



# Re-reading time geography from a feminist perspective

Gendered mobility

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# Re-reading time-geography from a feminist perspective – Gendered mobility

## *Abstract*

*Time-geography has by some feminist scholars been accused not taking gender relation, domination or power in consideration when analyzing the use of time and space. In this paper we argue that time-geography provides a useful set of analytical tools which successfully collaborate with social science theory as feminist studies. In a project called “Re-reading time-geography from a feminist perspective”, labour force mobility is, specially commuting, one important issue, for analysing women’s time-space use and identify what constraints might be found in organizing every-day life.*

*We put emphasis on that time-geography might provide feminist studies with a close, empathic and micro-levelled interventional approach in order to make obstacles and constraint visible and thereby changeable. This paper is based on previous and ongoing research on commuting and transport. We hope to prove why time-geography should be reconsidered as an approach with several sets of useful methods to describe and analyse women’s every-day life’s struggles and possibilities in times when mobility and transports has become an undisputed factor of everyday life.*

*Keywords: women, commuting, time-geography, mobility, feminism, method*

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## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Time-geography has been criticized in various ways by social scientists. One critique is that time-geography being too physical and not taking individuals in account.<sup>1</sup> Gillian Rose points to the common interest in feminism and time-geography, by arguing that “...time-geography shares the feminist interest in the quotidian paths traced by people, and again like feminism, links such paths, by thinking about constraints, to the larger structures of society.”<sup>2</sup> Not convinced, however, by the feminist geographers who have been working with time-geography, Rose classifies it as “social science masculinity”.<sup>3</sup> Her main critique towards time-geography is rooted in what she defines as a poorly developed discussion on space, on corporeality, on issues that most feminist claim to be of importance in the struggle against patriarchy: the domestic sphere, mothering and caring, passions and violence.<sup>4</sup> Time-geography “appears to erase a difference in the everyday which feminists associate with women”.<sup>5</sup> Rose has given important critics to time-geography and we argue that it needs to be developed further. However, there have been attempts to widen time-geography from a feminist perspective, using projects, prisms and diaries, in order to discuss gendered space and spatiality.<sup>6</sup>

This paper is an attempt to contribute to the discussion of power dimensions within a time-geographical approach with focus on mobility. The empirical findings are based on three mobility projects: the first study focuses on the pre-industrial Swedish household, which is especially connected to women’s immobility; the second study focuses on women’s mobility in a semi-rural region in the late 20th century and the third study deals with the present day, focusing on career households and long-distance commuting.

## Time-geography

Time-geography developed, writes Hägerstrand<sup>7</sup>, as a protest towards the dominant research discourse on not taking context into account. It was a search for more holistic analyses<sup>8</sup> on how people, society and technology intervene into complexity.<sup>9</sup> He concludes that geography is really about the struggle for access to space between existences and events.<sup>10</sup> A central theme in time-geography is the idea of spatial closeness. What planned or un-planned activities really carry through is dependent on spatial closeness and need for and access to space and time. Using the concept *project*, some might not be carried through successfully<sup>11</sup> because other activities have stronger agenda. Spatial closeness also indicates that parallel processes might interfere and out-concur one another because of limited resources.

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<sup>1</sup> Gregory, Giddens

<sup>2</sup> Rose 1993. P. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Rose, 1993. P. 40.

<sup>4</sup> Rose, 1993. P 28, 40.

<sup>5</sup> Rose, 1993. P 28.

<sup>6</sup> Åsa Westermark 2003, Kersti Nordell 2002.

<sup>7</sup> Hägerstrand developed the time-geography approach.

