

Cultural Heritage and Mobility from a Multisensory Perspective

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Chapter 13

Women's Heritage Homing in Rio de Janeiro's Favelas

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13 Women's Heritage Homing in Rio de Janeiro's Favelas

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Introduction and Theoretical Framework: Towards Heritage Homemaking

In terms of heritage and mobility, houses have long attracted attention from researchers, as they are recognised as crucial for processes involving the relationships between materiality, identity and the body. Mobility studies have widely problematised the transnational connections of people on the move through the lens of homemaking practices (for an overview, see Boccagni 2017; 2022). Cultural heritage studies have viewed material houses as the means through which heritage was performed by the actors, discussing their role as museums (Wang 2014) and the influence of homemaking practices on heritage landscapes (Nymoen Rørtveit and Setten 2015; Yeoh 2000). This chapter aims to bring together the theorisation of homes within mobility and heritage studies. It analyses the homemaking practices of women from the favelas in Rio de Janeiro – domestic migrants and/or descendants of forced migrants during the slavery period – with attention to the multisensory relationship between the body, place and material building. By doing so, the chapter problematises the intersectionality of the actors' class, gender, mobility motivations and trajectories, which project on their homemaking practices and which position them within specific hierarchies of privilege and inequalities (Wang 2014). We analyse how the actors imagine their homes, what strategies they use to materialise their imageries and how their material houses embody the socio-economic and legal issues regarding ownership. By doing so, we problematise homemaking as part of the personal heritage performance, suggesting that the bodies of the actors are rooted in a place through their houses, and they are a part of the everyday negotiations of the actors' belonging. This exploration seeks to address the claim of underrepresentation of working-class heritage in heritage displays and analyses (Smith, Shackel and Campbell 2011) by studying the home “from the margins” (Boccagni 2022; Ahmed et al. 2003; Boccagni, Pérez-Murcia and Belloni 2020). The findings presented in the chapter were obtained through visual and multisensory methods mobilising the sensibilities of the researcher and respondents to shed light on the homing practices (Boccagni 2022) of

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economically disadvantaged black women from the favelas, in the context of mobility.

Against the dominant narrations of institutionalised cultural heritage, or as Smith called it, Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD), critical heritage scholars have proposed that heritage should be viewed as a process and a performance (Harvey 2001; Smith 2016, 2021; Macdonald 2013), moving the focus from material heritage objects to the performance of heritage by the actors. Material objects have started to be seen rather as a pretext for heritage practices, and as stand-alone objects – that is without the sociocultural context of performative practices relating to them – they are deprived of meaning (Smith 2016). In this sense, all heritage was declared intangible (Smith 2016). We contribute to this processual, performative and emotional turn in heritage studies, which also emphasises the importance of the “politics of (mis)recognition” (Smith 2022) that is crucial to understanding people’s sense of heritage and identity (Smith 2022; 2021). While analysing the material dwellings of working-class female domestic migrants, the focus here is on the performative embodied practices that the actors develop in order to create their homes, including the sensory work associated with it. These cover the strategies for building and maintaining houses, experiencing the emotions that houses evoke, recognising the meaning of houses for questions of identity and belonging, and the issue of resistance against complex inequalities the actors are entangled in.

The described focus on the meaning-providing, sociocultural contexts of practices and performances around heritage objects evokes the recognition of the two “turns” that social sciences have experienced in the past century. First came a spatial turn (Lefebvre 1991), recognising the relationship between social life and place and anchoring social practices in physical spaces (Massey 1994). Second was a sensory turn (Howes 2022; Pink 2011), proposing to go beyond the Cartesian body-mind dichotomy and acknowledging that the body partakes in cognitive processes formerly reserved exclusively for the mind within Western epistemologies. Taking into account the developments of these two turns, the homes discussed in this chapter, as personal/familial heritage objects, are looked at through embodiment perspectives in heritage studies, which include the theorisation of the relationship between heritage and place. This is supported by Smith’s (2021) emotional heritage concept, which refers to the social situatedness of people, their meaning and emotions that intersect with the performative, embodied and affective practices of heritage. Heritage performances are not only discursive practices, claims Harrison (2013, 216), but also concern “corporeal influences on the bodies of human and non-human actors, and the ways in which heritage is caught up in the quotidian bodily practices of dwelling, travelling, working and ‘being’ in the world”. As Smith (2021, 45) puts it, “‘heritage’ is a continual embodied process of heritage-making”. Heritage objects embody certain values, memories, meanings, affects (Smith 2016, 65) and the past (Macdonald 2013, 104). This means they are inevitably entangled with the places and spaces they

