UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

Space-Time Autonomy by Proximity

- A Qualitative Study of Girls´ Accessibility by Proximity in Gothenburg

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ABSTRACT

The urban city is a melting pot of different people, groups of people, experiences, desires, and strivings organized within a shared space and connected through a variety of networks. In this shared urban space, it is important to create equal accessibility to places, services, and activities essential for people's everyday life. Accessibility is a crucial issue within urban planning and for a long period increased mobility has been promoted and formed our cities on the basis of high mobility. However, a paradigm shift may be on the horizon where proximity rather than mobility is emphasised as the most sustainable and inclusive path to accessibility. This thesis study aims to bring forward the experiences of girls' mobility patterns and the role of proximity for their everyday accessibility. To address this issue semi structured interviews with girls in upper secondary school were conducted. Handling further distances has become part of the girls′ everyday life since they entered upper secondary school in the central city. For traveling further distances the girls are mainly dependent on public transport. However, due to less frequent departures during evenings in combination with gender related constrictions the girls' mobility during late hours is constricted. Key places within the public traffic system that are meant to facilitate mobility and increase accessibility instead become a hindrance for the girls′ mobility and accessibility at evenings and nights as these places are often associated with anxiety. This especially has an impact on their everyday social relations. Proximity to places and activities create an independence of fast means of travel and within short distances slow modes of traffic can be used facilitating the girls′ accessibility and ability to use their time more freely, thereby increasing their space-time autonomy.

1. Introduction

Is the long-lasting myth of freedom by mobility coming to an end? Ever since the arrival of the car, cities have been restructured based on the idea that accessibility within cities is to be accomplished by fast means of travel and increased mobility (Banister, 2008). However, nowadays it has become less common to see cars and high mobility as purely a liberating aspect within the cities. Instead issues such as heavy infrastructure along with car dependency, urban sprawl and segregation are discussed (Vilhelmson 2005; Banister 2008). A paradigm shift may be on the horizon where proximity rather than mobility is emphasised as the most sustainable path to accessibility (Gil Sola, et al 2018).

The new planning paradigm promotes urban densification, mixed land use, polycentric cities and slow mobility (Gil Sola, et al 2018; Banister 2008; Qviström, 2015). The close city with proximity to service and activities has the potential of contributing to a more inclusive accessibility, with lower thresholds than the use of various modes of travel requires, in terms of driving license, economic resources and physical abilities (Stanley & Stanley, 2014; Gil Sola, et al 2018). For the cities to develop in a socially inclusive manner is it essential to acknowledge the human experience of travel and the perspective of different groups (Banister 2008). Otherwise, there is a risk of constantly prioritizing the same groups over others. Therefore, it is important to study how spatial structure affects different groups in order to better understand how inclusive accessibility can be accomplished. In 2015 the UN agreement for sustainable development was established, called Agenda 2030. The eleventh goal includes the development of urban cities and the challenges that rapid urbanization brings. One of these challenges is increasing gaps between social groups within cities. The global agreement emphasizes the importance of inclusive, safe, and accessible public places and transportations opportunities. Girls is one of the extra empathized groups (Regeringskansliet).

During the last decade children's perspective in urban planning has received more attention. In 2019, the UN children's convention was adopted by the Swedish government, strengthening children's rights in Swedish society. one aspect included in the convention involves the children's rights, integrity, and privacy, their right to express themselves in regard to their age and maturity. The convention counts everyone up to 18 as children (UNICEF). However, when children's rights in the city are discussed, the conversation tends to focus on younger children. The question of older children's place in the city is more seldom raised. Based on this, this thesis will study the role of proximity and mobility patterns of teenage girls.

1.1 Aim

The aim of this essay is to deepen the knowledge and bring forward the experiences of girls' mobility patterns and the role of proximity for their everyday accessibility. This perspective is important to develop strategies for accessible and inclusive development of cites.

1.2 Research Questions

- *What is the role of proximate areas in the everyday life of girls in upper secondary school?*
- *What strategies do the girls develop to handle distances in their daily lives?*

1.3 The Disposition

This essay will start by putting the issue into a context of previous research (on girls' use of public places, patterns and problems that have arisen for teenage girls within this area. Previous research is followed by the theory section where the three main theoretical orientations are described, time geography, gender, and proximity. In the method the methodological choices and the procedure are presented and reflected upon. This is followed by the result and initial analysis where the findings of the interviews are thematically gone through. The empirical material is then analysed using the theoretical concepts and lastly discussed and summarized in a conclusion to make use of the findings in an urban planning context.

2. Previous Research - Girls use of Public Places

This chapter presents a research overview of girls' use of and experiences of public spaces. The primary focus is on girls' leisure activities, time- space patterns and how these are related to aspects such as gender and proximity but also conflicts with other groups.

2.1 Girls in Public Spaces

In studies of girls the main focus has mostly been how they behave in domestic spaces for instance in the household. What girls choose to do in their leisure time outside home and school are less studied (Tucker, Matthews 2002; Skelton 2000, 81).

2.1.1 Spatial autonomy or nowhere to go to?

It is relevant to put this study within a broader perspective of other findings regarding girls' use of public places to be able to spot potential similarities and differences. Although this study does not engage in boys' use of public spaces, many previous research are comparative studies. These are also relevant as the comparative aspect contributes to a gender perspective.

Research shows that girls' behaviour in and use of public leisure spaces are largely affected by gender norms (Jin, Whitson, 2014; Tucker, Matthews 2002; Holdsworth et al 2017). However, research during the last decades have shown that these gender differences in use of public places have changed. Earlier studies state that boys use public spaces more frequently. Especially the streets, are more often used by the boys (Matthews, Limb, Taylor 2000; Lieberg 1995). It has been argued that girls spend more time in domestic spaces than boys. However, studies show that this pattern might have changed (Skelton 2000, 83). In recent years boys spend more time in the private sphere at home than earlier (Holdsworth et al 2017; Lieberg 1995). This pattern can partly be explained by the increased use of video- and computer games by boys (Holdsworth et al., 2017). It is also more common that young people, especially boys, spend their spare time within a domestic sphere organised by adults to specialise within specific interests. Lieberg (1995) argues that this is part of a new individualistic trend and modern youth culture, to be dedicated to specific activities and interests. This trend is more visible in urbanized larger cities than in smaller communities. In middle class areas, on the other hand, young people spend less time within their local areas. Instead, they travel elsewhere to engage in specific leisure activities. This modern youth culture goes hand in hand with

the ideal of the high mobility society (Lieberg 1995). As a result of this the teenagers have become more dependent on their parents to drive and organize their leisure time (Lieberg 1995; Holdsworth et al 2017).

In a study of boys and girls' usage of public spaces there is a significant difference in use of public space. There were more leisure activities targeting boys and the boys were also to a larger extent engaged in organized activities. At the same time, they also spend more time at home, playing computer – or video games. The boys describe their lives to be organized and mediated by adults and are also more afraid of encounters with other young people than the girls. The girls on the other hand have larger spatial autonomy and use public places more frequently as a place to hang out and meet other girls (Holdsworth et al 2017). Another study investigates teenage girls' relation to public spaces within a rural context. In this case there also were fewer sports activities organized for girls to participate in. As the girls cannot afford to take part in the commercial activities available, their leisure activities mostly consist of hanging out outside at public places (Skelton 2000, 80- 97).

The ability to control and shape one's own existence without adult control is an essential aspect that applies for young people and is vital for the forming of their identity (Lieberg 1995; Holdsworth et al 2017; Matthews, Limb, Taylor 2000). Since the home is often characterized by binary boundaries between adult and child, the home is frequently a dissatisfying space for a teenager (Lieberg 1995). Other domestic places such as sport centres do not necessarily fulfil this essential aspect of autonomy required by young people (Holdsworth 2017).

A study conducted in Sweden seeks to understand how teenagers (both boys and girls) between 13-17 years old use public places in their residential area and the city in order to create everyday purpose in their surroundings. Despite the need for autonomy the essence of what young people require of their surroundings is boiled down to two main aspects. Firstly, the need to be public (to be so called *on stage*) and secondly; the need to be private (to be so called *backstage)*. The need to be public requires places for interaction where they can go in order to gain social interaction, both to meet friends and strangers and to experience a variation. The need to be private requires places where teenagers want to be independent of adult observation. Smaller groups are formed and the identity as a collective is empathised. The stability and the pattern of the local teenage environment depend, to a great extent, on the access to both types of places. The creative use of public places of teenagers can be viewed as a result of having nowhere else to go. Young people need a broad variety of places with different spatial and social characteristics. From a teenager's

perspective public places can be viewed as the 'extended living room', as a sequence of multifunctional places (Lieberg 1995). However, this also leads to more conflicts of the use of public spaces, for instance with adults (Lieberg 1995).

Young people and especially girls often have few places to go, this is a constant issue brought up in several studies (Matthews et al. 2000; Tucker, Matthews 2002; Skelton 2000; Holdsworth, Laverty, Robinson 2017; Lieberg 1995). Public spaces are constructed around adult needs and wishes, which causes problems for young people trying to find a place to use for their purposes (Tucker, Matthews 2002). Adults have options to withdraw to places like bars, pubs, clubs, shops, cafés, homes, and the workplace. Teenagers on the contrary cannot access these places in the same manner, both due to age limitations or simply because they cannot afford staying. Consequently, they often use outdoor public places to fulfil both the need for privacy and social interaction (Holdsworth, Laverty, Robinson 2017; Lieberg 1995; Matthews et al. 2000). Therefore, young people are more dependent on public places than many other groups are (Lieberg 1995, 19-35). The fact that teenagers use public places differently than adults often causes conflicts (Matthews et al. 2000; Holdsworth, Laverty, Robinson 2017; Lieberg 1995). As teenagers often are excluded from different places it happens that they temporarily take over public places and transform them into their external living room. This phenomenon often causes conflict with other groups such as adults having another perspective on how the space should be used (Lieberg 1995).

In one study with 10- 14 years old girls they describe feeling unwelcome in public places such as recreation grounds, playing fields and parks. Adults in their surrounding threaten to call the police on them for being too loud or for using spaces in what adults believe is the wrong way. These girls are conceptualized as an ambiguous and uncomfortable position of being the "wrong "age, gender and at the "wrong" place (Tucker, Matthews 2002). Adolescent girls transgress the binary division between child and adult and can therefore be experienced as threatening for adults in public spaces. When girls use public places as a living room, they do not act according to the norms of what is interpreted as "adult" spaces and therefore transgress the binary division between public and private spheres, as the home and public places have come to represent (Skelton 2000; Tucker, Matthews 2002; Matthews et al. 2000).

The mall is a space for conflict between adults and girls (Tucker, Matthews 2002, Matthews et al. 2000, Lieberg 1995). However, the mall seems to have important qualities for girls that seem to be lacking/missing in some contexts. Many adults perceive the visible presence of teenagers in the mall as uncomfortable and

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inappropriate. By locating themselves in between, in the mall, the young people question the spatial hegemony of adulthood (Matthews et al. 2000). By using this space in an unconventional way young people can create a *Thirdspace* between public and private spheres. The mall then gains cultural importance over the pure function of the space, allowing the teenagers to create a community and forming their identities together while also contributing to a feeling of belonging in a sense of difference in relation to their surroundings (Matthews et al. 2000; Holdsworth, Laverty, Robinson 2017).

Opportunities for young people to socialize at public places are increasingly restricted. This is part of a general spatial trend where young people's access to public places are being curtailed (Holdsworth, Laverty, Robinson 2017).

2.2 Locality and Fear

The spatial limitation of young people depends on several factors. In contrast to the activity based modern youth culture the looser concept of "hanging out" is more dependent on the close neighbourhood and proximity to available local spaces. This traditional youth culture is therefore not encouraged by the high mobility society (Lieberg 1995). In two studies the girls are overrepresented in the traditional youth culture while the boys are more engaged in different specific activities (Holdsworth et al 2017; Skelton. 2000). However, in Liebergs' (1995) study the trend is the opposite. Although the girls in the same study pay more attention to locality and where in the city they hang out. This Is partly a question of perceived safety, as they feel safer being outside in the local neighbourhood (Lieberg 1995; Holdsworth et al 2017).

Fear determines the movement of people in space and is therefore an important aspect (Jin, Whitson 2014). Within feminist literature the subject of women's fear at public places in the evenings has been properly studied mainly focusing on sexual harassment and rape at night. Specific causes of anxiety also vary, some fear a specific time (night), while others a specific place, and some the combination of a specific time and place such as the underground at night (Räthzel 2000, 119-141).

The previous research on girls' perception of safety in relation to locality varies and aspects such as class, ethnicity, gender, usage pattern and the spatial organisation of the area are brought up. Two studies states that girls feel safer in their local neighbourhood (Lieberg 1995; Holdsworth et al 2017). Although another study complicates this statement by investigating the importance of class, comparing perceived safety, in the local area and the city centre of youths who lived in socio-economic wealthy and exposed areas. The result

shows that girls (and boys) who live in wealthier areas feel safer in their local area than those who live in the poorer neighbourhood. The girls who live in the richer areas are especially more worried in the city centre while the girls from the socio-economic exposed area feel more secure in the central city. This indicates that the class aspect may be more important than locality (Bromley, Stacey 2012, 428- 444). Ethnicity is yet another aspect emphasized in a study that finds a pattern between being part of the ethnic majority in a neighbourhood and being less afraid in local public places (Räthzel 2000, 119-141). This research also contributes to an additional dimension of spatial practices, indicating that there is a relationship between the structure of the neighbourhoods and the way in which girls occupy public places and appropriate the streets there.

The spaces built in one of the studied neighbourhoods were built for different groups of people and for different usages (shops, crafts, dwelling, leisure) with spatial closeness to each other. In the other area spaces were built to accommodate different groups of people in different places separated from each other, and leisure, shopping, dwelling, and working are also assigned to different places (Räthzel 2000, 119-141).

