Nano-Media and Connected Homeliness

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This article explores how digital communication platforms influence the everyday life of migrants in transnational milieus and how they shape the migrants' sense of home. I analyze the role of ICTs in forming relationships that are reproduced transnationally. The research is based on empirical material in the form of communication diaries that were completed by migrants living in Slovenia and interviews conducted with them. The article discusses the digitalized web of relations by exploring the who, when, how, where, and what of communication and analyzes how this influences the experiencing of home. The aim is to not only learn about belonging in contemporary mobility but understand how transnational communication is clustered along gender, ethnic, and class divides.

Keywords: home, digital networks, transnational migration, communication diary

Introduction

Migration and global communication reveal how various patterns of living across borders influence perceptions of place and space, especially the changing notion of home. Communication accelerated by the rise of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) has been recognized as a means that can alleviate problems of family and friendship separation. It is common for migrants to maintain remote relations and activate them through the use of multiple communication platforms (Greschke, 2012; Hannerz, 2002; Madianou, 2012; Madianou & Miller, 2011; Vertovec, 2004). This article explores how ICTs shape understandings and the experiencing of home through their influence on the everyday-life patterns of migrants. The goal is to understand the role of technologies in forming and maintaining communication and relationships that develop and are reproduced transnationally.

This research is based on empirical material in the form of communication diaries that were completed by migrants living in Slovenia and interviews conducted with them. The aims are to learn about

belonging in contemporary mobility and interconnectedness and to understand whether and how transnational communication is clustered along the socioeconomic divide, and how this influences home. Positioning technologies at the center of the research, I explore how "connected homeliness" manifests itself in the example of migrant subjectivities. What kind of communication practices emerge across spaces and with different actors, and what is their role in imagining home? Specifically, I strive to answer questions such as what are the meanings of home, who constitutes home, when and where home appears, and what role technologies play in the processes of reimagining home.

The article begins with a review of the existing literature and adopts the notion of connected homeliness, related to the "situated presence," which is explored as an intersectional approach to the understanding of home. Then I introduce the method of a communication diary and explain how this is used to conceptualize home. Next, the analysis of the data gathered through the diaries is discussed alongside the five indicators that constitute connected homeliness. In the analysis, home is also discussed via the intersectional approach to reveal hierarchies of power that make, for example, an asylum seeker's experience of home different from that of an affluent migrant.

Migrants' Home: Anyplace Through Communication

Home is a contested concept. In migration studies, which tend to focus on the ways in which migrants integrate into the host society, the notion of home is often related to what it means to be away from home. Defining home by way of its absence necessarily implies its rootedness. If a migrant lives outside her or his country of birth, then she or he must be away from home. In such conceptions, home is not only romanticized as some distant notion where genuine self-realization occurs but reconfirmed as a bounded category: Home appears as a specific geographic location, as a place like no other, which is then described in national, territorial, and ethnic terms. Such accounts produce a naturalized conceptualization of home that risks what Glick Schiller and Wimmer (2002) called "methodological nationalism in migration scholarship" (p. 302).

Since the 1990s, studies of migrants' notions of home increasingly have been tied to researching transnationalism as a process by which migrants create new social ties and experiences beyond geographic, political, and cultural borders (Glick Schiller, Basch, & Szanton-Blanc, 1992; Kivisto, 2001; Portes, Guarnizo, & Landolt, 1999; Vertovec, 1999). Questioning the nation-state model, transnationalism studies have shaken the linearity and monodimensionality of understanding the lifeworld of migrants. Homeliness was related to migrants' social spaces that are formed and re-formed across borders (Glick Schiller et al., 1992), and to transnational and translocal subjectivity and imaginary (Anthias, 2002; Ong, 1999; Vertovec, 1999).

Migrants' homeliness also has been discussed in the context of exile and diaspora. Naficy (1999) relates the imagining and living of home to the notion of exile that stands for a variety of modalities of placement and displacement that are mediated. Rather than being related to some generalized condition of alienation, exile refers to a multiplicity of belongings; home in exile is "anyplace"; it is temporary and it is moveable; it can be built, rebuilt, and carried in memory and by acts of imagination. Durham Peters (1999) adds diaspora and nomadism to exile, suggesting that exile stands for pining for home, diaspora

for networks of homing among the dispersed, and in nomadism, home is always already there; nomadism suggests being home-full and homeless at the same time.

Research on the use and meanings of ICTs in migration studies emerged more than a decade ago, and, although this topic is of more interest than ever, literature that comprehensively considers the interrelationship between new media and belonging is still scarce. Naficy (1999) discussed exile at the intersection of homeland and home page, stressing the use of the Internet as a way of becoming "discoursively emplaced" (p. 3). Karanfil's (2009) analysis of media practices of Turkish-Australian transnationals is an empirical example of how transnational television creates "pseudo-exilic culture" (p. 898) that has an impact on migrants' self-perception and perception of home. A notable more recent example is research in the Philippines, which has witnessed booms in both the use of ICTs and migration, whereby many mothers migrate for work (mostly in the care sector) and use ICTs to keep in touch with their families. Madianou and Miller (2011) argue that mobile phone or Internet-based communication has dramatically changed the way relationships at a distance are maintained. For example, mobile technologies allow migrant women to micromanage their household, which can produce an "empowered experience of distance mothering" (Madianou, 2012, p. 290). New ways of "living home" are thus a consequence of widespread ICT use that constitute and reconstitute migrants' roles as parents, husbands, wives, brothers, sisters, daughters, and friends.

