INTRODUCTION

Bringing the Migrants' *Voices* to the Home–Mobility Nexus

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This book looks at how people on the move, in particular migrants and refugees, experience home or the lack of it, and attempt to transform their everyday dwellings into meaningful places for living. Mimi Sheller and John Urry's (2006) invitation to appreciate a multiplicity of mobilities in order to better understand today's world informs our conceptual engagement with different ideas of home and more specifically our interest in investigating migrants' experiences of home on the move. The 'new mobilities paradigm' provides a conceptual lens through which to consider not only the physical movement of people and goods (Cresswell 2011; Sheller and Urry 2016), but also the multiple ways in which social and cultural notions and practices travel across places, not least the connection between social and spatial mobility. Embracing the mobilities paradigm does not mean, however, that we can ignore how *motility* – that is, the capability for moving (Kaufmann et al. 2004) – is just an ambition or a necessity that is out of reach for many, as opposed to real capital for setting one's life in motion. The millions of migrants and displaced people embarking on perilous journeys (Burrel and Hörschelmann 2019) to find better economic opportunities and seek sanctuary remind us that the very act of mobility is not open to all, or at least it is conditional for most (Kallius, Monterescu and Rajaram 2016). People's mobility is often restricted by national and international regulations and migration policies (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013). The recent global health crisis further reminds us that travelling and moving across borders cannot be taken for granted, even for those

who used to enjoy relatively unrestricted freedom of movement (Adey et al. 2021). As Tim Cresswell (2021: 52, 59) stresses, Covid-19 has put mobility 'under siege' and 'invigorated localism'.

Our understanding and conceptualization of home are also inspired by extending the idea of mobilities (Urry 2000) to scholarship on home and migration (Ralph and Staeheli 2011; Boccagni 2017; Miranda-Nieto, Massa and Bonfanti 2020). Urry's (2000) invitation to challenge the understanding of societies as spatially bounded entities, and Liisa Malkki's (1995) and James Clifford's (1997) call that we look at culture beyond the idea of 'roots', notably complicate the rooting of home in a particular place or space. Instead, home can be 'routed' elsewhere: it can be, and sometimes it has to be, re-imagined and renegotiated on the move (Rapport and Dawson 1998; Ahmed et al. 2003; Boccagni et al. 2020). It does not always follow that migrants and refugees can experience an effective (re)making of home across different places and spaces. In fact, as the life stories gathered in this book demonstrate, struggle is a common feature of the ways those on the move understand and experience home (Jansen and Löfving 2011).

But what do *we* mean by home? Although every chapter in this book approaches home from a specific conceptual angle and engages with different corpora of research, it is worth highlighting that our conceptualization of home is informed by a wide range of disciplines, including environmental psychology (Hayward 1997; Moore 2000); phenomenological scholarship on the perceptions of home (Dovey 1985; Kusenbach and Paulsen 2013); critical geography (Blunt and Dowling 2006; Brickell 2012); social and cultural anthropology (Hage 1997; Miller 2001; Cieraad 2006; Lenhard and Samanani 2020); sociology (Mallett 2004; Boccagni and Kusenbach 2020), and urban and housing studies (Jacob and Malpas 2013; Hadjiyanni 2019). These accounts have variously unpacked the critical dimensions of the home, and the relationalities embedded therein. Some have stressed the entanglement of the material and the symbolic in recovering the emotions that any person's home displays and conveys (Blunt and Dowling 2006; Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik 2013). Others have contended that home entails the interrelated feelings of security, familiarity and control (Boccagni 2017), but also the feeling of community and a sense of possibility (Hage 1997). Finally, many have emphasized the significance of multiple scales – that is, the private and the semi-public, the national and the transnational – in investigating people's meanings and practices of home (Al-Ali and Koser 2002; Walsh and Näre 2016). Last but not least, for ethnographers like the authors of this volume, home can become a fruitful research setting for attempting an exercise in social knowledge in which the distance between hosts and guest, informants and

researcher can reveal the microphysics of power that any domestic space contains and conceals (Boccagni and Bonfanti 2023).

The Book's Approach: What's Distinctive about Using Life Stories as a Method for Research and Dissemination?

As Charles W. Mills argued (1959: 3): 'No social study that doesn't come back to the problems of biography, of history and of their intersection within a society, has completed its intellectual journey.' Towards the end of long-term team ethnography, the authors of this volume were drawn to the use of life stories as a research method, a method we found invaluable in making our research available to the public. First collected in biographical interviews, then interpreted through textual analysis, the life stories presented herein rely on a narrative approach to qualitative research and the communication of the results. While the archaeology of life storytelling has a long history (Erben 1998), we subscribe to Renato Rosaldo's (1989: 11) view that 'stories are inherently analytic, and … in the sequence of reasoning, analysis has narrative form'. The telling or narration of a life story involves nuance, depth and feeling that other modes of representation lack.

However, storytelling's theoretical potentials are not neutral: they are important conceptually and cognitively, and always need to be situated in specific cultural and political contexts. As Hayden White (1980: 9) reminds us: 'narrative is an expression in discourse of a distinct mode of experiencing and thinking about the world, its structures, and its processes.' Furthermore, life stories like those in this volume are twice-told narratives, which dwell in between data collection and analysis. Reviewing the field 'from a continental view' (which also informed the work of the authors based in Europe), Daniel Bertaux and Martin Kohli (1984) contrasted two trends in writing life stories on the basis of the collection of oral autobiographical narratives. The first, widespread in German and Anglo-Saxon academia, focused on the symbolic in social life and meaning in individual lives. The second, more common in Romances language-speaking countries, considered interviewees as informants, whose life trajectories might uncover patterns of social processes. This edited volume offers a combination of both approaches, which were developed in situ by each ethnographer with their informant(s), and afterwards by each author, in conjunction with their own analytical skills, to understand and re-narrate another's biography.

Given the variation in basic theoretical orientations and substantive issues, rather than concentrating on unattainable singular standards, in the next section, we make explicit the disciplinary contributions that

provided a theoretical base for our grounded explorations in the field and the life accounts provided by our interlocutors. While it is focused on the lived experience of an individual through the life course and across spaces (from transnational journeys to commutes in the city), *Finding Home in Europe: Chronicles of Global Migrants* turns the informative into the narrative, the everyday into an epic, and invites the readers to appreciate the diversity of perspectives within the singularity of experience. Because of their particularity, we find that these life stories are profoundly evocative of the human condition. Like Walter Benjamin forewarned (1968: 90): 'A story is different. It does not expend itself. It preserves and concentrates its strength and is capable of releasing it even after a long time.'

Building on Oral History

As Margaretta Jolly informs us (2012), a logic of convergence between oral history and life-story sociology had been mounting in the twentieth century. Citing historian Paul Thomson and sociologist Norman Denzin, Jolly maintains that four paradigmatic revolutions have occurred in the conception of biographical narrative over the past fifty years across the humanities. The key terms of her temporalization – that is, memory, subjectivity, interpretation and digitalization – are inscribed in a deeper genealogy of how collective remembrance is formed, preserved and reproduced through the circulation of (auto)biographical memoirs: recalling one's life or recollecting another's, with spoken words being put on written paper (Maines 2001).

As anticipated above, we maintain a distinction between life history and life story throughout this volume. Life history and life writing research use life story, whether in the form of oral history, personal narrative, autobiography or biography, as a primary source for the study of history and culture (Abrams 2016). As Brian Roberts (2002) put it more simply: the life story is the narrated story by the author/teller, whereas the life history is the later interpretive, presentational work of the researcher. Life stories capture the relation between the individual and society, the public and private experience, the local and the national, and the past and the present. Unlike tales, therefore, life stories provide us with the opportunity to understand how individuals position themselves in broader social and cultural realms (see Kothari and Hulme 2004). Although we, as authors, did intervene through editing the autobiographical accounts of the people we interviewed, and selecting excerpts to rebuild a coherent narrative (Wilmsen 2001), we tried to maintain our 'listening attitude' (Back 2007) in the chapters that follow. In most of the cases, we re-engaged our interlocutors by asking them to

read and approve the final manuscript (Shopes 2003). If history at large considers events in chronological order, life history sees the passages that a person goes through in their life course in relation to the surrounding culture. Life stories challenge our received notion of authenticity and subjectivity: where is the boundary, if there is one, between fact and fiction?

