



Book Review of
Boccagni, Paolo (ed.)
2023. *The Handbook on
Home and Migration*.
Cheltenham: Edward
Elgar Publishing. pp.
702.

BOOK REVIEW

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HUP HELSINKI
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PRESS

ABSTRACT

The main aim of the recent Handbook on *Home and Migration* was to overcome the case study-based fragmentation of the discussion on homemaking among people on the move, and to elevate it to a substantive thematic, conceptual and theoretical level. This is a unique and ambitious project led by Boccagni and including 74 book chapter authors from all over the world, representing various disciplines and theoretical traditions. The volume consists of seven parts and 53 chapters and covers a wide range of topics under the conceptual umbrella of the home-mobility nexus.

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KEYWORDS:

Migration; Home

TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Tkach, O. 2025. Book
Review of Boccagni,
Paolo (ed.) 2023. *The
Handbook on Home and
Migration*. Cheltenham:
Edward Elgar Publishing.
pp. 702. *Nordic Journal of
Migration Research*, 15(4):
3, pp. 1–4. DOI: [https://doi.
org/10.33134/njmr.998](https://doi.org/10.33134/njmr.998)

Since the pioneering book *Migrants of Identity: Perceptions of 'Home' in a World of Movement* (Rapport & Dawson 1998) came out, home as a lens has entered and spread widely in migration studies. Over the past three decades, many empirical studies of migrants' experiences of homemaking around the world have become the subject of academic debate. The main aim of the recent *Handbook on Home and Migration* was to overcome the case study-based fragmentation of the discussion on homemaking among people on the move, and to elevate it to a substantive thematic, conceptual and theoretical level. This is a unique and ambitious project led by Paolo Boccagni and including 74 book chapter authors from all over the world, representing various disciplines and theoretical traditions. The volume consists of seven parts and 53 chapters and covers a wide range of topics under the conceptual umbrella of the home-mobility nexus. Previously, Boccagni and colleagues (Boccagni 2017; Boccagni, Murcia & Belloni 2020; Miranda Nieto, Massa & Bonfanti 2020; Boccagni & Bonfanti 2023) have compiled comprehensive readers on home in relation to human mobility. The *Handbook* develops previous works under a single title, making it a significant milestone for studies of home and migration, representing the historical, methodological, thematic and conceptual diversity of the study area. The conceptual toolkit of the 'multidimensional and multiscale migrant home' and the concept of 'homing' (i.e. the potential creation of new forms of home in migration) which were developed in Boccagni's previous work (2017) are utilised here as a basis for further empirical research and conceptual argumentation.

A handbook is a specific genre of academic writing and is usually a massive intellectual product that is rarely read from cover to cover, which seems reasonable given its size. Having spent several months in the company of the *Handbook on Home and Migration*, I find it a must-read for scholars who want to gain deep and systemic knowledge of the field, bridging the past and present research at the intersection of home and migration. Part I places the home-migration debate within the conceptual cross-disciplinary dialogue. Discipline-based chapters guide the reader through the history and conceptual development of the migrant-home nexus within anthropology and sociology, refugee and diaspora studies, housing studies and architecture, social history and cultural psychology. Part II addresses political and societal contexts that shape and defy experiences of homemaking in migration. Referring to the multiple dimensions of home, the chapters analyse, for example, the emotional senses and temporalities of homemaking in migration and displacement, as well as settler colonialism and active dwelling as a political act of resistance. I would particularly like to highlight Chapter 12, by William Walters, who coins the concept of domopolitics and eloquently shows how migration is governed by the imagination of the nation as home. Chapters 15 and 16, by Bree Akesson and Jan Willen Duyvendak, respectively, are also powerful contributions, rigorously analysing the politics of domicile and nativism as brutal, war-driven and racist home-unmaking processes that result in multiple forms of home loss and demolition. The careful analysis of the violent and hostile politics of home as a cause of forced migration and as a form of governance over migrant populations is an essential contribution to the debate on diverse experiences of home. Part III moves to the level of lived experience, focusing on a variety of empirical examples of migrant homemaking intertwined with other practices and imaginaries. These include transnational family life; the circulation of care; the development of migrants' housing rights; the material organisation of home; sensory work as a migrant homing process; the construction of home through migrants' memories, rituals and religious beliefs; and migrant homemaking as an artistic practice and discourse. Part III finds sedentarism crucial to homemaking in migration, challenging the predominant