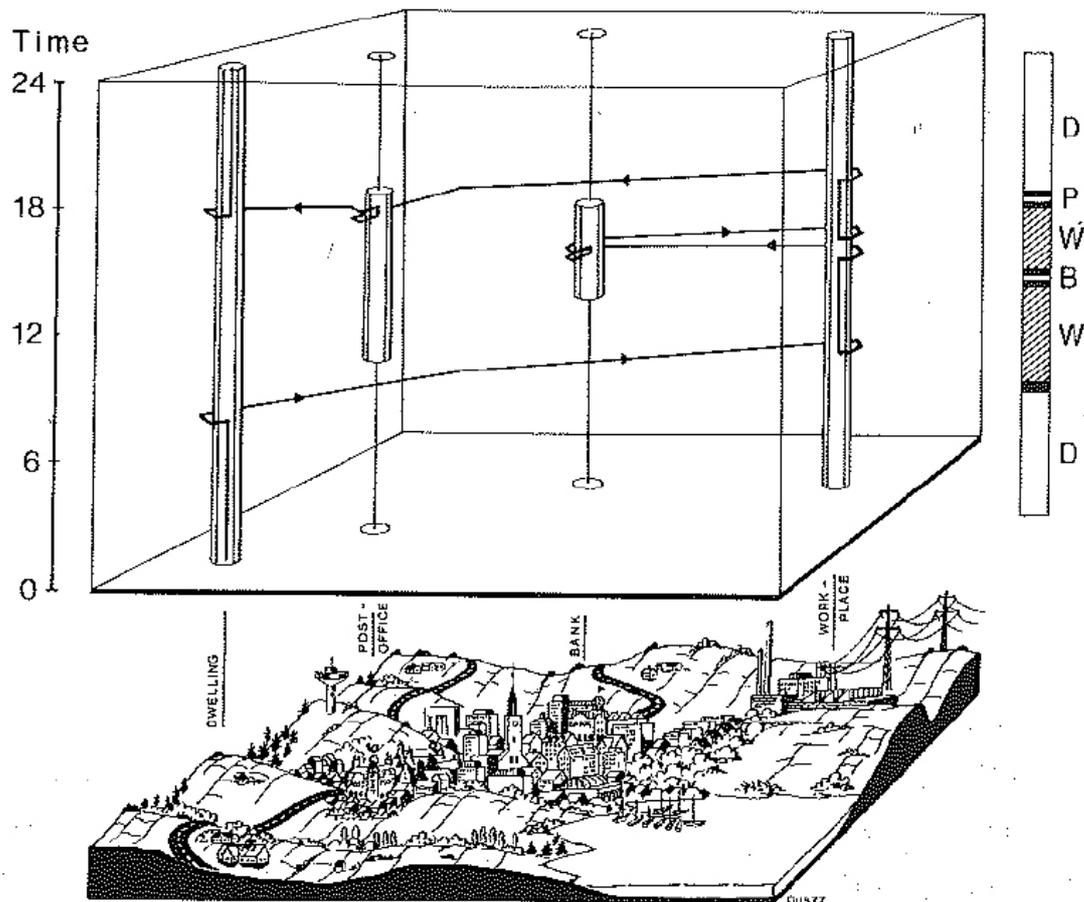
<sup>8</sup> In this case Rose criticism is well founded. See Rose 1993 p. 29ff.

<sup>9</sup> Hägerstrand, 1991.

<sup>10</sup> Hägerstrand 1985.

<sup>11</sup> Hägerstrand 1978.

In today's planning of society into functional economic and labour market regions, residential areas, leisure and shopping spots, mobility is built into everyday life.<sup>12</sup> To be able to understand and analyse women and men's organising the everyday life, it is necessary to have an understanding of the *interrelation of time and space*. In this analyse, time-geography models and concept might give good descriptions of what is needed to carry out the different kinds of projects an ordinary day is composed of and what might be the *restrictions* in doing so. The three-dimensional diorama, as in the figure below, became an illustrative way to map movement in time and space in order to handle the complexity of everyday life:



A trajectory, or life-path, which shows how a person went from their residence (dwelling) to their workplace, made a short trip to the bank and back to the workplace, and, on their way back to their residence, paid a visit to the post office. Source: Lenntorp 1980.

