The Neighbourhood as Home Away from Home?
Potentials and Dilemmas of Homemaking in the Public Among the Somali Swedes in Rinkeby, Stockholm

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Abstract

Home, as a special attachment to (and appropriation over) place, can also be cultivated in the public urban space, under certain conditions that we explore through a case study in Rinkeby, Stockholm. This article analyses various forms of homemaking in the public among the Somali-Swedes who live there. It shows how, in the case of vulnerable immigrants, a neighbourhood feels like home insofar as it facilitates a continuity with their past ways of living, sensuous connections with a shared 'Somaliness', reproduction of transnational ties, and protection from the sense of being 'otherised' that often creeps among them. However, homemaking in the public is ridden with contradictions and dilemmas, including those of self-segregation. The grassroots negotiation of a sense of home along these lines invites a novel approach into the everyday lived experience of diverse neighbourhoods in European majority-minority cities.[1]

Keywords

homemaking, neighbourhood, normality, public space, transnationalism, Somali migrants, Sweden

When I interviewed Hanan[2] [a Somali-Italian man living in Rome], he had just come back from Rinkeby where he had visited his sisters. Rinkeby, he enthusiastically explained, is where many Somali migrants in Stockholm live and have shops and restaurants. 'If you want to study Somalis in Sweden, you must go there, it is called "little Mogadishu"', he recommended when I told him about my fieldwork plans. But he also cautioned me:

> 'It is a ghetto. Young people kill each other in the streets. White people do not like to live there, they work there but then run away as soon as they can. But my sisters love Rinkeby, they have their friends, they work . . . they feel at home there' (Aurora Massa's fieldnotes, Rome, January 2018).

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There are different and contrasting ways to depict the Stockholm suburb of Rinkeby. It sounds like a dangerous 'ghetto' where 'white people' do not want to stay and youth crime is rampant. Yet, it also emerges as a hub in the Somali diasporic social space and, most importantly, a sort of public home for its inhabitants. Drawing from ethnographic fieldwork with local residents with a Somali background, this article investigates the everyday negotiation of a sense of home through the public space of a multiethnic low-income neighbourhood, among people that conjugate a strong transnational engagement and a remarkable exposure to stigmatisation from the host society.

In doing so, we aim to advance the debate on homemaking in diverse and marginalised urban areas. As several scholars suggest (Blunt and Sheringham 2019; Boccagni and Duyvendak 2020; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2017), 'the everyday practices, material cultures and social relations that shape home on a domestic scale resonate far beyond the household' (Blunt and Varley 2004: 3). They may also involve public spaces, like neighbourhoods where inhabitants experience a peculiar kind of social proximity. Attaching a sense of home to some extra-domestic space, hence identifying it as a metaphorical home, is an intrinsically relational process. Its meanings and functions are not inherent in the space as such. Rather, they stem out of the situated and contested ways in which it is experienced and appropriated (Koch and Latham 2013; Kuurne and Gómez 2019; Low 1996). Moreover, they work out in a tension with the larger urban and socio-political background in which a particular space is embedded. In the case of migrants, this typically includes transnational connections with the homeland and other 'diasporic' contexts.

Somali people in Rinkeby, as we realised through our fieldwork, tend to articulate and emplace a significant sense of home towards the neighbourhood. How does such a feeling arise, on what conditions and set of practices does it rest, and what does it ultimately mean? In which particular settings, and in reference to which other places or people does this sense of home emerge? We address these questions by discussing the lived experience of Rinkeby's public space among migrants with a Somali background, in light of their biographic and migration trajectories. While the majority of our interlocutors came from the Somali region, others were born and raised in the nearby countries (e.g. Ethiopia and Kenya), where their families resided or had been displaced.[3] Sweden is the country where they found asylum after escaping the Somali turmoil in the 1990s and 2000s, or other situations of crisis elsewhere. Yet, as they are perceived as 'Muslim',

'poor' and 'black' migrants, they are the target of ethnic, Islamophobic and racial discrimination. Moreover, as Rinkeby inhabitants, they suffer forms of spatial stigmatisation. At the same time, they have a political, economic and emotional attachment with their homeland, by some considered as the only real home. From this perspective, by referring to these people as 'migrants' or 'refugees' with a similar national and ethnic background we do not mean to reassert any essential identity, nor to neglect the diversity of migrants' relationships with their place of settlement and their similarity to non-migrant groups (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018). In fact, the categories we use were not preconceived or predefined. They emerged from the fieldwork itself, from the analysis of the ways in which Rinkeby and migrants were depicted in the mainstream public space, and from the narratives, practices and experiences of our interlocutors.

Central to this article is an analysis of the interplay between their dual marginalisation, the cultivation of diasporic ties, and everyday forms of homemaking in Rinkeby. We understand home, here, both as a physical location and an imaginary space imbued with 'positive' emotion (Blunt and Dowling 2006). Consistent with this, we understand Somali migrants' homemaking as a 'struggle for normality' (Korac 2009; van de Wetering 2020) after displacement, in contrast to the exceptionalism under which they are framed in the hegemonic Swedish public space.

