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**FEELING AT HOME: MIGRANT HOME-MAKING THROUGH THE SENSES**

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**Abstract**:

This chapter focuses on the sensorial nature of migration and migrants’ homemaking practices. It brings together contributions from Migration Studies and Sensory Studies. More specifically, this chapter builds on phenomenological contributions on the feeling of being at home in order to highlight the central role of the senses in home-making practices in the context of migrancy. Migration, as a fully corporeal and embodied experience, brings about changes in migrants’ sensorial circumstances. In such context, the experience of making oneself at home by migrants and other mobile populations involves the establishment of a series of practices, some of them being highly sensuous. The lived experience of home is linked to the development or recreation of sensuous habitus and sensescapes. The concept of migrant sensescapes captures the ways migrants navigate and relate sensorily, in and with their places of residence.

**Keywords**: senses, home, phenomenology, migrant sensescape, sensuous habitus

**Introduction**

This chapter applies a sensorial lens to the home-making practices of migrants. I aim to expose the sensuousness involved in the experience of home. To do so, I build on phenomenological understandings of the feeling of being at home. I start by considering the sensorial nature of migration itself. Migration is an embodied and entangled experience (Bascuñan-Wiley, 2021), and so are the attempts and experiences of home-in-the-making practised by migrants. The sensorial material is not just sensuous props in the experience of migrating and being a migrant. For instance, the existence of immense traffic of food parcels being packed, sent and received by migrants worldwide accounts for the no-accessory quality of the sensorial experience in migrants’ lives (Mata-Codesal & Abranches, 2017). The prevalence of eating practices and the importance of food in the migrant experience is well documented in the literature (see for instance, Kershen, 2002; Gabaccia, 1998; Law, 2001). Such academic vastness inextricably points to the sensuous work carried out by migrants and diasporic groups[[1]](#footnote-1). Flavours, smells, sounds, colours, tactile experiences, haptic perception, are part of anyone’s experience of home. In the case of migrants, I argue, they become even more crucial, given that migration often involves changing the sensorial milieu where everyday experience deploys. The so-called lower sensesof smell, taste and touch have traditionally not been considered as proper ways to wisdom (Classen, 1999, p.269). However, they hold strong evocative power as they are intimately related to certain memories as well as embodied knowledge and experiences. To better present the topic, I start with a brief presentation of the sensorial turn in anthropology. In particular, I reflect on the possibilities opened up by sensory ethnography to research difficult-to-verbalize sensorial experiences of home. Section two conceptualizes migration as sensorial change, while the next section focuses on “migrant sensescapes”. In the fourth section, home is presented as a kind of sensorial experience. This conceptualization facilitates the analysis of the sensuousness of migrants’ home-practices, including the active work involved in developing sensuous habituation, presented in the fifth section.

**1. THE SENSES IN SOCIAL SCIENCES**

The cartesian division between mind and body, and the subordinated position of the latter to the former, has long dominated Western understandings and scientific approaches to social phenomena. As a result, the senses were not seen as a proper research object for the social sciences till the sensorial turn. This incorporated the senses as a proper object of study for disciplines like history (Classen, 1993), sociology (Synnott, 1993) or geography (Rodaway, 1994). Although sensorial elements were not completely absent in these disciplines -being secondarily or anecdotical present in many research projects-, the sensorial turn encouraged the development of a comprehensive and systematic research corpus specifically about the senses. While the senses have proved to be a relevant object of research for many disciplines, they are still to ripe full potential in migration studies (Bascuñan-Wiley, 2021. p.2).

The sensorial turn has been particularly intense in anthropology[[2]](#footnote-2). It draws heavily from phenomenological notions of experience and perception, where bodiliness and sensory engagement are central to understandings of human existence as necessarily intersubjective, embodied and emplaced (Csordas, 1990; Desjarlais & Throop, 2011). The subject is conceptualized as embodied and entangled with its surroundings in a sensorial manner. Sensorial engagement can be conceptualized as a simultaneous coming in and out of the body. It is in the act of attaching meaning and feeling emotion that sensory engagement becomes such This dynamic iterative understanding overcomes conceptualizations of sensorial perception as a one-off unintentional and unidirectional element. Phenomenological insights into how sensory engagement takes place in the interplay between perception, conception and emotion set the foundation for much anthropological scholarship about the senses.