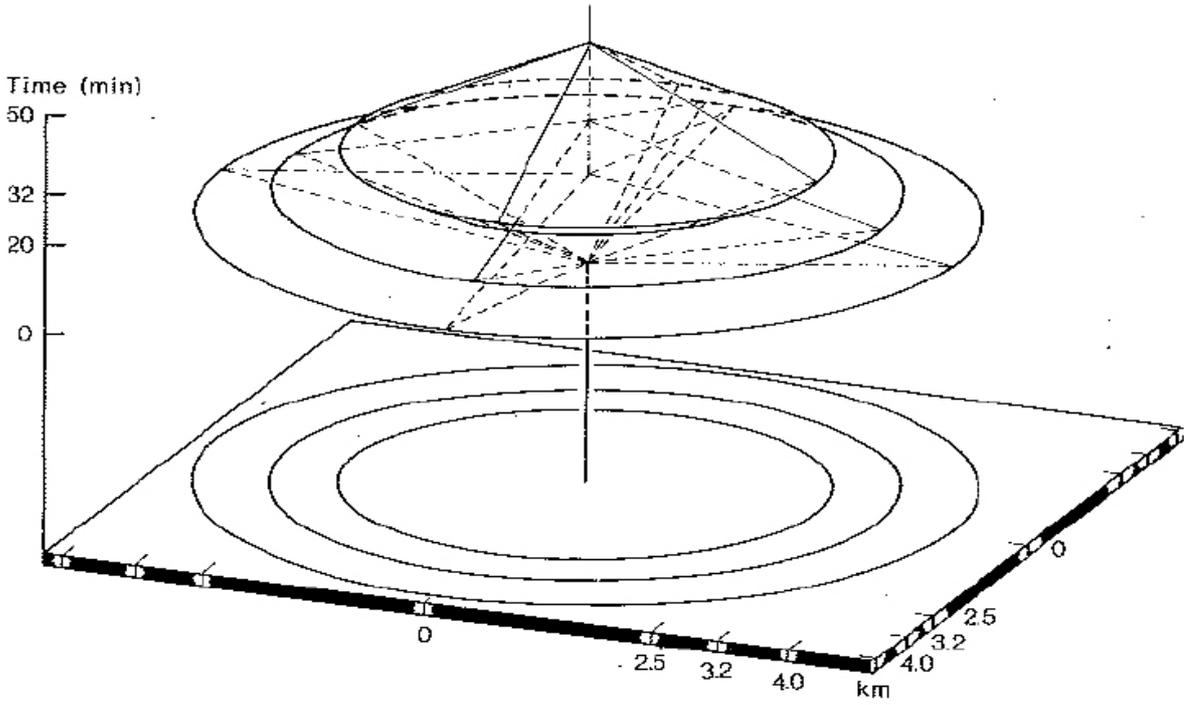
### Some concepts

Time-geography has a broad repertoire of concepts, and not all are specified and distinct, which leaves to the interpretator to translate them for the purpose needed. This works quite well with the intention that time-geography is merely a skeleton of organising research questions and data.

<sup>12</sup> McKenzie 2003 in Root (ed).

We are taking special interest in concepts that involve power dimensions. The routinized every day life is overloaded by projects, decisions and priorities which also includes aspects of power.

The basic assumptions are however, that everyday life is organized that we leave in the morning for work and return in the afternoon. Mapping women’s mobility in time space, could leave us with mere descriptions on individual behaviour, but it also gives data to produce a *prism*; a theoretical spatiotemporal illustration of possible spatial reach within a demarked time-space outcome. The size of the prism is dependent on available transport. In a *time-budget*<sup>13</sup> it is then possible to measure what time is left for other activities in the morning and/or evenings. Since women are main carers, more time spent on work trips gives less time for caring responsibilities. In the examples given below there are different ways of handling both transport and caring responsibilities. Low wage households become more spatially restricted and vulnerable to local labour market compositions, since they are more heavily dependent on public transport.<sup>14</sup>



Examples of prisms – the principle of return. Source: Lenntorp 1976. The map has been transformed into a plane and the distances are given in the x-axis. The y-axis is still measuring time.

<sup>13</sup> Time-budget is based on concurrence on space and time by various actions taking place simultaneously. Hägerstrand and Lenntorp 1974, from Hallin 1988.

<sup>14</sup> Stuck in the slow lane.

Time-geography elaborates with the term *project*. Like projects in generally, the concept is based on: “the entire series of simple or complex tasks necessary to the completion of any intention-inspired or goal-oriented behaviour.”<sup>15</sup> And like all kinds of projects, it has to be organized in structured fashion if they are going to be carried out successfully.<sup>16</sup> What becomes interesting from a feminist perspective is the access to recourses needed to be able to carry the everyday projects through. That is why the concepts of restrictions become central and important, and to some, what time-geography really is all about.<sup>17</sup>

Time-geography is vague on dimensions of power. Discussions on distribution and access to recourses, which are central in feminist studies, might prove to be helpful in analysing spatial-temporal conditions. Using restrictions as a way of uncover dimensions of power might be fruitful. In time-geography, three family groups of *restrictions* are identified, and they stretch from the ideas of *capacity* over *coupling* to *steering*. In each of these restrictions the individual perspective might be analysed.

Dealing with mobility issues, the need to transport oneself or dependent members of the family to and from work/caring facilities on what available transport and to what costs, are together examples of capacity restrictions. The workplace location in relation to housing area and how to get there are parts of the second group or coupling restriction; and transport legislations and policies sets frames for what mobility projects that are possible to conduct, like pricing and time schedules for public transports, fuel costs and safe bicycle tracks. These are examples of institutional or steering restrictions. This third group of constraints

...relates to the time-space aspects of authority. The word is filled with a device which we may call the “control area” or “domain”...The purpose of domain...seems to protect resources, natural as well as artificial, to hold down people density, and to form containers which protect an efficient arrangement of bundles seen from the insides point of view of the principle.  
(Hägerstrand 1970 s.16)

When organising everyday life into specified projects, specific tempo-spatial arrangements develop, which are organised and led by organising principles. There becomes what Hägerstrand terms *pocket of local order*.

...such order requires that a specific definition of time-space is endowed with particular infrastructure and that it has a more or less formal system of regulation to facilitate the execution of the aforementioned activities. The system of regulation both regulates the activities within the pockets of local order as well as their interaction with the outside world. Activities thus demand a section in time-space that is well ordered to serve their function and that it can also be controlled so that this order may be maintained and respected.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Pred 1981 från Hägerstrand 1982 p. 336. Hägerstrand and Lenntorp 1974 p. 229.

<sup>16</sup> Hägerstrand 1985b p. 201.

<sup>17</sup> Asplund 1983. See also Giddens 1984 and Gregory 1985 for critics against the concepts of restrictions.

<sup>18</sup> Lenntorp, B 2004 p.225.

