Servicescapes seen by visually impaired travellers

Time-geography approach to servicescape research

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Servicescapes seen by visually impaired travelers - Time-geography approach to servicescape research

Abstract:

Knowledge gaps remain in the study of servicescapes, since existing research on servicescapes tends to ignore major advances in the understanding of space and time as social phenomena. One aspect that particularly requires further study is how emerging constraints influence customers' interactions with organized service places. The time-geography approach was therefore applied to the current servicescape research to help to identify various constraints that blind and visually disabled persons (VIPs) experienced in a certain service place and time. A complementary usage of the concept of tactics illustrated how constrained customers responded to the constraints.

The overall research question - How do blind and visually impaired persons act and move in hospitality servicescapes? – was explored empirically through individual and focus group interviews and go-along observations of 56 blind and VIPs during 3.5 years. The study population was composed of residents of Sweden, Kazakhstan, and Germany.

The analysis was organized into two themes – *Competition of space-time projects and Tactical behavior: evaluating, mapping, and networking*. This was followed by a discussion of the analysis under the two headings *A scarcity of resources* and *A struggle for resources*.

This book concluded that emerging constraints are not only "created by" the organization of servicescapes, but are also due to the customers' insufficient capabilities. The outcome of an individual's action in service place depends on customer's capability to overcome unexpected constraints and available resources, such as time and an access to service offerings. Some of the key findings that emerged were that blind and VIPs were not passive recipients of services but rather developed tactical strategies to navigate within poorly organized servicescapes. In so concluding the book suggests that servicescape is a place of dynamic interplay between emerging constraints and the tactical behaviors of the constrained customers.

Key words: servicescape, time-geography, constraints, tactics, blind, visually impaired persons

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To my mother

For her advice, for her patience, and for her love

Content

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Helsingborg, 20 February, 2017

Alma Raissova

PART ONE

This book applies the time-geography approach to a servicescape research by applying this to concrete empirical material. More precisely, this book is about customers' interactions with physical and social surroundings of service places.

The aim of this book is to deepen the understanding of customers' interactions with servicescapes, by focusing on the blind and visually impaired customers in hotels.

The overall research question - *How do blind and visually impaired persons act and move in hospitality servicescapes?* – is explored empirically through individual and focus group interviews and go-along observations. The analysis of empirical materials is structured by means of the following questions: *In what way do the blind and VIPs experience constraints in hospitality servicescapes? How do the blind and VIPs respond to the constraints?*

The book consists of three parts. In Part One I introduce the topic of this research investigation. Part Two presents the empirical materials and their analysis. Part Three provides the discussion and the conclusion.

Chapter I
Introduction

"The hotel room was equipped with Braille signs and tactile paths. The furniture was placed conveniently and the layout was convenient as well. However, the room was damp. When I requested to change room, I was informed that there was not another available accommodation for visually impaired guests. I had a light cough plus it was during the bird flu epidemic. My cough would become worse in such a damp place. People could think that I have bird flu. I had to stay in that room for 2 months! So, every day I switched on the hot air from the air conditioner and simultaneously opened the window, so I could breathe. That dried out my room; however, when I came back home to Kazakhstan and opened my suitcase the smell of mildew was there." (visually impaired woman, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 08.21.2013).

A visually impaired guest experienced difficulties with the stay at a hotel. The woman was assigned to a room that was damp and smelled of mildew. In such accommodation she felt that she could not recover from her cough. Moreover, the customer was worried about being perceived as a having the bird flu. She felt that it was necessary to spend time to dry her room daily. The customer found a way to solve the problem and she did it without breaking the rules of the hotel.

"Having breakfast in Barcelona with my husband [also a visually impaired person], we wanted to have breakfast with just the two of us. We arrived very early and there were only two of us. We were thinking that the waiters would have more time to help us, because it was a buffet service. We spoke only Swedish and English and the waiters spoke only in Catalan. It worked, because we had the TIME [the emphasis by interviewee]. *We used oral and body language and it was good, because we were understood by the waiters. The next day it was easier, because they already knew us. We were served and the rest of the guests were seated around us."* (visually impaired woman, interview, Limhamn, Sweden, 03.31.2012).

A buffet breakfast is a barrier to visually impaired customers. It is difficult for them to find the position of meals, drinks, and cutlery by only using four senses (smell, sound, touch, and palate). Therefore, the customers with visual impairment

require additional time to manage the meal. But the visually impaired guests solved this problem. They came to breakfast early in the morning to allow the waiters to have more time to help them.

As the examples show, blind and visually impaired customers experience different problems at hospitality service facilities. Damp air in the hotel accommodation, a failure to change rooms, and a buffet breakfast are examples of *constraints*. These constraints are barriers, hindrances, difficulties, and troubles, which hinder, impede, prevent, and disturb disabled customers in service places that are planned and constructed around the needs and wants of all customers, regardless of physical ability. Constraints may vary from inconvenient ambience and design to problematic interactions with unskilled personnel and difficult adaptation in controlling domains such as, for instance, hotels' restrictive rules and norms.

In these cases, the mildewed air in the hotel accommodation and the buffet breakfast are unexpected constraints for the visually impaired customers. A smell of mold in hotel accommodation is a barrier, which limits the ability of a visually impaired customer to use the sense of smell. Unclear design of a buffet breakfast is difficult for persons with visual impairment. Crowdedness and noise in a public eating place are additional constraints, which may hinder visually impaired customers to navigate unfamiliar service places with help of their available senses. Hence, the blind and visually impaired persons (VIPs) experience emerging constraints in service places.

However, constrained customers were not passive. The woman with vision impairment knew that in a moldy environment her cough would become worse. She predicted that people may avoid her, because of the bird flu epidemic. To avoid these constraints, she dried the accommodation daily. For the visually impaired couple, a buffet breakfast was impossible without external assistance. The VIPs were aware that they would need help to have a buffet breakfast. Because the couple predicted a limited number of personnel during a buffet breakfast, they networked to gain personnel assistance in advance, and escaped further difficulties. The examples show that the actors evaluated service surroundings, did mappings by creating mental maps, and solved unexpected constraints.

Tourism and leisure researchers have studied the various constraints that hinder the activities of travelers with disabilities in service places (Poria *et al.* 2011, Small *et al*. 2012). Small and her colleagues (2012) depart from the concept of embodiment and analyze how visually impaired travelers experience various constraints in service places. They discuss various oppressive environments and attitudes, which customers with disabilities experience in the organized service places. Small and her colleagues classify all possible constraints under four themes: access to information, wayfinding (navigation), knowledge and attitudes

of others, and travelling with a guide dog (Small et al. 2012:945). Menus in small fonts and frustration with unclear position of food on the table are regarded as information constraints. Difficulties with finding one's way are related to inconvenient design and cause feelings of dependency and anxiety. Blind and visually impaired people have difficulties with navigation inside buildings, lack of Braille signs, poor lights and the lack of color contrasting, non-accessible emergency information (in a printed format and placed on the back of the door), and need for trained staff to the knowledge and attitude issues. The researchers call attention to the types of inclusion and exclusion that customers with disabilities experience in service places (Small et al. 2012).

Similarly, Poria *et al*. (2011) use the concept of disability and underline the challenges arising from the interactions of blind customers with hotel environments and their efforts to overcome these challenges. The researchers highlight the barriers and difficulties that the blind and visually impaired guests experience in hotels. Poria and his colleagues categorize difficulties and barriers by linking them to (1) types of environment (human or physical) and (2) emotions (pain, shame, frustration or all) (2011:578). The researchers suggest that organized service places may disable customers with vision impairment (Poria *et al*. 2011).

The blind and visually impaired customers are just like anyone else, and should be met with the same respect as a seeing person. However, the current study is not about a disability. Therefore, I do not address human rights and the non-discriminatory legislations, which would add definitely an interesting dimension to the analysis on the informants' experiences and consequences for the service providers.

Servicescape is the phenomenon under consideration in the current research investigation. In traditional servicescape research, the typical customer has no disability. Tourism and leisure researchers pay some attention to travelers with vision impairment (Poria *et al*. 2011, Small *et al*. 2012), but do not discuss the service process. Therefore, little is known about what happens at service places when customers with vision disability attempt to make use of the offered services.

The acts and the moves of the blind and visually impaired customers in hospitality servicescape are the focus of my research investigation. The roles of the blind and VIPs in this research are twofold. They are regarded as both travelers and hotel guests. These two functions cannot be separated, because the blind and VIPs stay in hotels when they travel.

My ambition is to look at servicescapes through the eyes of blind and VIPs. I use the time-geography tools (Hägerstrand 1970) to analyze customers' activities within man-made (Bitner 1992) service places. I complement the time-geography tools by the concept of tactics (de Certeau 1984) to understand customers'

decision-making processes. Consideration of time and space dimensions regard the servicescape as a place of social interactions (Aubert-Gamet and Cova 1999). The current research illustrates the servicescape as a dynamic, not a static place. I investigate *the process* of getting services, a topic which would be of interest for service studies. The research is important also for the entrepreneurs developing servicescapes.

The blind and VIPs are sensitive to various constraints in service places, because these customers use four senses. Although the VIPs may use some level of sight, they, similarly to blind people, navigate unfamiliar service spaces with a help of auditory, haptic, olfactory, and palate senses. In addition, interactions with unskilled personnel are likely to be emotionally intense for customers with vision disability (Small et al. 2012, Kaufman-Scarborough 2001). Various controlling domains such as no-pets rule, plastic key, buffet breakfast, etc. may limit their acts to move independently.

Organized service places tend to decrease customers' freedom to move (Baker *et al*. 2007, Daniels *et al*. 2005, Poria *et al*. 2011, Small *et al*. 2012). Customers get services only in the forms authorized by service providers. The blind and VIPs may react spontaneously or selectively on the external stimuli of service environments. Therefore, their behavior patterns may range from a simple reflex to a complex sequence of actions.

What is happening when blind and visually impaired guests experience constraints in hotels and resorts? By shedding light on customers' intentions with regard to accessing expected services, I investigate what is regarded as problematic for the blind and visually impaired. I also define how customers react upon limitations. These findings can help to gain a better understanding of the service process and to highlight that servicescape is a social place.

The outline of the chapter is as follows. The section 1.1 provides the background for this research. Next, a framework is introduced for an understanding of blindness and visual impairment. A brief explanation on how the concept of disability has been shaped by medical and social models of disability is given next. The following section 1.3 briefly describes my position as a researcher. The aim of this research is introduced in section 1.4. Finally, a chapter-by-chapter summary is presented in section 1.5.

1.1 Research background

Servicescapes are physical surroundings where services are rendered (Bitner 1992). Small stores and shopping malls, hotels and resorts, restaurants, cafeteria

and other public eating places are various physical examples of servicescapes within the retail and hospitality areas. Interactions with salespeople, hotel personnel, waiters in public eating places are integral parts of a servicescape (Baker 1987, Tombs and McColl-Kennedy 2003). Hence, servicescapes are physical locations where individuals temporarily act and move in order to get expected services.

Customers evaluate service places with the help of three interrelated factors of servicescapes (Baker 1987, Bitner 1992). *Ambient factors* include air quality, temperature, humidity, ventilation, noise, scent, and cleanliness in the service place. Ambient factors are noticeable in case of lack or nuisance (Aubert-Gamet 1996:29). In contrast, *design factors* can be clearly seen. The architecture, color, scale, materials, texture, shape, style, and accessories are esthetic, whereas layout, comfort, signage, and pattern are functional characteristics of interior design. Number and appearance of other customers and staff members and their behavior belong to *social factors* (Baker 1987). All three factors of the servicescape are aimed to create service environments. However, customers may be "unable to carry out the purpose of entering the environment, at least not very easily" (Bitner 1992:61). Hence, three interrelated factors of servicescapes may also constrain customers' acts and moves.

Constraints in service places

Tourism and leisure researchers focus our attention on how the blind and visually impaired people experience various constraints in service places (Baker *et al.* 2007, Daniels *et al.* 2005, Poria *et al.* 2011, Small *et al.* 2012). Baker *et al.* (2007) write that architecturally rich mall interiors hinder physical moves of visually impaired visitors by curved escalators, glass walls, flashing lights, etc. Blind and visually impaired persons have problems using the other four senses, because service places are designed for sighted customers. Thus, these researchers call the readers' attention to the disabling service environment (Baker *et al.* 2007).

The findings of Poria and his colleagues (2011) about the blind and VIPs in hospitality service places reveal that constrained customers experience negative emotions such as pain, shame, and/or frustration. According to the researchers, personnel often do not possess sufficient knowledge on how to serve customers with vision impairment. The blind and VIPs make extra efforts to confront limitations in service places (Poria *et al.* 2011).

Small, Darcy and Packer (2012) analyze travel experiences of visually impaired travelers, and find that VIPs have difficulties with navigation, access to information, and interaction to salespeople. Constrained VIPs often lose a sense of control in unfamiliar service environments. Therefore, visually impaired

customers might be excluded from the process of getting services. However, customers with disabilities act strategically by negotiating ongoing constraints (Small *et al.* 2012).

The researchers also raise the issue of customers' diversity and suggest that two persons with identical vision impairment may have different experiences of a similar service place (Poria *et al.* 2011, Small *et al.* 2012). These differences arise from an individual's expectations about a service place and her/his own perception of a disability (Poria *et al.* 2011:584). However, there is still a need to understand in what way customers experience constraints and how constrained customers behave.

The time-geography framework (model) of Torsten Hägerstrand (1970) identifies constraints that individuals experience in a certain place and time. The model focuses on individuals (Ellegård 1999). Every day individuals plan own activities. Their plans may change because of unexpected obstacles or barriers. The performance of individuals' activities depend on "natural and social resources, artifacts, time and space" (Ellegård 1999:168). There are many examples of this statement. Thus, in service place a young customer may move faster than a retired person may. Buffet breakfast may influence a blind customer by forcing her/him to spend extra time, whereas for a sighted guest it is an opportunity to save time. Therefore, customers differently experience similar service places.

Hägerstrand's (1970) initial work was primarily quantitative. His early research focused on migration and innovation diffusion. But time-geography evolved a "perspective on everyday working of society and the biographies of individuals" (Thrift and Pred 1981:277). Nowadays, both quantitative and qualitative research scholars actively employ the time-geography approach.

