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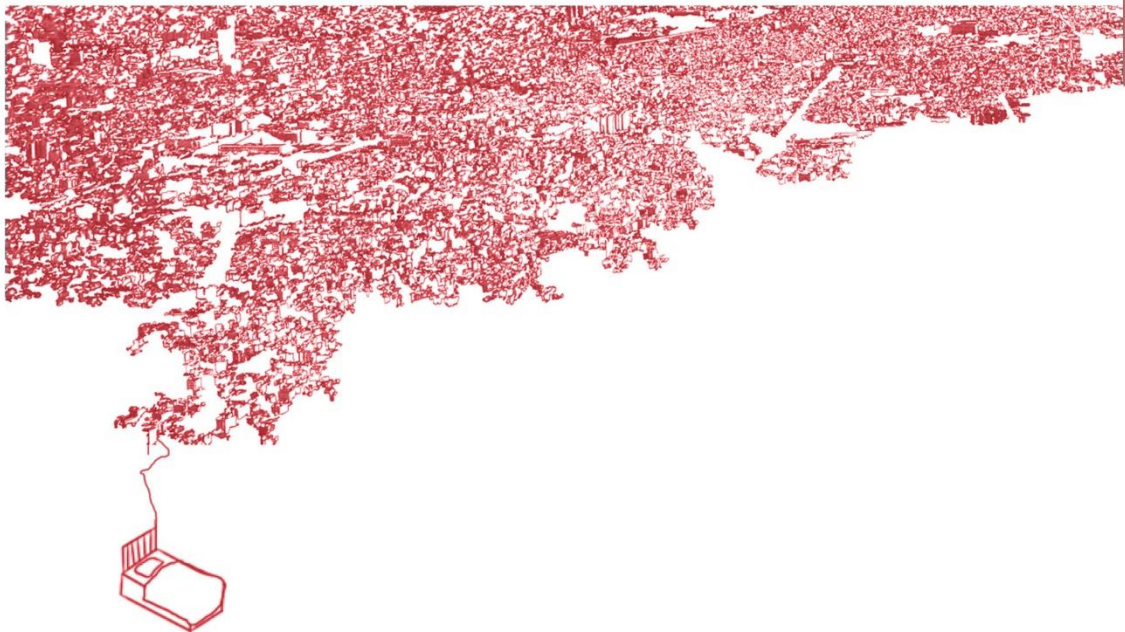
master's thesis | submitted on september 1, 2019

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erasmus mundus master course in urban studies (4cities) | 2017–2019

FROM THE BED TO THE CITY

MICROGEOGRAPHIES OF HOME-MAKING ON THE RUN



abstract

Over the past couple of decades, the world has witnessed a radical rise in mobility. This poses serious challenges to the way we anchored ourselves in the world. New home cultures have emerged from temporally and spatially transitory living arrangements. Home is no longer one sedentary ideal, but it can be multiple, dynamic, and incomplete. Home and Home-making processes can be seen as an ensemble of everyday materialities and micro practices. Humans, places, and material objects connect to each other and form a narrative structure, which extends over multiple scales, from small objects in the bedroom to the city at large. Living a life on the move, 4CITIES students are an illustrative example of transitory urban living. Inspired by the works of the French writer Georges Perec, this thesis develops a Perecquian methodology to investigate the home-making experiences of the students of 4CITIES Master Course in Urban Studies, which revolves around three main axes: multi-scalarity of everyday spaces, the connectedness of life narratives and materiality, and an autobiographicality that transcends the personal. Starting from the bedroom, and the life and the objects it contains, this study soon surpasses those four walls and explores 4CITIZENS' microgeographies of home-making on the run, in Copenhagen.

keywords

Home, mobility, multi-scalarity, materiality, everyday life, Georges Perec, 4CITIES

There are times when I run through my drawers in search of a little something, say a bottle of perfume, just to find that it is not there. In fact, I realise I do not have it at home at all—not in *this home* at least. The little bottle of perfume—if it ever was in any drawer—was in the drawer of one of my once-homes in another city, another time. It is as if my places, my things, and my memories are swirling in a whirlpool of time and space. A fragmented life. Every time I lay my suitcase flat on the floor and start packing my stuff (and how common of a scene that has been in the past couple of years), it is as if I try to claim a little piece of my life, packing the only things that I can take with me, as I leave loved ones, places, and homes behind.

Now that I am writing these lines, as the very last additions to my master's thesis, I am on the verge of one of those packing sessions again—this time, perhaps, in a more uncertain way than ever. There is no denying that this research project has been a very personal quest for me. To look at how others around me live, hoping to find out how I, myself, live. Even the formation of this master's thesis has been a story of home-making on the run. Most of the write-up was completed between Tehran, a village in Northern Italy called Monteleone, and Vienna; some other parts were written in Madrid; the empirical research was carried out in Copenhagen; and the initial idea for the research was developed in Vienna. In each of these places, as I was doing these things, there was a place I called *home*. But above all, there were precious *people*.

I wish to sincerely thank all who made this possible. Henrik; for his great advices and his continuous, friendly support, which goes way beyond this thesis—*tak!* My parents; for their love and unwavering support and for having shown me that one can make a home out of every new place—*merci!* Eva; for always having been *there* for me, wherever that 'there' was, also for the thought-provoking conversations we had around my thesis—*danke!* My clique of old friends, these five wonderful people who have given me solid reasons not to fear living on the run. And finally, my brilliant and inspiring fellow 4CITIZENS and the ten participants among them, who are the stars of this research and without whom this would never be possible—*thank you!*

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chapter I

INTRODUCTION

« Mes espaces sont fragiles :
le temps va les user, va les détruire »
—Georges Perec

Over the past couple of decades, the world has witnessed a radical rise in mobility, to the extent that the relationship between time and space has been drastically altered. More than ever, our lives are associated with notions of speed, lightness, and fluidity. As Zygmunt Bauman (2000) argues in his elaboration of *liquid modernity*, one can, now, reach any spatial destination in the same time span (that is in ‘no time’); therefore, spaces lose much of their privilege and time shrinks down to moments. This poses serious challenges to the way we anchored ourselves in the world. The privileged space that once was home to those inhabiting it for a lifetime is fading away and new forms of homes and living arrangements entail the need to reimagine the meaning of home to explore the domestic interiors of the contemporary city.

Traditionally, home is associated with the timely inhabiting of a highly personalised space. Heidegger’s essay on dwelling and building (2001) is often referred to as a ground for such position. Heidegger, who wrote the essay in the aftermath of World War II and in the context of the housing shortage in Europe, maintains that dwelling (*wohnen*) is our way of *being in the world* and that our capacity to build comes from our capacity to dwell. He then goes on to conclude that the real problem of dwelling is not merely in the lack of housing, but in that humans must ever learn to dwell (Heidegger, 2001). The typical paths taken from here are a nostalgia-driven requiem for a lost authentic dwelling and a critique of modern, standardised, urban housing. What remains in the shadow, however, is that if we understand Heidegger’s notion of building in the larger sense of the material making of a home—i.e. home-making—then the coupling of dwelling and home-making, as a continuous learning, forms a very flexible notion of home.

Engaging in home-making, one works within a world rather than acting upon a material world from without. As such, our capacity to make a home indeed comes from our ability to dwell, but that dwelling is not an abstraction of an ‘authentic act’, but a lived experience which develops in parallel with the process of home-making. In the context of an increasingly mobile world, among a multitude of fragmented, temporary homes, the highly mobile individual, thus, tends toward a “collecting of experiences, places, events, trips, acquaintances, data, and files”, as Elliot and Urry put it (2010: p. 5). With a shift of scale, home and processes of home-making can simply be seen as an ensemble of everyday practices and material objects, some of which are more generic, like eating or a desk, and some are more personal, like a specific morning ritual or a polaroid of a precious memory. Humans, places, and material objects connect to each other through everyday practices and form a narrative structure, which extends over multiple scales, from small objects in the bedroom to the city at large.

Works by the experimental French writer Georges Perec offer a unique perspective on dealing with this ever-evolving process of relating to one’s space. For Perec, what begins as an exploration of one’s own spatial experience soon transgresses to a more impersonal and shared experience that is the characteristic of life on its everyday, mundane level. Fascinated by everyday life, Perec puts a tremendous emphasis on space as a dynamic phenomenon and in doing so he adopts a multi-scalar approach. For Perec, obliqueness of lived space is essential, as it embodies a materiality that

is closely tied to life narratives. Therefore, taking up a creative Perecquian approach opens a new window for this thesis to investigate the microgeographies of home-making in a highly mobile world.

International students, young professionals, backpackers, expats, migrants, and refugees, among many others, are constantly on the move and live between a multitude of places. The cultures of temporary homes, left-behind homes, and ‘carrying one’s life in a suitcase’ are on the rise, as more people live in places for limited, relatively short periods. Such lifestyles come with their own nuances and arrangements that are the focus of this thesis. Hence, the following research question leads this research: *How do people in temporally and spatially transitory phases of life make a place their ‘home’ —from the bed to the city?*

Undertaking to design a truly interdisciplinary study, I drew from disciplines of geography, sociology, and anthropology, combined them with literary and architectural endeavours, and carried out an extensive ethnography on my 4CITIES classmates, as a group of highly mobile international students who have lived in four European cities in the course of two years, to answer this research question.

In the following chapter, I discuss the theoretical framework of *home-making on the run* in two main parts. The first part presents a review of the manifold notions of home across various disciplines and the second part focuses on the contemporary shape of home within the context of mobility. In Chapter III, I explain the Perecquian methodology that I have devised, which revolves around three main axes: multi-scalarity of everyday spaces, materiality and its juxtaposition with life narratives, and an autobiographicality that transcends the personal. The chapter ends with a description of the case study and workings of the empirical research. Loosely based on Perec’s *La vie mode d’emploi* (2010), Chapter IV is composed of ten portraits of the rooms that I have studied. Each portrait is composed of a written description and an architectural illustration. The chapter ends with the display of 12 of the photographs I took of the rooms in Copenhagen during November and December 2018. In Chapter V, I discuss and analyse my empirical findings in the light of the theoretical framework laid out in Chapter II. And finally, Chapter VI presents the conclusions of this study. Throughout the document, names have been altered to protect the identities of the participants.



chapter II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

*"Just what is it that makes today's
homes so different, so appealing?"*
—Richard Hamilton

In the present chapter, throughout two main sections, each with their own subsections, the theoretical basis of *home-making on the run* is debated at length. The chapter begins with a section dealing with various takes on the notion of home within a multitude of academic disciplines, thus establishing the dimensions of 'home-making' within the scope of this thesis. Further, in the second section, through the conception of *mobility* as a principle of *modernity*, the advent of mobile lives and lifestyles is discussed, to highlight the significance of exploring the contemporary construction of home *on the run*.

WHAT IS HOME?

What is home? At first sight, this seems a banal question, not the least for most of us would be able to point to a place we call home without much trouble. Yet, home eludes definition; is it a place? Is it an idea? Is it synonymous with a house? Or is it where the heart is? In academia, of course, it is all of these and much more. There is an extensive body of research exploring the meanings of home from various perspectives within disciplines ranging from sociology, anthropology, history, and geography to psychology, cultural studies, architecture, and philosophy. Dealing with an ensemble of complex and interrelated concepts, the study of home is an extremely multidisciplinary realm. There have been a number of well-rounded, critical reviews of the literature (see Mallett, 2004; Blunt, 2005; Moore, 2000; Després, 1991, Blunt & Dowling, 2006; Perkins, 2002). Generally, the writings on home can be categorised on the basis of their rapport to space—i.e. space of the home. On the one hand, there are works that emphasize the social construct of the home, thus forming a socio-spatial understanding, eventually leaning towards a nodal concept of home as a place within a network of places. This perspective is more prevalent among researchers in the social sciences, particularly those involved in housing studies. On the other hand, many works focus on the emotive and psychological capacities of the home, eventually leaning towards an aesthetic understanding of the home—aesthetics in its fundamental sense, that of the 'status of bodily sensations' (Saito, 2015). This view is generally favoured within the disciplines of architecture and humanities. This labelling is, of course, a rough generalisation. It must be kept in mind that this broad categorisation is in fact a spectrum rather than a dichotomy. Different approaches do borrow from each other and interact. That is indeed why the study of home is a highly interdisciplinary one. In an attempt to answer to the question 'what is home?', I present six hypothetical responses in this section, each of which shedding light on one aspect of the complex and inter-disciplinary notion of home.

A SHELTER FROM THE OUTSIDE AND THE OTHER

Starting from the spatial unit of the home, one of the most obvious ideas that comes to the fore is that of a shelter—an idea that is based on the division and distinction between the outside and

the inside, the public and the private (Statszak, 2001; Wardaugh, 1999; Altman and Werner, 1985). In his study of the geography of domestic space, Staszak (2001) proposes a handful of characteristics for domestic space: “anthropic”, “differentiated”, “private”, “familial”, “on the scale and measurements of the human body”, and “that of the fundamental territory” (pp. 334–346, my translation). This is an illustrative example of a conventional understanding of home, in which home is defined as a *private* space—in opposition to the *public* realm—and is highlighted as a *territory*, an enclosed refuge from the outside world that is tied to ideas such as safety, security, comfort, privacy, and family life. Home is, thus, the materialized and symbolic space for privacy. Even so, historians have shown that our understanding of privacy as such, in the Western world, is a more or less new phenomenon (Ariès & Duby, 1987; Bryson, 2010; Rybczynski, 1986). It becomes clearer that home is a social construct. To explain the workings of this socio-spatial entity, Saunders and Williams (1988) build on Giddens’ (1984) theory of structuration, and in particular, his notion of ‘locale’, as in “social interaction is in part constituted by its spatial setting” (1988: p. 81). For them, home is the fusion between the physical space of the house, and the social unit of the ‘household’. Therefore, home is the site where “basic forms of social relations and social institutions are constituted and reproduced” (p. 82). They view it as the “core domestic unit” of contemporary society and a “basic economic unit”, while distinguishing between family and household as they believe the traditional nuclear family is but one of the possible forms of household (p. 82). Saunders (1990) takes the socio-spatial unit of the home to a further, more personal state and argues that home is the place “with which individuals can most readily identify and it easily lends itself to the symbolic expression of personal identity” and “where the self can be expressed outside of social roles” (p. 311).

Two major conclusions can be drawn from this analysis. First, home is portrayed as an enclosed haven, which provides protection from the hostile environment of the outside world, makes intimacy and repose possible, and offers personal territory to the individual, where one can be away from the expectations, control, and surveillance of the society. As feminists show, this view not only draws a false line between public and private, but also overlooks the conflicts around and within the home. Second, it defines home/household as a fixed socio-spatial unit, which is the basic component of society. In a critique of Saunders and Williams’ work, Somerville (1989) takes issue with their conception of society as an atomistic entity that comprises of basic units, remarking that it is an oversimplification. He furthers his critique by maintaining that even if we are to accept such a construct, Saunders and Williams do not back up their argument on firm theoretical grounds, as to how the relationship between the physical and the social space is mutually constitutive or how they interact to reproduce social action (Somerville, 1989). On the contrary, geographers such as Doreen Massey (1992; 1995) have argued that home, like other *places*, is well stretched beyond its fixed spatiality.

A SITE OF CONFLICT

Marxist critiques of the public-private dichotomy can be seen as a prelude to critical, feminist notions of home. While the division of the social world into public and private is often viewed as natural and inevitable, it is in fact a powerful ideological tool to favour the interests of certain groups at the expense of the others and to legitimise the dominance of certain individuals (Sapsford, 1995). In the hands of the bourgeoisie, the ‘private sphere’ and, specially, the family became a milieu for the consolidation of private gain, inheritance, and serfdom. “It contains”, Marx wrote, “in miniature all the contradictions which later extend throughout society and its

state” (quoted in Engels, 1986:88). Contrary to the proletariat household, where both the woman and the man had to work, in the bourgeois household, the man was the main income earner, so, for Engels (1986), “he is the bourgeois, and the wife represents the proletariat” (p. 105). But this is only a rudimentary take on the conflicts *within* the home and the domestic sphere.

Feminist writers put forth an extremely important critique of the conception of home as a haven and an unchallenged expression of one’s identity. The perspective that portrays the outer world as the world of hostilities and the home as a shelter from that is a fundamentally male-centric one. The division of the private and the public has reinforced gender roles and has associated the public realm with production and economic labour, thus with men, and the private realm with reproduction and domestic labour, thus with women (Oakley, 1974; Eisenstein, 1984). In a world where the former is valued over the latter, home becomes a site of oppression and patriarchal domination of women. Not only women are expected to make the home a clean, comfortable, and pleasant environment, they are systematically deprived of equal rights when it comes to housing production, exchange, and consumption, such as property ownership, proximity to workplace, or family policies (Madigan et al., 1990). Therefore, if women are expected to retrieve back into the home, perform domestic chores, and even be prone to domestic violence, there is no doubt that home is neither a safe haven for them nor a place with which they can positively identify. In an extensive review of feminist approaches to the notion of home, Young (2005) suggests that despite the rightfulness of the bourgeois-dominative critiques of the meaning of home, it “carries a core positive meaning as the material anchor for a sense of agency and a shifting and fluid identity” (p. 149). She argues that having a stable, comfortable home through which one can establish one’s own identity is indubitably a matter of privilege; however, this privilege is not limited to gender, it is also connected to social class, wealth, race, and so on (Young, 2005). Even beyond questions of gender, feminist analyses shed light on the important problematic of power relations within the home and render the home a site which is not *naturally* peaceful and, thus, not immune from conflicts and antagonism.

A POINT OF REFERENCE

Beyond the conventional geometric understanding of inside and outside, home goes past the sole purpose of providing physical shelter from the outside and being a social hideout from the other. Home is also defined through its subjective, psychological and emotive meaning for the individual, which is shaped through the lived experience of home, as a sense of belonging. Gaston Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space* (2012; first published in 1957) is a classic text of such perspective. In his definitive phenomenological study of the home, Bachelard (2012) investigates the poetic images of the home in order to gain access to the deep levels of the human psyche, where one has, as he claims, an intimate relationship with the notion of home. For Bachelard, “inhabited space transcends geometrical space” (p. 58, my translation). Inhabiting our “space of life”, we tend to become “rooted in a corner of the world” because our home is “our primary universe”, hence “every truly inhabited space, carries the essence of the notion of home” (p. 24, my translation).

This is indeed linked to Heidegger’s arguments in *Being and Time* (1996; first published in 1927) and his philosophy of being-in-the-world, which asserts that what we are is shaped by our relationship, through our bodies, to the outside world. In a later essay, he focuses his attention on the question of *building* and *dwelling* (Heidegger, 2001; first published in 1954). Heidegger (2001) stresses the significance of building or making to our conception of home and our very existence, claiming

that the act of building—and one can argue ‘home-making’ as well—is integrally associated with and comes out of our capacity to dwell. Phenomenologically, this is not limited to material building. It can also extend to the realm of imagination and memory, what Bachelard mainly deals with. Merleau-Ponty’s (2005) discussion of ‘perception’ is useful here, as he argues that our perception and memory are not merely distorted projections of the outer world in our subjectivity, but original ways to experience the world:

If on the other hand we admit that all these ‘projections’, all these ‘associations’, all these ‘transferences’ are based on some intrinsic characteristic of the object, the ‘human world’ ceases to be a metaphor and becomes once more what it really is, the seat and as it were the homeland of our thoughts (Merleau-Ponty, 2005: p. 28).

So the home that we build, be it material or imaginary, is the outcome of our immersion in the world—the very *homeland of our thoughts*.

Home is not just a physical entity, but an idea—or better put—an ideal, for it has to do with our thoughts, memories, dreams, and reveries. An imaginary ideal point from which one can view and understand the world (McCarter & Pallasmaa, 2012). For Bachelard, home is where time and space form a special relationship as he suggests that “in its countless cavities, space holds compressed time” (Bachelard, 2012: p. 27, my translation). In other words, when we localize our memories in time, we are doing so from an external point of view, but when we localize memories in space, we are able to discover the depths of intimacy. In this sense, home, as the primary space of life, takes centre stage in ‘housing’ our memories. For that matter, Bachelard gives special hierarchical importance to the ‘childhood house’. Nevertheless, our memories are never purely memories. These imaginations are at once “memories” and “legends, as they have an “oneiric base” (p. 47), therefore “for each of us, there exists an oneiric home, a memory-reverie home, lost in the shadow of a beyond of the real past” (p. 33, my translation).

For Bachelard, although the space of the home ‘transcends’ its geometric boundaries and integrates with dreams and memories in human psyche, it still keeps its stable and fixed nature very much intact, as he writes: “home is a body of images that give man reasons or illusions of stability” (Bachelard, 2012, p. 34, my translation). The home, due to this stability, becomes a reference point for the individual to relate to the world—to *be* in the world. This can be revealed through his use of language as well. Throughout the text, he uses the word ‘maison’, which can stand for ‘home’ or ‘house’ interchangeably, since there is no such distinction in the French language. However, we can deduct that he eventually favours the physicality, and thus stability, of a ‘house’ when he regretfully makes the remark that “in Paris, there are no houses [maisons]. The inhabitants of the big city live in superimposed boxes” (Bachelard, 2012: p. 42, my translation). Ali Madanipour (2003) points out that this notion of stability overarches Bachelard’s phenomenology to the extent that he takes an individual who is born in a ‘house’ (and not a hospital), grows up in the same house without moving from home to home, and spends long time in one place with a certain degree of continuity and a slow pace to be rooted there.

A NODAL POINT WITHIN SCALES

Despite the traditional understanding of home as a fixed place, empirical research shows that, in contemporary society, social relations have bypassed localities such as a settled household and

individuals have more complex relationships to their homes (see studies on solo-living individuals by Galčanová & Vacková, 2016; Jamieson and Simpson, 2013; among others). More often than not, there are tendencies to caricaturize those who live alone as disconnected from their friends and families, and far from any sense of community, exemplifying individualisation of the society. However, these assumptions are based on a traditional understanding of place-based community as the only means of organising social life and living environment in order to develop a sense of belonging and hominess. But those who live alone, who often happen to be mobile individuals too, illustrate a separation between living arrangements and social life (Jamieson & Simpson, 2013). Although mobility and living alone decrease the number of proximate social ties, this lack of “companionship on tap” (p. 146) does not necessarily translate into loneliness, as the importance of different relationships remains subjective to the individual (Jamieson & Simpson, 2013). Valuable relationships, as Jamieson and Simpson (2013) show, manifest themselves in many homes of the people living alone, through the display of photographs of friends and family members in the home or when they offer their homes to host them for a visit. Although, the residents’ sense of attachment to their locality remains an important component of their feeling of ‘being at home’, it has to be seen in the wider context of their non-place-based networks. That is even valid for ‘locals’, who also have personal circles of ‘friendship and kin’ beyond the local community (Jamieson & Simpson, 2013).

In her paper on the relevance of the concept of ‘place’—mainly as laid out by Doreen Massey (1995; 1992)—to housing research, Easthope (2004) theorises home as a “particularly significant type of place” (p. 137) and notes that, primarily, such an understanding of home puts an end to the false dichotomy of house, as a physical structure, and home, as a socio-cultural construct. She suggests that this view sets the ground for a new research agenda that “looks beyond the scale of individual households to the regional, national and international scale” (Easthope, 2004: p. 128). According to Massey (1995), we are living in a time when social relations are “stretched out” (p. 61) and we interact with people on a multitude of scales—locally, regionally, and internationally. Therefore, places are no longer “coherent, bounded, and settled” (Massey, 1995: p. 54), but are open nodal points within a complex network of social relations that stretch over scales. Massey challenges the idea of home as a fixed place of retreat and security. For her,

a large component of the identity of that place called home derived precisely from the fact that it had always in one way or another been open; constructed out of movement, communication, social relations which always stretched beyond it (Massey, 1992: p. 14).

Therefore, like all other ‘places’, homes are also nodal points created by social relations that stretch beyond their localities and are open and porous.

Furthermore, home is a multi-scalar spatiality. Imaginaries of home and processes of home-making can operate on various scales and therefore may construct home within other scales (Blunt & Dowling, 2006). In other words, home is not necessarily limited to a house or an apartment, it can also be one’s own body, a neighbourhood, a city, a nation, or even the world—as a ‘citizen of the world’, or an astronaut in outer space would probably claim. Likewise, since scale itself is a social construct, in that it is not a predetermined property of the world but is “made by and through social processes” (Marston, 2004: p. 172), the very practices and imaginaries that are associated with the scale of the home and the domestic world may well take place in other scales. One may feel safe and comfortable in an entire city; one may sleep in a public library; and one may celebrate Christmas over a Skype call with family members across continents.