## **An introduction to the empirical examples on gender and mobility**

State feminism<sup>19</sup>, as in the case of gender equality policy in Sweden, demands gender analysis in all sectors of society. This implies that transportation systems and built environments should take gender equality into consideration.<sup>20</sup> Gender equality has to be taken seriously and policymakers need tools to detect, map and analyse gendered imbalances. In the empirical examples below, mobility patterns are connected to paid labour and the Swedish labour market situation. In Sweden, approximately 80 per cent of women participate in paid labour. The labour market is both horizontally and vertically divided by gender.<sup>21</sup>

About 40 percent of women with small children work part time. Parents with children younger than 8, are able, by law, to work reduced working hours.<sup>22</sup> However, women are the primary carers of children, and it is women who tend to reduce their working hours during this period of life. Women who opt for a career tend to work full time. Men, on the contrary, tend to increase their working hours when they get children. With these caring responsibilities, women's situation on the labour market is restricted; their workplace is usually situated much closer to home compared with men's. According to increased functional economic regions and extended local labour markets, women are, spatially, more restricted than men.

This spatial restriction indicates that the average daily trip to work and back is 16 kilometres and takes about 40 minutes. Divided by gender, men commute longer distances and using faster transportation. However, men spend more time commuting than women do.<sup>23</sup>

The research presented below stretches from the 17th century to the present day. Using historic data and cultural analysis helps to ask questions on today's gendered mobility. The examples presented below, discusses women's situations, but from a class perspective. Case 1 shows the dimension of class when analysing women's mobility in the 17th century. The example is based on historical archive studies, such as protocols used in the municipal courts and the Cathedral Church courts. They provide an insight in patterns of maintenance and gender-constructing.

Case 2 gives a clear example of the mixed emotions of family responsibilities: the ambitions to be successful in work life and still be thought of as a good and responsible mother. The case is based on research study circles with women working as secretaries and administrators. Four circles, with about 12 women in each, in two minor municipalities in Sweden, have been conducting time-geography diaries and have been interviewed. Altogether, the groups met seven times each, which has given a rich amount of qualitative material.

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<sup>19</sup> Briskin p. 12 in Briskin and Eliasson (eds.)1999.

<sup>20</sup> The Gender Equality Council for Transport and IT (Jämställdhetsrådet för transporter och IT – Jämit), SOU 2000:58, Swedish Government.

<sup>21</sup> National statistics 2008 (figures based on data collection from 2005). Women are working both in the public and private sector, 52 and 48 per cent respectively. All children aged 1 to 5 have legislative rights to participate in preschool caring. Children aged 6 to 12 are offered after school caring. The municipalities are obliged to offer children to working parents the amount of time families need. This service is heavily subsidized by taxes.

<sup>22</sup> Parents of children under the age of 8 are allowed to work reduced working hours, which equates to 75 per cent of full-time work.

<sup>23</sup> SIKÄ – Swedish Institute for Transport and Communications Analysis, 2008.

In the third case, this traditional role model of women and motherhood is challenged. In this research the interviewed women and men are living in career households and are long distance commuters. Living with children in this kind of households puts other strengths on the family. The face-to-face interviews were conducted in the informants' homes or workplaces, or a place that the informant chose. The interviews lasted between 20 minutes to one and a half hours. The interviews have been recorded and then transcribed. Inspired by grounded theory,<sup>24</sup> important concepts and sayings, inconsequential and unexpected standpoints have been focused on, in order to give a "thick description",<sup>25</sup> which have been analysed from a life-form-<sup>26</sup> and discourse analysis.<sup>27</sup>

### **Case I: 17th-century women's mobility**

In the 17th century, as today, men and women were spatially restricted and what time-spatial claims individuals aimed for depended on what projects were given space, the composition of restrictions and by who or what these restrictions were made.<sup>28</sup>

Contrary to today's positive-valued mobility, the 17th-century social organisation in Sweden was founded on geographical stability. Belonging to a household was the fundament for maintenance, and to obey the superior classes was as natural as it was to care for weaker and disabled people. Society was based on distinct social hierarchies with no mobility in-between. The self-sufficient household was the norm and natural economic unit in society. Still, both men and women did move through the landscape. Mobility was, however, restricted in various ways, which had to do with class, gender, age, civil status, purpose and/or the intention of the journey.

Everyone belonged to a household, either as a master or his wife or as a farmhand or maid. Wealth and prosperity was created through collective actions within the household.<sup>29</sup> The importance of, and the organisation of, the household was built on strict hierarchical order, especially between the sexes. The master was responsible for the household, and he was superior to his wife. His wife was, on the other hand, superior to farmhands, maids and children, and she was responsible for the work that took place inside the household. Women had no political or individual legal rights, and the only legitimate role for a woman was either as a wife and mother. Marriage was the normal symbol of stable society, but also a practical solution for the maintenance of the house. The symbol of the married woman was portrayed as moral and honourable and with status. These norms also dictated what mobility men and women, depending on social status and class, were able to conduct. Members of the household were obliged to participate in the service in the community church. The nobility were free to move in the landscape, even though women of nobility were incapacitated, they used their class position, which released them from unpaid labour duties and allowed them to move around making economic arrangements quite undisturbed. Networking became an empowering strategy for these

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<sup>24</sup> Strauss & Corbin 1990.