In anthropology, the sensorial turn has led to the development of two related strands, anthropology of the senses and sensory ethnography[[3]](#footnote-3). The former was, according to Sarah Pink, “a revisionary movement calling for a re-thinking of the discipline through attention to the senses” (Pink, 2015, p.8). Constance Classen’s early works showed how sensory perception is a physical act as much as a cultural one (Classen, 1997 p.401). The sensorial turn has helped us to realize that social relations, place attachment and daily routines -all of which are part and parcel of the experience of home- are bodily enacted. This builds on phenomenological efforts to render the human body, not only as an object for scrutiny but a “locus from which our experience of the world is arrayed” (Desjarlais & Throop, 2011, p.89). The anthropology of the senses has been effective in directing attention beyond visuality to include other sensorial stimuli and to provide insights into what Michelle Rosaldo called "embodied thought" (1984, p.143). These insights are particularly useful to frame the sensuous work carried out by migrants in their *homing* processes.

For its part,sensory ethnographyimplied a call to consider “the possibilities afforded by the senses in ethnographic research and representation” (Pink, 2015, p.3). Sensory ethnography can be understood as an umbrella term including carrying out interviews and other talks while paying attention to the sensorial milieu in which the interview takes place. It also includes ways of directing interviewees’ attention to sensorial elements, usually throughdifferent elicitation forms. This understanding departs from the classic observational/hearing approach to ethnographic work to be able to grasp knowledge and experience difficult to verbalize that remains inaccessible to ethnographic observation or interview (Pink, 2015, p.5) [[4]](#footnote-4). Some authors have argued for the possibilities of carrying out participant perception (García, 2017) and other ways of using the researcher’s body as a research technique (Longhurst et al., 2008). Such methodological consideration builds on the fact that, for anthropological research, it may not be enough (or even possible) to *understand* how others live. Sometimes, a proper venue of research may lie in the ways to try to *feel* how others do (Pink, 2015, p.65). The experience of home lends itself well to be researched under this approach. If we consider home-making practices, only some of the actions undertaken to make us feel at home, secure and comfortable are what Polanyi called “explicit knowledge” (1983). The attempts to feel at home may be strategic. They are articulated, thought of, and therefore, they can be verbalized. However, some other times the pursue of home feelings is not strategic, but more intuitive, with an important corporeal component. Research needs to find ways to facilitate the expression of not so explicit knowledge which is difficult to articulate, in ways that may not be verbal. To do so, we need to carefully consider the potential of sensory ethnography to put forward a new and fruitful methodological approach to inquire about the role of the senses on migrants’ home-making practices[[5]](#footnote-5).

Researching sensorial perception does not only pose a methodological challenge in the data elicitation phase, it also implies representational difficulties. This is particularly the case for sensorial stimuli that are culturally loosely codified like smells. In most Western languages there are none or few words specifically for smells. This can result in a lack of accuracy when discussing or trying to elicit olfactory content in migrants’ home-making practices. Excitingly, there are a few examples of how this representational challenge can be met in the form of incipient and interdisciplinary attempts at experimental mapping[[6]](#footnote-6).

**2. MIGRATION AS SENSORIAL CHANGE**

Migration, in its simplest conceptual form, is the actual moving of bodies through space. It is therefore a fully corporeal and embodied experience, entangled into social, material, and symbolic nets. Migration brings about changes in migrants’ sensorial circumstances. It implies a change in the sensorial milieu, leaving behind a known sensescape while being welcomed (or unwelcomed) by a different one (Bascuñan-Willey, 2021, p. 3)[[7]](#footnote-7). Migrants experience a disruption in the continuity of the sensory world of their everyday experience. Although this holds for any type of migrants, the predisposition towards those sensescapes -present and past ones- may differ among different categories of mobile subjects, such as working-class migrants from formerly colonized areas, refugees, expats, elderly lifestyle migrants or tourists among many others. As sensorial perception is phenomenologically conceived as originating in the interplay between stimuli and reception (Desjarlais & Throop, 2011, p.88), the way in which different groups are oriented towards the former explain their diverging experiences. We can think for instance of the ambivalent relationship with a past home in the case of some refugees or the enjoyment of the cosmopolitan experience in a new city often found in tourists.