relate to. Heritage provides “a physical anchor or geographical sense of belonging”, allowing one to “negotiate a sense of ‘place’ or class/community identity, and a cultural place or sense of belonging” (Smith 2016, 86).

This chapter, drawing on the presented theorisation of heritage and its embodied, multisensory and spatially anchored dimensions, looks at performative and sensory practices of homemaking by women from the favelas around the imagining, materialising and making sense of their houses, approached here as their personal heritage.

What are known as “homes on the move” have gained broad attention from researchers of mobility and migration in recent years (Boccagni 2014; 2017; 2022; Perez Murcia 2018; Bivand Erdal 2014; Nikielska-Sekuła 2021; Ratnam and Drozdewski 2020). Mobile homes were conceptualised in alliance with the new mobilities paradigm (Sheller and Urry 2006), viewing homes as a process (Omata 2016; Boccagni and Brighenti 2017; Mallett 2004; Cancellieri 2017, 51), rather than as a material fact (Fortier 2003). Home is therefore understood here as a set of social practices that are intertwined with the materiality of the place and the multisensoriality of the embodied experience of the actors, going beyond a mere material building – a house. Home is “less a place, a predetermined condition or an idea, than an endeavour to tend towards any of these, and hopefully make them real” (Boccagni 2022, 585). Along these lines, Boccagni introduced the concept of homing to the social sciences, defining home as “a range of actions and interactions – some physical, virtual or imagined mobility – whereby people orient themselves towards what they ‘feel, see or claim as home, or at least as homely-enough” (Boccagni 2022, 585–586). As Boccagni suggests, mobility is inscribed in the process of homemaking and relates to the efforts employed by individuals to reach home (which he claims can never be fully achieved), with migration being a visible instance of this (*ibid.*). The home involves familiarity (Hage 1997, 102) and covers emotions and sensory stimuli (Ahmed 1999, 341) that tie their physical localities with the bodies of the actors that enact them. However, “homing is also a matter of unhoming” (Boccagni 2022, 597), referring to what could be recognised as home and to previous settings that used to be regarded as home, even if they are no longer considered as such. According to Boccagni (2022, 597), “rejecting the pre-given basis of home and trying to make one’s way out of it, following a sense of ‘estrangement’ (Ahmed 2000), is precisely a form of unhoming; one that may be experienced by migrants, refugees, or queer people as they exit the home to which they used to belong, on a range of scales”.

Building on the theoretical conceptualisations of heritage performances around homes, as well as the scholarship on homes on the move, this chapter looks at the homing practices (Boccagni 2022) of favela women, who are themselves domestic migrants or descendants of domestic and/or forced migrants during slavery in Brazil. It discusses material houses as the tangible objects of respondents’ personal/familial heritage, imagined based on past experiences of homes and the future aspirations of the actors, and meant to

be passed down to further generations. At the same time, these material dwellings are intersubjectively embedded within the sociocultural and economic contexts of their owners' lives (Smith 2016; 2021; Macdonald 2013) embodying their positionality within complex and often translocal structures of cultural, social, economic, legal and political interconnections and inequalities.