<sup>25</sup> Geertz. 1993.

<sup>26</sup> See Højrup. 1983.

<sup>27</sup> Fairclough. 1995.

<sup>28</sup> Means of transport, business/commission, social position etc.

<sup>29</sup> Ågren and Johansson 1994.

women, and mobility was a fundamental part of this networking.<sup>30</sup> The bourgeoisie had to do their trade journeys and men could move around the landscape in order to find work on daily basis. Class and gender collaborated in shaping normative values on men's and women's mobility.

There was, however, mobility which was forced by the local court. An individual that was found to be misbehaving could, by the powers of the local court, result in being banished from local society. Violent farmhands or soldiers were not considered as the main threat to local society or normal values, but single mothers were. Sexual relations outside marriage were banned, and they were punished by worldly and spiritual judgments. An unmarried mother was also exposed to punishments by the local community, as she represented the fallen woman and the antitheses to the established norm system. She was denied membership to the local community and was forced to mobility in order to make a living, trying to pass the town gates, which were closed to women like her, often making a living as a thief, beggar, prostitute or other untouchable works. As a consequence, wanderers became synonymous with marginalised people.

The 17<sup>th</sup> century women had no formal political rights. Social status, however, provided the noble woman with a *mobility prism* comparable to those of men's. Women in Sweden of today have reached the same political and formal rights as men. But women's and men's everyday life are generally not the same, which goes for reproductive responsibilities as for mobility. The dominant norm in Swedish society is heavily biased on traditional male norm values. These include participating in the labour market, working full time and commuting. Resources are not evenly distributed, and women still face risks of being abused or violated at home, in the workplace and when undertaking mobility projects. The analytical tools of time-geography can illuminate these aspects of risks and what else might be forgotten because it is thought of as common knowledge or trivial, such as having time for the family, being a good mother, having an interesting job or having to commute various distances in order to support oneself.

*The principle of return* helps to understand the impact which normative ideal on women's caring responsibilities still have today. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, women were not allowed to leave the farm. The farm was the *pocket of local order* where the master's word had to be obeyed by everyone, even his wife. It was only mobility forced by others that made women moving from the farm, such as visiting the church or, when sentenced to abjection by the local court in case of pregnancy outside marriage.

## **Case II: Katia in a gender transition period**

In the example given above, the two genders are best described as complementary to each other, fulfilling a "holy" unit which was the very principal, economically and politically, upon which society rested. Today's society differs of course, not only in the respect of women's increased mobility and the ability to create a life of their own, single mothers or not. The transition in the example below is related to the shift towards more individualistic social organisation, where the modern welfare state is a central part in organising people's lives. The welfare state both demands and makes it possible to participate on the labour market for women.

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<sup>30</sup>Norrhem 2007.

Katia lives with her husband and three children in a detached house just outside a small village in southern Sweden, in a sparsely populated region. There is no access to suitable public transport that would fulfil the needs and desire of the family's mobility patterns. Instead, the household has two cars, and, in the morning and evening, Katia brings her children to and from school and the day-care centre.

She works part time as an administrator of social security insurances, which is a quite a highly qualified role. She is ambitious and takes classes at the nearby university. Focusing on her work, her university studies and her family leaves her with little time. Twice a week, her husband picks up the children, but the journey: home – day-care centre – school – work and the trip back in the evening, weaves these four places together to a spatial web. Sometimes there are additions to the routine, as other items become included in day-to-day life, as in the example given below, from the *time-geography diary*, when Katia and her children visit the library and their grandparents' home.

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h.	07.20–07.30	driving	Mobility project 1
	07.30–07.35	leaving the kids at school	
	07.35–07.55	driving to the day-care centre	
	07.40–07.55	driving to work	
	13.30–13.40	walking to a nearby shop	Mobility project 2
	13.40–13.55	buying trousers	
	13.55–14.00	walking back to work	
	14.00–14.10	driving to the day-care centre	Mobility project 3
	14.10–14.20	picking up the kids	
	14.20–14.25	driving to school	
	14.25–14.30	picking up the kids	
	14.30–14.35	driving to the library	
	14.35–15.45	borrowing books, taking a coffee break	
	15.45–15.55	driving to the children's grandparents' home	Mobility project 4
	15.55–16.15	chatting with the children's grandparents	
	16.15–16.30	driving home	

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Katia's mobility projects.