A main message of the time-geography approach is the idea of spatial closeness, or the interrelation of time and space (Friberg, Sanden, & Scholten, 2009). Every individual tends to plan daily activities, and therefore needs to consider a time dimension. However, the outcome of these activities is sensitive to an individual's capacity, and physical and social environments. A spatial closeness means that parallel processes "interfere and out concur one another because of limited resources" (Friberg *et al.* 2009:2). Thus, inconvenient ambience and design, interactional limitations, hotel internal rules and regulations, etc. may change planned activities of a blind customer. The time-geography can consider how customers act and move, and how physical and social elements of service places may influence customers' temporal activities. The time-geography approach can explain how individuals experience various constraints and how social environments influence individuals' decision-making processes (Friberg *et al.* 2009).

The time-geography approach adds to our understanding of social processes (Parkes and Thrift 1980). Why individuals do things is important to understand human intentions. But the time-geography approach explains what stops individuals from doing certain things. The time-geography approach captures a sequence of an individual's activities and co-existence of events as a dynamic map (Parkes and Thrift 1980). For example, service providers may think that hotel accommodations are accessible for blind customers. However, organized service places may hinder customers with vision impairment. Hence, servicescapes might be designed by sighted people for the blind customers as how sighted people understand them. However, blind customers may avoid inconveniences of the organized service place by using memory and other skills.

The time-geography framework identifies various constraints that an individual experiences in a certain place and time. These constraints are referred to as *space-time constraints* (Hägerstrand 1970). According to the time-geography framework, all space-time constraints belong to the following three groups: capability, coupling, and authority (Hägerstrand 1970).

The *capability constraints* include human capabilities and characteristics of infrastructure that limit activity participation (Yu and Shaw 2007). Any human activity requires time. Some activities such as sleeping or eating are impossible to escape. Other activities depend on the available time. Individual's skills and resources are another subset of capability constraints. For example, a transparent door is a barrier for the visually impaired customer (Kaufman-Scarborough 2001). Visual impairment itself is a capability constraint. A soundless and transparent door might be regarded as a capability constraint, which hinders the VIP to navigate by senses of sound and touch. Therefore, capability constraints may limit an individual's involvement in various activities.

The *coupling constraints* belong to the individual's interactions with others in order to participate in certain activities (Yu and Shaw 2007). The coupling constraints include time to socialize, to communicate, to cooperate, etc. Poria *et al.* (2011) revealed how personnel behaved towards customers with visual impairment. Thus, the staff spoke loudly and slowly, and failed to assist visually impaired customers. The study of Small *et al.* (2012) discussed how social attitudes of service providers negatively influenced travel experiences of visually impaired customers. An interaction with non-qualified personnel is a coupling constraint, which hindered customers' activities in hospitality places.

The *authority constraints* are norms and rules, which limit the performance of individuals' acts and moves at a certain time and place (Yu and Shaw 2007). The blind sociologist Rod Michalko (2002) describes his "two-hour marathon on the telephone" to find hotel accommodation accessible for the blind guest with a guide

dog (Michalko 2002:4). No-pets regulation is the authority constraint, which hinders customer's desire to stay in hospitality service places.

In the current research, together with the space-time constraints, some additional time-geography tools can be of help to understand customers' interactions in hospitality space during time period (f.e. stay in a hotel). These tools are: *space-time station, space-time path, space-time prism, and space-time project* (Hägerstrand 1970).

The space-time station is a physical location where individuals have various activities, such as walking, talking, sleeping, eating, entertaining, etc. In the current research, a lobby, accommodation, eating place, and a hotel in general are regarded as *hospitality servicescape stations*.

The space-time path traces physical movements of an individual in a certain place and time. I consider physical moves and acts of hotel guests during their temporal stay in hospitality service places as space-time paths or space-time trajectories. *Space-time prism* depicts an area of customer's activity. *The space-time project* is a customer's intentional act to attain a goal, or to get expected services.

The time-geography tools help to understand individuals' activities as *a process* (Scholten *et al.* 2012). Every day individuals develop different actions, such as moving, working, eating, entertaining, etc. These acts and moves can be visualized by space-time trajectories. Any activity includes a series of mini acts that lead to a particular result. These acts are mini-projects, which are integral parts of a big space-time project. For example, an individual intends to have a breakfast. It is a space-time project. A buffet breakfast is a system of serving meals in which meals are placed in a public area. Diners serve themselves. Usually they view the food and then select which dishes they wish. The diners also decide how much food they take. But the acts of diners might be changed by many unexpected situations, as, for example, a noise from bar or restaurant. Then, the process of getting services might get slower. The time-geography approach helps us to compare space-time projects of individuals and to understand whose project is successful and why (Scholten *et al.* 2012). Space-time paths and space-time prisms of sighted and visually impaired persons at service place differ. Although two individuals may develop their space-time projects, a customer with vision disability may get fewer services compared to a sighted customer. Hence, the time-geography tools can provide an understanding of what social conditions structure individuals' everyday activities (Scholten *et al.* 2012).

The time-geography approach is a basic framework, which every researcher can connect to a theoretical consideration in his own way (Lenntorp 1999:158). In this research I complement the concept of constraint from the time-geography framework by the concept of tactics, to deepen our understanding on what is

happening in servicescapes when the blind and VIPs experience various constraints. I will apply the concept of tactics (de Certeau 1984) to understand customers' behavior towards emerging constraints in hospitality servicescapes.

Michel de Certeau elucidates the concepts of strategy and tactics. There are three essentials that characterize strategic use of the place, or the "ownership of a place" (de Certeau 1984:36). These essentials are: (1) control over time; (2) ability to predict; (3) knowledge and experience. The lack of one forces a strategist to act tactically. Similarly, travel strategies of the blind and VIPs might be influenced by various constraints in the organized service places. Therefore, constrained customers may develop different tactical acts and moves to overcome constraints and to get expected services.

Since this research investigates an intentional use of service places by the blind and visually impaired customers, I start by introducing what is written about blindness and visual impairment. What are the physical, social, and psychological characteristics of a visual impairment? How is it to be a blind person in a public place? What is a society's perception of blindness? How does this research consider the blind and the visually impaired travelers? I answer these questions in the following section.

1.2 Blindness and visual impairment

The previous section introduced the background of this research. Servicescape is a physical place where customers temporarily act and move. Customers with vision disability may experience various constraints in the organized servicescapes. The time-geography tools and the concept of tactics could help to investigate what is happening at servicescape when the blind and VIPs intend to get expected services.

In this section, I draw upon existing writings about blindness and visual impairment, due to my focus on the blind and VIPs at servicescapes. The first part provides brief information about blind and visually impaired people. The next part describes two models of disability.

The nature of blindness

In his *Letter on the Blind for the Use of Those Who See* Diderot alleges: *"One of our company thoughts was to ask our blind man if he would like to have eyes. 'If it were not for curiosity," he replied, "I would just as soon have long arms: it seems to me my hands would tell me more of what goes on in the moon than your eyes or*

your telescopes" (Diderot 1749 in Kleege 2005:181). The short excerpt from an essay by Diderot reveals that congenitally blind people must learn "to see" if they suddenly happen to be sighted.

Although lacking eyesight, blind people appreciate beauty. The photographer and writer Sophie Calle (Calle 2011) asks congenitally blind people what their image of beauty is. She got different answers like: *"The most beautiful thing I have ever seen is the sea, the sea going out so far you lose sight of it"; "At Versailles, I like the sequence of the gardens, the pools, the artificial lakes. It is magnificent. The Gallery of Mirrors overlooks them. You have to see it from there. You take in everything and that is what I like, the general effect. My glance embraces the scene, it is described to me and I transpose"; "White must be the color of purity. I'm told white is beautiful. So I think it's beautiful. But even if it weren't beautiful, it would be the same thing."* (Calle 2011). Blind people perceive beauty by ears, touch, smell, and palate (Dann and Dann 2011:3), and blindness does not hinder them to evaluate the environment.

Born blind may accurately conceptualize that the color "blue" is "cool" and "red" is "hot" (Jones and Broadwell 2008:287). Blind people use information to form spatial representations of temperature, sound, and tactile sense, such as texture, elasticity, and wetness (Jones and Broadwell 2008:287). In conversations "seeing" has a much wider meaning than simply to perceive with the eyes. Thus the word "see" means "identify", "understand" or "meet" (Dann and Dann 2011). A hug and to be hugged mean "acceptance and love" for dually sensory impaired (blind and deaf) (Dann and Dann 2011:15). Congenitally blind people never experienced the sense of vision and therefore they do not know any difference. But what is blindness for those who have lost the sight during the course of the life?

People react to the accidental loss of vision in much the same way (Michalko 1998, Scott 1969). *"There is a shock that comes from so enormous a blow to self and personality; there is grief that results from the loss of basic skills for coping everyday life; and there is the depression that accompanies the disorganization of total personality"* (Scott 1969:6). One can identify a "newly blind" person by seven types of losses: the loss of psychological security, the loss of skills of mobility, the communication loss (reading, writing), the appreciation loss (visual perception of environment), the loss of occupational and financial status, the loss of personal independence, and the physical loss (Scott 1969:82). The adjustment to the blindness and the acceptance of the fact of inability to see, as well as the necessity to learn new skills, makes a person independent (Michalko 1998, Scott 1969). In contrary, the rejection of the blindness turns a person helpless and dependent (Michalko 1998, Scott 1969).

Most sighted people have limited information on what blindness is (Scott 1969:21). What is it like to be a blind? All "blindness" is not the same, and only

15% of blind people "see" darkness. Sight impaired authors explain how blind people "see": "…pretend your fist is your eyes" (Michalko 1998:13). It is like stretched forward hands when playing a blind man's buff. The moving technique is translated by a cane, which is actually "an extension of your index finger" (Michalko 1998:12). Foot and acoustics help mapping the path (Michalko 2002, Saerberg 2010). Touch "allows … to appreciate things for what they really are" (Husson-Therese-Adele 1825 in Kleege 2005:184). Thus, the last scene of Charles Chaplin's film "City Lights" (1931) illustrates how the girl, whose sight has been restored by an operation, recognized her savior only by touching his hands.

Senses help the blind and VIPs to have a meaningful relationship with the environment (Pow 2000). Pow (2000) writes that visually impaired persons must use their auditory, haptic, and olfactory perception to a much greater extent than sighted people in order to understand the environment. Thus, for VIPs, sound attaches character and meanings to particular places. Indirect tactile sensation through the cane navigates them, whereas olfactory senses can help to indicate locations such as food producing places or hair salons. In addition, some VIPs report how their "sixth sense" helped them to avoid hindrances: *"Sometimes you just know it – you can feel that something is in front of you without even touching or hearing it. You just know it is there"* (Cheok, aged 42, visually-impaired)" (Pow 2000:175). Hence, non-visual senses play an important role in the spatial experiences of blind and visually impaired persons.

Unlike blind people, VIPs can recognize the difference between light and darkness and/or may perceive color, light and movement to some extent (Richards 2013). Some have limited peripheral vision and/or may retain the acuity to read and recognize facial expression (Kleege 2005). Sight impairment includes six main characteristics: "visual acuity, contrast sensitivity, the field of vision, color vision, movement vision, and stereoscopic vision" (Fürst and Vogelauer 2012:372). Although VIPs cannot see details, they can often follow a path in front of them or find the door. VIPs utilize numerous reference points and elements such as tactile area, smell and sound and use terms like "warmth", "smell" or "feel" (Furst and Vogelauer 2012), in similarity to blind people. When some senses are lacking, then others become more sharpened to compensate the loss (Kleege 2005, Saerberg 2010, 2011, Scott 1969), and some senses can be multiplied by "subdividing into a number of discrete sensory activities", similarly to the way that VIPs identify different aspects of touch by texture, temperature, and vibration (Kleege 2005:187).

VIPs require extra efforts to move in unfamiliar spaces (Anderberg and Jönsson 2005, Packer et al. 2008). Limitations in hand-rails, signs, colors, and texture codes make blind people less mobile (Imrie 2000:1645). The interviewed VIPs noted a lack of auditory elevator cues, unsecure road crossings, inaccessible

customs declaration forms, and difficulties with currencies (all paper bills were the same size and color) (Yau et al. 2007). The biggest barriers are those that the blind and VIPs experience in eating and drinking establishments (Bi et al. 2007:207). People with vision impairment describe a lack of round tables, low intensity lights and sounds, and summoning of the waiter by using a button as the most problematic (Faria et al. 2012). Limited access to the server and the feeling of shame when it becomes impossible to consume are two main barriers for the blind and VIPs in a public cafeteria (Faria et al. 2012).

The blind and VIPs assess physical barriers for the walking as more prevalent than attitudinal (Bi et al. 2007, Packer et al. 2008). Color contrast and lighting may obscure information for visually impaired people. On the other hand, colors may deliver messages to potential buyers (Kaufman-Scarborough 2001). A hazy area, shaded colors, difficulties with checkout and information on receipts, as well as the need of external assistance from the retailer' side hinder the blind and VIPs. People with vision impairment have a risk of various unintentional injuries, such as falls, burn, drowning, fractures, trauma, traffic accidents, and occupational and home accidents (Legood et al. 2002).

The blind and VIPs navigate unfamiliar spaces with the help of four senses. Blind sociologist Saerberg (2010) shares that his own feet provide an image of the place: "a stone platform, metal escalator steps, or asphalt". Sounds and acoustics around give him a sense of the "nature and locations of objects", as well as with the "direction of movement". Smell helps to create an "olfactory map", whereas touch provides "skin sensation guidance" (Saerberg 2010:370). With the help of four senses, the blind person develops tactical acts and moves to avoid dependency on physical surroundings.

Sight impaired people value travel activities (Small et al. 2012). Regardless of residual vision degree, VIPs are different in their ways of value perception (Kleege 2005:187). An identical impairment does not mean identical reason for the traveling (Chen 2004). According to service researchers, customers' perception of a hotel accommodation, eating and public spaces depend on the individual's own expectations, not from their physical abilities (Packer et al. 2008, Poria et al. 2011). In addition, an "attractive" hotel for travelers with disabilities means "far above" from what is required by a legislation (Poria et al. 2011:584). Moreover, non-accessible physical and social environments negatively influence the visual functioning of VIPs in the service places (Nascimento dos Santos and de Carvalho 2012).

