

# Tactics for Homing in Mobile Life

## - A Fieldwalk Study of Extremely Mobile People

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### ABSTRACT

For many people home making is an activity, which extends beyond a single house. We introduce the terminology of Homing as the act of home making, when in a primary home, secondary home or more temporary spaces. By point of departure in existing literature on home making and through ethnographic studies of extremely mobile people we identify general tactics for homing. We present the identified tactics and show how people deploy not only one but several tactics in their intention of making a homely feeling despite not being in their primary home.

Reviewing the mobile technologies currently in use we argue that several of the tactics identified are currently not well supported. We discuss how technology design can learn from this study through pointing to the potential in designing mobile technologies to better support these unsupported tactics.

We consider the tactics as a tool for deeper understanding of mobile practices and thus informing the design of more relevant future technologies for people engaged in a mobile lifestyle.

### Categories and Subject Descriptors

H5.m. Information interfaces and presentation

**General Terms:** Design, Experimentation, Theory

**Keywords:** Home, ethnography, design, tactics, making home, mobility, Deleuze

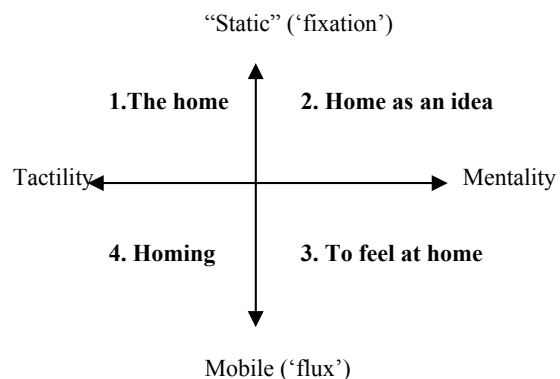
### 1. INTRODUCTION

The domain of homes has recently received a great deal of attention in response to the increasing use and development of interactive computer technology for the home. It has been pointed out that the domain of the home embraces unique characteristics, which are important to understand in order to design meaningfully for this sphere [6][20]. However, an underlying, almost tacit assumption in much of this work is that home is confined to one house. One of the weaknesses of this type of research, with respect to mobility, is that it often concentrates on studying one nuclear family living in one house, despite the fact that for many people home is not the same as a house. An increasing number of wealthy people have flats and houses in several countries, people

travel more and more as part of their job, and children of divorced parents often share their time between the homes of their parents.

With this paper we wish to broaden the perspective on homes relating it to mobile life. Drawing upon Winther's research [24], and also suggested by Woodruff et al. [26], we hypothesize that the partly confined perspective of home as a house is a result of the tacit normative idea of homes, as prevalent in western thinking, where home is conceptualized as nuclear families living together in one house. Winther [ibid] points to the paradox that a significant fraction of people actually live in much more complex setups. We see this research as a contribution in the direction of embracing the nature of lived home life with all its complexity and messiness as called for by Swan et al [20] and Aipperspach et al. [2]. Additionally we see this as a contribution towards embracing more of the place specific and heterogeneous activities and interaction in the area of mobile HCI, than promoted by the anything anywhere anytime paradigm and by the mobile, general purpose devices of the laptop and mobile phone.

In order to establish a nuanced notion of 'home' Winther [24] splits the concept of home in four categories and makes a distinction between: the home (as place), home (as an idea), to feel at home (a feeling of being home), and 'homing' (how to establish the home-feeling). As elaborated in the following, the last two categories are of high relevance to the mobile community, and in particular, we draw upon and further develop the perspective of Homing.



1. *The home (as place)* is often understood as a cave, a place reserved for certain (included) people. The Home is the concrete

material and tactile space. It is the inhabited space. It has been a specific place located in a Heimat where traditions, work and physical activities were the centre of rotation. At Home in a house everyday practices take place. The Home is a phenomenological sphere, where home life is performed [13] & [16].

2. *Home (as an idea)* is strong and complex. Home is not one idea but multiple ideas with a number of normative demands attached to them. Home is the abstract idea connected to the cultural ways of understanding the domestic. The strong ideological construction constitutes the notion about and around home, and it changes slowly.

3. *To feel at home* is a necessity in our modern world. It is not a feeling you obtain once and for all, but a complex feeling, bound in a mixture of restlessness, homelessness and homeliness. How one feels at home or not marks a mood, which is not embedded in one place. One can feel at home in an idea, in the body, in the language. One can carry the mood of homeliness along, if the one you feel at home with travels or moves on.

4. *'Homing'* is a way to relate oneself to everyday life and to obtain the necessary impression of 'coping'. Homing activities are done in order to feel more at home. Homing is a construction elaborated in the work of Winther [ibid] and the word has emerged from a Deleuzian verbalising of nouns, where things are in the becoming, never finalized and not bound to a specific place. We develop this concept with respect to the mobile community, as it is a mobile approach to home. To feel at home and to be homing are terms that are of high importance for this study. These are actions and notions that are applicable in mobile life beyond the traditional notion of home.

