analytic bias’ (Chu 2006) and to start considering ‘home’ as a precarious arena constituted by multiple social actors and struggles (Ahmed et al., 2003). They underlined that ‘home’ is not a ‘being’ but a ‘becoming’ (Nowicka, 2006) and the process of home-making can emerge everywhere (Nowicka, 2007) and can connect new and different subjects (Brettell 2006).

The paper uses the urban experience of migrants as a prism to analyse how ‘home’ emerges in new places. Indeed, as migrants have to counter their displacement from the country of origin,

their experience radicalises the necessity to construct new ‘homes’ and help going beyond the dichotomies stability/mobility and inside/outside. In particular, the paper analyses the everyday processes of home-making in a multicultural condominium (called Hotel House), where 2000 migrants live, situated in the small-size city of Porto Recanati (11,959 inhabitants) in the central part of the Adriatic coast in the Adriatic. This is a place largely inhabited by migrants (95%) coming from forty different countries that has become a multicultural enclave strongly separated from the rest of the town.

The paper opens with a presentation of the case study and the methodology used (section 2). An analysis of the home-making practices in domestic spaces (section 3) and in public spaces (section 4) will follow, highlighting the ambivalence of migrants’ experience and the social resources and risks involved in these processes. In the last part (section 5), the paper analyses an intercultural mobilisation organised by a part of the Hotel House’s inhabitants that opens possibilities towards a progressive home-making. The paper’s main aim is to analyse the diverse ways people ‘do’ and feel at home (Jackson, 1995; Ingold, 1995) and to focus the attention on the main related spatial, emotional and social struggles.

2. The Hotel House in Porto Recanati: an Italian multi-cultural condominium

The Hotel House is a high-rise holiday resort composed of 480 flats, situated in the small city of Porto Recanati (11,959 inhabitantsⁱⁱ), in the central part of the Adriatic coast. Built in the 1960s during the Italian economic boom, it was meant to be a ‘house’ with the services and comforts of a ‘hotel’. This project was explicitly inspired by Le Corbusier’s idea of ‘l’unité d’habitation’, that is a self-sufficient condominium characterised by verticalism and by the obsession of repeated straight lines. The idea of constructing a vertical ‘phalanstery’ with seventeen floors was very original for the Italian Adriatic coast because it is rather out-of-scale when compared to the surrounding area and, even more, to the town of Porto Recanati. Even today, the cross-shaped condominium tower is isolated and surrounded by fields; it is highly recognisable in the Southern periphery and strongly separated from the rest of the town.

The significance of this space is tied to both geography and history. At the end of the 1960s, the building’s firm went bankrupt and the owner committed suicide. Consequently, once the condominium was completed, it remained without services (even car parking), and the majority of flats were left empty for many years. These vacant flats have been periodically filled by a few hundred Italian holiday-makers and some very heterogeneous populations such as people who evacuated their homes after the Ancona earthquake in the 1970s or some aeronautic officers working on the radar in the nearby town of Potenza Picena in the 1980s. By the middle

of the 1990s, when large flows of migrants began to arrive in Italy, many people discovered the Hotel House as the ideal (almost empty) place to settle.

The Hotel House condominium is at the heart of an area composed of an informal conurbation of scattered small towns and different local economic systems constituting many industrial districts. The area surrounding Hotel House, and in particular Porto Recanati, has a flourishing and differentiated labour market. In only a few kilometres, there are many factories, especially in the shoes and furniture industrial districts, in the building industry, in fishery and agriculture and in the tourist sector, particularly restaurants and hotels. In a few years, the growing request of unskilled, above all '3D' jobs (dirty, dangerous and demanding) transformed the planned holiday resort for Italian vacationers into a place of migrants, inhabited by nearly two thousand younger workers from many different countries (see Table 1-2).

Table 1 – Main countries of origin of Hotel House's registered inhabitants

<i>Countries of origin</i>	N.	% on total HH's inhabitants
Senegal	367	23.6
Bangladesh	358	23.0
Pakistan	225	14.5
Tunisia	165	10.6
Nigeria	97	6.2
Italy	86	5.5
China	55	3.5
Macedonia	50	3.2
Morocco	46	3.0
Other African countries	50	3.2
Other Asian countries	28	1.8
Centre and Southern America	19	1.2
Other European countries	10	0.6
Total	1,556	100

Source: Hotel House's administration register (31st July 2009ⁱⁱⁱ).