Exploring the concept of home in relation to migrants' use of ICTs provides challenges to the treatment of home as a bounded category rooted in territorial, national, and gendered imaginings. The notion of "nano-media" has been used to point to the democratizing potential of small-scale media that act as a counterfact to the grand narratives of mass media (Pajnik & Downing, 2008). In the context of transnational migrants' milieus, nano-media refer to the role of ICTs in alleviating distance and to their globally dispersed power that has the effect of "bridging boundaries" across time and space. The growing digitalized communication stimulates us to develop a conceptualization of home that is grounded in the "connected presence" notion (Licoppe, 2004) and the related "connected migrant" notion (Diminescu, 2008), where homeliness relates to a continuous presence despite the distance involved.

With reference to previous theorizing of home and connectivity (Brah, 1996; Diminescu, 2008; Hannerz, 2002; Licoppe, 2004), this article proposes a notion of connected homeliness. Home stretches to different locales; it refers to the location-spanning networks migrants sustain across borders through ICTs. Consequently, home is becoming less physical and less topological and more active and affective. "Homing" thus refers to the "lived experience" (Brah, 1996), to the variety of practices of belonging and nonbelonging in various milieu.

Connected homeliness is empirically approached by researching the home-making practices of migrants who recorded their ICT use in communication diaries. Homing is analyzed as communication based on diaries using five indicators of communication: (1) the who, (2) the where, (3) the when, (4) the how, and (5) the what (see Figure 1). Homing is a process that always involves the *who*, the people we share a home with, making our relevant others necessary constituents of home. Exploring the *where* and the *when* of communication, I analyze how home is localized and delocalized at the same time, how place and time shape different localities of home, and how they reproduce and blur the divides between

localities. Connected homeliness implies some sort of technology that is used to mediate home, which makes it necessary to examine closely the different technologies as a means of communication (the *how*). The *what* of communication is analyzed because it helps us understand the routines and rituals of home—that is, what kind of communication is typical of connected homeliness.

Communication technologies have stimulated the shaping of looser feelings of home; however, these feelings should not be praised too optimistically as only a "bright" home (Hannerz, 1996). It is necessary to also address the less pleasant side of the development of ICTs, which leaves many unwired, bound to exploitative work relations, and lacking the capacity, time, and means to benefit from new communication possibilities. With these developments in mind and in line with studies on transnationalism, I also understand connected homeliness as a situated presence. I suggest a conceptualization of home that encompasses migrants' mobile communications that are at the same time embedded in present, immediate localities (see Figure 1).
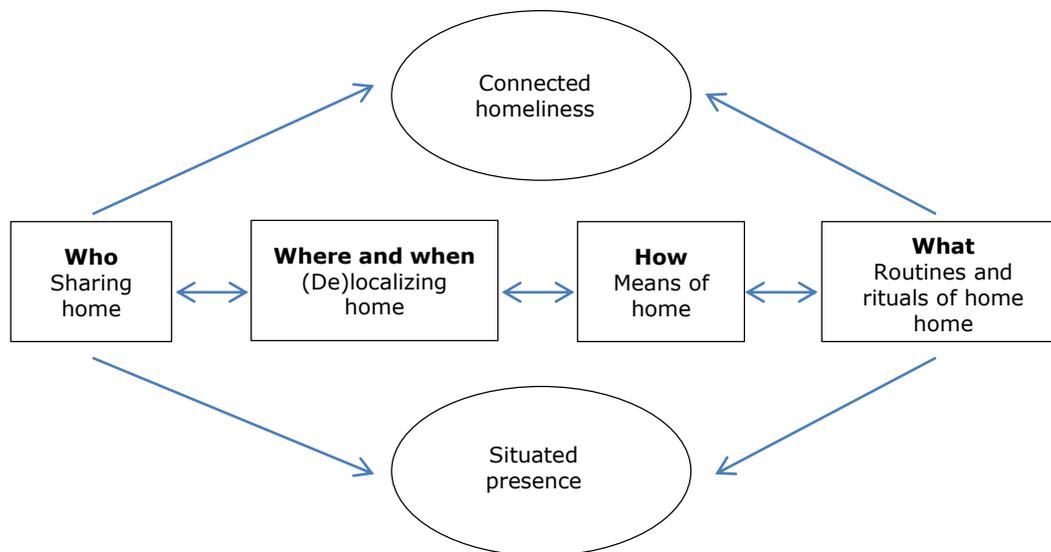

Figure 1. Connected homeliness.