As a way to explore how people do homing acts when sharing their time between different places, we decided to look at five different people living an extremely mobile lifestyle and having developed this over years. The field studies have been designed on the basis of Winther's work [24] following the line that "home" is not something that is, but is rather in continuous making. That homing is an activity that we do to achieve comfort even while shortly staying at different locations. We report on a qualitative ethnographic study of 5 people who in various ways live between several 'homes'. The study takes the form of a 'fieldwalk' [12] where one of the authors, Winther, followed these five people on their travel between one house and to another place studying both how they packed in one house, travelled and unpacked in the new place. All participants have lived between homes or homely places for a number of years developing and consolidating their practices. Thus they can be seen as lead users [10] and their lessons and tactics can provide valuable insights into the implications of making homely places in several houses, hotels or other relevant locations.

The paper is structured as follows. We position our research in the landscape of related work, and in particular we introduce the framework by Winther [24] focusing on the category of homing. We next describe our study exemplifying the tactics for homing and we present the results of this study. We conclude with a discussion of how we may learn from the identified tactics with regard to technology design.

## 2. HOMING

The terminology of Homing is based on Deleuze and Guattari's [7] verbalizing of nouns whereas things are in constant becoming. Deleuze uses space as an example and transforms it into 'spacing'

as an action. In that way space as a locality disappears and points towards the things and actions making it into space. By verbalizing home it becomes 'homing' and thus becomes home as something being done, practiced, the becoming of home.

It is a kind of tactic as Michel de Certeau calls it [5], a way to use the space, not to *get* a place. 'Verblings' as homing emphasize that one can home oneself, do as at home, fake at home, and act domestically, in localities which do not have anything to do with ones own home. In that way homing is a tactic and not a place. Homing is not connected to one place, but is a nomadism - a capability to be in the world [15].

Living between the contrast of a home (a specific home) and the none-homely-element (nomadism) is a condition for the late modern person in a global society. As a way of coping with this condition people do acts in order to relate to the specific places. Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan[22] talks about making space into place as way of coping. In that way space becomes specific, familiar, secure and thus transforms into place. This constant becoming place is a way of root holding while on the move. Deleuze and Guattari[7] argue that people are not root holders, but constantly moving in a network of relations to the world. Homing in our definition is not a none-place, but the acts of making specific places and feeling more homely.

## 3. RELATED WORK

Within the area of computer human interaction and interaction design in general, the home domain has received a great deal of attention over the past years [6][11][25]. The key argument of much of this research is that the specific nature of home life must be understood when designing for this sphere. Some of this has taken the form of ethnographic studies providing great insights into the specifics of domestic life [6] lately also covering activities such as religious practices within homes [25]. In line with our research, these results point both towards design issues [6] as well as the nature of how a space is transformed into a home [19]. However, as argued earlier, such studies have most often been confined to the study of home life as people living within one house practice it.

Exceptions include studies of families comprising extended family members who live in each their house [9][17] but here the focus has primarily been on supporting the connection between extended family members who live permanently in each their house [13][20] and not on how an individual or a family travelling between different homes or homely places make home in these different places.

In terms of mobility and domestic life, there have been studies of micro-mobility within a house [1]. Zafiroglu and Chang [26] have studied retirees living full-time in recreational vehicles pointing to needs for means to keep in touch with loved ones and friends while on the move, of signalling psychic states between inhabitants to make it easier to share limited space, for supporting the meeting with shifting neighbours and for storing and sharing memories of past journeys. Our study complements both studies in that we extend beyond a house and we study various kinds of people for whom home is not confined to a house.

In our view, Homing offers an alternative perspective on mobile life through introducing a certain nature, a preferred state of mobile life which is not place-less and do not adhere to the anything, anywhere, anytime paradigm, but which emphasizes that we are constantly situated in specific situations and locations

and that many people do homing activities as a way of being in the world. The research by Swan et al. [19] is in line with this emphasizing clutter-making as an example strategy for making home; in this way also pointing towards home making as an activity and not so much as a place.

To our knowledge, homing as a tactics has rarely been studied in this field with a design perspective. As we discuss in the end of this paper, current technologies only provide limited possibilities for homing, thus there seems to be a design space for future mobile technologies.

## 4. STUDYING HOW PEOPLE MAKE HOMELY PLACES

In order to study how people make homely places, we have done a qualitative ethnographic study, focusing on how concrete people transfer between two homes or homely places, how they leave one home or homely place and how they enter and inhabit another. We have followed five different people, who are further described in the following.