Table 2 – Age groups by nationalities

<i>Countries of origin</i>	Under 19	From 19 to 49 years old	Over 50
Senegal	20.4	63.6	16.0
Bangladesh	24.1	74.9	1.1
Pakistan	16.2	78.7	5.1
Tunisia	27.8	66.5	5.7
Nigeria	13.1	80.8	6.1
Italy	12.9	45.5	41.6
Other countries	21.0	73.4	5.6
Total	20.6	70.1	9.3

Source: Hotel House's administration register (31st July 2009).

In the first period Italian owners rented their empty flats to migrants at a high rent. This new presence engendered a strong opposition of the traditional Hotel House inhabitants: the more migrants' number increased, the more Italians decided to sell their flats. This 'white flight' (Kruse, 2012) has been supported by the interests of real estate agents, who could buy flats at a very low price and to rent them at a high one. In a second phase, the high rents and the relative availability of taking out a mortgage convinced many migrants to buy their Hotel House flat. In a few years, migrants have bought more than half of the condominium's flats (see Table 3).

Table 3 – Apartment owners by nationalities

<i>Country of origin</i>	N. flats	%
Italy	237	49.4
Bangladesh	71	14.8
Senegal	48	10.0
Pakistan	37	7.7
Nigeria	28	5.8
Tunisia	23	4.8
Marocco	9	1.9
Others	37	7.7
Tot.	480	100.0

Source: Hotel House's administration register

(31st July 2009).

The substantial body of the research is based on a detailed ethnographic work conducted from October 2004 to October 2006. In that period I lived in a Hotel House's flat hosted by a Senegalese woman. After almost a year, I found a little room in another Hotel House flat, hosted by an Italian boy who was working in the condominium as a lift technician. During that period, I met a large number of people and I found some relevant gatekeepers. I routinely visited friends at their domestic spaces and I spent a great deal of time in the collective spaces throughout the condominium.

Such a long and in-depth participant observation gave me the possibility to analyse the main social home-making practices and to discover the relations and struggles between the different senses of place (Cancellieri and Ostanel, 2015). During my research, I conducted and taped several interviews^{iv}, in order to have first-hand accounts by residents; all extended quotes in the article were taken from these taped interviews. But most of the data are derived from handwritten notes and hand-drawn maps in my ethnographic diary, because it was not always practical to record the everyday conversations. I also conducted twenty interviews with key

informants and analysed local newspaper articles that helped me to understand how the home-making practices of Hotel House' inhabitants relate to the local society.

3. Home-making practices in domestic spaces

I left the dark and grey corridor to get into the flat of Mamadou and Fatou'. All at once I am immersed in a dense and multisensorial atmosphere: tangs coming from the kitchen, passionate mbalax music in the Senegalese satellite channels, the Islamic prayers in the background coming from Malick's room. On the walls, you can see many photographs of relatives and religious leaders. The big images of Amadou Bamba, the founding prophet of the main Senegalese brotherhood, stand out. When the delicious food prepared by Fatou arrives, tastes, smells, colours and sounds are combined together to give rise to a total 'synaesthesia'! I like to move quickly from one apartment to another and, simply crossing a short corridor, to trespass boundaries between different 'worlds'. Therefore, I find an excuse not to stop for lunch and I leave the Fatou's flat. A few steps down the hall and I try to knock on the door of Abbas' flat. He opens it and immediately I listen to the music and I smell the Indian chapati that is cooking. The room is full of his paintings; many are portraits, many others are Pakistan or Italy's landscapes. Abbas is a talented painter and makes up his salary as assistant in a restaurant's kitchen by selling paintings. Here you can see that it is a room of first generation immigrants and there is not a family that takes care of the house. There is a certain disorder but nevertheless the atmosphere that is recreated within the domestic space is strongly recognisable. The music of Bollywood movies is mixed with the smells, the colours and everyday practices create a sensory landscape that reminds me of Pakistan. I stay for a little time because I want to go to greet Nader, who at this time should be back from work. I take the elevator and in a while I am in front of the door of his house. As soon as he opens it, I do not have time to say hello, before I'm listening to the Arabic language of Tunisian TV channels and I can smell the cous cous that is almost ready. On the walls and shelves, there are the photos and the objects that tell Nader's stories, his main relationships and his need to feel at home (ethnographic diary, 7th March 2006).