Against the background of the interconnections between the materiality of the houses and the positionalities of their owners, this chapter focuses on the actors' embodied practices of becoming at home in the houses in question. This is done through the concept of homing, which allows us to look at what the home is, as well as how it came to be and the lifelong existential and "ontological struggle" towards making a house a "future home" (Bocagni 2022). Since the houses in question are the objects of personal and familial heritage, the presented homing practices can be seen as part of heritage performances (Smith 2021). To facilitate this, the chapter introduces the concept of heritage homing, defined as making oneself home in houses that are considered part of the individual/familial heritage, as well as the everyday practices of heritage-making that are unfolded through homing. We discuss the strategies undertaken to materialise individual aspirations of homes that rely heavily on mobility and include collecting money through migration, building, choosing aesthetics and performing embodied practices to make houses into homes. By doing so, we study how heritage homing is enacted through the multisensory, unveiling the "multisensorial 'tactics' whereby people 'home themselves', given the material, relational and emotional affordances available" (Bocagni, 2022, 593).

Methodology and Context

This chapter builds its argument on data from a multi-phase multisensory ethnography in the favelas Cantagalo and Pavão-Pavãozinho (PPG) in Rio de Janeiro in the period 2011–2013 and 2018, along with short visits and informal conversations with residents in 2017 and 2023 by Håndlykken-Luz. It focuses on cases regarding the homemaking processes of favela women. The residents in PPG have resisted evictions and have struggled for housing rights and land for decades.

Overall, the fieldwork in the presented cases draws on visual and multisensory methods (Pink 2011), including participant observations, photowalks and walking interviews (O'Neill and Roberts 2019), participatory photo mapping (Dennis et al. 2009) and the researcher's mapping of visual field-notes. Apart from collecting researcher- and respondent-generated visuals, multisensory data was gathered noting the ambience and embodied experiences such as textures, movements, smellscapes and soundscapes of the field, along with the sights, gestures, mimics and emotions of the respondents as the researcher moved through the researched spaces, observed and partook in

encounters in the field. The multisensory data were crucial to reach the findings discussed further.

Those participants who generated their own photos did not want to be anonymised and gained recognition as the authors of their photos (Rose 2016). The remaining participants were anonymised. The participants included in this analysis were women aged between 45 and 70 years old. Some of them worked as domestic servants or had parents or grandparents who worked as domestic servants, in the rich neighbourhoods of Copacabana and Ipanema. The themes analysed in the cases emerged from an inductive thematic analysis of the visual and multisensory ethnographic data, which included researchers' fieldnotes, data from walking interviews, researcher- and respondent-generated photos, video interviews and the residents' reflections on the photos they had taken. The use of multisensory methods, photowalks and the residents' own reflections on their photos allowed for an understanding of the more veiled aspects of multilevel homing (Boccagni 2022) that would have not been accessible to the researcher otherwise.

Heritage Homing in the Favelas

Since the late 1800s, Rio de Janeiro's hills have housed the descendants of slaves and forced migrants, and later saw an influx of migrants from northeast Brazil. Today, large parts of the residents in the favelas are domestic migrants and descendants of slaves. Residents have developed a practice of building their own houses through autoconstruction (Holston 2008) over decades, from small wooden houses to solid masonry homes. These houses embody their stories, resistance and cultural practices as part of the tangible and intangible everyday cultural heritage. As these houses are always in the process of making, they can be seen as corporeal and embodied performances of heritage homing (Smith 2021; Boccagni 2022).

The community of PPG, their autoconstructed houses, including canvas houses (*casas-tela*) with murals illustrating the residents' life stories and memories, cultural practices, art and everyday life of the favelas, has been studied through the lens of heritage (Portilho 2016). The struggles faced by residents, and particularly women, to maintain the memory of their children lost to state violence was also conceptualised as favela heritage (Ota and Mason 2022) indicating how heritage is performed as a strategy of resistance to urban coloniality and marginalisation (Smith 2022). This case contributes to these operationalisations of the favelas' tangible and intangible cultural heritage by discussing the multi-layered meanings of heritage homing. It presents the performative practice of autoconstruction as an embodied, corporeal, affective and creative process of everyday heritage-making as "being' in the world" (Smith 2021, 45).