We used the method of ‘a fieldwalk’ [24] where the ethnographer went to the informants home, observed how they packed, travelled together with them between the places, i.e. ‘walked’ with them on their trail [12]. The ethnographer then visited or stayed with them again in the ‘new’ place. She followed them, observed them when they packed and un-packed, talked to them (informal), and interviewed them (semi-structured interview), and video and tape-recorded them. The ethnographer was embodied in the same places, and could see the informants bodily movements and gestures, what kind of stuff they took with them, how they used and inhabited the “new” place, and listened to how they talked about the place they left behind. She walked close to the informants, but of course did not feed and smell the same. But she could ask about the change, about their habits, about the mood during the travel. She could ask for explanations, and in that way get closer to the experiences they had which are important when we try to understand living conditions, needs, dreams and emotions.

### 4.1 Participants and fieldwalks

In this section we introduce our informants and the fieldwalk studies conducted. In the planning of the study we attempted to get in touch with informants that could represent a range of aspects in terms of approaches and conditions for homing. We sought for people who have both chosen this lifestyle for themselves e.g. a businessman as well as some who did not have a choice. e.g. the child of divorced parents. We also looked for people that extend their mobility across countries as well as people commuting more locally.

#### 4.1.1 Steven a New Zealand steward living in UK

Steven has been working as a steward for 18 years living a life with a wife in London. He grew up in New Zealand where his parents and brother still live and he has a son and an ex-wife in Copenhagen.

We meet Steven in London, and follow him on the typical work journey from London to Los Angeles.

The trip starts in the airport while waiting before going on board. He shows a binder of work material in which he has inserted photos of his wife and son, as can be seen in figure 7. Waiting time is over and we enter the plane and fly across the Atlantic. After a full workday on board he travels by bus with the rest of

the crew to a hotel in LA where he walks up to the room. While entering he places the “Do not disturb” sign on the outside of the door. At 2 am we receive a text message saying: “gym” and we get up to go to the gym. Steven explains that he tries to keep the UK time in the body. Therefore he goes to bed at 3 pm and wakes up at 2 am to go to the gym.

In his room he shows how he has arranged it. His stuff is spread out; he has put up his Ipod loudspeakers and set up the table with his laptop on four glasses. The computer is very important to him. On the computer he runs Google earth and widgets which tell him the current weather conditions in London, at his parents home in New Zealand, in Denmark where his son from his first marriage lives, and the two destinations he flies to. These are important topics when chatting with his relatives via MSN or mobile phone. His total set-up enables him to see, touch and hear their voices of his loved ones. He doesn’t do anything to keep his room tidy and cleaners are not welcome, and as such keeps his place very private, whereas the computer and phone enables him to extend this privacy beyond the room by connecting to his loved ones.

#### 4.1.2 Lisa a teen moving between divorced parents

Lisa travels every fortnight between her parents. She is 14 years old and has been travelling between her parents for five years.

We meet Lisa in her father’s home, from where we follow her on the recurring trip to her mother’s place.

Lisa shows how she packs while explaining what she is doing. One bag is for school and the other is filled with computer, game boy, mobile phone and a lot of adapters and wires. She does not bring clothes at all. When the bags are full she, her father and baby brother walk to her mother’s place ten minutes away. Upon arriving they use the entry telephone to ask for unlocking the door, and they walk up the stairs. She says that moving between the two places provides her break from a baby brother living with the father, and an older sister living with the mother. She does not prefer one of the places, and she does not label any of them as her home, but as ‘dad’s home’ or ‘mom’s home’. After arriving she drops the two bags in her own room. She does not unpack, and states that all this mess makes it visible that she is here.

#### 4.1.3 Paul commuting between an island and the city

Paul commutes weekly between his home and wife on an island and an apartment in Copenhagen where he works. He has done this kind of commuting for the last nine years. The circumstances for the travel change from travelling by night ferry, to going by airplanes. There are also schedule changes due to seasons. He uses much time on logistics, checking out weather reports and prices.

We follow Paul on his weekly trip from the island to Copenhagen.

On the island he shows how he collects stuff during the weekend, and makes a material outbox. He starts packing a computer and things from the tray – no clothes. Before leaving his wife checks up the remember list: money, keys, mobile phone. He walks to the ferry and waves to his wife while leaving the harbour. On the boat he talks to the captain and drinks coffee with the crew. After arriving to the mainland he drives around for several hours buying stuff for the wife and then waiting for the plane. 7 hours later after a walk, ferry, car, airplane, bus, metro, bike and some stairs – we arrive in Copenhagen. He looks forward to return home -to the apartment, drop the stuff, put some fresh milk in the fridge, and then he turns on the TV and relaxes on the sofa until bedtime. He says that it is a nice and warm apartment.

Some days later we meet again and he talks a lot about dust. The apartment smells dirty, and there are many practical things that need to be done. But he wants to return back home (to the island). In the apartment he has another material outbox, with some stuff for his wife.

#### 4.1.4 *Thomas a businessman travelling around the world*

Thomas is a wealthy man travelling around the world more than 200 days a year due to his work as an investor, having his own company. Originally he is from Denmark, but has during the last 20 years lived in Paris, New York and now London. He has an apartment in London, another in Copenhagen and travels around the world between partners and business meetings every week.