A SET OF EVERYDAY PRACTICES

Even if, and especially when, we strip home of notions of privacy, safety, comfort, and stability, it is very difficult to dissociate it from the everyday. The everyday is the realm of habits, routines, sameness, and repetition. It is both the most obvious and the most abundant. It encompasses the repetitive actions and places that form our closest backdrop of familiarity. In fact, in the context of modernity, the everyday becomes the dynamic system that reacts to the new—that is the *unfamiliar*—and transforms and absorbs it into the mundane—that is the *familiar* (Highmore, 2002). No matter on which scale or in what form, home is what we are used to. In Agnes Heller's words,

... familiarity is not in itself equivalent to 'feeling at home', though familiarity is, of course, an indispensable ingredient in any definition of 'home' (Heller, 1984: p. 239).

Despite the taken-for-grantedness of the everyday, this familiarity is not a given, it is, in fact, actively produced over time and is thus essentially linked to what we call *habitus* (Felski, 2000). But this linkage is a reciprocal one. Through our repetitive practices, we form these habits, but, as Bourdieu (2013) maintains, these habits generate an underlying, unconscious, everyday order which directs our footsteps and shapes us. As such, one is not isolatable from one's landscape of home. In his seminal work on the practices of everyday life, Michel de Certeau (1990) distinguishes between 'strategies' and 'tactics' in the sense that he associates strategies with a totalising view when "a subject of will and power is isolatable from its environment", while a tactic is more spontaneous as due to its "placelessness, a tactic depends on time, waiting observingly to seize passing possibilities of profit" (p. xlvi, my translation). Tactics are associated with 'doing' and 'operating'. Even as consumers, we find our own 'ways' and 'arts' of doing through everyday practices that at first sight seem to be dictated by the 'user's manual' (Certeau, 1990). Thus, if we understand home as a dynamic entity with certain degrees of fading and emerging placelessness, the everyday landscape of home possesses a 'tactical' nature—one of everyday practices.

Far from sociological and psychological pretence, the everyday once again brings home back down to earth. The functions and practices of which home is at once the effective setting and the *raison d'être* draw a detailed portrait of the person inhabiting the home. The inclusions and exclusions, preferences, arrangements of the furniture, manners of organising the space, order or disorder, routines, all of these already compose a "life narrative" (Certeau & Giard, 1998: p. 145). If we take Walter Benjamin's words, "to live means to leave traces" (Benjamin, 1986: p. 155), it is, then, through the traces of these practices that we can arrive at a *reading* of home.

A BUNCH OF STUFF

Essential to any discussion of everyday life is the *thingly* world. We live our everyday lives among things and our homes are the main storage sites of those things. The ensemble of one's everyday practices and everyday surroundings constitutes what is called *lifestyle* in popular culture. But while notions of 'style' and 'lifestyle' are closely tied to consumer culture and commercial forces, they are not merely reducible to them. In his many works on topics such as clothing, home decorations, long-distance relationships, and so on, the cultural anthropologist, Daniel Miller, stands against the attribution of a certain *superficiality* to material manifestations that define style,

to arrive at the real level of the relationship between persons and things, where they are mutually defined and redefined through each other (Miller, 2010; 2008; 2005; for instance). As Ben Highmore (2011) points out, common approaches to things reveal two main deficiencies: first, the emphasis on the cultural symbolism of things (i.e. what a certain object stands for); second, the view which finds meaning in objects only when the owner or the user ‘invests’ them with their own meaning. For Miller (2010), though, material objects are a “setting” that “make us aware of what is appropriate and inappropriate” (p. 50) while they themselves remain unnoticed. Such a perspective suggests that a lot of what makes us who we are does not come from our consciousness or subjectivity, but arises from the exterior, material environment that habituates us (Miller, 2010). In brief, material objects comprise not only a representation of self but are, constitutive of self. Therefore, home, as the primary site where stuff is accumulated, is constitutive of self, not because it is invested with some transcendental meaning, but because, through its materiality, it is simply the effective setting of one’s everyday life.

Past the simplistic theories of representation, it is this *humility of stuff* (Miller, 1987) that calls for scrutinization. There have been ethnographic works concerned with the everyday aesthetics of home in different contexts. Decoration and style in soviet interiors (Buchli, 1999); redecorations in search of an ideal image in English working-class households (Clarke, 2001); differences between big refurbishments and small arrangements in Norwegian working-class homes (Garvey, 2001); tensions that arise between the space of home and the movement of material possessions when tenants move homes in Montreal (Marcoux, 2001); aesthetic tactics used by Slovak au pairs in their rooms in London (Búriková, 2006); and a close exploration of 30 homes in a street in London (Miller, 2008), to name a handful. Firstly, these works stress the significance of extended ethnography as the prime means for the study of the material cultures of the home. Secondly, with exceptions here and there, they manifest an approach that avoids loading objects with grand sociological or psychological narratives.



MOBILITY: A MODERN PRINCIPLE

In laying out the workings of what they call ‘the mobilities paradigm’, Sheller and Urry (2006) problematise the ‘sedentarism’ that prevails theories in many social and cultural research disciplines. Loosely based on Heidegger’s (2001) idea of dwelling, this sedentarism prioritises rootedness in place and stability over placelessness and mobility and frames the timely inhabiting of space as the norm (Sheller & Urry, 2006). The ‘mobilities paradigm’, on the other hand, acknowledges that the world is on the move—although through a complex and interrelated system of immobilities, materialities, and localities (Canzler, Kaufmann & Kesselring, 2008; Sheller and Urry, 2006; Adey, 2006)—and, therefore, suggests that mobilities can be viewed as the practical outcome of an ideology of speed, lightness, and fluidity that constitutes the late state of modernity, labelled ‘Liquid Modernity’ by Zygmunt Bauman (2000). Likewise, for Bonss & Kesselring (2004), mobility, along with concepts such as rationality, individuality, and globality, is conceived as a general *principle of modernity*.

But why is mobility such a constituent part of modernity? It is hardly believable that humans have only started massive movements in modern times. The history of humankind is a history of

nomadism and migration. In response to this paradox, Bonss & Kesselring (2004) build upon Georg Simmel's (2011) idea that mobility in modern society is different from mobility in premodern society on the basis of the contrast between mobility and stability as their main point of reference. That is to say, in premodern imaginary, one who is on the move has the aim of returning to one's place of origin and notions of stability and local belonging dominate social contexts, while in a modern *mouldable* society, mobility gains a positive connotation as spatial movement becomes an "instrument for social change and individual progress" (Bonss & Kesselring, 2004: p. 11).

Furthermore, the multiplicity of *mobilities* is a key component of the mobilities paradigm. It encompasses all forms of human movements (by car, by plane, on foot, etc.), as well as movements of objects and also images, information, and data on multiple scales (Urry, 2004; Canzler, Kaufmann & Kesselring, 2008). In other words, it deals with movement in both *virtual* and *real* spaces (Kaufmann, 2002). Coupling this idea with the idea of modern mobility as a means of social change, the relation between mobility and movement can be deconstructed. Canzler, Kaufmann & Kesselring (2008) argue that there can be three different arrangements between the two: *being on the move but not mobile*, like a businessperson who constantly flies from one international hotel to another and stays in the exact same social milieu everywhere; *being mobile but not on the move*, like a heavy user of the internet, the social media, Skype, etc. who does not move but is connected to various social milieus, or someone who is hosting a guest from abroad; *being on the move and mobile*, like migrants, refugees, backpackers, tourists, international students, and young professionals, to name a few.

MOBILE LIVES

Reflecting on her personal experience of moving much too often, the American writer Deborah Tall writes about her fragmented network of relationships:

... my community is widely scattered. I have close friends all over the world; none of them know each other. We have only our own brief intensities of common experience to bind us, our telephone calls and letters. Friendship is tethered to loss, dependent on mental reconstruction instead of daily enactment. Sometimes I feel stranded at the centre of a fragmented orb, my life divided into a series of experiences and places that can never be brought together—except in the solitude of memory (Tall, 2007: p. 426).

Every individual has a personal history, which spans like a network comprising of many different individuals and relationships that range from everyday greetings with the corner shopkeeper to intense romantic engagements and complex family relationships. The increasingly mobile individual, thus, needs to reconfigure these relationships or establish new ones on the move. But this is only one of the many facets of a mobile life. Social, material, and imaginary landscapes become prone to constant change and moulding. Several theorists have linked the impact of mobility on everyday life to a modern reconfiguration of *space-time*. This view can be traced back to Simmel's (1997, originally published in 1903) remarks about modern *metropolitan life* and human connectivity through the advent of punctuality and timing precision, then to ideas of *rythmanalyse* (Bachelard, 1950, originally published in 1936; Lefebvre, 1992), and David Harvey's (1990) *time-space compression*, finally leading to contemporary analyses within mobilities studies, such as Drevon's (2019) work on the *rythmologie* of mobility and the contemporary society, where he

surpasses the framework of individual, spatial mobility to focus on an understanding of life rhythm, which takes into account the interactions between various spheres of everyday life.

Consequently, this new, grand socio-cultural concertation of time and space crystalizes in a transformed landscape of life—the *mobile life*—which arguably revolves around three main ideas. First, the rise of a highly mobile society transforms imaginaries and connections with the world at large; therefore, identity is recast in terms of capacities for movement, as living a life on the move is associated with the ‘good life’ (Elliott & Urry, 2010). Second, living arrangements are no more necessarily bound by proximity and “clashes of scales have become the norm” (Kaufmann & Viry, 2015: p. 8); therefore, a mobile life is a life lived on various scales at once. Third, various mobile populations are constantly on the move, which means that they live between two or more places; therefore, a mobile life is a life dominated by notions of *temporariness* and *transience* (see Acedera & Yeoh, 2019; Kloos, 2015; Collins, 2012a; Collins, 2012b; for empirical examples).

MOBILE HOMES

The problems that arise from a heavily stable and slow-paced approach to home—as a primary site of life—in our highly mobile and fast-paced world of today entail the need for a revised approach, which regards home within the broader framework of mobility. There is a growing body of literature that reimagines home within the *mobilities paradigm*, dealing with migrant’s home experiences, homelessness, homes in cars or campervans, and transcultural home objects, among others (see Lloyd & Vasta, 2017; for an edited volume of such works). There are, also, various mobile populations, ranging from tourists to refugees, whose home-making experiences have become subject to increasing scrutiny. In today’s world, migration is no longer seen as an extraordinary event where one transplants from one place to another, but it is rather a continuous process of redefining relations with people and places through everyday practices, means of digital communication, and imagination; all of these, of course, in a setting where certain groups enjoy massive privileges compared to others in terms of mobility (Ley-Cervantes, 2014).

On one end of the spectrum are the international elite who have access to an assortment of capitals linked to mobility, such as comfortable means of travelling, hospitality services, no visa complications, seamless legal recognition, and immunity from racism or discrimination in the receiving societies. Generally, their everyday lives are closely associated with professionalism and their spatial settings are, for a great part, generic places and non-places such as international hotels, airports, and conference rooms, or exclusive environments such as expat enclaves, gated communities, and high-income neighbourhoods. Works by Butcher (2010), Ley-Cervantes & Duyvendak (2017), and Nowicka (2007) are a few examples of research on the home-making experiences of these mobile groups.

On the polar opposite are millions of migrants and refugees who have abandoned their *homes* in search of a better life. Having fled from war, political oppression, poverty, and alienation, they often face estrangement in the receiving societies as well. Contrary to their privileged counterparts, they experience racism, stigmatization, legal recognition problems, and in many occasions end up on the sketchier sides of the labour market. Despite the hardships, these migrants cannot simply ‘go back home’ and are thus bound to regroup themselves in the new setting. *Home*, then, becomes a space, a community created within the changing links between ‘here’ and ‘there’ (Al-Ali & Koser, 2002). Works by Boccagni (2017), Brun & Fabos (2015), Graham & Khosravi (1997) are a few examples of research on the home-making experiences of these mobile groups.

In between these two extremes are countless different mobile groups that manifest a wide variety of home-making experiences, home spatialities, and home temporalities. As mobility becomes more and more widespread and accessible, homes are increasingly viewed—from the start—as *temporary*, open to further moves, even without a defined time-frame or destination (Rampazi, 2016). This, especially among the mobile youth, has resulted in the rise of various short-term living arrangements, such as cohabitations, shared flats, dormitories, extremely small studios, and so on. In an attempt to ‘feel at home’, mobile young people manifest forms of ‘temporary stabilisation’, as they adapt to the changing environments, which also coincide with the uncertainties that are characteristic of their life as a young person (Rampazi, 2016). The result is a home-making experience comprised of an ensemble of *tactics*—as in Certeau (1990)—creatively developed through the practices of everyday life.

STUDENTS AND MOBILE HOME-MAKING

Within home studies, there has been a growth in the literature on the home experiences of students (for instance see Cieraad, 2010; Collins, 2012a; Holdsworth, 2006; Holton & Riley, 2016; Janning & Volk, 2017; Kenyon, 1999; Prazeres, 2018; Thomsen, 2007). Due to the spatially and temporally transitory nature of student life, limited socioeconomic means of students, their mobility, and their being on the verge of adulthood, their home experiences reveal a stripped, and thus fundamental level of contemporary home-making. Different studies of student home-making have chosen different foci for their research, yet, materiality, place attachment, everyday life, and mobility are recurring themes.

Taking home as a dynamic entity in her study on undergraduate students in the UK, Kenyon (1999) emphasizes the symbolic and spatial role of students’ home experiences for developing an ‘adult’ sense of home, regarding their position in the life course, as they are going through a number of identity and status transitions. She notes that most “students could not locate and identify one definitive home-meaning or venue” (p. 85), instead, they pointed to three different homes: the past home (the family home), the term-time home, and a provisional dream home (Kenyon, 1999). This is reminiscent of Bachelard’s (2012) ideas of the ‘childhood house’ and the ‘oneiric home’ that we discussed earlier. Kenyon’s (1999) analysis of the interiors of students’ rooms shows that they understood home as a place to reflect their personalities and also address their needs, while the idea of ‘personalizing’ space through decoration and ordering was prevalent. Home is seen as ‘base’ from which one conducts one’s life, yet, students maintained their strong sense of belonging to their parents’ homes, to which they felt a ‘right to return’, however, at the scale of the neighbourhood, they felt alienated and mostly emphasized the role of their network of friends as a support for creating a homely atmosphere (Kenyon, 1999).

Also challenging the idea of the home as a temporally and spatially fixed entity, Cieraad (2010) views the home as being reinvented time and again in different locations, thus linking the past to the present and the future, in which objects play a key intermediary role. As such, her study on the home-making experiences of Dutch students reveals similar trends to that of Kenyon’s, where students’ homes are in dialogue with their parents’ homes and the experiences of the students are situated in the bigger context of their past and future home-making. Furthermore, she adds that the process of mental home-making follows material home-making, and that “home is a multi-layered concept” (p. 91), as for students, their own home, their parents’ home, and their hometowns where they had friends and they knew places were all different layers of this notion of

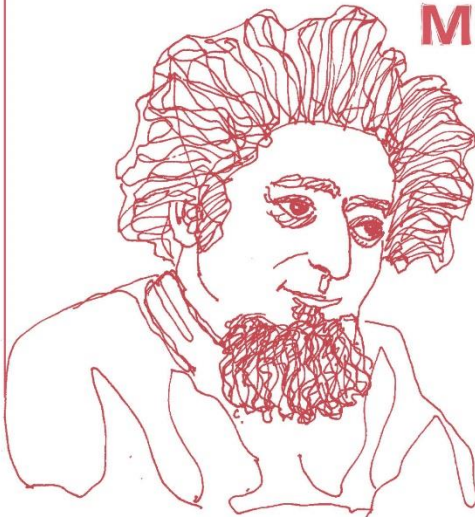
home (Cieraad, 2010). Yet for Cieraad, home-making is not limited to the material belongings, mundane practices are also of tremendous significance as “any place is best remembered in relation to practices performed” (p. 98).

In another similar study, Holton and Riley (2016) redirect their focus on the bedroom to explore the ‘microgeographies of student accommodation’ in the UK, taking the home and its objects as an anchor not only for students’ identity, but also for shared subjectivities. Selecting a smaller scale for their analysis, Holton and Riley delve deeper into the materiality of student rooms, distinguishing between objects that were brought from the pre-university home and those that were bought during term-time, while also paying attention to their position within the rooms and the processes of ‘self-archiving’ that students had to go through when they moved back and forth between their two homes (Holton & Riley, 2016). Similar to the other two studies reviewed here, this study also considers home as a dynamic and transitory entity that goes beyond a geographical location and also extends temporally from the past to the present and the future, however, here a very important nuance is pointed out: “the necessarily finite nature of being a student shapes how homes and bedrooms, especially, are materially organized and utilized” (p. 18).

Taking a slightly different angle, Prazeres (2018) focuses on the multi-scalarity of home and explores the home-making practices of Canadian exchange students on the scale of the city in urban centres in the ‘Global South’. Combining interviews with photograph analysis, Prazeres scrutinizes the ‘insider’s knowledge’ that the students gain through local everyday practices in order to understand the ways in which they turn it into a certain ‘cultural capital’. Based on the notion of ‘collecting places’ (Desforges, 1998), she suggests that students ‘collect homes’ through the places where they have lived, and value these experiences as capitals that will be integrated in their formation of the meaning of home in their life course (Prazeres, 2018).

chapter III

A PERECQUIAN METHODOLOGY



« *Vivre, c'est passer d'un espace à un autre, en essayant le plus possible de ne pas se cogner.* »
—Georges Perec

As mentioned early on, the work of the French writer Georges Perec plays a key role in shaping the outlook of this thesis. In the present chapter, I will discuss at length what I would like to call a 'Perecquian methodology', which basically comprises of three main axes stemming from Perec's oeuvre and their relevance to inform this thesis on how the research question is approached, what methods are used in the empirical research and its analysis, and why the case study and the unit of analysis are selected.

Perec's fecund literary career that was cut short in 1982 with his untimely death at the age of 46 could be more or less bracketed between his first novel *Les Choses* (first published in 1965) and his magnum opus *La vie mode d'emploi* (first published in 1978). What runs like a thread through his career is a fascination with and a desire for investigating the everyday (*le quotidien*). This is probably best stated in his manifesto-like piece *Approches de quoi ?* (Approaches to What?), which he published in 1973 in the fifth issue of *Cause Commune*—a journal he had co-founded with Paul Virilio and Jean Duvignaud:

What really happens, what we live, the rest, all the rest, where is it? What happens every day and recurs every day, the banal, the everyday, the evident, the common, the ordinary, the infra-ordinary, the background noise, the habitual, how to take account of it, how to investigate it, how to describe it?
(Perec, 1989: p. 10, my translation)

In Perec, the quest to explore the 'infra-ordinary' takes up a somewhat phenomenological status—one that tries to reveal a certain level of everyday reality. This approach is central to this thesis, as it undertakes to investigate the lived experiences of space, time, and human relations. More precisely, I would like to point to three key respects in which Perec's oeuvre informs this research. Firstly, in his exploration of the lived experience of the everyday, Perec puts a tremendous emphasis on space as a dynamic phenomenon and in doing so he adopts a multi-scalar approach. This is probably most evident in *Espaces d'espaces*, but as I will show in the following section, is present in his other works as well. I will also explain how dynamicity of space and multi-scalarity are at the core of this thesis, from the title itself to how the empirical research is carried out. Secondly, there is a robust focus on materiality and its juxtaposition with life narratives in Perec's work. As I will explain, this Perecquian approach, practiced at its best in *La vie mode d'emploi*, informs greatly the empirical part of this research and its analysis. Thirdly, a complex autobiographical approach runs through Perec's oeuvre—from its most evident instances such as *W ou le souvenir d'enfance* (first published in 1975) and *Je suis né* (first published in 1990) to his other works—which is somehow elevated to an epistemological level. I will discuss what this approach means in Perec and how it has informed my choice of case, unit of analysis—and more fundamentally—even thesis topic in the first place.

“SPACE IS A DOUBT”: PERECQUIAN MULTI-SCALARITY

The question of space is central to the work of Georges Perec. Space is an omnipresent setting for our everyday life—we are always inevitably in not only one, but in fact, a multitude of spaces at once. As such, it is *lived space* that fascinates Perec: “The space of our life is neither continuous nor infinite, nor homogenous, nor isotropic. [...] The problem is not to invent space... but to investigate it, or yet more simply, to read it; because what we call everydayness is not evident but opaque...”; which is how he introduces his book *Espèces d'espaces*—as a “diary of a user of space” (Perec, 1974: flap text, my translation). In *Espèces d'espaces*, Perec explores space through the lived experience of the self by the successive enlargement of scale, from the small intimate space of the bed to and beyond territories as vast as a country, like an onion with its many successive layers. This expansion, however, does not mean that scales and spaces lead one to the other seamlessly and unchallengedly. In fact, Perec uses this succession to emphasize the arbitrariness of hard borders and to highlight the interplays between scales. Therefore, by situating himself within this succession, he focuses on the inhabiting of space as the key to the constant negotiation of the dialectics of the intimate and the public that urban life brings to us (Chassain, 2014).

To better understand the constant dialogue between different scales of space, Perec’s novel *Les Choses* comes in handy. *Les Choses* (Perec, 1990a) recounts the story of Jerome and Sylvie, a young couple in the 1960s, and their desires and aspirations that are materialised in an obsession with *things* to acquire. At first glance, it might appear as nothing more than a sociological commentary on the consumer culture of the 60s. However, there are complex dialectics of scales at play. Jerome and Sylvie’s small home in Paris is where they conduct their everyday lives from and although they dream of a bigger home and more decorative objects and items of furniture, they are still surrounded by their favourite belongings. When they move to Tunisia, despite having a bigger house, they are unable to fill it with the things they want and that makes them even less satisfied. But that is not all. In Paris, the scale of the city is in fact the biggest contributor to their daydreaming, they see the face of their desires in fancy shop windows and they have friends who share the same dreams with them. The city fuels their longings. But for them, Sfax in Tunisia has no dreams to offer. Objects, the intimate space of home, the urban context, and the cultural context, are all in constant dialogue and affect one another. This intertwining of scales is what shapes Perec’s idea of the complexity of lived space.

For Perec, space is “either tamer or more inoffensive than time” (p. 83), yet despite his desire for it to be stable, and thus to act as a point of reference, “space is a doubt” (p. 91), one that he constantly tries to mark, yet he knows that is ephemeral (Perec, 1999). This is indeed a very humanistic understanding of space. Perec affirms that the space around us is far from being an empty, sterile terrain, but an extension of our own—ephemeral—existence. In the foreword to *Espèces d'espaces*, when he writes “to live is to pass from one space to another, while doing your very best not to bump yourself” (Perec, 1999: p. 6), it is in fact to underline the human experience of space. Lived space cannot only deal with straight lines. If one is to avoid bumping oneself, one has to go around things and spaces—one has to adopt an oblique angle (Vynogradov, 2014). As such, space goes beyond its geometric boundaries. While architects and planners lay out spaces in rather geometric terms, it is the obliqueness of life within those straight lines that forms the particularity of lived space and once again highlights the interplay of scales.

¹ “ne pas se cogner” in the French original; *q.v.* the opening quotation of Chapter III, on page 20.

“WHAT REMAINS WHEN NOTHING REMAINS”: PERECQUIAN MATERIALITY

One of the main characteristics of Perec’s oeuvre is indeed his fascination with *things*; from his first novel boldly titled *Les choses*²; to his obsessive inventories and lists of objects in his works of non-fiction, such as *Tentative d’épuisement d’un lieu parisien*³, where he exhaustively writes down every detail in sight in Place Saint-Sulpice in Paris, many of which are everyday ‘urban objects’; or *Notes concernant les objets qui sont sur ma table de travail*⁴, where he not only lists objects but also reflects on them as a way to view his space and everyday practices once again in an oblique manner (Perec, 1991); or *Tentative d’inventaire des aliments liquides et solides que j’ai ingurgités au cours de l’année mil neuf cent soixante-quatorze*⁵, where he does nothing more than merely listing things. But where Perec’s rapport with material objects reaches its zenith is undoubtedly in *La vie mode d’emploi*.

In *La vie mode d’emploi*, Perec gives a snapshot of life in a Parisian apartment building, as if the façade is lifted and every piece is visible as it is in one moment of time. Therefore, the book escapes the conventional structure of a novel, in which the story unravels through time, and contrarily adopts a spatial structure. Peta Mitchell (2004) calls it an “architext”, where the book and the building become one. The basic unit of the text, as with the building, is the room and, in every chapter, Perec gives us a detailed description of the interior of one piece, where there are small objects, items of furniture, and people. As a result, 99 chapters tell us about life in and beyond this Parisian apartment building. Resisting to give psychological depth to his characters, Perec chooses, instead, to focus on material objects, spatial arrangements, and anecdotes to portray them. As the book goes on, “what always begins as firmly entrenched between the walls of a particular flat or room soon becomes a story which transgresses these boundaries” (Brassett, 1991: p. 153).