A rising number of scholars have explored how domestic spaces are the traditional domain of home-making practices (Chapman and Hockey 1999; Makovicky, 2007). They underlined that social identities are created and maintained through the arrangement of personal 'biographical objects' (Hoskins, 1998; Mandich and Rampazzi, 2009). This is particularly relevant for migrants who need to construct a sense of home and a biographical continuity against the

displacement created by migration and the categorisation encountered in the country of destination. Migrants living in Hotel House re-territorialise themselves by breathing new life into the condominium's domestic spaces and have 'decorated' them for recreating the sensorial landscapes of their country of origin: satellite dishes emit familiar sounds and languages, the incessant import-export trade fills the air with smells, scents and flavours of their home countries, and the pictures and videos allow the inhabitants to see people and places they are more attached to.

Home-making practices in domestic spaces are particularly relevant for many Senegalese people who spend a large part of their spare time in Hotel House's flats. They gather with relatives and friends to chat for many hours, drinking mint tea or a toufam (a mix of yoghurt and sugared water), braiding hair, watching new Senegalese movies or some videos about weddings, baptisms or other feasts in Senegal and preparing collective meals in which individuals sit together in a circle around a big plate, generally of rice. The Senegalese living in Hotel House have not only re-organised and appropriated their home interiors, marking them with elements of personal and collective identities, they have also transformed their flats into parochial spaces for social and communitarian practices (Lofland, 1998). Their daily behaviours often seem reminiscent of Simmel's (1949) concept of 'sociability', the art of talking for the pleasure of staying together. In this case, 'home' is more a relational than a spatial realm.

However, these social and home-making practices also has an ambivalent 'nature'. Some Senegalese, such as Fatou, have highlighted that using domestic spaces in this way causes a rise in tension between community and individual needs:

"We do like in Africa. The door's room is always open. It's only closed before sleeping. But it began to bother me. When I go to Africa they say to me that I became white! Did you see Aminata this morning? She went in with the mobile, without greeting and she went to the bathroom. It could be funny to you but if she was European, she wouldn't have done that. It's a civilisation question because maybe I was making something!" (Fatou, 41-year-old, Senegalese woman, Hotel House resident).

This social density can favour strong forms of social control, as witnessed by Modou, a Senegalese who confessed feeling restricted by such a network:

"To stay here is like living in Senegal. It's even difficult to learn the Italian language!" (Modou, 29-year-old, Senegalese man, Hotel House resident).

Consequently, some young people left Hotel House just to escape from these bonding communitarian ties and this social control:

“Why did I leave the Hotel House? Because there are too many people that don’t mind their own business!” (Ndiaga, 23-year-old, Senegalese man, Hotel House resident).

The risk of this new sense of home is to discourage innovative behaviours and favour conservative practices and representations. This threat is strongly reinforced if what they found ‘outside’ is but an alienating environment where migrants’ dignity is usually denied and where their voice and possibility of making and taking place is largely restricted (Phillips, 2008). Hotel House, indeed, is a stigmatized space (Bourdieu, 1991) involved in continuous processes of spatial labelling. Its residents are stigmatised for their national origin, social class and place of settlement. Local mass media, in particular, have strongly contributed to the diffusion and legitimation of this stigma: on one hand a ‘clean’ fortress-city (Porto Recanati), on the other hand a high-rise increasingly perceived as a social ‘rubbish dump’ for unwanted ‘alterity’ (Cancellieri, 2013). As a consequence, some inhabitants risk living a double closure, one from inside and the other from outside. Generally speaking, Hotel House’s inhabitants ‘order’ their space to recreate their home, but the risk is that space orders them (Giglia, 2009). This demonstrates the interconnections between home-making instances and their structural vulnerability.