In another study the girls are less anxious about social encounters with others at public places than the boys. The study suggests a connection between a larger usage of the local area leading to a greater confidence. This thesis is strengthened by the study by Lieberg who divided teenagers into categories based on type of leisure time activities and found that those who did activities inside or at home were more afraid of public places compared to those who used the local outside environment more frequently (Lieberg 1995).

3. Theory

The following chapter will present the theoretical framework of this essay, time geography, gender, and proximity. First a general introduction of the theoretical fields will be held, followed by sections where the most relevant concepts of time-geography and gender for this study will be discussed further into detail. At last, the theoretical concept of proximity will be presented and discussed.

3.1 Time Geography

3.1.1 Time geography in context

Time geography arose as a reaction to the approach that emphasized rationality, effective system thinking and macro perspective in planning, known as the positivistic era in the 1960s and 1970s. The time geographical field originates from the Swedish scientist Torsten Hägerstrand and his research group who questioned the unproportioned large focus on economic and rational aspects in geography and regional planning. Instead, a shift was proposed that emphasized human living conditions (Hägerstrand 1970; Ellegård 2019 *A*, 14). Analytical tools were developed that made differences in human living conditions visible and thereby possible to change. These tools later became key concepts within the field and were used to measure and equalize access to jobs, education, health care, cultural resources and recreation and other important living conditions (Ellegård 2019 *A*, 14).

Hägerstrand criticised the specialization in research and regional planning as it tended to neglect important social aspects in planning. For instance, when the transport system was developed it did not take proximity and accessibility to work and services into consideration. To create a holistic understanding that could gather complex knowledge from different scientific fields and sectors, time geography created theoretical concepts (Ellegård 2019 *A*, 16: Ellegård 2019 *B*, 23). By creating general concepts, the intention was to bridge gaps between disciplines, widen and deepen the understanding of societal changes and processes and its implications on people's everyday lives (Ellegård, 2019 *A*,). Time geography is useful for this study as it allows a gathered analysis of social structures, as gender, with the built environment and infrastructure system, in this case Gothenburg, and the individual human experiences of girls' everyday lives.

Time and space are too intertwined with each other to be studied separately; time cannot be separated from the geographical location. Even an idea has a geographical context where it originates from, and a human

body located in space that comes up with the idea. As the space- time context influences ideas and phenomena, the specific location of an idea or phenomena also reveals something about the time-space context in question. Therefore, the geographical location is always important when studying phenomena, processes, or ideas (Ellegård 2019 *B,* 5-12). Society is more than a set of minds and intangible roles and institutions in interaction. Meaning and matter always come together in a human being. Therefore, the human body and its position in time and space has a central position in Time geography (Ellegård. 2019 *A,* 17; Hägerstrand 1970). This study is based on the experiences of ten individuals, teenage girls. Although they have their own unique lives and ideas, their experiences also reveal something about the time- space context, in this case how social structures such as gender can be visible in mobility patterns for girls in Gothenburg. Time geography involves a broad variety of concepts. However, this study will not engage in all of them, but primarily focus on *prism*, *projects*, *constraints,* and *pocket of local order*. These will be further explained in the next chapter.

3.1.2 Prism
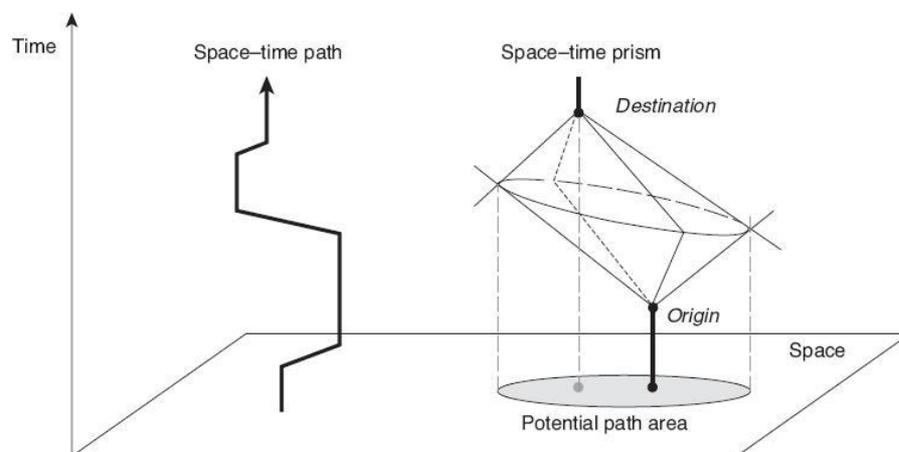
Figure 1 *Space- time prism*. (Hongbo, Yu. Shih-Lung, Shaw. 2011. Chapter 13, GIS Designs for Studying Human Activities in a Space–Time Context*, The SAGE Handbook of GIS and Society*. DOI**:** https://dx-doi-org.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/10.4135/9781446201046.n13).

A prism is the potential for actions and movement within the frame of time and space. The prism is defined by the point of departure and point of arrival, when and where a person has to be at a place at a certain time, but also on available modes of transport. For instance, if an individual has a free period between two lessons in school the size of the individual prism is determined by the length of the free period but also by the place where the school is located. If there are fast and accessible means of travel located close to school, the size of the prism grows, as the potential to reach far places within the same time frame increases. Proximity is also relevant when discussing prism. For instance, if the home or school is located close to desired activities the

need for a large prism decreases. If a person lives close to a friend, the need for fast and accessible means of transport or a lot of unscheduled available time is not necessary for the friends to meet up.

The size of the prism regulates the opportunities to carry out different projects in the future, although the size of the prism is not the only determining factor for the outcome of a project, this will be further discussed in the section; Pocket of local order 3.3.5 (Ellegård 2019, 33-36). This concept will be used in order to analyse the time and space opportunities available for the girls, when transport is a facilitator and increases the opportunities and when it rather reduces it and closeness is a more accessible strategy.

3.1.3 Projects

Throughout life humans continuously put-up goals that they want to achieve. This can be both short term goals, such as doing homework, and long-term goals such as building a good relationship with a friend. To achieve these goals, continuous planning and dedicated actions are necessary, this is part of people's everyday practice and the basis for small everyday choices and actions, so called projects. Project is a useful theoretical tool when studying the purpose of actions in people's everyday life (Lenntorp 2004; Ellegård 2019 *B*, 45-45). They reflect an inner idea and a future wish; however, all projects are not carried out successfully. The ability to succeed with a project is dependent on both material and immaterial available resources (Ellegård 2019 *B*, 45-45). It must be carried out at a specific place, moment in time, in a certain order, with access to the right tools and in interaction with other individuals (Gil Solá, 2013, 43- 44).

A prioritization between different projects is a constant part of humans' everyday life. Some projects are key projects that continue through life, others are only a part of the more essential ones. The most important projects are called dominants projects, school could for instance be such a project. Projects that for some reason are not carried out successfully or become dormant are called unsuccessful projects (Gil Solá, 2013, 43- 44). Some activities correlate with different projects simultaneously, other activities may contribute to one project but hinder another, and a prioritization must be made. Although a choice of time spent at different projects may seem as primarily a personal matter the prioritization of projects can be analysed in the context of social power structures materialized at local level (Ellegård 2019 *B*, 45-45). Some projects include the combined action of many people, others only a few. The ability to successfully carry a project is dependent on the pocket of local order, another concept within time geography, this is described further in section 3.1.5. The concept of project will be used to bring an understanding of what aspects that are

important for the girls, but also to discuss how proximity, mobility and place may affect the opportunities to carry out different kinds of projects.

3.1.4 Constraints

Individuals' ability to carry out projects (within a prism) can be restricted in different ways. Within time geography these restrictions are called constraints and are divided into three categories. The first constraint is *Capability* (or capacity) constraint. This constraint involves bodily and mentally restricting aspects, and it also includes limited access to tools, vehicles, and resources both in terms of economy and knowledge. One social group with capabilities constraints are children who for instance are not allowed to drive a car and usually do not have access to considerable economic resources (Ellegård 2019 *B*, 44-45).

Coupling constraint is the second constraint. This is strongly related to time geography as it deals with the human need to couple and decouple in different constellations. In other words, does coupling constraints revolve around the individual's needs to move, arrive, get in touch, leave, and disengage and to engage in everyday activities within their prism. Often is a coordination of action of several individuals necessary for different activities in everyday life, for instance in the household. Coupling constraints also involve the combination of individuals and vehicles. To catch a bus to attend the first class in school is one kind of coupling constraint (ibid.).

The third and last constraint is *Steering* (authority) constraints. This constraint addresses power relations that restrict the accessibility in space and time for individuals at different scales. Authority is therefore useful for analysis of for instance social groups' access to different parts of the city. Steering constraints describe power exercised by rules, regulations, norms, and material objects and can be both juridical and normative restrictions. This includes for instance national laws but also internal rules and norms at workplaces, schools, and service places. Activities are steered by the rules and norms at a place and regulate who is allowed access and hinders people to act as they may have strived for. Power relations can for instance be visualized between children and adults, as children in many situations, both judicial and normative have less power than adults, for instance teachers and parents, this constrains children in relation to adults. Steering restrictions can also refer to restrictions in time, for instance the closing times of service places or if a person must be at school or home at a certain time (ibid.).

3.1.5 Pocket of local order

All human activities require some kind of structure in order to take place. The pocket of local order can be described as the societal structure at a certain time- space gap that allows or hinders what activities and projects that can be carried out. As we all know, all projects do not turn out as intended. One reason for this can be limited access to the right tools, right competence, or resources, it could also be a result of societal and cultural structures. Together these aspects constitute a so-called pocket of local order (Lenntorp 2004). Large or small projects, alone or together, the right pocket of local order is always necessary when we carry out our everyday projects (Ellegård, 2019 *B*, 45-46). A pocket of local order is a territorially limited space that can vary in scale and size. It can be as large as a city or as small as a room in a household (Gil Solá, 2013, 45). This concept emphasizes the importance of place and proximity and the particularities and context surrounding a specific place at a specific time (Ellegård, Vilhelmson 2004).

There is a hierarchy between different pockets of local orders where smaller pockets of local orders fit into the larger ones (Ellegård, 2019 *B*, 45-46). A household is an important pocket of local order, constituted by the connection of various resources, people, material in particular time-space. The members of the household create and maintain a unique pocket of local order by their everyday practices, allowing some projects to take place in the household while hindering others. What projects that are being favoured or hindered is dependent on the social dynamic in the household (Lenntorp 2004; Ellegård, 2019 *B*, 45-46). For instance, in the case of this study, the girls may not have as much influence over the pocket of local order as the parents in their household and accordingly must find other places to fulfil their projects.

Within the household, each room can also be analysed as a pocket of local order, dedicated to specific purposes. For instance, is the bedroom a place for sleep and often seen as a more private sphere than the hall, associated with other norms of behaviour. The pocket of local order in the household can change over time when for instance children grow older and their needs and projects change, or when someone moves out space is left that may be filled with new purposes and projects. The size of the household or the amount of people living there can then affect how different projects can coexist within a household (Ellegård, 2019 *B*, 45-46).

Each pocket of local order is determined by more or less formal cultural and social structures, norms and regulation systems that facilitate some projects but hinder others. This means that within a defined space there is a certain "local order", i.e., a certain place-specific social structure that defines the conditions for

different people to carry out different types of projects. All activities within the pocket of local order that are in line with the social and cultural structure reinforces this structure while actions that on the contrary oppose the structure may eventually change the current structure (Gil Solá 2013, 45). Local and place-based norms, such as gender structures, are constantly negotiated, both at an individual and structural scale, especially at times of extensive societal transformation (Gil Solá 2016). Therefore, the concept can be used to analyse the process of creating a place rather than merely the static state.

All activities require a section in time and space that is well coordinated and adjusted to the activity in question. Every day we pass through different pockets of local order of which we have varying degrees of control over. It is easier for us to carry out our projects at a place where we have a larger degree of control and power (Lenntorp 2004). The power to arrange and negotiate necessary components for a favourable pocket of local order is crucial for the outcome of a project (Ellegård, 2019 *B*, 45-4; Lenntorp 2004; Gil Solá 2013, 44 -45). Pocket of local order is therefore a suitable concept when studying power structures (Lenntorp 2004). Pocket of local order regulates what processes and projects that can take place at place and time. Therefore, competition over use of space is a very common and vital conflict (Ellegård, 2019 *B*, 45-46).

3.2 Gender and Mobility

Gender theory will mainly be used in this study to analyse the girls' mobility patterns and experience of travel in different contexts and places. The study will illustrate how gender norms influence the girls' opportunities to move freely and reach desired activities.

3.2.1 What is Gender?

The gender concept refers to the socially and culturally constructed norms regarding gender categories, as male or female. Rather than a biological state of being, gender should be understood as a process, where everyday practices constitute the *doing of gender* (Hirdman 1988, 5; Connell 1987). Gender norms are based on a relation of power that is present in everyday practices and the minds of people that produce and reproduce what is categorized as male or female (Hirdman 1988, 5; Connell 1987). Hirdman (1988) calls this *the gender system* and Connell (1987) *the gender order*, although the same social structures are described. The gender system is a network of processes, phenomena, ideas, and expectations that correlate and result in specific social patterns. As other social structures: economic, political and social, are based on and to some

extent depend on the gender system, this makes the structure difficult, however, not impossible, to change (Hirdman 1988, 5; Connell 1987).

3.2.2 Manifestations of the gender system in the city

The experiences and reality of women throughout history have often been excluded from urban planning and decision-making processes; this is visible in the city structure (Friberg 2008*A*, 57). The human built material world is at some level a product of the societal structure that created it (Forsberg 2005, 21). Social relations and structures are materialized in the city, but the built environment also impacts the everyday life for those who live in the city, and they have to adjust to the material structure, for instance the infrastructure (Friberg 2008*A*, 65). Therefore, the city itself manifests the existing gender system in the society (Forsberg 2005, 21). If the development of the infrastructure system originates from the everyday mobility pattern of an adult man, the transport system may systematically disadvantage other social groups' ability to move. The experience of travel varies between social groups. By interviewing girls, their perspectives can be considered and contribute to a more accessible and equal infrastructure.

