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## Book Review

*Review of Walsh, Katie and Lena Näre, eds. Transnational Migration and Home in Older Age. New York: Routledge. 2016. pp.268. Price: \$153.00 (Hardcover); \$27.00 (e-book).*

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*Review of Walsh, Katie and Lena Näre, eds. Transnational Migration and Home in Older Age. New York: Routledge. 2016. pp.268. Price: \$153.00 (Hardcover); \$27.00 (e-book).*

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Though lived realities since time immemorial, both ageing and transnational migration have only recently received increased attention from social scientists, as both phenomena impact the world's population today more intensely than ever before, to converge into new transnational imaginaries of home throughout the life course. As people's life expectancy increases in an ever more fluid and mobile world, how does this impact their conceptualization of 'home'?

As part of the series *Routledge Research in Transnationalism*, with the edited volume *Transnational Migration and Home in Older Age*, human geographer Katie Walsh and sociologist Lena Näre elucidate multiple intersections of ageing, migration and home-making processes. The ethnographic chapters richly document a myriad of dynamics, spaces, practices, movements and imaginaries that crystallize in home-making in older age. The interdisciplinary blend of ethnographic case studies is divided into five sections. Although each section takes on a specific perspective on the topic, they all adhere to the same dynamic conception of ageing: not as fixed or static (biological age), but as socio-culturally constructed. Thus, notions of 'home' are analyzed following a multi-scalar approach and according to their material, emotional and temporal dimensions.

The first section, "Intergenerational Transnational Homes", paves the way for a topos which runs through all the subsequent chapters, by putting a special focus on ongoing relations within transnational families and on the way ageing people negotiate 'home' and 'belonging': affective spaces that often intertwine with notions and practices of care. Tatiana Tiaynen-Qadir (Chapter 2), for example, reflects on transnational grandmothers, so-called *babushkas*, travelling between Russia and Finland: they constitute their multi-sited homes not only in response to changes throughout the life course, but also through space by oscillating between their own and their children's homes in the two countries. In this process, Tiaynen-Qadir shows, care is mutual, as the aged are not only *cared for* but also *take care* of their children and grandchildren that have migrated, particularly in physical copresence. Julie Vullnetari (Chapter 3), on the contrary, focuses on the way parents make and unmake home in the absence of their children in their place of origin. Left behind in 'empty' houses, these older parents fill their homes with imaginaries and memories of their absent children, thus keeping the acquired homeliness alive.

The second part, "Home Strategies of Ageing and Mobility", moves beyond the family as a nucleus for home-making practices. Tine Buffel and Christopher Phillipson (Chapter 5) for example, illustrate how the process of 'home'(-making) is not limited to the sphere of family and kin, but intensely interrelates with the (deprived) communities or neighborhoods in urban

contexts, that older migrants in England and Belgium live in. Here – as many of the ethnographic chapters show – ‘home’ does not only refer to the direct physical environment that is shared by migrants of the same country of origin, but also to the transnational character of tea houses or ethnic shops, that affectively construct a sense of “Heimat” (72). Alistair Hunter (Chapter 6) describes the emotional and instrumental attachment by West African labour migrants to their long-term belonging in French hostels, while similarly adhering to their countries of origin. Life style migration, as another strategy on the convergence of ageing and mobility, is taken up by Stefan Kordel (Chapter 7) and Kate Botterill (Chapter 8), who write about North European lifestyle migrants that search for a new and ‘idealised home’ in Spain and Thailand respectively. These elderly are drawn by the promise of growing old in a warmer climate and, thus, by the possibility to increase their health and general quality of life. Most often, this desire for a new home goes along with a spatial imaginary of a beautiful scenery or landscape.

Part 3 deals with a reverse imagination: “Returning ‘Home’ in Older Age”. All chapters elucidate migrants’ experiences returning to their country of origin or planning to do so. Leslie Fesenmyer (Chapter 9), for instance, concentrates on Kenyan women living as labour migrants in London. Although definitely returning ‘home’ these women sway to and fro their “permanent temporariness” (123) and are concerned of struggling with their “old new lives” once they go back to live with their families in Kenya. In the tenth chapter, Ken Chih-Yan Sun documents the life stories of retirement migrants that return to Taiwan after having worked in the US for decades. The “falling leaves returning to their roots” (134) try to dwell comfortably by reshaping different cultural and social realms once back in Taiwan (Zigon 2014). In the section’s last chapter, Katie Walsh (Chapter 11) sheds light on the life of expatriates growing into old age and constituting ‘home’ after a life of working abroad. The transforming relation to emotional and material belongings, obviates that subjectification is ongoing, and does not end upon return.

“Ageing in Transnational Space”, the volume’s fourth section, emphasizes embodied feelings and emotions that come with return. The chapters show that the return after retirement does not come with feelings of pure enchantment, but with difficult, mixed and sometimes contradictory feelings that ask for emotional labour. Lars Meier (Chapter 13), for example, finds that Spanish migrants in Germany don’t necessarily have a sense of nostalgia when thinking of their homeland. Anastasia Christou in Chapter 14, on the other hand, does describe *phantasmagoric* narratives of home and the homeland circulating among Jewish and Cuban migrants in the United States. Caroline Oliver (Chapter 15) closes the fourth section with a realist remark: the often paradoxical embodied feelings surrounding homeliness, are not only ignited by the return but are tied up with the often difficult process of retirement.

The volume’s last part makes explicit the relation between “*Transnationalism*” and “*Elderly Care*”. Angeles Escrivá (Chapter 16) explores the desire of ageing Peruvian and Moroccan migrants in Spain to be cared for at ‘home’: a place that is familiar to them and where family members live nearby. Both, Antero Olakivi and Miira Niska and Kim England and Isabel Dyck provide data on the institutional sphere of providing care for the elderly. While the first show how professionals in public care in Finland anticipate the development of care in the future, the latter explicitly relate to racialization and power relations at work in the care sector. The afterword by Russell King, provides a comprehensive and constructively critical summary of the volume’s chapters.

Walsh and Näre’s edited volume is impressive thanks to the variety of case studies and regions, (re)presented in rich ethnographic detail, using different qualitative methods to provide the reader with a deep insight into the everyday lives of older people across the globe.

Unfortunately, case studies that refer to South-South migration – an area of research that is still marginal within the social sciences – were notably lacking in this volume. Nevertheless, *Transnational Migration and Home in Older Age* is a must-read for scholars of all disciplines working on the social and cultural construction of ‘home’ among older people, as it consistently combines this process with transnational migration. This book on ageing, transnationalization and belonging should be foundational in future research, to conceptualize a broader understanding of glocal processes of ageing and care.

## References

- Zigon, Jarett. 2014. “Attunement and Fidelity: Two Ontological Conditions for Being-in-the-World.” *Ethnos* 42 (1): 16-30.