In the following sections we present our theoretical and methodological framework and introduce the reader to the multiethnic public space of Rinkeby. We then approach the neighbourhood at different analytical levels. First, we illustrate the emergence of a sense of home out of sensorial and material infrastructures that facilitate lifestyles and atmospheres evoking Somalia and 'Somaliness'. We understand Somaliness as a source of personal and collective identification, which is produced, contested, and re-adapted to new life circumstances (Liberatore 2019). We then shift to a transnational scale, by revisiting Rinkeby as a hub for diasporic connections. At the same time, the neighbourhood should be seen in opposition to the wider city, as a 'local' sense of home is also a way to escape 'external' stigma and marginalisation. At all of these scales, we eventually discuss the ambivalence of living in Rinkeby as an equivalent of home in the public.

What we call 'Rinkeby' for sake of simplicity is actually the predominant lived experience of its public space among our informants. This is not meant to essentialise the neighbourhood, or to represent it as a whole. Indeed, our fieldwork-based portrait of Rinkeby is deliberately

partial and contingent. Yet, it is telling of what home-in-the public means to a stigmatised group, of how far it is achieved, and of the attendant dilemmas. The ensuing frame of analysis can be relevant across equally stigmatised majority-minority neighbourhoods, as we contend at last.

Migrant Homemaking in Multiethnic Neighbourhoods

A Theoretical Background

At first glance, the expression 'home-in-the-public' may seem paradoxical. In common sense, home evokes a private sphere in contrast to the public domain. In fact, home has been conceptualised as 'a special kind of place' (Douglas 1991) but also as a set of emotions, social relationships and values that can be transferred and reproduced into different settings over time (Kusenbach and Paulsen 2013). In this sense, home designates distinctive practices (home*making*) and is connected with 'positive' emotions such as security, familiarity and control (Boccagni 2017).

While showing that the attachment of a sense of home works out on several scales across the private–public divide (Duyvendak 2011), scholars have reconceptualised the divide itself as a threshold (Boccagni and Brighenti 2017) whereby domestic and non-domestic, private and public are co-produced and mutually imbricated (Blunt and Sheringham 2019). From this perspective, public spaces such as neighbourhoods, but also semi-public spaces like cafes or shops, can be investigated as locations in which people cultivate different senses and experiences of home (Kuurne and Gómez 2019).

The study of migrant ways to forge a sense of home in the public generally emphasises the role of their ethno-national belonging. Retaining everyday routines or special celebrations from 'back home', with people with a similar background, does contribute to shaping migrants' sense of home in the countries of settlement. Some authors consider migrants' homemaking-in-the-public in relation to other scales, from private dwellings to the city and the homeland, and in light of their legal, family and working conditions. For example, Hondagneu-Sotelo (2017) approaches urban community gardens as 'home-like places' where marginalised Latino migrants re-create their homeland during the harsh time of the US deportation crisis. By reproducing activities that are normally associated with the domestic

sphere (gardening, resting, socializing), migrants link their memories with the present, and experience comfort and familiarity. Likewise, Law (2001: 266) describes the weekly social gatherings of Filipina domestic workers in a central Hong Kong square, re-named 'Little Manila', as 'a home from home' – 'a place of remembering and forgetting . . . full of laughter, songs and home cooking', but also a site to escape work-related exploitation.

Migrant ways of homemaking in the public often take place against highly diverse urban backgrounds. As Wessendorf (2017) shows in the UK, neighbourhood diversity can both foster and hamper the development of emplaced belonging. For migrants that are visibly different from the white majority, neighbourhood diversity can be a source of perceived invisibility, hence of acceptance. This critically makes people 'fit in' (Butcher 2010), or 'feel normal' in the neighbourhood, as in the case of Rinkeby. Conversely, the arrival of strangers may fuel a sense of not feeling at home among long-time residents, thereby activating forms of 'home-unmaking' (Baxter and Brickell 2014). The construction and experience of home-in-the-public, therefore, is deeply related to the presence of some and the absence of others. Since it differentiates between insiders and outsiders, it is an inherently exclusionary process. As such, it has political implications that call into question the 'right' to feel at home, particularly in multiethnic neighbourhoods (Boccagni and Duyvendak 2020). In our analysis these political implications involve both Rinkeby as a locality and the sense of inclusion, visibility and normality – or rather, the lack thereof – in larger Stockholm.

Normality basically refers to conformity to a given standard. However, it also holds a more complex meaning (Cryle and Stephens 2017). For displaced people, in particular, regaining a sense of normality – improving one's conditions and exerting some control on one's life – is a precondition for 'remaking home' (Korac 2009). At the same time, defining what is normal is itself a normative act of power, which imposes certain ways of being over others (Goffman 1963; Hacking 1990). As a result, those who lie outside the boundaries of the normal likely become subject to forms of exclusion or stigmatisation.

The ways in which people deal with normality and stigma have been explored in different fields, including race and urban studies. Research on urban marginality has shown how people living in segregated areas do not necessarily internalise the stigmatisation they may be subject to (as asserted for instance in Wacquant 2008). Rather, they react in different ways, often adopting de-stigmatisation strategies

(Jensen and Christensen 2012; Lamont and Mizrachi 2012). While allowing one to rework the existing norms and elaborate different understandings of normalcy (de Wetering 2020), these strategies challenge the stigmatisation of these areas and may foster a sense of home-like attachment towards them.