4. Home-making practices through public and collective spaces

Home-making practices can emerge outside the domestic spaces’ boundaries (Rappaport, 1981; Relph, 1976). In our case, they involve public and collective spaces at the ground floor of the big condominium, underlining the plurality of ‘where’ of home-making practices. For instance, the ground floor of the building was originally designed for many small shops. However, until the end of the 1990s, it was nearly empty with only a pizzeria, a hairdresser and a supermarket that were all managed by Italian people. In 2003, the condominium administration council^{vi} decided to close the area to vehicular traffic and fill it with benches, which resulted in the opening of new small enterprises. In a few years, the ground floor transformed into a lively commercial area with fifteen small shops: four phone centres, two butcheries, two bars, two mini-markets, a haberdasher’s shop, a barber’s shop, a laundry, an accountant and a kebab bar. These activities are managed by people from many different countries: four by Pakistani and Moroccan people, three by Bangladeshi people, two by Italian people and one by Nigerian and

Senegalese people. All of them are situated in two small squares created on the ground floor from the intersection of the two parallelepipeds that constitute the building. Many of the shops, namely the two bars, some phone centres and the bigger mini-market, are not only commercial spaces but have also become social spaces for meeting people, chatting and coming into contact with information. They are no longer confined inside the walls of the store but form a continuum in which the footpaths and the outside space are embedded (Kärrholm, 2012).

The most important space situated in the ground floor is the so-called mosque, created in 2003 by the transformation of three different small shops into an Islamic prayer room. Considering that the large majority (approximately 80%) of the inhabitants share the Islamic faith, the condominium's mosque has become the fundamental place of reference as a place to share a religious identity and a stigmatisation due to the world's growing islamophobia (for the Italian case, see Saint-Blancat and Schmidt di Friedberg, 2005). This meaningful role played by the mosque, also for many Muslims living nearby, is well explained by Saber, the handyman bricklayer:

“It's beautiful in the Mosque; sometimes staying as in a family. I don't speak so because we are Muslims, but we are all equal, all workers, all far from our country. Otherwise, home and work, home and work. It's better to dig a grave and to throw oneself inside!” (Saber, 42-year-old, Tunisian man, Hotel House resident).

As many authors have underlined in other contexts (Hondagneu Sotelo, 2007; Ley 2008; Paerregaard 2008; Saint-Blancat and Cancellieri, 2014), the mosque is for many migrants a 'multifunctional territory' where it is possible to gather together for reconstructing an identity but also for exchanging goods, information and services and even in order to have a voice (Cancellieri and Saint-Blancat, 2012). However, home-making practices at the ground floor do not have a single, clear and fixed meaning for everybody. People's experiences strongly vary across diverse ages, ethnicities and above all gender. The ground floor is largely a space of sociability for young males and adults. For a significant percentage of women, they are sites of exclusion, more than places of symbolic and material resources (Dupuis and Thorns, 1998). The number of females living in Hotel House is constantly increasing but they are still largely a minority (less than 30%^{vii}, see tab. 4). Women's presence in the collective spaces at the ground floor is even more limited, and the majority of them do not have their own spaces other than their flat. The richness of home-making practices underlined above are men's practices that reproduce the classical division along gender lines (Strüver, 2004) between private spaces (for

women) and public spaces (for men). Even if the situation is strongly different for some Senegalese and Nigerian women who are more present in condominium's public spaces, we can say that women's local condition reveals the 'dark side' of the home-making practices.

Table 4 – Percentage of women by nationalities (2004-2009)

<i>Main countries of origin</i>	2004	2009
Senegal	10.2	18.1
Bangladesh	22.6	28.3
Pakistan	9.3	15.6
Tunisia	38.3	36.0
Italy	37.9	37.3
Nigeria	53.2	49.0
Total	26.9	28.3

Source: Hotel House's administration register (31st December 2004 and 31st July 2009).

5. Towards a progressive home-making: new interconnections and peoples' empowerment

The cumulative experience of a place where you can find physical and symbolic resources can create a relationship with it, resulting in a sense of continuity and order (De Martino, 1977). For many residents there is a sort of biographic relationship with the condominium, based on a personal history of continuity with the place. The high-rise has become a part of their personal history creating a cognitive, physical and affective connection. A clear example of that is represented by Rasul:

“I am here since 1992; I was one of the youngest in 1992. The Hotel House was quiet, everything worked, and there was the porter 24 hours a day. Now we created a committee formed by Senegalese, Bangladeshi, and Pakistani: there is everybody. We formed a good group to control the ground floor and the entire condominium. We started to talk with the municipality. We want totally to change the Hotel House. We will succeed. If I listen to some bullshit related to the condominium I'm getting angry. I did almost twenty years here and I do not allow anybody to ruin it: twenty years is a history!” (Rasul, 29 years-old, Senegalese man, Hotel House resident).