As mentioned earlier, the built environment can reflect the structures in society such as gender norms (Forsberg 2005, 21). The so-called zoning of the city can be seen as an example of this. During the functionalism era the city was divided into different zones located in sections outside the city centre. There was a separation between spaces dedicated to production and labour and the residential areas, resulting in longer physical distances and travel time between different functions within the city, and the network and nodes of traffic became a more essential part of the city. The strategy is called zoning. (Friberg, 2008*B,* 267). Zoning was based on an ideal of a housewife with children in the suburbs and although the housewife ideal has changed the city structure remains (Friberg 2008*A*, 61). This planning strategy has led to expanded road systems, growing motorism, public transport and the speed at which one can travel through the urban environment has accelerated to bridge the gaps of urban sprawl in the city. However, it has been argued that accessibility has not accelerated simultaneously with the speed of travel but rather the opposite, this question will be further discussed in the chapter on proximity (3.3) (Friberg, 2008*B*, 267). It has been argued that instead of having the car-driving-man as a norm that was established during functionalism, planning should focus on the everyday life patterns of different people. In the divided city the socio-economic differences between areas are growing and the city is no longer perceived as a whole but as increasingly fragmented (Friberg 2008*A*, 61).

Due to the division of the city in different zones of functions i.e., home and labour domains, many places become empty and "die" during certain times of the day (Forsberg 2005, 21). Zoning of the city can then be seen as a material manifestation of the gender system resulting in spaces inhospitable and inaccessible for many women at night-time. Decades ago, Jane Jacobs argued that a constant living city would make women feel more secure even at night-time (Friberg 2008*A*, 65). The question of women's feeling of insecurity in public places has received a lot of attention during recent decades. However, the discussion often revolves around lightning, surveillance cameras and individual responsibility (Friberg 2008*A*, 67). A risk with this framing of the issue is that women are presented as weak, unable and in need of male protection in a way that increases the gender polarization and the gender system (Friberg 2008*B*, 277).

3.2.3 Gendered spaces of travel

Travel patterns and the experience of travel are affected by gender structure and the condition for mobility varies with gender, something which has actual consequences in people's daily life and mobility patterns. Being able to travel freely between different places is essential in the modern urban city.

The traffic network contains nodes and links. These nodes are spaces of departure or arrival and are fixed spaces such as bus stations, whereas the links are the distance between the nodes, for instance roads and tram rails but also the actual movement. To analyse the movement of people correctly, travel must be understood as more than merely a time "cost" in the calculation of movement from point A to B. All movements take place in space and time, whether it is at a travel centre, the bus or in a car, all spaces of travel that individuals move through during a day contain different social orders that will affect the experience of travel. Friberg (2005) calls these closed spaces of travel for *spaces of traffic* (in Swedish *trafikrum*). These spaces of traffic can be analysed as one kind of pocket of local order (Fahlén 2013, Friberg 2010, Scholten et al 2012). The travel pattern of an individual depends on the experience of different spaces of traffic. Friberg argues that a journey can be experienced as either a burden (*tyngd*) or as facilitator (*avlastning*) (Friberg, 2005; Friberg 2010).

The built environment and transport system can be experienced as a burden and as a hindering factor in everyday life, but a trip can also be a facilitating experience, then the traffic structure contributes to a liberating feeling in everyday life. The same trip can have both burdening and facilitating segments and can be interpreted differently by different people. These concepts can be used to analyse travel patterns and bring forward experiences of travel of different groups (Friberg, 2005; Friberg 2010). In this study it will be

used to understand girls' movement in the city, when and why spaces of travel are experienced as a burden or a facilitator and how this is related to gender structures. Feelings of fear and unsafety when traveling by public transport in the evening or at night is one example of a gendered experience of burden in relation to spaces of traffic.

3.3 Proximity

The benefits of nearness (proximity) in planning have recently received large attention in research and to some extent in urban planning. This concept challenges the earlier dominating mobility paradigm and offers an alternative path to accessibility (Gil Sola, Vilhelmson 2018).

3.3.1 A shift from mobility to proximity?

According to the mobility paradigm, accessibility is best achieved by the means of fast transport. Distance is viewed as a factor that can be overcome with high mobility. This idea has resulted in investments in fast means of travel, car roads and extensive traffic systems (Banister 2008). During the last decade the mobility paradigm has been a subject of growing criticism. The mobility paradigm has for instance been criticised for causing increased travel time when commuting, car dependency and the distance between destinations have also increased. It has therefore been argued that the mobility paradigm has led to a reduced accessibility (Vilhelmson 2005; Banister 2008). This perspective is criticized for ignoring the human perspective of travel, not taking into account why people travel and how they use time (Banister 2008). Accessibility by mobility has also been argued to be more conditional than accessibility offered by proximity. While accessibility by proximity offers easier use of slow modes of traffic, such as cycling or walking, accessibility by mobility requires larger economic resources to gain access to fast means of travel such as for instance a car and affects some social groups more than others. Young people often have less economic resources and are not allowed driving licenses and therefore have less opportunities to drive a car and are at some point socially excluded as they are not able to access services available to other social groups (Stanley & Stanley, 2014).

The conditions for using different means of travel can for instance be economic resources or physical abilities that determine the opportunities to buy or drive a car or use and buy tickets to public transport. This constitutes different thresholds that may hinder the accessibility for some social groups. Young people for instance often have less economic resources and are not allowed driving licenses, therefore they have less

mobility options than an employed adult. By focusing on the importance of nearness proximity contributes with an alternative way of framing accessibility, possibly in a more socially sustainable and inclusive manner.

The focus on proximity represents an ongoing shift within planning and policy, from fast traffic infrastructure to an interest in local qualities and nearness (Gil Sola et al. 2018). Along with proximity, terms such as sustainable mobility, sustainable accessibility and accessibility-based planning have been introduced as an alternative pathway to accessibility than by mobility. These concepts emphasize aspects such as densification, mixed land use, polycentric cities and slow mobility and decreasing the need of transport (Gil Sola, Vilhelmson. 2018; Banister 2008; Qviström 2015).

3.3.2 Socio-spatial aspects of proximity

Proximity can be seen in a broader sense and encounter various dimensions. Proximity contains different qualities, both a 'practical' quality of having relevant services and activities located close by, as a facilitator of everyday life (Haugen 2011). This quality has also been called *social equity* and consists of physical factors such as access to key services, infrastructure, and other facilities. All of which are related to questions of social and environmental exclusion and can be seen in for instance unequal access to public service (Dempsey et al 2011).

Another quality with proximity revolves around *social rationalizations*, meaning that people want to be near "things" that represent aspects that are important for them in the larger sense of life. These preferences can be connected to aspects such as gender, age, and type of residential area (Haugen 2011). This can be related to the concept *sustainability of the community* which encounters other essential aspects of a sustainable local area. This includes neighbourhood participation, local social interaction, participation in local community activities, community stability, pride, and sense of place, and feeling safe and secure (Dempsey et al. 2011). Nearness and place attachment are often closely related to each other. Especially nearness to social relations such as friends and family, but also gender structures have seen to be affecting the place attachment (Lee, Abbott 2009). The emotional nearness or attachment to a neighbourhood is important as it influences the actual use of the close neighbourhood and determines whether a resident chooses to travel to another area or rather stays in the close neighbourhood (Waldo 2003; Lee, Abbott 2009). Therefore, it is important to take the perspective of emotional nearness into account when studying the importance of proximity.

It is interesting to study what activities that are important to have nearby, but first the question "from where" also must be taken into account. Point of departure is an important aspect when studying nearness. During a day individuals move between different places, but it is reasonable to depart from where most time is spent when studying nearness, home or the neighbourhood is often such a place. However, many people also spend much time at school or work and therefore nearness can also be analysed in relation to the school or the workplace with its surrounding area.

4. Method

In this section the method of the essay will be discussed. The method chapter includes a presentation and an analysis of methodological choices, limitations of the research, collection of empirical data, method reflection and the question of research ethics.

4.1 Methodological Choices

The research seeks to investigate girls' experiences based on everyday practise and mobility of being a girl acting in the urban city. The methodology in this research therefore takes on a qualitative research approach and puts emphasis on the personal experiences of the girls in their local everyday context.

4.1.1 Semi structured interviews

The primary research method of this study is semi structured and consists of in-depth interviews with respondents. Interviews are one of the most common methods within social science. There are also a broad variety of interview approaches suitable for different kinds of research (Bryman 2012, 469; Esaiasson et al. 2019, 235, 260). One can for instance distinguish between informant interview and respondent interview. When informant interviews are used the informants are seen as objective sources of information about a phenomenon, while in studies using respondents, the interview itself including the respondent's relationship to and perception of a phenomena is also an important part of the empirical material. Therefore, is it common to ask the same questions to all respondents to analyse similarities and differences in respondent answers (Esaiasson et al. 2019, 233).

As this essay seeks to investigate and dig into girls' experiences and perspectives on public urban spaces, this essay is based on respondent interviews and not informants. Conversation based interviews is another term to describe this type of interview, it has also been called qualitative interviews. Conversation based (or qualitative) interviews are often based on people's everyday experiences. The researcher then strives to understand the respondents' perspectives and lives (Esaiasson et al. 2019, 2060-262). The preoccupation of qualitative research is being able to understand the perspectives of the people being studied (Bryman 2012, 399). Conversation based interviews have a rather flexible structure. For instance, can follow up questions be asked, and the interview is allowed to take unintended directions and follow side-tracks. Therefore, this

form of interviews is favourable when approaching surprising and nuanced answers (Bryman 2012, 403, 469; Esaiasson et al. 2019, 260-262).

Semi structured interviews are one kind of qualitative interview. In comparison to the unstructured interview semi structured interviews are characterised by a general predetermined structure as an interview guide consisting of themes and questions and the researcher often has a clear focus on a specific research topic (Bryman 2012, 471- 472). This quality is favoured when approaching a relatively unstudied area but also to avoid repeating and re-creating predetermined perceptions. This makes the interview method appropriate for this study as the subject in question is rather unstudied. Conversation based interviews also have the potential to reveal patterns that otherwise are taken for granted and therefore risk staying invisible (Esaiasson et al. 2019, 260- 263). This is an essential aspect as the essay focuses on everyday patterns, which tend to be taken for granted or seen as unimportant from an individual's perspective.

4.1.2 Time diary as a method

Another research method that has been applied in this study is time diary. This is a method often associated with time geography. This theory is used to analyse the empirical material (Åström 2001, 108). A time diary is where respondents take notes on their movements in time and space. A time diary can both be used as qualitative or quantitative measurement and can then be designed differently depending on what qualities the time diary seeks to have. The purpose of time diaries in this study is primarily to have as a basis for the interviews. An advantage with the time diary is that interesting everyday patterns which the respondents may not have paid attention to or considered important enough to bring up in the interview can become visible. Another advantage with this method is that writing a time diary can make the respondents aware of their own daily pattern before the interview (Ellegård *Olikadnat*.). Time diaries have also been used to analyse patterns between the different girls.

4.1.3 Time-place context

The research was conducted during the spring semester 2021. At this time the COVID-19 pandemic had been going on for almost a year in Sweden. Sweden never had a lockdown. However, there were a variety of different corona restrictions, constricting social gatherings and movements and the upper secondary schools the respondent girls attended were affected by these restrictions. The girls had attended part-time to full time distance studies for around 4-5 months at the time for the interviews. This is important to have in

mind when analysing the interview as this offers an interesting context. The research was conducted in the city of Gothenburg, which is the second largest city in Sweden. Gothenburg is a regional centre, with increasing numbers of new inhabitants and commuters into the city. Most people commute for work, but many also commute to central secondary schools from surrounding municipalities. Gothenburg is a rather sprawled and segregated city with significant differences between the residential areas. The most characteristic public transport mode is trams. However, there are also busses and ferries within the city and commuter trains to surrounding municipalities. Therefore, Gothenburg offers an interesting context for studies of proximity and mobility.

4.2 Collection of Empirical Material

4.2.1 Selection of target group

The selection of respondents was made in different stages and the first step was the selection of the target group. The target group for this study was girls in the age of 16- 19 that went to upper secondary school in Gothenburg. Previous studies on how proximity affects accessibility have been made with other target groups, such as elderly and smaller children, but similar studies targeting teenagers had not previously been conducted. This study investigates the lives of girls and is based on their everyday experience. I considered doing a comparative study between girls and boys but chose to narrow it down and only focus on girls. This was done to deepen the understanding, highlighting patterns and shared experiences as well as differences within this diversified group.

Another methodological choice was to focus on girls in upper secondary school (in Swedish Gymnasiet) and with this selection girls in lower secondary education were excluded. Considering that they went to the same type of school, their everyday lives had shared patterns and experiences resulting in fewer variables to be considered. In the case of studying the significance of proximity the type of school may also be of greater importance as lower secondary schools are often situated near the children's residential area. People attending upper secondary schools in the larger cities such as Gothenburg in Sweden often travel longer distances to school. This choice was made to gain a more diverse target group within this aspect. The intention was to reach a diversity within residential areas and to reach girls who lived both close to the central city or further away. Another intention was targeting areas with different socio- economic conditions and interview girls who lived in different types of housing i.e., rental apartments, houses, and condominiums. Variety concerning age, school and field of studies were also considered when respondents

were chosen. To strive for intensity in selection but with maximal variation is a well-known strategy when doing respondent interviews to both narrow down the study but also broaden the potential for different angles (Esaiasson et al. 2012, 260).

4.2.2 Survey to reach and select respondents

To reach the targeted group a survey was created. The purpose with the survey was to effectively be able to reach a large number of potential respondents and then easily select and get in contact with suitable respondents based on relevant criteria.