A low vision is based on the low visual acuity (how clear the vision is) (Richards 2013). In clinical terms, "low vision" as well as "blindness" are defined as chronic disabling vision impairments that cannot be corrected with glasses, contact lenses, or medical or surgical treatment (Massof 2006). Thus, a visual acuity for normal

vision is 20/20 or better, and for blindness it is 20/200 or worse. Since a visual acuity is reported as a ratio, the top number is the distance at which the letters on the eye chart are read (a test distance of twenty feet). The bottom number in the ratio refers to the size of the letters on a particular line of the vision chart. The 20/200 letters on the vision chart are ten times larger than the 20/20 letters (Massof, 2006). A visual acuity can also be expressed as a single number: the ratio 20/20 is equal to one, and the ratio 20/200 is equal to 0.1. The latter means almost blindness. The visual acuity for 0.3 means that a person can see only silhouettes and can move only during day time in a well-known environment (usually it is from the bus stop to the living place and back). In this research I have observed and/or interviewed the blind (both congenitally and adventitiously) and the vision impaired people with the visual acuity 0.1 (GI) and 0.3 (GII).

Finally, I would like to call the readers' attention to the following facts: (1) VIPs primarily make use of ears, touch, smell, and palate in their everyday activities; (2) two VIPs with identical level of vision impairment perceive the same service environment differently. These two facts are of importance for my investigations of how organized service places may influence the acts and the moves of the blind and visually impaired customers (see chapters 5-8).

Disability models

The term "disability" is complex (Bruce 2014). The meaning of the term "disability" ranges from an inability of the human body to function physically to social restrictions in public spaces. It also comprises the human rights tradition (Bruce 2014). Therefore, the term "disability" is used in various aspects of human life, from the individual level to social interactions between individuals.

For a long time society's perception of disability has been dominated by two models: medical (or individual) and social (Richards 2013). The two models introduce two different approaches to understanding the disability phenomenon (Bruce 2014).

The medical model denotes limited physical conditions of individual(s) and suggests doctor-patient level of interactions between individuals with and without disability. Therefore, this model views disability as a personal tragedy (Richards 2013:36).

The medical model defines disability as recommended by WHO's Disability Classification System (1980) and the United Nations Enable (2009) (Bruce 2014):

- "A disability is any restriction or lack (resulting in impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for human beings" (WHO 1980, United Nations Enable 2009);

- "Impairment is any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function" (WHO 1980 United Nations Enable 2009).

Hence, these definitions acknowledge impairment and take into account people who lack the ability to participate in mainstream social activities, because of biological, cognitive, sensory, or psychological differences that are defined within a medical context (Goodley 2011).

Whereas the medical model of disability is based on medical explanations of individual human conditions, the social model of disability considers the disabling environment (Goodley 2011). The social model was developed in Great Britain in 1970s by activists of the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS), and received academic credibility through publications of Barnes (1999), Finkelstein (2001), Oliver (1996), Shakespeare and Watson (2002).

The social model proposes that public spaces are designed for non-disabled people (Darcy and Buhalis 2011), and persons with disabilities (PwD) are a socially oppressed group (Shakespeare 2002). Non-accessible physical environment and social, economic, political, cultural, relational, and psychological barriers isolate PwD in public spaces. Therefore, the social model of disability focuses on changes required in society.

The two general models of disability (medical and social) are characterized by two alternative perspectives (Bruce 2014). The medical model considers PwD as dependent upon society, and denotes segregation. The social model leads to an equality of human rights and integration, and considers PwD as independent and able to participate in decision making process. Therefore, the disability models reflect a view of the society or the ways in which the society regard the disability phenomenon (Bruce 2014).

The two alternative perspectives remain a central theme of the debates around disability activists and academics (Goodley 2011). These debates result in various interpretations of medical and social models. For example, a removal of socially constructed barriers and implementation of non-discriminatory policy cannot change the physical abilities of disabled people: "there are things to be seen, heard and done, which cannot be seen, or heard, or done by the blind, the deaf, and the lame whatever the social conditions" (Harris 2000:98). Therefore, it is quite reasonable to complement the medical model with the social model in order to better understand the disability phenomenon.

Ongoing debates have blurred the boundary between the disability models. Thus, second-wave social model theorists have proposed the affirmation model (Goodley 2011). The main idea of the affirmation approach is a desire of PwD to be perceived as "equal, but different" (Swain and French 2000:578). This approach

has been received well (Goodley 2011). According to some debates, for example, people with disability could benefit by getting better social status (education and employment), and avoiding sexual harassment. It is important that researchers with disabilities also are actively involved in these discussions (Swain and French 2000).

Unlike the social model, the affirmation model rejects the notion of the "disabling society" and identifies a disability as only a small part of a person. Actually, having minimum visual acuity VIPs can be characterized as "sighted people who experience difficulty of seeing" (Scott 1969:43). Moreover, blind people can be named as "sighted people with the sight missing" (Michalko 2002:63).

In this research project, I advocate the affirmation model of disability. This model requires me to understand disability as a part of the human condition (Richards 2013). An affirmation model does not manifest disability as a personal tragedy. According to this model, people in a society are not divided into disabled and non-disabled. Age and illness may cause a disability. Therefore, the majority of people are "temporarily" non-disabled.

Behavior of the customers with disabilities

How do people with disabilities behave in service settings? A review of disability, tourism, and service research literature revealed that the behavior of customers with disabilities may range from passive and "voiceless" to active and independent (see Chapter 2).

A helpful start is the research of Shaw and Coles (2004). Their findings from the survey revealed that hotel customers with disabilities experienced the "lack of medical and personal care helpers", "were treated less favorably at meal time", and had a very limited range of holidays taken compared to the non-disabled people (Shaw and Coles 2004:401). The holiday process was stressful for customers with disabilities, because of a lack of physical access and offensive remarks of personnel marginalized customers with disabilities. The researchers found that customers with disabilities depended upon organized service places.

The findings of Baker *et al.* (2007) revealed how customers with disabilities were "unwelcomed" in retail stores. A door placement, a height of the checkout counter, a spacing between racks, etc. hindered customers' activities (Baker *at al.* 2007:166). Interviewed customers with disabilities expressed the feelings that service places are not for people "like them" (Baker *et al.* 2007:170). Customers were unable to control service surroundings, and acted as "voiceless".

Inconvenient design of service spaces restricts customers' freedom and forces them to follow certain basic rules of consumer behavior. An example of recent

writers who have summarized this position is Small *et al.* (2012). Their findings from qualitative research revealed that visually impaired travelers want to have control over their environments. To be independent, customers with disabilities negotiate ongoing constraints. They may "put their faith in strangers and assume that any difficulties would work out in the end", "ask others for help", or use four senses to navigate in service places (Small *et al.* 2012:946). This approach is also seen in the research of McKercher and his colleagues (McKercher *et al.* 2003). Constraints force PwD to take personal initiatives, to be able to collect reliable information, to manage the trip, to manage oneself, and to reflect on experiences (McKercher *et al.* 2003).

In my research initially I was led by the idea "to give voice to the voiceless". I found from the textual analysis how organized service environments disabled customers with vision impairment, and how these customers experienced abuse. However, field work enabled me to observe VIPs' decision making processes and to investigate their navigation techniques (Capriano 2009:267). The findings of the individual and focus interviews confirmed my understanding of VIPs' spatial practices (Kusenbach 2003:463).

1.3 Aim and structure of the thesis

The aim of this research is to deepen our understanding of customers' interactions with servicescapes. This research gap is addressed through the specific case concerning how blind and visually impaired customers behave (act and move) in hospitality servicescapes.

For this purpose, I use the concept of constraints from the time-geography framework (Hägerstrand 1970) and the concept of tactics (de Certeau 1984). The concept of constraint helps to depict all possible limitations of customers' activities in hospitality servicescapes. Consequently, it may help to specify the necessary conditions for the individual's interactions with "man and man made objects" (Pred, 1977:209). The concept of tactics (de Certeau 1984) helps to explain customers' behavior towards emerging constraints. The complementary usage of these two concepts may deepen our understanding of customers' interactions with service environments.

The research question is approached through two sub-questions:

(1) In what way do the blind and VIPs experience constraints in hospitality servicescapes?

(2) How do the blind and VIPs respond to the constraints?

By answering these questions, the main research question is addressed, which is *How do blind and visually impaired persons act and move in hospitality servicescapes?*

In the current research I examine customers' activities in hotel lobbies, accommodations, and eating-places. The lobby is a physical place where customers try to get something they want by talking to the personnel, i.e. the people who make decisions. The accommodations are physical places were hotel guests can sleep and find other services. In the hotel eating-places, the customers eat a meal and communicate. Therefore, I explore customers' interactions with servicescapes of hotel lobbies, accommodations, eating places, and with hospitality servicescapes in general.

1.4 Thesis route finder

The thesis is divided into three parts. Part One includes four chapters.

Chapter One introduces the topic, outlines the nature of blindness and visual impairment, the author's position in this research investigation, and presents the overall aim of the book.

Chapter Two, *Travelers with disabilities in service places*, critically explores tourism, leisure, and disability literature in tourism within the PwD context, and in particular, how these research fields describe travelers with disabilities. The chapter identifies research gaps concerning travelers with disabilities in service places. The chapter analyses also previous literature on the role of time and space dimensions in servicescapes and critically reviews a servicescape conceptual framework.

Chapter Three, *Service process in the perspective of the concept of constraints and the concept of tactics*. This chapter critically explores the time-geography tools in servicescape research. The chapter provides the rationale for the need to combine the concept of space-time constraints with the concept of constraints in leisure research. The chapter explains how the concept of tactics may complement the concept of constraints to understand customers' activities in servicescapes.

Chapter Four, *Methods and materials*, presents a research methodology based on the primacy of space-time constraints and tactics in understanding customers' interactions with hospitality servicescapes. The chapter describes how research concepts and analytical themes were identified.

Part Two includes four chapters.

Chapter Five, *Lobby station,* reveals empirical materials and their analysis. The materials illustrate how the blind and VIPs interact with constructed servicescapes in hotel lobbies, corridors, retail, and public transportation places.

Chapter Six, *Accommodation station,* reveals empirical materials and their analysis. The materials illustrate how the blind and VIPs interact with constructed servicescapes in hotel accommodations and public toilets.

Chapter Seven, *Eating place station,* reveals empirical materials and their analysis. The materials illustrate how the blind and VIPs interact with constructed servicescapes in hotel eating places and public eating places outside of a hotel, such as public canteens, cafeterias, and restaurants.

Empirical materials for chapters 5, 6, and 7 were collected by individual and focus group interviews, go-along observations, and augmented with excerpts from on-line customers' testimonials (virtual outputs).

Chapter Eight, *Exploring hospitality servicescape from the time-geography perspective,* reveals empirical materials and their analysis concerning how two customers, sighted and visually impaired, experienced common service places. Empirical materials were collected by observation methodology.

Part Three includes one chapter.

Chapter Nine, *Discussion and conclusion,* answers the central questions: (1) In what way do blind and VIPs experience constraints in hospitality servicescapes? (2) How do blind and VIPs answer the constraints? The chapter summarizes the main results and draws conclusions. The chapter deepens our understanding of how customers interact with constructed servicescapes. The chapter discusses the consideration of space and time dimensions, as well as customers' capabilities, within a servicescape framework.

Chapter II
Travelers with disabilities in service places

In the previous chapter, I introduced the topic of this research investigation, outlined the nature of blindness and visual impairment, positioned myself, and presented the overall aim of the book.

The aim of this chapter is twofold. First is to identify potential research gaps in the research about travelers with disabilities. Research studies of tourism, leisure, and disability are the source material for investigating the needs of customers with disabilities.

A second aim of this chapter is to focus the study. I would like to call the readers' attention to the findings from the textual analysis about travelers with disabilities. These findings are centered around the phenomenon known as servicescape, and this is the key phenomenon of the current research investigation.

2.1 Research on travelers with disabilities: what is still missing?

A textual analysis of tourism, leisure, and disability research literatures revealed how society's perception of the travelers with disabilities has been changing. In the early publications, travelers with disabilities were referred to as "handicapped persons" (see Woodside and Etzel 1980). Society perceived them as dependent and compliant (see Xiao-Ting and Bi-Hu 2012). People with disabilities were not considered as active travelers, because of a dominance of the medical model of disability (see Chapter 1).

Nowadays the tourism market for travelers with disabilities is regarded as a "consumer niche" (Bizjak *et al.* 2011, Burnett and Baker 2001, Christofle and Masseira 2009, Dwyer and Darcy 2011, Ozturk *et al.* 2008, Ray and Ryder 2003). Tourists with disabilities have a higher proportion in budget travels, and smaller

proportions in luxury, adventure and nature-based travels (Dwyer and Darcy 2011). Although PwD travel on the same level as non-disabled people on day trips, they spend significantly less for overnight and for outbound trips. But when the provision of accessible accommodation is included, travelers with disability have the same rates for the overnight and outbound travel. PwD travel several times per year for the purpose of vacations, visiting relatives, and for medical needs (Dwyer and Darcy 2011).

As may be seen, society's perception about travelers with disabilities has changed significantly. The current trends in tourism and leisure research relate to a social model of disability, civil rights campaigns, and policies of the governments (Packer *et al.* 2008). Now PwD are recognized as active travelers, although they still travel less than people without disabilities.

Disability and tourism researchers state that participation in leisure time activities for PwD is the opportunity to experience a variety of physical, social, and psychological benefits (Janke *et al.* 2008, Lovelock 2010, Stumbo *et al.* 2004, 2007, 2009, 2011). Stumbo et al. 2007 point out that travelers with disabilities have similar outdoor interests as people without disabilities The traveling inspires PwD with a sense of community and improves a quality of life. People with disabilities narrate how leisure and recreation improves their interactions with non-disabled travelers, and how they become more socially active. The interactions between disabled and non-disabled travelers involve the former in different social activities and give them a chance to be satisfied by the life (Janke *et al.* 2008, Stumbo *et al.* 2007). Hence, traveling helps PwD to be socially active.