In sum, homemaking is also a matter of bringing into the public domain practices, objects and ways of living associated with the domestic sphere, and with people's countries of origin. However, this is no mere reproduction of something from the past. It is rather a recreation that stems from the needs of the present, is projected into the future, and attuned to translocal connections and to the diasporic links with the homeland (Cohen 2008). This is particularly relevant for migrant communities, since the possibility to cultivate forms of transnational engagement, as we illustrate below, is critical to their ways of feeling at home in the receiving society. As important, this leads one to deconstruct the view of home as a necessarily single or exclusive *locus* (Miranda Nieto et al. 2020).

Methodological Background

Our article draws on ethnographic research: six-months of continuous fieldwork carried out by Aurora Massa as well as intermittent visits to the neighbourhood in 2018 and 2019 by Paolo Boccagni. Massa collected a dozen life histories of residents with a Somali background and conducted go-along interviews and informal conversations with a variety of people working and living in Rinkeby. Most of her fieldwork was done in English, sometimes with local Somali-Swedish research assistants. She regularly attended public and semi-public spaces (e.g. shops, cafés and restaurants) and visited the dwelling places of some of her informants. Boccagni, in turn, had follow-up conversations with the same informants and had the opportunity to attend local Islamic Centres. Together, Massa and Boccagni investigated homemaking in the public by looking at routines, materiality, embodied praxes, senses, and thresholds of intimacy in the everyday life of the neighbourhood.

The bulk of our research participants were men and women in their 30s and 40s, who arrived in Sweden as children or teenagers during the nineties, or as young adults during the 2000s. While they differ in terms of length of stay, mobility pathways, education and employment, they all identify themselves as 'Somali-Swedes', thereby articulating a dual sense of belonging. As we show below, this self-identification

talks not only to the Swedish society, but also to the wider Somali diaspora. Some of our interlocutors have never gone back to Somalia. Others have never been there because they were born and raised elsewhere. Yet, they all share a strong emotional bond with Somaliness and 'Somali Africa' as sources of personal and collective identification, whatever the desired future ahead of them: a dream of return to the 'homeland', a hope for a 'better' neighbourhood in Stockholm, or a view of Rinkeby as the long-term home.

There may be little new in emphasizing that all fieldwork interactions are politically, socially and culturally shaped. Nonetheless, it is important to remark that speaking about Rinkeby is no neutral act. Both the neighbourhood and its Somali-Swedes inhabitants are often negatively portrayed in the public discourse and in the media (Kleist 2018; Scuzzarello 2015). These representations connect them with marginalisation and unemployment, and the neighbourhood with youth gangs, welfare abusers and oppressed women. Whether these images are prevalent in Swedish media or not (*Somalis in Malmö* 2014), many interlocutors emphasised their strong impact on their lives. They were the constant backdrop to our fieldwork conversations, just like our interlocutors' attempts to challenge them.

In short, making a home in Rinkeby does not just mean to familiarise with spaces, people and informal rules. It also requires learning these narratives, and the ways to cope with them.

Entering Rinkeby and its Somali-Swedish Community

Located in north-west Stockholm, Rinkeby is accessible from the city centre in twenty minutes by subway. This is enough to enter an area that tends to be experienced as different from the mainstream Stockholm space by local residents and other Stockholmers alike. To some extent, the suburb is a typical product of the Million Homes Programme (Miljonprogrammet) (1965–1974), aimed at solving the housing crisis and enhancing an exemplarily universalistic welfare system (Hall and Vidén, 2005). Consistent with this urban planning model (Mattson and Wallenstein 2010), Rinkeby develops around a central square (*torget*) which hosts retail trade and public services. The surrounding housing districts are composed of apartment blocks, green areas, playgrounds for children, and schools.

Local inhabitants, mostly migrants from the Horn of Africa and the Middle East and their descendants,[4] have left their own marks in

the neighbourhood. Just like in other Million Programme areas (Mack 2013), the ordinary facilities in the square have been replaced by retail trades that sell cosmetics, clothing, food from certain regions, and provide special services for migrants (e.g. travel and money transfer agencies). Out of the main square, the neighbourhood has undergone top-down and bottom-up transformations. A public housing company has inaugurated the shopping street Rinkebystråket, which hosts Somali cafes, African cosmetics and Turkish furniture shops, to present the neighbourhood in the positive light of 'diversity' (Boccagni 2015) – 'the LA of Rinkeby', as an informant calls it with self-irony. On the initiative of inhabitants, small-scale trade activities have been established in spaces originally reserved for condominiums' laundries and garages, giving life to forms of 'tactical appropriation' of a space already shaped by public urban planning (Olsson 2008).

In fact, the peculiarities of the neighbourhood do not depend on structural elements. They have primarily to do with the visual, sound and olfactory 'scapes' delineated by the daily practices of local inhabitants, including their use of the public space. Through the colours of their skin, their hijabs, their languages and the ways they spend time in public spaces, people crossing the streets of Rinkeby reveal their prevalent migratory background. So do the shops, facilities and restaurants in the square and in the shopping area. Both these infrastructures for consumption and the sensorial experience of people flowing across them mirror religious, national and ethnic diversities, and build a visible difference, relative to the mainstream Swedish public space. This has to do less with group characteristics than with the relationships between them, whereby some elements are emphasised and turned into markers of mutual distinction (Cohen 2001). Importantly, though, the same elements that create a sense of home for some inhabitants may generate a sense of estrangement, or concern for the perceived otherness of an ethnic enclave, among many outsiders.