Migrating from a rural to an urban area, between countries located in different climatic zones or at different altitudes, brings about a radical change in the sensorial milieu that shapes the in situ corporeal experience of every day. The degree of sensorial difference involved is not always directly related to the travelled distance. Short distances can imply massive changes in sensorial stimuli. This is the case when, for instance, migrating from a rural area to an adjacent big city. On top of climatic and geographical determinants, the socio-cultural circumstances in which mobility occurs also shape the experience of sensorial change. For instance, although tourists may have the same emotional reactions as less privileged groups to sensorial differences, the resources available for each group to support their reactions are different.

It is relevant to note that migration not only implies changes in the existing sensorial stimuli and migrants’ corporeal dispositions. More importantly, migration moulds the ways migrants relate to such perceived changes. The way migrants relate to the experience of their corporeal and sensorial every day in their new places of residence is mediated by their (memories of) previous sensorialities. The Greek students in London interviewed by Elia Petridou (2001) constantly confronted the perceived differences in smell, taste, and other sensorial qualities of English food with their (re)construction of Greek food. It is commonplace in the literature (particularly that on food and migration) that migrants report general feelings of sensory dulling, where sensory intensity is missing in their new places of residence (Bascuñan-Wiley, 2021, p.4-5). This is the case when one of Petridou’s interviewees pointed to the difference in existing sensorial qualities between mashed-potato power packed in the UK or Greece. This is also the case for the other way round, like many studies, again, on food in the migrant experience show when noticing that (the same) “food at home tasted better” (Kneafsey & Cox, 2001, p.11)[[8]](#footnote-8). Anthropologists David Sutton (2001) and Nadia Seremetakis (1994) have made major contributions on how memories contribute to humans’ sensorial engagements, particularly concerning food.

As a result of moving places, migrants often experience changes in their routines, many of which are bodily expressed. The list is long, including changes in walking paces, timetables, food habits, odour normativity, etc. Such group-specific ways of using bodies are what Marcel Mauss named techniques of the body (1973). Migrants are confronted with different bodily praxes. Many will quickly and inadvertently comply with some of them (for instance walking speed) or purposefully put up with specific body appearance and behaviour to avoid being noticed as aliens or subjected to discrimination, as Michael Jackson shows for the case of Sierra Leoneans in London (2008, p.69). Whereas they can consciously confront and resist other bodily praxes, epitomizing them as symbols of identity (e.g. eating habits and clothing being often tokens of ethnic group identity). Two elements with clear sensorial expressions, food and language, are some of those traits maintained long after migration has taken place, tells us historian Donna Gabaccia (1998, p.6).

The migrant experience is particularly suitable to inquire about modes of sensory engagement because of the sensory change brought about by migration. The fact that pre-migration experiences took place in a particular sensescape that is no longer there in migrants’ new quotidian, brings to the front sensorial qualities that were previously taken for granted. As we are all continuously immersed in a constant flow of sensorial elements, once we get used to them, we become unaware of them (Le Breton, 2012, p.99). Migration, by confronting migrants as sensing bodies with different sensorial stimuli, makes absences vividly present. Sensorial changes can be subtle but due to their accumulative omnipresence, they confront migrants with an experience that is perceived as different: a different rhythm of the seasons and its sensorial expression on human and non-human beings, temperature, humidity, the intensity of the light, predominant colours and contours, smells… Some of these changes can be noticed and verbalized, while others may not be easy to express, or even to delimitate (for instance, an unalike quality in the light due to the different amount or type of suspended particles).