We meet Thomas in his London apartment and travel with him to Dubai and back.

He tells us about his home and ways to use it. *“My sister often tells me, that I don’t need a home, but with my lifestyle I just need a hotel room”*. His suitcase is packed, because he returned from Spain the day before and has no time to unpack at all. He soon receives a text message saying that the private driver has arrived. The car driver reminds him about the passport, ticket and the key before leaving. On the way Thomas has lots of time to reflect about his life and travel because it is Saturday. Every Saturday *“the world is shut down”*, he says.

During the flight Thomas uses the laptop until the battery is dead, and after that he reads the five newspapers he has brought along. We talk, read and talk. In Dubai his mobile rings when we wait for the luggage and he constantly receives and makes calls until we arrive at the hotel. His assistant has booked the hotel, but there is no Internet connection in the rooms, and the conference office is closed after 10 PM. He is upset, and the next morning we receive a text message saying: ‘Left for another hotel. See you’. During the next 3 days he is very busy with meetings and we meet up again the day before returning to London. He shows his hotel room and his stuff. He stays in a suite at Sheraton just above the creak. Someone has drawn the curtain, and Thomas has not seen the view. He has not unpacked and except from the bed and the working table everything seems untouched. On the table he has a lot of labels with all the notes he has made during phone calls. During our 45 minutes interview the mobile phone rings four times and text messages arrive too (it was between 10-11 pm). On the way back to London he constantly talks on his mobile phone, just interrupted by a short meeting held in the airport. He talks while walking and during security and passport control. He does not talk to anyone else but is highly focused on the phone conversations.

#### 4.1.5 *A family commuting between the city and a holiday house*

The family consists of Brian, Jane and their two boys at the age of 4 and 6. They travel weekly back and fourth between their Copenhagen apartment and their holiday house. They leave Friday evening from Copenhagen and return on Sunday evening.

We follow them on the habitual trip from Copenhagen to the holiday house Friday evening.

The two boys are watching a children’s program while the parents prepare the trip. Brian says that they have to be ready for departure at 6 pm, because they want to be in the holiday house before 7 pm, when the Disney TV-show begins (a ritual Friday

evening for many families in DK). Brian and Jane are busy tidying up the kitchen. They start the wash machine; clean the tables after having a quick meal, and take things out of the fridge. They have 3 boxes in the kitchen, and after a while these boxes are placed on the steps, and then carried down to the car. At 6 pm, the boys are ready and the family walks down the stairs. They put the stuff into the car (just boxes with food and a camera). During the trip we listen to “Sludder og vrøvl” (a Danish children’s song). After 30 minutes we arrive, and Brian turns on the different things such as heating, electricity etc., for the house to be operable. Jane empties the boxes they brought along, and the boys change to pyjamas. They do all these things without discussion, and Brian explains that they have rituals for everything. They try to minimize the journey in a way so that it becomes a kind of ‘just’ a jump. They do not bring clothes or other luggage with them, because they do not want to pack and unpack. They have everything in doubles.

## 5. TACTICS FOR HOMING

Michel de Certeau makes a distinction between strategies and tactics [5]. A company, a government or an institution can through strategies get a place. Tactics are ways of using space without getting it. Everyday practices, tactile doings and bodily movements can be understood as tactics. Drawing upon the material and findings in the fieldwork we recognize the following tactics for homing, based upon identified thematic practices found across informants.

### 5.1.1 *Territorializing*

The ethnographic studies in this project exemplify various ways of territorializing as a way of homing. As Lisa enters her mother’s flat, she casually throws her bag in the middle of the floor to signal in particular to her elder sister that she is now back in the flat. She points out that it is important that her sister can see she is home and accordingly the sister should not be in her room. Lisa does not unpack as a separate activity when she enters the flat. Rather, over time, she spreads her stuff and picks and drops it as she needs it:

[all the interviews have been translated]

Q: I noticed last time that the first thing you did was to go in here [into her own room]. Did you go here to see how the fish are doing, or..?

Lisa: No, I went here to drop my stuff.

Q: Okay, so you put your stuff in here?

Lisa: Yes, I just drop them in a pile, until I need them.

Steven territorializes in a similar way by letting clothes and stuff lay around in the hotel room as can be seen in Figure 1. He also makes a clear gesture of territorializing by putting the “Do not disturb” sign on the doorknob.

But he also has more specific unpacking routines where he sets up and territorializes the room with music. He always carries with him portable loudspeakers, which he connects to his computer in order to listen to his own music.

Territorializing is a physical way of making traces, showing the lived life. According to Walter Benjamin to inhabit is to make traces[4][22]. The home is often referred to as the primary territory [20], and we find it interesting that territorializing obviously goes beyond the home. The first homing tactic towards

feeling more at home is gaining more territory in the acts of territorializing.