In order to appreciate how this blurry distinction between life history and life story operates within a constructivist and collaborative approach (Chappell and Parsons 2020), the next section follows the itinerary that took us from oral data collection in the field to assembling this volume. Through an interdisciplinary literature review, we reconstruct our theoretical itinerary, focusing on three successive moments: the naissance of oral history, the development of life writing across the social sciences, and the interpretive turn in anthropology. Our choices are partial and partisan (as well as being based on individual expertise and preferences), but they establish the necessary context for understanding the methodology behind our collection and co-writing of the life stories collated here.

Collective Memory and (Auto-)Biography

Throughout this book, we conceive of life stories as a method and a result of ethnographic research, seeing them as a process and a product of the collaborative generation of knowledge and the dissemination of this knowledge. In a general sense, oral history provides a means of inviting someone to tell their story of their past, a past time, a past event and so on. However, one's individual story is always intimately connected to historical conditions and thus extends beyond one's own experience.

Following Alessandro Portelli (1998), we argue that what makes oral history special in comparison with other forms of qualitative interviews is the archaeology of the genre and the inherent tension between individual memory and collective history. While the physiological functions of memory are proper to the cognitive sciences, the mechanism of filtering and interpreting past events is at the heart of the discipline of history. The term 'history' itself derives from the Greek and can be loosely translated as 'enquiry': nothing is plain or taken for granted in the act of remembrance.

Herodotus and Thucydides are credited as being the first historians because of their chronicles of the wars that raged through Athens in the fifth century BC. With different styles and political stances, both authors produced written accounts of those military and political events based on a variety of sources, with a heavy reliance on oral testimonies. According to Maurice Halbwachs (1997 [1925]), the goal of history is to provide a comprehensive, accurate and fair portrayal of past events, which allows for the representation and comparison of multiple perspectives, integrated

within an encompassing account. In contrast, collective memory focuses on a single perspective that is peculiar to one social group, nation or community. Consequently, a person's life history describes past events that were lived by that person but that are also associated with the values and biases specific to the group(s) to which the person belongs.

Oral history contains this tension between the singularity of voice and the plurality of experience, as well as the dilemmas that have besieged historiography as a result of the rise of the *nouvelle histoire* (Burke 1990). Since then, history has integrated the approaches of the nascent social sciences in analysing the past, enquiring through documents to discover the mundane material conditions as well as the ordinary practices and the imaginary shared by people in certain places and times (Braudel 1981). The attention to small scales and minor subjects, the settings and authors of those *petits récits* (small narratives, as opposed to the grand narrative of heroes and immanent political forces) that the microhistory movement brought to light in the 1970s (Ginzburg 2014), have sealed the gap between history and sociology, and found their convergence in the biographical approach to understanding the past as well as the present. Acknowledging their interdisciplinary appeal, we see life stories at the crossroads of the humanities and social sciences: history to begin with, sociology and anthropology to follow.

Oral History, Life Writing and the Social Sciences

Since the late nineteenth century, anthropological research has sought to archive history by means of the recording of personal stories: A.L. Kroeber, Franz Boas and their disciples engaged in what was then known (with a patronizing call for preservation) as 'salvage ethnography', that is, taking stock of the practices and folklore of Native American cultures threatened with 'cultural extinction', often as a result of modernization (Clifford 1989). Pioneering audiovisual reproduction techniques were employed for the first time, with the aim of heritage conservation: namely, early photographic cameras and Dictaphones (a machine trademarked by Alexander Graham Bell and used to record speech for playback or to be typed, a predecessor to the tape recorder). We can find evidence of the same urge to memorialize the past, and keep history alive for the benefit of future generations, in the countless 'mass archives' that have sprung up worldwide since the First World War (Ritchie 2014).

Likewise, in the early twentieth century, a range of academic work focused on the lives of people at the margins of Western industrial society and on the different means by which these lives could be explored, highlighting the interpenetration of biographies and the sociological

imagination (Thomas and Znaniecki 1918; Mills 1959). Michael Erben (1998) noted that this was the emergent breakthrough within the Chicago School (and the oral history studies in 'cultures of poverty', as devised by Lewis 1961), which was followed by key works such as *Documents of Life 2* (Plummer 2001 [1983]) and *Time and Narrative* (Ricœur 1984) that invited a new generation of scholars to commit themselves to understanding lives as recounted by the subjects themselves (whether in narratives, diaries or correspondence). As Liz Stanley (1993: 2) argues:

> Lives are an interesting place to be, partly because there are so few areas of work in the social sciences and humanities which do not involve auto/biography in one form or another, but perhaps mainly because life writing ... mounts a principled and concerted attack on conventional views that science can be objective.

Life stories contributed to an epistemological revolution within the social sciences that gives back legitimacy to the subjective and authorship to the narrating self (Ellis and Flaherty 1992). Being personal and social, we recognize the uniqueness of an individual's life story, as it is given by that individual in relation to both him- or herself and their audience: this may result in an account that is 'partial' (like any other, to different degrees) but nonetheless valid in representing what is valuable to the individual. Moving away from the deceptive pretence of illustrating 'exemplary lives', life stories reveal how people understand the lives they conduct, their notions of self and the implications that arise from the interaction with the ethnographer, who is actively engaged in the textual co-production (Shopes 2003).

Two concurrent breakthroughs contributed to this new epistemological horizon and its political ramifications (and linkages with literature): the so-called 'interpretive turn' in anthropology and the second wave of feminism between the 1970s and 1980s.

Interpretive Anthropology and Life Stories

In the aforementioned *Time and Narrative* (1984: 75), Paul Ricœur affirms that living practice precedes narratives: 'the story "happens to" someone before anyone tells it.' Still, experience can be comprehended and communicated only once it is storied. Following Martin Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology, Ricœur advocates for an 'existential analysis of human beings as entangled in stories' and talks about 'a potential story or (as yet) untold story' to account for the 'pre-narrative quality of experience'. The narratological approach to the human experience resonated with the paradigmatic change that swept through cultural anthropology in the 1970s.

Influenced by Max Weber and Ricœur himself, Clifford Geertz, in his seminal work *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973: 5), poignantly argues that 'man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun' and that any culture is a complex assemblage of texts that constitutes a web of meanings. These meanings are enacted by actors themselves (the 'natives') and then interpreted by anthropologists in the same way as a text is read by literary critics: incorporating into the analysis the many contexts that make meaning possible (and different) for everyone involved. Rather than the prevalent ethnographic practice of observation from afar, Geertz encouraged the engagement of the anthropologist in their ethnographic account. If culture is 'an ensemble of stories we tell ourselves about ourselves' (Geertz 1980: 121), no other technique could be more fitting in this collaborative quest for meaning than eliciting life stories from informants. The interpretive turn in anthropology became mainstream with the publication of *Writing Culture* (Clifford and Marcus 1986), in which the editors applied literary theory to textualize ethnographic fieldwork, while making explicit the political implications that any social encounter and cultural product entailed. Along with an expansion of the idea of literary text (to include cultural 'minorities' and postcolonial literatures), women's genres of writing and various forms of personal narrative started to be recognized as legitimate modes of research.