Toward an Intersectional Approach to Understanding Home

The empirical analysis demonstrates, on the one hand, how the availability of ICTs is for many something they do not need to question; ICTs are there and are used to manage distances. On the other hand, the analysis points to cases where ICT use is conditioned by one's status; the situation of an asylum seeker who cannot work, is confined to the closed environment of the asylum seekers' home, and does not have material resources is, of course, very different from the situation of an affluent migrant who has

obtained citizenship, has a steady job, rents his or her own apartment, and owns a computer. Another significant difference is seen between those who can travel relatively easily and those who cannot afford to visit their left-behind families due to lack of money, controlled work relationships that deny vacation time, or uncertain legal status that prevents them from traveling.

The globalized rich and the localized poor (Bauman, 1998) embody the difference between the connected and unconnected (migrant), where the divide is clustered along gender, ethnic, and class differences. Changes in communication have indeed occurred, but they are not to be treated as a universal blessing. Rather, they have been shaped in social conditions that are determined by inequalities. The danger of the "techno-optimism" perspective lies in its distancing from real-life inequalities and differences in power relations. Therefore, this research considers the fact that the development of communication can contribute to the further marginalization of certain individuals and groups that are already at a disadvantage and experience an insecure legal and social status, no work, or exploitation at work or in the household.

This article explores the communication practices of migrants and examines how these relate to their living and perceiving of home. I am careful to approach home in "grounded" terms—that is, to explore the hindrances to inclusive homing. Theorists who conceptualize belonging and intersectionality (Anthias, 2002; Yuval Davis, 2011) remind us that, in analyzing social relations and positions, we need to consider that these are deeply embedded in social and economic locations. From this perspective, we see a limitation in the notion of home itself if this is simply understood with subjective practices in networks of relations. These are indeed important and have gained ground in actor-network-oriented theories (Castells, 1996; Latour, 2006) that remind us of the importance of the agency of actors.

Thus, although the agency is important, it should not be the only dimension of analysis, because if it is it may, intentionally or not, (re)produce the masking of structural inequality (Wallis, 2011). Superpositive notions of "hybrid," "flexible" (Ong, 1999), or "networked" (Castells, 1996) identities have been criticized for ignoring the structurally bounded presence (Anthias, 2001; Pajnik, 2011). First, individual identifications are not just floating around as accidental products of networks but are situated in context, and they are never neutral. Second, specific locations should be considered in relation to the subjective but also separately to avoid the collapse of social structures into individual attachments. Following the analogy of the intersectional approach (Yuval Davis, 2011), the understanding of home should consider that people are differently located socially, politically, economically, and spatially.

Method

To understand the relationship between ICT-supported communication and notions of home in the context of transnational milieus, the analysis here draws on fieldwork conducted in Slovenia in the seven months from July 2011 to January 2012. The findings are based on communication diaries that were collected from 12 migrants who currently live in Slovenia[2] and were asked to document their

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[2] Slovenia has witnessed an increase in immigration since the early 1990s as a consequence of growing numbers of refugees fleeing war in Bosnia and Croatia in the mid-1990s and as a consequence of new

communication over two weeks, although some kept the diary for longer (the longest a diary was kept was one month).

Communication diaries were previously used by Ito (2005), who analyzed patterns of mobile phone use among Japanese youth and found that patterns are increasingly conditioned by the set of social norms governing mobile communication. It was shown that new technologies are not only used to strengthen the web of relations but are increasingly becoming the infrastructure for new disciplines emerging from in-person relations in home, school, or urban places. Wallis (2011) used communication diaries in her study of mobile phone use among young rural-to-urban migrant women working in the low service sector in Beijing and similarly concluded that mobile technologies not only have liberating and equalizing effects but increasingly have become a means of reinforcing power relations and surveillance.

The approach to the analysis of the 12 diaries was to investigate the meanings of home by addressing five facets of communication: (1) the *who*, (2) the *where*, (3) the *when*, (4) the *how*, and (5) the *what*. The aim was to explore: (1) who the relevant others are and the positioning of oneself in the network of relations; (2) where communication takes place (i.e., the reference to location); (3) the duration of the communication, how often it occurs, and during which part of the day; (4) what media device is used for communication (i.e., with what do diary partners communicate; and (5) what the communication is about (i.e., what is the content of conversation, where I was specifically interested in the apparent routines). As discussed earlier (see Figure 1), the five elements of communication shape what we understand as connected homeliness.

It proved to be a challenge to secure partners for the research, because some of the migrants I approached could not devote the time and effort required for filling in the diary. In some cases, the prospect of financial compensation was the factor that led to an agreement to participate in the research, which proves the above thesis that research should consider the situated presence of each specific migrant. Twenty people with migration experience were approached, and ultimately 12 agreed to complete diaries (see Tables 1 and 2).

