



## Migration, Culture and Identity Making Home Away

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Helen Underhill (eds.)

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Palgrave Macmillan launched the *Politics of Citizenship and Migration* series to promote a novel avenue of research on all aspects of migration and diaspora studies, focusing primarily on the politics and economics of migration. Also, this interdisciplinary series decenters the Western scholarship on migration and decolonizes migration research by contextualizing the non-western and African diaspora's lived experience of migration, resettlement, and integration in a new destination. Yasmine Shamma, Suzan Ilcan, Vicki Squire, and Helen Underhill's *Migration, Culture and Identity: Making Home Away* appear in this series to explore displaced people's homemaking experience.

This book denotes homemaking as a process and site of resistance, focusing on contemporary homemaking-in-migration literature, lived experiences and testimonies, and racialized-colonializing policies. *Home* is a multifaceted phenomenon that takes subjective meanings and requires a multidimensional approach to understanding the meanings. Building on the "Lost and Found?" project, this book is a composition of scholarships from editors and writers with diverse academic backgrounds. Utilizing the phenomenological approach, this nine-chaptered book records Syrian, Palestinian, Sudanese, and Nigerian people's lived experiences of migration and resettlement. It is a beacon for those who want a holistic understanding of displaced people's dynamic homemaking experiences.

In the first chapter, Helen Underhill, Vicki Squire, Yasmine Shamma, and Suzan Ilcan provide the preface of the book and outline the extensive scholarship the book has to offer. Dawn Chatty delves into the experiences of Palestinian and Syrian exiles to zoom into the meaning of home in the second chapter. The duality of home makes it both a physical and social construct. For exiles and forced migrants, homemaking involves three stages: initial (emergency), transitional, and permanent homemaking (p. 12). Homemaking for the Greater Syrian refugees is based on community networks, generosity, and hospitality, which are different from Western-centric asylum practices. The Ottoman millet system shaped the ethos of homemaking among the Greater Syrian refugees. This ethos is evident in Watfa's homemaking narrative, where this Palestinian refugee contextualizes the importance of place, commu-

nity, and shared experiences in creating a sense of home in a completely new territory, Syria. Generosity and hospitality also create a sense of belonging among displaced Sudanese men in Jordan. In chapter three, Zoë Jordan uses Antonsich's notions of "place-belonging" and "politics of belonging" to contextualize Sudanese refugee men's homemaking experience. Care plays a vital role in shaping displaced men's and hosts' experiences during political upheavals. In hosting relationships, care creates a sense of interconnectedness and support within and between groups—hosts and refugees. Sudanese refugee Samir's experience illustrates the benefits of living in host relationships, where refugees feel safe and protected. These men receive care through financial assistance and emotional support, creating resilience in hostile environments. Hosting sometimes overlooks cultural ideals, contrasting with the idealized homes of the refugees. However, hosting environments may contribute to some displaced men's autobiographical experiences, making hosting arrangements desirable living conditions. The political interplay creates favorable conditions for displaced men, which is based on the idea that people with a shared background would have a shared understanding of how to act in ways that are acceptable to each other (p. 45).