UNESCO and Heritage-making in the Favelas

Recently, the informal settlements in Rio have entered the heritage discourse both through the residents' favela territorial museums and the



Figure 13.1 A casa-tela by the artist ACME from PPG, showing the everyday life and history of PPG and stories of migration. The painting is entitled ‘Alvorada do Galo’ and is a part of the MUF (Favela Museum)

Source: Photo from Pinto et al., 2012.

institutionalisation of Rio’s cultural landscape within the AHD, Smith 2021) of a UNESCO World Heritage Site (UNESCO 2016). Initially, the favelas were included in UNESCO’s presentations of the cultural heritage site of Rio (Rolnik 2012), but the interest was finally limited to the seafront of Copacabana, including the elevator complex (Figure 13.2; UNESCO 2016). This prompted the mobilisation of the residents of favelas to call for UNESCO to include the favelas as part of the World Heritage site (Rio on Watch 2018). Unsurprisingly, the institutionalisation of heritage within the UNESCO AHD has caused multi-layered tensions between the actors involved. While the elevator complex in PPG was presented by UNESCO as an inclusive project featured on the World Heritage web page, from the favela residents’ perspective it was far from inclusive, due to evictions from the houses performed in the area. Residents emphasised the practices of hiding the poor behind the elevator, providing panoramic views for tourists reflecting the underrepresentation of working-class heritage (Smith et. al. 2011) and emphasising its tourist orientation.



Figure 13.2 Photo of the Elevator complex Rubem Braga on a photowalk with Paula
Source: Photo by Håndlykken-Luz.

This was also highlighted by Paula, a PPG resident, when we walked through the elevator complex in 2018. I (Håndlykken-Luz) followed Paula through the favelas with a hidden camera, to avoid the impression that I am a journalist. Her movement revealed the subsequent parts of the neighbourhood and the way she organised them in her head (Pink and Mackley 2016). She pointed to the elevator's front-only lights, meant for tourists ascending from Ipanema and not the favelas, revealing the hidden discourses of inequality existing behind the elevator's construction. At some point we realised we were being watched by the *Dono do Morro* ("King of the hill", or local drug gang leader) and his armed guards. Paula challenged the fear we felt at this unexpected meeting, slowly mobilising her body and navigating with calmness through the elevator. The situation was tense. Paula took my hand, and touched the walls with her other hand, grounding us in the place. She spotted another resident sweeping the floor and introduced me, initiating a conversation about residents' care and homemaking with a loud but calm voice to ensure that the traffickers understood I was a friend and not a journalist. At the same time, she double-checked that my bag was closed so that the camera was out of sight when we walked past the traffickers. She told me that she had never seen *Dono do Morro* before. We came out of the elevator, passed a drug sale point, and stopped to talk with a man repairing cell phones. Paula talked about the residents' dwelling solutions balancing between the multiple heritage discourses their houses became entangled



Figure 13.3 An autoconstructed house
Source: Photo by Håndlykken-Luz, 2018.

within and their everyday practices of homing. She walked me through the neighbourhood of Cantagalo and further down to Pavão-Pavãozinho, where the majority of the residents are migrants from northeast Brazil. They brought with them their own cultural practices, including music (*forro*) and food, along with savings that allowed them to establish businesses. We could see the shops and restaurants, smell the food and hear the *forro*. We walked past a *casa-tela* depicting *forro* and migrants from the northeast and continued past the main square of Serafim in Pavão. She showed me the autoconstructed houses (Figure 13.3), recounting the histories of how the owners built them over decades. She also discussed the earning strategies of the residents, showing me new stores. The stories Paula presented convey the history of the favelas, the residents' everyday practices and struggles involving the art of building and repairing, cooking and creating music. They reflected what we call 'heritage homing' – preserving and creating new uses for the multiple material buildings and houses in the favelas.