**3. MIGRANT SENSESCAPES**

In the last two decades, the concept of sensescape has been used in research to point to the interaction between the sensory body and its surrounding environment (Rodaway, 1994; Degen, 2002). This stems from phenomenological understandings of human experience as mutually constitutive with the world. Similarly to the relational nature of the term landscape, the sensescape, as defined by anthropologist David Howes (2005, p.143), conveys “the idea that the experience of the environment and the other persons and things which inhabit the environment, is produced by a particular mode of distinguishing, valuing and combining the senses in the culture under study”*.* Whether with Howes we start from the cultural commonality instilled into individuals and allow them to engage with the sensorial in their lives, or we follow instead Ingold’s focus on the perceptions of the worlds around us through individually creative interweaving (Ingold, 2000, p.285), the study of sensescapes has provided fresh insights into the lived experience of city dwellers. By focusing on specific sensorial realms, some studies have provided thick descriptions of smellscapes, soundscapes, tastescapes, hapticscapes, auralscapes and so on. Many of these studies have the migrant or diasporic experience and presence as central, providing rich ethnographic accounts of “migrant sensescapes” (e.g. Low, 2013; Rhys-Taylor, 2013).

The notion of migrant sensescapes accounts for the creation of a sensorial milieu due to the new habits, bodily praxes, sensorial presence and normativity brought about in a socio-geographical context due to the settlement of an important number of migrants from similar origins. A paradigmatic example is that of Little Manila in Hong Kong where thousands of Filipino female migrants gather to share food from home (Law, 2001). These migrant sensescapes are sometimes celebrated as festive expressions of lively multiculturality (Rhys-Taylo,r 2013). They can also be conflicting, used as the basis for discrimination and boundary-making between groups. In this regard, it is worth quoting Kelvin Low’s study (2013) about sensorial disagreement and disturbance related to the presence of (certain) foreign workers in the cosmopolitan city of Singapore. The (perception and presentation of the) migrant body is central to this understanding of the sensoriality of migrant sensescapes. The way for the body to be presented stems from specific and embodied body normativity. It includes elements such as where to hang out and for how long, ways of walking and regulation regarding clothing (in terms of colours, but also fabrics, shapes, etc.) or odours (type, intensity, etc.). Trnka et al. (2013) develop the concept of “sensory citizenship” to point to the ways in which the sensory mediates and is mediated by the State and other forms of citizenship, in particular specific normative ideologies that naturalize particular forms of belonging, also in and through the senses. Such normativity does not necessarily stem from actual sensorial stimula. For instance, the migrant is often projected as a smelly body in a deodorized urban environment, while the former is not necessarily smelly nor the latter deodorized (Mata-Codesal, 2018).

This concept of migrant sensescape also helps us to focus on the way migrants navigate and relate sensorily, in and with their places of residence. Within the realm of these migrantscapes, migrants can “let one’s guard down” and “find some sense of security and homeliness” (Jackson, 2008, p.69)[[9]](#footnote-9). This mirrors the main attributes of what the home literature tells us about migrants’ home experience (Boccagni et al., 2020). Being-at-home, no matter the spatial scope or how varied the situations involved, entails a “developed way of being that is marked by a sense of *our own*, […] an intersubjective way of being that is familiar and secure” (Jacobson, 2009, p.356). By focusing on such feelings of familiarity, security and ownness, the experience of home scales up and down. This approach expands the domestic sphere below and above the house: below, to consider the body as the primary home (Ahmed, 1999),[[10]](#footnote-10) and above, to include as large an extension as a neighbourhood, the city and the nation. If the home can be expanded beyond the house, migrants can and do engage in home-making practices encompassing spaces other than their houses. The work by Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo (2017) on immigrant community gardens in LA provides a rich account of city homemaking by migrants through particular sensescapes. The author shows how urban gardens act as home-like spaces for migrants living under precarious or unhomely housing conditions.