The first two questions were designed for the respondents to become interested in the study. They were easy to answer and with simple language in order to be as accessible as possible; *What do you prefer to do in your spare time?* and; *What do you often do in your spare time?* Another intention was to give the girls a broad idea of the purpose of the study. The survey continued with short questions that later would be used as a base to ensure a diversity in respondents. The questions asked; what upper secondary school they went to, what grade they were in, where in Gothenburg they lived. Followed by questions on what housing form they lived in, for instance rental apartment or family house and how many people who shared the flat or house. If they were interested in participating in the study and doing an interview, they wrote their contact information in the survey. The girls who were interested and met the criteria were contacted. During a phone call they got to ask questions in advance about the study. The girls also received general information in advance about the study. If the girls had not turned 18 the parents were contacted for a consent. This was the case for most girls.

The survey was done in a simple online program. The target group, teenagers, is a group comfortable using online functions, therefore an online survey was suitable. The online survey was mainly distributed to teachers in upper secondary that I knew or knew of. They presented the online survey to their students and asked them to participate. The survey was also passed forward from some teachers to colleges at other schools who passed it onto their classes. In that sense the snowball effect was partly used to reach the respondents, in combination with selective methods based on specific variables. One respondent was found outside the survey by other contacts. I knew none of the respondents beforehand.

The selection of respondents was made based on the criteria mentioned in the survey, age, residential area, housing form and distance or proximity to service and the city centre. Although the survey had been sent to

six different upper secondary schools, there was a clear majority of girls in one school who were interested in participating. A large majority of the girls who answered the survey lived in a family house, a few lived in rental apartments and those who did, share the space with few others. Although some amount of variation within this aspect has been achieved there is a tendency within the respondents towards high socio-economic conditions. There is a rather broad variation regarding where the respondents live, reaching over large parts of the city with a tendency towards western Gothenburg. Most girls live further away from the city centre, while only a few in the denser parts. Some live at two places or have experiences living at other places within or outside the city. Generally, there is also a tendency towards higher socio-economic areas represented.

4.4.3 The interview guide

In the next phase of the process the interview guide was formulated. In semi structured interview's themes are often determined in advance with associated flexible questions that will be discussed. This is called an interview guide. (Bryman 2012, 471; Esaiasson et al. 2012, 260). The interview guide is flexible in a sense that questions that are not predetermined can be asked but generally the same questions are brought up during all interviews (Bryman 2012, 471). When writing an interview guide it is essential to pay attention to both structure and content. The themes and questions must correlate to the aim and purpose of the research (Esaiasson et al. 2012, 260). In the process of creating the interview guide the first step was to create themes based on the research questions. following, questions and follow up questions were formulated. The interview guide must be well structured, and wordings have to contribute to a dynamic and good conversation (Esaiasson et al. 2012, 260- 264). Therefore, themes that were both broad and easy to answer were placed early in the guide while more complicated and personal questions were placed in the latter part.

The first section of the guide was dedicated to get a broad overview over the respondents' daily patterns and interests. The broad thematic questions were placed in the first part of the interview guide. The *thematic questions* are the most essential "grand tour" questions where the respondent gets an opportunity to elaborate on the subject in question with as small influence of the interviewer as possible (Esaiasson et al. 2012 265). Therefore, these questions were broad, short, and neutral. Different *follow up questions* were prewritten to develop understanding in each theme properly. There was one section later in the interview guide dedicated to *interpreting questions* with questions similar to the following:" Do I understand you right if …?" to be able to confirm or correct interpretations of the respondent but also to open up to a continuing conversation on the most interesting subjects (Esaiasson et al. 2012, 264). To create an open

conversation climate and reduce risk for miscommunication it is important to adjust the language to the respondent (Bryman 2012, 471; Esaiasson et al. 2012, 264). Therefore, the academic language in the beginning of the process was replaced by more common words. Steering questions were avoided in the interview guide as this could affect the answer and the result.

4.4.4 The design of the time diary

The purpose of the time diaries was to draw the girls' attention to their everyday mobility patterns and activities before the interviews. It also contributed to important reflections about everyday patterns, which then could be used in the interviews. For this reason, the time diary was designed to be easy to fill in, containing only four simple questions. Moreover, the space for answering was limited to small boxes because there was no need to go into detail on each question. Time diaries can also be used to visualize specific space-time patterns together with quotes in the result section. Therefore, the fundamental aspects, time and space have to be present in the diaries, which leads to the four questions contextualizing the space time movements. What time is it? Where are you? What do you do? And: Together with whom?

4.4.5 The interviews

When doing respondent interviews, it is not obvious how many that are enough. New interviews can be done until the interviewers experience a theoretical saturation in the answers, meaning that the interviewers have attained an overview and no interesting new aspects are brought up. When this is reached the number of interviews is enough, generally after about ten interviews (Esaiasson et.al 2012, 259). The intention was to do eight interviews. However, during this study a theoretical saturation was reached after the tenth interview. Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic the interviews were done with social distancing through an online program with live camera. It is important that the interviews take place at a place where the respondents feel comfortable (Esaiasson et.al 2012, 268). With this in mind the online aspect may have contributed to a calmer interview situation. On the other hand, face to face interaction increases the ability to interpret the other person correctly. Although all people involved were very used to these tools and no technical problems occurred. Each interview lasted about 50 minutes with some variation. The conversation was based on the interview guide. However, during the interviews the order of questions were often set aside and by asking follow-up questions the themes were often brought up more fluidly and naturally. The interviews were recorded, after permission being given, and later transcribed and analysed.

4.3 Introduction of the Respondents

Ten semi-structured interviews were conducted with girls in upper secondary schools in Gothenburg. In this section they will be shortly introduced based on relevant aspects for the study. All names are changed.

Johanna does her last and graduating year in a centrally located upper secondary school. She lives in a house with her family on an island in the archipelago. On the island she usually walks to get around. Going to school in the morning she first takes the bus, then the ferry to the mainland from where she takes an express bus to the city centre. This journey takes just over an hour (although she experiences it as quite fast). To reach friends and activities further away than the city centre requires more time and planning in advance. The ferry does not run during late hours, and she sometimes needs a ride to the ferry station from parents or friends having obtained a driving license.

Hanna does her first year at a centrally located upper secondary school. She lives in a house with her family in a suburban area in western Gothenburg close to the ocean. She usually spends time in the area close to home and then uses her moped to get around. When she travels to school or to the city centre, she takes the bus. The closest bus stop is 10 minutes′ walk from where she lives, and the bus runs twice an hour. The ride usually takes about 25- 30 minutes. A problem, according to Hanna, is the frequency with which the bus service is provided.

Miranda attends second grade in a centrally located upper secondary school. She lives in a rental apartment with her family in a denser part of western Gothenburg. She does not usually use the close area where she lives. She takes the tram to school; this usually takes between 30-45 minutes. When traveling in Gothenburg for other purposes she usually takes the tram as well and it generally takes about 30-40 minutes to reach the different destinations. At night, however, the travel time is often increased, sometimes even doubled.

Linnéa does her first year in a centrally located upper secondary school. She lives in a house with her family in a suburban area in western Gothenburg close to the ocean. In the local area she often walks or takes a local bus to get around. Coming to school she needs to change buses and then she walks the last part. This takes approximately around 30 minutes, depending on whether she manages to catch the best bus that departs twice an hour. Otherwise, there are other options of busses that she can use. She usually avoids taking the tram as she is not familiar with this means of transport and prefers the bus to travel into the city.

Moa does her first year in a centrally located upper secondary school. She lives in a rental apartment with one parent and had recently moved from a smaller community outside Gothenburg in another region. During her time in Gothenburg, she has lived at three different places, one within the city centre, one in a residential area in proximity to the central city and now in a denser part of western Gothenburg. She takes the tram to school; this takes her about 30 minutes or sometimes more. To her friends though it usually takes over an hour to travel by tram.

Vendela attends first year in a centrally located upper secondary school. She lives in a house with her family in a centrally located residential area in Gothenburg. She usually takes the tram to school. This only takes 15 minutes, and the stop is located close to her home, if the weather is good, she sometimes walks. She grew up in another part of town and spends more time there than where she lives. When she is there, she usually uses her moped to get around.

Clara does her second year in a centrally located upper secondary school. She lives in a house with her family in western Gothenburg. She uses both the bus and the tram to go into the central city and school. She has a good experience of bus and tram services to school. In the close surroundings where she lives she either walks, cycles or skates to get around and meet friends in the area.

Alva does her first year in a centrally located upper secondary school. She lives at two places, both in a small community 15 kilometres east of Gothenburg in a house with one parent and in a suburban area in eastern Gothenburg with the other parent. From both places she first takes the bus and then changes to a tram to get to school in the city centre. This takes approximately 30-40 minutes from one place and 45 minutes from the other. When she is in the small community, she usually walks to get around. However, when she is in the residential area in eastern Gothenburg, she usually doesn't spend time in the surrounding neighbourhood.

Tilda does her last and graduation year in a centrally located upper secondary school. She lives in a house with her family in a residential area. She usually does not spend time in her close neighbourhood. She lives rather close to the city centre in Gothenburg with access to good bus and tram services, to school she can catch both busses and trams. It takes approximately 10- 20 minutes to travel to school.

Ellen does her last and graduation year in a centrally located upper secondary school. She lives in a condominium apartment with her parents in a residential area in central-eastern Gothenburg. To school she takes the tram, which takes approximately 15-20 minutes in the morning. In her local area she often walks to get around and when she travels further her parents often give her a ride especially at evenings.

4.4 Analysing Methods

Several methods were used in the analysis of the interview material. After each interview a short summary of the most characteristic subject in the interview was done. Recurring themes were noted in another document simultaneously to visualize both similarities and differences. To get an overview and connect the material to the research questions and theory a thematic colour coding of the transcribed interview material was used. Three colours represented different phenomena and themes connected to the theory, the research questions, and the interviews. Blue represented mobility and travel, purple exemplified proximity and orange was connected to place. Two complementing colours were also used; red marked varying degrees of strong emotions and green marked activities. This strategy facilitated getting an overview of the girls´ opinions regarding the different themes.

Within the *Essence Method* attention is paid to the most essential tendencies and general patterns and this was the most used method in the study (Esaiasson et.al 2012, 274). The tendencies were easier to identify after colour coding of the material as one phenomenon at that time could be investigated more into detail. Although general tendencies were identified there were also interesting differences in the material. Therefore, a third method was used called *the idea- type method.* The ideal-type method aims to identify different types and categories and the characteristics within each group (Esaiasson et.al 2012, 274). During the analysis process the respondents were divided into a variety of different ideal types. Similarities as well as differences among the interviews were found. Some respondents gave a similar picture discussing some themes but differed within other areas. Therefore, the opinions rather than the persons were divided into categories. All public places that appeared in the interviews, both in negative and positive terms, were also summarized to get an overview over what kind of places that recurred within different contexts. For instance, spaces of travel were often mentioned in relation to fear.

4.5 Research Ethic

As an interviewer especially of respondents that are younger or under 18 the research ethics

is of more importance. Before the interviews with those below the age of 18 an email was sent to the girls' parents with a description and intention of the study and the interviews. A parental permission was also requested before the girls could participate. Before the interviews with the girls, we also had short phone calls for them to be able to ask questions beforehand to feel more secure. The names of the respondents have also been changed to other names that are not similar to their original names and personal information such as the name of their residential areas and school have also been left out to secure their anonymity.

4.6 Method Reflection

The study investigated the role of proximity for girls in upper secondary school everyday life and their strategies to deal with distances. This topic captures patterns and struggles in everyday life. Patterns and struggles in everyday life are at some level harder to grasp and are easily taken for granted and remain unnoticed or seen as dull. Structures beneath the everyday struggles are also interesting to highlight as they reveal something about these patterns. To study everyday patterns, interviews are suitable as it can remain on one subject for a longer period, ask broad questions and then follow up questions and encourage further reflections in a sense that for instance a survey may not have been able to. This strengthens the validity of the study. The concept of proximity and mobility is relatively concrete, this facilitates the operalization of theory and the theoretical interpretation of the empirical material.

The survey increased the ability to reach out to many possible respondents to choose from and it also offered an opportunity of selecting respondents based on different aspects to increase the diversity within the target group. Diversity is relevant as it can bring forward different angels on the same issue. In this study there was a diversity concerning where the respondents lived. This is a relevant aspect as the study of proximity is related to the neighbourhood situations and the experience of distance. However, most of the respondents had a similar housing situation and had access to large space at home. Most of the respondents went to the same upper secondary school, as some described as a place where many had an academic and wealthier socio-economic background. Another study with girls from another socio-economic context would be an interesting complementary study. Although qualitative studies never can be representative for all individuals in a target group, they can bring insights and effectively present experiences and patterns that otherwise would have been left unnoticed. The study can be seen as a contribution to previous research on the effect that proximity may have within different groups in society.

5. Results and Initial Analysis

This chapter will present what aspects that are most important for the girls' everyday life and how their daily patterns can be understood in relation to place, mobility, and proximity.

5.1 Important Aspects in Everyday Life

Generally, close friends are described as an essential aspect in the girls' lives. Family and school are also highlighted as very important, along with a variation of recreational, creative and community involving activities. To have a varied and diversified social life, an established social context as well as a feeling of belonging are also brought up along with a need for time spent alone and peace of mind. However, there are variations in what aspects that are emphasized as most important, where most girls put larger emphasis on their social relations while a few/some have a rather small focus on friendship and instead dedicated their time to certain interests.

"In my spare time I hang out a lot with my friends, it is something I really value a lot."
- Clara

Friendship is an essential part of most of the girls' lives. Some emphasize the significance of one specific friend. Together they did ordinary activities such as talk, take walks but also engage in common interests such as dance or going to the gym. These relations are characterized as sporadic and spontaneous activities.