Apprehension towards housing segregation is not new in Sweden. Rather, it has paralleled the development of the Miljonprogrammet (Murdie and Bordegård 1998), leading to several attempts to contrast it. Housing segregation, resulting from the city's spatial configuration and its housing policies (Rokem and Vaughan 2019), has intertwined with ethnic segregation after the introduction of liberal policies towards refugees and family reunifications in the 1970s. Since then, in Million Homes Programme areas like Rinkeby, refugees from Latin-America, Balkans, the Middle-East and Africa have come to replace working-class Swedes and labour migrants with a Finnish or

Figure 1: A map of Rinkeby (source: authors' fieldwork).

southern European background. This process has increased with the marketisation of the housing sector in the 1990s, which pushed well-off sectors of populations into private housing (Andersson et al. 2010). Although the spatial concentration of ethnic enclaves is not an issue in itself, it does reflect a lack of integration for migrants and refugees in the Swedish urban contexts, which emerges for example in territorial stigmatisation and migrant discrimination in the labour market (Bevelander 2004; OECD 2016).

The question of segregation is entangled with a general distrust towards 'ethnic communities', considered a threat to a universalistic welfare model (Olwig 2011). Though a multiculturalist approach was introduced in Swedish immigrant policy in the 1970s, public policies have been guided by a rather prescriptive definition of integration as 'the ability to conform to social norms and cultural values defined in dominant discourse as basic to proper citizenship' (Olwig 2011: 180). Put differently, the Swedish political rhetoric for 'equality' has

privileged ideas of 'conformity' and 'sameness', making the very existence of difference a problem (Eastmond 2011; Graham 2003).

Against this backdrop, Rinkeby has long been portrayed as a segregated suburb, which conflates urban marginality and insurmountable cultural distance (Pred 2000). This emerged most visibly as a public issue with the riots from 2013 onwards (Anderssen and Weinar 2014). More recently, the representation of criminality has intertwined with Islamophobia, racism and the perception of insecurity increased by the 2015 so-called 'refugee crisis', which led the government to restrict its historically open regulations (Dahlstedt and Neergaard 2016).

While public policy tends to tackle integration in terms of areas of concern (e.g. urban outskirts) rather than ethnic groups, some communities do receive particular attention. Somalis are among them (Anderssen and Weinar 2014). The presence of Somali migrants in Sweden remained limited until the civil war in the early 1990s (Lewis 2002). After that, their number has been increasing through resettlement, asylum migration and family reunification. With almost 70,000 Somali-born individuals and over 100,000 descendants (Statistika Centralbyrån 2018), Sweden is the largest Somali hub in Scandinavia, hosting a very diverse community in terms of region of origin, education and professional skills.

Like elsewhere in Europe (Fangen 2006; Kleist 2007), negative media exposure and persisting marginality characterise the everyday life of Somali migrants in Sweden (Scuzzarello 2015). Nevertheless, the Somali-Swedish community has also engaged in significant social, economic and political initiatives regarding both the Somali region and their own life conditions in Sweden (Kleist 2018; Kubai 2013). As we show in the following sections, Somali-Swedes in Rinkeby attempt to create their own haven, legitimacy and belonging in a context they experience as hostile. Yet, this *is* their life context for an indefinite period of time, no matter how 'provisional' many perceive it to be as they dream to move to a 'better' neighbourhood in Stockholm, or to return to Somalia.

Home-in-the-Public and the (Re)production of Somaliness in Rinkeby

Osman is a 44-year-old bus driver who left Somalia in the 1990s. After being granted Swedish citizenship, he lived in different European countries looking for better job opportunities and returned to Sweden

during the economic crisis. Massa used to meet him in a café in Rinkebytorget. Although this coffee house was run by a Turkish couple and attended by men from the Middle East and the entire Horn of Africa, Osman and other informants consider it 'a typical Somali café', for it is a meeting point for the Somali-Swedes. One afternoon, while drinking a cup of spicy and milky tea, he said about Rinkeby:

> This is home, it seems to me to live in my country, in Somalia . . . Here we share everything. Here there are people who matter to me, my friends, my relatives. Here I can get what I want: food and clothes of my country. Here I can pray, because there is a mosque. Here I can have all the information about my country and send the money home.

In Osman's words, the sense of home in Rinkeby rests on the possibility to enact and enjoy what he considers a 'Somali' way of life, while also contributing to his homeland. Rinkeby is like a stage on which certain forms of sociability, shopping practices, religious celebrations and sensescapes allow Somali-Swedes to (re)produce a form of Somaliness. The presence of shops, facilities, restaurants and cafés plays an important role for our interlocutors to feel at home. Whether they are run by Somali-Swedes or not, they still provide suitable services, familiar foods and gathering opportunities.

The availability of certain items for consumption has a great impact on women's daily practices, as in the case of Aisha, who moved to Rinkeby from Italy eleven years ago. For Aisha, the impact of Stockholm was difficult: for some years, she was not able to learn the Swedish language and go to the city. Yet, Rinkeby offers her a safe haven. The first time she invited Massa at home they met at the local metro station. Aisha was returning from work and proposed shopping together. They first went to a supermarket managed by a Somali-Swedish man to buy *halal* meat for the family dinner. They moved then to the stand in Rinkebytorget to get vegetables that, Aisha said, 'in normal supermarkets are not fresh and expensive'. For Aisha, a mother of four, having these shops nearby is of paramount importance to buy 'Somali food' (permissible Islamic food, and fresh vegetables) despite her busy life.