Unlike homemaking in Middle Eastern countries, displaced people undergo precarious conditions during their homemaking process in the UK and Canada. They face intersectional discrimination due to their racial and ethnic backgrounds. The restrictive immigration laws and exclusionary policies affect the conventional homemaking process. Chapters four, seven, and nine take us through the narratives of displaced people struggling to settle in the UK and Canada, particularly in London and Ontario. Rumana Hashem, Paul Dudman, and Thomas Shaw interviewed displaced people from various countries and archived their oral histories to document their identity struggles and the precarity these displaced people go through. Recording, archiving, and analyzing displaced people's life narratives significantly challenge official narratives of displacement. Also, the "moving memories" concept portrays the complexities of the homemaking experience, with undocumented displaced people's positive and negative emotions towards their home countries and experiences of discrimination and despair during the homemaking process. Although some individuals received warmth and support, the narratives illustrate homemaking as paradoxical. The meaning of home to the displaced is relational, complex, and multiple, and displaced peoples' experiences of home are affected by their everyday life struggles over identities and politics of belonging in the host country (p. 58). Ilcan and Squire describe the difficulties Syrian refugees face during their migratory process in chapter 7. State policies in the UK and Canada impact refugees' resettlement and homemaking experiences. Despite government and private schemes for refugees, they experience limited access to housing, employment, and education and face discrimination. The absence of emotional support and the loss of family members exacerbate their hopelessness. However, for some, migration creates new opportunities, with employment opportunities and children's education being driving forces. Marissa Quie and Titi Solarin also explore the complex and fluid concept of home in chapter nine. For Nigerian migrants in the UK, the homemaking process goes through the UK's exclusionary bureaucratic process. Together with subjective experiences, Nigerian migrants' familial ties play vital roles in the homemaking process. Despite facing oppression in their home country and discrimination in the UK, the Nigerian migrants struggle to settle in a new home and maintain intergenerational ties. However, the old and the new generations have contrasting values and ideals, with opportunities driving the former and addressing discrimination driving the latter. This trend sheds light on the fact that the struggle during the homemaking process is different for different generations. Nevertheless, every Nigerian maintains a sense of belonging and ties to their home country. They struggle to maintain a dual identity as a Nigerian and a refugee. Some of them experience the

cruelty of detention, restriction, and deportation. Deportees experience a form of double abandonment: recipient communities in Nigeria are highly likely to stigmatize them as “failures” (p. 186).

Homemaking and creating a sense of belonging can also be understood through archival art and the ecoglobalism process. In chapter five, “Archival Home Making: Reference, Remixing, and Reverence in Palestinian Visual Art,” Helen Underhill provides an overview of how archival art can be a means of homemaking. This art provides anecdotes for new generations of displaced to visualize the idea of home and criticizes traditional institutions’ definition of home. Different types of art, such as paintings, installations, and video works, underscore the self-historicization process. Also, the *Qattan Foundation’s activities* and focus on the arts highlight cultural expression as key elements of personal and political claims to home and homeland (p. 87). Genevieve Guetemme also provides a nuanced exploration using Syrian artist Diala Brisly’s artistic lens in chapter six. Guetemme analyses Brisly’s collection of light, plants, and photographs from the past, which constructs a therapeutic environment during the difficulties of exile. Brisly’s experience depicts displaced migrants’ duality of connecting the present with the past, creating resilience amidst uncertainty. A place can also be claimed as a home through the ecoglobalism process, as analyzed by Yasmine Shamma in chapter 8. Syrian refugees in Jordan nurture gardens and connect to the environment, which works as resilience, a sense of belonging and hope, and is reminiscent of their home country. They build connections with the earth and create homes, challenging the traditional notion of homemaking.

Put together, *Migration, Culture and Identity: Making Home Away* offers a new dimension to understanding migrants’ and refugees’ homemaking experience. Its major strength lies in its interdisciplinary nature, with ideas and research of anthropologists, archivists, demographers, sociologists, political scientists, and litterateurs. Their exploration expands the horizon of migration research, incorporating first-hand resettlement practices and experiences. Moreover, using the qualitative approach and extensive interviews with displaced people unearth the subtlety of migratory experiences. Incorporating different methods of understanding homemaking experiences provides new avenues for exploring migration and settlement practices. I highly recommend this book to scholars, students, and practitioners interested in getting a holistic idea of displaced people’s experiences and needs. The book can also be helpful to policymakers in addressing gaps in existing migration laws and policies. However, the book focuses solely on forced migration, neglecting economic migrants’ resettlement experiences. Also, it fails to address the displaced people’s origin countries’ role and the impact of bilateral relations in navigating migration and homemaking practices. Despite these negligible weaknesses, this book stands out among migration studies literature and provides a nuanced exploration of cultural and political dimensions of homemaking amidst forced migration.

## References

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