Those who spend much time together with friends generally live closer to each other and more frequently hang out in each other's homes. To spend time with a circle of close friends is also common. These groups usually consist of girls who attend the same class in school and often live further away from each other in different parts of-or in a suburban area outside Gothenburg. In this constellation they tend to hang out at a broader variety of places but less frequently than with the closest friend and more seldom in the close neighbourhood or in their homes. Common activities are to talk, cook or order food, watch a movie, or just stroll around. Other activities mentioned are going to a café, having a look in shops, or in summer, taking a trip to the ocean or having a picnic in a park. Some enjoy doing activities together with friends and combine social interaction with a hobby such as dancing, sailing, shopping, or going to the gym. Some activities offered the opportunity to meet like-minded people with whom the girls could discuss certain topics, share

a sense of belonging and a feeling of being part of a community. Examples of this were different gatherings at church or a political organisation.

Moa describes how she has met new friends through her politic engagement:

"It really contributes with a social context. I get to meet people from many different places, I have made friends in Stockholm, further down in Skåne and many other different places in Sweden and several friends in Gothenburg. By getting to know each other and doing things together, we have become very close friends. And you can talk to them about political stuff. A lot of my friends aren't interested, and I don't want to force it onto them. And many who are politically engaged feel a great anger and commitment so it can be nice to find like-minded people."

- Moa

In some cases, and for certain girls the activity itself is the primary purpose and the main driving force is to challenge themselves to develop and improve within a specific area. These activities are often done on a weekly basis planned and connected to an organisation. Travel dedicated to these activities were more common and they were more often located further away from home.

Tilda elaborates about her interest in music, both in a choir and playing different instruments:

"I really like to sing and learn new pieces because it is really a challenge. You must make an effort to grasp it. So immediately when you get something you have to understand what the note looks like and how to sing it. The whole process from starting to learn a piece until making it sound super cool is very cool. And when you as a whole group stand and breathe and it really feels like everyone is in sync and it really sounds great, it's really cool. So, I'm lucky to be in a choir that really sounds great."

- Tilda

All girls live with at least one parent and sometimes a sibling. Some mention their families more frequently and their close relations to specific family members, but most girls do not stay on the subject of family for long. The family is more commonly mentioned in passing as an important but natural part of life. The family is also mentioned in negative terms as a complicating aspect to take into consideration when they decide where to hang out with friends.

Some of the girls are very dedicated to their education and spend a lot of time doing homework and studying for tests. Most of the girls attend the same school. The school is described as a place with a broad study culture. Sometimes studying is combined with hanging out with friends, at school, a café, a friend's home or online. However, most of the girls studied alone at home. Many prioritized studies over other activities. During the Covid -19 pandemic many experienced the lack of social interaction, as they used to get in school on an everyday basis. The social interaction in between classes and the spontaneous gatherings after school are now missing due to the temporary change of having the classes online at home

5.2 Places in Daily Life

The social and cultural context within a place is also crucial for the girls 'everyday activities. Different places are favourable for different kinds of activities and may both facilitate and hinder activities.

5.2.1 The home

Some activities seem to be more favourable to do in the home than others. At home many spend time alone with calm activities such as listening to music, reading books, watching series, and playing computer games. However, some girls with younger siblings did not experience the home as quiet and peaceful. The character of the home in terms of available space and the presence of family members affect the potential to do different activities at home.

When the girls hung out with a close friend the most common place for them to hang out was either at each other's homes or outside in the near area of their homes. When hanging out only with one close friend it generally seemed easy to bring home the friend, even when the family was at home. In these cases, neither space nor the presence of the family was described as an issue. For instance, Vendela used to travel to her best friend's house in the morning and study at her place. As they have known each other for a long time she feels comfortable with her friend's family and enjoys spending time there. Hanging out with several people at someone's home seems to be more problematic and is done less often, even before the pandemic.

Hanna shares her opinion on why it is easier to hang out when the parents are away.
The most important thing is whether the parents are at home or not. You can talk more freely if you feel that you don't have anyone that could be listening in. You can also listen to what music you like and do what you want without anyone checking on what you're doing all the time.

- Hanna

I think the distance is a problem to some extent. If everyone has half an hour to school, it will be one hour or maybe two hours travel time in total between us. But I also think that when you go to upper secondary school, fewer want to be at home, you may not want to be with your family all the time but have some more privacy.
- Moa

When the girls chose where they would meet the most important factor is the absence of parents. When parents are not present, they can both preserve their privacy and gain full access to the space without having to make adjustments for others. Having this kind of spatial access made it easier to invite more friends over; they could then use the TV, cook in the kitchen, and play loud music. If the parents were home, the girls have their own room where they can bring friends if they want privacy, but the available space was then more limited and sometimes they hung out at friends′ who live in a house rather than in an apartment due to larger space. The girls generally had to ask for permission before they invited their friends over, therefore it required more planning if they wanted to use their homes.

In this quote Hanna discusses why it is easier for her and her friends to do activities outside, than at someone′s home.
We have been winter bathing a few times this season. It has been an activity that we do spontaneously now and then. We did it this morning before school, we only decided to do it last night. Such simple things can happen more spontaneously as we live close by. But if we, for instance, are going to watch a movie together with friends, it may require some more planning to find out where we can be and if it is okay for their parents. If we are at someone′s home for a longer period, you may need some more planning."
- Hanna

Space is described as especially important when the girls wanted to invite several people or new friends' home with whom the family isn′t familiar with. Some parents may know the friends from lower secondary school better and this could lower the threshold for inviting those over. If the space is limited this may also be a factor that leads to a prioritization of who is invited. It was more complicated to hang out in larger groups, with new friends or friends who live further away. This is one explanation to why the girls generally hung out more seldom than they would have wished for. One girl said that she used to have friends over quite often as she lives in a rather large house. She and her brother have their own floor to themselves, and

her family also owns a summer house. This gives her the opportunity to invite her friends over when the family visits the summer house. To have access to this kind of extra space is something that would facilitate social life for the girls but that is clearly related to a socio-economic context.

Vendela talks about how hard it is to find a place to hang out with many
Our class is split up into different groups. Our teachers usually tell us to include everyone in the class. when we hung out. Yeah, I would love to do that. But if fifteen- sixteen people would wanna come home to me? Not a chance! It wouldn't work.

- Vendela

5.2.2 Inside spaces in the central city

Different places are favourable for different kinds of activities and groups. Even though the central city has the advantage of being close to different services, parks, and their school, this is a space with a distinctive commercial focus. This limits the girls' use of the central city especially during colder seasons when the cold and rainy climate makes it hard to be outside.

Johanna tells about her struggle and determination save money.
I think I'm prioritizing things that don't cost. I'm very good at wasting money and it isn't something I'm proud of but I'm still trying! I'm trying not to have coffee in town and instead do things that don't cost that much. I mean a walk doesn't cost anything.

- Johanna

The central city is less accessible for the girls during evenings and nights. All girls are not allowed to be there for their parents at late hours while others do not feel safe enough themselves. Cafés and shops often close at evenings and restaurants are even more expensive than cafés and the girls who have not yet turned 18 are not allowed at bars or clubs. When hanging out in the evening they normally are at home, at their friend's home or outside.

5.2.3 Outside spaces

Especially during the warmer season most girls spend a lot of time outdoors, both in their local area and in parks in the central city. What they do outside in their local area depends on the area in question. Those who live close to the ocean hang a lot at the seaside, have barbecues or take an evening dip. Some of the girls

dance, skate, or go for a walk but mostly they just hang out. Being outdoors can both be used to get privacy but also offers a space for interaction. In the summer season centrally located parks are used more often, while nature areas in the close neighbourhood are used more evenly over the year. Being outside has many qualities during warmer seasons and is frequently used in different manners.

Parks and nature areas offer a multifunctional place and can serve as a second living room for the girls and facilitate their social activities. As the parents usually are not present, they can have their privacy. There is a lot of space allowing the girls to invite and bring different people and meet new friends. It does not cost anything to be outside and they can bring their own food. Furthermore, there are no closing hours or age restrictions for being in a park. The lack of restrictions also facilitates doing different activities, at least during summer. However, most of the year the climate in Gothenburg is too cold and rainy to stay outside for longer periods.

During summer Vendela often hangs out outside in larger groups. Here she expresses how she misses it during the winter season.

"It's a pity because I like to hang out in larger groups. I think it's a lot of fun. During winter, I miss it a lot because people usually don't have homes large enough to bring fifteen people. It'll be too crowded."

- Vendela

5.2.4 What is missing in everyday life?

Some girls are satisfied or could not think of anything they missed on a daily basis. For these girls the space for being alone and doing activities by themselves, seems to be an essential part of life. However, many girls expressed a desire for more accessible and multifunctional places for them to hang out with friends at.

Close to the girls´ schools in the central city there are many cafés and places for shopping, and these are also commonly mentioned activities. Nevertheless, many miss spaces where they can do activities with their friends, for instance a roller-skating rink or a skate park. The girls also requested places where you could choose between different kinds of activities and where the social interaction could be combined with different activities. Places with enough space for them to hang out and bring a variety of friends along without planning in advance, where they could meet new people. Places that are open for all kinds of people to come and go as they like and that they could afford. Or spaces where social activities could be combined with studying together. Places that would be open in evenings, but where they still would be safe and

therefore also allowed to be by their parents. The need for these kinds of spaces is related to their age. Girls at this age often feel the urge to distance themselves from their parents. At the same time as they do not have the economic reassurance to be able to stay in other spaces than their homes for a longer period. However, the experience of lack of spaces to spontaneously hang out can also be seen as a reaction to further distances in their everyday life.

Here Vendela expresses a wish for places where she can combine social life with activities of different kinds.
I would like to spend more time with friends than I do and maybe do more activities with friends. Now we mostly have girl's nights and talk. It's fun to sit and talk, but after four hours of talking, you don't have much more to talk about. Then it's fun to try new things, if there had been, I don't know, a skate park or a tennis court where you might have been able to combine training with meeting friends and if there were someone who could play tennis, he or she could teach the others, or volleyball or whatever.
- *Vendela*

Linnéa shares her thoughts regarding the conflict of studying and seeing friends and how an affordable quiet space would contribute to her doing both.
"In everyday life, I think I would like to meet friends more often, but it might be a bit hard, because on weekdays, it's often a good time to study, but even so I still want to spend a lot of time studying. But then maybe the alternative shouldn't always be to go to a café, but rather to go to a quiet places where you don't have to buy anything. Somewhere where you could just hang out or study a bit. I think that would be nice"
- Linnéa

5.3 Advantages of Proximity

Proximity to friends and favourable places for leisure activities can be seen as a facilitator in everyday life for the girls and provide them with an opportunity to carry out activities and projects that are important for them. Geographical distance was on the contrary often described as an obstructing factor that reduced opportunities to hang out with their friend as often as they would have liked. The girls do leisure activities both close by and further away, although the spontaneous, sporadic, and social activities are often carried out in the nearby area. Particularly on weekdays and evenings, nearness seems to be an essential factor for social- or other leisure activities.

5.3.1 Proximity in the close neighbourhood

"I still have some friends who live close by. They are still easy to meet up with when you want to be time efficient. It's nice to have such a person that you can just go for a walk with and do small spontaneous things together with."

- Linnéa

There are several reasons why many of the girls' activities, especially those performed during evenings or weekdays that are spontaneous and social, are more sensitive to nearness. One important reason is the time-saving aspect. Some girls describe how they more frequently hang out with friends they live close to when they want to meet up quickly or for a shorter period, which often is the case on weekdays. It happens that they choose to see a friend that lives closer to them instead of others that live further away, mainly to save time.

In this quote Johanna describes how she sometimes meets up with old classmates that live close by rather than her current best friends in class that live further away.

"I don't have much contact with my old classmates out here where I live, I don't usually hang out with them anymore, but I still try to meet up for a walk sometime. It takes quite a while to travel into town. But if you long for social interaction, I have to choose among my friends out here"

- Johanna

5.3.2 When distance is an issue

Distance to friends matters for how frequently they meet their friends. Alva for instance, lives at two places and when she is at her father's place, she lives very close to her best friend. They then hang out several times a week. However, when she is at her mother's place, in another part of town, Alva usually does not hang out with her friend that week. Sometimes they do sleepovers on the weekends but otherwise the distance becomes a barrier for their day-to-day activities, especially on weekdays. She does not find this very problematic though as they live so close to each other half of the time. This example clearly illustrates how distance matters for the girls' social activities.

Alva talks about how the close distance to her friends affects how frequently they see each other and facilitates their close friendship.

"We live about three minutes' walking distance from each other. It makes it easier for us to meet up quickly when we want to. When I'm at Dad's we see each other after school every other day, four times a week I'd say. We take walks or hang out. But when I'm at Mum's, a week might pass without us hanging out. Then we'll meet the following week though, but then of course we sleep over sometimes on the weekend when I am staying with my mother. But if we had lived further away from each other all the time, we might not have met as often and maybe we wouldn't have become as close friends as we are now.

- Alva

Far distances to the girls' friends is a problem that frequently was brought up in the interviews. Due to the far distances to friends many did not see their friends as often as they would have liked to. Several girls mention that it was easier to hang out with their friends when they went to lower secondary school in the local area, where everyone lived relatively close to each other. After lower secondary school they often continued the day together outside or at someone's home. However, ever since they started upper secondary school in the inner city where teenagers come from all parts of Gothenburg, or outside the city, it has become more complicated to find time and place for social interactions.

In this quote Linnéa explains why it requires more planning to see her new classmates than her old classmates.

I have noticed that when I went to local lower secondary school everyone lived close to each other but when I started upper secondary school, especially as it's really in the city centre, people come from all over Gothenburg. I have two friends who live in municipalities outside Gothenburg. Then you really have to plan in advance when you are going to meet up.

- Linnéa

Vendela also compares how it was easier to be spontaneous with friends in lower secondary school due to shorter distance.

In my old class in lower secondary school, it sometimes happened that we stood at the schoolyard and suddenly someone said "hey, should we do something?". So, we went home to Mikaela's and played games and had a barbecue. As everyone lived so close to each other there was no need for planning in advance. Now we need to plan. For instance, "Do you want to come over here for a girl' night on Friday?" and then she (a friend who lives far away) *may have to leave earlier as she doesn't want to travel home too late in the evening. Since we have grown older, we have been able to move more freely, but it's still a pity that there are such large distances. I*

can't call Rebecka and ask "do you want to hang out for an hour?" because it takes her about an hour to get here.