Tourism and leisure studies state that the majority of travelers with vision impairment do not consider their disability as a barrier for the traveling (Small *et al.* 2012, Yau *et al.* 2004). A lack of sight does not hinder the blind and VIPs to enjoy the traveling because they exploit smell, hearing, touch, and palate to experience travel destinations. Although the bodily experience of tourism appears to be different compared with the sighted travelers, the blind tourists use common descriptive words such as, "smells", "touch", or "sound" (Yau *et al.* 2004:956). Their travel pleasures, benefits, and anxieties of travelling are in many ways the same as those of sighted tourists (Small *et al.* 2012:944). For the blind and VIPs, tourism is a form of socializing which helps to explore new interests, gain advantages, manage everydayness, increase networking, and accept their disability (Yau *et al.* 2004:950). Traveling helps the blind and VIPs to experience a sense of independence, by responding to the challenge of a personal journey, and by learning how to look after themselves (Yau *et al.* 2004:950). Therefore, for the blind, tourism is more a journey than a sightseeing (Richards 2013).

Tourism and leisure researchers suggest that travelers with disabilities are loyal customers (Burnett and Baker 2001, Stumbo and Pegg 2005). They are more likely

to revisit the service places that best served their needs. PwD are devoted to service places where they are accepted and appreciated for who they are regardless of their physical ability (Burnett and Baker 2001, Lovelock 2010, Stumbo and Peterson 2009). An investigation on customers' loyalty to travel destinations has identified that PwD value a sense of freedom (Anderson and Brown Kress 2003, Dattilo 2002, Edwards, 1995) and a sense of independence (Baker *et al.* 2002, Lovelock 2010). For example, VIPs wish to be independent by being able to read the menu, follow the hostess to the table without needing special assistance, being able to deal with the check and tip (Baker *et al.* 2002). Hence, customers with disabilities feel themselves independent when organized service places meet their needs.

Even if the disability can be similar, people seem to perceive services differently (Chen 2004, Packer *et al.* 2008, Poria *et al.* 2011). In their exploratory study, Poria *at al.* (2011) found that travelers with disabilities experience different barriers at service places. Thus, wheelchair users have difficulties in hotel rooms, shower and toilet places whereas the blind and VIPs feel unsafe in hotel public areas and in the rooms. Customers with disabilities are not alike. Two customers with identical disability could differ in the experience of service environment due to their different perceptions of their impairments (Poria *et al.* 2011:584). Therefore, regardless of a similar level of disability the customers behave differently within identical service places.

Poria *et al.* (2011) found cross-national differences with regard to "accessibility" of hospitality service places (2011:584). The researchers defined the term "accessibility" as physical and non-physical difficulties, which prevent customers to satisfy hotel experiences. They also found out that hotels in different countries might follow different accessibility standards, which are connected to the cultural differences, for example. Therefore, what is regard as accessible for the local customers may cause a problem for the travelers from foreign countries (Poria *et al.* 2011). Hence, a cultural diversity may influence customers' perceptions of service places, and therefore shape customers' behavior.

Tourism and leisure researchers state that various constraints (Daniels *et al.* 2005, Small *et al.* 2012) and barriers (Poria *et al.* 2011, Yau *et al.* 2004) hinder travelers with disabilities in service places. Daniels *et al.* (2005) define constraints as a psychological state of customers, physical functioning and/or cognitive abilities, interactions among people in service localities, and/or restrictive rules at service places (Daniels *et al.* 2005:920). The researchers suggest three types of constraints: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural.

Intrapersonal constraints relate to the "individual's psychological state, physical functioning or cognitive abilities" (Daniels *et al.* 2005:920). These include physical/sensory constraints, physical/sensory negotiation, emotional constraints,

emotional negotiation, knowledge constraints, and knowledge negotiation. Interpersonal constraints concern interactions among people and include: travel companion constraints, travel companion negotiation, service provider constraints, service provider negotiation, stranger constraints, and stranger negotiation. Structural constraints are restrictive rules at service places, which include: transportation constraints, transportation negotiation, facility constraints, facility negotiation, environment/ geography constraints, environment/ geography negotiation, financial constraints, and financial negotiation. The findings of Daniels *et al.* (2005) revealed that the proportion of intrapersonal constraints was equal to 26%, whereas interpersonal and structural constraints were equal to 25% and 49% respectively (Daniels *et al.* 2005:922).

According to Daniels *et al.* (2005), constraints make customers with disabilities non-served. Travelers with disabilities experience both physical barriers and social obstacles. These constraints are ongoing, interrelated, and nonlinear (Daniels *et al.* 2005:925). Therefore, constraints in service places have an emerging character.

The findings of tourism and leisure researchers revealed that customers with disabilities are separated in service spaces (Bizjak *et al.* 2011, Christofle and Masseira 2009, Darcy *et al.* 2011, Dwyer and Darcy 2011, Packer *et al.* 2008, Poria *et al.* 2011, Ray and Ryder 2003, Small *et al.* 2012). Small and her colleagues (2012) state that visually impaired travelers may feel themselves excluded from the offered services. The researchers identified the four types of exclusion cases: (1) access to information; (2) wayfinding; (3) knowledge and attitudes of others; (4) traveling with a guide dog (Small *et al*. 2012:945). For the blind and VIPs, simple attendance of a service place does not mean the inclusion. For example, lack of access to travel information as small fonts, no sign in Braille, and paper printed materials make them feel excluded from travel experiences. The difficulty in wayfinding force VIPs to be dependent. Customers with vision impairment may feel themselves excluded from service offerings when they experience lack of color contrast and unpleasant lighting. VIPs said that service providers may treat them as "second-class citizens" that prevent engagement in the travel experience (Small *et al.* 2012:946). Blind travelers feel themselves insecure if service providers misunderstand the role of the guide dog (Small *et al.* 2012). Hence, VIPs may experience negative feelings and emotions in constructed service places.

A study carried out by Kaufman (1995) indicates that shoppers with vision disability desired to shop by their own. However, VIPs' activities such as "search" and "evaluation of alternatives" were different compared to the sighted customers (Kaufman 1995:47). Hence, a time pressure often forced VIPs to make a very difficult choice between things of equal importance, such as time of others and their own time.

Tourism and leisure researchers note that becoming an active traveler is not an automatic process (Yau *et al.* 2004). Beforehand, a person has to accept the fact of the disability. PwD say that in places of service they experience a stereotypical attitude from service providers: *''if you are disabled, you're expected to be dependent, and if you're dependent, you better should not do too much, not expect too much, or want too much. Just sit there.''* (Yau *et al.* 2004: 953). The interviewed travelers with disabilities indicate difficulties with ticketing, booking accommodation, making payments, problems in hotel accommodation and transportation as well as lack of assistance from service providers. (Yau *et al.* 2004). Travelers with disabilities are aware of how they might be perceived in public service places.

PwD want to know in advance about the accessibility of service places (Blichfeldt and Nicolaisen 2011). New service environments quite often force the blind and VIPs to act independently to secure their own needs. PwD inform that traveling helps them to practice a holiday decision-maker role and to feel as "able" people. Choices of transportation, attraction, accommodation or any other activity lead them to act as active travelers (Blichfeldt and Nicolaisen 2011). Thus, the blind and VIPs want to be able to predict unexpected barriers and difficulties within new service surroundings in order to feel independent.

Travelers with disabilities have more challenges to experience before and during a trip compared with non-disabled people (Yau *et al.* 2004). A range of activities in service places are non-accessible for the customers with disabilities. An interviewed VIP commented on a non-accessible swimming pool: *"There are many limitations on* [against] *my participation"* (Yau *et al.* 2004:955). The blind and VIPs plan their travel activities to minimize potential problems. They check information about physical accessibility of transportation, hotel accommodation, public toilets, as well as availability of travel partners. In extreme situations travelers with disabilities are forced to adopt "drastic coping strategies", as dehydrating themselves or taking less food before the long-hour trips (2004:954). The desire to have control over destiny forces them to make many compromises in terms of time and destination (Yau *et al.* 2004).

Tourism, leisure, and disability researchers describe behaviors of the customers with visual impairment within unfamiliar service places (Balata *et al.* 2014, Carvalho 2012, Odette *et al.* 2003). Typical navigation points such as leading lines, edges of the pavement, handrails, corners, sounds, acoustics, smells, etc. are helpful for the customers with vision impairment. However, a common problem for the blind and VIPs within unfamiliar service surroundings is a lack of environment description created for visually impaired users. Therefore, the blind and VIPs actively use memory and four senses to navigate new service places (Odette *et al.* 2003). The findings of Nascimento dos Santos and de Carvalho

(2012) revealed that electronic equipment in hotel accommodations is difficult to use without a sense of sight. The blind and visually impaired guests have to memorize how to manage physical surroundings at service places. Situations in which the blind and VIPs cannot use resources around force them to experience negative feelings and emotions. Balata *et al.* (2014) explore the ways, in which the blind and VIPs share information about service places. For example, PwD actively network, and therefore the area in which visually impaired persons are able to navigate safely and efficiently becomes wider (Balata *et al.* 2014). As seen, customers with vision impairment actively use memory and four senses to navigate service environments.

Overall, the findings from the textual analysis of tourism, leisure, and disability research publications revealed that PwD are active travelers. They value traveling for a chance to experience decision-making process and to feel themselves independent. PwD are devoted to travel destinations that satisfy their service needs. Although to some extent customers with disability experience similar constraints in organized service places, their perceptions of these limitations may, however, differ. The reason for this is that they may have their own perception of disability and service surroundings.

In service places, customers with disabilities experience various constraints. These constraints are ongoing and interrelated, and therefore it might be difficult to predict them. Constraints may exclude customers from the offered services. Consequently, travelers with disability have more to consider and must make more efforts just to get the same services as travelers without disabilities. The blind and VIPs actively use four senses, develop coping strategies, memorizing service environments, and networking with each other.

The research gap

The findings from a textual analysis about travelers with disability revealed "white spots" of this research agenda. Firstly, previous studies on VIPs' experiences in service spaces are mostly aimed at "solution and their evaluation" (Furst and Vogelauer 2012:371). Little has been written on identification of barriers and needs that result in social inclusion of VIPs (Fürst and Vogelauer 2012). Secondly, little is known about hotel experiences of travelers with disabilities (Blichfeldt and Nicolaisen 2011, Poria *et al.* 2011, Small *et al.* 2012). Thirdly, there is also a need for research about accessible accommodation criteria for the customers with disabilities (Darcy 2010, Yau *et al.* 2007) and about other hotel areas such as public spaces and restaurants (Poria *et al.* 2011:578). Fourthly, a majority of service providers are not ready to offer inclusive services (Poria *et al.* 2011; Stumbo *et al.* 2011:98). Hence, these research gaps indicate that knowledge is

scarce concerning the interactions of customers with disabilities within hospitality service places.

The fact that "no research has examined this before" does of course not justify the need for such an examination (Ladik and Stewart 2008:162). Why are the identified gaps important? An increasing number of travelers with disability may benefit the tourism industry. However, there is still a need for more bridges between tourism academia and tourism industry (Jafari 2014). Accessible service environments are a chance to experience independence for travelers with disabilities. In turn, senses of independence tend to improve quality of life. An improved accessibility (physical and social) is beneficial to everyone regardless of physical ability (Small *et al.* 2012). Research on customers with disabilities in hospitality service places shows that many inadequacies surfaced during service processes.

The textual analysis of tourism, leisure, and disability research publications revealed the following paradox: PwD are loyal and constrained customers. On the one hand, customers with disabilities are devoted to service places where their travel needs are satisfied. On the other hand, customers with disabilities in service places meet constraints, that exclude them from service spaces and force them to use extra time and even efforts to get expected services. Therefore, the following section highlights certain aspects of service places, with a focus on the role of time and space dimensions in customers' interactions with service locations.

2.2 Servicescape as a place of social interactions

In 1973, Kotler identified the role of the service place atmosphere with regard to purchasing decisions (Kotler 1973). He suggested that sensory qualities are intrinsic to service space. Kotler conceptualized an ability of service surroundings to cue "consumer wants" by visual, aural, olfactory, and tactile dimensions (Kotler 1973:53). The "service being" influences customers' decision-making processes (Kotler 1973:48), and therefore physical environment may change a purchasing behavior. Hence, Kotler underlined the *aiding* role of the atmosphere, by focusing our attention on its *physicality*.

Bitner (1992) extended the research about the leading role of physical surroundings in customers' behaviors. Her publication *The Impact of Physical Surroundings on Customers and Employees* thus provides a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the physical surroundings of service places on customers' behavior. Smell and furniture at service locations inform customers about the quality of the offered services. Bitner said that even before purchase,

every customer commonly evaluates “capabilities and qualities” of a service place (Bitner 1992:57). Customers form an opinion of the service environment and then they act.

Bitner stated that ambient conditions, spatial layout and design, signs and symbols have a great impact on customers’ decision-making process. Service attributes help customers to categorize a place (Bitner 1992). “…changes in the layout and furnishings of the service facility can be made to speed the flow of transactions, encourage particular forms of interaction between and among customers and employees, or provide opportunities for customers to linger” (Bitner 1992:67). Physical surroundings influence social interactions between and among customers and service providers. Customers’ perception of service surroundings does not directly force actors to act or to behave in a certain way. Bitner stated that the service environment first of all influences customers’ emotions, beliefs, and physiological sensations. Constructed service environments create an image of a place, influence customers’ cognitive, emotional, and physiological states, which in turn influence customers’ behaviors (Bitner 1992:62). Hence, physical surroundings of organized service places form customers' behavior.

Service developers build service places to aid customers and to meet customers' needs. However, organized service surroundings may hinder customers’ activities (Bitner 1992:61). Although service places are alike, every place is planned and constructed differently. When customers enjoy shopping environments, they tend to return to a service place. But customers avoid service places where their needs are not satisfied. Optimal design for one customer may create a problem for another customer (1992:61). Therefore, customers may differently experience identical service place.

Bitner (1992) developed a conceptual framework (model) to evaluate environment-user relationships (see Bitner 1992:60). She proposed the concept of *servicescape,* by saying that servicescape is the physical surroundings in which services are rendered. In her conceptual model Bitner emphasized a leading role of physical surroundings (design and ambience) in shaping customers’ behavior (1992).