Women in the Favelas

Many households in the favelas are led by women, whose contribution to the autoconstruction of houses in the favelas is fundamental, especially with regard to resisting evictions, struggles for land, social rights and housing movements (Håndlykken-Luz 2022). These efforts reflect the heritage homing

performed by the participants and are described below. The cases presented here feature black female descendants of slaves or domestic migrants who worked as servants (*empregadas*) (Håndlykken-Luz 2022, 168; Perry 2016) in Ipanema and Copacabana, settling in the favelas.

Marcia's Story

Walking the narrow streets, we came to a steep curve covered with mud. Marcia, now in her 50s, remembered how she walked here in the rain and mud as a child. At the time, there were no shootouts, it was quieter, with tiny wooden houses, no asphalt-covered roads, more like a small village when compared to the tall brick buildings today. She expressed nostalgia about growing up in the favelas, showing me an archival photo of the area (Figure 13.4).

By contrast, an asphalt road was in front of us, with an abandoned evicted house where a road was supposed to continue. While I (Håndlykken-Luz) touched the pillar of a newly constructed house at Marcia's request, she told me a story about its residents, skilled workers who constructed apartment blocks in the *asfalto* (formal city) (Håndlykken-Luz 2019), and transferred their skills to create their own house in the favelas, in their quest for homing (Boccagni 2022).

While walking and navigating the steep hills with residents who shared their everyday life and homemaking experiences, Marcia asked me



Figure 13.4 Photos of houses in PPG in the 1990s
Source: Photo provided by Marcia, year unknown.

(Håndlykken-Luz) to mobilise my senses in order to get to know the area better. I was instructed to touch the plants, the house facades, bricks and bullet holes; to listen to the music, voices, cars and children running, singing and playing; to the noises and rhythms of the sand and sacks of cement being carried to construction sites. We experienced the smell and sight of the food, the sounds and rhythms of the *forro* (northeastern music), which revealed the presence of the domestic migrants from northeast Brazil. We saw *casa-telas* (canvas houses with murals) and heard numerous stories about migration and everyday struggles, told by the residents we met. These stories resembled those of Dona Yolanda and Marcia's grandmother, which we present further in this chapter. All these constituted the community's very foundation. Beyond the widely popularised music, food and views from Rio's favelas that have entered pop culture, romanticising life there, Marcia highlighted certain obstacles that people experienced in the neighbourhood. These included inadequate lighting and ventilation, the odour of exposed sewage and humidity, tall buildings, and narrow pathways, resulting from the increased construction over the past years, indicating both the challenges and opportunities of this unhomely (Boccagni 2022, 597) situation.

During the walk with Marcia, the heritage homing we witnessed unfolded through the multisensory and corporeal engagement of the residents in the neighbourhood and we perceived it through the scenescapes described above. The heritage homing practices included everyday practices and knowledge of building and repairing houses, as well as transforming them into personal and familial heritage over generations. Hence, besides the actual building of the houses, the actors planned their futures in the houses in question. Sadly, the respondents' performances around the houses were criminalised, forcing them to underline that their homing practices should not be seen through a criminalising lens: "We are workers, not criminals," they declared. Against this background, by not giving up on heritage homing, the interlocutors exercised resistance against the structural inequalities and injustice the favela residents are subjected to.

Marcia's Grandmother

During one of our encounters, Marcia recounted her grandmother's words while we were walking late at night to a hilltop with a view of the lake below in Lagoa, one of the richest neighbourhoods in Rio. This is where her grandmother used to fetch water, which she then sold on the streets in the 1950s – her economic strategy to save up for her own house. She said: 'This is my castle. I constructed this house with my labour. I built the doors and windows ... I will never leave this place' (Håndlykken-Luz 2019). Marcia's grandmother came from a family of slaves and migrated from Minas Gerais to Rio:

I came to understand a person who comes from a family of slaves, they did not have many things, right. When she [my grandmother] came to Rio de Janeiro, she lived in the houses of other people, and when she started to build her house in the favelas, it became her castle. ... She did not want to leave it, right, because it was her great achievement.