understanding of migrant homes as constantly changing and mobile. For example, Chapter 19, by Dina Mata-Codesal, shows the homemaking role of daily routines for people whose previous home has been destroyed. Part IV is entirely situated within housing and property studies. It analyses migrant and diasporic housing, and co-habitation in reception centres and shared housing. It moreover offers ethnographic accounts of migrants' domestic spaces and possessions, and the migrant home as an assemblage of people and technologies that enable transnational and portable homes. Part V directs the focus through the matrix of intersectional inequalities, examining homemaking in migration through the lenses of gender, sexuality, age, citizenship, education and class, as well as ethnicity, race and access to rights. Part VI is a collection of well-written chapters that present the research methods commonly used by scholars interested in the interplay between home and migration. Apart from one quantitative chapter, this section promotes qualitative methods, such as auto-ethnography, oral history, and visual and participatory methods. Part VII seeks to emphasise the experiences of home and migration in the Global South and East, which is done through the accounts from various continents beyond Europe.

The chapters embrace various types of scholarly writing, including the state of the art or literature reviews, revisions and updates of the recent or long-term research, as well as current original research, thus maintaining a dialogue between different generations of scholars and analytical traditions. Interviews with acknowledged experts in their fields end almost all parts of the book as extremely useful vignettes. The interviewees speak in a more relaxed yet critical manner than in a regular academic paper, discussing their main findings and fostering a better dialogue with readers. They raise questions and uncertainties about their previous long-standing research while generating assumptions that anticipate future work. I find the interview with Barak Kalir (Chapter 17) to be the most conceptually grounded and innovative. He illuminates patriarchy, capitalism and colonialism as the three main critical lenses through which home should be viewed. Kalir proposes the notion of accommodation as an alternative to home, which he criticises, just like integration, as a violent instrument overused by politicians.

No matter how comprehensive the *Handbook* is, it has its rough edges and gaps. The wide variety of genres in which the chapters are written makes the overall discussion uneven. Some topics in the book are covered quite abstractly and are based on previous publications representing the current state of art, while others are elaborated through fresh and vibrant ethnographies, and critical empirical studies. Some works are more theoretically informed, while others remain quite descriptive. Overall, the chapters display a theoretical diversity, including governmentality, semiotics, feminism, deterritorialisation and emancipation from methodological nationalism, the sensorial turn in anthropology, the right to home, and many others. However, there is still a lack of theorisation in many works, which is mostly replaced by a contextualisation or typification of migrant homemaking. I would expect a bolder use of theories that analyse home as a process rather than a particular imaginary or material state or conflict between them. Most of the chapters follow the analytical approach that places migrants in specific categories, such as refugees, and their practices of homemaking in the context of related policies, structures and powers. Looking beyond the opposition between migrants and the state would allow for a deeper exploration of migrants' social connections and co-becoming with other people who also maintain their homes. Finally, I find the allocation of non-Western migration cases to a separate section as a manifestation of methodological nationalism in the structure of the volume. It not only assigns these cases to area

studies but also presents them as specific empirical data that expand our vision of migrant homemaking, while theory-building remains conventionally Western.

That said, given its wide range of topics and genres, the *Handbook on Home and Migration* has every chance of becoming a desk book or a detailed roadmap for researchers from a wide range of disciplines in the social sciences and humanities who are interested in how home and human mobility are intertwined at the levels of policy and everyday life. Its systematic approach will appeal to university lecturers developing their courses in migration and home studies. I believe that the *Handbook* will become an indispensable thematic, theoretical and methodological support and an inspiration for both teachers and students.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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Tkach
Nordic Journal of
Migration Research
DOI: 10.33134/njmr.998

TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Tkach, O. 2025. Book Review of Boccagni, Paolo (ed.) 2023. *The Handbook on Home and Migration*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing. pp. 702. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, 15(4): 3, pp. 1–4. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33134/njmr.998>

Submitted: 14 February 2025

Accepted: 13 March 2025

Published: 30 April 2025

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