In but a few years, thanks to a job market with low unemployment^{viii} and to the wide availability of bank loans, a large majority of migrants bought the flats where they lived (see above). This new kind of settlement differentiates this place from other similar places in Italy, which are

mostly places in which most residents are in a ‘transitory’ space-time where the movements of people overtake, rather than coexist with, re-territorialisation and home-making processes (Zorbaugh, 1929; Vianello, 2006). This transition has been strongly supported by the gradual settlement of migrant families. Residential stability and ownership of flats contributed to the material and symbolic home-making (Brooks-Gunn et al., 1997; Sampson et al., 2002). Indeed, the increasing territorial settlement of migrant families seemed to favour a major responsibility for their ‘home’, as Saber, a young father of two children, attested:

“You become more serious when you have a family. Before marrying, when you were alone, nothing matters. With a family, you care, because you think about your children’s future. I don’t think about me, I don’t care, I don’t need to protect myself, I am a warrior. But now I have to protect my sons, for their future.” (Saber, 42-year-old, Tunisian man, Hotel House resident).

A sign of this new liability is the creation of a residents committee from different ethnic backgrounds. Its aim is to force authorities to listen to their voice and to protect the condominium as a place of settlement of families and workers against drug dealing, institutional abandonment and stigmatisation. This is well highlighted by the words of Antonio:

“We want the serenity; we want those people to get out of our way. We get peeved a lot. For too many years Hotel House was not considered a place to defend, this is the truth. Authorities maybe thought that, considered that there were some criminals, it should be better to attract others in such a place. But now we pay for that, because some of them have established a presence and it’s not easy to uproot them. Now we have to be determined, because otherwise it would be like shouting but not solving the troubles. We cannot do a lot of things, but we have to speak about that, authorities have to listen to our voice” (Antonio, 65-year-old, Italian man, Hotel House resident).

The residents’ committee organised meetings and public manifestations, such as a protest parade in front of the city hall. The local mosque played a great role in this mobilization (Cancellieri, 2013). Khalid, the manager of three shops on the ground floor, stressed that this mobilisation has also had the purpose of preserving the image of the mosque:

“Here there is a mosque; there are people who go there to pray. There was fear that these drug problems in the ground floor arrives in the local newspapers and we must take action to do something to save our rights, our families, our children, and, above all, for the mosque. Here there is a mosque and people outside may think: ‘they are all the same, there is a mosque and, as a consequence, there are drugs!’” (Khalid, 36 years old, Pakistani, Hotel House shopkeeper).

The immediate consequence of this mobilisation was the confinement of drug dealers in a well-bounded condominium area, around one of the two bars, followed by the closing of that bar for drug trafficking. However, a few days later, the place was abandoned by the local institutions. As often happens in these cases, the mobilisation was driven by a minority of the condominium’s inhabitants (mainly owners or long-terms renters) and lasted only a short time because, as underlined by Small (2004), community participation encounters great difficulties to sustain itself over time without external support.

Nevertheless, the constitution of the committee was an interesting dynamic which demonstrated that being subjected to the same exclusion processes can create a common living experience that can be used to rally people together in collective ‘homely’ identification and mobilisation (Baumann, 1996). In this case, it was more important to share the characteristics of being apartment owners, having a family or a specific sense of place than, for instance, to come from the same country. This reveals ‘the threshold-crossing capacity of home to extend and connect people and places’ (Ralph and Staeheli, 2011, p. 518). Evidently, home-making practices can play a role in empowering and interconnecting subjectivities. Through this struggle over the space, the local inhabitants have tried to ‘be subjects not objects’ and to defend a place where they can restore ‘dignity denied [to them] on the outside in the public world’ (hooks, 1981, p. 42). Spivak (1988) spoke about ‘strategic essentialism’: home can be a place, always at risk, through which you can connect people and try to rebuild your power.