Fieldwork included meeting the participants to explain the purposes of the research and the method; in some cases, several meetings off- or online were arranged to clarify how the diaries should be

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migration trends since 2000, when Slovenia started to attract migrants from other regions, especially from Africa, the former Soviet Union, Asia, and Latin America. Slovenia was already a country of immigration in the 1960s to the 1980s, when migrants from other republics of Yugoslavia moved to Slovenia during the period of industrialization and urbanization. Significant economic migration to Slovenia began as migrants settled in industrial cities, especially in the 1970s when the Western European states that had been the primary countries of destination for Yugoslav migrants (especially Germany) began to limit immigration. This trend has affected the current composition of the migrant population, the vast majority of whom come from former Yugoslav republics. At the beginning of 2014, around 4% of Slovenia's population of slightly above 2 million were foreign citizens.

completed. The participants were asked to record every communication along the five indicators of homeliness, also noting the date and hour of the start and end of the communication (see Table 1). The diaries also recorded situations entailing technology that is always available and which might take place at any time, such as Facebook monitoring or reading e-mail on mobile phones. The participants were asked how frequently they use these technologies (on a six-point scale ranging from *once every day* to *never*). Most of the communication was in the Slovenian language, but in a few cases English, Russian, Spanish, or Serbian were used. In all cases, the diary was later translated into English, unless it had been originally compiled in English. To avoid potential limitations of diaries that do not capture the wider context such as the experiences of migration, socioeconomic situation of migrants, their intimate relations, and work experiences, the completion of the diary was followed by an interview to obtain this additional information.

Table 1. Excerpt from a Diary.

Date/hour start	Date/ hour finish	Media/device (describe)	Correspondent(s) (who?/where?)	Location of use	Description of communication
July 16, 2011 Saturday					
10:30	11:00	Skype/personal laptop	Sister in Skopje, Macedonia	At home, Ljubljana, Slovenia	Sibling update
11:00	11:30	Facebook/personal laptop	Friends on Facebook (in Skopje, Macedonia, or outside Slovenia)	At home Ljubljana, Slovenia	Staying in touch, commenting on photos, statuses, etc.
July 17, 2011 Sunday					
11:20	11:25	Skype/personal laptop	Sister in Skopje, Macedonia	At home Ljubljana, Slovenia	Chat via Skype
12:00	12:20	Skype/personal laptop	Sister in Skopje, Macedonia	At home Ljubljana, Slovenia	Chat via Skype, chitchat

Sample

Participants were recruited using the snowball method. I refrained from narrowing the sample to include only migrants of a certain ethnicity or of a specific type of employment, because the aim was to explore homeliness beyond borders and boundaries. The diversities I wanted to capture relate to migrants' country of birth, reasons for migration, position in the labor market, family relations, education, age, and gender, and the sample was built around these indicators.

The participants were between 23 and 43 years old. Seven were women, and five were men. Their countries of birth included countries of former Yugoslavia (Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia), Ukraine, Mexico, South Africa, and Syria. For some, Slovenia was their first country of immigration; most previously had lived elsewhere, such as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, Turkey, and the United States. When communication practices are considered, an even more global network of countries emerged that included Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Poland, Spain, Australia, Brazil, Israel, Japan, and Singapore. These are the many places where the migrant's family, friends, or coworkers were scattered. The year of arrival in Slovenia varies; some arrived in the 1990s, one in the 1980s, and most were recent migrants who immigrated from 2008 onward. The circumstances of their migration included work, job search, studies, family reunion, marriage, and fleeing from war.

The general education level of participants was high, with eight holding a university degree or higher, two having completed vocational school, and one having finished secondary school (there was one missing answer). Among those with more education, two had PhDs, and three were PhD students, of whom two had MA degrees. It was not the intention to focus on more affluent migrants, and I made efforts to include participants with various statuses and experiences, although compiling a diary represented a big commitment for some. This confirms that the maintenance of contact remains influenced by income level and material assets, because the cost of communication often represents a barrier for low-income migrants (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002).

The professional expertise of the participants varied among the banking sector, marketing and communication, the computer industry, mechanical engineering, pedagogy, and the transport industry. At the time of the study, five were regularly employed, three were students, one was unemployed, one was in irregular employment, and two more were employed but did not specify their employment (see Table 2). Although all of them used the new digital media almost daily, one participant used only a mobile phone. This case resembles many comparable migrant stories; mobile phone use is widespread, particularly since cheap(er) mobile providers have entered the marketplace, offering reduced rates and lower charges for calling abroad (Vertovec, 2004).

I began with the assumption that all migrants are in some way connected, which justifies the sample's diversity. "Connected migrants" are active migrants, and the approach here departs from the victimization of migrants to recognize that the modalities of home are not alien to any migrant, but are emergent for all. In dealing with a diverse sample, it was, however, paramount to explore not only similarities in homing but the differences that emerge in the context of personal circumstances that reflect social and structural issues.

Opportunities and Constraints of Mobile Culture

The communication diaries and the interviews reveal that the participants were heavy users of ICTs and greatly valued their existence. Some reported that they "cannot imagine life" without new media, and others said that the technologies are crucial for maintaining contacts and relationships. All of

those who were employed spoke of the importance of ICTs not only in their family and friend relationships but in their professional lives.

> New technologies are very much part of my everyday life, all of its aspects: studies, work, communication with family and friends, everyday issues such as transport or shopping. Actually it is interesting that, although I knew I use all these devices, especially the Internet a lot, keeping a diary of these activities really opened my eyes to how much I cannot exist without it. I think the most important thing is that it would be impossible to keep in touch with my family and friends, who are so scattered around. (Katarina)

Katarina's narrative is one example of how important technologies are for a migrant's life, and of how frequently they are used. Some participants were, however, also critical of ICTs: Temjana said they introduce "staying connected" as a matter of banality and daily ritual; her diary points to her routine of using social media to check up on her friends via her mobile phone while stuck in traffic on her way home from the office. Andrea described how she uses means of communication to remain in touch and exchange stories as part of a daily routine with distant family members, but also with friends living in the same city. This illustrates the intermeshing of distance and closeness, where technologies are both a means to bond across distance and that technology is used as a routine in everyday life.