**4. FEELING AT HOME: HOME AS A KIND OF SENSORIAL EXPERIENCE**

As Boccagni exemplifies in his much-needed work on the home and migration nexus, home in migration studies holds a three-folded nature, being a description, a metaphor and a concept (Boccagni et al., 2020, p.8). According to this author, the evocative power of home is achieved at the expense of its analytical power (Boccagni, 2017, p.2). Home is a word that can mean many different things, whether “the place where people live, but also the place(s), beings or things they feel that matter(ed) the most, or that they would like to matter the most, for them” (Boccagni et al., 2020, p.1). Boccagni identifies security, comfort and intimacy (what this author encompasses under the broader term of familiarity), and control as the most basic attributes of the home experience (2017, p.7). To achieve such attributes, home (and home-making practices) necessarily implies some sort of regularity (relatively continuous) in time and space. Routines, many of which are bodily performed, are closely related to the basic elements of the feeling of home, i.e. control, safety and predictability, as well as comfort (be this physical or otherwise). Eating for example accounts for an important share of migrants’ home-making practices. It is a highly ritualized routine with a bodily component. The regularity of these routines brings space and time under control.

As anthropologist Mary Douglas puts it, home implies a special relationship with place (1991). Home is something more than just a house[[11]](#footnote-11), but some sort of dwelling structure providing shelter must be in place. Just like some sort of materiality is involved in the *idea of home*, the *experience of home* entails some sort of sensuousness.

The expression “feeling at home” conveys particularly well the fact that we can consider home a kind of sensorial experience. Applying a sensorial and embodied understanding of being at home is in line with Boccagni’s proposal to move from static understandings of home to focus instead on the processual nature of the actions and feelings involved in *homing* (Boccagni, 2017). I am not arguing that home has only a sensorial entity. I state, however, that looking at the sensoriality of *homing* provides an analytical vantage entry point into the mundane, albeit profoundly political, act of making oneself belong. I contend that embodied practices are an essential and irreducible part of migrants’ home-making practices.

Tautologically, being a feeling, feeling at home is felt in the body. Perception and emotion intertwine. Feeling at home is both a temporalized and spatialized experience. Although feeling at home can be synonym with being at home, this is not always the case. Hence, even though there is not -yet or anymore- such home, past experiences or internalized normative projections of home can enact or facilitate temporary experiences of home. Feeling at home is both a cognitive as well as a sensorial act. It is easy to notice that home-making practices, or those activities and processes related to the endeavours of attaching a sense of home to one’s life circumstances (Boccagni, 2017, p.23), cannot be reduced to its ideological component. They comprise an important corporal element. I feel secure, in control, in a milieu I know, and I tend to feel good in. Tastes, smells, sounds, whose presence (and regularity) relates to certain materiality and symbolism, are always present. When I feel at home, I consider myself secure (at least relatively so), in control of my nearby environment. This is a positive feeling, one that feels good to feel. It is often evocative of sensations that are felt in the body and the skin, as warmth or coziness. There is a bodily part of that experience of making oneself feel at home, there is physical wellbeing involved. It is a familiarity that has a strong sensuous component. The home experience is one good example of embodied knowledge (Rosaldo, 1984, p.143). This explains why an odour, a tone, or a flavour are common triggers for sensorial *déjà vu* which recalls a past or imagined home (Mata-Codesal, 2008, p.16). This home can be a past home, but also an imagined one, inserting us bodily into an idea linked to an ideal of what a home should feel like and not just look like, overcoming the existing *ocularcentrism* detected by sensorial anthropologists like David Howes (2003). The touch of the well-worn pieces of clothes put on so many times that have grown to our bodies shape, the smoky incense light up to cover the putrid smell coming out the pipes when it rains, the tinkling sounds of the pots and pans in the kitchen, the tunes and rhythms of songs in the mother tongue at high volume… can all make us feel at home while away. Migration and physical mobility entail situations of social, material and sensorial dislocation and estrangement. It is a change in the “sensory world of everyday experience” (Ahmed, 1999, p.341). This creates an extra layer of complexity to such sensorial understanding of the home while opening the door to explore the sensoriality of the materiality involved in home-making practices by migrants and other mobile people.