While the shopping trajectories of our research participants frequently cross the city and reach as far as London or Dubai, Rinkeby offers important services for their daily life. These attract people with Somali and other migratory backgrounds from elsewhere in the city. Equally significant in eliciting a sense of home is the concentration of Somali-Swedes, as living closely together helps in upkeeping and creating Somali networks. As they meet around the neighbourhood,

Figure 2: Rinkebytorget, the main square in Rinkeby (source: authors' fieldwork).

on all levels from greetings on the street to hanging out together, they fulfil also a social need for both sociability and recognition in the public.

If we look at the ritual and religious dimensions of everyday life, many informants reported that they love staying in Rinkeby on Fridays, during Ramadan and on other Muslim and Somali celebrations. While these are just ordinary days in Sweden, they represent occasions to acquire the taste of holidays in face-to-face interactions in the neighbourhood. Some events are collectively celebrated in the public domain and in religious places like Islamic Centres, housed in rooms that were not originally meant for that purpose. The presence of an Islamic Centre where Somali-Swedes gather is particularly relevant for families, thanks to the Qur'anic schools where children can get an Islamic education, and for adults, as attending the mosque is deemed important to be a 'good Muslim' – especially for men. Although the construction of proper mosques has long been in progress (Mack 2015), dedicated institutions and services help migrants locate themselves on the actual and imaginative map of the urban landscape, enhancing their bonds with the neighbourhood.

Importantly, people's ways of consumption and sociability in Rinkeby are not only an effort to reproduce their past (real or imagined) lives. This is particularly evident for those participants who, like Aisha, left Somalia as children and have been socialised to 'Somali' ways of life, values and tastes only in diasporic contexts. For them, the (re)production of some sort of Somaliness is rather a resource for homemaking in the here-and-now, related both to Sweden and to diasporic networks. In a similar vein, retaining the past and emphasizing Somaliness does not necessarily mirror a desire to return to Somalia in the short term. Osman, who had never visited Somalia although he could have afforded to, is a case in point. Rather, these are strategies to provide a secure base for confronting life in Sweden and to feel at home in Rinkeby. In this perspective, recurring expressions such as 'I feel like I'm in Somalia' articulate the creation of an imagined space for living in Sweden. The sensorial and material landscapes of Rinkeby do not simply reflect the existence of a social and moral Somali community, but contribute to shaping and building it. It follows that the Somali character that our informants attribute to their ways of homemaking makes sense in an idealised sense of modernity in Sweden and a dialectic relation with their desires for wellbeing, as well as with the tug of their diasporic social space.

Home-in-the-Public and Transnational Connectedness: Rinkeby as a Hub for Diasporic Ties

One late afternoon in September 2018, Massa took a walk with Alma, a 42-year-old woman who had lived in the neighbourhood since 1992. As they were walking across apartment blocks and reddish-brown gardens, Alma intertwined the topography of Rinkeby with her personal biography. She showed Massa the places where she used to work and shop, the four flats where she had lived over time and the one where her father had died, the schools where her children studied, and so forth. As on other occasions, she said she had never thought to live elsewhere in Stockholm, nor had she any doubt in seeing Rinkeby as home. However, she also repeated what kind of home Rinkeby was for her:

> This is home because I am living here, but it is only temporary, because I don't feel this is my country . . . My father always told us as children: '*This* [Somalia] is home, Somalia belongs to you . . . You can come here

> [Sweden], you can study, you can work, but home is home'. This is my second home. This is the home I made. Somalia is the home God gave me.

Alma's words reveal the dialectical tension between the *ascriptive* and the *manufactured* side of home. This is a typical condition of those who live in diaspora, often pursuing the idea, and possibly the illusion, to return in the future (Werbner 2013). In the narratives of our informants, Somalia is generally the obvious and 'natural' home in an ascriptive sense – the place where the family comes from, the ancestral roots lie, and identity is based. Yet, Somalia as home is equally 'made', or cultivated through daily practices such as remittances or political and co-development initiatives. Alma, for example, in addition to being a member of a relief association, is involved in transnational family networks that connect her not only with Somalia (by sending money back to Mogadishu), but also with England and Norway, where she visits siblings. Similar mobility patterns, transnational engagement and family configurations multiply the perceived locations of home and influence the way one feels at home in Rinkeby. The neighbourhood itself is a hub for diasporic connections. Money transfer points, travel agencies and Lyca phone card retailers are all infrastructures for engagement with distant relatives and friends. In turn, Rinkeby's cafés are also meeting places for transnational associations.

As important, Rinkeby hosts the annual Somali Cultural and Sports Week, which attracts a large audience from abroad (Olsson 2008). By playing as representatives of the European countries where they live, while also highlighting their shared belonging, participants contribute to reproduce the 'Somali diaspora' – not as an established group defined by its dispersion, but as a potential moral community and a category of identification that is mobilised in certain circumstances (Kleist 2008). As our fieldwork shows, the Somali Week is a source of pride for being 'Somali-Swedes' within a diasporic space that facilitates both the attachment to countries of settlement, and the creation of a common ground across them. Over time, Somali-Swedes have campaigned to obtain an enlargement of local sport facilities to host the tournaments within the suburb. Overall, then, the event nourishes their multiple belonging and engagement – in short, their potential 'multi-sited embeddedness'. Originally referred to migrants' multilocal civic engagement (van Houte et al. 2015), this notion reveals how the everyday life of many Somali-Swedes is constituted of a network of localities connected through transnational flows (cf. Horst 2017). The

very sense of home for Somali-Swedes can be understood in terms of multi-sited embeddedness, for it ties together their places of origin and residence and the transnational family networks in-between, both in a scalar sense (neighbourhood, city, region, country) and in a temporal one. To the people we met, Rinkeby lies at the core of this temporal continuum, as a balance point between past- and future-related obligations towards the country of origin and the dear ones living there.