At that time, the second wave of feminist initiatives (which mushroomed in the United States and then spread across the Atlantic and worldwide; Hokulani, Erickson and Pierce 2007) paved the way for women's liberation from multifaceted social oppression by giving legitimacy to their self-narratives. Life stories began to be seen as appropriate techniques for theory-building in the social sciences, as well as effective tools for the political claims made by their tellers, in their marginal voices (Maynes, Pierce and Laslett 2008). The intersubjective sharing of personal accounts in women's circles strengthened their gendered contestation, with arguments based on authenticity and struggle (like their manifesto *Sisterhood Is Powerful,* Morgan 1970). Even so, considering life stories as primary sources for the exploration of women's lives made life history research a feminist method for the broader and deeper understanding of gender consciousness, historically and in the present (Geiger 1986).

The narrative approach that coincided with the public rise of multiculturalism and feminism was further transformed by gender and queer studies from the 1990s, in particular by sexual minorities who contested their public invisibility by literally 'coming out' through narratives (Edwards 2012; Gorman-Murray 2009). Furthermore, the revolution of those pioneering feminist auto/biographies did not remain confined to women's spaces. New currents in sociology and anthropology (Bertaux 1981;

Tedlock 1991) were bolstered by those 'personal thus political' experimentations that viewed life stories as a unique challenge to debate key themes within the method of oral history that are far from having been solved. These ongoing methodological challenges include, for example, the reliability of biographic accounts, the reflexivity of the researchers, the adequacy of narrative knowledge and the representativeness of personal cases. In his comparative overview of the genre, Vincent Crapanzano (1984: 954) provides a succinct closing statement:

> The life history is more 'literary' than 'scientific' – and yet more 'scientific' than 'literary'. It mediates, not too successfully, the tension between the intimate field experience and the essentially impersonal process of anthropological analysis and ethnographic presentation.

As we transit from a review of the literature that informed the genesis of this book to the methodology that resulted in the present collection of migrant life stories, we follow in the footsteps of those pivotal works and acknowledge that the use of life history has become ever more common, even in adjoining fields such as the geography of migrations, challenging any set notion of mobility and fixity (Rogaly 2015). Not only can personal narratives be navigated as 'interactive texts' that provide the coordinates for retracing people's itineraries in time and across spaces (Miles and Crush 1993); migrant stories themselves appear to be moving, shifting our understanding of events and mobilizing other senses and sensibilities (Thomson 2011).

As we acknowledge that oral history is a process and product, and that the personal comes out as political, this volume emphasizes that life stories are powerfully and irreducibly *en-gendered*: any auto/biographical form is narrated and composed via an articulation of gender as embodied and experienced by tellers and writers. In following these tenets, we not only pay homage to the theorization of feminist writing as a means of liberation for women (Gluck and Patai 1991); we also take inspiration from the crucial encounter with the racialized difference of Black feminism, in which, 'historically, black women have resisted white supremacist domination by working to establish homeplace' (hooks 1990: 385). Throughout this book, 'home', in its many manifestations, is often the place where life stories are delivered, but it is also a metaphor for one's existential mobility: in the passing of time during one's life course and in one's shifting location as a gendered subject within relations of nurturing and/or constraints. As critical geographers have amply explored (see Brickell 2012 and 2020), whatever its realization, in private or public space, home is always a place for some to control and for others to resist. A more conceptual discussion of the importance of gender in the life stories collated in this volume is

given in the short introduction to Part II. However, the gendered nature of 'domopolitics' (Lonergan 2018) runs across all chapters, criss-crossing with other social axes of difference as these became salient in the lives (and chronicles) of global migrants trying to find a home in Europe.

Writing Life Stories of Home and Mobility

Given the conceptual and methodological background provided in the previous sections, how did we transition from life story as a process of doing narrative fieldwork with our participants to a product that rendered and interpreted the biographical accounts received? Before appearing in the form of a written text drafted by the researchers, life stories have been told by the social actors themselves within the interview frame; thus, their realization is comprised of two successive moments, intimately interwoven and yet distinguishable in time and manner (Plummer 2004; Abrams 2016; Kulick 2017). To discuss how our interlocutors experienced (and communicated) their efforts at homemaking in various conditions of mobility, we need to step back and look at the ethnographic production of those life stories. First, we must consider the oral exchange that permits a sufficiently trustful sharing of knowledge between enquirer and respondent, listener and teller (Anderson and Jack 1991; Back 2007). Then, we account for the writing endeavour that strives to maintain the authenticity of others' spoken words while delivering them in a communicable format to a reader (Wilmsen 2001; Fernandes 2017).

Reconstructing the interactional practices behind the textual product reveals the complexity of biographical accounts. As it is repeatedly reiterated, this book subscribes to the story-focused rather than life-focused approach in using biographical narratives as the core of ethnographic work. Following James L. Peacock and Dorothy C. Holland (1993: 368):

> Rather than 'life-history', we prefer the term 'life story'. By 'life story' is meant simply the story of someone's life. For our purposes, 'story' is preferable to 'history' because it does not connote that the narration is true, that the events narrated necessarily happened, or that it matters whether they did or not.

Life stories are not equated with narrative as fiction, but the spaces of subjectivity and imagination that articulate life writing are hinted at (Portelli 1998; Jolly 2012, Chappell and Parsons 2020). Who holds narrative accountability in our work then? As argued in the next section, the chronicles of home and mobilities included in this volume emerged thanks to the mutual engagement of the ethnographers and their informants, of

interviewers and interviewed. While both parties had their own stances, interests, modes and aims of narration, as each chapter shows, all the authors shared the risks and responsibilities of 'storying experience' (Schiff, McKim and Patron 2017). Although we recognize that our informants were the more vulnerable in going public (Seligman 2000), it is on the basis of this reciprocal trustworthiness that our work proceeded, in a pact of trust that we invite the readers to enter (Russell 2002).

The Narrative Event and Degrees of Collaboration

'What is an event?' Robin Wagner-Pacifici (2017) asks, analysing the 'political semiosis' of happenings that disrupt the everyday and resonate in a mediatized form, be it as a picture, a piece of news in the press or any other narrative that frames the occurrence within a discourse. Building upon Michel Foucault's theorization (see Revel 2002), a historical event is recognized as such once it is shaped into a discursive element: part of a communication process in which the meanings and the import of incidences are made, contested, amended and transmitted.

Several scholars have debated the circularity of historical and discursive events, and the subtle power stakes that render a lived episode relatable, transforming experience into a narration. In particular, the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein and the forerunner of ethnomethodology Harold Garfinkel contributed to our conceptualization of life stories and our appreciation of how our participants reflect on home. Wittgenstein focused on language performance as the foundation of social constructivism: how we use language in everyday interactions informs our understanding of reality (Wittgenstein 1953). Garfinkel elucidated the notion of 'ac-countability': individuals subscribe to shared interactional codes to make their actions intelligible in the context in which they participate (Garfinkel 1967). Both authors converge on the general view that, if one's life events assume a significance when emplotted, inserted in a narrative frame, the story becomes a story when conveyed to others. It is on this passage from historical to discursive and then narrative events that we wish to focus our attention.

With the development of sociolinguistics, and its application in folklore studies, the ethnography of communication, and particularly of speaking, started to consider the specific narrative event of biographical interviews. Following Dell Hymes (1974: 69): 'an oral history interview is a communicative event, not comprehensible apart from social interaction, and intimately bound up with the changing values and institutions of a changing society.' More precisely, according to Hymes, an ethnographic interview is

a 'speech situation' (codified within the fieldwork itself) that sets the coordinates for a 'speech event' to take place: for the ethnographer to ask and the informant to respond, for the former to elicit, the latter to narrate. As Crapanzano (1984: 955–56) argued:

> Life history is the result of a complex self-constituting negotiation. It is the product (at least, from the subject's point of view) of an arbitrary and peculiar demand from another subject – the anthropologist. … The interplay of demand and desire governs much of the content of the life history.