Material objects are the key to this transgression. They act as portals that allow for jumping between different spatial and temporal scales. Describing these objects in detail, Perec often mentions how or where the object was acquired by the character or how it ended up there. In many instances, people are long gone, but there are still residues, trivial objects, testifying to their existence. Such narratives that stem from material objects lead one to the other and create an extremely substantial body of narratives that go beyond the time and space of the room. And while the numerous lists of objects in each chapter go on to shape narratives, these narratives are also listed by Perec himself at the end of the book—a list of 107 anecdotes and the page where they appear for the first time in the book. Yet, just as the lists of objects generate narratives, the list of narratives—which one can actually claim is what the entire book is—goes on to become the multifaceted portrait of life. Peter Schwenger (2002) writes of a “functional congruence of narrative and list” which is “exemplified precisely by Perec’s rooms and their listed contents, which combine, piece by piece, into a narrative ‘supersystem’” (p. 148). This intricate construct is perhaps why Perec subtitles *La vie mode d’emploi* “romans”—novels, in plural.

Even if ‘things’ are the driving force behind *La vie mode d’emploi*, as in elsewhere in his oeuvre, Perec does not load material objects with sentimentality. They generate and connect life narratives, they

² *Things* in English

³ First published in *Cause Commune*, 1975; *An Attempt at Exhausting a Place in Paris* in English

⁴ First published in *Les Nouvelles littéraires*, 1976; *Notes Concerning the Objects that are on my Work-table* in English

⁵ First published in *Action Poétique*, 1976; *Attempt at an Inventory of the Liquid and Solid Food-stuffs Ingurgitated by Me in the Course of the Year Nineteen Hundred and Seventy-Four* in English

bear memories, but they are still everyday, (infra-)ordinary objects. In fact, that is what Perecquian materiality stands for. Describing Gaspard Winckler's living room, which is empty after his death, Perec writes:

Now, in the small living room, there is only what remains when nothing remains; flies for example, or some leaflets that students have slid under all of the doors in the building, which sell a new toothpaste or offer a discount of twenty five cents to anyone buying three packs of detergent, or some old issues of *Jouet français*, the magazine that he received all his life and whose subscription went on for a couple of months after his death, or those insignificant things that lie around on the floor or in the corners of the cupboard and one doesn't know how they got there or why they stayed... (Perec, 2010: p. 55, my translation)

It is the most mundane that Perec is interested in—the almost random objects that lie around. What saves them from randomness is not some sort of transcendent meaning, but an 'immanent connectedness' that is easily recognizable (Sheringham, 2006). Just as I argued, in the previous section, that Perec's spatiality is a humanistic one, I would like to suggest that Perecquian materiality is humanistic as well. Things, in their non-transcendent mundanity are tied to life narratives and, through their familiarity, act as catalysts that make different scales relatable to us.

“HE UNDERTAKES TO REMEMBER”: PERECQUIAN AUTOBIOGRAPHICALITY

In 1969, Georges Perec outlined a massive four-part autobiographical project in a letter to his editor Maurice Nadeau, which comprised of *L'Arbre*, exploring the genealogies of his families; *W*, exploring a fantasy island that was arisen from his psychotherapy sessions at the age of 13; *Lieux*, a 12-year-long systematic exploration of places where he had lived or had a particular attachment to; and finally, *Lieux où j'ai dormi*, which was supposed to be an exhaustive description of all the places where he had slept. Of this tremendous labyrinth of memories and self-exploration Perec only published *W ou le souvenir d'enfance*, which is an autobiography of some sort paralleled with the story of the fictional sports-dominated island of W (Perec, 2017). All the other projects were abandoned and left unfinished by him. Nevertheless, adhering to his spatial and material standpoint, and contrary to psychological musings common to the literary genre of autobiography, Perec develops a unique autobiographical approach that is not only manifested in the projects mentioned above, but is also an underlying force in his other writings.

Philippe Lejeune (1991), in his book *La Mémoire et l'oblique : Georges Perec autobiographe*, argues that Perec's autobiographical approach is an oblique one. This obliqueness is mainly a result of the spatial and the material outlook that shape his writing: “because the ordinary language of autobiography was somewhat forbidden for him, back against the wall, he invented new strategies” (Lejeune, 1991: p. 16, my translation).

Perec's oblique autobiographical strategy takes the form of an archaeology, dealing with fragments of memories, just as an archaeologist would dig up different artefacts to take snapshots of the past. It is not a comprehensive portrayal of the evolution process, it is a collage of snapshots, which help to decipher the complexities of the everyday. I would like to call this strategy 'auto-

archaeology'. *Lieux où j'ai dormi* is a great example of this strategy. Percec who never realizes *Lieux où j'ai dormi* except for one instance in *Espaces d'espaces*—where he describes his room in Cornwall in the summer of 1954—defines his project as a list of places and a precise description of each place based on memory, which focuses on rooms and the objects within them. Percec places the mundane act of sleeping and the bodily materiality of the bed⁶ at the centre of *Lieux où j'ai dormi*, in which he explicitly claims to take the “space of the bedroom” as a “Proustian madeleine” and goes on to write that “the topographical certainty of the bed in the room” reactivates his memory and gives it “an acuity and a precision it hardly ever has otherwise” (Percec, 1999: p. 22). As such, Percec the auto-archaeologist tries to grasp memories as neutrally as possible and explores the self through spaces, material objects, and the narratives derived from them.

This type of memory and remembrance is a definitive characteristic of the Percecian autobiographical approach. As Michael Sheringham explains:

The type of memory here is both physical—it relates to ‘experience grasped at the level of the setting in which your body moves’—and neutral: just as Gertrude Stein wrote ‘Everybody’s Autobiography’, so these are ‘everybody’s memories’. Percec’s criterion is that such memories should transcend the purely individual and autobiographical whilst remaining rooted in affective experience (Sheringham, 2006: p. 276).

Percecian autobiographicality is thus an extended domain of the self. It is autobiographical yet impersonal. Percec starts from his personal memories but ties them to the mundane spaces and objects of everyday life that connect them to the common cultural and social context that the self is a part of. Therefore, the ‘je’ (‘I’) here is interchangeable with the third person—as Percec demonstrates in *Je suis né*: “As twenty years later, *he* undertakes to remember (as twenty years later, *I* undertake to remember) ...” (Percec, 1990: p. 30, my translation; emphasis added by me).

4CITIZENS’ HOMES IN COPENHAGEN: METHODS AND APPROACH

Having discussed at length the three salient features of Percec’s work relevant to this thesis, I will now explain how they are instrumental in the ways the research is structured, approached, and analysed. To begin with, let us have another look at the research question presented in the introduction:

How do people in temporally and spatially transitory phases of life make a place their ‘home’—from the bed to the city?

To be able to respond to this question, it is necessary to know who those “people in temporally and spatially transitory phases of life” are that will be studied, how their home-making processes are to be studied, and what “from the bed to the city” indicates. That is what I will explain in the following paragraphs.

This thesis takes as its unit of analysis the home-making processes of ‘Cohort 10’ students of 4CITIES Master Course in Urban Studies, of which I’m honoured to be a member, hence from

⁶ We must not forget that for Percec, the bed is in fact a *space*, one that comes before the room in the succession of the lived spaces that he explores in *Espaces d'espaces*: “The bed is thus the individual space *par excellence*, the elementary space of the body” (Percec, 1999: p. 16, emphasis added by Percec).

here onwards I will take the pleasure of using ‘us’, ‘we’, and ‘our’ referring to the ‘cohort’ in numerous instances. 4CITIES is “a unique two-year international and interdisciplinary programme. 4CITIES takes students to Brussels, Copenhagen, Vienna, Madrid and various surrounding cities” (EMMC 4CITIES Student Handbook, 2017: p. 5). As such, 4CITIES students are highly mobile, young individuals that live and study in each of these cities (Brussels, Vienna, Copenhagen and Madrid, respectively) for the duration of one semester—i.e. three to six months. Although 4CITIES provides the students with administrative, monetary, and emotional support throughout the programme, we are nonetheless required to deal with accommodation in all of the four cities ourselves. This very fact makes the home-making processes of the 4CITIES students a unique case, as it perfectly exemplifies a spatially and temporally experience of the home on different scales.

Cohort 10 began the journey from Brussels in September 2017. 30 students from 26 nationalities form this cohort, with the addition of one more student from the previous cohort, from yet another nationality, who joined Cohort 10 in the second year of the two-year programme (i.e. in Copenhagen). This highly international sample (with members from all continents), brings together 10 males and 21 females between 22 and 31 years of age.

Being a member of the group that I study and analyse, I do not separate myself as a researcher from my research subjects. The fundamental question of ‘home-making on the run’ is rooted in my own ‘affective experience’ which I share with my fellow Cohort 10 students. As I explore our experiences of home-making in the four cities, the *first person* and the *third person* are in constant dialogue. Exploring the other becomes exploring the self, and exploring the self becomes exploring the other. This is indeed a Percequian autobiographical situation, which is different from a merely ‘participatory’ anthropological research as the participation is prior to the research itself and the research question arises from within the initial experience. This informs the way the research is carried out, i.e. the methods. However, before discussing the methods used in this research, it is also needed to explain how the question of home-making, as defined throughout the Theoretical Framework chapter, is approached and how it is tackled “from the bed to the city”. This is where Percequian materiality and spatiality come in handy. If we acknowledge, as Percec suggests, that lived space is inherently oblique and multi-scalar, it becomes evident that a study of home-making cannot limit itself to only one scale. Now, this might signal a chaotic horizon for the research. But Percec also gives us the tool to investigate this complex intertwining of scales, and that is the focus on material objects and their power to act as portals to jump between scales. Therefore, this research focuses on the bedroom, and the life and the objects within its four walls, but as in Percec, it soon transcends those four walls through the connectedness of everyday objects to life narratives. That is how this thesis goes from the bed to city—from small interactions with objects to urban life at large.

The case study thus investigates the homes and home-making processes of Cohort 10 in Copenhagen. It takes the rooms of 10 participants (seven females and three males) from Cohort 10 (the locations are shown on the map of Copenhagen; *Illustration 1*) and the material objects within them, to explore our multi-scalar home-making experiences. As such, the research is based upon a phenomenological outlook, which stays cognizant of its non-representativeness due to a limited sample and a subjective perspective, but nonetheless, reveals a certain level of everyday reality through the exploration of lived experience.

The thesis uses a mixed methods approach. In-depth qualitative interviews, mental maps, photography, observations, and architectural surveying are utilized. The empirical work began with



Illustration 1. Map of the homes of the 10 participants across Copenhagen. (Map by author).

the mental maps. Participants were asked to draw three mental maps, representing three different scales of space—the bedroom, the apartment, and the city⁷. This was done in a location other than the participants' homes. Afterwards, the participants' rooms were visited, observations were made, a quick architectural plan was drawn, and the space and objects were photographed. In order to maintain the scalar approach, two different lenses were used for the photographs. A wide lens was used to capture the space and a normal 50mm lens with a deep focus to capture the objects. Further, semi-structured interviews were conducted to investigate the lived experience of the participants and their narratives of objects, places and practices⁸. The interviews followed a designed flow and a set of questions; however, the questions were of an open-ended nature in order to allow the participants to speak about their own lived experiences⁹. Needless to say, as I share the experience with the interviewees, I welcomed the interview to take the form of a conversation and shared my own experiences as well.

The collected data was, then, compiled together in a sum of 20 tables—two for each participant: one classifying the objects in their 'homes' and the other classifying their everyday practices. In both tables, the entries are microgeographically *located* with regard to their actual physical position and their links to scales beyond that (*Table 1* and *Table 2* illustrate two of such tables)¹⁰. In analysing the empirical findings, the tables were used for two major processes. First, they were used to generate ten portraits of the participants' rooms in a Percequian fashion (presented in Chapter IV). Second, they were used to discuss the empirical findings in comparison with the theories laid out in the Theoretical Framework chapter (presented in Chapter V).

⁷ Samples of the collected mental maps are available in the appendix, pp. xv–xvi.

⁸ The full transcript of the 430 minutes of in-depth interviews conducted in Copenhagen is available as a separate document and can be provided to readers upon request. I can be contacted at arshia.eghbali@gmail.com

⁹ The guideline according to which I conducted the interviews is included in the appendix. pp. iv–v.

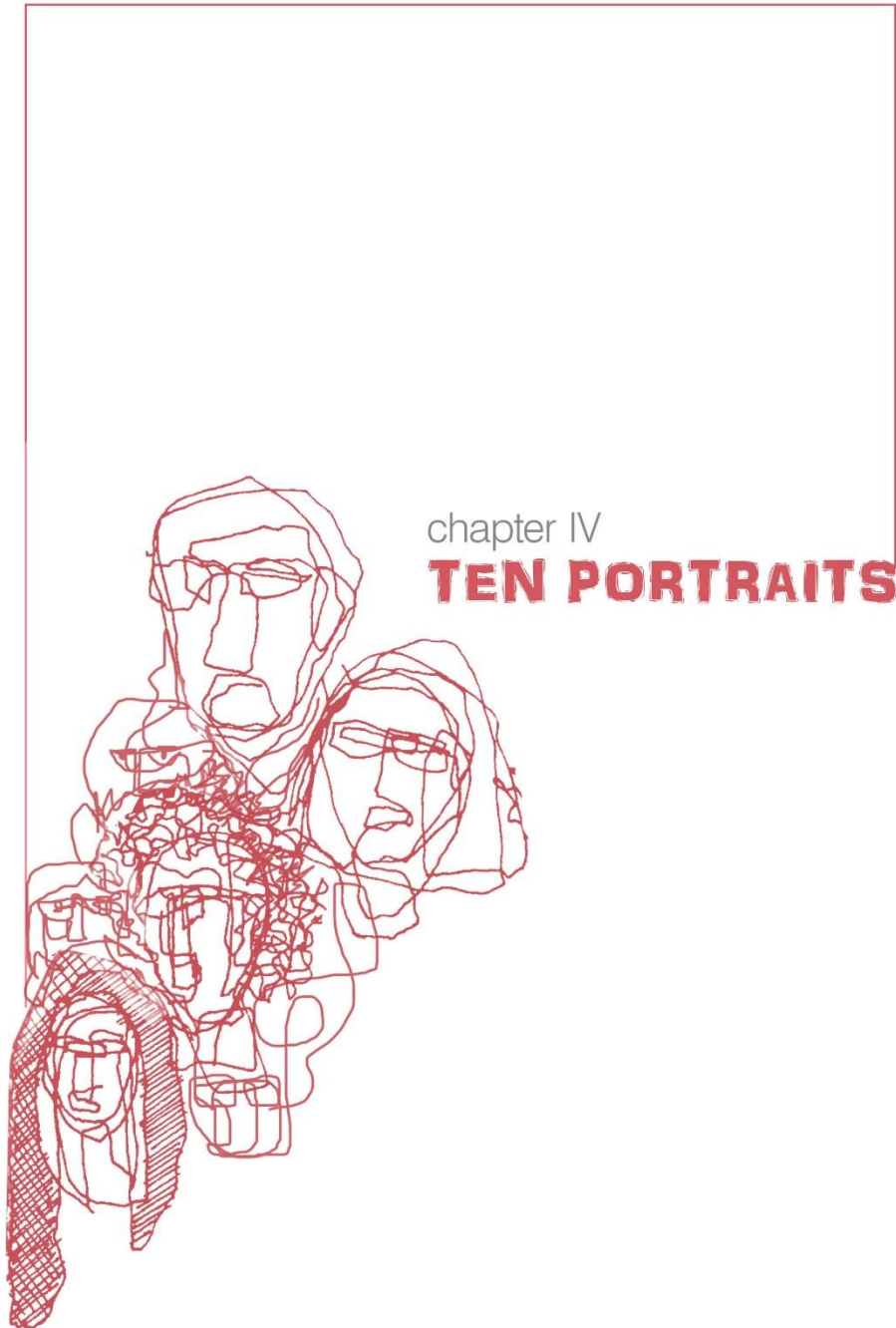
¹⁰ The complete set of the tables (excluding these two) is included in the appendix. pp. v–xv.

| THINGS | LOCATION | STORIES | BEYOND |
|------------------------------|---------------------|--|--|
| Bed | Room | The last tenant took the bed with her (it was hers). The landlord/flatmate had two mattresses. She put them together and fastened them with twines, because otherwise they go apart. | ----- |
| Shelf | Opposite door | It was in the room. She moved it. | ----- |
| Clothing rack | Next to door | It was in the room. | ----- |
| Armchair | B/w bed & shelves | " | ----- |
| Big couch | Attic | She didn't need it. It took space. The flatmate/landlord put it up there. | Attic |
| Calligraphy in frame | wall next to window | Not hers. She took it from the attic and put it there. | " |
| Duvet & pillow cover | On the bed | She took them from Nepal. | Nepal |
| Pillow & bed sheets | " | Not hers. From the flatmate/landlord. | ----- |
| Net curtain | In the suitcase | She brought with herself, but she didn't need it. room had curtains. | |
| Quarter cup | Kitchen | She carries with her everywhere. Very convenient. Because you can measure small portions. She uses it for baking, for her cereal. Somebody gave it to her in Korea. | Korea - Brussels - Vienna - travels everywhere |
| Three photographs | Her room in Nepal | She had a photo of her parents as a young couple. One of her brother being very small, and one that her best friend in school had given to her of themselves, for good luck. But she decided to leave them back home, when she went there before Copenhagen. She had them in Brussels and Vienna. | Nepal - Brussels - Vienna |
| Jar with lights | Square Shelves | She met a 84yo lady in the Black Diamond, when she went in because it got super windy and the lady was attending a concert and they sat in the cafeteria together. They made friends and Tara went to her house a few times. The lady knitted her a scarf out of lama wool and gave it to her with a pic of lama, she used that picture, some fairy lights and an empty marmalade jam to make this assemblage. | Black Diamond - Old lady's house |
| Picture of Vienna in a frame | " | She took it from a neighbouring French girl who was shifting homes to Amager and was giving some stuff for free. Found it on the facebook group "Free Your Stuff Copenhagen". There was a picture of the friends of the French girl in it, so she replaced it with this postcard depicting an 18th century Vienna, which she'd bought there. | Neighbourhood - Copenhagen - Amager - Vienna |
| "Nice-looking" tiger | " | She took it from a neighbouring French girl who was shifting homes to Amager and was giving some stuff for free. Found it on the facebook group "Free Your Stuff Copenhagen". | Neighbourhood - Copenhagen |
| Plate | " | " | " |
| Books | " | ----- | ----- |
| Bathroom stuff | " | She had them in the bathroom first, but it got too cold. | Bathroom |
| Candle | " | Flatmate/landlord gave it to her for birthday. She uses it as bookholder. | ----- |
| Two plants | On drawers | Aloevera & Spider plant. Got them through 'Plants Exchange Copenhagen'. From a woman in the neighbourhood. met a guy there, he offered her some soil. She got the jars from flatmate/landlord | Neighbourhood - Copenhagen |
| Birthday card | " | She got it from me, once. | ----- |
| Bottle | " | Not hers. From the flatmate/landlord. | ----- |
| Mug | Long shelves | Got it as a gift from Javed. | ----- |
| Postcards | " | From different places. | Slovenia - Brussels, etc. |
| Yoga mat | " | She does yoga somewhere in the neighbourhood. | Neighbourhood |
| Cheese plate | " | She took it from a neighbouring French girl who was shifting homes to Amager and was giving some stuff for free. Found it on the facebook group "Free Your Stuff Copenhagen". She uses it for under tea cups. | Neighbourhood - Copenhagen |
| Suitcase | Under the rack | "My best friend for the last few years". | Travels everywhere |

Table 1. Microgeographies of Tara's home objects. (Table by author).

| PRACTICES | LOCATION | STORIES | BEYOND |
|-------------------|--|---|------------------------------------|
| Eating | kitchen / Living room | Breakfasts in the kitchen, and dinners/lunches if it's quick or alone, in the kitchen. If having dinners with Freddie, in the living room. | Apartment |
| Cleaning | Apartment | Freddie doesn't do it. She doesn't mind. She does it once a week. | Apartment |
| Laundry | Basement | She has to book a timeslot and go with the chip. | Apartment building |
| Sleeping | Middle of the bed | ----- | ----- |
| Moving in | ----- | She stayed with Delilah for the first few days. She had to wait to move in to her room. When she arrived to the place, Freddie and his girlfriend were there to meet her. She came in with all her bags, Freddie showed him the place, laundry, garbage sorting, etc. Then they went for a walk around the neighbourhood and he showed her. And then came back in to make Mexican dinner. | Vesterbro |
| Moving out | ----- | This time she was more relaxed about the fact that "everything is so temporary" in Copenhagen, compared to Vienna & Brussels. | ----- |
| Grocery shopping | Supermarket | Netto? -- nearby | Neighbourhood |
| Studying | University library - kitchen/living room | She doesn't study in her bedroom. She prefers the library, because she's more productive. She also feels she's more efficient in the evenings, so she studies until midnight. | University - kitchen - living room |
| Cooking | Kitchen | She loves cooking. It calms her down, so she cooks for herself every day. | Kitchen |
| Breakfast | " | She makes herself a coffee, puts on something to watch or listen to. And wakes up slowly. She wakes up early for this. | Kitchen |
| Finding the place | ----- | HousingAnywhere.com - the only place that looked real and not a 'scam'. They had a skype call. She liked it a lot. | ----- |
| Cycling | Copenhagen | She got her bike stolen toward the end of the semester. She enjoyed biking along the lakes. Going around with the bike was very convenient, but she also discovered the city differently without it. "every time I don't use the bike, I walk through the same street that i bike every day and it feels completely different". | Lakes - Copenhagen |
| Walking | Park - Beach | When the weather was better, she went for a walk. | Neighbourhood |

Table 2. Microgeographies of Zoya's everyday practices. (Table by author).



« L'espace. Etant donné un mur,
que se passe-t-il derrière ? »
—Jean Tardieu

Based on Georges Perec's descriptions of the interiors of the fictitious 11 rue Simon-Crubellier in *La vie mode d'emploi*, ten detailed portraits of the participants' rooms are given in this chapter. Each portrait is composed of a written text in the style of Perec's descriptions, in which the materiality of the interior is 'exhausted', frozen in time, and an architectural representation of the space. As in Perec, through an all-out exploration of the materiality of the room, each portrait soon transcends the four walls of the room and reveals the complexities and the multi-scalarity of 4CITIZENS' home-making, following the life narratives connected to material objects.

HANNA: TORVEGADE, 1400 KØBENHAVN

Hanna's room in a three-bedroom apartment, which she has rented from and shares with a mother and her 16-year-old daughter. The room is almost square with the exception of a chamfered corner long enough for a generously-sized desk to be placed there. Hanna is sitting at the desk and is having dinner. There is a small table in the kitchen and a dining room, but she eats in her room. To be precise, she prefers doing so since the time she was reading in the living room and her flatmate suddenly came up to her and said that she didn't want her to use the living room anymore and that she meant it to be only for her daughter and herself. Hanna does not even have a signed rental contract, so she does not want to risk it. Since then, she understood that she needs to be invisible in her home and she decided to implement her 'leave-no-trace policy'. That is why she is eating in her room behind the desk. That is also why she has all her kitchen stuff and bathroom stuff in the drawers opposite her bed. The chest of drawers is a simple white one (probably IKEA?), just like the white walls, the white doors, the white window frames, and the white desk—a somewhat too white of a room for her taste, in the beginning, so that she had to decorate it with a few simple, colourful items that she asked her mother to send from Brussels.

On the wall right above the desk, is a rather rectangular composition of a few pictures and postcards that she has assembled. On the top left is a picture of her and her boyfriend. Below that, is a sepia-toned picture of an old man holding a tray of drinks in front of a door with the sign "Sperlhof". Hanna has taken this from her favourite bar in Vienna. When she was living there, she used to frequent the bar, where the 80-something-year-old bartender slid over the floor with the aid of his walking stick and where there were lots of board games. Hannah thinks Sperlhof has this authentic style that one can only find in Vienna. There is also an orange feather, a couple of small posters and postcards, and pictures of her at a not-so-warm seaside. The last piece on the top right is a picture of the serpentine spire of the Church of Our Saviour in Copenhagen. Hanna likes the spire. In fact, she once made a small model of the serpentine spire out of cardboard to use it as a hat when she dressed up as the church for the 4CITIES Halloween party in Copenhagen. The model is now sitting on the shelf above the pictures, where there are a couple of other items and some books.

On the wall between the desk and the window are three colourful paper animals hanging in a vertical line. Under the window, out of which she has an open view, is the heater which is recently fixed, it is constantly on and the room is hot. Behind Hannah, there is also a poster of different bird breeds on the wall along which her bed is positioned. The bed is bigger than a single but is not a real double. Yet, it is big enough for her blanket to be too small for it. She has two pillows and normally sleeps toward the edge. Now, however, she is having her dinner behind the desk, seated in the only chair in the room. Having only one chair, she believes, is a problem. Especially when you are not allowed to use the rest of the apartment, which means that if you have guests, they should stay in your room. That is why she does not have guests. She prefers so. In fact, she does not spend a lot of time at home herself either. Usually she stays at the library of the university for the longer part of the day.