Marcia, 2019

As the servants typically lived in a *quarto de empragda*, the servant's room (a small room often without windows) in the employer's home, behind the kitchen, their biggest aspiration often included owning their own house. To make that happen, Marcia's grandmother mobilised her body and senses to perform physical work in order to collect the means to build a house. Her grandmother's everyday embodied practice of homing (Boccagni 2022), including carrying water on her head to sell and raise money, as well as performing physical labour as a servant, reflected her "ontological struggle" for recognition and dignity while imagining, projecting, and constructing a home in the favelas from the unhomely situation (2022, 597) of living with other people in the employer's servant quarters. The aspirations of Marcia's grandmother and embodied means to achieve them reflect the heritage homing concept. Emotions and feelings of achievement, pride and recognition unfolded through the grandmother's comparison of her house to a castle. The heritage homing phenomenon, the emotions evoked through houses and home-building, and their afterlives expressed through oral history, as transferred by Marcia, are now a crucial part of the bottom-up cultural heritage of the favelas.

Interestingly, servants' rooms are still found in the rich neighbourhoods in Ipanema, located below PPG, exemplifying how urban coloniality is re-actualised through the architecture, forcing many of today's favela women to live the afterlives of slavery: working as maids, displaying multi-layered mobility and performing "unhoming" (Boccagni 2022, 597) practices across the city by participating in multiple interrelated homing practices of other people. These struggles reveal coloniality, social and racial inequalities and spatial exclusion, but also resistance. The story of Marcia's grandmother conveys the still relevant struggles of multi-layered (im)mobility and homing practices, from a servant's room to imagining and later constructing a house in the favelas, thereby creating an alternative future for the family.

Dona Yolanda's Story

I first met Dona Yolanda (in her 70s) in 2012 during a photowalk in PPG. She invited me to her house (see Figures 13.5 and 13.6), which she had built over decades. First, she built a wooden house when she migrated to Rio with her cousin, arriving in PPG in the 1950s at the age of 15. She showed me the garden with its birds, trees and flowers, the white paint of the house and the tiles on the ground in the house that she had built and decorated over



Figure 13.5 Dona Yolanda's house
Source: Photo by Håndlykken -Luz, 2012.

decades. She emphasised the silence, the size of the garden and the spacious house where her life journey had unfolded, comprising of an existential struggle of homing and mobility (Boccagni 2022) and resisting threats of evictions.

She and her cousin worked tirelessly to build a large house that could accommodate the entire family, which had promised to join them. The family did not come and, after the death of her cousin, Dona Yolanda, single and without children, was left to rely on the help and support of friends and neighbours to overcome loneliness.

(Interview by the MUF, favela museum in 2008; Håndlykken-Luz 2022)

In 2012, Dona Yolanda recounted the story of resisting eviction threats when people from the municipality came to estimate the value of her house, including the doors and windows.

Dona Yolanda, a descendant of slaves and a domestic migrant to Rio, made homing into the purpose of her living and hard work as a domestic servant in the *asfalto*. Her story is one of becoming at home in the favelas



Figure 13.6 The terrace in Dona Yolanda's house
Source: Photo by Håndlykken-Luz, 2012.

through heritage homing and can be read as resistance against the intersection of structural inequalities she was tangled up in. Her autoconstructed house embodies a lifelong struggle and symbolises her leaving the servant's room, even if Yolanda continued to work as a maid while living in the favelas. She died in 2018, just before I (Håndlykken-Luz) went back to Rio and tried to find her again. After Dona Yolanda passed away, her extended family took possession of the house and sold it, indicating a possible deception and the implementation of the politics of (mis)recognition (Smith 2022), contrasting Dona Yolanda's plans for the future and the promise by the family to move in with her.