Home-in-the-Public and Acceptance: Rinkeby as a Place to Feel 'Normal' and Counter Stigmas

One Saturday, during our joint fieldwork, we started talking with a group of Somali-Swedish men in Sahal, a Somali-run facility with *hawala* service, a café and an area to play domino, watch Somali TV programmes and international football matches, and discuss politics. Their opinions of the Swedish election of 2018 and their bonds with Rinkeby were our main topics of discussion. 'Here I feel normal: I can speak loudly and nobody complains,' said Abdirahim, a Somali man in Sweden for twenty-six years wearing a white *khameez* (a long shirt). Married to a Somali-Swedish woman and father of five children, Abdi works in a public office in central Stockholm and is used to spending his days off in Rinkeby. He went on:

> When I am elsewhere, I have to change my behaviour: I lower my voice, I avoid moving my hands, I have to follow the rules because I *became a minority* . . . There are criminals in Rinkeby, but no more than elsewhere. There are people who live on social benefits, but most of us pay taxes, even though we spend time in cafés. We are not what they [the Swedish media] say, and patiently we must demonstrate that we are *normal* people. We accept and respect Swedish culture and Swedes must accept ours.

As this self-account, and many more, suggest, feeling at home in Rinkeby is built on a search for normality that overlaps with a persistent sense of estrangement. Rinkeby feels like home (also) by contrast with the external Swedish social space. In fact, all our interlocutors expressed their gratitude for the help they had received in Sweden. Most of them manifested a certain pride in having 'become Swedes', claiming to love the climate, share democratic values, or act as reserved persons when they travel back home. Nonetheless, they all emphasised a sense of separation from the majority population,

Figure 3: Rinkeby's housing districts (source: authors' fieldwork)

regardless of their personal histories, achievements or entitlements. Whether our informants blamed media manipulation, people's attitudes or institutional mechanisms, all of them articulated a sense of exclusion which may provoke anger and frustration. This can be elicited by open discrimination, by their difficulties in conforming with the presumed 'Swedish ways' to act in the public space, or by exclusivist understandings of the appropriate 'Swedishness' in which Muslims and poor and black-skinned bodies are simply not included.

This symbolic boundary between insiders and outsiders is epitomised by the question 'Where are you from?'. The frequent occurrence of questions on their place of origin made our participants feel like people who do not belong in the country, even if they were born or have lived there since their childhood. One cannot feel at home in a place, Alma told us, as long as their presence is not recognised as 'normal' – something that seems to occur in Rinkeby, but not in Stockholm as a whole: 'It's like a domestic space, no? If you feel you're not accepted, if Swedish people ask the Somali where they are from, you can't feel at home there'. From this perspective, and against the monolithic representations of Rinkeby as a dangerous place, the neighbourhood represents a zone of security. It protects from feeling out of place

or from being targeted as strangers. Thanks to its internal diversity, Rinkeby allows its inhabitants to feel 'invisible' and 'normal'. This means to adhere to shared social rules, values, ways of dressing and acting in the public. But it also means to avoid facing the stereotyped representations that are connected to racist attitudes among white Swedes. This is exemplified by the experience of Habane, a man in Sweden for eight years, who spent some months in a reception centre for asylum seekers in a village in the north before moving to Stockholm. He told us that same Saturday morning in Sahal:

> In the village they called me the 'black guy'. I am proud to be black, but I was disappointed by this nickname: they could call me the 'new guy', the 'new neighbour', or simply Habane. Here in Rinkeby I have never been labelled. Here I am Habane, and this is one of the reasons why I feel I belong to Rinkeby.

For sure, this emplaced sense of normality can always be questioned from the outside. Virtually all the conversations we had were aimed at showing us that people in the neighbourhood are 'good' and 'normal'. In an attempt to overturn the master-narrative about Rinkeby, many stressed the positive peculiarities of the suburb, relying on different stereotyped representations of themselves. Alma for example enthusiastically described the happiness one can find in Rinkeby:

> I see so many good things here because where can you find happy people every day? Nowhere else! If I live somewhere else in Stockholm, I don't think I can even say 'hi' to my neighbours. But here you feel like you are home . . . Swedish people become irritated if you go home without calling them before, but in Rinkeby they'll be happy if you go without an appointment, just you knock the door and they 'ah, come, come, come!', like when I was in Mogadishu . . . The hospitality is very high, so I feel like this is the best place I can be here.

Alma presents the neighbourhood sociability as a positive alternative to the stereotypically cold and reserved Swedes. She also connects it to her past life back home. Indeed, hospitality and close contact between neighbours are some of the 'homely' features of life in Somalia that our interlocutors miss most. From a dangerous and marginalised area, Rinkeby is then reframed as 'the best place to live'.