In order to be able to take full responsibility for her family's needs and combining it with paid work, Katia needs to plan and carefully organise her week and handle a lot of *constraints*. She takes full responsibility for the internal requirements of the household, and her husband mainly focuses on activities outside the home, such as ensuring the vehicles are maintained. The household is a specific *pocket of local order*, and organizes differently compared to the 17th century, but the *gender-divided activity patterns* remain. Every *project* has to be measured out of time and place. It is also necessary for Katia to use a car because this enables her to be flexible and fits into her life, whereas public transport is not flexible. The *time-budget* conflict between work/education and family responsibilities is solved by Katia doing her university homework after 9pm and not putting an emphasis on being as a traditional homemaker with a sparkling clean home. On the

contrary, participating in higher education and engaging even more in her job than before has given Katia new ideas about womanhood. With her tight schedule, Katia has developed a programme which helps her to fulfil all of her tasks properly. Being self-sufficient gives her self-confidence; the tricky part is to combine the traditional motherhood expectations with those of a professional.

The normative values of motherhood and closeness to children and household responsibilities are still strong. Travel behaviour investigations states that women prefer to work near home, even if research is indicating that women spend more time on work and men spend more time with children than before.<sup>31</sup> Katia in the example above struggles with double loyalties of being both a caring and present mother and a professional. She is however, dependent on her husband taking interest in the vehicles. Without her car, she wouldn't be able to conduct all her *projects*. Her car, and not to be forgotten the day-care-centre, have become the liberating tools, which gives her the freedom to work outside home and still be the prime carer.

What's defined as woman/feminine and man/masculine has come to change over time.<sup>32</sup> Today's modern women, like Katia, have a spatial dispersed everyday life. Paid and unpaid labour are spatially separated, but also separated in time. Several of her tasks are traditional gender coded, though. From the gender equality legislation perspective, women leading their lives under these circumstances are defined as subordinated towards men. According to themselves, they've made a rational choice. This put emphasis on putting every single individual into her specific context. It also illustrates how modern gender equality policy prescribes one version of how to lead one's life but how old traditions and values where class, gender and ethnicity come through still play important roles in shaping values according to being a "woman". The traditional role of a homemaker has been overthrown for higher education and access to paid labour because the project of being a homemaker becomes less strong in peoples' construction of a labour market participating rationality even if this include increased daily mobility.

### **Case III: Eve in times of late modernity**

Modern Swedish, well-educated couples with career ambitions claim they share the burden of everyday life. Despite this gender equality, Swedish women still are the main carers and when household relocates, the workplaces of women are usually an important factor in choosing where to dwell. In this example this is not the case. Living in a city in southern Sweden of estimated 100 000 inhabitants, commuting for 1.15 hour single way isn't necessary to have a desirable job, but Eve is a long distant commuter. She is right though, when she says that she probably would have had even longer commuting hours if she lived in a metropolitan area, using public transport.

In this example I would like to discuss Eve's priorities out of a feminist and time-geographic perspective. First a brief description of her situation: Eve commutes 160 kilometres (one way) to her work as a designer in a global business. She leaves her husband and three children in the morning to take care of day-to-day life. Neither Eve nor her husband has any relatives living in

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<sup>31</sup> Hjorthol. 2008.

<sup>32</sup> Connell. R W 2002.

the area, and Eve says the family solves about 90 per cent of all household-related issues by themselves. The two elder daughters take their little sister to and collect her from the nursery. Eve's husband works only 15 minutes by bus from home and is usually home early in the afternoon.

Eve and her husband are well educated and love their jobs. They are pursuing their careers and put a lot of effort into their work. To Eve, it is important to be at the office most of the week, because spontaneous meetings often take place in corridors, and, since it is an innovative and creative milieu, it is easy to miss important events and opportunities if she isn't in there. She is also concerned about how family life affects her professional one. She plans her own workload which gives her the liberty of working from home time to time, usually one day a week. Sometimes she takes an earlier train home and is able to pick up her youngest daughter from the nursery herself. During her time on the train, she has work-related meetings with colleagues; reads work-related material; prepares e-mails or just relaxes. She refers to being a mother of a preschool child, and having three children gives no or a limited amount of time for your own needs. The time spent on the train gives Eve the opportunity to clear her head and to adjust to the other role, either as mother or as professional.

The main *spatial-temporal project* in this example is about combining long distance commuting with being a mother and a professional. Within this major project, there are several sub-projects such as managing the household together with her family, planning for job-related travels abroad, being mentally and physically at the spot for the children, taking children to and from activities in the evening, keeping social relations with parents and friends alive. In analysing the interview with Eve, her career ambition is somewhat superior to being a mother. Her two older daughters have given her the possibility to withdraw from some of the caring responsibilities, and sharing the household duties with her husband also gives her the opportunity to focus on her job. Commuting also legitimizes her departure in the morning; she needs to be on time, because of the train. This indicates that long distant commuting women might gain some freedom compared to women who work more close to the home. These women might be described as border crossers from a traditionally white feminine to a masculine behaviour in the labour market. To be able to fulfil this project, several others, like the daughters and the husband, have to take increased responsibilities, time-schedules need to be developed otherwise the project collapses.