While the politics of interviewing is inherently replete with inequality in oral history research (insofar as one logs the other's accounts), analysing the performance of a biographical interview also necessitates a consideration of the gestures, mimicry and modes of narration that make every single collection of life stories unique (Di Leonardo 1987). As Lynn Abrams (2016: 1) clearly puts it: 'Oral history interview is an event of communication which demands that we find ways of comprehending not just what is said, but also how it is said, why it is said and what it means.' Appreciating life history as a multi-layered research technique that starts with an oral interaction and culminates in a written text, we are drawn to question the degrees of collaboration, authorship and even dialogism that this method entails (Kulick 2017). In the wake of Mikhail Bakhtin and language semiotics, all discourse and social life tend to be seen as inherently dialogical: no speaker speaks alone because our words are always partly shaped by our interactions with others, past and present.

Furthermore, life writing requires a triangulation of voices and points of view, combining aural and textual proceedings. Our interlocutors' personal accounts were themselves based on interpersonal happenings and culturally biased modes of speech (Franceschi 2006). To what extent our skills of questioning and listening (Back 2007) culminated in an ability to recast our interlocutors' life tales in an interpretive narration has yet to be judged by our readers. As part and parcel of what ethnography is – literally the writing of another culture – life storying took the contributors to this volume from the field to the desk. This is where the life stories we collected took shape as chapters: told by our participants and then compiled by us, amid a multiplication of authorial perspectives (Clemente 2012).

From Orality to Text: Tale-Telling between Fact and Fiction

In the passage from the biographical interview to its rendition as a life story, from a recorded transcription to an interpretative analysis, the ethnographer is required to both edit the transcripts and curate the life accounts

of which the ethnographer has been the recipient (and trusted custodian). In relation to depositing oral history interviews in archives, Carl Wilmsen (2001: 65) debates how problematic 'accuracy' may be:

> Accuracy is perhaps the central goal of editing oral history transcripts … The assumption is that if we are faithful to recordings, we will convey the narrator's meaning fully and accurately. And yet how does editing affect the meaning that is ultimately produced in the interview transcript?

The original motivations of the narrator might be challenged not only by editing transcripts for the sake of understanding beyond the mystery of the narrative event (oftentimes translating into English to communicate to a broader audience; Ricœur 1984), but also by pulling out excerpts from longer quotes. Besides, while our collection of recorded interviews (including audio recordings, verbatim transcripts and photographs) was stored in the project's digital archive, recasting our informants' life narratives required an even greater assumption of risks and responsibilities on our part (Schiff, McKim and Patron 2017). As Sujatha Fernandes (2017) argued, observing the rise in contemporary modes of digital storytelling, 'curated stories' are often harrowing accounts of injustice that may move us deeply and serve utilitarian purposes as well as being part of advocacy projects. While Fernandes is concerned with how we might reclaim storytelling for the purposes of transformative social change, she recognizes the foundational moment of retelling life stories as an ethnographic craft that allows for the complexity of individual experience.

By using the rhetorical devices of lumping, splitting and recasting one person's storyline to construct a chapter, all authors tried to deliver both the voice of the first-person narrator and that of their interlocutor, to various extents, depending on multiple factors (such as ethnographic intimacy, mutual language proficiency and contingencies of the interview setting). In the transition from the interview to the life story, not only did we come to terms with a different medium, audience and genre (from oral to textual, listener to readership, life narrative to ethnographic analysis); we also interrogated ourselves in relation to the partiality of life stories and their ultimate aim. In a provocative article, David Zeitlyn (2008) enumerated three different life writing modalities taken up by anthropologists, who may work as 'ghost-writer, biographer or hagiographer'. These three types of life writing serve as extremes within which sits his life writing, described using a metaphor drawn from visual anthropology: the idea of the silhouette. 'A silhouette stems from physical optics just as a photograph does. … Such silhouettes have an empirical basis that, unlike photographs, do not disguise or dissemble their artefactuality and incompleteness' (2008: 158).

The many conversations that we, the authors, had with our informants in our years of fieldwork might not add up to a conventional life story that goes straight from tape transcripts onto the paper; however, across their variations, our life stories may be described as producing anthropological silhouettes: 'less complete than a biography, but demonstrably based on an individual, and honest about its limitations and incompleteness' (Zeitlyn 2008: 168).

The biographical snippets composing our chapters serve to reconstruct the life accounts of our interlocutors as much as they allow us to reflect on our research interests: primarily, homemaking as experienced under conditions of mobility. In the following chapters, the reader will meet our interlocutors, but also come to realize the partiality of our storytelling, which could only account for a fragment of the complexity of each biography and for a selection of the arguments we discussed with the interviewees over repeated interactions.

The title of this volume contains the ambivalence inherent in the word 'chronicle', which the *Oxford Dictionary* defines as either, 1. A factual written account of important or historical events in the order of their occurrence, or 2. A fictitious work describing in detail a series of events. While the Greek etymology of *kronos* (lit. 'time') is maintained in both meanings, it is the craft of writing such work that lies between factuality and fictionality. The specificity of life stories as a process and output of ethnographic research calls for sharpening our comprehension of facts and fictions, and how these are related to temporality, of lived as much as accounted experience. As Portelli (1998: 23) wrote: 'Oral sources are credible but with a different credibility. The importance of oral testimony may lie not in its adherence to fact, but rather in its departure from it, as imagination, symbolism, and desire emerge.' As a result, the closer the relationship between interviewer and interviewee, the more articulate the communication of feelings, impressions, memories and yearnings. The interviews on which the book is based were framed to follow people's biographies, from birth to the present day, allowing for the non-linearity of life accounts. Life-course interviews allow us to hear about people's memories, stories, perspectives and interpretations in their voices, words and styles, offering 'felt-life' access to their worlds. 'Felt life' is a term borrowed from Henry James that is used to refer to the most authentic understanding of another's life story, the closest we can get to knowing not just what happened, but also what life felt like for our interlocutor. Following Portelli further (1998: 31), oral history tells us 'not just what people did, but what they intended to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did'. The biographical interview is an opportunity to travel back in time with the narrator and have them take a look around and describe

it for those who were not there at that time. As a case in point, when oral data were gathered in people's homeplaces back in their countries of origin and from the significant others they left behind, travelling to those places actually allowed the ethnographers to experience the sense of having already been there: in the houses and neighbourhoods their informants used to live in and had vividly depicted. Life stories thus bring to the surface experiences that the general public and scholars did not confront first-hand, but can better understand through the secondary interpretation of the subjects' lived accounts, through those chronicles to which the authors bore witness.

At Home on the Move: Chronicles of Times and Spaces

Notwithstanding the peculiarity of each of the following chapters, they all subscribe to a tradition of collecting migrant life stories that has a long-established pedigree, as Ben Rogaly (2020: 47) contends. Following Alistair Thomson (2011: 25–26): 'not only do oral testimonies … have the potential to actually challenge the categories and assumptions of official history; they can reshape the ways in which migration is understood as individual migrants and their descendants struggle with labels of identification.' According to Richard Rodger and Joanna Herbert (2007: 7), while the individual experience is anchored in social history, life stories value the uniqueness of the subject and produce a specific knowledge that is 'attentive to the diversity of experience'. Although oral history has always provided faces and voices for the grand narratives of migration studies (and tried to compensate for the invisible suffering in refugee studies, cf. Habib 1996; Eastmond 2007; Ghorashi 2008), life stories have been increasingly recognized as a critical source for understanding 'new mobilities' without becoming oblivious to older ones (Cresswell 2010). Cultural geography has been particularly fond of exploring migrant life accounts with a view to expanding the discipline's grasp of movement and locality (Lawson 2000). Within the geography of migration, place has been conceptualized as both a lived locality (Massey 1993a) and a larger imaginative space between mobility and fixity in which people can understand themselves (Burrell and Panayi 2006). The testimonies of lives in the city across time, considering people's life courses, the household cycle and their group history (Gardner 2002), have been key to revealing the interplay of social class, gender and racialization in a world that is growing more plural (Rogaly and Taylor 2016). New studies on the 'cosmopolitanization' of habitus and experiences have also relied significantly on life stories, arguing for the connection between emotions and localities beyond the taken-for-granted equation of home, homeland and a sense of belonging (Jones and Jackson 2014).