Just like the participants in van de Wetering (2020)'s study of Paris *banlieues,* people living in Rinkeby do not simply minimise or deny negative stereotypes. They also elaborate new representations of themselves and others. In doing so, they challenge social and symbolic boundaries and struggle to create alternative ideas of normalcy to reshape the dominant ones. Rinkeby becomes an inclusive and

welcoming place where 'it is ok to be different' and 'none can just say "you should be like that"'. Its value comes precisely from its ethnic, national and religious diversity, as 'hundred different kinds of languages, colours, cultures . . . come in one place and still live in peace', says Naima, a 45-year-old woman born in urban Kenya from a Somali family. Discursively at least, Rinkeby-as-home emerges as the opposite of a stereotypical ghetto, but also of the ideally quiet and homogeneous Swedish public space.

Interestingly enough, none of our research participants expressed discomfort for Rinkeby's diversity and multiculturalism. Some, mainly those who are actively engaged in the improvement of the neighbourhood, put it in a positive light. This shows a creative use of the 'Western' multicultural and cosmopolitan discourses from below (Werbner 1999). To some extent, these representations enable the appropriation of values such as tolerance and inclusion that have long characterised the 'Swedish exceptionalism' and that urban segregation, growing populism and hostility towards refugees seem to erode (Schierup and Ålund 2011). These idealised narratives show how the discursive battle around Rinkeby influences the homemaking efforts of Somali-Swedes, as well as the ways in which they represent themselves and the others.

On the Limits of Home-in-the-Public in Rinkeby

Feeling at home in Rinkeby, however, is not without ambiguities. All across the narratives of our participants, the positive aspects were unsurprisingly paralleled with downsides in their own life conditions. While the media are blamed for the bad reputation of the neighbourhood, public institutions are considered responsible for the lack of services, the social and economic problems and youth criminality. 'This is Sweden too', a sentence we often heard during fieldwork, clearly articulates this sense of frustration and abandonment. This matches and contrasts with feelings of being targeted as 'zone of concern'.

As already mentioned, many of our research participants carry out civil and voluntary activities to improve the neighbourhood. For example, Alma, as a family counsellor, is particularly committed to overcoming migrants' mistrust towards public authorities and attracting Somali parents to welfare services. Likewise, Naima, besides working as a linguistic mediator, is a member of several associations that support vulnerable migrant categories. These are ways to take care

of the neighbourhood, contrast stigmatizing representations about it and contribute to the city-making (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018). They are also, we argue, homemaking practices whereby people try to enhance the collective sense of security and attachment to the neighbourhood.

At the same time, the risks of everyday life in Rinkeby and the need for residents to protect themselves and their families were not absent from their narratives, nor from their practices. While adults tend to see Rinkeby as a home-like place for themselves, those with young and teenage children fear that they may get involved in gangs, get a poor education and have fewer job opportunities in the future. In some cases, the efforts to improve Rinkeby and protect one's children coincide. This is the case of Zahra, a single woman who has lived in the neighbourhood for twenty-five years. After changing several jobs throughout Stockholm, Zahra has recently opened a branch of a home-care company for disabled and elderly clients, in Rinkeby. Although she has never thought to move elsewhere and does not plan to return to Somalia (which she often visits for family and work reasons), she has made all efforts to keep her children busy after school (by making them attend Qu'ranic schools and practice sports) and away from the neighbourhood: 'If you go to schools here you never meet a Swede. Instead, it is important for my children to get to know Swedish people, because they live in this country.' The small number of children whose mother tongue is Swedish could actually affect the linguistic proficiency of Rinkeby students, according to many research participants (cf. Milani and Rickard 2012).

Zahra's case illustrates the concerns of many parents in raising children in Rinkeby, as well as their tactics to keep them safe and offer them a better future, while retaining a local attachment. As she proudly recounts, her daughter moved to London and found a job there. This is telling of the symbolic value attached by Somali-Swedes to this city as a land of opportunity, and of the connection between spatial and social mobility (Ali 2012). Rinkeby itself has long been the 'vestibule of Stockholm', as one participant put it: a transit area where newcomers stay for a while, before getting a good job and moving elsewhere. Although the residential trajectories of local inhabitants are more stable nowadays, mainly because of the housing crisis, the idea that moving elsewhere leads to improvement is still widespread. This is also a matter of getting out from the bubble of Rinkeby as such. The sense of security, familiarity and control ensured by the neighbourhood

has its own potential downside – isolation, self-marginalisation and lack of self-realisation. Naima, who had purposefully chosen to live in Rinkeby a few years ago, emblematically expressed her concerns towards those who 'spend all their life in Rinkeby square'. Her work, she added, was precisely an attempt to build a bridge between the neighbourhood and the larger Swedish society.

Conclusion

As our fieldwork shows, public spaces in a stigmatised neighbourhood like Rinkeby can turn into a source of ideas, feelings and practices of home for a particular community of migrants. Even so, their construction and experience of home-in-the-public is faceted, ambivalent and shifting over time. It entails the domestication from below of certain spaces and the simultaneous production of connections (with Somalis living elsewhere) and oppositions (with the majority population and urban space).