6. Conclusion

The ideas of placelessness and detachment from place, which seem to be the essential features of the modern condition, conceal the fact that the experience of mobility is inflected with continuous gestures of attachment (Ahmed et al., 2003). The case study of this multicultural high-rise is a clear example of how home-searching is a basic trait of human nature. Migrants produce ‘home’ both by imbuing domestic spaces with their own memory and meaning and by creating public and collective spaces characterised by ‘homely relations’, whereby they produce material and symbolic resources. Our case study reveals the importance of having a part of the

world where what you do has some effect and some weight (Jackson, 1995). This is particularly relevant for populations, like migrants, whose ‘spatial rights’ (Cancellieri, 2014) are usually denied and considered ‘out of place’ (Cresswell, 1996).

Home-making is an emotional and multisensory process that involves the ‘immersion of a self in a locality’. The home ‘intrudes’ upon the self through the senses, defining ‘what one smells, hears, touches, feels, remembers’. Equally, the self penetrates the home. This characteristic of ‘home-making’ puts the reflections about ‘home’ at the centre of the emotional and affective turn that have characterised humanities and social sciences since the mid-1990s (Thrift, 2004, Davidson et al., 2005; Smith et al., 2009). The paper also reveals the ‘dark side of home’, because the social density of the home-making practices also favour strong forms of social control, particularly relevant for women and young people.

The process of self-exclusion and *enclavism* is strongly reinforced if ‘outside’ there is an alienating environment where their voice and the possibility of making and taking place is largely restricted (Phillips, 2008; Cancellieri, 2013). There is a risk of a double closure, one from inside and the other from outside. This shows the interconnection between home-making instances and structural vulnerability and the necessity to analyse the construction of ‘home’ in relation with the outside. At the same time, the paper reveals that the process of home-making can produce new intercultural identifications based on the same living place. Indeed, the continuity of home-making practices in the Hotel House also favour a major responsibility for residents’ ‘home’ which resulted in the constitution of a committee, composed of inhabitants coming from different countries, with the aim to protect the condominium against drug dealing, institutional abandonment and stigmatisation. This intercultural ‘homely’ mobilisation reveals the threshold-crossing capacity of home.

From this perspective, home is a plural and conflictual field of action that can reinforce social exclusion but can also open new interconnections. Therefore the paper invites scholars to go beyond the celebration of mobility and nomadism against a bounded and regressive conception of ‘home’ (Massey, 2003, 2005) for conducting research on the ambivalence and struggles related to home-making practices. In contemporary cities, increasingly characterised by difference and diversity, the paper, in particular, suggests the need to do research on ‘progressive’ home-making practices that can play a role in empowering and interconnecting new and multiple identities (Massey, 1994).

References

- Ahmed, S., Castaneda, C., Fortier, A. M. and Sheller, M. , eds (2013). *Uprootings/regrounding: questions of home and migration*. Oxford: Berg.
- Bachelard, G. (1958). *The Poetics of Space*. (Boston: Beacon Press)
- Baumann, G. (1996). *Contesting Culture: Discourses of Identity in Multi-Ethnic London*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)
- Bisharat G.E. (1997). Exile to compatriot: transformations in the social identity of Palestinian refugees in the West Bank. In A. Gupta & J. Ferguson, Eds. *Culture, Power, Place. Explorations in Critical Anthropology*. (Durham and London: Duke University Press)
- Borchard, K. (2013). Homelessness and Conceptions of Home. In M. Kusenbach and Krista E. Paulsen, Eds. *International Perspectives on Culture, Identity, and Belonging* (Frankfurt am Maim: Peter Lang).
- Brettell, C. (2006). Introduction: Global spaces/local places: Transnationalism, diaspora, and the meaning of home. *Identities*, 13, 3, 327-334.
- Brighenti A. M. (2010). On Territorology. Towards a General Science of Territory. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 27, 1, 52–72.
- Brooks-Gunn, J., Duncan, G., & Aber, J. L. (eds.). (1997a). *Neighborhood poverty: Context and consequences for children (Vol. 1)*. (New York: Russell Sage).
- Bourdieu P, (1991). *Language and Symbolic Power*. Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Cancellieri, A. (2013). *Hotel House. Etnografia di un condominio multi-etnico*. (Trento: Professionaldreamers)
- Cancellieri, A. (2014). Giustizia spaziale: una nuova prospettiva per gli studi sull'immigrazione?. *Mondi Migranti*, 1, pp. 121-138.
- Cancellieri, A. and Ostanel, E. (2015). The Struggle for Public Space: the Hypervisibility of Migrants in the Italian Urban Landscape. *City*, forthcoming.
- Cancellieri, A. and Saint-Blancat, C. (2012). La scrittura religiosa della città. In: A. Cancellieri and G. Scandurra (eds.). *Tracce urbane. Alla ricerca della città*. (Milano: Franco Angeli)
- Chapman, T. and Hockey, J. (eds), *Ideal homes?: Social change and domestic life*. London: Routledge.
- Chu, J. Y. (2006). To be 'emplaced': Fuzhounese migration and the politics of destination. *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 13, 395-425.
- Cresswell, T. (1996). *In Place/Out of Place: Geography, ideology and transgression*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Davidson, J., Bondi, L. And Smith, M, eds, (2005). *Emotional Geographies*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