Tombs and McColl-Kennedy (2003) criticized Bitner’s conceptual model of servicescape. The model explains environment-user relationship with much focus on the physicality of the service place, and less on the role of the customers (Tombs & McColl-Kennedy, 2003). Tombs and McColl-Kennedy proposed that along with physical surroundings, social factors impact on customers’ experiences. The researchers extended Bitner’s conceptual model of servicescape (see Tombs and McColl-Kennedy 2003:458), by reasoning that social interactions between and among customers and employees have a great influence on customers’ feelings and emotions, and therefore on their behaviors. Although customers are expected

to behave in a specific way in a certain place and time (for example, to eat and to sit in a cafeteria, to move in a retail place), their purchase experiences are personal or private (Tombs and McColl-Kennedy 2003:459). Lack of control over service surroundings may generate negative feelings and emotions. Customers are able to read the displayed emotions of service providers and of other customers. Customers' responses to the interactions with the social environment tend to influence a willingness to pay and to return to a service place. Customers' behaviors are sensitive to both: physical and social surroundings of service places (Tombs and McColl-Kennedy 2003).

The proposed conceptual model of servicescape considers customers' interactions with physical and social surroundings. More precisely, servicescapes are places where customers get services by interaction with social (service providers and other customers) and physical surroundings. However, the conceptual model of servicescape does not consider time and space dimensions in customers' activities. Customers act and move in time and in space. Any act and move of a customer is time-consuming. Customers may fail to get expected services, and therefore they might be excluded from service offerings, or service space.

In servicescape research, some few studies have commented briefly on the role of time and space dimensions. Yalch and Spangenberg (2000) studied the correlation between the shopping duration, music, and amount purchased. The researchers found that a shopping time was influenced by the ambience in a store. People actually shopped longer when listening to unfamiliar music compared with familiar music. Since consumers tend to buy more when they are in a store for a longer time, the researchers recommended to extend a shopping time by the investigation of such aspects as liking of music, tempo, and the interactions between music and characteristics of individual listeners (Yalch and Spangenberg 2000). As seen, the ambience at service place influence a duration of customers' activities.

Eroglu *et al.* (2005) examined whether shopping values were influenced by the perceived retail crowding. They suggested that two different shoppers in the same retail place may differently perceive levels of crowding, because of personal perception of dense environment and/or situational constraints, such as time pressure, for example. The researchers selected six emotions (joy, interest, surprise, contempt, disgust, and anger) to demonstrate individuals' shopping experiences in overcrowded service settings. Their research findings revealed that shoppers who stayed in overcrowded retail place more than one hour no longer noticed a dense environment (Eroglu *et al.* 2005). Hence, customers' activities depend not only on unexpected barriers (such as crowding), but individuals' shopping experiences and available time.

The cohesion of time and space was recognized in a varying degree in the servicescape literature, but mainly in the retail area. Aubert-Gamet and Cova (1999) spoke of time and space dimensions for renewing research on the value of shopping and suggested the need to consider servicescapes as places of "social ritualization" (1999:40). People meet in service places in specific spatiotemporal conditions. They get together during certain times such as weekends, after working hours, etc. People also rarely communicate with each other, except with service providers. Their activities in service locations are temporal, and the shopping places may mean a mix of space and time dimensions (Aubert-Gamet and Cova 1999:42).

Aubert-Gamet and Cova (1999) stated that hospitality service places play a significant role in daily socializing (1999:42). Servicescapes optimize service processes and create space for customers' interactions. Consideration of time and space dimensions help us to understand the temporality of customers' activities in service places and reveal the service place as a place where people meet and interact. Service environments become both physical support of the services and places of human activities (Aubert-Gamet and Cova, 1999). Hence, servicescape is a place where customers temporarily act and move in order to get expected services and to socialize.

Tombs and McColl-Kennedy (2010) discussed the ability of customers' to influence other customers without any direct interaction. Thus, the placement of specific groups of customers in a specific place may attract passing customers to stay at this public eating place. Customers appear to enhance the convenience of other customers in service settings and to facilitate a sense of belonging to the servicescapes (Tombs and McColl-Kennedy, 2010). Hence, customer's behavior might be a response to the acts and moves of other customers.

Johnstone (2012) spoke on the inability of personnel to control retail space because every individual had its own meaning of the service place (Johnstone 2012:1402). The researcher analyzed how women's non-commercial relations and their relationship with service places shaped their patronage choices. Although changes in the physical environment may draw attention to different groups of customers, service spaces tend to be socially attractive without direct communication with personnel or other customers. Since the service environment is itself a place for customers' enjoyment, service providers were recommended to create different service spaces, such as places with "space that caters for young children", for example (2012:1414). Customers tend to spend their time not only for purchasing, but also to experience positive feelings and emotions, to socialize, and to belong to social environment. Servicescapes serve a much wider purpose for their customers, by becoming a place of social connections (Johnstone 2012). Therefore, customers want to follow their own intention with regard to how to spend time in a service location.

However, organized servicescapes may control customers' activities. Ek and Hultman (2008) focused on the ability of service spaces to drive customers' activities. Although the researchers did not investigate the role of the time dimension, their findings revealed that a golf club's servicescape influenced customers by "sticking" or "fixing" them by booking through the Internet. A golfscape started from "seducing" potential clients by introducing via photo and booklets attractive leisure conditions as well as different food offerings. On-line registration "looped" individuals and there was no way to avoid "internal rules" except by escaping with no money paid (Ek and Hultman 2008). As seen, organized servicescapes may not only control customers' activities, but force them to act in a certain way.

In their qualitative research, Pareigis, Edvardsson, and Enquist (2011) investigated the relationship between customers' activities and the service environment. The researchers identified and described important dimensions of the service process as defined by public transport customers. Customers' behavior depended on how they spent time during the bus trip. Physical environment such as air quality and cleanliness of the vehicle, as well as interactions with staff played an important role in the service experience. When travelers were developing different activities such as interactions, listening to music, etc., their perception of time and service experience was positive. However, a lack of activities made the bus trip boring for them. Service offerings, the traffic situation, the weather, and the natural landscape had an impact on customers' perception of travel time. The researchers suggest that the service environment should be viewed as a resource that is used in service provision (Pareigis *et al.* 2011:120). Hence, an organized service environment has a great influence on customers' perception of service time.

Aubert-Gamet (1996) explicitly examined the relationship between servicescape, time, and space. She reasoned that service spaces not only act on their users, but users also act to get expected services. She analyzed customer's behavior in the lens of different paradigms and determined alternative conceptualizations of environment-user relationship. Thus, service providers control customers' activities by certain basic rules of consumer behavior. However, customers intend to achieve a sense of independence and to get the expected services. Customers escape the dominance of a service space by using "bricolage" (e.g. "do-it-yourself") tactics (1996:32). They act completely opposite to the expected behavior, and therefore escape the control of the service space (Aubert-Gamet 1996). As may be seen, customers intend to gain control of the service surroundings in order to get expected services. Customers may behave tactically to escape a supervision of the organized servicescape.

Textual analysis of servicescape literature revealed that consideration of time and space dimensions in customers' interactions with servicescapes may deepen our

understanding about service processes. Customers tend to stay longer when organized servicescape meet their needs and wants. Design, ambience, and social interactions between and among customers and service providers shape customers' behavior. Therefore, organized servicescapes may alter the duration of customers' activities. The findings of textual analysis revealed also that all the above studies discussed various spatio-temporal matters in retail, but none of them had a particular focus on the role of the time and space dimensions in the acts and the moves of the blind and VIPs in hospitality servicescapes.

2.3 Summary

A review of tourism, leisure, and disability research publications identified that travelers with disabilities are active and loyal customers. PwD experience a sense of freedom and independence when service places meet their needs. However, customers with disabilities are not alike. Two customers with a similar level of disability may differently experience identical service place, because of their own perception of the impairment.

PwD experience various constraints at service places. These constraints are ongoing and interrelated. Constraints may exclude customers from the offered services, and therefore may generate negative feelings and emotions.

Since PwD experience constraints at organized service places, I focus this research investigation on servicescapes. Servicescapes are physical places where customers temporarily act and move in order to get expected services. Servicescapes are built to aid customers' needs and wants. However, servicescapes may hinder customers' activities.

Customers' behaviours are sensitive to physical and social surroundings. The blind and VIPs navigate service places with the help of four senses. Customers with vision impairment actively use memory and negotiating skills within service places. Ambience and design may influence the duration of customers' activities. Customers' behavior depend not only on unexpected constraints, but also on the shopping experiences and available time. Customers tend to stay longer if they experience positive feelings and emotions. They also tend to oppose a dominance of organized servicescapes.

The conceptual model of servicescape considers physical (ambience and design) and social factors in customers' interactions with servicescapes. However, the model does not consider time and space dimensions. Consideration of spatial dimensions may deepen our understanding on what is happening at service places when customers experience unexpected constraints. In the following chapter I

introduce the concept of constraint seen from the time-geography framework and the concept of tactics.

Chapter III
Service process from the perspective of the concepts of constraints and tactics

In the previous chapter I reviewed previous research about travelers with disabilities in order to identify research gaps. I focused my research investigation on servicescapes as a place where customers interact with constructed service environments. I also reviewed previous literature on the role of time and space dimensions in servicescape research.

The aim of this chapter is to theoretically conceptualize how blind and visually impaired customers act and move in hospitality servicescapes. In order to elucidate what is happening when customers act and move within service locations, I now introduce the relevance of the concept of constraint (Hägerstrand 1970) and the concept of tactics (de Certeau 1984). The concept of constraint is borrowed from the time-geography model (framework) of Torsten Hägerstrand (1970). Moreover, certain tools used in the time-geography model have been important sources of inspiration for my understanding of customers' activities in hospitality servicescapes. These tools are the space-time project, space-time station, space-time path, and space-time prism (Hägerstrand 1970, 1982). I complement the concept of constraints by the concept of tactics (de Certeau 1984) to understand customers' behavior towards unexpected constraints.

3.1 Contextualization of the time-geography framework in servicescape research

People move and act in space and time. Torsten Hägerstrand (1970) proposed a model to examine the relationship between human intentional activities and emerging constraints in a space-time context, known as the time-geography model (framework) (Hägerstrand 1970). Together with his colleagues from Lund

University, Hägerstrand studied human migration in the 1960s. Investigation into the movement of people from one place to another inspired him with regard to the idea of the time-geography model. During the same period, Hägerstrand and his colleagues tested a new model by studying living conditions in urban and rural areas in Sweden (Lenntorp 1999). As a result, a huge set of collected material revealed that migration patterns are not just a process, but rather are life histories of individuals (Lenntorp 1999).

The time-geography tools

The time-geography model emphasizes the role of "situational settings" (Hägerstrand 1970:9) for individuals' intentional acts and moves. A situation means a position at the moment, or with regard to the surroundings (Hägerstrand 1982:325). Hägerstrand says "every somebody or something is in a situation with respect to everybody and everything else" (1982:325). Hence, a situation is what an individual undertakes somewhere at some time within a particular place. Furthermore, "a situation takes shape as such only in relation to a defined direction of change or action" (Hägerstrand 1982:325). Therefore, it becomes possible to understand how things that are happening at particular time and a particular place shape the outcome of an individual's action (Hägerstrand 1982).

Hägerstrand conceptualized man-environment relations in time and space. His time-geography tools are helpful for analyzing what individuals actually do when dealing with unexpected situations within physical places. The *space-time project* is a set of task-oriented acts that have to be undertaken in some place and time within a constraining environment (Hägerstrand 1978:244). The projects "tie together into a whole all those "cuts" in evolving situations that an actor must secure in order to reach a goal" (Hägerstrand 1982:324). Projects can be of any scale, from minor, as having a lunch to large, as a paid labor. The project outcome will "depend on what events the subsequent situations permit from moment to moment" (Hägerstrand 1982:325). For example, a blind customer with a guide dog cannot develop the stay-in-the-hotel project, if the hotel follows no-pets policy. A blind traveler may find another hotel with a friendly environment for pets, but with inconvenient geographical location and a noisy air conditioner. Hence, various situations may influence the travel experience of a blind person. Therefore, the project outcome depends on situations that may shape and change the direction of the individual's action or his space-time project.

The time-geography model considers human activities as activities of individuals, rather than groups of people (Ellegård, Hägerstrand, Lenntorp 1977). Individuals are different in their capacities to experience a similar physical place, interact with other individuals, act and move, etc. Therefore, the amount of time required for an

activity depends on many conditions that belong to a person, rather than to a group (Ellegård *et al.* 1977). For example, a blind and a sighted customer have different capabilities to navigate service surroundings. The blind customer's inability to use a sense of sight requires him to use extra time to move and to act within a new service surroundings. In addition, when a service place is non-accessible for the customers with vision disability, a blind person may require even more time. When one activity costs more time, the time is taken from an alternative activity (Hägerstrand 1970, 1982). Hence, the time-geography model underlines that time is a *resource* both for an entire population and for the individual, and this resource is limited (Ellegård *et al.* 1977).

The space-time project depicts every moment of an individual's activity (Ellegård and Svedin 2012). When an individual performs a space-time project and stays in the same place over time with no physical movement, time is consumed regardless. In other words, the individual "moves in time" (Ellegård and Svedin 2012:21).

Along with time resources, individuals need other resources in order to develop their planned activities (Scholten *et al.* 2012). Thus, in everyday life some people have longer commuting distances, may experience problems with personal relations, health, etc. Therefore, individuals' everyday activities depend on physical and social environments (Scholten *et al.* 2012). Likewise, everyday activities of visually impaired guests in hotels and resorts may depend on the organized service surroundings. The blind guests may experience various constraints such as a sensor remote and mini-bar service in a hotel room, a buffet breakfast, interactions with unskilled personnel, etc. Therefore, some parts of individuals' daily plans "can change radically in terms of input, order, and location without violation of the overall purpose" (Hägerstrand 1985:200). As can be seen, customers' space-time projects might be sensitive not only to time resources, but also to the organized service places themselves.

However, the amount of time required depends not only on an individual's desire to get the expected aim, but also on the various *constraints* that this individual may experience. These constraints force an individual to use extra time to overcome them. The time-geography framework classifies constraints as belonging to the three groups: capability, coupling, and authority (Hägerstrand 1970).