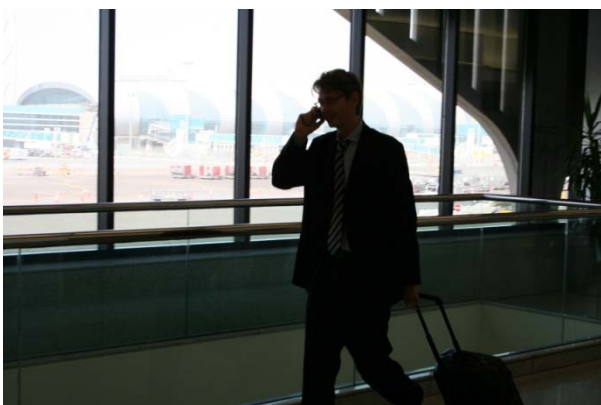


**Figure 1 Stevens hotel room**

### 5.1.2 Bubbling

Thomas's dominant tactic for living an extremely mobile life is to bubble. Bubbling is a way of excluding the outside local disturbances. Using his portable computer and in particular his mobile phone Thomas continuously bubbled through having concentrated conversations over the mobile phone. This happened in transit (Figure 2), in the taxi, in the lobby. Only on the actual flight trip where conversations over mobile phones are prohibited, he refrained from talking on the phone; being his only place for bubbling not only from the current physical surroundings also as a personal bubbling, disconnected from anyone – in his own words "...a sacred place". Thomas did not pay much attention to his surroundings nor did he feel the weather as he travelled by car and went directly into the hotel lobby. In his hotel room (Figure 3) he did not withdraw the curtains and in this way he also bubbled in there, keeping the local surroundings out.

Yet an example of bubbling is when Steven and his colleagues had finished a long flight, they all bubbled individually in the bus while being transported to the hotel, by putting on headphones and listening to music. Most of them closed their eyes too.



**Figure 2 Thomas bubbling while in airport transit area**



**Figure 3 Thomas bubbling in his hotel room, never pulling back the curtains**

Bubbling is a coping tactic for the people constantly on the move. The findings were examples of individual bubbling, only social outside the specific place, such as the other end of the telephone connection. You may not feel homely by bubbling, but rather less alienated towards the surroundings and the homing tactic is therefore an example of placeless homing. It is a homing tactic in line with the nomadic thinkers claiming that none-place exists.

### 5.1.3 Outboxing

We see a number of examples where people make outboxes preparing for their travel. Overall we see two ways of 'outboxing'. One which consists of a permanent outbox in the form of a bag, which is adjusted, refilled between trips but never totally unpacked and another strand which is the temporary outbox where materials are gathered, typically in a specific location in preparation to a specific travel. Similarly Jane and Brian prepare for their trip to the summerhouse by collecting materials in dedicated boxes next to the front door (Figure 5). Steven and Paul have more permanent outboxes in the form of their suitcases. These boxes are never emptied but only refilled with clean and ironed clothes before a travel.



**Figure 4 Paul prepares for his trip back to the island by collecting materials on a table in his office in his flat in Copenhagen, forming a material outbox**



**Figure 5 Brian and Jane's outbox of stuff collected to be brought to the summerhouse**

Q: Do you unpack your bag while you travel?

A: No, it is, no it is always ready right. My passport is always in a specific place in my bag. It is kind of idiot-proof since, you know if I start to put my passport all sorts of places, then I forget it.

Q: yes, I heard your driver reminding you

A: yes yes, exactly

In contrast to these examples, Lisa only packs her two bags minutes before she is departing for her mothers place. She brings her laptop and her mobile phone and in addition she only brings things she sees when glancing around in her room.

Outboxing has a close relation to the metaphor of a snail house or ArchiGram's suisaloons [3] The home feeling follows the content being transported and a web of transported gifts and goods are being spun to create some sort of root holding for the mobile people, thus making it feel more homely.

#### 5.1.4 Connecting

During the fieldwalks, we saw a number of examples of how people established connections. The mobile phone and laptops were very often key means for this. In addition to numerous phone calls, we saw a number of interesting examples. Steven for instance is combining instant messaging with weather information from a number of destinations (Figure 6):

Steven: So // there's ehm, I'm talking to Alex, my wife and ehm my friends and eh my mom and dad ehm, on here I have the news, I have the weather for Hong Kong, the weather for Stansted, the weather for Pasadena here, and the weather for .

Q: Why these places?

Steven: Because we fly there, Pasadena because I'm here now.

Q: L.A.?

Steven: Yes. L.A. ehm (Bishop Suffolk) because that's where I live. Hong Kong cause I fly there and Dunedin because my mom and dad are there.

Q: So that's you're/right now you/the four places, the four topical places you're/you very often go to.

Steven: Yes... Or not, I mean, in New Zealand you don't go there, but you have relatives living there.