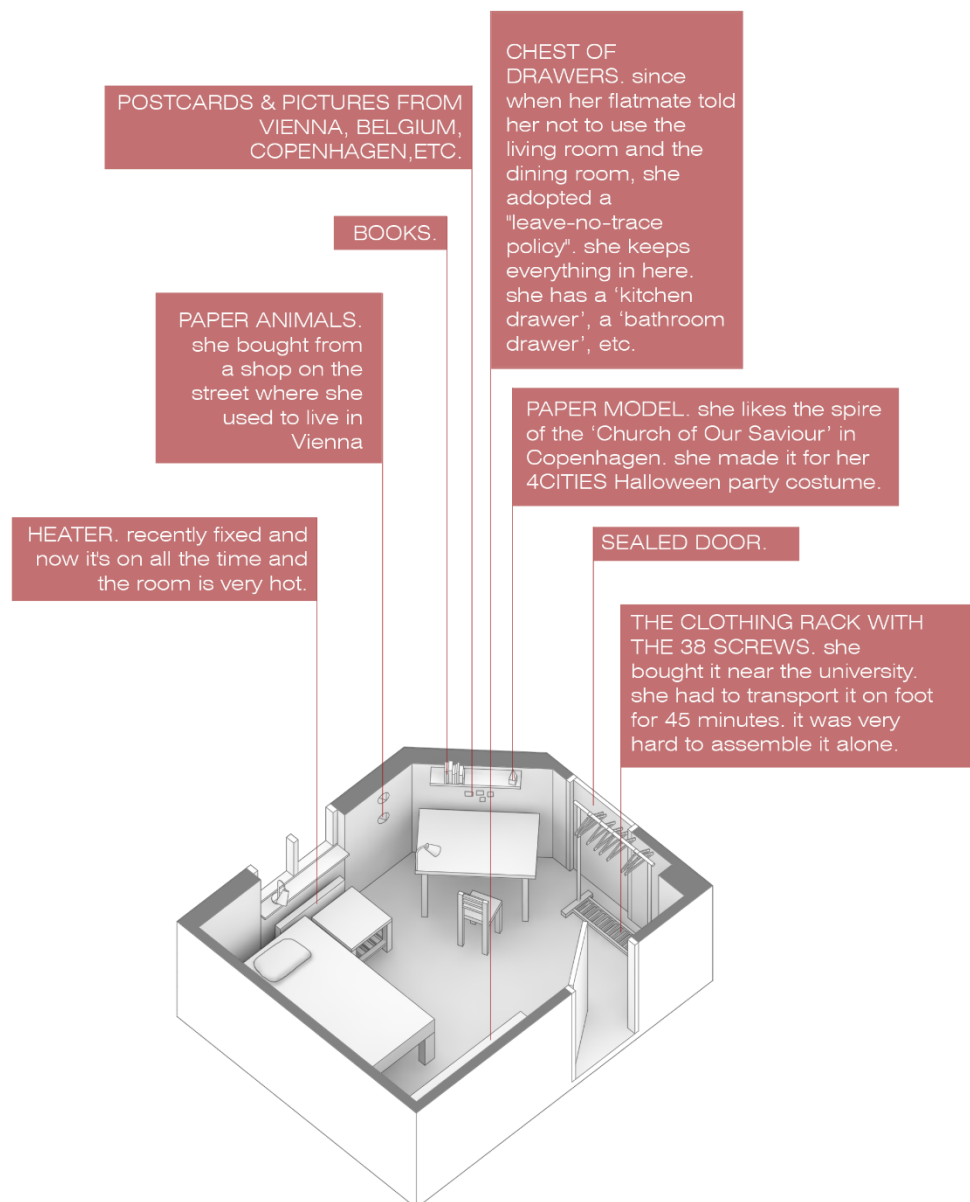


Illustration 2. Hannah's room. Torvegade, 1400 København. (Illustration by author).

Next to the desk, there is a closed door that leads to the mother's room but is sealed. In front of it, Hannah has placed the large clothing rack that she bought upon moving in. It was a tough job. She had to transport it on foot and then had to assemble it alone, figuring out where the 38 screws had to go in. Hannah likes her clothes and wants to see them. They are hanging from thin pink hangers placed in equal intervals. Everything is in order. Now that she is demanded to be invisible at home, she tends to keep the space all extra-orderly—as if it is not lived.

ISABELLA: ARNÉ JACOBSENS ALLÉ, 2300 KØBENHAVN

Isabella's room in a dormitory apartment, which she shares with three other international students. The room has an irregular shape, close to a pizza slice. The door is located at the pointed end of the pizza slice and on the opposite side are full-length windows opening to a balcony. Isabella is sitting at her desk. The desk is filled with papers and her laptop is open, but she is not working. She is typing out a shopping list on her phone to send to her French flatmate. He is participating in some sort of a commercial competition, where he needs to do as much transactions as he can on this new app. Since a month now, he has been doing grocery shopping for Isabella to register more transactions to his name and she pays him later. She finds it very convenient.

On the wall above the desk, a number of postcards and two medals are displayed. One card reads: “be nervous, but don't be afraid”. The medals are on both sides of the cards. One is from a marathon she ran in Vienna and the other one is from an academic conference in Malmö. She

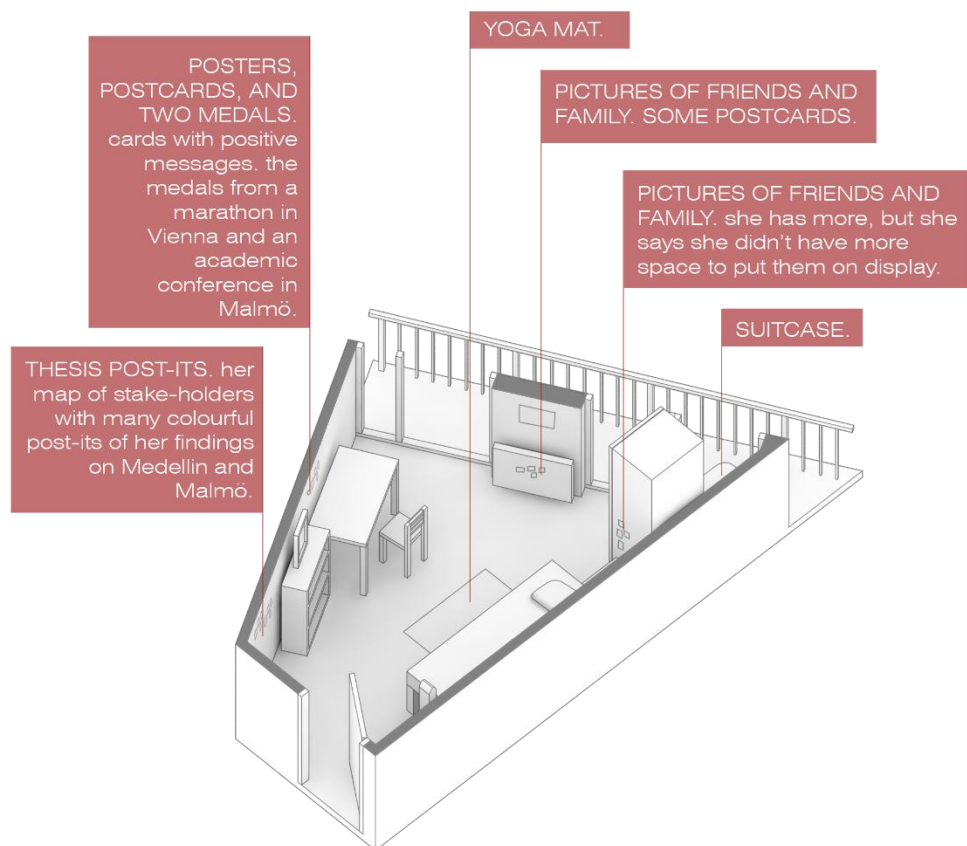


Illustration 3. Isabella's room. Arné Jacobsens Allé, 2300 København. (Illustration by author).

presented some of the interim findings of her ongoing master's thesis there. On the wall not far from the door is a complex composition of colourful post-its grouped under "Medellin" and "Malmö". Between this composition and the desk is a three-tier bookcase. The bottom level is occupied by books, the second level is given to a big flat box, and the first level is filled with toiletry and jewellery. There is small mirror, a small globe, two perfume bottles, some more jewellery, and a study lamp.

Behind her, aligned along the wall, are her guitar, a narrow bed, a small bedside table, a wardrobe, and her suitcase. There is a coloured map of the world on the wall above her bed. She has marked the places where she has been to. The bedside table is between the head of the bed and the wardrobe. There is a lamp on it and above, on the wall, there are two bird's-eye pictures of Copenhagen that she has taken herself from the top of two different tall buildings. On the side of the wardrobe, right above the bedside table are several pictures of family and friends, some with her and others without.

JAVED: SLANGERUPGADE, 2200 KØBENHAVN

Javed's room in a two-bedroom apartment which he has rented from and shares with a man who is a musician, like himself, and a music journalist too. The room is a rather long and narrow rectangle. It looks cramped, almost like a storage room, with all the objects in it and the thick carpets that cover its entire floor. On the narrow end of the room further from the door, is the iron head of his bed. Javed is sitting on the other end of the bed and is playing his electric guitar with no amplifier connection. His acoustic is in its cover, leaning against one of the tall bookshelves opposite the door. The bookshelves are filled end to end with classics in Danish. Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Shakespeare, Umberto Eco, Aldous Huxley, Samuel Beckett, Moby Dick, Ulysses, Dracula, Don Quixote, and so on. The three bottom shelves near the bed, however, hold no books. There is an almost continuous pile of clothes that, like an ivy, runs through the shelves, crawls on the floor and climbs his suitcase.

Near the door and the suitcase, against the wall that makes up the shorter side of the rectangle that is the room, is an Andreas Christensen upright piano. It is terribly out of tune and its position is such that it keeps the door from being fully opened. On the wall above the piano is a framed poster of 2001: A Space Odyssey, which reads: "an epic drama of adventure and exploration". That is not the only film poster in the room. None of which, though, belong to Javed. There is a similarly-sized Clockwork Orange poster on the wall next to the door. Beneath the poster is a short cabinet filled with the flatmate/landlord's books, on top of which is a one-tier bookcase also filled with books, crowned with two small speakers. The space between the speakers is taken by an assortment of small objects: a cigarette pack, some coins, a letter, deodorants, and a hand disinfectant.

Next to the cabinet, on the floor, are a wah pedal, which Javed has gotten through a friend of his flatmate/landlord's, and the rest of his effect pedals. Next to this equipment is a small, wooden table on which he keeps some personal items and some medicine. There is also a lamp on the table. Next to the table is a wooden armchair just the size to fill up the space between the wall and the bed. Javed does not have a desk in his room and his flatmate/landlord usually closes the door of the living room as he sits and works there, so this armchair is where Javed eats or studies at home. For him, the position of the chair next to the head of the bed and the narrowness of the room resemble Van Gogh's painting of his bedroom in Arles. Above the armchair, next to the

window, on the wall, are a small shield and an axe. The windowsill is where Javed keeps the stuff he takes to the university every day and his own books, which he likes to carry with him to every city; A Murakami, A Bertrand Russel, The Secret, and Pierre Bourdieu's Political Intervention. Compared to the number of books in this room, though, Javed's books do not really count—a room filled with too much of someone else's things.

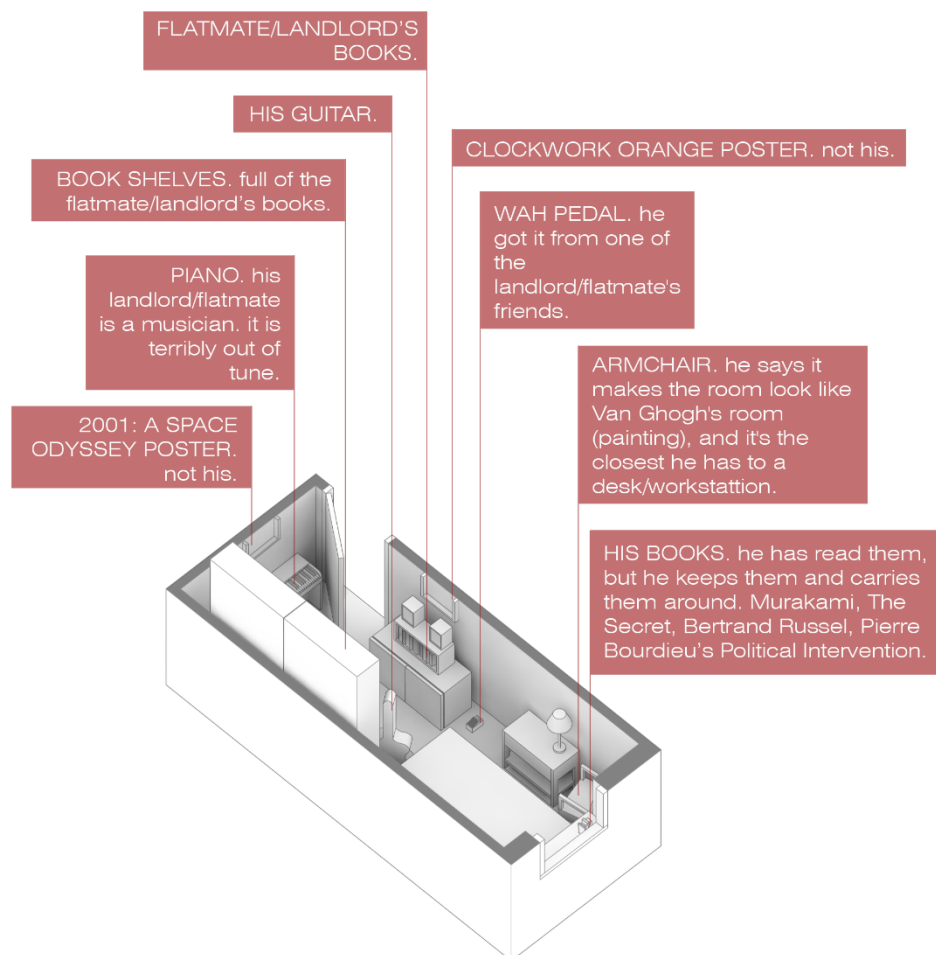


Illustration 4. Javed's room. Slangerupgade, 2200 København. (Illustration by author).

LUCA: AMAGER STRANDVEJ, 2300 KØBENHAVN

Luca's room in a four-bedroom apartment, which he shares with three other international students. The room is almost bare. The only pieces of furniture are a white wardrobe, a single mattress, and a chair. Nobody is in the room. Luca is in the university, where he spends most of his time. His flatmates are on a constant party mood, which is too much for his taste.

A tell-tale sign that there is a person living here is an open travel bag and a pair of socks on the floor, in front of the wardrobe. Like the bag, the wardrobe is also open. There is not much inside, but the door needs to be open as there is a small lamp clipped to the edge of a shelf in the wardrobe and is plugged to the outlet next to the door. The room does not have fixed lighting, so Luca got a couple of lights for free from the Facebook group 'Free Your Stuff Copenhagen' upon moving in. The other light has a long pole attached to it with no base, so it cannot support itself. Luca has placed it on the chair next to his mattress, where there is a pile of things on top of the pole, holding

it in place. At the foot of the chair, there is small pillow, on top of which is an upside-down melamine bowl. It is in fact a Margrethe bowl—a Danish design classic. In 1955, a young industrial designer called Jacob Jensen designed a minimalist, plastic bowl for a small Danish company called Rosti. Later, Jensen went on to become one of the most prominent figures of Danish modern design, and Margrethe, after whom the mixing bowl was named, became Queen Margrethe II of Denmark. Not having a desk, Luca uses the upside-down bowl as a laptop stand.

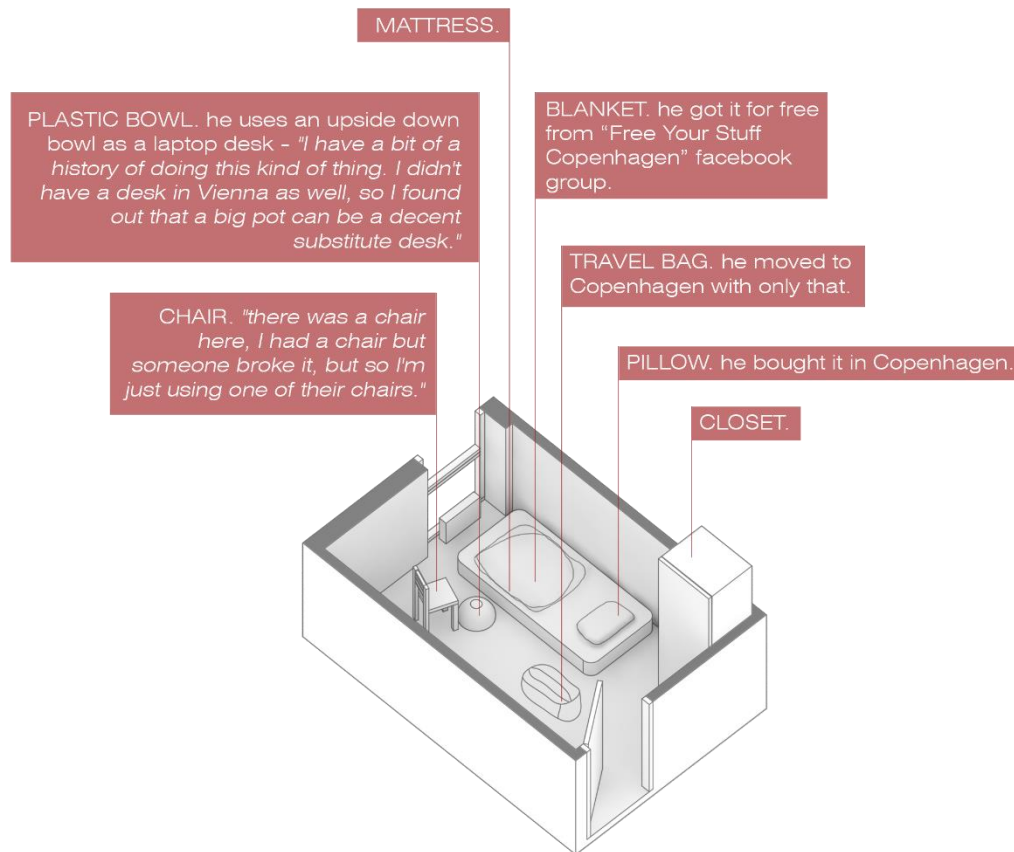


Illustration 5. Luca's room. Amager Strandvej, 2300 København. (Illustration by author).

MAYA: VESTERBROGADE, 1620 KØBENHAVN

Maya's room in a two-bedroom apartment, which she has rented from and shares with a woman who is her Danish friend's aunt. That relation is in fact how she got the room. The room is quite spacious and has a rectangular shape. There is a three-part window on the wall opposite the door. Just across from the window, on the other side of the courtyard, are the curtain-less windows of a psychologist's office. Maya is sitting at the round, wooden table under her window and is looking out of it into the psychologist's office. The entirety of the interior of the office is not visible; therefore, one gets a fragmented view of what is going on, but whatever is visible can be seen in full detail. There are three plants on one of their windowsills. Two of them appear to be orchids. Maya too, has one on her own windowsill, although it is smaller. There are also a couple of notebooks, some drawing pens, a portable speaker, some stones, a blue tile, another plant, and a candle on the windowsill. Maya sometimes draws. On the side-walls of the window opening, above

the orchid, she has put two of her recent drawings, which she has done in Copenhagen. They are small line-drawings of a ginger and a lemon in white on two square pieces of black paper. On the opposite side-wall, there are two postcards.

On the table behind which she is sitting, are her laptop and a couple of notebooks. Besides the chair that she is occupying, there are two other white-coloured wooden chairs around the table. In front of where Maya is sitting is an old wooden wardrobe also coloured in white. Next to it, on the wall, there are two small posters of mushroom drawings, which she has bought from Sweden, earlier, in the semester. Maya likes mushrooms. Next to the posters, there is a papier-mâché of a large, red mushroom on a wall shelf. She made it herself as part of her costume for the 4CITIES Halloween party. On the same shelf, next to the mushroom, there are books which are not hers and the other side, there is a globe light which does not work. On the shelf below, are her jewellery, an old painting of Copenhagen, and a brass candle-holder made of nine figures whose heads can hold candles. There are a bigger painting and a laundry bag on which it is written 'LAUNDRY' beneath the shelves, on the floor.

Behind Maya is a white, wooden bookcase. There is a framed drawing on the wall above it and there are a number of small objects, a disposable camera, a painting, her passport, and a tall plant on it. Between the bookcase and the window, on the wall, is a small painting of an ink bottle and two paint tubes. It is painted by a German artist who lives a couple of floors above. Across the room, on the wall opposite this painting, hangs a Picasso. The head of the bed is right beneath it. Beside the bed, in the space between the door and the bed, is a small, round, wooden table. Above the table, on the wall, Maya has pinned some postcards: a mother and her child in Chinese style, a drawing of an Arné Jacobsen design, and a cat playing the ukulele.

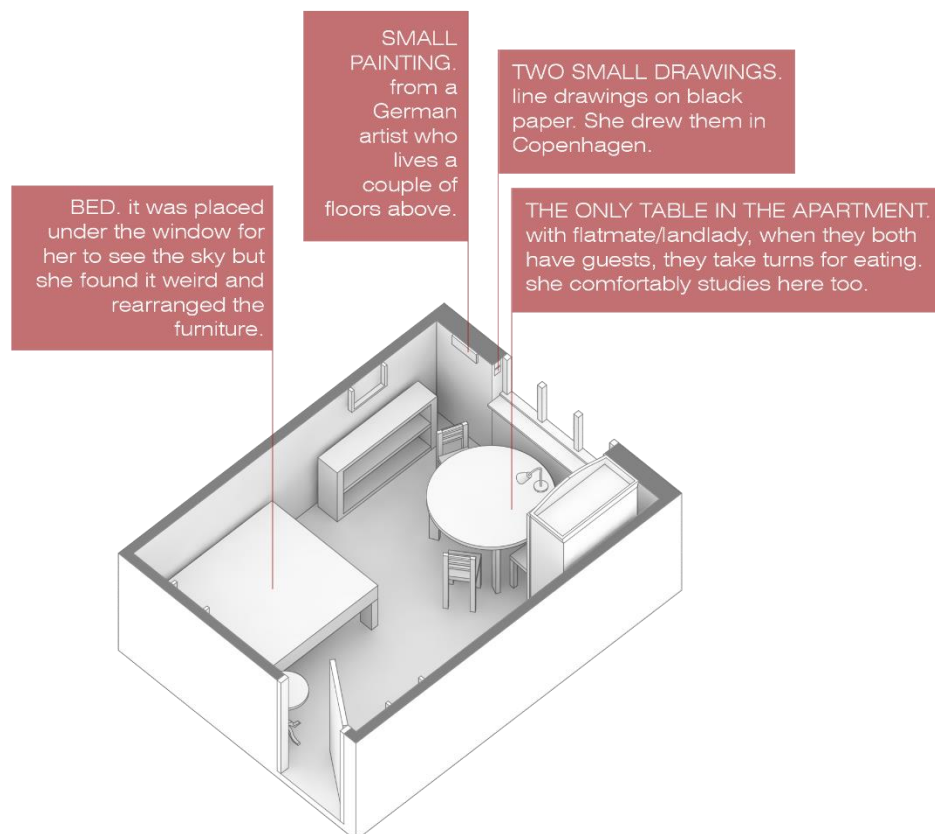


Illustration 6. Maya's room. Vesterbrogade, 1620 København. (Illustration by author).

NANA: VIBORGGADE, 2100 KØBENHAVN

Nana's room in a one-bedroom apartment. She is the only person sleeping there, but her landlord sometimes comes and spends time in the other room of the apartment. The room is rectangular and quite spacious, with two windows on the wall opposite the door. Nana is sitting on an armchair by the window, at the corner of the room. She is reading. On her left, there is an upside-down Aarstiderne box on the floor, on top of which are two decorative vases. Aarstiderne is a Danish organic food company. They pack seasonal organic produce in a standard wooden crate along with recipes and send them out to the front doors of their customers.

Next to this decorative arrangement is Nana's suitcase. She uses it as a cupboard to keep the things that cannot hang on the clothing rack, which is on the opposite side of the room, in front of the door. For her, the suitcase in the middle of the room is also a symbol of her constantly being on the move. Right next to the suitcase is the foot of her double bed. The bed is covered with a grey bedspread she has bought in Copenhagen. Next to the clothing rack, there are two identical framed prints leaning against the wall. Their background is white and blue spots invade the whiteness from the bottom but do not reach the top.