The *capability* constraints include human capabilities and characteristics of infrastructure that limit activity participation (Yu and Shaw 2007). Food intake, sleep, and other physiological needs necessitate that individuals spend a certain amount of time in a certain space, and therefore limit their involvement in various activities. Individuals' skills and competences are another subset of capability constraints. Individuals' skills are human abilities to do something well, and a lack of some skills forces them to apply extra time. Thus, in a "seeing" world,

blindness is a capability constraint that characterizes an individual's physical capacity. A blind person moves much slower than a sighted person, when a place is unfamiliar. Low income, unemployment, and social isolation are another examples of capability constraints. This subset of constraints has an indirect influence on individuals' capability to conduct various activities. In other words, the individual's physical capacities that would be necessary in order to do something may be limited, and these limitations would act as capability constraints.

The *coupling* constraints focus on human interactions, which are always time consuming. Individuals interact with others in order to participate in certain activities (Yu and Shaw 2007). The coupling constraints "define where, when, and for how long, the individual has to join other individuals, tools, and materials in order to produce, consume, and transact" (Hägerstrand 1970:14). Hotel guests communicate with personnel, and these interactions take time. However, the time does not seemingly concern socializing, but rather concerns the time that is required to identify offered services. For example, tourism and leisure researchers suggest that interactions with unskilled personnel seem to be time-consuming for the blind and VIPs (Poria *et al.* 2011, Small *et al.* 2012). A lack of gesticulation when a blind person interacts with personnel might also be considered as a coupling constraint.

The *authority* constraints are norms and rules that limit the performance of individuals' acts and moves at a certain time and place (Yu and Shaw 2007). Hägerstrand (1970) refers to authority constraints as the "control areas". In these areas, all things and events are under the control of a given individual or a given group (Hägerstrand 1970:16). Thus, hotel regulations for customer services may vary from country to country, such as check-in and check-out time, for example. No-pets requirement is a barrier for the blind guest with a guide dog. Obligatory meetings, employment, and schooling are also regarded as authority constraints.

Constraints influence customers' trajectories within *a space-time station.* The *space-time station* is a physical location where individuals have various activities, such as walking, talking, sleeping, eating, entertaining, etc. The space-time station is a convenient tool for visualizing an individual's place of temporal activity. Individuals may move within and between space-time stations and their trajectories are space-time paths. Figure 3.1 describes graphically an individual's path in time–space coordinates of a physical place. During a day, the individual visits few stations, namely a home, childcare center, office, and grocery store. The space-time path of an individual has a certain time duration and incorporates various space-time stations. A *space-time path* traces the moves and the acts of a person in a physical space during a time (Miller 2005).

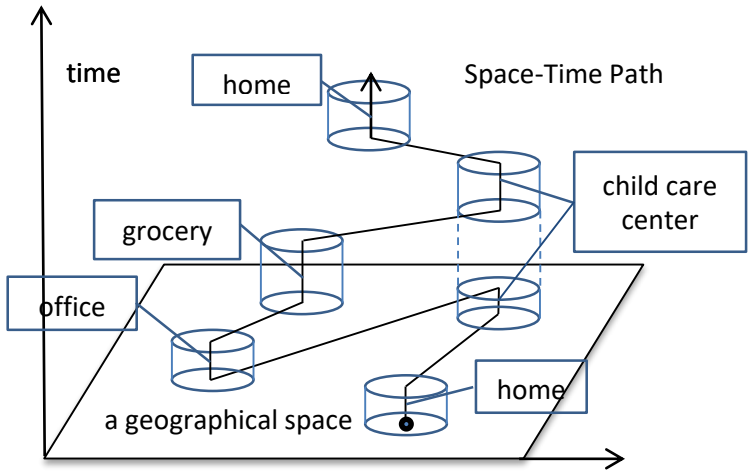

Figure 3.1
The time-geography of an individual *Source:* Miller (2006)

The everyday space-time path of an individual may change because of various reasons, such as a traffic jam, occasionally meeting a friend, or just feeling sick. "The space-time path highlights the constraints imposed by activities that are finite in space and time as well as the need to trade time for space when moving among activities" (Raubal, Miller, Bridwell, 2004: 247). A space-time path depicts the moves of an individual in a physical space and sensitively indicates the opportunities and experiences of a person during a period of time (Miller 2006). In the Figure 3.2 a vertical line illustrates a stationary position of an individual, and an inclined line depicts his physical movement. A steep slope means that more time is required per unit space when moving (Raubal, Miller, Bridwell, 2004).

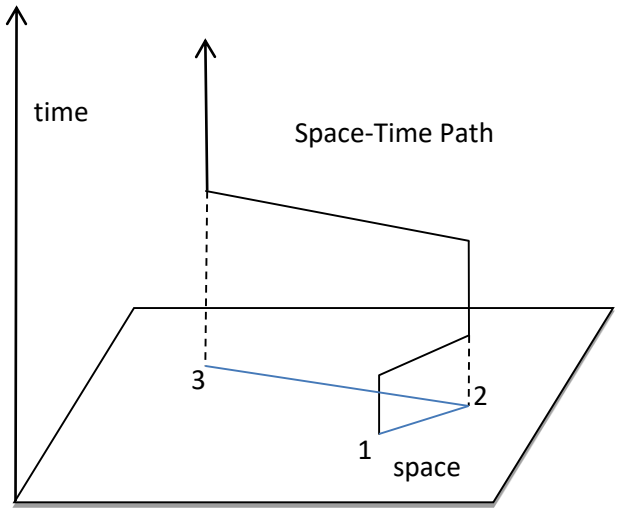

Figure 3.2
The space-time path *Source:* Shaw (2010)

A *space-time prism* measures the extension of the area of an individual's activity (Miller 2006:18). A space-time prism delimits the possible area of the space-time path, based on an individual's ability "to trade time for space" (Raubal, Miller, Bridwell, 2004). The individual may occupy one particular place (say, the working desk) and move around to interact with her/his colleagues or deal with the work tasks. Hypothetically, this person does not leave the office area during the working hours. The space-time prism is proportional to the distance a person moved during the working hours (Miller 2006:18) or the area covered. The prism illustrates all possible locations in space that an individual can reach under certain constraints. A space-time prism might be expressed geometrically as "an individual's physical rich in space and time" (Raubal, Miller, Bridwell 2004:248). Figure 3.3 illustrates a space-time prism, or an area of physical accessibility, under certain constraints in time and in space.

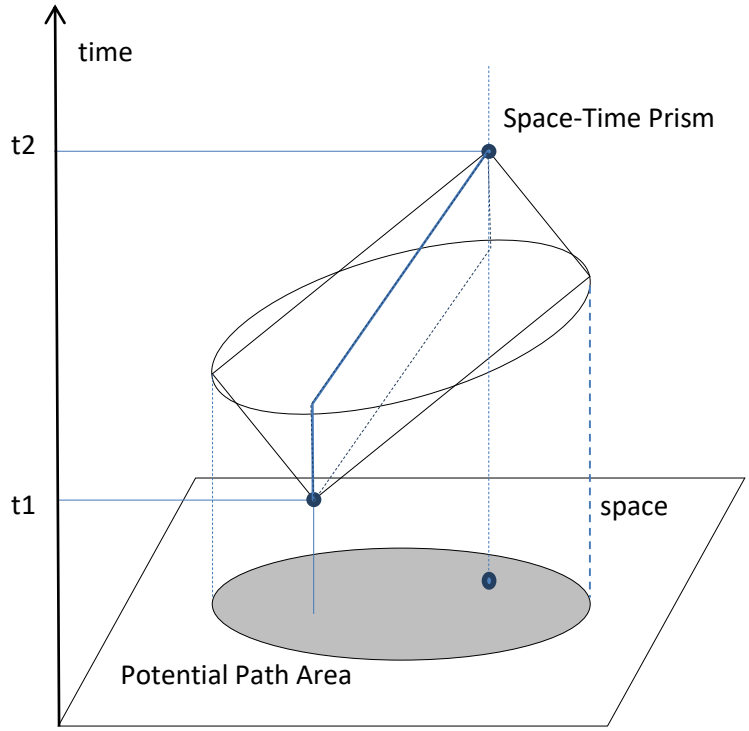

Figure 3.3
Space-time prism *Source:* Shaw (2010)

Figure 3.4 illustrates graphically the space-time prisms of walking and driving individuals during the exact same period. The walking person had less time for alternative activities unlike the person in the car. Therefore, the activity area for the walking individual (1) is much smaller compare to the driving person (2). Hence, space-time prisms can illustrate the difference between individuals' activities in time and space conditions.

With the help of the time-geography tools, Pettersson and Zillinger (2011) used survey and photography to investigate the movements and experiences of sport event visitors. The researchers tracked travelers' mobility by using GPS devices. Depicted paths provided information not only about the experiences that the visitors had, but, in addition, informed about where and how long these experiences took place. The research findings revealed that a destination dictated travel situations, which included capability constraints such as weather conditions and crowdedness. Constraints differently influenced tourists' activity style. The study suggested that space-time paths depended not only on the visitors' desires, but also on the time and space where the activity took place (Pettersson and Zillinger 2011).

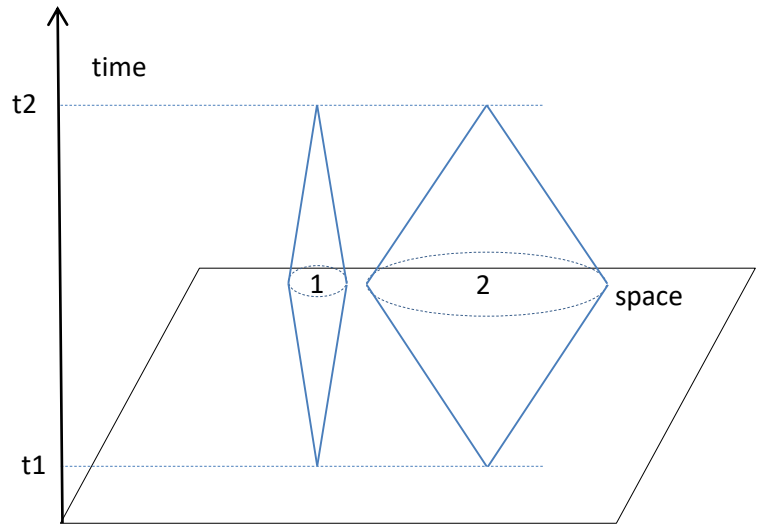

Figure 3.4
Space-time prisms of walking and driving individuals *Source*: Hägerstrand (1970)

Neutens *et al.* (2014) used the time-geography tools to analyze accessibility levels of different societal groups within an urban region. Their quantitative research findings revealed that the working class is much more constrained in terms of accessibility within the city. Furthermore, observed women exhibited on average lower levels of access than men after regular business hours, and higher levels of accessibility during regular business hours. Hence, the time-geography tools helped to identify accessibility limitations of certain urban citizens, which resulted in social exclusion.

The time-geography approach to the analysis of human activities in space-time burgeoned not only among geographers but also among other researchers. A good example is a study of daily activities of 17 low-income single mothers (McQuoid and Dijst 2012). The researchers used the time-geography approach to understand poverty as a situational embodied experience. The study combined qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The time-geography tools helped to illustrate how low-income mothers were excluded from social activities. Women experienced a high degree of constraints in their daily lives. A low income was a capability constraint for the women. Single mothers did not have free time, because they had to spend time for work trips and for household activities. Besides time for daily childcare, school, and work, the interviewed women had weekly service-related meetings with doctors, housing programs, etc. These mandatory appointments could be considered as authority constraints. Constraints interrupted women' daily paths and their space-time prisms had a little chance of being expanded. The interrelation between the capability and authority constraints restricted low-

income mothers not only in time (for instance, a daily commute in public transportation), but also in their participation in different social activities (McQuoid and Dijst 2012).

McQuoid and Dijust (2012) suggested that low-income mothers had to confront unpleasant exposure to their situations. For example, in public places such as high-end shopping centers, wealthy neighborhoods, or places of authority, the single mothers felt themselves as "poor". They experienced negative feelings such as fear and vulnerability, and therefore it harmed the women' personal well-being and quality of life. However, low-income mothers were developing emotional boundaries between themselves, others and places. The women were developing "cocooning tactics" by wearing a voluminous black coat in warm weather or habitually listening to an iPod (McQuoid and Dijust 2012:34). As may be seen, situational settings, such as unwanted interactions, influenced the women' behavior. In my research I illustrate how various situational settings, such as physical and social surroundings may force customers to experience negative feelings and emotions, and how constrained customers develop strategies to avoid these constraints.

Enokson (2009) investigated human intentional acts with help of the time-geography tools. The author analyzed working and living conditions of two groups of individuals: the time-poor who were employed and experienced a great demand on their professional and educational competences and the time-rich who were out of the labor market. The interview-based study drew readers' attention to the diversity of time frames experienced by people inside and outside the labor market. Having a paid labor was a dominant space-time project for the careerists or people with a job priority in relation to other activities during the working weeks. The time-poor, or careerists, were successful in developing their space-time projects. The paid job was a priority for time-poor in relation to other activities. Their daily space-time prisms were restricted to the working and living places. Although the time-poor had access to economic resources, they experienced coupling constraints, such as a lack of non-work-connected communication and mobility.

In contrast, the time-rich people had difficult economic situations. Enokson (2009) referred to them as those unwanted by the labor market. The time-rich were stigmatized by their unemployment, which was a capability constraint. The unwanted experienced also authority and coupling constraints. The lack of demand by the labor market with regard to their resources was an authority constraint. The time-rich interacted with others with a need in social influence and recognition, which was a coupling constraint. Their daily prisms expanded. However, the unwanted failed to develop their space-time projects, or to get a paid job (Enokson 2009).

Enokson suggested that individuals experience a diversity of time patterns, which may create restrictions in developing work/life balance strategies (2009:171). For example, an access to the places in timespace, such as a working place, gym, supermarket, etc. are sensitive not only to time, but to a person's biological constitution, paid labor, and other resources. Similarly, in the current research, I would like to emphasize the notion that customers' travel strategies depend not only on time.

With help of the time-geography tools, Friberg et al. (2009) provided an understanding of the social and economic conditions that structure everyday life. The researchers investigated women's everyday mobility through the use of three cases. Two cases discussed the traditional role model of women in modern times. In modern society, women are forced to have increased mobility. Women combine a working status with a private life, because their everyday activity patterns are still highly influenced by motherhood and household responsibilities. A third case was based on historic data and cultural analysis of women's mobility in the 17th century. The authors compared daily activities of men and women in the 17th century, when Swedish society's dominant norm was biased towards traditional male norms. Therefore, women's everyday prisms were narrowed to the farm where they were occupied with family work. However, women resisted social isolation by networking strategies (Friberg *et al.* 2009). The networking strategies of the constrained women described by the researchers are of interest. Although a household was built on a strict hierarchical order, the women used their class position, which allowed them to move around during the course of making economic arrangements and to remain undisturbed. Women attained more mobility via social interactions, and therefore, networking acts empowered them.