As the life stories collected in this volume demonstrate, our interlocutors constructed their own biographical narratives involving people and places, times and events, notions of identity and 'alienness' (Rapport and Dawson 1998; Miranda-Nieto, Massa and Bonfanti 2020). We wish we could argue that this work challenged the exceptionalism of the migrant figure (Dahinden 2016), but we leave this to our narrators, who think of themselves through and beyond categories, alongside the language politics in which everyday lives are embedded. Also, due to our recruiting procedure (based on nationality or ethnicity, via serendipitous snowball sampling), all of our narrators had a migrant background of some kind (either born or raised elsewhere, speakers of a mother tongue other than that of their current place of residence, or part of a group that is officially foreign in their country of residence). However, in contrast to migration-focus studies, our interviews tried to elicit the interlocutors' reflexivity in relation to their movements and moorings, without necessarily tagging the latter as the equivalent of a certain idea of home that might have been overly sedentarist or westernized (Cieraad 2006; Easthope 2004). Since we conceptualized home as a *locus* and a trope – that is to say, a lived place and a motif of discussion (Blunt and Dowling 2006; Bonfanti and Massa 2020) – we were open to recording both factual and fictional accounts from our interviewees, who alternatively displaced and emplaced their lives across countries, relations, memories and projections (Ahmed et al. 2003; Bennett and McDowell 2012). As we were interested in how people reflected on the meaning of home and practices of home within a multi-scalar and experiential approach (Noble 2013; Jacobson 2009), our guided questions addressed spatial mobilities as well as housing pathways, interlacing people's experience of movement and locality but also their shifting in relation to significant others over the life course (Ralph and Staeheli 2011). At the end of the day, in spite of irreducible differences (or perhaps owing to them), all the life stories of home and mobility that feature in this volume allow us to see the auto/biographic side of people's quest or struggle to put themselves in context (Moore 2000), authoring the plot of their lives so they can be the protagonist of the story they inhabit. It is undeniable that the singularity of each life story as reported in this volume speaks about different migratory experiences and relates to different interpretative frames within the 'mobilities paradigm' (Sheller and Urry 2006; Cresswell 2011). For a detailed account, we invite the readers to familiarize themselves with each part introduction before turning to the relevant chapters: migrants' quest for belonging, their vulnerabilities and their sensorial appreciation of home are the three lenses through which we, as authors, viewed the stories we were told.

Final Remarks: Social Critique in Participants' Voices

'It is perfectly true, as the philosophers say, that life must be understood backwards. But they forget the other proposition, that it must be lived forwards' (Kierkegaard 1843, as in Quist 2002: 80). Taken from the *Journals* written by the Danish initiator of existentialism, this quote reminds us that storytelling's ability to help us make sense of our experiences is also based on the promises it makes to help us navigate the present and orient ourselves in relation to the future. Researching lives by listening to people's stories has proved to be an increasingly broad and rich field in the social sciences, with a proliferation of cases and methodologies (Harrison 2009). In this Introduction, we have given an overview of the studies that resonated most with the biographical approach we developed in the field while doing ethnographic research on home and mobility. From the development of oral history to the 'interpretative turn' in anthropology (Plummer 2001; Crapanzano 1984), from the rise of second-wave feminist studies to the political struggles against colonialism and intersectional forms of discrimination (Roberts 1981; McCall 2005), life stories have been increasingly recognized as credible sources of social critique, which are integral to understanding people's subjectivities as well as the social worlds they inhabit.

Following Umut Erel (2007), who argued that biographical methods are particularly suited to shifting the premises of migration research to foreground the agency and subjectivity of migrant women, in this volume we maintain that our editorial work on the life narratives we collected usefully reveals the self-representations of migrant people and the challenges they confront in the search for home. Integrating the biographical approach into our ethnographic studies of homemaking as experienced by different migrant people on an everyday basis, the resulting life stories are wonderfully diverse and are based on the peculiar collaboration established between scholars and participants (Shopes 2003). Without compromising complexity, we hope to have made life-story research accessible to a broad audience and to have provided our informants with a platform for their voices to be heard in the public space of free knowledge production.

One critical reflection, stemming from postcolonial theories of representation, needs to be addressed. In deconstructing 'the Orient' as portrayed by Western intellectuals, Edward Said (1978: 21) guarded us against any alleged benevolence in representing Others: 'In any instance of at least written language there is no such thing as a delivered presence, but a re-presence, or a representation.' As much as the authors of this book might aspire to leave the floor to their interviewees as narrators, it is the ethnographers' writing that ends up *speaking on behalf of* their informants.

Gayatri Spivak (1988: 63) reiterates this critical point: 'It is not a solution, the idea of the disenfranchised speaking for themselves, or the radical critics speaking for them; this question of representation, self-representation, representing others, is a problem.' While this volume does not specifically build upon Subaltern Studies' perspectives, we remain aware that a 'persistent critique' of the life stories as delivered to us and then re-presented to readers defies simplistic interpretations of 'voice' that are void of ideological features. Following Stuart Hall (1997: 6), our approach to a theory of representation is more *semiotic* than *discursive*, that is, it is more focused on the poetics than the politics of life storytelling. Nevertheless, as all chapters will make explicit, the reciprocity between participants and researchers, in spite of their unequal positioning, in this oral history project is the only answer we can offer to a naïve understanding of the conundrums of representation, and our well-reasoned antidote to giving any 'spectacle of the Other' (Hall 1997: 276).

To conclude, this book takes a step forward from the collective work published earlier by the authors, which was grounded in team research lasting almost five years (Belloni et al. 2019). Responding to Pierette Hondagneu-Sotelo's invitation to consolidate our critical engagement after *Ethnographies of Home and Mobility* (Miranda-Nieto, Massa and Bonfanti 2020), *Chronicles of Global Migrants* contends that the segregating discourses that have arisen in Europe (and elsewhere) codify home and nations as sites of exclusion, but it does so by bringing in the voice of (oftentimes marginalized) research participants. Although the constellations of people whom we call migrants may have fewer resources and tenuous claims to home, it is our wish that the life stories collated in this volume function as 'counter-narratives' (Andrews 2002) and have the power to oppose otherwise simplistic and oftentimes discriminatory views on the journeys of those who come from afar and 'pretend' to live *chez nous*. Building on the lived accounts of people who are seen as on the move and variously struggle 'to turn space into their place' (Boccagni and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2021), this book advocates for the appreciation of stories that travel beyond the personal and provide new frames of reference for tellers, listeners and readers. Although, as authors, we are aware of the 'critique of empathy' that the various entitlements to home claimed by our interlocutors may provoke (Shuman 2005), we defend our standpoint by their side in constructing meaningful homes in the places they have reached because we believe that 'home' can only be such if it fulfils the promise to include, to remain open to life projects as diverse as theirs may be and to offer an equal welcome to all. If lives can only be understood in recounting the past, we are all accountable for making the future happen.

The Contribution of the Book

The scholarship discussed above informs our understanding of both mobility and home and the intersections between the two. *Chronicles of Global Migrants*, however, privileges the voices of migrants and refugees to capture the significance of home in their everyday lives and the ways in which they negotiate home in contexts of mobility. Their narratives powerfully illustrate the complexities of moving between the Global South and the Global North, and the difficulties posed by developing a sense of home on the move.