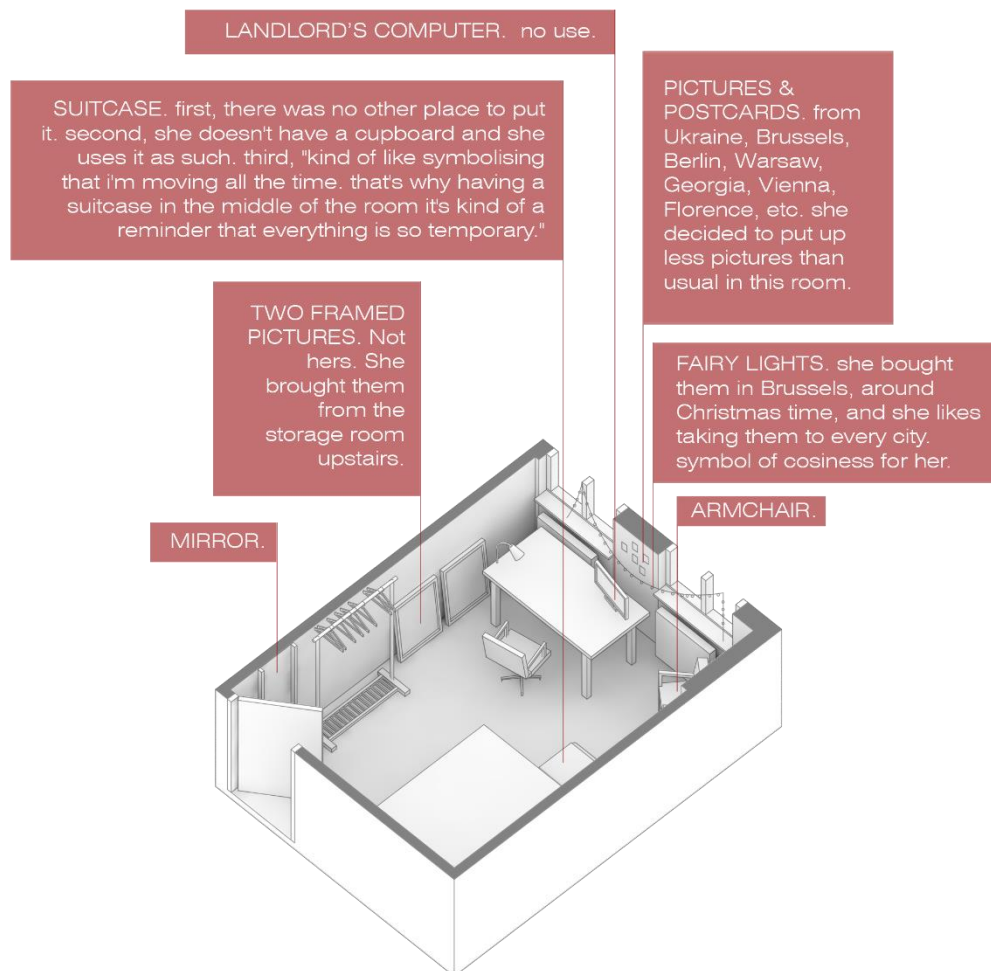


Illustration 7. Nana's room. Viborggade, 2100 København. (Illustration by author).

There is a desk just to the right of where Nana is sitting. It is a rather large, thin wooden-topped desk. A giant iMac monitor is sitting on the desk. It does not belong to Nana. Above the monitor, in the small space between the two windows, a composition of some pictures and drawings is on the wall. Four of the pictures are larger and the other three are extremely small squares. Three of the larger ones are pictures that she has taken from Berlin. The fourth picture is a completely black polaroid with a flash of light in the middle. She took it last New Year's Eve at her home in Brussels. It was supposed to be her and her friends' reflection in the mirror, but it turned out wrong. Nevertheless, she loves the memory. The small square pictures show her friends in Georgia, her friend in Warsaw, and the mountains in Georgia. Beneath these pictures are two drawings. One is a birthday card drawn by a friend and the other one is another friend's first drawing attempt. There are some fairy lights passing through this composition of pictures and drawings, which start from the top of one window and end at the top of the other. She bought these lights last year in Brussels around Christmas time and she has carried them with her to Vienna and Copenhagen.

NOAH: ARKONAGADE, 1726 KØBENHAVN

Noah's room in a two-bedroom apartment which he has rented from and shares with a Danish woman. The room is almost a rectangle except for a chamfered corner where the door is located. Noah is making his bed. "First victory of the day", he believes, "first thing you do right, so you start the day in a good, positive light". He has built the bed himself. When he moved in to this room, there was nothing but the sofa and the wardrobe. So, the very first day, he went to an IKEA store and came back with two bedside tables and a double mattress, which he had to carry all by himself on public transport. With the help of a friend, he collected some wooden pallets from different spots around the city and built himself a bed.

On the wall above the bed, there is a triangular composition of postcards. The bottom is a symmetrical arrangement with two postcards that play with the iconic image of the 1902 film *Le Voyage Dans la Lune*, two that celebrate the 90th anniversary of *Kofoeds Skole*, which is a Danish organisation providing education and social help for vulnerable groups, two that depict the metro map of Copenhagen with the lines that are not open yet and reads "Mere metro—på vej til dig¹¹", and a black and white postcard in the middle. The layer above is composed of three postcards that show some chair designs. Above them is a big red postcard and the top layer is a small black and white one.

There are some books and a study lamp on the bedside table to the left of the bed. Not far from the bedside table and parallel to the bed is a green sofa where Noah's backpack is sitting. Opposite the sofa, across the room, is the three-part window of the room. There are three hats and a jacket hanging on small hooks on the window frames. One of the hats is an Arsenal cap, made by Nike, and the jacket also bears the logo of Arsenal Football Club and Fly Emirates, Arsenal's sponsor. On the windowsill, there are some personal items, a plant, and four Tintin postcards. Beneath the window, to the left, is a wastepaper basket filled with crumbled paper. It is in fact a lobster catcher. Noah has bought it in a street market. There are two pairs of white sneakers and a floor lamp next to the lobster catcher. There is also a white power strip that is plugged in to the outlet near the lamp and sits on the floor, near the bedside table to the right of the bed. It also serves as a plug

¹¹ More metro—on your way.

adaptor. On this bedside table, there is Noah's Alarm-clock radio, which he always carries to his homes. In this home, it plays a mix of Scandinavian and English-speaking pop.

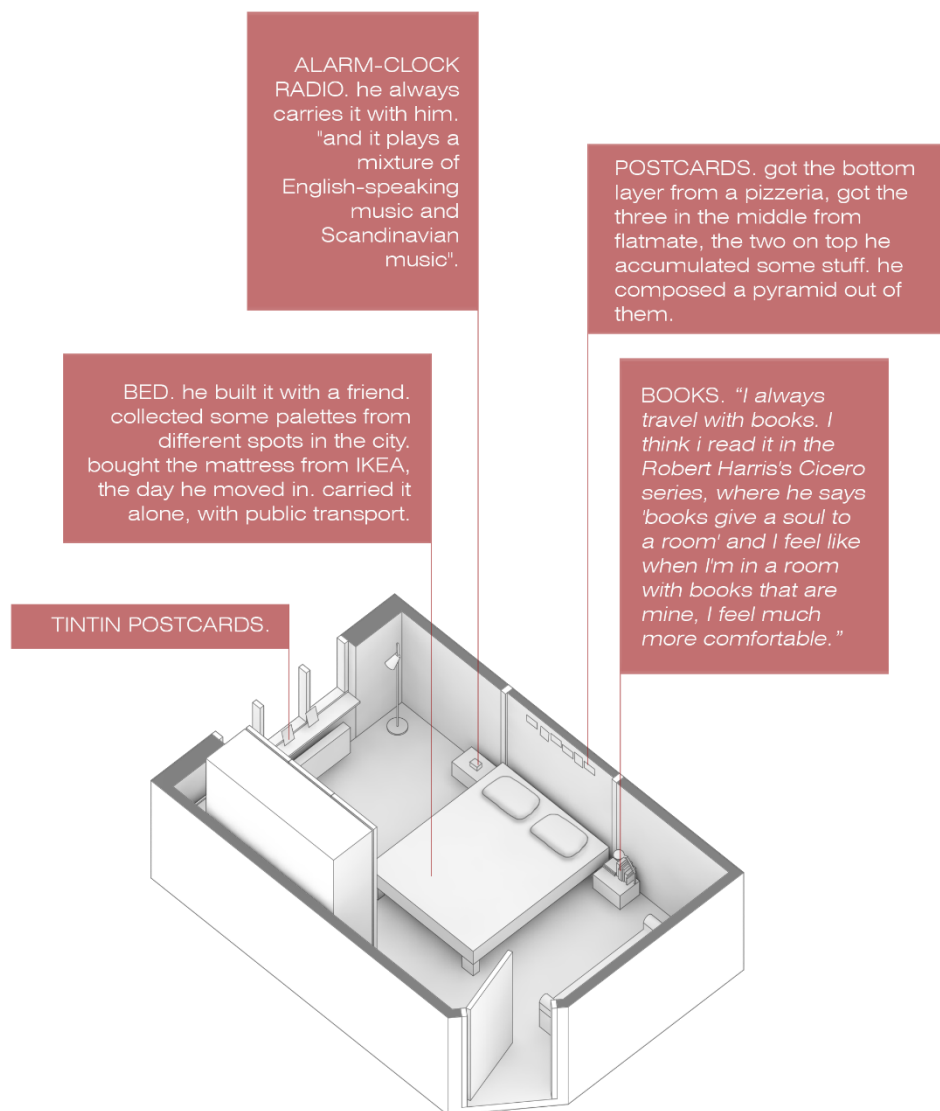


Illustration 8. Noah's room. Arkonagade, 1726 København. (Illustration by author).

SYLVIE: SLANGERUPGADE, 2200 KØBENHAVN

Sylvie's room in a two-bedroom apartment which she shares with one flatmate. The room belongs to a Danish anthropology student who has left Copenhagen for three months to complete her fieldwork in the US. The room is spacious and is filled with the original inhabitant's stuff. It is seven in the morning. Sylvie is at the door, just about to leave the room to take her clothes to the communal laundry room in the basement. It is required to book a timeslot to use the machines. The demand is quite high, so she usually books it for early mornings. Behind her, across the room, is the wall where the windows are located. One is a full-length window, which leads to a small balcony. Between this one and the other window, there is a round bedside table and a picture of a seaside on the verge of a storm hanging on the wall.

The head of Sylvie's bed is right under the window and the foot of the bed ends where she is standing now. There is a floor lamp with a white, folded lampshade and a leather-covered armchair next to it. Above the armchair, on the wall, is a somewhat expressionist, oil painting. It is a swirl of many faces and occasional body parts against a warm orange background. The canvas is just the size to cover the whole width of the wall next to the door. On the floor, near one of the legs of the armchair, is a massive book that Sylvie sometimes uses to hold her door open. Simone Lulu Duen. *Tre romaner*—three novels by Cæcilie Lassen. Each novel is the story of a young girl in a historical setting. Paris in the outbreak of the French Revolution, Copenhagen during World War II, and Franco's Madrid in the late 50s. Sylvie lives in two of these cities during her 4CITIES studies.

To Sylvie's left is a chest of drawers. There is a mirror on it, with some fairy lights going around it. On the corner of the mirror, Sylvie has printed and put a small picture of a snowy square in Paris. There are some jewellery pieces and personal items on the drawers too. To the left of the drawers is a corner with a wardrobe, some low shelves for shoes, and some coat hooks where her winter coat and bags are hanging. Next to the drawers, on the other side, there are two vintage Carlsberg beer crates on the floor. One is placed on top of the other and they are both filled with books. The crates themselves are made of wood and are painted in crimson, with the Carlsberg

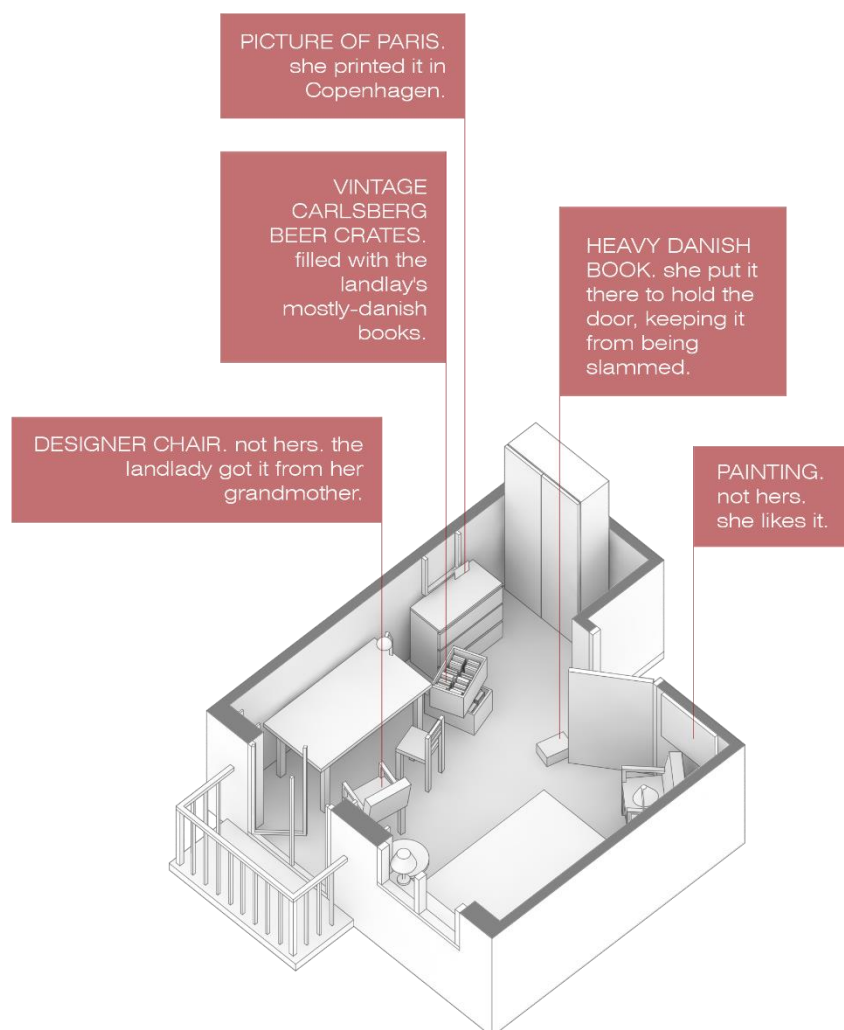


Illustration 9. Sylvie's room. Slangerupgade, 2200 København. (Illustration by author).

logo in yellow. Just next to the beer crates is a large desk topped with Sylvie's laptop, some stationery, some paper, and Sylvie's books with a wooden artist mannequin and a wooden hand model on top. Above the desk, there is a bookcase attached to the wall. It is filled with books that do not belong to Sylvie. The only thing that is hers, in the wooden bookcase, is a small postcard that she has bought in her recent trip to Venice and that she keeps forgetting to send to her friend.

TARA: MÅGEVEJ, 2400 KØBENHAVN

Tara's room in a two-bedroom apartment which she has rented from and shares with a musician. The room is a rather long rectangle with a double door opening in the middle of one of the longer sides. There are shelves, on one shorter side, and a window, on the opposite shorter side. Tara is standing by the window and looking out at a slide and a swing across the street. It is one of her favourite things to do in all her homes—to look outside from the inside, at nothing happening. To her right is a narrow chest of drawers, on top of which are a birthday card leaning against a bottle and a spider plant and an aloe vera in two glass jars. She has got the plants from a woman in her neighbourhood whom she met on the Facebook group 'Plants Exchange Copenhagen'. When she went there to pick up the plants, she met another neighbour who offered her some soil. And then she picked up the jars out of her flatmate/landlord's collection to make a home for her new plants. Above the plants is an Eastern Asian calligraphy hanging on the wall. She found it in the attic where her flatmate/landlord stores some of his stuff and she brought it down to her room.

Next to the drawers, there is a white bookcase with two rows of square compartments and a narrow mirror on top. In each compartment, there is either a single object or a few objects arranged in one corner. She has gotten some of them for free from a French woman in the neighbourhood who was moving to Amager. She found her on the Facebook group 'Free Your Stuff Copenhagen'. Among those objects are a small statue of a tiger, a decorative plate, and a frame in which Tara put a postcard depicting an 18th century Vienna. The frame is in the top right compartment, and the tiger in the one below. There is a black purse in the one next to the tiger and next to that is the plate. In the compartment above the purse is a glass jar stuffed with fairy lights and a picture of a lama. The picture is a gift from an eighty-something-year-old friend who gave it to her along with a scarf she had knitted herself from lama wool. They met one day by chance in the Black Diamond¹². Tara was at the waterfront when a heavy wind started blowing, so she took refuge inside the Black Diamond's cafeteria. The old woman was attending a concert there and was seeking a free chair during the entr'acte in the crowded cafeteria. So, she asked if she could join Tara and they started talking. In the short space of an entr'acte she gave her address to Tara and invited her over. They became friends and she once gave Tara the scarf and the lama picture with which Tara made the light jar. In the compartment next to the light jar, there are some books held straight by a candle. She has gotten the candle as a birthday gift from her flatmate/landlord.

Next to the bookcase, there are a floor lamp and a small armless sofa with leather covering and right next to that is Tara's bed. The bed is in fact only two mattresses laid on the floor that Tara has fastened together with a twine. To the left of the bed are the wall shelves. There are some postcards from Brussels, Slovenia, and Copenhagen on them, a yoga mat, her backpack, a mug that she has gotten as a gift, a cheese plate, and some neatly folded clothes. At the foot of the bed,

¹² *Den Sorte Diamant* (in Danish) is the modern extension to the Royal Library's old building in central Copenhagen.

by the wall, is a clothing rack with a suitcase placed right next to it, in the corner—a suitcase that Tara calls her ‘best friend’.

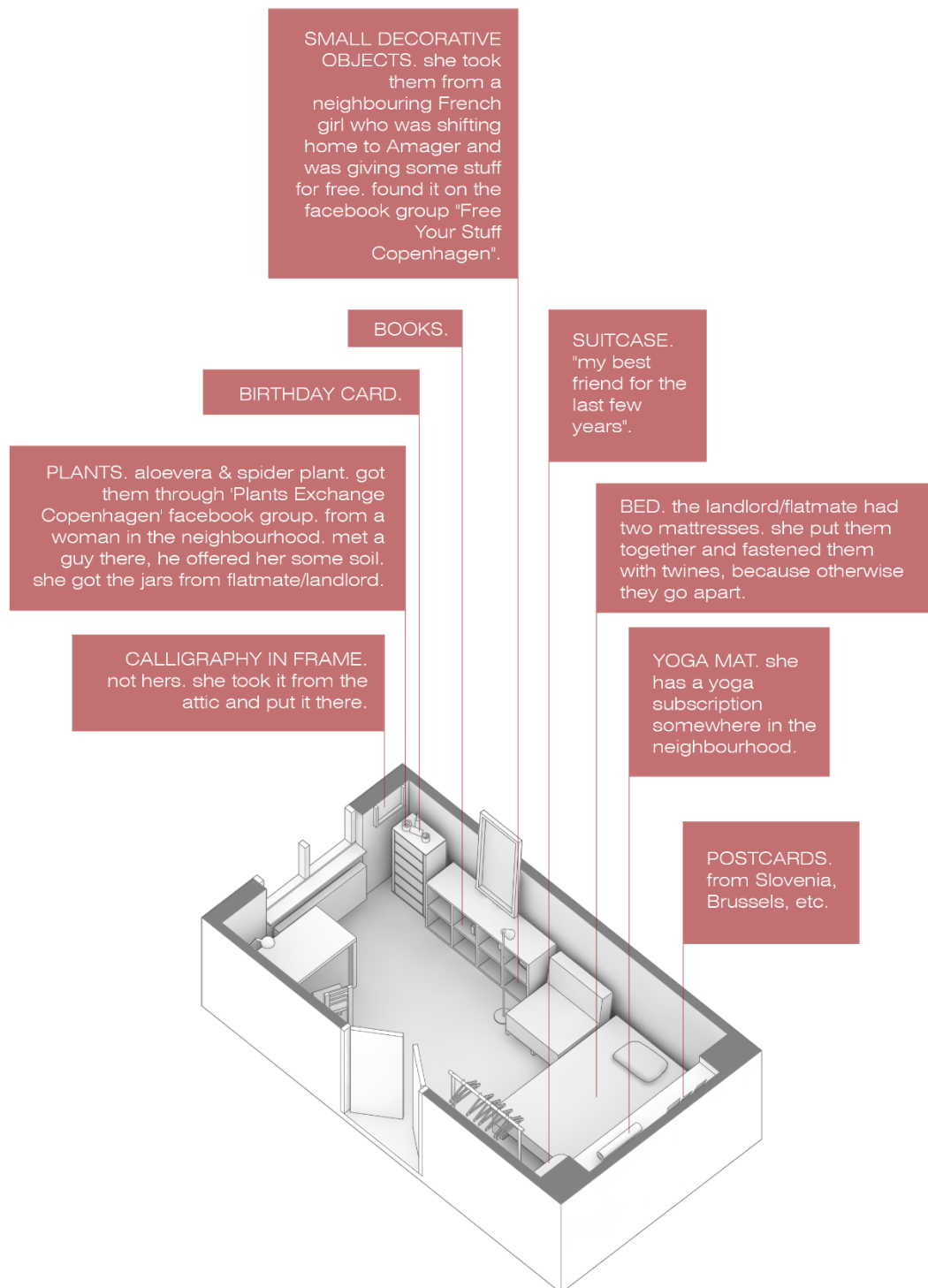


Illustration 10. Tara's room. Mågevej, 2400 København. (Illustration by author).

ZOYA: VOGNMANDSMARKEN, 2100 KØBENHAVN

Zoya's room in a two-bedroom apartment which she shares with her flatmate/landlord. The room has a rectangular shape. Zoya is not in the room. She is in the kitchen, where she is having her breakfast while listening to a podcast. Back in the room, there is a small double bed on one corner and a sealed door on the wall, at the head of the bed. Zoya has made a rather extensive composition out of some pictures, postcards, handwritten quotes from poetry, books, and songs, and a line of fairy lights running through them. At the foot of the bed is the door to a built-in closet. Next to that, on the wall, is a poster which reads: "Louisiana. 8.11.18–10.3.19. Cecily Brown". The poster is about an exhibition in the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, 35 kilometres north of Copenhagen. Zoya has taken it off the walls of the university and has put it on the wall here.

Opposite the poster, across the room, is Zoya's desk. The desk is in the corner where the window is located. There are some small objects almost covering the entire windowsill. Next to the window is a tall, narrow mirror and next to that a built-in wardrobe without a door. On the desk, there is a small board leaning against the wall. There are some pieces of paper pinned to it; among which an affiche with a vintage-looking reception desk and the words "BELLEVUE BADEHOTEL", which is the name of a comedy show at the Bellevue Theatre in Klampenborg; a *Lebara* sim card pack; a used *Urbano Napoli* 'corsa singola' ticket; and a small flyer with a drawing of Karl Marx, which reads: "MARX—200 ÅR". Next to the desk is Zoya's suitcase and right next to that a white chest of drawers (perhaps IKEA?), with some toiletry items and jewellery spread on top of it.

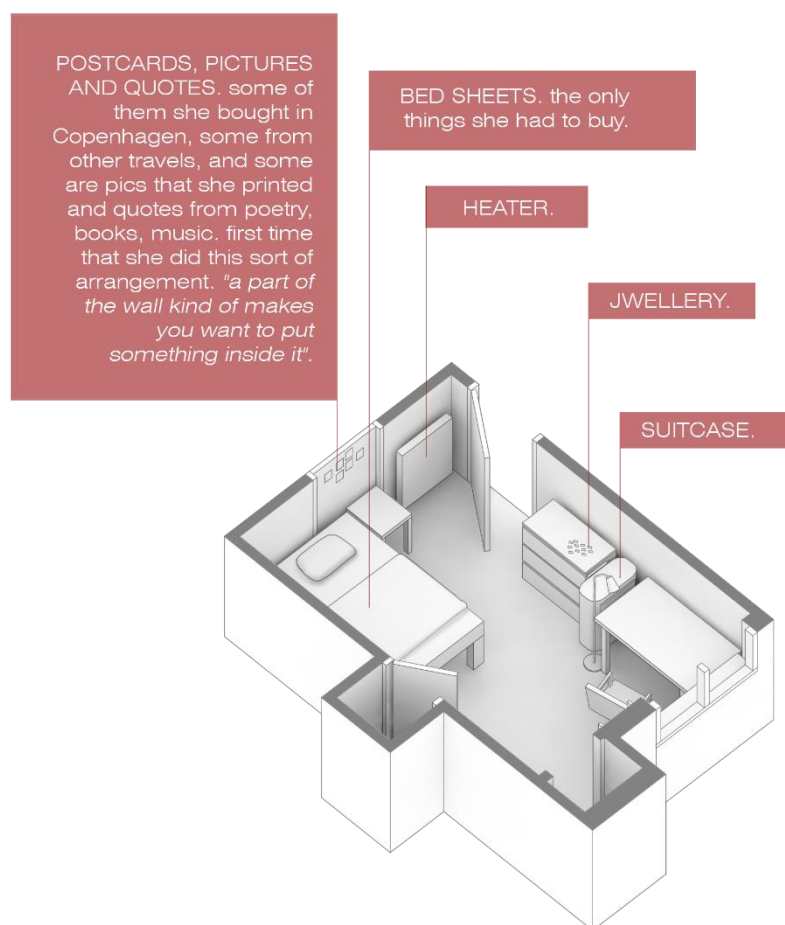


Illustration 11. Zoya's room. Vognmandsmarken, 2100 København. (Illustration by author).