- Vendela

The girls describe how it became more complicated to hang out in each other's homes after school since they started upper secondary school. Most girls travelled for at least 30 minutes to school and even if some lived closer, there was usually someone who had to travel far to get back home again, it could take 1,5 hours or more to travel back and forth during a normal weekday after school. The time to travel back and forth for a spontaneous visit to a friend often seems too much of an effort to be worthwhile. Many girls are very dedicated to their schoolwork, which has become more time consuming than in lower secondary school. Furthermore, some of the girls have other leisure activities during weekdays which also contribute to an unwillingness to spend much time traveling after school.

Here Moa shares her experience of how proximity to classmates affects how often they visit each other's homes.

"When I lived in a small town, everyone went to the same school and lived within a few kilometres, it's really different in Gothenburg. /... / In my current class I have been at one person's home, while in my previous class in lower secondary school I had been in about half of my classmates' homes as everyone lived nearby."

- Moa

5.3.3 Distance a constraint for girls?

"I really miss not having a 15 minute bus ride seeing a friend. If I want to meet my friends now it'll take over an hour. Then I have to plan in advance, and someone has to drive me to the ferry and so on."

- Johanna

Far distance may affect the girls more than other groups. Firstly, none of the girls have a driving license and are therefore not able to access the infrastructure dedicated to cars to reach activities and friends. Instead, they are dependent on slow modes of travel such as walking, skating, cycling or public transport. For longer distances within Gothenburg, the most common means of transport is using public transport, either bus or tram. For longer distances the girls must adjust to timetables, which requires planning and calculating. There is an imminent risk that the journey home takes longer than usual due to fewer departures in the

evenings or at night. This also is a part of the calculation of whether it is worth travelling to reach the required activity or not.

In this quote Moa explains why she sometimes hesitates to visit a friend due to the journey back home.
Mostly the question is: Is it worth traveling back home later? It's one thing to travel to a friend at six or seven in the evening, but then you must travel back home, and you have to sit on a bus or a tram alone for an hour and change at a few different places. It's something I often feel uncomfort doing.
- Moa

Miranda describes how the public transport later in the evening can be problematic and requires more time.
It can be very tricky actually; I often think it's very difficult. The changing time between different public transport modes is often very long, at least when it is late. It can be very tricky. Sometimes it takes twice as long to travel back home, it can definitely be a very long trip and be very inconvenient. Especially if you're a bit further away from where you are going.
- Miranda

5.3.4 The nearby area to school

"It is actually a great advantage that the school is centrally located. You can both get there very easily and at the same time it's very close to many things."
- Clara

Instead of hanging out at each other's houses and apartments it has become more common for the girls to spend time in the inner city, where their new upper secondary school is located. As their new friends from school live further away from each other, they tend to spend more time in the central part of Gothenburg than they used to. This is partly a time- saving strategy as no one had to travel too far to be able to join.

Linnéa describes how she and her friends usually go to cafés nearby their school since her friend lived so far away. Central Gothenburg then becomes the "closest" option for everyone.
A reason why we hang out in the city is because one in my closest group of friends lives in another town further away and then it's closer, or at least not as far for everyone.
- Linnéa

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Another reason for the girls' more frequent use of the central city is simply that it is the closest option when the school day is over, and they do not have to travel anywhere to gain access to different activities. The proximity to different kinds of services from school is something that is emphasised as a positive aspect by most girls and facilitates certain activities after school. Several of the girls spontaneously go to a café after class to chat or study. Other such activities mentioned are going for a walk in the nearby park, eating ice cream or running some errands. In summer there are spaces for them to socialize close to school, for instance parks where they can hang out later in the evening. Many experience it as easier to stay behind a while in the nearby area to school, rather than visiting each other's homes. Activities done in the close by area are often spontaneous and do not have to last for long. The constellation of people from the school class more often varied, in comparison to when activities are well planned or require further traveling. This illustrates how nearness can be seen as a facilitator for the girls' spontaneous everyday activities.

Johanna expresses how she appreciates the proximity to services from her school

I think it's great! It's close to everything. Like when we had Lucia, and someone didn't have a nightgown we were like: we'll just go to Åhlens nearby during the break. It's super close. Central Gothenburg isn't very big either, it goes very fast. I think it's a dream that it's so central. After school it's easy to be just like: Should we have coffee? Or, should we go for a walk in this park?

- Johanna

A few girls also use the school building more actively. For instance, Johanna, (who went to a music class) and her classmates sometimes stay behind in school in the evenings to practise together before concerts. They sometimes order take away food together and the nearness to such places makes it easier for them to stay and practice without having to plan the day in advance.

When we have concerts, we often stay up late at school and practice. Then someone often says: Shall we buy some food? And we're like: Yes, let's go together! We have definitely spent a lot of time together.

- Johanna

However, everyone is not as fond of the central city of Gothenburg. One girl pointed out that the only things that you can do in the city centre is to go to a café or go shopping and she is not very interested in either and therefore tries to avoid this. Another girl also emphasized that she chooses to visit cafés in another part of town, as she experiences the area close to the school as too mainstream. The use of an area can be related to more than closeness and identification could for instance be an important aspect.

5.4 Proximity and Perceived Safety

"I think it's nice to take the tram to school, as I get to wake up slowly before school. I'm usually a bit tired in the morning and it often takes a while for me to get started, so I think it's very nice. But late in the evening I don't like it very much, I'm a bit more worried then."

- Moa

The perceived safety of the girls affects their ability to gain access to different activities and social meetings. This aspect also affects their use of places; however, this may also work the other way around that the use of a place may affect the perceived safety.

5.4.1 The experience of time in relation to travel

Most girls have a positive experience of traveling to school in the morning. Both those who live further away and those who live closer to school describe it in similar terms, as comfortable with good public transport opportunities. Some describe the journey as a space to gather their thoughts, wake up or do last minute homework. Some listen to music or a pod, others enjoy watching the sky change colours. These travels are generally experienced as positive. This implies that the experience of travel may be of more importance than the time "cost" of the trip.

Moa describes positive traveling experiences.
I really like taking the tram. I just think it's very cosy and it's nice to just sit there. It takes a very long time to travel quite short distances, so it isn't very efficient, but I still like it. I usually just look out through the windows, maybe think through the week, or just kind of process things that have happened. If you are on your way to school, you can also do some last-minute homework or study for a test."

- Moa

In general, the experience of travel varies depending on the time of day. The experience of traveling with public transport at evenings or at night is mostly described in far more negative terms than traveling at daytime. Many girls are anxious or even scared when traveling by public transport during evenings and nights, or when it is dark outside. These negative feelings are mostly connected to the central and essential stations of the public transport system in Gothenburg. Nordstan and the public transport stations surrounding Nordstan are where most girls feel unsafe or avoid during evenings and nights. Other often

mentioned places that are associated with anxiety are Brunnsparken, the Central station and Stenpiren. Järntorget is also brought up a few times along with Frölunda Torg, Norra Ullevi and Backaplan.

Hanna shares the negative public perception of a centrally located place.
"There is a lot of talk about Nordstan, they say that you shouldn't be there after six o'clock or whatever. They say that there are people who rob children there and maybe even shootings. Things like that have been on the news."

- Hanna

However, the perception varied. One girl was not worried at all while traveling through Gothenburg at night and only had complaints about fewer departures of late-night trams and busses, although she was in the minority.
"I wouldn't say that there is any place in the city that I usually avoid, not that I can think of. There are of course places in the whole city that I haven't been to, industrial areas and so on, but since I have no business going there, I see no reason why I should. I'm mostly not that risk thinking in that way.

- Miranda

Another girl did not travel after dark hours due to a feeling of insecurity. The feeling is not only related to the central parts of Gothenburg's public transport system but also most parts of the city, including the neighbourhood where she lives. The most common approach is to avoid places that are perceived as unsecure, often key traffic nodes of public transport, during evenings and nights. One girl usually plans her routes in advance to avoid changes of traffic mode at Nordstan during late hours. Then she can avoid having to stand alone waiting at Nordstan, Brunnsparken or Centralstationen. If such routes are not available, she usually sleeps at a friend's house instead.

Being able to navigate wisely at night requires good knowledge about the traffic system. Some girls are more familiar with the traffic system and the central city than others. Being able to apply this strategy requires different available traffic options. Therefore, is it generally trickier for those who live further away. For instance, the girls who have to take the ferry to get back home have to adjust more to the traffic than Vendela, who lives close to the central city. The experience of being at busses or trams at evenings is more seldom described in negative terms than being at the related stops or traffic nodes. However, drunk men are often mentioned as a cause of anxiety, especially being alone with one man on the bus or tram at night.

In this quote Moa describes in what situation she feels anxious in public traffic.

"For me, it's mostly when it's late and I'm sitting on the tram and I'm alone and an older man is sitting a bit away on the tram. Then I can feel insecure, but when I'm completely alone I don't feel that way."

- Moa

Some girls have specific paths they usually take if they walk through the city centre late. Some feel safer at the shopping streets close to their school and therefore way home and therefore chose this. Others talk on their phone with a friend or keep each other company for as long as possible on their way home. They do not usually avoid these places but have "some respect" and keep an eye open. Sometimes the thought of having to travel home stops them from visiting friends that lived further away in the first place. Interestingly, these central spots for mobility paradoxically become an aggravating factor for the girls' ability to access places during evenings and at night. The distance becomes a hindrance for the girls at evenings and night due to the fear of certain places of mobility in the central city. The infrastructure that is supposed to increase the mobility and accessibility for the citizens also seems to create places that are experienced as unsafe and therefore complicate the girls' ability to reach certain activities.

Moa shares her thoughts on how perceived unsafety constraints her ability to see her friends more frequently.

"I often feel very insecure at the central core stops of the public transportation system. When I visit my friends in the evening, I have to travel through Brunnsparken or through Central Station and places like that. And if I had felt more secure at those places, I think it would have made it easier for me to see my friends more often."

- Moa

5.4.2 Gender related fear

If you, as a 16-year-old girl, walk past a group of five slightly drunk 25-year-old men, you don't feel like the safest person in the world so to speak"

- Moa

The girl's fear can be related to gender structures. The explicit cause of the fear is not always articulated, but generally the worries seem related both to fear of sexual violence or harassments. A cause of worry mentioned is being alone with a man or a group of men late at a bus stop or at the tram, especially if they are

drunk. The fear is often brought up together with experiences, along with stories and experiences of friends and family members or the media. Young people are more dependent on slow modes of travel and public transport than others who for instance have access to a car. This results in a larger dependency of public transport for longer distances, but the gender related fear also limits the girl's ability to use public transport at evenings.

Alva discusses her thoughts and feeling regarding fear for unknown men at evenings.

I sometimes feel insecure if someone comes walking towards me in the dark, more often if it is a man of course. You never know. You have heard all these stories about things that have happened, that you should always be prepared. But at the same time, you cannot live your life and feel scared all the time. I guess it's this discussion about "not all men", but how should I know?"

- Alva

Hanna expresses her approach to persevered safety and unsafety in everyday life.

I would say that as a young girl you feel a little uncomfortable in the evening when you see a bunch of guys. But I still know which places to stay away from and I would say that we are not very often in the centre of town in the evenings anyway.

- Hanna

5.4.3 The image of the city and own experiences

My parents wouldn't be too happy if I would be in the city centre during evenings.

- Linnéa

Several girls associate "the city" with risks, violence, and danger. The city centre is perceived as a place for adults and surrounded with an air of insecurity in contrast to their own neighbourhood area. Others express that this was an image that was more present when they were younger but now when they are older, they have modified their opinions.

In this quote Tilda discusses the reasons for why she doesn't use public transport in evenings.

"I don't like to travel home in the evenings. When I was little, my parents didn't want me to go home alone in the evenings and it has grown into a habit even when I'm older. So, it is probably both that you grow up with people telling me that it is dangerous but also that I feel that it may be dangerous."

- Tilda

When discussing fear and the image of the city, most girls refer to their parents' perception and many have been warned to visit certain places at night. It is also common that the girls know someone, a brother, a friend, or a friend's friend who have been robbed or similar at a certain place and therefore are more cautious at those places. The public perception of safety or risk seems to partly influence their perception and behaviour. However, their own experience is also an important component. Most girls have never been through any frightening experience of their own. Those who have, on the other hand, explained that they were more cautious after the incident.

5.4.4 Calmness nearby

There seems to be a connection between nearness and perceived security. Almost everyone (nine out of ten) feels safe and comfortable using the area close to where they live, even in the evenings. For instance, to visit a friend who lives nearby, take an evening dip in the sea, go for a walk or some other activity. The three most recurring aspects that are highlighted to explain their feeling of comfort are positive experience of a place, nearness to people and knowledge of a place. Nearness to people provides a feeling of safety, especially if there are people they know or know of, for instance a neighbour or an old classmate. Even the awareness that people live close by could contribute to a calm feeling. The amount of people could also pay in and more people visible at a place generally contribute to the perceived safety.

In following quote Clara explains that closeness to different aspects is important for her persevered safety when she visit her grandmother.
My grandma lives in an area where I feel very safe. /.../ I think it has to do with her neighbours and that it feels very safe in that area. It is close to other houses, close to Slottsskogen and close to the tram lines, so there are other people around, I would say that is an important factor.
- Clara

To have positive experiences of a place contributes to the perceived safety there. For instance, most girls have positive experiences of the area where they live, or at least an experience of familiarity. Some also have this relation to the city centre. In similar ways a bad experience of a place contributes to an increased fear at a place.

In the following quote Miranda share her experiences of increasing persevered safety and mobility, as she has gotten older.