**5. THE SENSUOUSNESS OF HOME-PRACTICES**

The idea of home and the lived experience of home, or in Boccagni’s terms, the ideal and the real side of home (2017, p.23), are not independent. The former bears a normativity that moulds the latter. In particular, it affects how the experience of home is perceived (and valued) and the practices carried out to feel at home. Using the available assets and structure of opportunities (Boccagni, 2017, p. 24), there is a creativity and crafting potential in migrants’ home-making practices, who can resort to 'pick-n-mix' strategies to enact (albeit temporary and fragmented) the feeling of being at home (Mata-Codesal, 2010). We can argue that the need for feeling at home becomes more acute in situations where migration is involved. Whether it is because home is somewhere else or sometime else, the search for home (or the feeling of being at home) often triggers home-making practices. Migrants may, and often do, use sensorial elements in their endeavours to seek comfort. Food is a case in point, and although important, it is not the only one. Smells, textures, body moves, visual elements… they all are part and parcel of migrants’ efforts to feel at home.

With Sarah Pink, I contend that “the home is an environment that is constituted, experienced and understood, evaluated and maintained through all the senses” (Pink, 2015, p.11). The perception and valuing of comfort and disgust, as culturally informed and deeply internalized categories acquired through inculturation, are two elements important in the experience of home (Wang, 2018, p.57). It stems and creates a body predisposition or “sensuous habitus” made of habits, skills, and dispositions that are ingrained in our body through our life experiences (Wacquant, 2005). Bourdieu’s habitus is defined as the “lasting dispositions, or trained capacities and structured propensities to think, feel and act in determinant ways’ of a group or class” (Wacquant, 2005, p.316). By using the expression “sensuous habitus” I emphasized the body disposition toward the sensuous experience that is inherent in people’s everyday perception through habituation. This sensuous habitus is “endowed with built-in-inertia, insofar as habitus tends to produce practices patterned after the social structures that spawned them” (Wacquant, 2005, p. 317). The sensorial change that migration brings about interrupts bodily inertia by confronting migrants’ bodies with different sensescapes and sensorial regimes. Due to the change and the absence, previously unspecific sensorial traits become salient.

Migrants’ practices of home-making illustrate well the double-folded nature that Jacobson, based on Merleau-Ponty, assigned to being-at-home: one that combines passivity and activity (Jacobson, 2009). Being-at-home “rests in the background of our experience and provides a support and structure for our life that goes largely unnoticed and that is significantly beyond our *conscious* control while simultaneously a way of being to which we attain (Jacobson, 2009, p.356). Migration affects the balance between the unnoticed passivity and the active becoming involved in the experience of home. Due to its absence, the background, as a sensuous habitus, becomes noticed and migrants actively work towards developing new sensuous habituation. Migrants are confronted with the situation of replicating or re-creating feelings of home, whether by making use of elements encompassing a known sensoriality ingrained in a past familiarity or altogether projecting a different experience of home. The election is surely influenced by a myriad of past experiences and future expectations, as well as by the range of assets and opportunities at migrants’ disposal (Boccagni, 2017, p.24).

Food exemplifies well sensorial work in migrants’ homing. Eating practices play an important role in migrants’ home-making practices, as multisensorial carriers of sense and triggers of physical and emotional comfort (e.g Law, 2001; Mellin-Olsen & Wandel, 2005). Food is an important element in homemaking processes through the senses, probably because it combines different kinds of sensorial experiences: smell, taste, touch, all interweaved in social relations that give meaning and turn the biological act of feeding into an important cultural element (Fischler, 1988, p.276). Smells, for instance, become a prolific source of body comfort by being able to provoke sensations of sensorial déjà vu. As smells are less codified, I argue elsewhere, there is more space for them to be filled up with personal memories (Mata-Codesal, 2008). Cooking, eating and sharing food from home, in everyday and festive practices, as well as incorporating new dietary habits, are meaningful multisensory experiences. Eating known food can be a way of remembering past feelings of home, as well as re-membering with people in the new residence (Mata-Codesal, 2008). Food, albeit important, it is just one way in which migrants interact, sensuously, with their new environments. There is hence, great potential to research how other senses contribute to the ways migrants make themselves feel at home in their new places of residence.