Along with the singular contributions of each chapter, *Chronicles of Global Migrants* contributes to ongoing debates on the home–mobility nexus in a number of ways. To begin with, this anthology provides an ethnographically rich account of the meaning of home. All chapters explore in detail the multiple meanings migrants attach to the idea of home and how those meanings, and the migrants' experience of home or the lack of it, are negotiated on the move. Research on home, migration and mobility has significantly increased in the last two decades but the meaning of home and how migrants negotiate it on the move are often not engaged with conceptually or are simply taken for granted. As Tom Selwyn and Nicola Frost (2018: 2) rightly point out, 'the term [home] is in danger of becoming unmoored to specific lived realities'. By looking at the diverse ways in which migrants reflect on home and struggle to turn their places of settlement into a home, the authors are not only showing the interaction between home and closely related concepts such as homeland, belonging and even housing; they are also questioning the use of the term 'home' to refer to those analytical categories. The significance of such distinctions for theorizing home can be appreciated in Miriam's life story (chapter 2). Having Italian nationality does not necessarily result in a feeling of being at home in Italy, and owning a house in Ecuador does not necessarily result in a feeling of being at home in Ecuador.

The life experiences of the nine migrants and refugees discussed in this book also call our attention to the need to look at the home–mobility nexus beyond what Malkki (1992) terms the 'national order of things'. Their accounts illustrate the value of mundane mobilities – that is, moving to a different area of the same city – to better understand how the multiple scales of home are re-negotiated. As illustrated by the life story of Yolanda (chapter 6), moving to a different flat within one's building can shape an entire family's sense of home. Being 'forced' to temporarily leave one's room to accommodate an ill father/grandfather can be perceived differently by different family members: as a moral obligation for a mother who wants to accommodate her father and as an act of injustice in the eyes of

her teenage son who was asked to temporarily vacate the only place to which he attached a feeling of home after several months of Covid-19 lockdowns. As Sara Ahmed et al. (2003: 5) contend, 'the greatest movements often occur within the self, within the home or within the family'.

Furthermore, and taking a bottom-up approach, contributors stress the significance of what Jan Wilhelm Duyvendak (2011) calls 'the politics of home' for understanding the home–mobility nexus. As discussed in the context of the life story of Mateos (chapter 5), migrants and refugees' struggle to belong to the places in which they have been settled for years illustrates the tensions between being a 'local' and being a 'migrant', and the hostility migrants and refugees often have to deal with in making a home on the move (Selwyn and Frost 2018). Even those who have lived most of their lives in countries where they have been granted citizenship tend to emphasize their migratory background to stress the extent to which their belonging in the places in which they are settled is contested by 'autochthonous' populations (Duyvendak 2011). Participants' accounts reveal that citizenship certainly facilitates their settlement, further mobility and the making of a home; however, it is only one of the many structural factors that contribute to transforming one's dwelling space into a home. More generally, as Cresswell (2021: 53) emphasizes, mobility is 'entangled in issues of power, politics, and social justice'.

Closely related to the former aspect, contributors complicate the idea of 'domopolitics'. As discussed in Sumant's life story (chapter 8), Sumant has made himself at home in London through the display of his culinary skills and his food. In this case, however, Sumant is not domesticated by the 'Empire'; rather, he has been domesticating the demanding palate of British and foreign gastronomes with the flavours, spices and smells of Indian food. Makda's life story (chapter 7) also shows the power of food in contesting colonial powers and racism. By cooking and selling Eritrean food in London, she is both bringing the flavours of home to London and teaching London foodies to engage with the Black culture she represents.

Chronicles of Global Migrants also shows how the tensions between home and mobility/immobility can be appreciated in both the experiences of those who moved and those who stayed put. The narratives of those who migrated and could not bring their families to their countries of settlement remind us of the multiple difficulties transnational families experience in developing a sense of family, a sense of community and ultimately a sense of home on the move. As the life story of Paola (chapter 9) illustrates, this is the case for elderly parents and grandparents who are left behind with a broken promise of family reunification (cf. Walsh and Näre 2016). However, as discussed in many of the contributions, this is not the end of the story. Migrants are often able to recreate their communities and social

and cultural practices in the societies in which they settle as a strategy for feeling at home in the transnational space.

The emotional sides of home are explored further by some of the contributors of this volume. Priya's life story (chapter 3) not only shows the significance of emotional attachments to culture and family in migrants' attitudes towards home, but also disrupts how high-skilled migrants' feelings towards home are portrayed. Her struggles to feel at home abroad question the assumption that highly educated and affluent migrants move from home to home almost seamlessly (cf. Hage 2005). She has the qualifications and financial resources to travel back 'home' or move elsewhere but instead remains in the Netherlands, feeling that she is stuck. The emotional sides of home are also explored in Aaron's life story (chapter 4). His narrative illustrates both how trauma often becomes a feature of the lives of those fleeing conflicts and how experiences of trauma limit refugee opportunities to remake home in the new context in which they settle.

The value of migration categories for conceptualizing home is questioned by several contributors. Makda (chapter 7) left her country two years before the end of the Eritrean War of Independence against Ethiopia but did not describe herself as either a forced migrant or a refugee. In fact, her narrative details her cosmopolitan life in New York and London and how she has been relying on 'Black' food to create a home on the move. Lucho's life story (chapter 1) further questions the blurred distinctions between so-called 'forced' and 'voluntary' migration and shows how individuals navigate these categories over time. His journeys started when he was forced to leave 'home' at an early age and then resumed once again when attending God's call to support people in need thousands of miles away. Nowadays, such forms of 'forced' mobility equipped him and his family with British passports and the opportunity to move as God decides.

The role of material cultures in migrant's homemaking is a common feature in the narratives discussed in this book. Sumant's practice of remitting Indian food from London to Kuala Lumpur is just one example that highlights the significance of everyday material cultures in sustaining family bonds across the transnational space (chapter 8). By cooking for his brother, Sumant is availing of his Indian cooking skills and reproducing a sense of home within his family's domestic space in London, as well as bringing a piece of his British Sikh home to his brother. The significance of everyday materialities in homemaking can be also appreciated in the context of those living in informal settlements.

Last but not least, this anthology makes an important methodological contribution to the study of home under conditions of mobility. All contributors engaged in longitudinal research to appreciate how migrants and refugees experience home in the places in which they settle and, in some

cases, in relation to the places from which they have been forced to move. As described in more detail above, the collection of the life stories involved long-term ethnographic engagement with research participants. By following the lives of migrants and even becoming 'part' of their lives, not only have we found an extra source of inspiration for exploring the conceptual links between home and mobility; we have also gained a strong sense of what life on the move is about. We hope to encourage scholars in the fields of home, migration, refugees and mobility studies to engage more with life stories as a research technique, as well as encouraging the general public to engage with the lives of these nine 'people on the move'. We hope their life stories inspire us to consider and listen to the voices of those migrants and refugees who are living around us and perhaps trying to make our communities their home.

A Note on Methods and Ethics

Ethnography and Interviewing: A Selective Process

This book brings together the voices of nine migrants and refugees, who vividly describe their experiences of home, and the voices of a multi-disciplinary group of researchers (sociologists, social anthropologists and a specialist in development studies), who connect the migrants' and refugees' narratives to broader contemporary debates on the home–mobility nexus. Drawing on the life histories of nine individuals, this collection of life stories constitutes a critical account of how home is experienced by those who move or are compelled to move. The life stories of Lucho, Miriam, Priya, Aaron, Mateos, Yolanda, Makda, Sumant and Paola were carefully selected from an archive of over two hundred in-depth interviews that we have collected since 2017 as part of the ERC-HOMInG research project based at the University of Trento. This is a collaborative, qualitative and multi-sited social science investigation that examines the interplay between migration and home for migrants and refugees from South America (Ecuador and Peru), South Asia (India and Pakistan) and the Horn of Africa (Eritrea and Somalia) across major cities in five European countries: Italy, Britain, Spain, Sweden and the Netherlands. In the cases of Lucho, Miriam, Mateos, Yolanda and Paola, data were also gathered from family members and friends in their countries of origin.