Relative to the pre-existing literature on feeling at home in the public (Blunt and Sheringham 2019; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2017), we highlighted the sensorial and mnemonic foundations of a sense of home in the neighbourhood. This rests on the possibility of retaining connections to the past and the country of origin, seen from the here-and-now. Indeed, our interlocutors often articulated their attachment to Rinkeby with expressions like 'I feel I am in Somalia'. Homemaking in Rinkeby is mediated by the existence of Somali shops and restaurants, Muslim worship places, and people with a similar migratory background, with the attendant opportunities for familiarity and sociability. This, however, involves less a mimetic similarity with Somalia than a sense of security, familiarity and belonging that is experienced in the neighbourhood.

Migrants' construction of a link with an idealised homeland and Somaliness is a way for them to reinvent themselves in the new life circumstances of a diverse and socially marginal urban outskirt of Europe. In addition, the attachment of a sense of home to a specific socio-spatial environment emerges from the feelings of 'fitting in' (Butcher 2010) there. Making home-in-the-public is based on feelings of entitlement, but also of (in)visibility. Even though negotiating a sense of home requires some claim for public visibility, feeling scarcely visible – that is, like the other inhabitants – is what fosters a sense of familiarity and belonging there (Wessendorf 2017).

Relative to the debate on Somali transnationalism and diaspora (Hammond 2013; Horst 2017; Kusonw and Bjork 2007), we showed that migrants' construction of a sense of home involves several scales and locales across a diasporic space. A neighbourhood can be a hub for local and translocal connections to be simultaneously cultivated, fostering in turn the possibility to feel at home there. Somalia, in the eyes of our research participants, stands for the ascriptive and inalienable home given by God, where one's sense of belonging lays its roots, and affective ties can be nourished from far away. However, the public space of Rinkeby is a crucial affordance for these transnational activities and diasporic attachments, thereby mediating the tensions between here and there, past and future. Unsurprisingly, the possibility to enact such practices and cultivate such attachments reinforces one's sense of being at home in the neighbourhood.

Having said this, researching homemaking in a neighbourhood is also instrumental to highlight a sense of exclusion from the wider urban environment. Home-in-the-public in Rinkeby has pragmatically to do with familiarity, normality and invisibility in the neighbourhood, whereby one is not perceived as out of place, more than being a positive achievement. Homemaking is a relational and exclusionary endeavour, based on the absence of a native majority and on the possibility to escape stigmatisation from it. Conversely, the peculiarity of the neighbourhood fosters feelings of estrangement among outsiders. In this respect, our work reveals that the 'struggle for normality' is part of migrants' efforts not only to remake a home somewhere, but also to rework existing and hegemonic normativity. In other words, the efforts to make a home can go hand in hand with the attempts to challenge and change negative representations of marginal urban areas and populations. In presenting their feelings of home towards Rinkeby, for example, our interlocutors emphasised the positive aspects of it, paradoxically depicting in negative terms the Swedish majority and thus countering their stigma.

At the same time, our study shows that the construction of home in a stigmatised neighbourhood is not without ambivalence and pitfalls. Although for most research participants Rinkeby emerges as a homely place, it still generates contrasting life projects – some want to improve it, others wish to leave it, most perceive it as dangerous in certain life circumstances. In this light, our interlocutors' attempts to improve the neighbourhood are further instances of appropriation and homemaking. However, home-in-the-public, as much as in the private, is no fixed condition. It is rather an open-ended, temporalised process, which can work

against an aspirational background of future social, and possibly geographical mobility towards other neighbourhoods in Stockholm, other European countries and even – in a yet-to-determine future – to Somalia.

While the Somali case has several peculiarities, approaching neighbourhood relations as a matter of homemaking can be equally relevant to other stigmatised and segregated peripheries in European multiethnic cities. Researching home-in-the-public along the lines we suggest is instrumental to shift the debate from principled values, or abstract claims, to the empirical terrain of everyday place-making, as long as the latter rests on adequate material and sensorial infrastructures. Feeling at home in the neighbourhood has not simply to do with the public space available for ethnic retention or transnational engagement. It also relies on an inherently oppositional and 'exclusivistic' subtext. Living in a familiar place where one feels normal can be the flipside of conditions of marginality that are built from the outside. How permeable the windows and gates of a 'public home' are, for ethnic minorities and majorities alike, is then as important as the existence of a home in the first place. 'I cannot feel really home here', Naima pointed out at the end of a conversation with us, 'until the Swedes acknowledge this as a place like all the others'.

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Notes

1. Although the authors have been equally engaged in the writing process, we declare a 'division of authorship', for the purposes of research output assessment in Italy, as follows. Massa authored the sections on 'Home-in-the-public and the (re)production of Somaliness in Rinkeby', 'Home-in-the-public and acceptance', 'On the limits of home-in-the-public in Rinkeby', and 'Conclusions'. Boccagni authored 'Introduction', 'Migrant homemaking in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods', 'Entering Rinkeby and its Somali-Swedish community', and 'Home-in-the-public and transnational connectedness'.
2. Personal names are fictitious.
3. We refer to the Somali region as the territory corresponding to the Somali Republic of 1 July 1960, including both the Federal Republic of Somalia and the Republic of Somaliland. We use the term Somalia, instead, for events that occurred before the collapse of the Somali state (1991) or whenever reporting words, meanings or emotions of our participants.
4. In 2011–2013, out of 25,723 inhabitants, more than half were born outside the EU and Scandinavia. Most notably, 7,197 were born in Somalia, 3,756 in Iraq and 2,839 in Turkey (Statistika Centralbyrån 2015).

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