**Figure 6 Steven presenting his widgets on the computer**



**Figure 7 Stevens private photos inserted to his work material**

In addition Steven has inserted a number of personal photos (Figure 7) in his work manual. There is a picture of him and his wife, and of his son. In this way he coincidentally passes by these pictures repeatedly during his working hours.

Thomas exemplifies another way of being connected; for him it is important to be continuously connected to the newest information on the stock exchange:

Thomas: "It is in the background all the time, right. I also have TV in the bathroom and that kind of thing, so even when I brush my teeth and when, what is it called, when I am in the shower or something, it is on all the time in the background right, so, so it is on all the time right. It is being uploaded from the moment I get up in the morning" [referring to the stock market information]

#### 5.1.4.1 Gift giving

We saw a lot of examples of gift giving as a way of connecting to loved ones. Always when in LA, Steven goes to a particular shop to bring home paper for the copier. He does this primarily due to the low price. Similarly Paul buys plant spices from Copenhagen to bring them back to the small island where he lives with his

wife. He also buys soil in a special store on his journey due to special request from his wife. In this way people pick up local specialties or in the case of the paper even commodities and bring back home.

The tactic of connecting is a way to relate the ideas of home as the social construction of home. Newer family research [9] shows that the home and family intersects. In that way some part of the family is understood as home. That brings us back to the fact that people feel more homely when connecting to close relations.

### 5.1.5 Differentiating

In a couple of examples, the tactics of differentiating is applied, for instance in the case of Lisa who moves between her parents every second week.

Lisa: I have some good friends who are twins and very often they do the same things, and I just don't like that very much, everything being the same. So I try to do it a little different, personal, and separate, so it does not become as if you are still where you were before

Q: Is this because you want to see and feel that you actually live in two places?

Lisa: Yes, I think so. I like to know where I am, really.

....

Lisa: Yes but I do not think that much of... except, if I am really bored, I might call and ask how everything is, but I don't think that much about what it is like the other place.

Lisa: They [the parents] think it is a little sad that I am going to the other's place, I think

Q: They think it is sad?

Lisa: Yes.

Q: But you don't?

Lisa: No, I think it is fine, because of the thing with the breaks - I really need them.

While this is a sensitive issue, Lisa emphasizes the breaks she gets in particular from her elder sister at her mother's house and her little brother at her father's place. And apart from calling if she is really bored, she adopts a tactic where she resides in the place she is here and now and disconnects from the other place while not there.

We see a similar tactic applied by the family spending their weekends in a summerhouse and staying during the week in the city. They dwell around the values of the current situation:

Brian: "It is a matter of having the best of two worlds. To have the city and access to this from the flat in Copenhagen and then have a life on the countryside and the wonderful nature and the beach and the outdoor life for the small boys in "Dronningmølle". So it is about wanting both and then you think you get both when having a flat in the city and a summerhouse in the countryside".

Additionally the family has a wardrobe for each place, reflecting the change of scene; in line with this Lisa keeps a wardrobe at each parents' place, and as such the clothes she wears become part of her current home.

This way of homing is in line with geographer Tuan [23] about making space into place. The informants relate to the specific

space and adopt it into place. They act differently in different places because they see the value of the specific site and thus relate diversely to the feeling of home in different places. But it still helps them to feel more at home.

### 5.1.6 Doubling

Brian and Jane commuting between the flat in the city and the summerhouse have for some aspects adopted a doubling tactic. In particular they have doubled their domestic appliances and their pushchairs.

Q: Last Friday you talked about that you have doubled a lot of things

Jane: Yes.

Brian: Yes.

Q: And why did you, why are you doing this, is this something you consciously planned or did it just happen and then you discovered, oops now we have picked the same boiler?

Brian: This has something to do with, I think, that now we have learned it and we had found one we were satisfied with, why then use the time to scan the market again. We know this brand is good, and that it works and functions, one more of these. Then it is done.

Jane: Ay, but I want to say, it was a dedicated choice, surely with the dishwasher, because, really, we need, when we get up here, we do not want to wash, when we are here, really it should just be tossed in, and it should be washed, and finished, right, so it was, when we chose the dishwasher, it was like, that when we needed a dishwasher, and the one we had in the city, did not make much noise, it was, you almost can not hear it running, and it can run in the night without us hearing it, fine, we take the same type and the same model. That is... we, kind of like it in this way. But the thing about doubling is true, at some point we had four pushchairs, we had pushchairs in Copenhagen and two up here.

Paul does not carry a laptop between his flat in Copenhagen and the small island where he lives with his wife. He doubles the technology in the way that he has one computer each place. This gives him some hassle because the content is not doubled between the places. So he also collects digital documents in his outbox when preparing for his next commute. He both uses an USB-stick for this and he emails documents to himself.

Doubling is the opposite of differentiating. The informants are seeking equal home feelings in different places and therefore use the doubling tactic as a way to feel at home in the remote place.