Long distance commuting puts strength on the body. Time is needed to recover and relax from intense work life. Commuting by train is faster than by private car or bus, but also more expensive and comfortable. Even if she plans the work herself, she has to be at her office at least four days a week, because interesting meetings occur spontaneously, and she has ambitions. This puts spatial restrictions on her desire where to work from and when. She also travels in her work, which also puts restrictions on where she is when and these travels put extra burden to her daily commuting. The regional body of public transportation has during the last year expanded and without any advertising more and more people choose to commute by interregional trains.<sup>33</sup> This has led to a situation where there sometimes are no seats available. The political ambition on supporting "green" public transports and the desire by people to travel by train, has led to a

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<sup>33</sup> Interview with the development manager at the Public body of regional transport in Skåne.

situation of “unworthy travels”<sup>34</sup> for daily commuters, as they sometimes have to stand the way back home for an hour.

Putting a lot of effort on her work, she is challenging a traditional role model as mother and wife. In her work life career, she has more come to adjust to a traditional white, middleclass and masculinistic behaviour in work life. She is worried that her family interfere with her work life and she tries to separate the two spheres from each other. Still she uses nights to catch up with necessary correspondence by e-mail. Her work life tends instead to interfere with her private.

The regional development policy in Sweden argues strongly for increased mobility by the workforce and to support the ability to long distance commuting. Interregional trains are mainly in focus in this policy. Extended functional regions are a net effect of people’s increased work related mobility in general. The problem, however, is when a possibility – increased mobility, becomes compulsory, as for unemployed searching for new jobs. In a society where social security systems rests on self-sufficiency, there has to be questions asked from what perspective and whose position increased mobility and extended functional regions are being held. Time-geography can in this specific case, be of help to ask questions on whose mobility?

### **Time-geography and women’s mobility projects – a feminist reflection**

In the examples given above, time and space are fundamental structuring principles along with class and gender. What lessons can be drawn from these? One is that societal relations of power, norms and values are represented in these illustrations. The examples given are also illustrations on the everyday life’s necessary transports- and mobility projects. Still, these mobility projects need to be put in a spatial and societal context.

Inspired by the cultural turn within social sciences acknowledging women not as a homogenous but as a complex and heterogeneous social category, debates on how to make the physical body a subject of empirical interest are still relevant. The disregard of social constraints and empiric research has made us ask questions on how to discuss gender and embodied experiences. Mobility demands a bodily presence which is illustrated by these two examples; women working nightshifts change their journey to work because of imagined or real threats.<sup>35</sup> Pregnancy and public transport raises issues on the lack of seats or the spatial closeness to other people’s bodies, just as people who travel with small children on public transport find it hard to take a stroller on board or find somewhere to put it.<sup>36</sup>

To be able to discuss what mobility projects are possible to realize according to existing resources, the concepts of *prism* and *action space* might prove to be helpful. The above prism-figure visualizes the possible daily mobility of the three women in the cases. The prism with the shortest radius corresponds to the action space of the farmer’s wife in the preindustrial society. Next prism, with a wider radius, corresponds to an ordinary woman wage earner in Sweden today. The prism with the widest radius corresponds to a career woman who travels quite a long way in

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<sup>34</sup> Eve, quoted from interview.

<sup>35</sup> Andersson. 2001.

<sup>36</sup> Friberg. 2009.

order to combine a desired place to dwell with an attractive employment. This prism could however correspond to a woman of limited resources and therefore have to commute a long way to be able to combine an affordable dwelling with job opportunities. In this manner the prism illustrates the organization of the everyday life in time and space and at the same time the *principle of return*. If the women were pregnant, were travelling with children or needed a stroller the prism would probably have changed and got another shape.

Hereby the connection to classical feminist issues such as access to and distribution of socio-economic resources also becomes significant. Using the time-geography approach helps to describe under what given preconditions men and women try to organise their everyday lives.<sup>37</sup>

By using time-geography concepts, we might provide an understanding of what economic conditions structure everyday life according to geography and gender. We also might be able to describe the amount of time needed to fulfil various tasks and how individuals are forced to handle simultaneous demands – sometimes individuals tend to float between different activities that occur spatially close, which ends up in a complex array of everyday projects. The access of equipment, skills, knowledge and financial resources, together with political rights and the ability to enforce projects and have access to and control over place, is all about using a time-geographic frame for understanding various scales of society.

