EDITORIAL

Embracing home-making in displacement as constitutive to the fabrication of the city

Seemingly regardless of the ubiquity and timelessness of the phenomenon that homes may be made in displacement appears extremely difficult to accept for many politicians and policymakers, as well as for some scholars. Yet, as we live today in a highly globalised world – of which transnational migration is intrinsically part – a mere juxtaposition of 'home-making' on the one hand and 'displacement' on the other, cannot remain unreviewed or unchallenged. As two of the editors of the volume *Making Home(s) in Displacement* (2022)*, we find it therefore of great importance to unpack for an audience of housing scholars what continues, particularly in policy, to be seen as a contradiction. In our view, not unsettling this contradiction would do injustice to the lived experiences and multiple subjectivities of too many home-makers and house-builders in the world across space and time.

Unpacking a contradiction
In the (Western) common imaginary, 'home-making' and *'*displacement' are sometimes seen as antithetical terms that define the opposites of a dyad. Whereas in the common sense 'home-making' is characterised by a positive undertone that implicates addition and construction – to create a place to dwell, to create relationships, to build a consistent life environment –, *'*displacement' is understood in a rather subtractive way that relates to the idea of disaggregation and loss of the roof over one's head (the house), the native home, of bonds, of wealth, of security. "Home is where the heart is" recites a popular saying, appointing the 'home' to the emotional sphere beyond the mere physicality of the house. 'Home' thus recalls stability, rootedness and comfort, a psycho-spatial condition where identity and community develop and where bonds and relations are fostered and cultivated. As the counterpart of the dyad, *'*displacement' evokes movement, instability and uprootedness. Displaced people are typically seen as underprivileged, moved by need or emergency, living at the mercy of events, and eventually reduced to passive recipients of policies and conditions dictated by the places they temporarily transit through, or eventually settle in – if they ever get to reach a final destination.

However, looked from a closer distance, these interpretations are rather simplified and stereotypical, affected by generalisations and cliches that romanticise the 'home' on one hand while demonising *'*displacement' – and displaced people particularly – on the other. What happens if we reconsider the terms of the discussion by looking at home-making and displacement as collaborating processes that together contribute to the formation of our everyday built environments? We have dedicated quite some time now visiting this perspective, starting with organising the conference *Displacement and Domesticity since 1945* held in Brussels in 2019, and afterwards, by compiling the volume *Making Home(s) in Displacement,* marking two steppingstones of this exploration that relies on the experience brought by an interdisciplinary group of scholars and professionals and variety of cases from different parts of the world. At the time, these intellectual activities arose in response to the so-called European refugee 'crisis' of 2015 and, indeed, there is much to be said about the *poverty* of the response from European States and institutions, in particular when compared to the way the Ukrainian people have been welcomed over the course of last year.

Broadening the scope of house-builders and home-makers: spatial and political implications
With our book we sought to bring to the fore the spatial decisions, strategies and practices of those whose impact certainly resonates globally on what is often called the 'age of migration'. Ultimately, our effort to challenge and broaden the canon of architectural histories and theories concerns establishing a legitimate position within architectural and housing scholarship for all those house-builders and home-makers that have hitherto been marginalised by it. This objective resonates with recent feminist architectural histories of migration, for instance, by

Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi (2018)**, that aim to destabilise and decentre certain historiographical presumptions, for example, by attributing architectural authorship to non-experts, such as migrants who "may have lacked signature, but not significance". Therefore, we intended to confront the presumption of powerlessness and inertia attached to the labels of 'migrants' and 'refugees', categories with which many people subsumed under them would not identify (often precisely for this reason). The challenge in this approach is to avoid romanticising – and even fetishizing – the spatial agency of those who have been historically, socially and politically marginalised, for it is clear that displaced persons must often operate in very precarious circumstances. Instead, it was our intention to acknowledge the significance (and, indeed, signatures) of migrants' and refugees' contributions to the built environment and to the production of everyday (material) life. Equally, by including contributions that unpack this topic in a variety of geopolitical and historical contexts, written by a diversity of authors, we aimed to liberate the bibliography in current architectural scholarship and challenge the continuous (re-)production of Eurocentric academic knowledge in this field.

(His)stories collected from across the globe – including Europe – indeed proved to challenge the conventional view of 'home' as a static and permanent entity, bringing to the fore its transnational, multiple and even mobile dimension. The shattering of the idealistic view of the 'home' as a timeless unity gave space to an understanding of it as also a site and practice of gendered and racial violence, asymmetrical power relations, privatisation and commodification, and colonial socialisation and oppression. At the same time, it broadened our understanding of 'displacement', even embracing the idea that one can be in a condition of displacement without any physical movement away from a place. Accordingly, homelessness can even occur with the avail of housing, as having a house is far from being equated to having a home, which is to say to inhabit, partake and appropriate the place of where one is living. The experience of the pandemics over the past three years has accelerated with dramatic undertones the reaching of this understanding.

Home-making in displacement as city-making
Just like two lenses of the same goggle, to look at life in the city through 'home-making' and 'displacement' together proved to offer a more all-around, nuanced and layered view. The meaning of 'home' as the collector of basic rights – the right to stay put, to dwell and to root – emerged as complementary and not antagonist to the right of movement and search for suitable life conditions linked to the idea of 'displacement'. Learning to appreciate the manifold forms of home-making and displacement as processes that actively contribute to constructing our cities and everyday living environments, is key to a broader understanding of housing too. Only when we fully embrace the manifold ways displaced people actively contribute to and challenge the city, its spaces and houses, its rituals and rhythms, and only when we understand urban citizenship as something that can be transnational and multiple, we can plan, govern and design housing in ways that are fully inclusive.

As home-making and displacement go beyond the intimacy of the house, the next time we pass by that ethnic grocery store in the neighbourhood, we can give a thought about how it works as a home-making element for a particular ethnic community, as it enables – for example – to connect with its origins by providing what is needed for reproducing recipes, smellscapes and tastescapes from the motherland. Yet, at the same time, that shop has become part of our everyday landscape, it is perhaps the same that saved our Christmas dinner when we forgot an ingredient and all other shops were closed for holidays, or provides us a sense of security staying open until late while we are coming home at night.

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* https://lup.be/products/139084
**https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/structural-instability/208707/writing-with/