The time-geography tools help to illustrate what is happening when actors interact with physical and social environments in time and space. Thus, the narrowed space-time prisms of the low-income single mothers signified social exclusion (McQuoid and Dijst 2012), whereas the expanded space-time prisms of the unwanted indicated a failure to find a paid job (Enokson 2009). Everyday space-time paths of household women (Friberg *et al.* 2009) indicated these women's social exclusion from mainstream activities. The actors wanted to develop their space-time projects. Likewise, single mothers wanted to have more income (McQuoid and Dijst, 2012), unwanted wanted to be employed (Enokson 2009), whereas women-as-housewives were developing ways to socialize (Friberg *et al.* 2009). Time and higher income (McQuoid and Dijst 2012), paid labor (Enokson 2009), and networking (Friberg *et al.* 2009) were necessary for the development of the actors' space-time projects.

The time-geography model describes time and space as being interwoven, and furthermore, individuals require resources in order to develop their space-time

projects (Hägerstrand 1982). The blind and VIPs within unfamiliar service places require access to the offered services. A lack of access necessitates that customers with vision impairment spend extra time to overcome constraints. Hence, time and access to service offerings might be regarded as resources for the development of the customers' space-time projects. When the resources are scarce, the space-time projects compete for them (Hägerstrand 1982).

Constraints by time-geography always influence individuals' activity patterns by forcing them to spend extra time to overcome them. Although the space-time constraints give a "glimpse" of the individual's emotional feelings in a particular place and time (Sui 2012:12), constraints in Hägerstrand's view are a more physical type of entity. "[Time-geography approach] placed too much stress on the scene (the physical world) and the individual as object and not a thinking, experiencing person…" (Lenntorp 1999:157). Therefore, constraints by Hägerstrand connect with things that actually exist or are present and can be seen and felt, rather than things that only exist in a person's mind. The time-geography model defines the constraints as spatiotemporal and suggests that these constraints vary significantly (Neutens *et al.* 2010:1042). Although the space-time constraints illustrate customers' behavior and define their social exclusion in space and time, in Hägerstrand's interpretation constraints are more material, rather than a social entity (Thrift and Pred 1981).

The difference between the concept of space-time constraints and constraints in leisure research

The time-geography model depicts individuals' space-time paths and identifies emerging constraints with help of time and space dimensions, whereas constraints in leisure research focus on attitudes towards unexpected constraints. Leisure research investigates social, financial, and psychological aspects of constraints with regard to traveling (Jackson and Scott 1999). Leisure researchers distinguish between barriers and constraints. Thus, prior to 1980 leisure research considered only the "barriers" to the recreational participation and did not pay attention to the "constraints" (Jackson and Scott 1999:299). Although these two words are similar, the meaning of the term "constraint" is broader than that of a "barrier" (Crawford and Godbey 1987). For instance, lack of services and accessibility is a barrier. Such a barrier fails to explain the leisure behavior of the travelers. Constraints are factors which "inhibit people's ability to participate in leisure activities, to spend more time doing so, to take advantage of leisure services, or to achieve a desired level of satisfaction" (Jackson 1988:203). A sequential shift from the barriers to the constraints captures the "entire range of explanation of leisure behavior" and

discusses a “non-participation” issue (Jackson and Scott 1999:302). Hence, leisure research emphasizes the non-material nature of the constraints (see Figure 3.5).

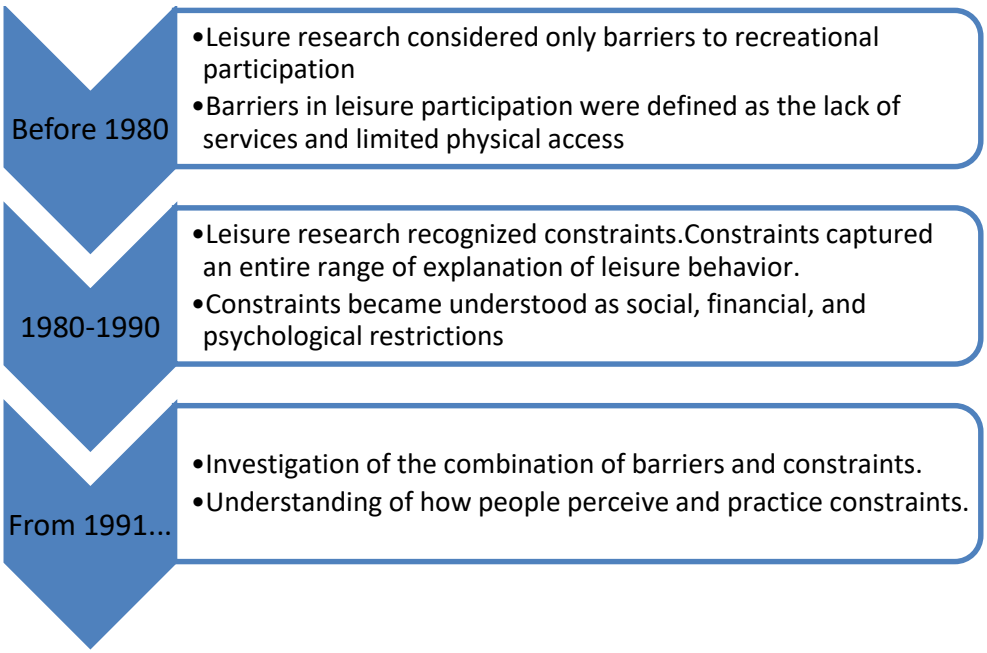

Figure 3.5
Ontological framework of the concept of constraints on leisure

Composed on Jackson & Scott 1999

Nevertheless, for a long while, the various constraints such as lack of financial resources, time, knowledge and awareness of leisure services, were discussed separately. Leisure research was mostly quantitative (survey-based), and identified constraints were analyzed by an item-by-item approach (Jackson and Scott 1999). Eventually, leisure research findings lacked empirical support, such as empirical material on target groups, their activities and choices (Jackson and Scott 1999:303).

The subsequent shift in the study of leisure constraints from an item-by-item approach to the combination of barriers and constraints approach made it possible to investigate how people *perceive* the constraints (Jackson and Scott 1999:304). For example, health problems are perceived constraints for old-aged individuals (Alexandris *et al.* 2003) These constraints limit the confidence of elderly individuals and have an impact on their perceptions of personal fitness conditions.

Wilson and Little (2005) argue that constraints could have an impact on travelers *during* their leisure participation. The researchers note that the constraints paradigm previously was focused on what *stops* people from the leisure activities. Consequently, participation was a final point of the research discussions. This way of thinking about the concept of constraints by leisure researchers ignored the fact that the leisure experience itself could be constrained too. Hence, the researchers suggested that those constraints can have an impact *during* the leisure participation. Consequently ,a new approach to the concept of constraints on leisure made it possible to understand how constraints influence the enjoyment of an activity and the desire of the participant to get expected services (Wilson and Little 2005). Hence, the constraint-based analysis can identify a leisure service place as a place of the continuous interactions of customers with service spaces.

Constraints to leisure participation are classified into three groups: *intrapersonal, interpersonal,* and *structural* (Crawford and Godbey 1987). Examples of *intrapersonal* constraints refer to individual's psychological state, physical functioning, and cognitive abilities like stress and anxiety. *Interpersonal* constraints belong to the interaction with or a behavior of a travel companion, a service provider, and a stranger. Each of the indicated parties may set up a barrier. In addition, poorly designed information about hotel offerings may force guests to seek out personnel at service desk or other hotel guests for the relevant information. *Structural* constraints are described as any factors that intervene in a choice between leisure preference and participation. Examples of structural constraints are lack of time, insufficient funds, or limited access to transportation.

Small and her colleagues (2012) denote that ongoing constraints in service places are socially constructed and interrelated. Their research findings revealed that VIPs experienced senses of dependency and anxiety due to difficulties with navigation inside buildings and by interactions with personnel, who often addressed VIPs as deaf or wheelchair persons. However, audible streets and guide dogs included customers in the service environment.

Another large issue discussed by Small and her colleagues (2012) concerns how blind and VIPs manage their experiences. Thus, blind and VIPs are forced to put full trust in strangers. "If people are unable to control all aspects of the trip, they need to be able to accept the situation when things do not go the way they expect. With their patience and acceptance of the situation, they (hopefully) can move forward to the next stage of their journey" (2012:946). Hence, travelers with vision disability may miss a sense of control within unfamiliar service environments (Small *et al.* 2012).

Tourism and leisure researchers state that blind and VIPs experience various constraints in service places (Daniels *et al.* 2005, Poria *et al.* 2011, Small *et al.* 2012). The blind and VIPs apply extra efforts to overcome barriers and constraints

in hospitality places (Poria *et al.* 2011). Customers with vision impairment may feel themselves as “second class citizens” (Small *et al.* 2012:946) and less-served (Daniels *et al.* 2005; Small *et al.* 2012). The researchers state that constraints to leisure are time consuming and even stressful in some degree for travelers with vision disability.

Constraints in leisure research may enhance the understanding of how people choose their travel preferences, participation, and enjoyment (Jackson 1994) (see Annex V). Climate, topography, the resource base in general, or lack of the required facilities are examples of geographical constraints. The geographical constraints consider environmental and social contexts, but these constraints are less influenced by the "cost, lack of time, and lack of facilities" (Jackson 1994:110). Geographical variables such as destination, accessibility, mobility, and the relative location of recreational facilities can profit by adopting characteristics concerning constraints on leisure (Jackson 1994). A complementary usage of the geographical aspects of constraints to the research on constraints on leisure enhances the understanding of how persons choose their leisure preferences, participation, and enjoyment (Jackson, 1994).

Similarly, in the current research I complement space-time constraints by also considering constraints as described in leisure research. The time-geography model is very much about constraints, and it is less about customers’ behavior towards unexpected limitations. Constraints in leisure research could complement the space-time constraints by consideration of human feelings and emotions. In the following section, I explain why the concept of tactics can be a reasonable complement to the concept of constraint, in order to further understand customers’ behavior in hospitality servicescapes.

3.2 Tactics

Tourism and leisure researchers suggest that constrained customers behave strategically (Daniels *et al.* 2005, Jackson *et al.* 1993). They define constraints as ongoing and interrelated (Daniels *et al.* 2005, Small *et al.* 2012). However, it is quite difficult to act strategically in environments with emerging constraints. To deepen readers’ understanding of what is happening at service places when customers meet constraints, I complement the concept of constraint according to the time-geography framework (Hägerstrand 1970) by also considering the concept of tactics (de Certeau 1984).

In his *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), Michel de Certeau elucidates the concepts of strategy and tactics. De Certeau focuses on the three essentials or the

characteristics of strategic acts that characterize the "ownership of a place". To "own" a place means an ability to act strategically. He suggests that control over time, an ability to predict, and knowledge and experience are three essentials for strategic acts (de Certeau 1984:36).

The *control over time* is an integral part of the planning activity. The strategists, or the owners of place "assign the rules", which help them to "master by time" (de Certeau 1984:36). Likewise, military theorists propose that strategic acts require a careful planning (Tzu 1910). To act strategically is to have control over time and space.

The strategists should *predict*, to see, to observe, and "to run ahead of time by reading a space" (de Certeau 1984:36). Similarly, the warrior is warned "to WATCH the enemy" to know when to fight or not (Tzu 1910:49). Hence, the owners of place should be able to predict what can happen in the future, or in the next moment.

Knowledge and experience "transform uncertainties" into "readable spaces" (de Certeau 1984:36). It is possible with a lesser force to defeat a greater, if the military capacity includes knowledge and skills (Tzu 1910:52). Likewise, a previous experience and knowledge about a place help to evaluate any problem and to avoid it with no loss. Hence, a strategic behavior is the ability to manage by time, to predict, and to have a knowledge and skills to deal with normally unexpected situations.

Although tactics are understood as concrete actions and tools in order to achieve strategies, tacticians act being "without own place" (de Certeau 1984). De Certeau takes the act of walking in a space as an analogue to the act of speaking a language. Space in the walking act plays the same role as sound and acoustics in the act of speaking. Steps form the act of walking as words form the conversation between people (de Certeau 1984:98). De Certeau explains that individuals may manage the "language" by replacing words and composing other "turns of phrase", which are "rare, accidental" or illegitimate" (de Certeau 1984:99). With different intonations individuals initiate, maintain, or interrupt contacts. In a similar vein, when individuals are obliged to walk by one of few permitted pathways, they may multiply their own opportunities by "shortcuts" or "detours" (de Certeau 1984).

Tacticians do not obey the law of the place and are "always on the watch for opportunities" (de Certeau 1984: xix). They develop small and invisible tricks and do not break assigned rules (de Certeau 1984:97). These rules are set up by the owners of place, or by the strategists. Individuals may do things that have not been planned, but seem to be enjoyable and worth doing at a particular time and place. Hence, tactics are used to avoid the control of a freedom to act and to move.

In view of these findings, the difference between tactics and strategies is based on the ownership of a place. Tacticians are not the "owners" of a place. That is why they depend on time, cannot predict, and lack knowledge and experience about a place. In contrast, the strategists control a place. However, "the weaker the forces at the disposition of the strategist, the more the strategist will be able to use deception" (de Certeau 1984:37). Tactics are thus a continuation of strategies (de Certeau 1984).

With the help of de Certeau's writings, McCormak (2009) calls our attention to how low-income women developed tactics to avoid a negative attitude of the caseworkers in a welfare office and to save time to get expected services. Thus, in the welfare office, the women met with stigmatizing looks and comments by personnel, as they acted differently. Along with negative feelings, the welfare clients were forced to spend additional time. When caseworkers were unhelpful, the women-tacticians used a leapfrogging strategy. McCormak describes how women used a stronger tone of voice, were more demanding, or directly challenged the caseworker's attitude. If they did not resolve the problem, they spoke with the worker's supervisor. The women-clients did not want to feel frustrated by the caseworkers' attitudes, and therefore networked by going up the hierarchy until they were satisfied.