### 5.1.7 Rhythming

Actually most of the people we followed lived in constant transfer and yet, or maybe because of this, as one of our interviews illustrates, they stick pretty closely to certain rhythms as a way of coping.

Lisa, Paul and the family all lived in constant rhythms of continuity, with repeating schedules of moving week after week.

The steward on the other hand had various schedules and while travelling around the globe, Steven sticks closely to the UK time schedule. As a result the crew goes to the gym in the middle of the night, local LA time:

Q: And eh, do you use television?

Steven: Yes. Ehm // mainly in the middle of the night when I wake up, I either read or watch the TV and then more or less by four till seven o'clock this afternoon.

Q: Why do you wake up in the middle of the night?

Steven: Just eh because of my/I'm still on UK-time. Or ehm, I could lie in bed or I would be/I would be restless because I couldn't get back into my sleep again, I would just be lying there, thinking ok, what shall I do now. You know? Sometimes I get up on to the computer and see if, if Alex or or my friends are on and ehm, if they're not, I go to the gym.

Q: So in the night, in the middle of the night, you go to the gym?

Steven: Yes.

Q: Eh, and there's always a gym possibilities in this hotel?

Steven: Ehm, in this hotel, in all those hotels it it, it's eh a prerequisite for hotel is it there's a gymnasium there.

Along these lines, Thomas sticks to the same working hours no matter where he is, following the rhythm of the markets he is doing business with:

Thomas: "I am typically on the phone for Australia or the eastern hemisphere, and next comes the middle east, then Europe, continental Europe, and then when continental Europe goes for lunch around 11, UK time or 12 on the continent, then I still have an hour or an hour and a half, I am on, I can cover UK, so there I go UK, and then they change afterwards, then UK goes for lunch and then the continent is back".

Similarly, Paul, Lisa and the summerhouse family very much stick to the same rhythms of commuting between their places. So apparently creating and following rhythms is a prevalent tactic for dealing with a lot of change.

By chance we interviewed another steward, Ben, who had worked as a steward for more than 30 years. He was not part of the planned fieldwork study, but his reflections after all these years seem to capture what we see in many of the other cases too:

Q: And here, in Pasadena, you have special shops you go into every time you are here. I mean, you have been here, I guess, many times. And you have been in Long Beach and the other places many times. So do you have special teashops and special places you like to go, special markets and so on? You turn to the same things?

Ben: I do every time. And I believe that runs through... airline crews in general. Because we... We are... The one thing crews dislike, the big heading in your airline crews, the one thing we dislike... is change. And yet, and yet, the only thing that's constant is change. Correct? Hm... Airline... We like hotels, we like to return to hotels that we know, and then when we're told... so we dislike change. And yet...

Q: [interrupts] You live in change, and you don't like change, but you still want to be in change?

Ben: Quite.

Q: But not changeable change.

Ben: Quite.

The tactic of rhythming is a way of root holding and also a coping tactic. But it can also be seen in relation to connecting when relating to time in a remote location.

## 5.2 Sum up on tactics

We have identified seven tactics on how mobile people act to feel more at home and cope with the mobile lifestyle.

- Territorializing is a way of taking in more/new territory
- Bubbling is shutting out context
- Outboxing is preparing artifacts for moving
- Connecting is staying in touch with extended family
- Differentiating is contextualizing the home feeling
- Doubling is copying things from the primary home
- Rhythming is continuation beyond mobility

The most homely tactics are doubling, connecting and territorializing. Outboxing and differentiating are also tactics that support a homely feeling although not so obviously homing as first assumed. It can be discussed whether rhythming and bubbling are homing tactics or coping tactics.

The choice, mixtures and blends of tactics are personal and changes over time due to specific circumstances, availability of services and physical artefacts. However, by identifying thematic practices recognizable across informants we point to tactics of homing, which we, based on Winther's work [24] claim have relevance and are generally applicable for people's activity of homing both in stereotypic single-house homes and in situations where home goes beyond the single house as is the case in this study.

## 6. TACTICS, PEOPLE AND TECHNOLOGY

In this paper we have coined a number of tactics as a palette of ways to deal with living between several homely places. We argue that these tactics are thematic practices, which can serve to identify openings for design of future mobile technologies in the direction of providing additional means and tools for supporting these tactics.

When looking at the role existing technology plays in the lives of the people studied, it is remarkable how important the laptop and the mobile phones are to the people we followed. Everyone carries their mobile phone and all except Paul and the family commuting between flat and holiday house brought their laptops around with them. A substantial part of the bags carried around consists of technology, laptop, mobile phone, iPod, loudspeakers, wires and a rich collection of adaptors. This is to some extent a paradox since while clothes and other valuable physical objects are hard to copy, these technologies and adaptors can in principle easily be copied or doubled.