Back then I only knew Majorna, I used to feel like Gothenburg was this big "country". I remember the first time I would go home from a friend who lived outside the neighbouring area. I thought I'd get lost and never find my way home again. This picture changed when I got older, and actually, could go into town myself and with my friends and walk around. Since then, I have gotten a better idea of Gothenburg and it wasn't this large and scary place. It's simply part of the city that I live in"

- Miranda

The third factor, is knowledge of and the girls´ ability to navigate at a place, being able to know their way around, what paths to take or to avoid, often contribute to a safe feeling. The girls usually do not seem to be as afraid of dangerous things that happen in areas they know well.

Alva explain why she feel safe outside in her residential area though there are some criminal activity in the area.

If you can't be indoors, you can always be outdoors somewhere. Especially in my area, you can basically be anywhere! And there are not many places where you feel insecure there, possibly at our city centre. I have heard that there have been drug dealing there, car bombing and there was also a stabbing not so long ago. But at the same time, I don't feel insecure about that, because I feel that I wouldn't end up in the middle of it. But in the evening, I usually avoid the travel centres near the bridge, but if you just keep away from that specific place, I don't worry.

- Alva

5.4.5 Proximity during different time of the day

The nearness in the central city is at some level temporal. In the daytime the central city is near many different services, activities, their school and other people. However, when these close in the evening, most parts of the central city change character from a place where people stay and spend time to a place where people are passing through. In some parts of the city services such as nightclubs, bars and restaurants open up, however these are far less accessible for the girls. The central city is not as "near" or accessible for the girls in the evenings as during daytime. In the evenings public transport runs less frequently and therefore the distance to home is perceived as more of a problem. This temporal nearness may be one reason why many

girls perceive the inner city as more hostile at evenings than during daytime. If proximity contributes to a feeling of safety, distance seems to do the opposite.

Alva answers the question whether she experiences that there are any places for her and her friends to hang out at.

In this quote Alva answer the question if she and her friends always have somewhere to meet up. She experiences a lack of available places at evenings.

Maybe not in the evenings, actually. When you are an adult, you can go to clubs and so on. If you're celebrating a birthday for instance, you must arrange everything yourself, but if you're an adult you can go to a club. /... / Me and my friends like to meet in the daytime, this may actually be a reason for it. When you meet in the evening it becomes a larger project, but when you meet during the day you can easily just go to a café. But in the evening, you can't go to a café and then you'll have to go to a restaurant and we're only 16-17 and my parents wouldn't be too happy if I would be in the city centre during evenings.

- Alva

5.4.6 Proximity to school

However, the temporal nearness is not the only aspect that affects the perception of safety. The aspects that are more accentuated as contributing to a feeling of safety in their neighbourhood are, (as mentioned in 5.4.3) positive experience of a place, nearness to people and knowledge of a place. Going to school in the city centre may have contributed to some of these aspects. Some girls highlight the increased everyday use of the area surrounding the schools in relation to increased confidence in the surrounding area and a decreased feeling of unsafety that many feel in the central parts of the city in evenings or at night. Through a combination of positive experiences, a personal connection to the place and increased knowledge of the place as well as an ability to navigate in the city could then contribute to an increased ability to move freely.

In this quote Vendela reflect upon why she has become more secure moving through the central parts of town in the evenings.

It's nice that it's so central because after school you can go out and check out clothes and have a coffee and so on. Previously I always used to hang out in the area where I lived. But since I've started school in the city centre, I have been spending more time there. Before, I would never have walked from the Nordstan to Domkyrkan, but now I find my way through the centre. When I go somewhere I don't have to pick up my phone and check the

map. This has made me feel more comfortable and when I'm walking through the city later in the evening it doesn't become as uncomfortable. Of course, there are some places like Nordstan I of course still avoid later in the evening. I stay on larger lit roads, but I'm not as worried anymore.

- Vendela

Another interesting pattern is that those who have attended lower secondary school in the area where they live generally have a much closer relationship to that neighbourhood and use it more frequently than those who have attended school in another area. The four girls who do not live in the neighbourhood where they have attended lower secondary school have a very neutral relationship to the place, not negative but neutral and they do not use it very often. As they do not have friends who live close by, they more often travel further to meet up with friends or more often emphasize distance to friends as a problem.

Miranda reflect upon how the relation to the close neighbourhood is affected by going to school there and having friends close by.

It's a completely different thing when you grow up in a place because then you grow up with people that live close to you in the same area and go to school together. And I haven't done this.

- Miranda

6. Concluding Analysis

In this chapter the empirical findings will be analysed based on the theories and concept of this essay.

6.1 Proximity Increases the Available Time

Proximity is related to the time geographical concept *Prism*. The prism defines the space for manoeuvre within set time and space constrictions and sets forth the opportunity to reach desired places or do activities. The mobility paradigm derives from the assumption that increased mobility and fast means of transport widen the prism, decrease the significance of distance, and increase the accessibility for people in their daily lives. However, for this to be accurate the modes of traffic must be equally accessible for different groups in society, otherwise the accessibility is constrained. Therefore, the proximity to activities and places becomes more important for those who cannot gain access to different modes of traffic. The girls' access to the main modes of travel, car and public transport are constricted by *Capability, Coupling* and *Steering Constraints*.

Girls' use of cars is constricted by capability constraints, both regarding their age, those under the age of 18 are not allowed to obtain a driving license, and their economic situation. Therefore, their access to places and activities are more constricted than adults. Some girls have parents who can give them a lift when the public transport does not run, or when the parents have safety concerns. However, this is also restricted by coupling constraints as coordination is required.

The girls mainly depend on public transport for traveling further distances. Therefore, their prisms are constricted by the timetables of trams, busses, or ferries. If they are meeting up with a friend who lives further away additional timetables and routes have to be taken into account. This determines when and where the girls meet up and when they must travel back home. This constraint has a larger impact when friends or desired activities are located further away. Further traveling and the distance between friends is experienced as most problematic during evenings and nights when public transport departures run less frequently. The girls' prism then shrinks. This influences the frequency of how often they visit each other's homes, especially on weekdays and evenings. Especially at evenings proximity is a time saving facilitating factor for the girls and when friends and activities are close by, they are equally accessible throughout the day, regardless of public transport departures. Proximity creates an independence of fast means of traffic, reducing the coupling constraint and increasing the ability to travel home when it is most suitable.

The size of the prism is defined by available time and available means of travel. However, if the desired activities and friends are within a shorter distance the need for a large prism is not necessary to be able to engage in different projects. Meaning that in situations when the prism is small, due to shorter available time, and limited access to fast means of travel; proximity is important for the girls to be able to engage in projects that are important to them. If there are opportunities to engage in different kinds of projects within a shorter range, the girls would not have to prioritize different aspects important for them in life. Proximity increases their ability to succeed with several projects at the same time.

6.2 Gender Constraints Affecting Accessibility

Another factor that constrains the girls' accessibility by mobility is related to gender structures. The built city, such as the infrastructure, affects the lives of different groups variously. The girls' accessibility is affected in their own way by their age, gender, and life situation.

The experience of travel is to a large extent related to the social group in question. This experience of travel creates a variety of *spaces of traffic,* which is important to study to understand the travel pattern and accessibility of different groups. Some spaces of travel are experienced as *facilitating* in the girls' everyday life. However, at evenings and nights many spaces of traffic are experienced as *burdening*, especially when traveling further distances. In fact, the places that are most often mentioned as unpleasant or frightening at night-time are those related to public transport; busses, trams, traffic centres and stops. Especially centrally located traffic nodes such as several stops for busses and trams.

Such spaces of traffic can be analysed as a *pocket of local order* that allows and hinders activities to take place. Every day we pass through different pockets of local order, of which we have varying degrees of control. At a place where we have a larger degree of control and power it is easier to carry out projects. In the case of central traffic nodes, the places change character throughout the day. At evenings and nights, the central traffic nodes are perceived as uncomfortable both passing through or waiting at, due to the power relation within this time place context. This results in difficulties in carrying out projects, such as maintaining a relationship with a friend that lives further away. Although there is a spectrum, the clearest pattern is that the girls are cautious, feel uncomfortable and exposed while passing or visiting central traffic nodes or travelling by public transport at evenings and nights. This experience can be analysed as an expression of a *steering constraint* when power relations restrict accessibility in time and space. The power relation in question is *gender structures*. This pattern is related to gender as the anxiety is connected to fear of sexual

assault or violence. The cause of worries often comes in relation to men, alone or in groups, especially drunk men are experienced as a cause of anxiety. There also seems to be a common understanding that as a young girl you should not be at certain places at certain times. This common understanding originates from concerned parents, friends and relatives' experiences, stories from the media and constitutes another steering constraint regarding norms of movements of girls.

These gender steering constraints; specific pockets of local orders and burdened spaces of traffic affect the girls' travel pattern and their accessibility to engage in social activities. This constrains traveling at evenings by public transport and the ability to access places and activities. The time of the day when travel is experienced as a facilitator and not a burden limits the size of their prism and the available time to engage in activities. Places that are meant to be facilitating mobility within the city and increasing the accessibility of the inhabitants, as central nodes in the public transport system, instead become a hindrance for the girls' mobility and accessibility at evenings and nights. This paradox points out the importance of highlighting the experience of mobility and the places it creates rather than seeing mobility as only a calculation of time and space. Girls are affected by the built environment in their own specific way. By studying this specific group their experience is brought up and the case study visualises how social structures such as gender and the male norm can be visible in mobility patterns for girls in Gothenburg.

Experience of traveling as a burden makes some girls think twice before engaging in late activities further away. However, in the neighbouring area most of the girls feel safe and do not hesitate leaving home, even those who live in districts with bad reputations. This feeling of security enables them to engage in activities and meet up with friends who live nearby regardless of time. Being able to use slow modes of traffic increases independence and decreases coupling constraints with public transport. The parents are also less worried about their children being out in the close area resulting in a loser steering constraint compared to when they are further away. Proximity can then be seen as a facilitator to their daily activities and the girls' ability to pursue their long-term *projects*.

6.3 Lack of Pocket of Local Order for Social Activities

Proximity affects different aspects of the girls' lives. If proximity facilitates various spontaneous activities, mobility favours specific activities that are organized and planned in advance. Proximity seems to have a major impact on the girls' social relations more apparent than on specific spare time interests. This may be due to the lack of a nearby pocket of local orders for social activities.

Proximity affects different aspects of the girls' lives. If (accessibility by) proximity facilitates spontaneous various activities further distances/accessibility by mobility favour specific activities that are organized and planned. Proximity seems to have a major impact on the girl's social relations. Distance seems to have a more negative effect on social encounters than on specific spare time interests. Those, mainly engaged in different specific interests and less engaged in social relations generally express less frustration with their day-to-day life. To satisfy a spare time interest, there is often a specific place to visit or pre-paid activities, often paid by parents. There are favourable pockets of local orders to fulfil the projects. Further distance requires more planning in advance and a larger prism, and this aspect can also be seen to favour specific interests rather than social relations since these activities follow a weekly schedule. Friendship, however, can be more sensitive to current moods and feelings and therefore profits from the ability to be spontaneous. Another possible explanation could be that it is experienced as a greater loss to hang out with someone they like less but live close to, than choosing a dance class they live close to but like less.

As mentioned earlier the girls' prism is limited at evenings and nights due to less frequent departures of public transport, burdening experience of spaces in traffic and limited opening hours. When time is limited, it is more important to use the available time effectively. One strategy is to replace spontaneous meetings with organized and planned social activities. Further distance and fewer public transport options increase the need for organization of social meetings. The girls must require strategies to handle everyday constraints of mobility and distance, for instance: sleeping at each other's homes, hanging out during daytime, or avoid having to travel in the evenings on weekdays. Before friends are invited home parents are often asked in advance. Some girls experience that this less spontaneous and more planned way of hanging out resulted in a more limited social engagement, both in terms of frequency, where they were but also in who they hang out with. Some girls strategically choose paths at evenings they knew better and expressed as safer. This strategy is easier to apply for the girls who live closer to the central city or have better accessibility concerning public transport.

6.4 From Local to Central to Where?

Another common strategy to deal with further distances is to meet at other places. Instead of using the home or neighbourhood area, the girls sometimes chose a place that is relatively close to everyone, or a place with good public transport opportunities for everyone. This strategy is applied as an adjustment to the circle of close friends. They meet each other halfway both literally and figuratively speaking. "Halfway" for the

girls is often in the central city. Notable is that even when the central city is chosen as a hang out spot instead of their local residential area; this is also partly done based on closeness. Staying in the central city saves time and late travels home can be avoided. The fact that no one must arrange, plan, or ask parents for permission to hang out in the city centre also facilitates spontaneous social activities. With this in mind the central city can be seen as a favourable pocket of local order for the girls' projects of building friendship.

Even though the central city has the advantage of being close, it is also a place defined by consumption. To be able to gain access to these spaces of consumption on a weekly or daily basis requires larger economic resources than most young people can afford. This causes a dilemma as it is more time efficient to stay in the city but also more expensive. In this way, the girls' spontaneous encounter to some extent depends on their access to economic resources. When the social interaction is transferred into a commercial sphere; the interaction is affected by the pockets of local order.

The close area surrounding the schools mainly offers places to sit and talk while having something to eat or drink or buying different products. The commercial norm in the city centre constitutes steering constraints that enable certain kinds of activities but at the same time hinder others. These commercial steering constraints are more present in the central city than in many of the local neighbourhoods. Although the proximity to these services is much appreciated there is also a desire for alternative spaces. Several girls desired multifunctional spaces where they could just be, study or combine spontaneous social interaction with an activity, for instance roller skating or dancing i.e., a pocket of local order that would favour social relations. What the girls wish for is a place with low cost and late closing hours but where they would feel safe being and their parents would allow them to. The closest to this kind of place is youth gatherings at church that some of the girls attended.

To be outside in a local park or a nature area in the summer season is also highly valued by many girls. The advantages are many, it does not cost anything, and anyone is free to come and go as they like. Furthermore, there are no time restrictions, closing hours (e.g., cafés), age restrictions (e.g., bars or pubs) or high costs as at restaurants, that constrict them. There are less norms regarding appropriate activities to do outside, allowing the girls to be more active when hanging out. Nature areas and parks contain a favourable pocket of local orders for the girls' social activities in warmer seasons.