> On the personal side, technology (mainly text messages, Skype, Facebook, e-mail) enables me to remain in fairly close contact with friends and family. Especially through text messages I can have frequent conversations with my boyfriend, who lives in another country, and my mother, who lives in another city, and update them on even the small things that are going on in my life (what I'm making for dinner, what kind of movie is on TV, etc.). I can also send quick photos by iPhone of a nice sunset that I'm watching or a new dress that I bought. I'm also in frequent text/e-mail contact with friends who live in the same city even though I see them regularly. (Andrea)

Andrea's diary and her narrative point to practices of an affluent migrant with a higher education, steady job, and access to technologies she used for private and professional purposes. On the other hand, Maša's frequent mobility is not particularly apparent in her diary, because she only used her mobile phone to communicate both within Slovenia and abroad, with her country of birth, Ukraine, where her mother and an aunt live. It is not an accident that Maša, who resided in a home for asylum seekers, used her mobile only, because her access to a computer was limited. Also, she raised the issue of money, mentioning that she needs to make sure she has some credit on her mobile. In some other interviews, this was not an issue. It is common to read in the literature about the remittances migrants send home, how remittances are a motif for migration in the first place, and how migration affects remittance patterns (Carling, 2008), but in Maša's case, the story is reversed, and money is transferred to her from her mother in Ukraine.

> I am always online because my mum is old now and she helps me out a lot, she sends me money, she's helping me out so that I can rent this place to live in now [Maša was

planning to go to live outside of the asylum seekers home]. And we're online constantly, she first calls to let me know that she made the money transfer and to give me the code, then I call to say that I received it OK, or she calls to ask if everything went OK. (Maša)

Two other participants—Aleksandra and Miki—explained how having a computer of their own, which Maša could not afford, removes obstacles to not being able to communicate due to high costs. Miki migrated from Serbia and worked on short-term projects in construction and explained that he had spent a lot less money on expensive telephone calls since he got a laptop. Working as a dancer in a nightclub, Aleksandra saved enough to buy a computer and was no longer dependent on the mobile phone that "is just too expensive." Having her own laptop enabled Aleksandra to keep in touch with her mother in Ukraine, who was looking after Aleksandra's one-year-old child. Aleksandra had recently bought a computer for her mother and was able to spend time each day with her son via Skype.

Situated Understanding and Living of Home

The interviews reveal a fluid understanding of home for some participants in the sense that they change perceptions according to their current location, the location of their family and friends, or future plans. When speaking of the fluidity or hybridity of belonging, it is crucial not to overlook the situated perspective from which one speaks (Anthias, 2001). Those who are mobile or can afford to travel associate home with a variety of places and circumstances more so than those who are bound by a lack of money or time to travel. For Andrea—who was living in Zurich at the time of the study, had lived previously in Germany, studied in the United States, worked in London, and met her partner in France—home is where she currently lives, and she can feel at home in different places where she is located or will be in the future.

Home for me is my flat in Zurich and Switzerland in general, but this is just for the time being. In the past when I was living abroad, the respective place became my "home" very quickly, and I'm sure it would be similar if I moved again. . . . Home can be any place I decide to move to in the future as long as I have a couple of people around me who I consider to be my friends. (Andrea)

A different perspective on flexibility in feeling at home is Marko's, which described how situated belongings really are and how the shifting or multiplicity of belonging occurs in migrant practices. Having experienced refuge from war, a situated and hard-fact experience made Marko "lose the sense" of home.

The bottom line, home is here where I am, as most of what I need is available to me online. So now there is not really a place like home, you know like the one that, if it is taken from you, you will not be a person anymore; now home is a much more flexible category, at least for me. Maybe it is also being Bosnian and a refugee for all that time in the 1990s, but it makes you lose the sense of it. That and cheap airplanes and constantly moving friends makes you feel that geography is lost and that we are living in this "translocal" space all the time. (Marko)

Some participants espoused a dual belonging, noting that they felt at home both in their country of birth and in the country they had migrated to. Temjana is at home in Slovenia, but she is *really* at home in her birth town of Skopje in Macedonia.

> I perceive Slovenia as my home and am happy when returning to it from a longer trip. However, I have to add that once I am in Skopje, my birth town, I really feel connected and really at home. (Temjana)

Katarina's narrative embodies both the adaptability of home to the current situation (belonging to the Hungarian minority in Serbia, she was, at the time of the study, living in Slovenia or between Slovenia, where she studies, and Hungary) and the expression of multiple belonging scattered between her current place of stay and her birth place.