Aipperspach et al. [2] discuss the problem of homes increasingly becoming homogeneous, e.g. temperature, ceiling heights, uniform access to data, all-in-one devices bringing work into the home and they call for increased heterogeneity and variation in the home through proposing new kind of technologies integrating heterogeneously with the physical environment. The people in our study certainly move between very heterogeneous environments in their mobile life, and for some of them it is the whole point of maintaining different dwellings, however, on the technology side

they carry with them insensitive, all-in-one devices making it very hard to differentiate in terms of digital contents, contacts and interaction between the different places. Thus there seems to be room for designing new mobile devices supporting differentiating tactics better than current devices.

As the study illustrates this will not be equally attractive for everyone. From the study it seems that choice of the specific tactics or combinations of these depend on the concrete opportunities of the situation as well as the lifestyle, preferences and personality of the people adopting them. Thomas for instance bubbles intensively via his mobile phone in his very mobile everyday life. He is most of the time rather disconnected to the local situation, except from the physical meetings he holds. Whereas Lisa actively differentiates between the places she stays in delving at the specific values of the local situation.

From a technology design perspective today, there is weak support for some of the tactics. Current technologies provide poor support for the tactic of territorializing. As can be seen e.g. from figure 1, currently it is very much physical objects that are used to territorialize. Steven uses music to territorialize the hotel room, however, he brings his own loudspeakers to play music from. Thus better interplay between the technologies people brings, and the local technical and physical resources could overcome this scenario. Based on this we suggest there is a potential in developing new mobile technologies, which easily connects with the local physical and digital environment that support territorializing.

Differentiating is another of the tactics that is currently not very well supported by mobile technologies. The laptops, mobile phones carried by the participants in the study are largely insensitive towards the local context. In contrast Lisa and Brian emphasises the value of sensing where they are and dwell on the specifics of this place. We may look to these cases to inform context-aware mobile computing towards embracing places rather than sensor data.

Particular in the case of Thomas, we see how both laptop and mobile phone supports bubbling and connecting extremely well (as can also be seen from the pictures in sections 4.1.2 and 4.1.4). Thomas has a strong preference for the bobbling tactic as can be seen from his lack of pulling back the curtains and the mobile technologies supports this well. Although noticeably the kind of bubbling supported by mobile phones and laptops is very individualized. One could imagine the potential of designing for bubbles for multiple people as well as bubbles where it is possible to invite others in.

The recently announced iphone app sleep cycle is an example of how technology can support rhythming, however the empirical cases illustrate how people adopt rhythms on different scales, beyond the sleep rhythm, e.g. in travelling between places, in being with different people etc. This seems to be pointing towards an interesting design space for future mobile technologies.

Overall, the tactics of differentiating, territorializing and rhythming represents a very different perspective on the design of mobile technologies than the placeless anything, anywhere and anytime paradigm or vision represents. The bubbling tactic is what comes most close to this placeless vision, and Thomas really lives out this vision much of the time, e.g. being able to see the stock market information even while in the shower. However, other people have different personal preferences. Lisa and Jane and Brian commuting between their flat and their holiday house

actively resist this in much of their tactics of differentiating. Thus while some, e.g. Thomas practices this lifestyle others resist it.

Thus with the tactics we wish to broaden the perspectives on mobile technology design arguing that mobile life is not place-less but rather we emphasise the need to design possibilities for entering and leaving places; for establishing meaningful relations with the specific situation, people and place.

Furthermore as can be seen in the presentation of the tactics people deploy a range of these in their efforts to make homely places; this aspect should also be considered when taking departure in tactics as a resource for design.

## 7. FUTURE WORK

Our aim is to learn from the studies and turn the tactics into strategies for design. We do not wish to simplify the tactics by making them into seven categories, but use the richness of the material to understand and explore the tactics and transform them into design for homing.

The reason for conducting the empirical studies is to turn it into innovative and relevant design. We learned about the tactics from the experienced lead users, living in several houses and travelling over and over again. Their tactics and solutions can then be inspiration for design that other people living fragments of modern nomad lifestyle can gain from. Next step is to develop concrete design and to bring the design proposals back into context, which are not the initial contexts, but more of a target group audience. Such as frequent travellers living some of the modern nomad lifestyle. This will be done through dialogues about design proposals and later bringing in tangible experience prototypes that can be assessed through everyday use sessions.

## 8. CONCLUSION

In this paper we point to the perspective of homing as an activity to complement the prevalent perspective of home as house, and to give a new perspective to the discourse on the mobile, place-less and nomadic lifestyles. We have presented the analysis of an ethnographic study, a fieldwalk, of five very different people who in various ways trying to make homely places. Through analysis of the material we have identified seven tactics, which people deploy to various degree and in various combinations in their homing activities. We have discussed the limitations in current mobile technologies in terms of supporting these different tactics, and we have argued that there is room for designing mobile technologies that provide better support for territorializing spaces, for differentiating between spaces and for rhythming.

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