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## Book Review

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## Book Review

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*Ways of Home Making in Care for Later Life* examines the intersections of home, care, and older adults. In the introduction, the editors set the stage by encouraging the reader to understand home as a *verb* and to envisage how home intersects with care in later life as a *making*. The book covers different types of families in these home making practices, including adult children living with their parents (Chapters 2 and 11), families who have members with the diagnosis of dementia (Chapters 4 and 14), and transnational families (Chapters 3 and 12). In addition, the book also focuses on different loci of home making and covers this process at different (semi-)institutional settings, such as co-housing initiatives, nursing homes, and residential dementia care institutions (Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10, and 13). Although all the chapters focus on Western societies—mainly Australia, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, and the United Kingdom (UK)—the book also contains chapters that touch on transnational families (including Karen and Italian migrants in Australia and Sudanese migrants in the UK and the Netherlands).

At the intersection of two protean concepts like ‘home’ and ‘care,’ the editors reveal a wealth of practices, relations, and affects that push contemporary research on care and belonging forward. The book is organized in three thematic sections: “Moving Imaginaries,” “Negotiating Institutions,” and “Shifting Arrangements.” The “Moving Imaginaries” section investigates the home imaginaries held and performed by older adults, older migrants, and people with dementia, as well as by government authorities and students in architecture. A central lesson from this part is that these imaginaries are not fixed but continuously transform and make (new) interpretations of home with care possible. The second section, “Negotiating Institutions,” contains rich discussions of the ideals of homeliness and care practice in institutional contexts. This part shows that the intersections of home and care are ongoing experiments that disrupt as well as open up places of care. The chapters in the last section, “Shifting Arrangements,” argue that home need not to be a place but is first and foremost a quality of shifting arrangements of people, things, places and affects. This perspective allows the reader to understand care in later life as circulating and reciprocal, especially when home is not bounded to a singular place.

As the editors explain in the introduction, the purpose of using verbs (moving, negotiating, and shifting) instead of nouns in the section titles is to “deeply uproot the trope of home and care as somehow fixed and stable repository” (6). The book shows how the meanings of “home” shift across various boundaries in the home making process, namely national boundaries (e.g., the experience of transnational families), the boundary between public and private (e.g., who defines and maintains boundaries between public and private life at care institutions), and the boundaries between safety and homeliness (e.g., dealing

with issues such as whether stairs should be removed or surveillance cameras installed at home). The volume offers ample examples of different ways in which boundaries are negotiated for home making. Loretta Baldassar, Raelene Wilding, and Shane Worrell (Chapter 3) articulate the concepts of “local home making,” “community home making,” and “digital home making” to analyse the different ways the Karen and Italian older migrants in Australia sustain their ideals of home when some of their kin members are living overseas. They pay particular attention to how care is done in a transnational setting with the help of digital technologies. Wiring money (financial support) and making video calls (emotional exchanges) have become important means for older migrants to provide care to their overseas family members and sustain the ideals of home.

With the concepts of “tinkering” (204) and “breaching experiments” (203), Bernike Pasveer (Chapter 10) captures how boundaries of home and care, private and public, and life and death are negotiated at the hospice. She uses the ethnographic example of Mrs. A, who was very ill with metastasized breast cancer and wanted to bring her sewing machine into the hospice to use after her condition would become relatively more stable. For Mrs. A, this would allow her to feel at home in the hospice. However, for the hospice staff this particular desire of Mrs. A demonstrates her unwillingness to face death, which runs counter to the aim of hospice care which is to make residents acknowledge and accept death in order to be able to achieve a “good death” (214). While the hospice encourages residents to bring in personal items to make themselves feel at home as a care technology, decisions on which items are welcome and which are not have become “breaching experiments” (203)—there are no clear guidelines, so both residents and care staff are tinkering with the specifics of care, while altering the meanings of ‘home’ and ‘good care’ in this process of negotiation.

The book also includes a significant contribution to understanding the dynamic interplay between the caregiving role of older adults in a reciprocal care relationship and the meanings of home in later life. In Chapter 14, Christine Ceci, Ingunn Moser, and Jeannette Pols, ethnographically document “shifting arrangements” in home making for older couples, where one partner has dementia and the spouse takes up a caregiving role. The case of Ken and Marla documents very well that “what home means in concrete situations is the result of the relationships that organize those situations” (309), a process that equally implies the organization of “stuff” (309). At a certain point in the disease process and their life trajectory, Ken reports feeling that his home is disturbed as there is ‘no activity’ in the house, with daily activities becoming too complicated for Marla. Caring for Marla 24/7 also makes him feel “trapped” at home (307). Acting upon these feelings, Marla was admitted to a long-term care institution. Interestingly, after the move, Ken witnesses that he is working hard to organize activities and build up a new life to fight being “trapped at home,” now that he doesn’t have to take care of Marla anymore. The shifts in this story clearly show that for older adults—particularly when intensive caregiving is involved—‘home’ can come to mean different things in different circumstances, as relations, practices and “stuff” are rearranged along and across care. As the case of Ken and Marla illustrates, both permanent caregiving and the absence thereof in the home can cause a sense of entrapment with the primary caregiver.

How does gender matter in the process of home making and care provision? In Chapter 8, Daniel López Gómez, Mariona Estrada Canal, and Lluvi Farré Montalà show how care work is both gendered and de-gendered, by comparing two senior co-housing initiatives in Spain, *El Hogar* and *La Comunidad*. The majority of the residents at *El Hogar* are single or widowed women. These women report appreciating that external staff at *El Hogar* is responsible for the housework because this leaves them with more time for their hobbies. In contrast, the majority of residents at *La Comunidad* are married couples and 45% of the residents are men. *La Comunidad* emphasizes mutual support rather than taking over care, leaving the residents fully responsible for hands-on daily tasks. It is common for the women to do informal care

while the men run errands. As the authors note, these two co-housing initiatives produce two different gendered modes of home making. Frode F. Jacobsen (Chapter 5) similarly investigates the intersections between care in later life and home making in analysing the politicization of aging-in-place in Norwegian public policy papers, with a focus on the diversity of older adults with regard to gender, social class and ethnicity. Jacobsen argues that the aging experience is shaped by culture; therefore the meaning of home and public policy on home care should take full consideration of social factors, such as gender and social status, as they shape the needs and preferences of different older women and men. Gender matters in the aging process. It could be as subtle as the daily division of labour between women and men at their place of residence or as significant as the public policies on service provision for women and men.

Trained in the anthropological tradition, I find this book to be very engaging and a delight to read because most of the chapters provide solid case studies, interview quotes, and fieldnotes that unravel the relationship between the notions of home and care for older adults across the globe in different living situations. The book makes a valuable contribution to aging studies and care research, and is suitable for graduate students and researchers who are interested in aging subjectivities, meanings of home, care practice, and personhood.