> Home for me is, on one hand, a temporary place, the place I am residing at the given moment, and I don't have a problem calling a place my home after a few weeks of living there (it was like that in Szeged, in Budapest several times, Belgium, Ljubljana). On the other hand, if I think of it more, real home is where I was brought up, in Zrenjanin in Serbia. If I move from Budapest, it won't be my home anymore, but Zrenjanin will always remain that. That is why it is possible for me to say I'm going home from home. (Katarina)

Marko, Temjana, and Katarina all allude to a kind of moving geography in perceptions of home, where home changes locations. In contrast, Aleksandra's narrative below points to a loss of geography and shows that home is closely related to the accepting environment, to the place where one feels good and is at ease due to knowing the environment and its people. In addition, perceiving home can be quite specific in mother-child relationships in the sense that she feels at home where her child is. Similar connections can be found in the wife-husband relationship—Katirhan's narrative suggests that he feels at home where his wife is.

> Home is where I feel better than anywhere else. Home is my family, my relatives, baby. Home is for me in Ukraine, because I know the city, the people, the language. In Slovenia I am not native, and I don't feel at home here. Not yet at least, (Aleksandra)

> To me, being at home means peace. A source of hope. We have a saying that your home becomes clear after you get married. (Katirhan)

Results of the Communication Diary Analysis

So far this article has discussed both the opportunities and constraints of mobile culture and how these depend on migrants' specific positions. What it means to be a "connected migrant" varies from one situation to another: If affluent migrants reflect connectivity as something unquestionable and obvious, connectivity is still a longing for some to connect to home. While still adopting the situated presence as a

starting point, this analysis of the diaries explores connected homeliness according to the five elements that constitute understandings of home and belonging.

Immediate Family and Friends as Constituents of Home

The social networks that participants maintained via communication engagements vary and included family, friend, and work relationships. Andrea's diary reveals that she used ICTs in a balanced way in relation to her family (i.e., her mother in Switzerland), her boyfriend in Ukraine, and friends and coworkers worldwide. Similarly, Temjana spent a lot of her time online not only keeping in touch with her family (mostly her sister in Macedonia) and friends but also for her work. Obviously, the diaries of those who have no jobs, change jobs frequently, and perform jobs that are not desk-related as well as the diaries of the students report less or no communication with coworkers and report more family- and friends-oriented communication. Katarina and Marko often communicated with other students and friends, while Aleksandra's communication was focused on keeping in touch with her mother, who was caring for Aleksandra's son in Ukraine. Aleksandra's communication with friends is frequent, and it is a peculiarity of her diary that she counted as friends her clients that she met in the nightclub or as an escort.

Family and friends are the most frequent constituents of home, representing the *who* the migrants are sharing the home with. The most common is communication with parents, a mother and/or father who live in a different country. All 12 participants maintained contact with their parents: Nine of them did so several times a week, and two participants maintained their contacts with less frequent communication. In Katirhan's case, the reason he communicated with his parents only once or twice in the diary might have been related to his relationships with them, which were strained at the time, or it may have something to do with the tense political situation in Syria, which made communication more difficult. Aleksandra is the only one in the sample who reported communicating with her parents—the mother, in her case—once a day. Her story confirms existing research findings (Madianou & Miller, 2011) that point to the mediated relationships mothers keep with their left-behind children, even though in this case the one left behind is the mother.

Communication with friends was generally more frequent. Most participants communicated with parents several times a week, and eight of them communicated with friends several times a day. One was in touch with friends once a day, and three were in touch several times a week. These data thus demonstrate that ICTs enable ongoing friendships, also at a distance that, as some participants reported, would otherwise not be possible. For those who were active in the labor market, communication with coworkers or business partners was also common, with eight reporting they use it several times a week.

The Private/Work Divide? The When and Where of Home

Exploring the *when* of communication, the interest here is in how frequent this is, which parts of the day are mostly dedicated to new media use, and the extent of communication on weekdays compared to weekends. The purpose was to reflect on the localizing and delocalizing of home, reflecting the space and time of communication. We see the prevalence of shorter communication practices, when communication lasts for only a few minutes: 10 of the 12 migrants practiced such short communication

several times a day, and two used it once a day. Longer communication was rarely practiced on a daily basis. Communication lasting up to 30 minutes was used daily by two participants, and communication up to one hour every day was used by one. Communication on a weekly basis varied: Four to seven participants communicated in varying time increments—up to 30 minutes, up to one hour, up to two hours, and for several hours—several times a week. It is interesting to note that communication lasting up to two hours was rare, only once or twice in the diary by eight participants. The type of technology affected the duration of communication: Using a mobile phone tended to mean more intermittent use for shorter durations, and, for instance, having one's computer on at or for work could easily add up to several hours of use per day.

To explore whether the *when* of communication is related to the *who* of communication, I examined frequencies of communication on weekdays and weekends according to the person with whom one was communicating. On weekdays most participants (seven) communicated with family every few days (with four doing so every day), and communication intensified on holidays, with six communicating with family every day at holiday time (and four doing so every few days). A similar trend is observed in communication with friends: Here, too, communication sees a slight intensification during holidays. Work-related communication sees the opposite trend: It was more intense on weekdays and much less frequent during holidays. Nevertheless, four participants reported communicating about work during holiday time, indicating a blurred line between public and private, work and home.