The nine life stories were selected primarily for conceptual reasons. Following a preliminary analysis of the emergent themes from the empirical material gathered by the HOMInG Project, a number of life stories were proposed by members of the research team. Researchers engaged in an individual and collective reflective process (see Vari-Lavoisier et al. 2019) about

the significance of their empirical material in problematizing questions of home and belonging in the context of migration and mobility. On the basis of an initial, larger selection of life stories, three emerging topics were identified: the migrants and refugees' search for home on the move; the struggles they often face in making their places of settlement home; and the role of food, and food practices more generally, in the making of a home. The final selection of the life stories was guided by several considerations, including reasons for migration, country of origin, country of settlement, gender, and skills or educational degrees. Both people fleeing war and persecution and people moving in search of better job opportunities and qualifications were considered. The selection included three participants from Eritrea (Aaron, Mateos and Makda), two of whom identified themselves as refugees (Aaron and Mateos); two participants from India (Priya and Sumant), who moved as a result of their qualifications and skills as an ITC programmer and a chef respectively; two participants from Ecuador (Miriam and Paola), one of whom (Miriam) is a school teacher who has mostly done low-skilled jobs in Italy; and two participants from Peru (Lucho and Yolanda), one a Christian religious minister (Lucho) and the other a nurse.

Several ethnographic techniques were implemented to collect the life stories. Along with semi-structured interviews, which aimed to capture the participants' experiences of home before and after migration, the five contributors to the book adopted a varied set of techniques to explore the material and symbolic dimensions of home (Blunt and Dowling 2006) in the contexts of migration and mobility (Ralph and Staeheli 2011). To begin with, 'home visits' were conducted in most cases. The domestic space offered a unique opportunity to observe family dynamics, power relationships and the ways migrants and refugees use and appropriate space to transform their dwellings into homes. Furthermore, through visits to their domestic spaces, we were able to gain a better understanding of whether migrants recreate or reproduce ideas or practices from their countries of origin, or the many places they have transited through, in order to feel at home beyond their precarious status of guests in a host environment (Boccagni and Bonfanti 2023). This aspect was significant in understanding the role of objects and material cultures, including housing (chapter 2) and food (chapters 7, 8 and 9), in the ways participants and their relatives circulate ideas and practices of home across the transnational space (Tolia-Kelly 2006; Pechurina 2020).

Beyond the domestic space, the contributors engaged with research participants in a large range of settings, including places of work and worship, 'temporary' places of settlement, food and religious festivals, 'ethnic' restaurants, cafés and street food markets. By 'going along' with participants and sharing time with them in those places, we were able to better

understand the extent to which they create connections with those places (Kusenbach 2003). In fact, by observing participants in the many places in which they spend a significant part of their everyday lives, we learnt about the significance of place (Massey 1993b; Edensor, Kalandides and Kothari 2020), the people and communities around them, and their feelings and attitudes towards home.

Recording, Transcription, Translation and Analysis

After written consent was released by research participants, interviews were arranged and data collection started. With the exceptions of Miriam and Mateos, whose life stories started to be gathered respectively by Paolo Boccagni in 2006 and Aurora Massa and Milena Belloni in 2013, the data collection for this book took place between 2017 and early 2021. All interviews were recorded. Since the collection of the nine life stories involved dozens of interviews and informal conversations, only the material from the main and follow-up interviews was transcribed.

The participant's first language was privileged for data collection when the language matched the researcher's heritage language or when the researcher was proficient in the language. Following this rationale, Spanish was used for interviews with migrants from Ecuador and Peru. This allowed participants to freely use idioms and metaphors to stress the meanings they attach to the idea of home and the ways in which they experience it in the transnational space. English was used as the lingua franca for the remaining life stories; we acknowledge the complex political issues behind this choice (including the postcolonial conundrum for people from South Asia, who often master English as the result of British imperialism, cf. McArthur 2003). Mateos's interview represents an exception since it was conducted partly in Italian and partly in Tigrinya. Mateos has been living in Italy for over twelve years, but his command of Italian is too limited to express in detail his feelings about home and how migration has shaped these feelings. As explained by Massa and Belloni in the chapter, their command of Tigrinya was also limited. Consequently, they decided to rely on their long-term ethnographic engagement with him and indirect description to reconstruct his migration and housing trajectories. In some cases, keywords were kept in the original language and a translation was provided to allow readers to appreciate the rich and diverse ways in which participants reflect on their experiences of migration and home.

The specific analytical angle and its relevance to ongoing debates on home, migration and mobility are detailed in each chapter and were autonomously decided on by the author(s) of each chapter. However, precise guidelines in terms of content and analysis were agreed upon amongst

editors and co-authors to ensure that each life story would connect with the scope and aims of the book. All chapters were peer-reviewed by the editors and the general Introduction of the book was peer-reviewed by the principal investigator of the HOMInG Project, Professor Paolo Boccagni. The editors and co-authors of the book are grateful to all participants for contributing their life stories and dedicating significant time to this research and book project. We also thank Professor Nick Harney for proofreading the whole manuscript and providing insightful comments.

Research Ethics

Ethnographic and oral history data were gathered in line with the ethical standards currently shared by the academic community and detailed in documents such as the pamphlet 'Research Ethics in Ethnography/Anthropology' (Iphofen 2013), distributed by the European Commission, and the latest EASA 2018 'Statement on Data Governance in Ethnographic Projects'. Besides, as the HOMInG Project and its principal investigator are based at the University of Trento, all team members agreed to follow the praxes set by the local Research Ethics Committee, which is also aligned with the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity.

In keeping with such ethical requirements, informed consent was obtained from all participants before the collection of any data. Participants were invited to use a pseudonym for the interviews. Three out of nine participants opted to use their real names, asking to be given personal recognition for their involvement in the research project. In all cases, data was safely stored on a password-protected University of Trento drive.

With some exceptions, the collection of life stories led to enjoyable conversations, often enlivened with food and coffee in either public venues or domestic spaces. The collection of Aaron's and Mateos's life stories proved more challenging due to traumatic experiences of displacement, especially in the case of Aaron, and precarious settlement conditions in the case of Mateos. Distress was also observed in some of Yolanda's interviews, especially when she described the death of her patients and the ways in which the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has affected her family life.

All participants gave written consent to their life stories being published in this volume and, with the exception of Mateos (partly for the linguistic reasons outlined above), all participants read and commented on their life stories. As for the photographic material, most of the pictures used in the book were taken by the chapter's authors, a few others were taken by the interviewees themselves as it is acknowledged chapter by chapter and in the List of Illustrations. All the visual material is published with the participants' authorization.

To conclude, while the authors strived to comply with all procedural requirements to ensure responsible data management, ethics and integrity, we acknowledge that a scientific practice as open-ended, intersubjective and interpretative as ethnography requires that the researcher adopt broad principles to guide their work but also to adapt their efforts on a case-by-case basis (see de Koning et al. 2019). The authors of the chapters thus remain accountable for what is written in the following pages, grounding their credibility not on the pretence that they are speaking on behalf of their informants, but rather on the ethical collaboration that stems from doing oral history with the utmost care and consideration for migrant people and their stories.

The Content of the Book

This book comprises three distinct, interconnected parts: 'Searching for Home' (Part I), 'Struggles at Home' (Part II) and 'Tastes of Home' (Part III). Each part includes its own introduction and three life stories. All chapters provide their own endnotes and references.