Illustration 12. Very Danish things: Carlsberg beer crates. (Photographed by author on 11 November 2018).



Illustration 13. Very Danish things: A small Danish flag at home. (Photographed by author on 11 November 2018).



Illustration 14. DIY: the clothing rack with the 38 screws. (Photographed by author on 27 November 2018).

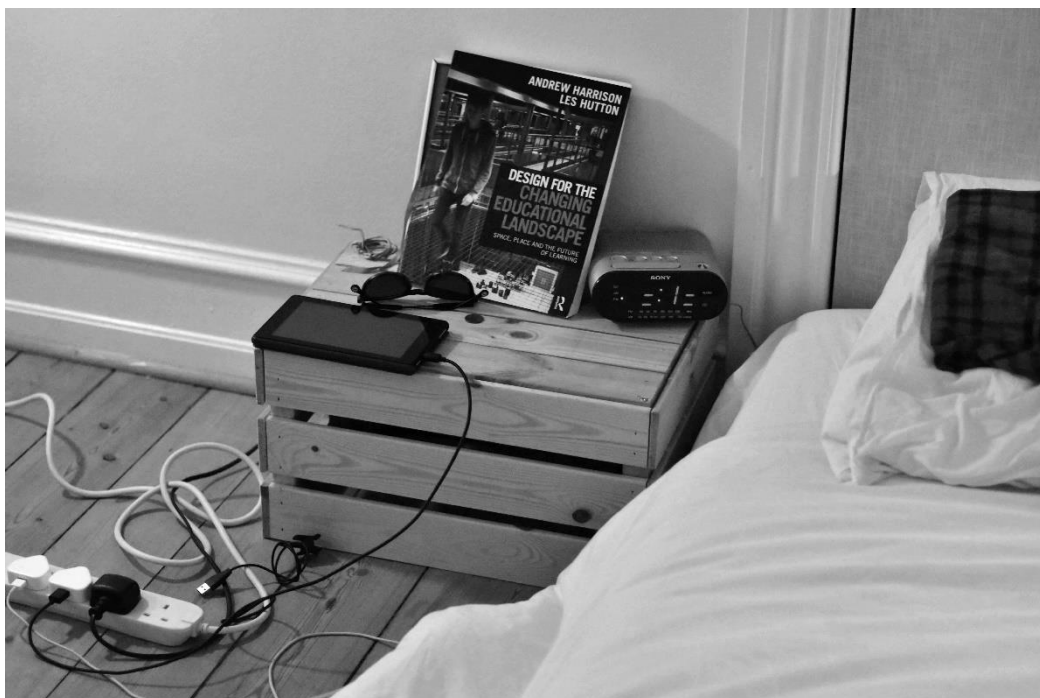


Illustration 15. DIY: the IKEA bedside table. (Photographed by author on 17 December 2018).



*Illustration 16. On the wall: No. 1.
(Photographed by author on 11
December 2018).*



*Illustration 17. On the wall: No. 2.
(Photographed by author on 9
December 2018).*



Illustration 18. Crumpled: the travel bag. (Photographed by author on 29 November 2018).



Illustration 19. Crumpled: Clothes and books. (Photographed by author on 11 November 2018).



Illustration 20. Study desk: Another woman's books. (Photographed by author on 11 November 2018).



Illustration 21. Study desk: The psychologist's office in the window. (Photographed by author on 10 December 2018).



Illustration 22. A room of one's own: No.1. (Photographed by author on 16 December 2018).



Illustration 19. A room of one's own: No.2. (Photographed by author on 18 December 2018).

chapter V

DISCUSSION

*“His house was just one of many stopping places
in a restless, unmoored existence”
—Paul Auster*

To discuss the empirical findings in the light of the theoretical framework laid out in the onset of this thesis, an ensemble of six everyday practices and four home objects are selected from among the most common ones classified in the analytical tables¹³ and are placed at the centre of the ten sections of this chapter. In each section, I take one of these objects or practices and discuss the empirical evidence in relation to certain theoretical premises.

FINDING A ROOM: STEPPING INTO THE UNKNOWN

The first engagement of the 4CITIZENS with their homes—on multiple scales, from the room to the city—is through the practice of *finding a room*. Eight out of the 10 participants found their rooms through online platforms, such as Facebook groups and local or international accommodation finding websites, and the other two (Maya and Sylvie) found them through friends and connections in Copenhagen. Except for two (Hannah and Noah), the participants had already found a room before moving to Copenhagen.

The internet indeed plays a crucial role in shaping the contemporary form of the practice of finding a room. As the mobilities paradigm (Urry, 2004; Canzler, Kaufmann & Kesselring, 2008) observes, information and images are constantly on the move and 4CITIZENS are already mobile without having moved. Through Facebook, messaging services, accommodation finding websites, and Skype calls, they immerse themselves in social and material milieus hundreds and thousands of kilometres away. As such, they engage with the virtual space of the city, even before being present in its physical space. Statements such as “I liked the pictures of this flat” (Nana), “looks beautiful in pictures” (Sylvie), and “she sent me some pictures and I was like this is amazing, I’m done” (Maya) show that images depicting the materiality of the home are an important component of the decision-making process. However, there are other, perhaps more important, factors that inform the practice of finding a room.

Like images, information is also extensively on the move. Among international students, Copenhagen is notoriously famous for a difficult housing market, where prices are extremely high, options are limited, and scams are commonplace. This is clearly manifested in Javed’s account of finding his room:

we're quite familiar now with the scamming in the housing market, so then I asked a friend of mine who's based out of Copenhagen to come and see this place on my behalf. So, I asked Martin [flatmate/landlord] if that can be done and then my friend, he came here and he video called me and he showed me the room, he showed me the kitchen, and I also spoke to Martin. And then

¹³ *q.v.* Table 1 and Table 2, pp. xxx, and the complete set of tables in the appendix, pp. v–xv.

when I realised that it's not a scam, that it's real, and that this guy is real, I didn't even think twice about it.

The peculiar housing market of Copenhagen, coupled with the limited time and economic means of the 4CITIZENS, rendered their room-finding a tactical practice—as in Certeau (1990)—of seizing passing opportunities. In fact, all participants agreed that they did not have much choice in the selection of their rooms. As a result, their subsequent living arrangements were rather unknown to them and thus their lives in the new city was characterised by a somewhat Heideggerian *thrownness*. Acknowledging that “everything is so temporary” (as worded by Nana and Zoya, separately), 4CITIZENS appear to embrace the temporariness and uncertainties that such arrangements entail. This is also in line with Rampazi’s (2016) findings on young people’s temporary homes. Rather than long-term planning, strategizing, and all-out searching, which are associated with traditional familial house-finding, they focus on adapting to the environment they end up in, or abruptly seize another opportunity that comes up. An example of that is Isabella who found herself a room in Signhuset Kollegiet through the Housing Foundation of the university after being dissatisfied with her small, faraway, expensive room, which she had initially found through Airbnb.

MOVING IN: FAMILIARISING THE UNFAMILIAR

The participants’ experiences of moving in reveal two parallel processes. First, the process of material home-making, which begins with the unpacking of one’s belongings, rearrangements of furniture, and acquisition of needed items. This is a *creative/inventive* process. Second, the process of familiarising oneself with the new environment, which begins with finding one’s way to the apartment, getting to know the schedules and systems of the house, and, generally, laying the foundation for what will grow to become a routine. This is a *learning/discovering* process. Tara, for instance, recounts her experience of being received by her flatmate/landlord’s mother, as she ‘showed her around’:

The supermarket was like here, there, and the washing machine's here and the garbage sorting's there, laundry; so those basic things and then once you settle those things, then you kind of go venture out.

Getting to ‘know’ things, which later leads to the development of a certain ‘local knowledge’, is indeed a constituent part of home-making on many scales. Tara’s account of getting to know the garbage sorting system or how the laundry works are examples of acquiring this *know-how*. Hannah’s remark on being shocked by prices due to not knowing that *Irma* is an expensive supermarket chain in the beginning takes this know-how to the scale of the neighbourhood and the city. And the participants’ mental maps illustrate a relatively intricate knowledge of the city at large that has been shaped throughout three months of inhabiting Copenhagen. These also reflect Prazeres’ (2018) study, in which she argues that international students gain insider knowledge and a certain ‘local cultural capital’ through their everyday urban life.

Furthermore, entering their ‘homes’ for the first time, 4CITIZENS are faced with the material conditions of the rooms they have rented. They need to come up with innovative tactics to utilise the space and make a *home* out of it. Being faced with an empty room, as was the case with Noah or Luca, and an overly-filled room, as was the case with Javed, entail different responses. Noah had to immediately buy various furniture items for his bare room whereas Javed had to find a way

to fit his belongings. When he arrived at his new room, he had a suitcase, two guitars, a rucksack, a computer bag, and another handbag. He was intimidated by the fact that the room was already filled with the flatmate/landlord's stuff:

in first reaction, I was 'oh my God! How'll this all fit in?'. So I came in and I started to unpack, and then I also figured that would those three shelves be enough? would this space be enough? I kept thinking about that. [...] it definitely was a challenge also because, as you can see, this is not a very regular kind of a room; you know, I don't have a desk, I don't have a place to hang my clothes. So I had to kind of improvise.

For Javed and other participants, the practice of moving in is synonymous with being surprised. Be it the position of the furniture, the emptiness of the room, the absence of lighting, or the clinical whiteness of the space, they need to tackle the problem. In doing so, their tactics can extend over various scales. It can be a simple reshuffling of the furniture within the room (as with Maya), or finding the things one needs for free on 'Free Your Stuff Copenhagen' Facebook group (as with Luca), which plays on the scale of the city, or asking a family member to send some stuff by mail to put up as decoration (as with Hannah), which takes place on a cross-national scale.

BED: A POINT OF REFERENCE

A bed, as Perec asserts in his *Species of Spaces* (1999), is a space—for that matter, a space within a space. Being located in the room, the bed is so essential to the formation of the space that it is in fact called a *bedroom*. Throughout the interviews, when faced with the question “how much time do you spend at home in a day?”, most participants reacted by clarifying if I meant it “excluding sleep”. Sleeping, and thus its space, the bed, is a given in 4CITIZENS' understanding of home—which is primarily their rooms. The participants, like Noah, Luca, Hannah, and Javed, who did not feel comfortable in their homes for different reasons and tried to avoid it, stated that that they basically used their homes only to sleep. As Hannah puts it:

since a certain event happened, the comfortableness of home was not so welcomed anymore. So now, I think most of my time I spend at the library at the university. Well in weekdays of course, but yeah, so now I think I mainly use it for *sleeping* [emphasis added by me].

The materiality of the bed is, also, of utmost importance. The same day Noah moved to his new home, he made a trip to a somewhat faraway IKEA store to buy a mattress as there was neither that nor a bed in his new room:

I went to IKEA and I take the train and the bus to IKEA, and I had to take the train and the bus back with two bedside tables, a mattress, I mean, some coat hangers—never been so exhausted in my life. Absolute hell. [...] I'm quite sad to leave this bed actually, from that story. The next person who moves in won't know that story. They won't know the story that the little bed's been through.

In the following days, Noah built a bed, with the help of a friend, out of wooden pallets that he had collected from different spots around the city. For all participants, pillows, bed sheets, blankets, and covers are indispensable items that either they carry with them to their new homes or they make sure that they will have them there. Moreover, all participants were able to elaborate

on their preferences in their sleeping positions ('in the middle', 'more toward the wall', 'on the right', etc.), which in various cases led to interventions in the material arrangements of the bed. Maya, for instance, moved her bed from under the window to another spot close to the door, as she found the initial position strange. The only change that Isabella made to her room, was to move the bedside table to the other end of the bed, because she wanted to face the door while sleeping. And Tara used a twine to bind her two mattresses together so that they do not part, as they were simply laid on the floor and thus not bound by the structure of a bed.

Arguably, the bed—in any form—is the heart of any *temporary* living arrangement (is there any non-temporary living arrangement?). Hotel rooms, for example, are fundamentally defined by the bed, and therefore, the practices that are common to the space of the bed, i.e. sexual activities and sleeping. On a yet more utilitarian level, a hostel reservation is often equal to securing a bed somewhere—a guarantee that one can venture out and navigate a life for as long as there is a place to sleep. The sheer temporariness of 4CITIZENS' living arrangements in their homes in Copenhagen magnifies this role of the bed. The bed is a point of reference, from which one conducts one's life. As a naturally recurring state of body and mind, sleep is associated with regeneration. One depends on sleeping to perpetuate one's daily activities. Therefore, it is the most fundamental everyday practice that *embeds* an individual in a certain location.

POSTCARDS, PICTURES, & POSTERS: HOME-MAKING ON THE RUN

For many, postcards, pictures, and posters make up the ultimate *PPP* of home-making on the run. In studies on temporary student homes, such as those reviewed briefly in this thesis¹⁴, the display of such material belongings is often underlined as a way of appropriating space and creating a sense of belonging and a linkage between the materiality of the room and formation of identity. It is not without reason to suggest so. In my observations, eight out of the 10 participants had postcards, pictures, or posters of their own on display in their rooms. Yet, we must not hurry to conclusions. A common fallacy is to overload material objects with excess meaning in order to make them fit into a narrative. For instance, a narrative that depends too much on material objects as means of identity-building is first and foremost based on the assumption that identity is a rather rigid and independent entity that can then be transmitted to objects. However, as discussed earlier, the cultural anthropologist, Daniel Miller's (2010) arguments on the reciprocity of the relation between human beings and material objects, in that they both define each other and that our material surroundings set the setting for our behaviours, shed a new light on the meaning of identity and its relation to material objects such as postcards, pictures, and posters. Referring to some Tintin postcards in his room, Noah, who has no personal pictures on display but only a few postcards, reflects on his 4CITIES home-making experience:

I never necessarily feel like I need to bring a piece of home with me. I just need to feel comfortable. If I were to go back home and forget those postcards, I'm sure I would have brought something else that would make me feel comfortable. [...] When I go abroad, I think I need clothes, I need my trustee alarm clock—I always bring that I suppose [...] those Tintin postcards are very important for me in this room, purely because I love Tintin.

¹⁴ *q.v.* 'Students and Mobile Home-Making' in Chapter II, p. 13.

He, then, hesitates, “I’m sure if we mined into my Tintin experiences, there’s a lot of my childhood in Tintin—whatever”. That, nonetheless, is a psychological musing of the kind that is not the intention of this thesis. In several other instances, participants stated that they have postcards, pictures, or posters because of their convenience, as they are small, light, and easy to carry. In some cases, participants had decided not to put some of such objects on display. Sylvie, for instance, decided not to use them as the room was already ‘beautiful’:

I have this thing with pictures that I carry around and [...] I had them on the walls in Brussels, and in Vienna, they were on the table. [...] but actually here, I didn't even have to take [them] out of the box [...] because, yeah, as you can see, there is already a lot around and it feels already really homey and comfortable... I wouldn't even know where to put those things actually.

Sylvie’s reasoning is a merely functional one, which is also heavily influenced by the material condition of her surrounding, i.e. her room. On the other side of the same coin, Zoya made a rather large composition of postcards, pictures, and quotes, because “a part of the wall kind of makes you want to put something inside it, because it’s a little bit deeper than the other walls”; and Hannah put up postcards, picture, posters, and paper animals to add some colour to the white room.

On the more sentimental side, though, Nana decided not to put up all of her thirty-something pictures, because they made her “really nostalgic” and she only made a small composition of a handful of them on the wall. Tara decided to drop off the three old pictures that she used to carry around, at her parents’ house before moving to Copenhagen:

I left it there because I thought like, yeah, I don't really need them. Well it's nice to have it, but then I just thought like, yeah, everything is in my head, and it just feels nice, yeah—it's nice to see like pictures of your family and your friends and all the memories but also, I think it's alright not to have it. And just maybe it's a change.

Instead, she used a few postcards from her recent travels, like Ljubljana and Vienna, and some other ornamental items and plants that she acquired in Copenhagen.

Nevertheless, be it a self-initiated decision or a reaction to the material conditions of the home, decorations and memorabilia are, once again, tactical responses to living arrangements. And as far as decorative objects go, postcards, pictures, and posters are the most convenient. Even if not for reasons of profound personalisation and identity-building, they remain the quintessential objects of home-making on the run. They are easily portable, versatile, and collectible. More than anything, they are objects of a mobile lifestyle; they bring together so many locations and scales (e.g. cities or restaurants that the owners have been to), fragmented memories, and different cultures in one place—which is the room of the highly mobile individual.

EATING IN THE BEDROOM: THE BURDEN OF BEING INVISIBLE

The common functional division of spaces in an apartment means that there is a distinct room or space for every domestic activity¹⁵. This is a mutual relationship. The practice that takes place in

¹⁵ Perec also plays with this concept in *Spices of Spaces* (1999), pp. 27–33.

the room defines the space and the material setting of the space is such that fosters the meant activity. This is based on the premise that a coherent household unit inhabits the home. However, with the advent of different forms of cohabitation in today's mobile world, conventional residential spaces are inhabited differently (all of the 10 participants lived in some sort of shared arrangement). Coupled with the difficulties of Copenhagen's housing market, these arrangements tend to be against short-term, temporary tenants and in favour of the longer-term, often 'primary' ones. The experiences of the participants reveal a trend of such unbalanced power relations, which give rise to various conflicts and overshadow the once-seemingly neat, functional logic of spaces.

Sharing the space with long-term inhabitants of an apartment, who often happen to be the one to whom they also pay the rent (I call them flatmate/landlady and flatmate/landlord), a number of participants expressed the feeling of being an outsider in 'someone else's space'. This feeling can even manifest itself in non-conflictual contexts, such as in Tara's case, where she had no apparent problems with her flatmate/landlord, but still felt a certain burden on her own side:

He is the primary person here, you know, it's his home and he has made this space in a certain way. He has made this place and he's lived here for so many years and me, I don't feel temporary here, but still, I am a temporary person, I wouldn't want to disrupt that flow that he has made for himself. [...] of course when you rent a room to some other person you expect this discrepancy but still you have a system and then you would want to keep that system somehow.

Tara did not feel the need to be 'invisible'. She used the living room and the dining table to have her meals; yet, she tended to make a conscious effort to minimise her impact. As a result, she did not feel comfortable to invite friends even if her flatmate/landlord encouraged her to do so.

In a slightly more conflictual context, despite getting on well with his flatmate/landlady on the surface, Noah felt that he "was not allowed to be private". Therefore, he tried to minimise his time at home:

I love my housemate, but [...] I always felt that she's sort of judging me or I have to explain what I'm doing... *I'm definitely in her space not mine*. And so, I would rather be in control of who, what, when [...] So I tended to try and leave quite early [emphasis added by me].

A more antagonistic situation was with Luca, who lived in a shared apartment with three other international students, two of whom were long-term friends. In fact, a group of four international friends had rented the whole apartment, but as two of them would only join in December, Luca and another girl were staying there for three months on a sublet. Although there were no restrictions put in place for Luca, the overall social dynamics in the apartment had alienated him to a great extent:

It feels like, it's like their house. Me and the other girl who are here temporary, it's kind of not really our place. So maybe we're quite invisible—her and I. And then it's kind of lawless for the two others. It's been like that.

Hannah's case is an extreme instance, where she was once explicitly told by her flatmate/landlady not to use the living room and the dining room:

I felt like a child that had been punished and been sent to her room or like all of a sudden, the space that I had been using, like, for this month, [...] it's for

you off limits! So I have like an apartment or a place that I knew that now has these imagined boundaries or borders... Yeah, which is quite a funny thing, not only because of the functional restrictions that I got but also just because the whole atmosphere changed. You know, like, all of a sudden, [...] it's not an apartment you share anymore, it's like *you are intruding somebody's space* and this person made it very clear: until here, no further. Like this is your role in this household that you remain as much unseen as possible [emphasis added by me].

Hannah, who lived with and rented her room from a mother and her 16-year-old daughter, did not even have an official rental contract, so she did not want to risk it. As a reaction, she adopted what she called a “leave-no-trace policy”¹⁶, which meant that, in order to avoid confrontation, she minimised her *material reach* in the apartment. She picked up the habit of cleaning thoroughly after herself and she moved all her ‘kitchen stuff’ and ‘bathroom stuff’, which are conventionally kept in the kitchen and in the bathroom, to her drawers in her room. Moreover, even if there was a small table in the kitchen, she had her dinners behind the desk in her room. Similarly, Javed also had meals in his room, as he was denied access to the living room most of the time, as his flatmate/landlord worked from home and, thus, sat in the living room and closed the door.

These cases not only exemplify a disturbed functional logic of conventional, residential spaces, but also question the unchallenged association of notions, such as privacy, comfort, and security with the idea of home, once again asserting that, like all social milieus, home is a site of conflict.

LAUNDRY: THE RHYTHM OF THE EVERYDAY

As a site of everyday life, home is where repetitive practices take place. The rhythms of these practices are different. One eats three times a day, sleeps every night, and does laundry once a week. Everyday rhythms, as Lefebvre argues in his *Rhythmanalyse* (1992), are the outcome of the interactions between *cyclical repetitions*, which he associates with natural processes such as day and night, seasons, or bodily functions; and the *linear repetitive*, which comes from human activities and imposed frameworks. Additionally, every rhythm also implicates a measure; therefore, rhythm is regulated time, governed by rationality, but related to the least rational, which is the human lived experience (Lefebvre, 1992). As such, recurring domestic practices punctuate and measure one’s homely life. Laundry is an interesting example of such practices.

Comments by the participants reveal their limitations and how they deal with them through their processes of discovery (learning the workings of laundry at their new home) and creation (coming up with tactics to do laundry conveniently). For Sylvie, it requires a lot of planning:

Laundry happens around once a week and I always have to plan it in advance, cause I have to book it online. So, it's always a complex system. So, I always have to—I often have laundry at 7:00 in the morning which is really painful, but it's the only way I know I'm always gonna be at home, so I often book it in advance—or like sometimes I have to book 10 days in advance.

Similarly, Javed needs to make a reservation too:

¹⁶ Interestingly, Walter Benjamin writes “to live means to leave traces” (Benjamin, 1986: p. 155). q.v. ‘A Set of Everyday Practices’ in Chapter II, pp. 17–18.

Laundry, I can't have a schedule, because it's completely dependent on when I get a slot, as I said. [...] weekends it's impossible, because it's always booked.

Hannah points out to another limitation, which, for her, defines the frequency of the practice:

Laundry, I also just do it when my underwear is done, but I have underwear for one week.

Simplistically, based on the participants' remarks, two imposed frameworks can be identified that interact with the cyclical process of body perspiration, which entails the need for washing one's clothes: first, the arrangements of laundry processes at the home (if there is a washing machine, whether one needs to book it in advance, etc.); second, the number of clothing items one has. As such, the rhythm of the infra-ordinary practice of laundry becomes a measure of the scale of one's everyday life. How much spontaneity or organisedness can one afford? Or how much underwear can one have when travelling with only one suitcase?

DESK: STUDYING AND BEING A STUDENT

Being a student is a constituent part of the identity of 4CITIZENS. As students, their lives are closely tied to studying—the materialisation of which, at home, is a study desk. At the same time, on a broader scale, studying, and thus, the university, is their principal connection to the city, i.e. Copenhagen. Due to its everyday qualities, Prazeres (2018) argues that 'studying' gives a certain distinction to the temporary sojourn of international students in a city, as 'living', compared to a simple stay. One can, then, imagine that there is a link between the primary 'living space' of the students (their rooms), and their primary 'connection to the city' (university), particularly through the presence or absence of a desk.

Three out of the 10 participants (Javed, Luca, and Noah) did not have a desk in their rooms. Javed spends the greater part of his days at the university:

I don't have a desk, so it's very difficult to work, I mean I sit on this chair over here. This is the closest thing I have to a study. So, I usually wake up in the morning and get ready and leave.

Further on, Javed also mentions that, as a result of being at the university, he often eats out. Similarly, Luca also spends most of his time at the university. In fact, on his mental map, he noted that he “basically *lives*” in the university. Nevertheless, for the little time he spends in his bare room—where he had no more than a mattress and a chair—he invented a simple desk, an upside-down plastic bowl:

This is just because I don't have a desk. It doesn't work the best, but if you sit, this is just like if you're sitting on a chair, and you feel like this is a good stand. So, your laptop is a bit higher up, that's what that's about. [...] I have a bit of a history of doing this kind of thing. I didn't have a desk in Vienna as well, so I found out that a big pot can be a decent substitute desk.