Data about the *where* of communication indicate that communicating from home—that is, the flat where one currently lives—is most frequent: 11 participants communicated from their flat several times a day, and one communicated several times a week. The city (around town) was the next most frequent place of communication, with eight communicating around town several times a week in the time frame of the diary. Those who were employed reported somewhat frequent communication from their office or workplace. Four reported that they communicated on public transport (bus, train, tram), and three noted they had communicated in a car. A library was occasionally used as a place of communication, with two out of the three students and one employed and one unemployed participant reporting having using it. A library's benefits for the unemployed are cost-free Internet and computer availability. For students, ICTs probably are used more because of their availability while reading or studying, and the library ICTs are not the primary focus of their visit. Homing thus shifts locales and time frames, and it depends on the availability and affordability of technology and on the socioeconomic micro positions of individuals who are shaped around the public/private divides.

Overcoming Barriers of a Distant Home Through ICT

As for the *how* of communication, I was interested in delving into the media devices participants used. About half the participants used a PC or laptop for general surfing. PCs were used more frequently to check e-mail in cases where migrants were employed; otherwise, they used their own laptops more for e-mail communication. Interestingly, the majority (eight participants) had never used a PC for e-mail communication, and five had never used laptops. The reasons varied, from not having their own laptops or access to PCs to not using e-mail very often. Social media were rarely used with PCs and more often used with laptops. A noticeable difference existed with Skype use: 2 participants used it as a phone and 1

as a video with a PC, and 10 used it as a phone and 5 as a video with laptops. Skype was used mostly for cheap communication with distant family. Furthermore, Skype was the most frequently used of all the devices: Only two participants had never used it as a phone with laptops. Not owning computer was a hindrance for some.

In addition to computers, mobile phones were used to overcome barriers of distance. Mobiles were used mostly for phone communication: Eight participants used mobile phones several times a day, two participants used them several times a week, and two participants never used them. Conversation as a mode of mobile phone use was followed by sending text message: Half (six) of the participants sent text messages, and the other half did not communicate via text messages.

Cross-tabulation data indicate that PCs were used more for work in an office, and laptops prevailed in communication that took place in a flat. Those who owned a computer mostly had a laptop, which can be partly explained by frequent practices of moving, migration, or changing flats for some. Only one participant used a PC from home, and 10 used laptops, mostly for communication several times a day (five participants) or several times a week (4). Living in a home for asylum seekers, Maša was the only person in the sample who had never used a laptop, which reconfirms the importance of approaching homeliness from the perspective of situated presence. A mobile phone was used from home by 10 participants, the majority of whom used it several times a day. The remaining two participants used a tablet instead of a mobile, and they used it several times a day at both home and the workplace.

Exploring how Skype is used in communication with relevant others, I found that Skype talk was most used by the majority of participants for communicating with family: Nine reported using it four times a week, and two reported using it once a day (Bistra for communicating with friends and family, and Aleksandra for keeping in touch with her one-year-old son). Four participants reported using Skype talk to communicate with friends several times a week, and others did not use it at all to communicate with friends.

Routines and Rituals of Home

The last indicator of connected homeliness refers to the question of *what* the communication is about—that is, what are the usual routines the participants practiced or the usual topics they discussed when conversing. One participant complained in the interview about the banality of everyday chats; interestingly, analysis of the diaries confirmed the prevalence of communication as "checking in" (saying hello, good-bye, good night, etc.) and general "chat/talk" as catching up or keeping in touch. Of 13 indicators used to measure the *what* of communication, these were the only two that all participants reported they did. They all used ICTs to check in and for general chat, and typically they did this frequently: Seven participants reported calling to say hi several times a day, two once a day, and three several times a week.

Communication for other purposes was less frequent, sometimes oriented to practicalities such as arranging to meet and other times dedicated to information search via the Internet. Other purposes included checking or writing e-mail, which was generally more frequent than checking or engaging with

social media. Less common was the use of ICTs to watch video or films; seven reported their communication was never about radio or TV streaming. Based on the small sample, it is evident that those who engage with social media are more likely to use TV streaming.

Exploring the relations between the *what* and the *who* of communication, I found that checking in was frequently used with both family (less frequently with one's immediate partner) and friends—seven used this kind of communication with friends several times a week (four did so on a daily basis), and, similarly, six used it with friends several times a week (five did so on a daily basis). A similar situation emerged with chat/talk and its relation to the relevant others: Six participants chatted to catch up with their family several times a week, and eight did the same with friends. In general, these two purposes of communication were the most widespread of all. As expected, participants rarely communicated by e-mail with family and friends and never with partners; e-mail communication with friends was a little more frequent. Here we can detect a clearer dividing line between home and work, because checking in was rarely the subject of communication with workmates, while chat reveals a completely different picture that, again, blurs the divide and was frequently used to communicate about work (five participants reported doing this several times a week, and two reported doing this several times per day).

Conclusion

The use of ICTs makes it easy to keep in contact while moving. Despite indicators of emergent new forms of ghettoization where individuals get trapped in a "media bubble," ICTs have considerably alleviated the constraints on migrants. Various uses of nano-media have generated new forms of improvised and informal social integration. Moreover, thanks to ICTs, individuals who are separated from their family can not only maintain occasional contact with their place of birth but take part in family decisions and events.