- De Martino, E. (1977). *La fine del mondo*. (Torino: Einaudi)
- Dear MJ and Wolch JR, eds. (1987). *Landscapes of Despair: From Deinstitutionalization to Homelessness*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press)
- Deleuze G. e F. Guattari (1980). *Capitalisme et schizophrénie 2: Mille plateaux*. (Paris: Éditions de Minuit)
- Dordick, GA (1997). *Something left to lose: personal relations and survival among New York's homeless*. (Philadelphia: Temple University)
- Dovey, K (1985). Home and homelessness. In I. Altman and CM Werner (Eds.), *Home environments* (New York: Plenum Press)
- Dupuis, A. and D. Thorns (1998). Home ownership and the search for ontological security. *Sociological Review*, 46, 1: 24–47.
- Escobar, A. (2001). Culture sits in places. Reflections on globalism and subaltern strategies of globalization. *Political Geography*, 20, 139-174.
- Giglia, A. (2009). *Housing Solutions in Mexico City. Cultures of Inhabiting and Urban Spaces*. (Paper presented for the Housing Conference, Glasgow 2009)
- Goffman, E. (1961). *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*. (New York: Doubleday)
- Gotham, K. F. (2003). Toward an understanding of the spatiality of urban poverty: the urban poor as spatial actors. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 27, 723-737.
- Haesbaert, R. (2001). Le mythe de la déterritorialisation. *Géographies et Cultures*, 1, 40.
- Harvey, D. (1989). *The Condition of Postmodernity*. (Oxford: Blackwell)
- Heidegger, M. (1971). *Poetry, language, thought*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. (2007). *Religion and Social Justice for Immigrants*. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press)
- hooks, b. (1981). *Ain't I a woman?* (Boston, MA: South End Press)
- Hoskins, J. (1998). *Biographical Objects: How Things Tell the Story of People's Lives*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Ingold, T. (1995). Building, Dwelling, Living: How Animals and People Make Themselves at Home in the World. In Strathern, M. (ed.), *Shifting contexts: Transformations in Anthropological Knowledge*. (London: Routledge)
- Jackson, M., (ed.), (1995). *At Home in the World*. (Sydney: Harper Perennial)
- Kärholm, M. (2012). *Retailising space. Architecture, retail and the territorialization of public space*. (London: Ashgate).