**6. CONCLUSION: BRINGING THE SENSES HOME**

If home is considered the sensory world of everyday experience (Ahmed, 1999, p.341), migrating entails getting away from familiar sensorial stimuli, getting in contact with a new one and learning to craft one’s own in the process of home-making. Sensuous work is important in migrants’ home-making practices if we consider that home can be conceptualized, at least partly, as a sensorial experience. Although as Boccagni argues this may be just part of the story as a more processual understanding of the home experience, homing, may be more relevant in the case of international migrants (Boccagni, 2017, p.16), the sensoriality of the process is doubtless important**.** Moving, changing jobs and houses involves the physical mobility of the body and the engagement with new sensorial milieus. The resulting sensorial estrangementis more intense in the cases of international migration, given that one cannot go back at the end of the day to previously known contexts, including sensorialones.

In this chapter, I have argued that applying a sensorial approach to the migrant experience, and more specifically to migrants’ home-making practices, is pertinent and can shed light, a different one, on the sensoriality of the materiality involved in home-making practices by migrants and other mobile people. The senses are central in the constitution and value of the experience of home (Pink, 2015, p.11). This experience that I have referred to asthe feeling of home is made up of multisensory phenomena experienced through, and in, the body, which trigger emotional responses of belonging, familiarity, comfort, and general wellbeing.Home then can be conceptualized asa sensuous experience, sensorily loaded with a rich diversity of elements, those related to the human body itself, its smells, the food shared, the music danced together, the changing voice tones, the temperature and humidity, or the colours.

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1. Although the chapter makes a prolific use of food-related practices with exemplary purposes, I also consider other senses in the sensuous-work involved in migrants’ home-making practices. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This is rather unsurprising given the early interest of the discipline in the body and the prolific presence of sensorial references in a great number of classic ethnographies (e.g. the work on sensitive bodies by Levi-Strauss about the Nambikwara or the vivid references to colour in Malinowski’s fieldwork notes). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Some of the concerns and approaches of the anthropology of the senses intertwine with those of the well-established specialization of anthropology of food and the anthropology of the body. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. In anthropology, participant observation is paramount in the ethnographic approach of the discipline. This immersive technique relies on what the ethnographer observes and hears while doing research in the field. This visual and hearing predominance is not coincidental. In the hierarchy of the senses, sight and hearing are conceptualized as more reliable, considered the senses of the distance and often linked to masculine attributes (García, 2017, p.129). David Howes goes so far as to speak of a “despotic reign of the eye” (2003, p. xxii). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Some work in design research and studies about domestic space in the modern Western home has already pointed to the fruitfulness of such approach (Pink, 2004). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. I find particularly fascinating the attempts to visually express smells in the form of odoromaps or smellscapes making used of artistic elements (Henshaw, 2013; McLean, 2017). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Remarkably, the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted most people’s quotidian sensorial milieu. The contention measures include a long list of new “techniques of the body” (Mauss, 1973[1935]) which include wearing masks, thoroughly and regularly washing hands, using elbows to greet instead of kissing or shaking hands… It has at least temporarily implied an abrupt change in the sensorial regime. Touch has gone from being a potential source of pleasure to a risky action to avoid. Face masks cushion the sounds of the human voice while impeding environmental smells from reaching our noses. The relationship with new body normativity caused by social distancing generates uncertainty that is sometimes experienced in the form of body discomfort. By creating a sudden change in the sensoriality of our everyday life, the pandemic has brought to the front the omnipresence and importance of the often taken for granted sensoriality of our social life. We could wonder to what extent this change can mirror the migration experience in its sensorial terms. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Interestingly, there are many accounts of anthropologists about sensorial stimuli during fieldwork to be of an unbearable intensity. As a case in point, the humorous prose by anthropologist Nigel Barley based on his work among the Dowayo is full with this kind of statements (2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Navigating these sensescapes can also be a source of ambiguity for migrants, as they compare them with concepts or memories of previous ones (Wise, 2010). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. The house can also be considered as a second body (Jacobson, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Many authors have clarified that there is no direct equation between a home and a house (Boccagni, 2017; Douglas, 1991). As the literature on queer migrations has shown, the family house does not necessarily need to be a home (Fortier, 2003). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)