Multisensory Heritage Homing in the Favelas

Through the multisensory practices of homing and autoconstruction, the female domestic migrants who settled in the favelas have for decades challenged urban coloniality in their everyday lives, while also carrying construction material, water or stones in order to come closer to achieving the dream of having a home (Boccagni 2022). Many worked as maids, engaging with

daily mobility and walking the narrow streets down to the *asfalto* (formal neighbourhoods) in order to make a living. The body was what reunited their home aspirations, which we looked upon here as heritage (Smith 2016), with their homing practices (Boccagni 2022), which included the embodied work, either in order to collect money or to carry out the construction of the material dwelling. The multisensory perspective was crucial in revealing these interconnections and played a role in the practices of homing themselves, as shown. Additionally, as presented, navigating and controlling the bodily gestures, emotions and sensory experiences was crucial in everyday survival and resistance in the favelas, as when Paula and I (Håndlykken-Luz) encountered the drug dealers. It was also intrinsic in the practices and strategies of homing, such as earning money and creating the materiality of homes. The respondents performed heritage through homing at the intersection of Rio's AHD (Smith 2016) and individual heritage imageries regarding the family houses. The actual physical and imaginary creation of homes, music and food, along with engaging in politics and struggles for social rights, all played a role in the heritage homing processes. The favela women's heritage homing can be seen as embodied recognition mobilised in everyday practice (Smith 2022, 639) and displaying "existential struggles" (Boccagni 2022). The lifelong struggles of Dona Yolanda and Marcia's grandmother, who challenged the afterlives of slavery and domestic migration, unfolded geometries of power, effects, emotions (Smith 2021) and politics of (mis)recognition (Smith 2022).

The relationship with the houses our protagonists created, as well as their practices of heritage homing, may be interpreted through the lens of emotional heritage (Smith 2021). This is conveyed through their descriptions of the meaning that houses have for them and the struggles they went through to build them, implying an emotional and symbolic resistance towards the allocated social space of black women and favela residents in Brazil. These heritage homing practices evolve through the "bottom-up" autoconstruction of houses as "performing heritage" within the context of multi-layered mobility. The favela women's housebuilding and "heritage homing" can be understood as embodied "existential struggles" (Boccagni 2022) mobilised in everyday practice (Smith 2022, 639).

Conclusions

This chapter discusses the homemaking process by favela women who were domestic migrants or descendants of forced migrants during times of slavery. It analyses the self-made houses of the respondents as sites of familial and personal heritage, adding a bottom-up perspective to the literature on houses as cultural heritage objects and contributing to the discussion on the role of houses and homemaking in the issues of belonging and identity within mobility studies. The employment of multisensory methodologies, and more specifically revealing the sensescapes (Low and Kalekin-Fishman 2016) around the houses, the attention to the gestures, mimics, tone and emotions

coming to the surface in contact with the material structure of the houses and their surroundings, constitute important data that help to contextualise the vocal statements of the respondents. The everyday practices of “heritage homing”, as performed by our protagonists, uncover their everyday “ontological struggles” in the quest for creating alternative futures.

The contribution of this chapter to the broader cultural heritage-mobility nexus concerns the development of the concept of heritage homing. It builds upon the processual conceptualisations of homemaking practices within mobility studies and performative approaches to cultural heritage, as popularised within Critical Heritage Discourse. As we have demonstrated, the homemaking by the respondents is done through the embodied practices of homing (Boccagni 2022), evoking and transmitting emotions and practices oriented on the materiality of the houses. At the same time, the dwellings in question are seen within certain contexts as tangible cultural heritage objects, meaning that the mentioned practices of homing become part of the embodied performative heritage (Smith 2021). The process of constructing self-built houses in the favelas reflects the struggle of becoming a home while performing heritage through embodied physical and emotional work. The concept of heritage homing, linking the conceptualisation of homes from mobility studies with the performative heritage approaches, offers the lens for the analyses of the houses as heritage sites from the perspective of individual actors and beyond the AHD.

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