This article explores the concept of connected homeliness and empirically tests it in the context of researching the home and belonging of migrants. The concept is related to the previously theorized migrants' use of ICTs to overcome distance and sustain social networks across space and time (Brah, 1996; Hannerz, 2002; Licoppe, 2004; Madianou & Miller, 2011). Unlike in existing research from migration studies, the role of technologies is central to the analysis here of homing. These technologies were researched based on communication diaries and interviews with migrants in Slovenia. The research design adopts connected homeliness at the intersection of the *who, where, when, how*, and *what* of communication, also analyzing the possible interrelations among these elements as constituents of home. The analysis captured the different positions of migrants—that is, migrants' situated presence that affects their communication, their sense of belonging, and their concept of home.

The interviews suggest a fluid understanding of home for some participants in the sense that they changed perceptions according to their current location, the location of their family and friends, or future plans. Also, those who were mobile and could afford to travel associated home with various places and circumstances more so than those who were bound by a lack of money or time and opportunity to travel. This confirms that, when speaking of the fluidity or hybridity of belonging, it is crucial not to overlook the situated perspective from which one speaks (Anthias, 2001).

Analysis of the diaries reveals that the social networks that migrants maintain using ICTs vary, as does their communication in terms of duration, frequency, and content. As noted by Calhoun (1999), we may "feel at home with people whom we know personally, to whom we are committed in the networks of social relationships" (p. 222). Indeed, the analysis here reveals that migrants generally feel at home when connected to family members and friends, and also to various locations or spaces—those that they currently inhabit and those they feel related to through memories. This means that, on the one hand, they associate home with places of their memories and locations where they grew up, but, on the other hand, home is also perceived factually and rationally as the current place of residence and the location of the actual physical contact with and presence of significant others. This confirms the theoretical outline where connected homeliness was devised as any place that continues to appear in real and imagined time and space across borders.

Immediate family and friends are the most prominent constituents of home, which is practiced through banalized rituals in the networks of communication (e.g., frequent practices of checking in and chatting). The research presented here demonstrates that mobile phones (calls, text messages) and laptops (Skype, chat platforms, social media) are the most relevant ICTs for engaging in relations at a distance. At the same time, this study points to the ubiquitous presence of ICTs, resulting in the fact that ICTs seem to reinforce the private/work divide while often blurring the difference. Because the use of ICTs extends beyond the time confines of work-related communication while bringing private life into the work environment, the communication diaries illustrate the complexity and situatedness of these processes, confirming our understanding of homing in relation to a situated presence.

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Appendix

Table 2. Data on the Interviewees

Pseudonym	Age	Year of arrival in Slovenia	Country of birth / Country of prior migration	Reason for migration	Education, qualifications	Family relations/ social networks
Andrea	37	Born in Slovenia	Slovenia / Switzerland / United States / United Kingdom / Singapore	Moved as a child, later schooling and work	PhD, field of economics, banking, sociology	Mother in Switzerland; father, half-sister and extended family in Slovenia; boyfriend, who is British, in Ukraine; friends worldwide
Temjana	36	1986	Macedonia / Netherlands	Moved as a child with parents who were searching for work	BA, MA in communication studies	Parents and one sibling; a network of friends in Slovenia, hometown of Macedonia, and around the world due to MA studies abroad
Bistra	40	1999	Macedonia	Moved because of work	University degree, computer science	Mother, father, and sister and friends in Skopje (Macedonia); friends also in other European countries

Maša	38	2011	Ukraine Luxembourg	Seeking work	Trained dancer	Husband in Slovenia, from whom she is now separated. Her son lives with her in Slovenia. Her mother is in Ukraine.
Katarina	30	2011	Serbia	Visiting fellow at university	MA in literature; MA in sociology and anthropology; PhD student	Family mostly in Serbia, sister in Budapest, brother in Amsterdam while making the diary. Friends from Serbia, from all around Europe, and some from the U.S.
Marko	27	2011	Bosnia and Herzegovina Austria Germany	Studies and work	PhD student, double MA, trained educator in human rights education for youth	Living in registered partnership (gay), family in Bosnia, extended family in ex-Yugoslavia, different student and NGO networks
Siqueiros	32	2005	Mexico	Slovenian girlfriend	Engineer, now a PhD student	NA
Aleksandra	23	2011	Ukraine	Work in a night club	Higher pedagogical education	Communicating via Skype and partly mobile phone with mother, son, ex-husband, and sister, all living in Ukraine
Miki	34	2008	Serbia	In search of employment	Occupational technical middle school, automobile electrician	Has family in Serbia (parents and siblings and also mentions communicating with his extended family), lives in Slovenia with his girlfriend from Slovenia
Amela	37	1991	SFRJ [Yugoslavia]	First war, later work	BSc in Biology, PhD in Molecular Biology and Biochemistry	Family from Sarajevo (BiH), friends from Sarajevo who live worldwide; work collaborators are located worldwide

Michael	40–45	2010	South Africa several different countries	Marriage	NA	NA
Katirhan	38	2008	Syria Turkey	Family reunion	University degree in mechanical engineering	Wife in Slovenia; brother in Istanbul; rest of family in Syria