Time-geography is, as critics have stated,<sup>38</sup> a result of the modernist project with a linear time and where planning society and everyday life for the benefit of people was the goal. In the early research of time-geography, individuals were treated more instrumental, and the fact that men and women lead different kinds of lives, and did not share the same ideals in life, was acknowledged, but no one really worked with a qualitative understanding of gender. The research position is also, as some critics have argued, from a non-embodied all-seeing God<sup>39</sup>, laying the schemes and plans for mankind to accept.<sup>40</sup> What recent research with a time-geographic perspective has contributed is to allow the subjects' voices to be heard. Time-geography diaries have been followed up by reflection- and emotional diaries and in depth interviews, which provide research with an in-depth perspective.<sup>41</sup>

Arguing for a feminist perspective indicates a critical reading of time-geography. Hägerstrand discussed the topic of people within regional studies in 1970 but gender and feminism in time-geography was not acknowledged until 1990 in Sweden.<sup>42</sup> Women's liberation has, among other things, been about breaking gendered domains in the labour market. Feminism has also been about questioning resource distribution, like access to transport and access to caring facilities making it possible for mothers to have paid labour and be able to support themselves and their children. Late modern society brings challenges as policy documents insist on ecological, economic and social sustainability in Sweden. The challenge is to make these claims manifest in the *action room*, and illustrate and discuss how globalisation at different spatial levels integrates and

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<sup>37</sup> Jackson. 2001

<sup>38</sup> See Giddens. 1984, Gregory. 1985; Rose. 1993.

<sup>39</sup> Haraway, D 1988.

<sup>40</sup> Rose. 1993.

<sup>41</sup> Nordmark and Nordell, 2002.

<sup>42</sup> Friberg, 1990.

have impact on everyday life. By illuminate *time-spatial arrangements* on different geographical levels, it becomes easier to question policy making and the future of society. In this, we would like to stress power, orders, legislations and norms as being expressed through spatial arrangements, in which each person or groups of individuals have their own trajectory traceable through time and space. It is the practice that makes time-geography distinct. Its combinations of concepts help to discover principal standards. Time-geography offer a way to be spatially anchored, acknowledging the presence of space and the importance of proximity.

Time-geography works smoothly with social sciences, for example theories of life forms<sup>43</sup>, but there are, inevitably, areas within time-geography which could be developed further, such as the concept of *power*. To develop an understanding and receive satisfactory explanations about gendered mobility we need time-geography, but it must be in relation to other theories, such as for instance, *gender system*<sup>44</sup> and *gender contract*.<sup>45</sup> Pockets of local order and domains are imbued by interrelated power relations. By investigating the *strength*, *reach* and *hierarchy*<sup>46</sup> of these relations, changes are possible to develop and the force of resistance possible depict. This is the forthcoming step in our work on re-reading time-geography.

In this paper, we have chosen not to list numerous statistics regarding women's travel patterns in Sweden. Our ambition is, instead, to enforce public bodies and policymakers to take gender differences seriously and dig the gendered terms out of the non-embodied "man" in policy documents. Planning and built environment and its legislations and policy documents become of significant importance in this ambition.<sup>47</sup> Our experiences, when we meet policymakers, transport planners or politicians in order to present and analyze women's everyday lives in the way as above, it is easy to catch their interest because they identifies themselves or someone they know. By that, a discussion can start in which they have to take in consideration other things than physical infrastructure; namely how and who is using it and their needs. During the past decade the regional development policy in Sweden argues for increased labour force mobility and extended functional regions, which imply that more people are going to commute longer distances. This trend in Sweden has left marks in the economic- and transport politics and has more or less impacts on individuals.<sup>48</sup> The issue, from a feminist perspective, is that the debate focuses a gender-neutral person, with no caring responsibilities leading a career life form. In reality most women in Sweden have a wage earner life form and take great responsibility for their home and children.

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<sup>43</sup> Højrup. 1983.

<sup>44</sup> Hirdman, Y 1991.

<sup>45</sup> Hagemann, G & Åmark, K 2000, Esping-Andersen, G 2002.

<sup>46</sup> Turén, 1996.

<sup>47</sup> Greed. 2008.

<sup>48</sup> This is true because the Swedish welfare system is based on labour market participation.

Time-geography can visualize women's everyday life (and men's) and in that respect give an input to policymaking. Finally, to illuminate especially women's situation in an accurate way, new concepts need to be generated. A language which does not acknowledge multiple ways of leading everyday life will exclude and silence the ones who won't fit in the norm. One example of concept is *domain* which is difficult to illustrate by lines on a map. People waiting at the train station late at night, sharing the space with others who may be expressing sexist notions or confronting other people waiting for transport sets a kind of *gendered domain* or *pocket of local order*, which everyone there has to relate to. Travelling by crowded public transport also gives bodily experiences. Women, in particular, tend to develop strategies<sup>49</sup> to help them to provide a "secure" space of their own. Why women should have to identify these strategies in the first place, and establish a specific embodied awareness of themselves and others, in the second, can be taken for a society which still positions women and men differently and subordinates women toward men in public (mobility) spaces. Our purpose with this work is to make invisible connections visible, identify alternative voices and to get it included in public body of knowledge. There are multiple ways to exclude: one is to neglect situations and circumstances which not yet have names – these situations are invisible. The missing words are like black holes of repressed situations.

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<sup>49</sup> Friberg, 2009.

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