7. Discussion and Conclusions

The aim of this study is to deepen the knowledge and bring forward the experiences of girls' mobility patterns and the role of proximity for their everyday accessibility. This perspective is essential to develop strategies for accessible and inclusive development of cites. To further investigate this subject two research questions have been formulated; What is the role of nearby activities and places in the everyday life of girls in upper secondary school? What strategies do the girls develop to handle distances in their everyday lives? In this chapter the research will be summarized based on the findings in the result and analysis section. The findings will be discussed further in a larger context of previous research and potential future research. The implications of the findings from a planning perspective will also be discussed.

7.1 What is the role of nearby activities and places in the everyday life of girls in upper secondary school?

The significance of proximity is made visible in how day to day meetings with friends have become more difficult since the girls entered upper secondary school. Although the girls' ability to move further distances independently has grown with age, the pressure on the girls' ability to move has increased even more. Distances are still perceived as a major issue that this increased ability to travel has not been able to compensate for. Unlike in lower secondary school they now must travel further to school and their friends in school are spread over larger areas within and outside the city of Gothenburg. The need for increased mobility is intensified when the girls have to deal with further distances on an everyday basis. The girls' mobility is constrained by different factors. Firstly, they lack the opportunity to use cars and are therefore more dependent on public transportation to access places and activities further away. Secondly, less frequent public transport departures during evenings and nights result in longer travelling time and an increased need for planning routes in advance. Mobility during evenings and nights is also constricted due to negative experiences and feelings of anxiety in relation to central public traffic nodes during late hours. Places that are meant to be facilitating mobility within the city and increasing the accessibility of the inhabitants, as central nodes in the public transport system, instead become a hindrance for the girls' mobility and accessibility at evenings and nights. Proximity to places and activities create an independence of fast means of travel and the mentioned constraints. Within short distances slow modes of traffic can be

used, which facilitates the girls' accessibility and ability to use their time more freely and increase their space-time autonomy especially during evenings.

7.2 What strategies do the girls develop to handle distances in their everyday lives?

Distance affects both where and when they meet with friends. They develop different strategies to bridge the constraints related to limitation in time and the perceived unsafety. When time is limited, it is more important to use the available time effectively. One strategy is to replace spontaneous meetings with planned social activities. Another strategy to deal with further distances is to meet at other places. Since it requires more time to travel to each other's home or neighbourhood area, the girls often choose places that are closer to everyone or with good public transport opportunities for everyone. This is often in the central city. However, these spaces of consumption in the central city are both too expensive for the girls to use on a everyday basis and offer a limited variety of activities. In the summertime a solution to this problematic situation is to meet up outdoors in a local park or nature area. During the colder season there is a desire for places with similar qualities. Several girls requested multifunctional spaces where they could just be, study or combine spontaneous social interaction with an activity i.e., a pocket of local order that would favour social relations. In other words, what the girls wish for is a place with low cost and late closing hours but where they would feel safe being and their parents would allow them to be. The closest to this kind of place is youth- gatherings at church that several of the girls attended.

7.3 Contextual Understanding of the Findings

Inclusive and accessible public places and transportation options is one of the goals that 196 countries, including Sweden, have committed themselves to accomplish in Agenda 2030 (källa). Women and children are groups that are especially highlighted to prioritize, girls can be seen as a combination of these prioritized groups. In modern research proximity is raised as a strategy to achieve inclusive accessibility to different groups, which due to different reasons have less access to fast means of travel.

This study can be seen in the light of this new planning paradigm bringing new perspectives and insights on the role of proximity to contribute to more inclusive and accessible places and mobility for girls in an urban Swedish context. Within an urban planning context, three of the findings are of particular significance (to

increase the girl's accessibility and facilitate everyday life for/of the girls). To increase the girls' accessibility by mobility it is important to create spaces of traffic secure enough for the girls to use. When the girls enter upper secondary school, their social network is changed, and higher pressure is being put on their ability to travel further distances to maintain their social relations. If the central public transport nodes are perceived as safe even during late hours this would strengthen the girls' ability to independently reach activities, services and friends located further away.

Ensuring proximity to places and services increases the girls' accessibility and facilitates everyday life in several ways. It would save time in daily life and enable the girls to do spontaneous activities and use their time more freely. Shorter distances promote slow mobility. This facilitates movement in the proxime area even during late hours and increases their time-space autonomy. In this case proximity refers both to their residential areas and the nearby area where they attend school.

It is also important that the proxime places are accessible for the girls to use. Unlike adults, girls need a place where their independence from parents can develop, and they require spaces for their social encounters outside home. Girls in this age generally do not have the economy to use commercial places as a replacement for a living room in the same way as many adults. Therefore, accessible, and affordable public places are of extra importance for this group. Rather than carrying out a specific interest the girls require safe spaces close by where they could hang out with several people trying out a variety of activities. Public living rooms. These kinds of spaces could play an important role in the girls' lives and facilitate their social relations and independence in everyday life.

Despite the need for autonomy the essence of what young people require of their surroundings is boiled down to two main aspects. Firstly, the need to be public (to be so called *on stage*) and secondly; the need to be private (to be so called *backstage)*. The need to be public requires places for interaction where they can go to gain social interaction, both to meet friends and strangers and to experience a variation. The need to be private requires places where teenagers want to be independent of adult observation. The stability and the pattern of the local teenage environment depend, to a great extent, on the access to both types of places (Lieberg 1995). Young people need a broad variety of places with different spatial and social characteristics. From a teenager's perspective public places can be viewed as the 'extended living room', as a sequence of multifunctional places (Lieberg 1995). The problem of commercial places is that they are constructed

around adult needs and wishes, which causes problems for young people trying to find a place to use for their purposes (Tucker, Matthews 2002).

7.3 Future Research

Another conclusion drawn from this is the importance of studying experiences and everyday struggles of mobility and accessibility of different groups. It would be interesting to conduct a similar study with a larger socio-economic diversity than this study to be able to add a class perspective. Suggestions for future complementary research could be to study if the need or requirements of public places differ based on home conditions or available space at home. Another interesting complementary research would be to do a comparative study between girls' and boys' mobility patterns and use and/or their desired use of public places.

7.4 Conclusion

The findings of this study pay attention to primarily three aspects. To have access to close, multifunctional, and social places outside home can play an important part in girls' everyday lives and growing independence. The girl's independence and space- time autonomy will also be increased if spaces of public traffic are perceived as safer. The role of proximity to nearby places and activities for teenage girls' daily activities can be understood in several ways. The girls' age, gender and limited economic resources constrict their ability to move freely within the city in certain ways and therefore their accessibility by mobility. For this reason, proximity may be more important for the accessibility of girls enabling spontaneous activities, social encounters and increasing their time- space autonomy.

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Appendix

Appendix 1- Interview Guide

<u>Introduction</u>

Hello!

How are you?

How has your day been so far?

Great!

Let's get started.

As you already know, the general purpose of this study is to focus and highlight girls' experiences and perspectives.

The purpose of this interview is to find out what activities you do in your everyday life, what places you visit and for what reason. Everything concerning these questions are of importance and of value for the study! I will ask questions but feel free to elaborate and explain what you think and feel. There might be things that you find insignificant yourself or self-explanatory. But please don't hesitate to develop your ideas and thoughts further.

Being anonymous. Is it OK that I record? Then, I will start recording. You will probably see a little box on your screen where you are asked to give your consent.

1. <u>INTRODUCTION</u>
    - Can you please tell me a little about yourself to start off?

2. <u>ACTIVITIES - Why?</u>
    - Would you please tell me about an ordinary day in your life?
    - I have seen the diary that you have handed in. Are the reported days typical examples of your everyday life or are they rather exceptional?
    - What decides whether you do activity 1,2 or 3?
    - What activities do you like doing the most with your friends?
    - What do you generally do when you are together with others?
    - What do you generally do when you are not together with others / alone?
    - What do you usually do when you are at home?
    - Is there a difference between what you do at the weekend and ordinary evenings during the week?

3. TIME - *when?* - how often, for how long, repeatedly or sporadically

- How often would you say that you do (the reported activities) ? (estimation)
- Do you generally plan your week in advance or is it more spontaneous?

4. THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- Describe the present situation with the online studies.
- In what ways has the COVID-19 Pandemic affected what you do in your spare time?
- Do you do other activities now or do you mainly do the same activities as before?
- In what way has the COVID-19 Pandemic influenced what places in the city you visit?
- When and where is it important for you to be at other places than your home? (If this is stated)
- What do you miss doing the most?

5   PLACES - The city centre, The neighbourhood, At home - Where?

- What school do you attend? Why did you choose this school? How is the school situated, according to you?

You said that you usually (connect to earlier answers, activites)

- Where do you usually (...)?
- Why do you choose this place for (this activity)?
- Do you often visit the same place/places or does it vary?
- Do you normally meet at each other's homes or do you generally meet somewhere else/outdoors?

Further questions if the answer is at each other's homes.

- Whose place do you meet at?
- Why do you choose this place? (Closeness? If so -to what? Seclusion? Free from parents? Spacious living space? Economic reasons?)
- Are you often at your place? Why? Why not? Has this ever occured?
- Further questions if the answer is elsewhere or outdoors.
- Do you meet in the city centre? At a café or similar? At other public places indoors?
- What spaces are good for different types of activities? Does this change over the day or year? Is this question even relevant? Do you feel free/comfortable to do whatever activity you choose wherever you like?
- Would you say that you often have a place to go to or is it difficult to find such a place?

Confirmation Questions

- It seems that xxx (a specific statement i.e. you often hang out at each other's places) is the case?. Is this true?/Have I understood you correctly?

- Followed by " check what they say - question" more closely connected to the/my analysis, after having talked about a specific area linked to the research questions. These questions are adopted according to the answers given. (You travel all over the city?/ You are mainly close to your home and local residential area and your school? / How would you describe the area close to your home and school, do you easily find places where you can be with your friends?
- Now you have described what you do when you are out together with friends. What do you do when you are home or alone? Earlier you said that when you are home you often…(connect to earlier answers)?

At Home
- Is there anything/ or any activity that you would like to do but refrain from doing due to the circumstances at home?
- What activities do you leave your home to do?

The Neighbourhood/ The Residential Area
- You live in X. How do you like this area?
- What activities do you do in the close area?
- Why do you choose to do the mentioned activities at this place??
- What do you choose to do in other areas outside your local area or neighbourhood?

4. TRAVEL - How it changes between different places and activities

- How do you generally travel? For example to school and when you do different activities in the evenings or at the weekend?
- Do you often travel in the same way or does it vary?
- Describe what it is like travelling in Gothenburg.
- When do you need to plan and when is it possible to travel without planning?

5. EXPERIENCE OF SPACE AND SITUATION . Pocket of local order, constraints and gender

Well, now we have talked about what you do and where you do different activities. Now I'd like to ask you some questions connected to your experience of different spaces and situations.
- We have talked about different places you visit (connect to earlier answers). Where do you feel comfortable and free?
- What activities do you do at those places?
- What do you do at these specific places that you cannot do elsewhere?

- If we turn the question around: where and when do you feel most constricted or unfree?
- (possible answers could concern public transport and time tables, norms on how to behave at certain areas, fear of certain places could create a feeling of constraint and refrain from visiting certain places at certain times)
- Have you ever, when together with others or on your own, ever come into conflict with other people?
- Please, tell me about it

5. HOPES AND DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE

- Well, let's move on and talk about your everyday life. Is there anything that you would like to do but you refrain from doing because it is too complicated?
- Let''s talk about what you cannot do but would like to. That is sometimes the case, isn't it?
  Let's move on to the next topic which is a more open one, connected to dreams in everyday life.
- I wonder if there is anything that you would like to do more often in your everyday life, if it were easier to organise? I.e xxx
- What refrains you from doing this today? (Lack of time/ conflict with other activities/other constraints)
- What would it take to make this possible in your everyday life?
- Are there spaces/ Is there a space in the city, where you feel free to carry out your interests?
- Is there a social context for this?
- We have talked about X being important for you. What are your long term visions and dreams?

7. CONCLUSION

Now it seems that you have answered all my questions and I am content with your answers.

- How was it being interviewed?
- Is there anything that you would like to add?

If not, Thank the respondent for the participation and good answers.
Ask whether the respondent would like a copy of the study when it is finished in May or June?
Say "thank you" and wish the respondent "all the best".

Phrases to use

- *Have I understood you correctly when XXX is important to you?*
- *You mentioned earlier that X XX . Would you like to tell me more about it/that?*
- *Repeat what the respondent just said using a confirming question.*
- *What do you think about that?*
- *Interesting! Could you please elaborate?*

Appendix 2

Girls in the City

What do girls prefer to do in their free time? Where do they prefer to stay in the city?

These questions will be examined in my essay during the spring of 2021. The goal is to interview girls who go to upper secondary school in Gothenburg to highlight their perspective and everyday experiences of the city.

Thank you! / Julia Wilzén

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*Obligatorisk

What do you prefer to do in your spare time? *

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What do you do most often in your spare time? *

_____

_____

_____

_____

Which Upper secondary school do you go to? *

_____

What year are you in? *

_____

Where in Gothenburg do you live? (which residential area code) *

Do you live in a ...? *

Markera alla som gäller.

☐ Rental apartment

☐ Condominium

☐ House/Detached House

☐ Other

Övrigt: ☐ _____

How many rooms does the home have? *

☐ 1   room and a kitchen

☐ 2   rooms and a kitchen

☐ 3   rooms and a kitchen

☐ 4   rooms and a kitchen or more

How many people live in your household? (including yourself) *

_____

Would you like to take part in an interview or want to know more about the study? *

Yes   ☐

No   ☐

If yes, write your name, mobile number and / or email below, and I will get in touch and tell you more!

Name:

_____

Phone Number:

_____

Email:

Thank you!