- Ley, D. (2008). The Immigrant Church as an Urban Service Hub, *Urban Studies*, 45, 10, 2057-2074.
- Lofland, L. (1998). *The Public Realm. Exploring the City's Quintessential Social Theory*. (Chicago: Aldine Transactions).
- Mandich, G. and Rampazzi, M. (2009). Domesticità e addomesticamento. La costruzione della sfera domestica nella vita quotidiana. *Sociologia@DRES. Quaderni di Ricerca*, 1, 1-30.
- Makovicky, N (2007). Closet and Cabinet: Clutter as Cosmology. *Home Cultures*, 4, 3, 287 - 310.
- Mallett, S (2004). Understanding Home: A Critical Review of the Literature. *The Sociological Review*, 52, 1, 62-89.
- Massey, D.B (2005). *For Space*. (London: Sage)
- Massey, D.B. (2003). Some Times of Space. In O. Eliasson (eds.) *The Weather Project*. (London: Tate Publishing).
- Massey, D.B. (1994). *Space, place, and gender*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press).
- Nowicka, M. (2006). *Transnational professionals and their cosmopolitan universes*. Frankfurt: Campus Verlag.
- Nowicka, M. (2007). Mobile locations: construction of home in a group of mobile transnational professionals. *Global Networks*, 7, 1, 69-86.
- Paerregaard, K. (2008). In the footsteps of the Lord of Miracles: The expatriation of religious icons in the Peruvian diaspora. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 34, 1073-1089.
- Phillips, D. (2008). The problem with segregation: exploring the racialisation of space in Northern Pennine towns. In: Dwyer, C. and Bressey, C. (eds) *New geographies of race and racism*. (Hants: Ashgate).
- Ralph, D. and Staeheli, L. (2011). Home and Migration: Mobilities, Belongings and Identities. *Geography Compass*, 5: 517-530.
- Rappaport, J. (1981). In Praise of Paradox. A Social Policy of Empowerment over Prevention. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 1, 1-25.
- Relph, E. (1976). *Place and Placelessness*. London: Pion.
- Rossi, P. (1989) *Down and Out in America: The Origins of Homelessness*. (Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press)
- Saint-Blancat, C. and Cancellieri, A. (2014). From invisibility to visibility? The appropriation of public space through a religious ritual: the Filipino procession of Santacruzán in Padua, Italy. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 15, 645-663.

- Saint-Blancat, C.. and Schmidt di Friedberg, O. (2005). Why are Mosques a problem? Local Politics and Fear of Islam in Northern Italy. *Journal of Ethnic and Migrations Studies*, 31, 6, 1083-1104.
- Sampson, R.J., Morenoff, J.D. and Gannon-Rowley, T. (2002). Assessing Neighbourhood Effects: Social Processes and New Directions in Research. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28.
- Simmel ,G. (1949). The Sociology of Sociability. *American Journal of Sociology*, 3, 254-61.
- Simonsen, K. (2013). In quest of a new humanism: Embodiment, experience and phenomenology as critical geography. *Progress in Human Geography*, 37, 10.
- Small, M.L. (2004). *Villa Victoria: The Transformation of Social Capital in a Boston Barrio*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press).
- Smith, M., Davidson, J., Cameron, L. and Bondi, L. (2009). *Emotion. Place and Culture*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Spivak, G. (1988). Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography. In G. Spivak, *Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*. (London: Routledge).
- Strüver, A. (2004). Boundaries under Construction: Linking Body Politics to Space. *Espace, Populations, Sociétés*, 9, 1.
- Thrift, N. (2004). Intensities of feeling: towards a spatial politics of affect. *Geografiska Annaler*, 86, 57-78.
- Tucker, A., (1994). In Search of Home. *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 11, 2, 181-187.
- Vianello, F. (ed.) 2006. *Ai margini della città. Forme del controllo e risorse sociali nel nuovo ghetto*. (Roma: Carocci).
- Virilio, P. (1991). *Lost dimension*. (New York: Semiotexte).
- Zorbaugh, H.W. (1929). *The Gold Coast and the Slum: A Sociological Study of Chicago's Near North Side*. (Chicago: University of Chicago).

Notes

ⁱ The term re-territorialisation, originated by Deleuze and Guattari (1980) and systematised by Raffestin (1984), underlines how actors express themselves in urban space by using and giving meaning to specific 'territories'.

ⁱⁱ ISTAT data, 2010 (<http://demo.istat.it>).

ⁱⁱⁱ The data refer to the period in which I conducted research.

^{iv} I conducted 40 interviews with residents (75%), local shopkeepers (15%) and holiday-makers (10%) that work or have their second home at the Hotel House. The people interviewed are 68% men and 32% women and come from 10 different countries (mainly from Senegal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Italy and Tunisia).

^v All names are fictitious to preserve privacy and anonymity.

^{vi} The Hotel House's administration council, a fundamental power place of the condominium, has seen several administrators and councilors come and go over time. Since the mid-2000s, the role of migrants in the council has gradually increased.

^{vii} This percentage is very low considering that in the same period (2009), the majority of migrants living in Italy were women (51.3%).

^{viii} Before the economic crisis of the late 2000s.