'Searching for Home' focuses on migrant attempts to make a home in the transnational space. Following Boccagni's introductory essay, the three chapters presented in this part engage with questions of home and migration from three different analytical perspectives. Luis Eduardo Pérez Murcia (chapter 1) explores how faith-related migration complicates the interplay between mobility and home. Based on the life story of Lucho, a Peruvian religious minister with a British passport who has been spreading Christian values amongst Muslim communities in Manchester since 2007, the chapter questions distinctions between different forms of human mobility and the assumption that attachment to a place called home is both a universal need and a never-ending search. By mobilizing his faith, Lucho is not seeking a place in which to create 'roots'. Instead, he is searching for 'routes' to propagate the moral values of his community of faith and, in doing so, supports refugees in making Manchester their 'home'. The chapter concludes by highlighting how, rather than being fixed in a particular building, city or country, home has become a mobile space that Lucho experiences as a 'journey with God' as long as his family travels with him.

Boccagni (chapter 2) draws on the life story of Miriam, an Ecuadorian-Italian woman in her mid-forties who has been living in Trento, Italy, for nineteen years. A long-term ethnographic engagement with Miriam's migratory experience has allowed Boccagni to provide an in-depth analysis of her changing housing, household and dwelling conditions in both Italy and Ecuador. Miriam's narrative strongly illustrates the intersection

between ideas of identity and belonging, the built environment, especially the multiple dwellings she has inhabited over years and relates to as home, and the more affective dimension of the built environment. Throughout the migration process, 'Ecuador' seems to retain a deeper association with home than 'Italy'. On an everyday basis, though, home for Miriam has less to do with a place in particular than it does with the people in it – most notably, her mother. As she stresses, 'My place is home only if my mother is there'.

Through the life story of Priya, a 32-year-old Hindu woman living in Amsterdam, Sara Bonfanti (chapter 3) highlights the predicaments faced by high-skilled migrants in making a home on the move. Coming of age with a stronger attachment to her adoptive country and a weaker desire to return to her 'homeland' despite her nostalgia, Priya remains in a liminal condition; unable to develop strong bonds with the 'locals', she tries to reproduce a sense of home with 'expat' peers. The ways in which she arranges her domestic objects and enjoys Indian party culture abroad reveal her mixed attachments to places and people, as well as her understanding of social differences among Dutch people with an Asian background.

'Struggles at Home' takes the reflection on the search for home further, recognizing the political issues embedded in both the public and domestic arena. While all people on the move might struggle, to some extent, to feel at home in new locations or under precarious conditions, the contributions in this part explore the critical challenges migrants and refugees experience in transforming their places of dwelling into homes. Following the introductory essay by Bonfanti, who highlights 'the moral and political calls of the life history' method (Plummer 2001), three life stories are examined. Belloni (chapter 4) tells the life story of Aaron, an Eritrean man in his forties living in the Netherlands. While recounting the main episodes of Aaron's life in his own words, the chapter elaborates on the concept of collective 'trauma'. It shows how the idea of 'trauma' provides Aaron with a powerful tool to make sense of his own life story in light of a shared history (i.e. Eritrea's struggle for independence, conflict, the progressive militarization of society and displacement) and allows him to re-establish the markers of his community symbolically and practically. Aaron's attempt to establish an ethnic association for Eritrean refugees in the Netherlands is part of his attempt to overcome common traumas collectively.

Drawing on the life story of Mateos, a man in his forties who has lived in Italy since 2005, Massa and Belloni (chapter 5) illuminate the different facets of what it means to be homeless. While Mateos is actively looking for stable and decent accommodation after multiple evictions in Rome, his experience in different informal settlements shows the importance of

a community bond, a feeling of control – agency – and personal realization to the perception of being at home. As the authors stress, Mateos's homemaking efforts have been fraught with structural factors, such as the lack of housing policies for migrants and refugees in Italy, and individual factors, such as material precariousness, his health and his distance from family members.

Pérez Murcia (chapter 6) elaborates on the life story of Yolanda, a Peruvian caregiver with a Spanish passport who has been living in Madrid since 2000, to explore two interrelated questions: whether and how care work constitutes a homemaking practice deployed by migrant care workers and how the ongoing pandemic shapes their experiences of home. In relation to the first question, the chapter shows that by caring for elderly people and newborns in Madrid, Yolanda has been able to reunite her family, educate her children and gain the respect, admiration and appreciation she needs to feel at home. The making of a home in Spain, however, is not free of complexities and negotiations. Working double shifts, Yolanda has often struggled to look after her family and herself and has had to learn to get used to being surrounded by death in her work. In relation to the second question, the chapter shows how practices of compulsive cleaning and social distancing within and beyond the domestic space have disrupted Yolanda's experience of home within and beyond the domestic space.

'Tastes of Home' provides three examples of the potential and limitations of migrants' food practices in their attempts to make a home in a transnational space. Practices of food preparation and sharing, as well as cooking entrepreneurship, emerged as common features displayed by migrants and refugees in their processes of searching for and making a home. Through food practices, migrants and refugees alleviate their everyday struggles for home and are able to reproduce or even reimagine home on the move. Following Pérez Murcia's introductory essay, Massa (chapter 7) shows how people not only negotiate and influence the meaning of their life, their home and their selves through food, but also transform and invest those meanings with new connotations. Drawing on the life story of Makda, a woman from Eritrea who manages a street-food restaurant in London, the chapter sheds light on the processual entanglement of food, a sense of home and subjectivity in a biographical trajectory marked by intersecting positionalities and multiple relocations in different countries. Furthermore, Massa discusses how foodways and their routes can become the pivot through which people may challenge postcolonial power relationships in multicultural settings.

Focusing on the life story of Sumant, a 44-year-old Sikh man, born in Kashmir, who is a chef in an Indian restaurant and lives in London with his family, Bonfanti (chapter 8) examines foodways that reveal the bifurcation

in diaspora communities. Part of a disadvantaged minority in his native area, his parents' lands were expropriated and Sumant and his brother were sent to study hotel management in Bangalore. He practised as a chef for a few years in Delhi, where he met his future wife Manjit. Desirous of a transnational move to the West, he went to Mumbai and passed a cooking trial to be recruited in London. There, he has climbed the restaurant ladder of prestige and achieved social mobility, shifting to superior restaurants and buying a property for his household. While his memories indicate profound homesickness for affective attachments and nostalgia for familiar landscapes, he is proud to partake in the British Indian diaspora by applying his cooking skills to overcome racial and class inequalities inherent in the colonial legacy of the cuisine he serves and consumes.

Pérez Murcia (chapter 9) explores the intimate connections between food, mobility and home. Based on the life story of Paola, an Ecuadorian woman living in Manchester, Pérez Murcia shows that by cooking, serving, eating, sharing and selling food, migrants are not only evoking memories of previous homes but also actively transforming their current places of settlement into new homes. His analysis reveals that food practices reproduced in the transnational space are often replete with patriotic symbolism. An everyday recipe shared with family in the domestic space of one's homeland to 'simply' nourish the body may be loaded with enormous symbolism and may even become an expression of national identity and patriotism when cooked and shared among the same people in the public space of one's host-land. Overall, the chapter illustrates further how the taste and smell of food have the power to connect memories and practices of home across multiple places and make it possible for migrants to simultaneously experience home as both grounded and mobile.

The book closes with an afterword authored by Russell King. It connects the ongoing crisis in Ukraine, as a result of which millions of people have been forced to leave their 'homes' and are now in the search of sanctuary in neighbouring countries, with the critical themes that emerged from the nine life stories discussed in the book. King not only discusses the multiple inequalities that migrants and refugees can face in their search for home but also how those inequalities shape their daily lives and imaginaries of mobility.

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