Both Javed's and Luca's arrangements show that, as students, on the one hand, a certain material entity close to a desk is a rather indispensable part of the home, not because of a purely symbolic value, but because the practice of studying is so central to a student's lifeworld, it cannot be erased

from their primary living space. A substitute of a desk is needed, even if for very limited use. On the other hand, the university is annexed to the homely world of 4CITIZENS, through other everyday practices not related to studying. Examples of such practices are abundant. Nana noted that she liked eating at the university because the food is good. Noah said that he often had a beer there. Zoya even mentioned that she considered sleeping at the university:

If I had to choose for studying again, I definitely choose Copenhagen, just for the campus of the university. It's just—I came there in the morning and I left there 10:00 in the evening. I didn't even have the feeling that I was tired or stressed from studying. I was ready to sleep there once.

Therefore, the material manifestations of the practice of studying are unfolded on two scales and go on to shape two different home spheres. The physical space of the university, which is the materialisation of studying on the scale of the city, becomes the site of many familiar everyday activities, so much so that Luca, for instance, calls his rapport to the university campus 'living'. As such, home-making is taking place on the scale of the university, and thus, the city. On the other side of the same coin, the desk, which is the materialisation of studying on the scale of the room, is so essential to the arrangement of a room for a student, that its provision is an essential part of a student's material home-making, so much so that it goes on to become the symbol of a 'student room'.

CYCLING: EXPERIENCING THE CITY

Copenhagen is world-renowned for cycling. All participants, and for that matter, all 4CITIZENS except for one, owned and used a bicycle in the city. Common trends among the participants, revealed through the mental maps and the interviews, were their mentioning of their preferred cycling paths, their measuring of distances by the time it takes for a bicycle ride, and their praising of the freedom of movement it granted them, as compared to their experiences in cities where their movements were bound by the rigid structure of public transport. The relation of cycling and the participants' lived experiences of Copenhagen is a fundamental one. Following Merleau-Ponty's (2005) phenomenology of perception, cycling can be seen as an embodied practice, where the bicycle becomes an extension of the body of the cyclist. Therefore, the ensemble of the cyclist and the bicycle become an 'embodied subject' that has dimensions of its own, a specific velocity, and certain mechanics of movement and stability. As such, the perception of senses is that of this embodied subject—the cyclist-bicycle.

In her last month in Copenhagen, Zoya's bicycle was stolen. Being obliged to walk where she used to cycle, her experience of the city was completely altered:

I was always going around with the bike, which of course is more convenient, everybody's doing it; but I also realised, when my bike got stolen—then I had to walk a bit—that you actually miss so much of the city when you are biking, because you don't see, you don't feel the architecture, you just pass by everything. Ok, you know the places, but you never actually see them, and you never experience them, you just pass by. [...] Every time I don't use the bike, I walk through the same street that I bike every day and it feels completely different. And actually, I prefer it when I walk, I realise that I like it more, because, architecturally, it's a really interesting city.

On the more negative side, yet not far from Zoya's comments, Javed who was not completely comfortable with cycling, felt that he did not get to explore much of the city:

I haven't explored the city centre as much or the neighbourhoods. One is that I didn't utilise my time and the other—I think the other thing—is also just cycling from one place to the other is—we're not used to it, like, I'm not used to it. In Vienna, you could just get onto metro, go from point A to Point B in like five minutes. Cycling does take time, [...] for instance, Google Maps says that it takes 15 minutes, it never takes 15 minutes. And then you know about the lights, there is always an effect on it. So, I think that's why. [...] I also have back problems, so I can't really cycle too frequently in a week.

Javed's and Zoya's remarks on the fundamental differences between the ways in which one senses and experiences the city through cycling, walking, or taking the metro highlight the role of the everyday practice of cycling in shaping the perception and interaction of the participants with Copenhagen. As an embodied, everyday practice, cycling is a somewhat automatic, habitual act that renders the unfamiliar familiar. This familiarizing process is no other than the process of home-making. In other words, 4CITIZENS discover Copenhagen and familiarize it as a part of their homely world within the possibilities and limitations of the cyclist-bicycle's perception. This, however, does not mean that their experiences are homogenous at all. It suggests that the home-making experiences of the participants, on the scale of the city, has been influenced by the embodied experience of cycling, through the materiality of a body-on-a-bicycle.

SUITCASE: A LIFE ON THE MOVE

The suitcase is perhaps the most iconic object associated with people who live a mobile life. It contains and makes possible the mobility of ones' primary material belongings. Recounting their first memories from moving to Copenhagen and to their new homes, the participants depicted themselves as carrying their suitcases. Javed remembers arriving with a lot of luggage:

I had a suitcase, I had two guitars, I had a rucksack and my computer bag, and then there was one other bag. And I also had this thing which I forgot to kind of put in the suitcase—the thing that we got on the orientation, this bag here. So, basically, when I arrived at the door—I came in a taxi on the 15th—I was just completely enveloped with luggage.

The suitcase, as such, stars twice in the home experience of 4CITIZENS in every city, once upon moving in and once upon moving out. But it also has a continuous presence in their homely worlds. In eight of the 10 participants' rooms, the suitcase—and in one instance, the travel bag, as Luca moved to Copenhagen with no other luggage—had a visible presence. In most of these interiors, the suitcase, which is not a part of the furniture of a conventional home, had acquired the status of an item of furniture. Most participants specified and showed the suitcase in their mental maps of the rooms. Throughout the interviews, talking about the suitcase, different views were expressed. Noah, for example, offhandedly clarified that his suitcase is where it is because “it was the best place to put it”, Isabella talked about keeping some of the stuff she does not use in the suitcase, and Tara called it her “best friend for the last few years”. But Nana's remarks on the role of the suitcase in her room are more thorough:

Because, first, there is no other space for that. Secondly, I don't have any cupboard to keep my stuff so I—it's messy but... yeah, the stuff which I cannot hang. So, I keep it there. And also, kind of like symbolising that I'm moving all the time. That's why having a suitcase in the middle of the room is kind of a reminder that everything is so temporary.

Such a threefold structure provides a useful framework to analyse furniture items within interiors, and in this case, the suitcase in 4CITIZENS' rooms. The first layer is simply dictated by the materiality of the room and the object itself. The physical layout of the room and the arrangement of its furniture, coupled with the shape and dimensions of the suitcase, limit its potential position. The second layer deals with the function that the object adopts due to its new position, which can be different from its initial purpose. For example, Javed mentioned that he used his suitcase to put some of his clothes on top, or Nana kept things in it as a cupboard. This layer once again highlights the tactical aspect of home-making on the run. The third layer is a symbolic one. But this symbolic value is not the result of some *a priori* meaning invested in the object, unless one makes the decision or the design to put a suitcase in an interior, merely as decoration or some sort of a manifesto (Marcel Duchamp's *Fontaine?*). It is, in fact, the integration of the suitcase in the room that creates a setting, which gives a 'temporary' shape to the inhabitant's everyday life. That is to say, keeping a big suitcase in the middle of a rather small room, or using it as a cupboard is not the most maintainable arrangement. A reciprocal relation is formed. The temporariness of the mobile individual's living arrangements brings in and maintains the suitcase where it is, while the suitcase, by being there, signifies that "everything is so temporary"—to use Nana's words.

MOVING OUT: MANY HOMES OF THE 4CITIZENS

The practice of moving out makes us face the inevitable question: *where is one's home?* The response, however, is surely not as short as the question. As discussed throughout this thesis, home is a multi-layered, dynamic entity with a multitude of material and conceptual manifestations. The existence of multiple homes for an individual is not only possible, but inevitable. Almost all participants pointed out to where their parents—or one parent—live as *home*. The proof of which, for many, was also the fact that they were *going back home* to that place, upon moving out of Copenhagen, before moving in to Madrid (Their next 4CITIES destination). This gives the quality of a *base* to that home. It acts as a point of reference. Sylvie explains her relation to her parent's house:

I think my parents' place is still what I call my home in terms of, yeah, the house itself. And, I mean, I still have my room—all my books and clothes are still there. Every time I move, between one city and the other, I sort of go back and, yeah, I never really completely moved out. Like I've always carried my suitcase with a bit of things but then everything else has been there and the holidays, I always spend them back home.

Sylvie's mentioning of the 'holidays' reveals that, in addition to acting as a 'base', the parents' home, for her, is associated with practices linked to special family occasions. Isabella and Maya, for instance, both mentioned that they 'go home' for Christmas, to where their mothers lived. Comparing his room in Copenhagen to his parents' house, Noah says that, for him, Christmas is synonymous with home:

Home for me is Christmas, is summer, or it's always family. I don't think on a personal level, until it was my own apartment, with my own family, will ever feel like home, because home for me is a deeply emotional thing, [...] not a physical thing. I mean, my parents have just moved house, [...] the other house was a home—and that was my home—and this one will be my home. It's just cause it's where my mom and dad would be. I will go and have a nice Christmas. Mom and dad will never be here. I'll never have Christmas here. So, it doesn't feel like home, you know. [...] I can live my life here but it's not home.

Defining a distinction between one's site of life and one's home, Noah's statement illustrates a certain hierarchy among different manifestations of homes, which is based on different levels of emotional attachment. Exploring her attachment to her temporary home in Copenhagen, Maya's formula is "get attached, but don't get too attached". For her, it is important to feel attached enough to be able to feel at home, while it is equally important not to be attached to the extent that leaving the room, the apartment, and the city becomes an overly unpleasant experience. Similarly, comparing her experience in Copenhagen with Brussels and Vienna, Zoya thinks that she was searching for too deep of an attachment in her previous homes, through excessive emotional and material investment:

I finally realised that this is temporary, I don't have to be worried about things, things will go as they go [...] It's only four months, it's gonna be nice. While I think, in Brussels and Vienna, I was so trying to kind of grasp this feeling of home [...] In Brussels I was still buying, like, things for the kitchen, cutlery, plates, to make it all cosy. It was stupid, you know, because you cannot carry those things around. But I really felt that I needed it, because otherwise, I was not feeling comfortable in my own space.

As the multiplicity of the participants' homes necessitates limited emotional and material investment in the temporary ones, it also redefines the relation of the participants to their parents' homes. Nana thinks that she is "losing that sense of home" as she does not live there anymore and feels that it is more her parents' space rather than hers. As such, 4CITIZENS experience a fragmentation of the idea of home. Just as it cannot be attributed to one physical entity, or one place, it can neither be tied to one transcendental meaning. Even if one resists calling a temporary home 'home'—which does not happen anyhow, as things like "I left home at 9" or "I'm going home" are indispensable parts of everyday conversations—home-making practices are constantly in course, as I have shown throughout this thesis. All previous or temporary homes are parts of the individual's 'collection of homes', to follow Prazeres' (2018) idea of 'collecting homes'¹⁷. Tara's reflection on her many homes sums it up perfectly:

Home, for me, now, is not like a spatial thing, but it's just something that I make along the way [...] it's just an *accumulation* I would say. Like, Brussels for me was a home and still is. [...] It's just about the experiences, and for now, this is home. Like spatially, this is what is tangible. But still, I would say, it's how you feel. Yeah. And how you make of it. Of course, it's the room and the feelings and the cosiness and all. [emphasis added by me]

¹⁷ q.v. 'Students and Mobile Home-Making' in Chapter II, p. 13.

chapter VI

CONCLUSION

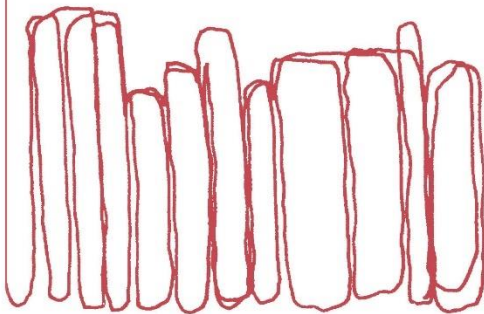
« *Savoir comment les autres vivent pour
savoir comment, soi, on vit* »
—Annie Ernaux

The study of one's home is a study of one's life. As with life and its countless nuances and forms, home is also a complex, manifold phenomenon. In today's highly mobile world, as highlighted throughout this thesis, most of the traditional preconceptions of home—if not all—do not hold true. Having explored home as it is rather than what it should be, this study shows that home is not necessarily one, sedentary ideal, but it can be multiple, dynamic, and incomplete, yet relatable. It is in fact the omnipresence of everyday materiality and the micro workings of everyday practices that render the notion of home widely palpable.

4CITIZENS' experiences of their temporary homes in Copenhagen reveal a two-fold process of home-making. An *exploratory* process and a *creative* one, which evolve in parallel with each other. Finding themselves *thrown* into a new environment, 4CITIZENS engage in an exploratory process; that of familiarising oneself with the new conditions, which begins with finding one's way to the apartment, getting to know the schedules and systems of the house, and, generally, laying the foundation for what will grow to become a routine in the face of this somewhat Heideggerian *thrownness*. This facet of home-making echoes Prazeres' (2018) findings that international students accumulate a certain 'local cultural capital' through their everyday urban life. The other, creative aspect of home-making is that which begins with the unpacking of one's belongings, rearrangements of furniture, acquisition of needed items, and establishing one's own ways of *doing*. This process reflects Michel de Certeau's arguments in *L'invention du quotidien* (1990) that even as consumers of the rules and products that already exist in culture, through everyday life we invent our own ways and *arts of doing*, which are influenced, but never wholly determined, by those rules and products.

These home-making processes are multi-scalar and extend over various scales, from the interiors of the rooms, to the city, and the cross-national ties with friends and families. Through life narratives, places, material objects, and everyday practices connect to each other and form a narrative structure. The many homes of the highly mobile individual are nodal points within this structure. Therefore, while the privileged home invested with years of material and emotional investment fades away in a mobile world, a *collection* of temporally and spatially transitory homes emerges. Like others who live a *life on the move*, 4CITIZENS *collect* homes, among other places, objects, friends, and experiences, as they drift toward their next destination.

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APPENDIX

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INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

The following is the guideline according to which I conducted 430 minutes of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 10 participants during November and December 2018, in Copenhagen, as part of my empirical research. The full transcript of the interviews is available as a separate document and can be provided to readers upon request.*

Basic facts.

How did you find the room?

Why did you choose the room?

How furnished was the room?

How many flatmates do you have?

What special amenities you have here that you specifically enjoy (washing machine, dishwasher, coffee machine, etc)?

Was it your first time in the city?

Objects.

What non-functional/ornamental objects did you take with you? – are they on display? Why? Where are they from?

Did you buy any non-functional/ornamental objects here?

What functional ‘home items’ did you bring with you? Why? Where are they from?

Did you have to buy any functional home items here?

Are there any objects that you would take to your ‘future home’?

How much effort did you put to adjust the room to your preference? What adjustments did you do?

Time and rituals.

In a normal day, how much time do you spend at home? – if not where are you?

When at home, how much time do you spend in your room – how much in common areas?

Can you describe to me your daily routine? – imagine a day

Do you have specific domestic rituals? Cooking habits? Shopping schedules? Laundry schedules?

Do you prefer to work/study here or outside?

Do you have any specific rules in the house?

Do you have cleaning schedules—with flatmates?

People.

How would you describe your relationship with your roommates?

Did you get to know people here in the city—on various scales, from knowing familiar strangers to making real friends?

How often do you have visitors? Do you feel comfortable having people over?

* I can be contacted at arshia.eghbali@gmail.com

Emotions.

Do you like your place?

Do you like the city?

Do you like your neighbourhood? Do you hang out in it?

Do you feel 'at home'?

So, this is currently your residence—your home—but is there another place you call home? Why?

What's your favourite thing about here?

What's the thing you dislike the most?

Memories.

What's your first memory from your home here?

What's your first memory from the city? — where did you arrive first?

And...

Would you mind telling me which side of the bed you sleep on?

MICROGEOGRAPHIES OF HOME OBJECTS

| HANNA | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|------------------------|
| THINGS | LOCATION | STORIES | BEYOND |
| The clothing rack with the 38 screws | In front of the sealed door. | Bought it near the university. Huge. She had to transport it on foot for 45 minutes. Very hard to assemble alone. 38 screws... | Amager, Copenhagen |
| Coffee-maker | The kitchen drawer? | Bought it in a second-hand market for 4 euros. | Copenhagen |
| Picture: Hannah & boyfriend | On the wall above the desk. | — — — — | Belgium |
| Picture: old man and the bar | " | Sperlhof. Nice bar in Vienna with board games. 80-something-year-old bartender "-- he's like-- more sliding over... through the bar with his stick". "very nice authentic style that you can only find in Vienna". | Vienna |
| Two random posters | " | — — — — | — — — — |
| Two pics at the seaside | " | — — — — | Belgium?? |
| A postcard. | " | — — — — | — — — — |
| Cute paper animals | On the wall between desk and window. | Bought from a shop on the street where she used to live | Vienna |
| Suitcase | Under the desk. | Went with suitcase to university on the first day in CPH, thought that it's 4CITIES welcome day... | Belgium, Vienna?, etc? |

| | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| Underwear boxes | Under the rack. | ----- | ----- |
| Clothes | On the rack. | She loves them and wants them on display. She likes ordering them. | ----- |
| Drawers | Opposite the bed. Next to the door. | Since when her flatmate told her not to use the rest of the apartment, she keeps everything in here. Kitchen drawer. Bathroom drawer. "leave-no-trace policy". | ----- |
| Chair | At the desk. | Having only one chair... and guests | ----- |
| The church spire hat | On the shelf above the desk. | She likes the church spire. She made it for the 4CITIES Halloween party costume. | Church of Our Saviour, Copenhagen |
| "too-small" blanket | On the bed. | ----- | ----- |
| Heater | Below the window. | Recently fixed and now it's on all the time and the room is so hot. | ----- |
| ISABELLA | | | |
| THINGS | LOCATION | STORIES | BEYOND |
| Bedside table | between the head of the bed & closet | It was first on the other side and she moved it there | ----- |
| Guitar | at the foot of the bed. After door. | ----- | ----- |
| Suitcase | behind closet | some sheets and covers already inside. | Travels everywhere... |
| Chair | at the desk. | it was brand new when she arrived | ----- |
| Toaster | Kitchen | ----- | ----- |
| Water boiler | " | ----- | ----- |
| Two motivational frames | on the wall opposite the bed | She likes the. One is from a friend from work and the other she bought it herself. "be fearless" | ----- |
| Two medals | on the wall above the desk | one is from her marathon running in Vienna, the other one from a conference she went to in Malmo | Vienna, Malmo |
| several postcards | " | With positive messages.. | ----- |
| a small poster (painting) | " | ----- | ----- |
| some pictures and a couple of motivational cards | On the heater between windows | photos of groups of friends | Colombia, Miami,etc? |
| Pictures of friends and family | on the closet above the bed. | she has more pictures. But she doesn't have more space to put them up. "they're easy and light to carry around" | Colombia, Miami,etc? |
| Two pictures of Copenhagen from above | On the wall above the bed | She took these pictures for one of her presentations for a seminar at the university | Copenhagen |
| Map of the world | " | It's colourful. there are two handwritten motivational post-its on it. She has marked the places on it where she has been | Many places in the World |
| Shelves | next to desk | ----- | ----- |
| Jewellery, perfumes, cosmetics, mirror | on the shelves | ----- | ----- |
| Thesis post-its | on the wall next to shelves | Medellin and Malmo. The Medellin part is full of different yellow, green, orange, pink post-its. Map of actors. The Malmo is going to grow. She's done her research. | Medellin, Malmo |
| Demographics infographic poster | on the door (from inside) | From our Demographics course in Vienna | Vienna |
| JAVED | | | |
| THINGS | LOCATION | STORIES | BEYOND |
| Piano | Behind the door. End of the room. | His landlord/flatmate is a musician. The piano is terribly out of tune | ----- |

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--|--|------------------------|
| 2001: A Space Odyssey Poster | On the wall above the piano. | ----- | ----- |
| Clockwork Orange Poster | On the wall above the speakers. | ----- | ----- |
| Bookshelves | In front of the door | Filled with the landlord/flatmate's books (mostly Danish) | ----- |
| Suitcase | In front of shelves | ----- | It travels everywhere |
| Two guitars | " | He is a musician. An electric and an acoustic | From India. Stockholm? |
| Two speakers | On the cupboard next to the door | The landlord/flatmate put it there for him. | ----- |
| Wah pedal | On the floor, at the foot of the bed | He got it from one of the landlord/flatmate's friends | ----- |
| Carpet | On the floor | ----- | ----- |
| Armchair | At the corner next to the window/bed | He says it makes the room look like Van Ghogh's room (painting). He says it's the closest he has to a desk/workstation. He also eats on that | |
| Javed's Books | On the windowsil | He has read them, but he keeps them and carries them around. He could drop them at home, but he didn't. Murakami, The Secret, or Bertrand Russel, Pierre Bourdieu, Political Intervention. | Brussels - India |
| Axe & Shield | On the wall above the Armchair | Not his. | ----- |
| Bathroom stuff and medicine | Small table next to armchair | He places them at hand, and in sight. Because he needs them. | ----- |
| Clothes | on the lower shelves & on the suitcase | There are some Kurtas among them. | India |
| Spices | Kitchen | He got from India but needed containers. landlord/flatmate had them. | India |
| Pressure cooker | " | He says, as an Indian, he eats rice quite often, and he thinks it's easier to make rice with these, and he knew he couldn't find one in Europe so he bought it in Abu Dhabi Airport | India - Abu Dhabi |
| Music CDs | In the suitcase | I don't know why I brought them, like just kind of emotional attachment. | India |
| Bed cover | On the bed | Not his. Looks nice. | ----- |
| LUCA | | | |
| THINGS | LOCATION | STORIES | BEYOND |
| Chair | Near mattress | "there was a chair here, I had a chair but someone broke it, but so I'm just using one of their chairs" "I took it out because briefly I had a double bed, like an inflatable double bed when my girlfriend came. And it could exactly fit so I just substituted." | ----- |
| Plastic Bowl | Near bed on pillow | It's a Margrethe Bowl! He uses an upside down bowl as a laptop desk - "I have a bit of a history of doing this kind of thing. I didn't have a desk in Vienna as well, so I found out that a big pot can be a decent substitute desk. " | Vienna |
| Two Lights | Closet and chair | The flatmates let him know just before coming that they are not planning to wire up electricity, so he will need lamps. So he got them for free from FreeYourStuffCopenhagen facebook group | Copenhagen |
| Travel bag | On the floor | ----- | ----- |
| Mattress | On the floor | The only thing that was in the room when he arrived | ----- |
| Letters & pics | ??? | ----- | ----- |
| Closet/cupboard | Corner, next to door | ----- | ----- |
| Playstation | living room | Once he played with it. Alone. | |
| Blankets | on the bed | he got them for free from FreeYourStuffCopenhagen facebook group | Copenhagen |
| Quilts | " | " | Copenhagen |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|-----------------------------|
| Pillow | " | He bought it | |
| Some clothes | In the cupboard | he got them for free from FreeYourStuffCopenhagen facebook group | Copenhagen |
| MAYA | | | |
| THINGS | LOCATION | STORIES | BEYOND |
| Mirror | Behind the door | ----- | ----- |
| Books she doesn't own | On the top shelf | ----- | ----- |
| Mushroom papier mache/hat | " | She made it for her 4CITIES Halloween costume | Copenhagen, Nørrebro |
| Globe lamp | " | It does not work. | ----- |
| Jewellery | On the lower shelf | ----- | ----- |
| Cat-playing-ukulele postcard | On the wall above the bedside table | One of the pieces she always takes around with herself | Vienna? Brussels? |
| Chinese mother and child postcard | " | " | " |
| Laundry bag | On the floor | ----- | ----- |
| Round table | Under the window | She can easily study here at home. She rearranged the furniture, she wanted natural light for studying. | ----- |
| Two drawings | On left window wall | Line drawings on black paper. She drew them in Copenhagen. | ----- |
| two mushroom posters | On the wall between the shelves & closet | She likes mushrooms. She bought them in Stockholm (?) in the beginning (of the Copenhagen semester) when she went there. She says they will become things that she will take with her | Stockholm |
| two postcards | left window wall | ----- | ----- |
| Picasso painting | The wall above bed | "Betina's picasso" | ----- |
| Small painting | Next to the window | From a German artist who lives a couple of floors above | The apartment building |
| Documents | On the shelves | Her important documents that she always carries. | They travel everywhere |
| Personal items | " | ----- | ----- |
| Books she own | Bedside table | ----- | ----- |
| Oven | Kitchen | She likes to cook and spend time in the kitchen. | Kitchen |
| Bed | room | Betina had placed it under the window for her to see the sky but she found it weird and rearranged the furniture and put it next to the door | ----- |
| NANA | | | |
| THINGS | LOCATION | STORIES | BEYOND |
| Two framed pictures | Leaning on the wall. Next to cloth. rack | Not hers. She brought them from the storage room upstairs. | storage room upstairs |
| Vases | On box. n. armchair | " | storage room upstairs |
| Clothing rack | Next to the door | ----- | ----- |
| Blanket | On the bed | Bought it here. Matching the colours of room. She'll take it to Madrid. | Copenhagen - Madrid |
| Armchair | Corner- n. window | She sits on it and does her things. | ----- |
| Chair | Behind the desk | ----- | ----- |
| Fairy lights | Hanging between windows/above desk | Bought them in Brussels, near Christmas, and she likes taking them to every city. She likes lights. She had a lot of lights in her room/'home' in Ukraine. Symbol of cosiness to her. | Brussels - Vienna - Ukraine |
| Desk | Under windows | It's a nice desk, but she prefers studying at uni because she won't be distracted by food at home, and her friends are there. | University |
| Florence postcard | Left windowsil | She just likes it. | Florence |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Motivational card | " | Her friend gave her before leaving for Brussels. | Ukraine - Brussels |
| Small jar | " | Her friend from Vienna gave it to her. | Vienna |
| Pencils | " | "i have lots of pencils, i carry them" | ----- |
| Two pictures of her and friends | Between windows | One with a friend from Warsaw, another from friends in Georgia | Warsaw - Georgia |
| Picture of mountains | " | She likes Georgia a lot. Makes her feel good. | Georgia |
| Berlin pictures | " | She took them herself. | Berlin |
| Birthday card | " | Got it from a 4CITIES friend in Vienna. It's a drawing. | Vienna |
| Rough drawing | " | One of the first attempts of a 4CITIES friend at drawing | ----- |
| Totally dark picture | " | Took it with friends last New Year in Brussels, at 'home', it was supposed to be their reflection in the mirror, but turned out wrong, but she loves the memory. | Brussels |
| Suitcase | At the foot of bed | First, there was no other place to put it. Second, she doesn't have a cupboard and she uses it as such, third, "kind of like symbolising that i'm moving all the time. that's why having a suitcase in the middle of the room it's kind of a reminder that everything is so temporary." | Travels everywhere |
| "Roland Bar" cup | Kitchen | David (one of the 4CITIZENS) who lived with her for two weeks, stole it from the university bar "Roland Bar" | University |
| NOAH | | | |
| THINGS | LOCATION | STORIES | BEYOND |
| Wastepaper basket | Under the window next to heater | He bought it from a street market. It's a lobster catcher. | Street market in Copenhagen |
| Bed | Middle of room | He built it with a friend. Collected some palettes from different spots in the city. Bought the mattress from IKEA. Carried it on a bus alone. Going to leave it here. "The next person who moves in won't know that story. " | IKEA, some restaurants - Copenhagen |
| Wardrobe | opposite bed | One of the only two things that were in the room from the beginning. It's not stable. Leaning forward. | ----- |
| Sofa | Next to door | One of the only two things that were in the room from the beginning. | ----- |
| Mug | Kitchen | His mom brought from Cambodia or Vietnam. He always travels with it since 18yo. Clips it to his backpack. It has a lid, so nice for outdoors. | Vietnam or Cambodia, travels everywhere |
| Bedside tables | Next to bed | Bought from IKEA | IKEA, Copenhagen |
| Two Lamps | near window & bed | " | " |
| Alarm-clock radio | On the 'right' bedside table | Always carries with him. "and it plays a mixture of [...] English-speaking music and Scandinavian music". | Travels everywhere |
| Fairy lights | Above the window | Bought in Copenhagen | ----- |
| Tin Tin postcards | on windowsil | Bought in Copenhagen. He loves Tin Tin. "I'm sure if we mined into my Tin Tin experiences, there's a lot of my childhood in Tin Tin whatever." | Copenhagen - Belgium - London (home) |
| Tin Tin bag | on doorknob | " | " |
| Arsenal hat | on the hooks on window frame | He supports Arsenal. From 'home'/London. "I find football an amazing way to make friends... so bringing something about Arsenal, letting other people know that 'I know what football's about' kind of thing. | London |
| Two other hats | " | Because there's no other place for them. | ----- |
| Some clothes | " | First, because it airs the clothes, second, because it blocks sunlight/ gives privacy. "This country appears not to care about curtains" | ----- |
| Plant | on windowsil | Bought in Copenhagen | ----- |
| Books | On the 'left' bedside table | "i bring from home. I always travel with books. I think i read it in the Robert Harris's Cicero series, where he says 'books give a soul to a room' and I feel like when i'm in a room with books that are mine, I feel much more comfortable " | Home/London |

| | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| Big Suitcase | beside wardrobe | There was no other place to put it | Travels everywhere |
| Small Suitcase | beside sofa | " | Travels everywhere |
| Plug adaptors | on the floor | "that's a bit of a bane of my life. The British three plug to the European two round plug. So i always have to carry around with me" | Travels everywhere |
| Some postcards | soft wall above bed | Got the bottom layer from a pizzeria, got the three in the middle from flatmate, the two on top he accumulated some stuff, made something symmetrical--composed a pyramid out of them. Using coloured pins. | Copenhagen? |
| SYLVIE | | | |
| THINGS | LOCATION | STORIES | BEYOND |
| Books not hers | Sheves above desk | ----- | ----- |
| Her books | On the desk | ----- | ----- |
| Venice Postcard | On the shelf | She bought it from Venice. She went there that semester. | Venice |
| Picture of Paris | On the mirror | She printed it in Copenhagen. | Paris |
| Scarves & bags | Hooks on wall near wardrobe | ----- | ----- |
| Heavy Book | On the floor at door | Holding the door, keeping it from being slammed. Danish book. | ----- |
| Painting | Wall opposite bed | Not hers. She likes it. | ----- |
| Designer Chair | At the desk. | Not hers. The landlady had it from her grandmother. Danish design. | ----- |
| Chair | " | ----- | ----- |
| Big desk | Near window | ----- | ----- |
| Carlsberg box | Floor. Near desk | Filled with the landlay's books. | Carlsberg/Denmark |
| Armchair | opposite bed. | ----- | ----- |
| Plants | Bedside table. Shelf over bed. | Not hers. She has to take care of them. | ----- |
| Many postcards | In the drawer | She always carries them around and adds to them, usually puts them on display, but here she didn't feel the need. Because the room already feels 'homely' and looks beautiful with the landlady's stuff. | Brussels - Vienna - other places |
| Poster of the cinematheque in Tangier | " | " | Tangier - Brussels - Vienna |
| Bedsheets | On the bed | She brought from home. | Home - Albiolo |
| Sewing kit | In the drawer | Her grandmother always gives her. | Italy |
| ZOYA | | | |
| THINGS | LOCATION | STORIES | BEYOND |
| Postcrds, pictures, and quotes - fairy lights thru them | On the wall, where it's a bit deeper | Some of them she bought in Copenhagen, some from other travels, and some are pics that she printed and quotes from poetry, books, music. First time that she did this sort of arrangement. "it's like a part of the wall kind of makes you want to put something inside it". | Copenhagen - other places |
| Bed sheets | On the bed | The only thing she had to buy. | ----- |
| Cecily Brown, Louisiana poster | On the wall next to storage closet | She stole it from the university. She likes how it looks, and the walls were empty. She would do it more, if she'd thought earlier | Louisiana - University |
| Suitcase | B/w desk & drawers | ----- | Travels around |
| Jewellery | On the drawers | ----- | ----- |
| Onion-cutter | Kitchen | Kitchen is well-equipped, but she doesn't use this one. | Kitchen |
| Pillow & warm blanket | Living room | She travels with them. "these kind of things that kind of make you feel at home". She has them from Italy. | Living room - Italy |
| Paintings | Moscow | She used to carry them around, but she finally sent them to Moscow | Brussels - Vienna - Moscow |
| Clothes | open closet | ----- | ----- |
| Mirror | opposite bed | ----- | ----- |

MICROGEOGRAPHIES OF EVERYDAY PRACTICES

| HANNA | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| PRACTICES | LOCATION | STORIES | BEYOND THE ROOM |
| Eating | In the room. | she prefers eating in the room since the time she was reading Perec in the living room and her flatmate suddenly came up to her and said that she didn't want her to use the living room anymore and that she meant it to be only for her daughter and herself. | ----- |
| Cleaning | Whole apartment. | She does it more. Now that she has to be invisible at home, she cleans more. "leave-no-trace" policy. | ----- |
| Sleeping | On the outer side of the bed. | She moved a lot in sleep so the sheets went off, she asked her mom for a special kind of sheet. She noticed the thin "Copenhagen" mattress. | Brussels - Copenhagen |
| Moving in | ----- | Came in and though the room was so white. So asked her mom to send some of her stuff from a warehouse in Brussels. To add colour. Also she had not noticed the floor was black. She also bought the clothing rack upon moving in and she had to assemble it. | Osterbro |
| Moving out | ----- | She's looking forward to going 'home'. | To Brussels |
| Grocery shopping | on the mental map. | ----- | Christianshavn |
| Finding the place | ----- | Internet/visit in-person (difficulties--no choice). Got the offer, but thought that she could find something better, with young people, but then she came for a visit on an extremely rainy day on the bike and met up with the landlady/flatmate. They got along. | Copenhagen, Amager, Osterbro |
| Cycling | Copenhagen | She mentioned it few times as her default means of transportation | Copenhagen |
| ISABELLA | | | |
| PRACTICES | LOCATION | STORIES | BEYOND |
| Eating | In the room. | They all normally eat in their rooms. Except for the time she was studying their all the time. So she wanted to make a change. | ----- |
| Cleaning | Whole apartment. | They have a cleaning/garbage schedule. She thinks they don't clean much, but it's ok. | ----- |
| Sleeping | ----- | She wanted to face the door. So put the bedside table there. | ----- |
| Moving in | ----- | I came early in the morning. Yeah that's when I actually got everything and they showed me around. So I felt like ok I'm in it. it's good it's a nice place. My first impression was just with the space, that it was so much better than what I had before. All new (with plastic) furniture | Far off Airbnb in Copenhagen |
| Moving out | ----- | She's flying to Madrid first to drop her stuff and then goes to Miami for Christmas and then to Colombia for the New Year's... | Madrid - Miami - Colombia |
| Grocery shopping | Bilka. Across the street. Huge mall. | She used to do it once every two weeks, but then her French flatmate started doing a Samsung competition where he had to have more transactions through his phone/card or something like that. So he did grocery for Isabella and others and they would pay him. So she didn't have to bother. | Non-existent neighbourhood |
| Finding the place | ----- | It was her Plan B: Housing Foundation. Thru Uni. (Plan A: Airbnb--difficulties) | ----- |
| Cycling | Copenhagen | "everything is bikeable. so as long as you have a bike you can basically go anywhere." | Copenhagen |
| Travelling to Malmo | Orestad station | One of her thesis case studies is Malmo, and she goes there very often. It's very convenient for her to be close to the train station. | Malmo - Orestad |
| JAVED | | | |
| PRACTICES | LOCATION | STORIES | BEYOND THE ROOM |

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|--------------------|---|---|---|
| Eating | In the room. | He doesn't really have access to the living-room, because his landlord/flatmate 'works' from there and shuts the door. He eats alone sitting on the armchair, watching something. | ----- |
| Cleaning | Mostly his carpet. Whole apartment. | No schedule. The flatmate thinks why be on a schedule when there are so many uncertainties in life. | ----- |
| Sleeping | middle of the bed. | ----- | ----- |
| Moving in | ----- | He was staying with his friend before moving in, near Herlev Hospital. He arrived with a taxi, he had a suitcase, two guitars, a rucksack and a computer bag and another other bag. It was intimidating. The room looked already full. He had to 'improvise'. | Herlev Hospital |
| Moving out | ----- | He had to move out earlier! Because the landlord/flatmate was having his grandfather coming over for christmas and he wanted the room for him. Javed moved out to Isabella's place. But for one night stayed at my place. | Refshaleøen - Arné Jacobsens Allé |
| Grocery shopping | on the mental map. | No schedule. Netto. | Norrebro |
| Finding the place | India | Posted on a facebook group that he wants a room and he's a musician. The landlord contacted him. He thinks the landlord/flatmate was not actively looking for someone. He was away, so he had his friend go and check it out for him. He saw it through video call. | India |
| Meditation | On the carpet | In the mornings he meditates. | ----- |
| Playing the guitar | In the room - a rehearsal room | plays the guitar alone sometimes. And plays with a band. | Rehearsal room in Copenhagen |
| Cycling | Copenhagen | He's not used to biking that often, and he thinks it takes long, because of traffic lights. He also has back problems. So he doesn't use the bicycle usually. He takes the public transport. | Copenhagen - bus stops - metro stations |
| LUCA | | | |
| PRACTICES | LOCATION | STORIES | BEYOND |
| Eating | Outside | He doesn't really cook and eat at home. He says he would if the dynamics in the home were different. (He says he basically lives in the university) | Copenhagen |
| Cleaning | ----- | There is no arrangement for cleaning | ----- |
| Sleeping | On the mattress | That's basically all he does here at home. | ----- |
| Moving in | ----- | Stayed in a hostel for the first two weeks. Being given surprising news about the lack of lamps and wifi upon arrival. Getting an impression of the flatmates as party people, but interpreting it as maybe the first days. He joined the party, after moving all his stuff from a locker in uni. | Christianshavn - University |
| Moving out | ----- | He looks forward to it. Moves out at the end of NOV, moved to another place, because the rent was until then. | Somewhere else in Copenhagen |
| Grocery shopping | Lidl (near home) - Netto & Fakta (near uni) | No schedule. | Amager/neighbourhood - uni |
| Finding the place | ----- | Facebook group: Copenhagen Accommodation. Subletting from a girl who is one of the 4 friends who will live here. | ----- |
| Cycling | Copenhagen | He loves cycling. In the suburbs around his place. Towards airport. Frederiks staden. Around Carlsberg brewery. | All over Copenhagen |
| MAYA | | | |
| PRACTICES | LOCATION | STORIES | BEYOND |
| Eating | Her room. | Because there is no other place. Also when Betina has guests, they take turns. | ----- |
| Cleaning | Whole apartment | No schedule. Common sense. Responsible. | ----- |
| Sleeping | Mostly in the middle of the bed | Getting to the bed on the wrong side, tiring herself out and then turning around and sleep. | ----- |

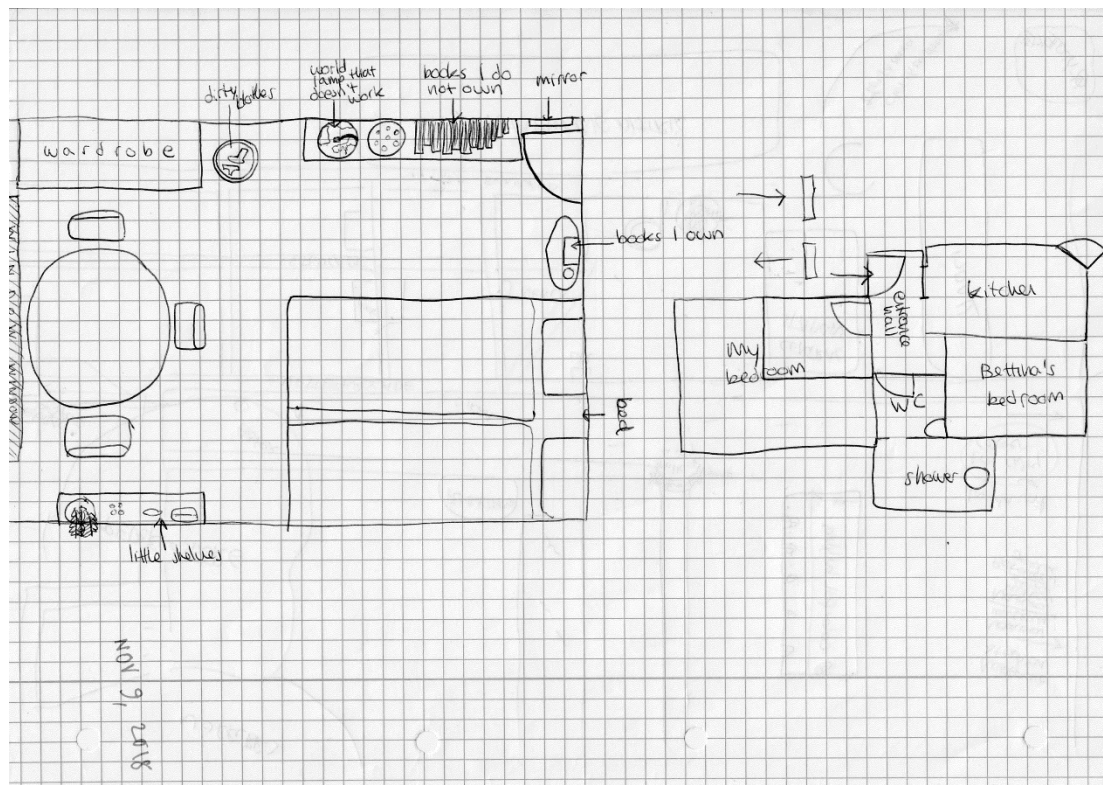
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| Moving in | ----- | She arrived with her mom. Walked from Copenhagen Central, lost the way a bit. Flashback to first time in Copenhagen. Darkness and neon lights. Betina welcomed them with food. | Copenhagen Central / Vesterbro |
| Moving out | ----- | She goes to Madrid (where her mom is. That's home. 'going home for Christmas'). 4CITIES feeling: "get attached but don't get too attached, all the time." / "I'm gonna be sad of leaving it, but at the same time, I'm also happy of leaving it" | Madrid |
| Grocery shopping | Lidl (mostly) | for a large batch -- she does it on a day when she's been productive to make it a 'full day' / also marked Netto, Fotex, & Irma on map | ----- |
| Finding the place | Vienna | She contacted her Dansih friend from an exchange she did in high school, her aunt Betina, was renting out a room, she sent her some pictures and she grabbed the room. | Copenhagen / eco-village |
| Cycling | Copenhagen | She likes that the city is very bikeable and safe to bike. The freedom to go anywhere. "even if you're talking or distracted or with music I dare to do it. " | All over Copenhagen |
| Grinding coffee | Kitchen | The first thing she does in the morning after the visit to the bathroom. | ----- |
| NANA | | | |
| PRACTICES | LOCATION | STORIES | BEYOND |
| Eating | Room | She likes eating healthy, but here she doesn't have an oven, and she thinks that baking is a nice and healthy way of cooking. So he mostly has salads or soups here. She hates the kitchen here. she doesn't like cooking here. She goes and studies at university and buys food there | University |
| Sleeping | Middle of bed | (or toward the wall if sleeping next to someone-- it's safer) | ----- |
| Moving in | ----- | When she got out of the plane it was raining heavily. She met nice and helpful people on public transport. She was scared that the landlord was at the place with his 'friend', so she asked her friend to text and call her constantly to check on her. The landlord and his friend helped carry her luggage up the stairs. the flat is top floor. | ----- |
| Moving out | ----- | She wants to tell the landlord that he has been the worst part of her Copenhagen experience | ----- |
| Finding the place | Ukraine | Bolig Portal - originally, she wanted to come to CPH and then look for something but then she thought she had nothing. It was difficult, but she saw pictures of the room and liked it | ----- |
| Cycling | Copenhagen | She loves cycling in the city. Especially along the lakes. She took that path to go to uni | Copenhagen - Lakes |
| Playing volleyball | Near KU North Campus | She was a professional volleyball player before. She plays in Copenhagen. And she got to know ~35 people through that. | Copenhagen - Near KU North Campus |
| Having guests | Apartment | Once she threw a surprise dinner party for a friend there and the neighbour from downstairs complained so landlord got mad and set a new rule: she couldn't have guests, esp. someone sleeping there, or she has to pay or move out. She breached the law again though | ----- |
| NOAH | | | |
| PRACTICES | LOCATION | STORIES | BEYOND |
| Cleaning | Room | Tries to clean his room once a week. But generally very ad-hoc. | ----- |
| Sleeping | right side' of bed | He always does that, no matter where. | Everywhere |
| Making the bed | ----- | "I always make my bed in the morning. Um... my friend used to say, you know, first victory of the day, making your bed, first thing you do right. So you start the day in a good, positive light" | „ |
| Putting the kettle on | Kitchen | Always does it before going to take a shower, so he has coffee after | kitchen - bathroom |
| Studying | University | He doesn't have a desk in his room. Also he prefers to leave his home for the bigger part of day, to avoid flatmate. They get on well, but he thinks she is an | University |

| | | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| | | oversharer, too much emotional burden. He values his privacy a lot, and he is 'not allowed to be private'. he feels more private outside. "I'm definitely in her space, not mine". | |
| Moving in | ----- | Arrived on a hot day to CPH. He first stayed at Delilah's [one of the 4CITIZENS] place in the beginning, with Sylvie [another 4CITIZEN]. Then stayed at an Airbnb. Both in Vesterbro. The same day he moved in, he went to IKEA to buy stuff. "absolute hell". very difficult to carry w/ bus | Vesterbro - IKEA |
| Moving out | ----- | Going home for Christmas. In his parents' new house. He thinks that's already 'home' for him. Because his mom and dad are there. | London, G.G. (?) |
| Grocery shopping | Netto / corner shop | ----- | Vesterbro |
| Finding the place | ----- | "Danish equivalent of <i>Find A Roommate</i> " website. He had made a profile. Not much luck. Esther [flatmate/landlady] wrote him out of the blue and said she got on well with English people. He visited another place in Amager, they had a cage of flying squirrels. | Amager |
| Cycling | Copenhagen | A park where he cycles. Good infrastructure. | Copenhagen, park |
| Watching Football | Bar | Goes to a bar nearby to watch football, with flatmate. Guillermo there | Neighbourhood |
| Laundry | Basement | He likes that it's shared. He meets people. | Apartment building |
| Watching TV | Living room | he enjoys. | Living room |
| SYLVIE | | | |
| PRACTICES | LOCATION | STORIES | BEYOND |
| Eating | Kitchen | Normally eats at ~8:30 pm. Have different timings with flatmate and they normally avoid each other. (the flatmate started it) | Kitchen |
| Cleaning | Apartment | Once a week. Each week one of them. Generally, they keep the place very clean. | Whole Apartment |
| Sleeping | Toward the wall | ----- | ----- |
| Laundry | Basement | She has to book a timeslot. It's difficult. Sometimes 10 days in advance. She normally books it for 7AM because that's the only time she's surely home. She gets up at 7, takes clothes down, sleeps one more hour, then goes and puts clothes in the dryer. | Apartment building |
| Studying | Room, uni, other libraries, cafes | Depends on whether she has class or not and how the day feels. | Room, uni, other libraries, cafes |
| Moving in | ----- | When she arrived, she first stayed at Delilah's place for a few days. But first she couldn't find it because of the entrance being inside a supermarket. When she first came to this place she stayed in the flatmate's room because the landlady was still in the room, moving out. she got glimpses of the room. | Vesterbro - Flatmate's room |
| Moving out | ----- | She had to move out at the end of November (that was the deal from the beginning). Found another place in Amager. (fully furnished room) | Amager |
| Grocery shopping | Fakta (mostly), Afghan corner shop | No schedule. Does it on the way. When she forgets something, she goes to the Afghan shop. | Norrebro/ neighbourhood |
| Finding the place | ----- | She has a friend who once lived in Copenhagen and she had friends here, so one of them found her this place. So she saw pictures and she liked it a lot. | ----- |
| TARA | | | |
| PRACTICES | LOCATION | STORIES | BEYOND |
| Eating | Living room | ----- | Living room |
| Cleaning | Apartment | Once a week. Each week one of them. | Apartment |
| Baking | Kitchen | There's an oven and the flatmate/landlord doesn't use it often, so she decided to improve her baking and made baked things on Fridays and offered the flatmate/landlord too. He liked them. | Kitchen |
| Sleeping | Toward the wall | She'd rather sleep in the middle, but the two mattresses fall apart... | ----- |
| Moving in | ----- | Took a taxi from airport. Rainy weather. The flatmate/landlord wasn't there, his mom was waiting for her. She showed her the place. "the | Airport |

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|---------------------------|-------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| | | supermarket was like here, there, and the washing machine's here and the garbage sorting's there". | |
| Grocery shopping | Fakta/ Fotex/ Netto/ REMA1000 | She alters between three supermarkets. | Neighbourhood |
| Finding the place | ----- | Findaroommate.com - She had a long, difficult search. The place was available from October, but then the flatmate/landlord wasn't there most of September so, he rented his room for sep and the other room for the rest. Had another far away offer in a suburb thru an uncle | ----- |
| Cycling | Copenhagen | ----- | Copenhagen |
| Looking out of the window | Room | Likes looking out of the window. "it's just like a picture". Calms her. Also at night, when there's not much to see. There is a slide and swing in front. She has so many pictures in her head of places she's lived. | Korea - Nepal - Brussels - Vienna |

EXAMPLES OF COLLECTED MENTAL MAPS

The following are samples of the mental maps I collected from 10 participants during November and December 2018, in Copenhagen, as part of my empirical research. Participant were each asked to draw a plan of their rooms, their apartments, and the city. This was done in a location other than their *homes*. A total of 30 such maps were collected**.



Maya's mental map of her room and her apartment. Drawn on November 9, 2019.

** Scanned versions of the mental maps can be provided to interested readers upon request. I can be contacted at arshia.eghbali@gmail.com