The tactic helped low-income women to develop their space-time projects, namely to avoid the dominance of caseworkers in their interactions. An interaction with non-professional welfare service providers could be regarded as a coupling constraint for these women. Tactical acts changed the area of clients' activities. The clients-tacticians avoided caseworkers by developing new patterns. The women-tacticians got expected services, even if they experienced additional coupling constraints such as the interactions with other representatives of the welfare office. Consequently, the clients became able to control over time and service surroundings.

Quinlan and Bates (2012) relate a story concerning a protest by wheelchair people and call our attention to the *spontaneous behavior* of the protestors. In 1985 a group of protesters blocked a bus from moving to draw attention to the non-accessibility of the public transportation in Cleveland, Ohio. The protestors did not want special buses; they wanted equal access to the public transportation. Although they developed a strategy for how to protest, the researchers consider the acts of the protestors as tactical. The protest occurred in a city center, a place controlled by the city administration and an alien place for the protestors. Although they agreed in advance to meet at the city center, their further step to perform a dance movement in their wheelchairs in front of the bus was unplanned.

The protestors did not expect that their non-disabled colleagues would alert the bus passengers as to what was happening. The limit of time forced the wheel-

chaired individuals to act tactically. They decided to network) with the bus passengers and to command their attention by performing a dance on wheel chairs. The protestors networked also with the media by issuing a spontaneous invitation.

The tactical acts helped wheel-chaired activists to develop a public-protest project. A city administration did not pay attention to the development of accessible public transportation for PwD, which might be regarded as an authority constraint. Non-accessible public transportation might be characterized as capability constraints for everyday activities of wheelchair citizens. The everyday space-time prisms of PwD did not include bus trips. Consequently, wheelchair citizens had less activities than they wanted to have in public places. However, a spontaneous dance of PwD during the outcry made their non-disabled colleagues alert bus passengers as to what was happening. In addition, unplanned involvement of media forced a city administration to pay attention to the needs of wheelchair citizens. As a result, public transportation became accessible. In the time-geography language, the protesters developed their space-time project (Quinlan and Bates 2012)

Datta and her colleagues (2007) call readers' attention to how the lack of knowledge and skills about a labor market in London forced low-income migrants to develop different tactics. The job finding strategy of the unemployed migrants failed, because they were unable to compete with ocal labors. A lack of working and living experiences in a foreign country might be considered as a lack of knowledge and skills on the part of the migrants to act in the London labor market.

A desire to survive in a new place forced low-paid persons to develop different tactics. For example, they created friendship groups and used them as a tool to find a job and a house, and to network. They evaluated alien territory and mapped the places of potential activities. Thus, a participation in faith-based organizations was a tactic developed by the migrants. Although the migrants started their journeys as part of an active strategy to improve lives, they ended up by developing unplanned tactical acts. The tactics helped them to communicate with others and to transcend a social exclusion, which they had to face (Datta *et al.* 2007).

It seems that the migrants experienced authority constraints such as local norms and rules towards foreign low-paid labors. A lack of life experience in London, educational and cultural differences might be regarded as capability constraints, whereas an interaction with local authorities might be regarded as coupling constraints for the migrant workers. However, to survive in an unequal labour market, the migrants networked. They created friendship groups and participated in faith-based organizations, which is another common tactic used by migrants. These tactics helped migrants to expand their space-time prisms and to develop space-time projects, or find jobs and houses.

All examples above illustrated that the actors were developing space-time projects with the help of different tactics. The actors networked to avoid a negative attitude of the caseworkers (McCormak 2009) and to draw the attention of the bus passengers (Quinlan and Bates 2012). They also evaluated and mapped environments to survive in a new place (Datta *et al.* 2007). Networking, evaluating, and mapping were task-oriented acts in particular situations.

Similarly, in the current research investigation I am going to demonstrate that constrained blind and VIPs may develop different tactics to save time and to get expected services (see chapters 5-8). Customers' tactics do not contradict their travel strategies. Individuals plan their activities. However, normally unexpected constraints such as limit of time, inability to predict a situation, and lack of knowledge and skills as to how to behave in a certain place may force the strategist to act tactically. Hence, tactics might be considered as an unplanned (spontaneous) behavior to achieve the expected goal.

Similar to de Certeau's writings, service researchers identify tactics as acts that were not planned in advance (Penaloza and Price 1993:123). Service research defines tactics as a desire to get services despite service inconveniences (Penaloza and Price 1993:123). Once customers get in a hotel, they can only get services in the forms authorized by the service providers. For example, in unfamiliar service places, visually impaired customers move by walking along the walls (Hansen and Philo 2007:501). They prefer sittings near the wall and avoid the obligatory pathways marked out by service providers (Hansen and Philo 2007).

The blind and VIPs develop different skills that people without disabilities may not possess: strong memory, smell and sensor skills (Odette *et al.* 2003). These acts and the moves of the customers with vision impairment may look as though they are unplanned. However, in research about visually impaired persons, such acts are called coping strategies (Brennan and Cardinali 2000). Visually impaired persons maintain prior activities to "keep going" and "not give up" (Brennan *et al.* 2008). Researchers define coping strategies as individuals' acts in various stressful situations. They suggest that coping strategies are organized into behavioral, psychological, and social domains. Behavioral coping acts are observable actions, which include reliance on memory or senses other than vision. Psychological coping refers to the emotional and cognitive experiences of vision impairment in the life of an individual. Social coping refers to the involvement of the VIPs in informal social network and services.

However, a proposed description of the coping strategies (Brenna *et al.* 2000, 2008) does not consider time and space dimensions. Considerations of spatial dimensions regard "coping strategies" as tactical acts of the constrained blind and VIPs. Blind customers seem to be out of control over time within unfamiliar service place. They cannot see, and therefore do not know what may hinder them

in the next moment. But experienced travelers may predict constraints. They may have knowledge and experience about how "to cope", or to deal with unexpected limitations in service spaces.

The blind and VIPs usually begin their journeys to service places as part of an active plan to benefit from service environments. For example, blind customers bring along a guide dog hoping to find a dog-fancier to accompany them within a store's layout (Baker 2006:45). Likewise, blind and visually impaired guests prefer to stay on the first floor or near the elevator which allows easier navigation (Yau *et al.* 2007). The blind and VIPs feel themselves secure when multi-sensory information is available and a destination is well-designed (with color contrast, tactile signs, etc.) (Small *et al.* 2012). Hence, customers with vision impairment develop travel strategies to enjoy the benefits of tourism.

However, when the blind and VIPs experience *unexpected* constraints, they tend to end up resorting to a range of tactics in order to get the expected services. There is no contradiction between tactics and strategies: "two logics of action (one tactical, the other strategic) arise from these two facets of language" (de Certeau 1984:xx). Tactics are spontaneous acts of individuals to escape emerging constraints. Tactical acts may help them to develop shopping strategies, because normally tactics are developed from strategies.

To conclude, the time-geography framework suggests that every individual experiences emerging constraints in a certain place and time. Constraints always force the individuals to spend extra time to overcome them. According to de Certeau's writings, the difference between tactics and strategies is based on the ownership of a place (1984:37). Therefore, constrained blind and visually impaired customers develop tactics when they lack control over time, cannot predict, and do not have knowledge and skills about a service place.

3.3 Summary

The chapter theoretically conceptualized customers' activities in hospitality serviescapes. According to the time-geography perspective, a servicescape is a geographical location where every customer temporarily acts and moves in order to get expected services/aims.

The concept of constraint (Hägerstrand 1970) along with other time-geography tools, such as space-time project, space-time path, space-time prism, and space-time station, depicted customers' intentional acts to fulfil various tasks. The concept of space-time constraints was combined with a concept of constraints on

leisure to consider customers' feelings and emotions within organized servicescapes.

The concept of constraints was complemented by the concept of tactics (de Certeau 1984) to better understand customers' interactions with hospitality servicescapes. The two concepts made up the theoretical and empirical work relevant to the aim of this research investigation. In the time-geography model where time is constantly on the move, it is possible to identify the space for possibilities, but the trajectory of an individual or a group of people and the actual choices they can make depending on available resources can only be traced and analyzed after the choices have been made. By examining the strategy and tactics, it is possible to investigate why the choices were made and on what grounds.

The time-geography approach to servicescape research may help to understand under what given preconditions the blind and VIPs organize their daily activities in hospitality servicescapes. How do the blind and VIPs experience hospitality servicescape stations? What types of constraints limit their activities? In what way do the blind and VIPs experience ongoing constraints? How do customers behave towards unexpected constraints? The following chapter explains and describes the methodological and conceptual journeys of this research investigation.

Chapter IV
Methods and materials

In the previous chapter I theoretically conceptualized how the blind and visually impaired customers act and move in hospitality servicescapes. For this purpose I elucidated the relevance of the concept of constraint from the time-geography model of Torsten Hägerstrand (1970) and the concept of tactics of de Certeau (1984).

The aim of this chapter is twofold. Firstly, it is to describe how a qualitative methodology is employed. Secondly, it is to identify the research concepts and analytical themes.

Taking the hermeneutical stance, this research seeks to understand how the blind and VIPs "know" the environment by moving and acting in space and time with help of four senses. Interview comments and observation findings, as well as textual analysis helped to extract topics and to define theoretical explanations of customers' interactions with hospitality servicescapes (Peet 1998).

This chapter starts with a presentation of the qualitative methods that were used in my research (4.1). Next, the process of the participants' selection is discussed (4.2). The following part describes the process of materials collection (4.3). In section 4.4 I explain how the research concepts were identified. The last part presents the material analysis process and the identification of analytical themes (4.5).

4.1 Methods description

For this research investigation I employed the following qualitative methods: the individual interview, focus group interview, go-along observation, and the observation of textual materials.

I explored the respondents' perception of services in hotels and resorts with a help of the *individual interview* method. The interviewed shared positive and/or negative travel experiences (e.g., when entering hotel rooms), told about the

techniques they used to orient themselves during travels (e.g., in hotel lobbies, public eating places), and suggested general and practical reflections about what the tourism service providers could do to improve services for visually impaired travelers. I used open-ended questions (Silverman 2001) to try to understand how it is to experience constraints in hospitality service places. For instance, I asked respondents: *Can you describe the first impression of the hotel accommodation? Did it match your expectations?* Those who said that the hotel room was a disappointment were probed in detail about its exact nature. Respondents were also asked what made them uncomfortable in the hotel room, what the most difficult moment was, and what the solution was (see Annex I). The interview questions encouraged respondents to describe difficult situations in service places. I collected the statements about motives for the travellers and obtained information about free time activities such as walking in parks, meeting friends, watching television, or going to the public eating places. I raised additional questions to specify previously observed incidents and/or ask for their clarification, and change and improve questions during the interview. The individual interview method helped me to get individuals' opinions about organized service places.

I applied the *focus group interview* method to gain knowledge about how people talk about a common problem and how they share their own experiences concerning a specific situation. The number of focus group participants ranged from 3 to 10. The interviewed participants developed their responses based on responses of other participants (Kitzinger 1995). The group meetings encouraged the blind and VIPs to share their views and discuss taboo topics, such as the accessibility of public toilets, for example. This method did not discriminate as it provided an opportunity for people to talk with other people who shared a similar experience (Kitzinger 1995). The blind and visually impaired participants shared their personal experiences of various constraints in hotel lobbies, accommodations, and eating places.

The *go-along observation* method combined interviews and observation by moving alongside the participant(s) and helped to understand customers' behavior in service places (Kusenbach 2003). The go-along observation investigated "every day behavior" of observant(s) (Jones *et al.* 2008, Kusenbach 2003). Working as the escort person, I observed how the blind and visually impaired guests walked, occupied themselves, interacted, networked and connected to places and people in hospitality servicescapes. The observation activities took place in three hospitality servicescape stations: the lobby, the accommodation, and the eating place. The field notes consisted of detailed summaries about the acts and the moves of blind and visually impaired travelers. As the escort person, I witnessed the activities of the observed customers "in a process". But the work as an escort person did not allow any opportunity for simultaneous recording, because my hands were busy. However, during short breaks, I jotted down notes about events and about my

initial ideas, impressions, and feelings (Bryman and Bell 2007). Go-along observations allowed me to pose questions to the escorted persons, and to discover in what way VIPs experienced various constraints in organized service places.

I also used *the observation of textual materials* method. The material was collected from written online customers' testimonials (virtual outputs) of the blind and VIPs about their experiences of living in hotels. The intention of hotel service providers is to know customers' opinions about offered services. Based on the customers' testimonials, service providers improve service offerings. The analysis of the written on-line comments helped to investigate what constrained activities of blind and VIPs. The comments from customers' testimonials on barriers in specialized hospitality places ensured the credibility of collected materials (Buhalis and Law, 2008; Ip *et al.* 2011).

A combination of different methods helped to provide the reliability and the credibility of the collected empirical material. The findings from individual and focus group interviews was always cross-checked by observation activities, whereas the observation results were regularly tested through interview questions. In addition, on-line customers' testimonials provided further evidence and were added to the collected field material.

I also planned to discuss the gestures and gesticulations of blind and VIPs during individual and focus group interviews. However, the interviewed participants rarely used hands for gesticulations. The blind and VIPs tilted their heads by turning toward interlocutor(s). A voice timbre and intonation were actively employed also. To my further question to a VIP woman about why she does not use hands for gestures, she answered the following: As a sighted person, she gesticulated a lot. After the loss of her ability to see, the woman started to be afraid to occasionally touch someone during a conversation. That is why she has learned "not-gesticulation" reciprocity. Based on the above, I did not discuss gestures and gesticulations of the participants.

4.2 Selection of the participants and author's behavior

The population of this study was composed of the residents of Sweden and Kazakhstan. The work with the participants from different countries helped me to investigate the role of cultural dimensions on customers' activities. In Kazakhstan I worked with members of the Republican library for blind and visually impaired persons (RLVIP) in Almaty. In Sweden interview and observations participants were active members of Synskadades Riksförbund's (SRF), Helsingborg, www.rft.se The respondents represented blind (congenitally and adventitously)

and visually impaired people (GI and GII) (see Chapter 1). The interview participants shared their travel experiences in 7 countries: Sweden, Kazakhstan, Russia, Germany, Japan, Turkey, and China.

I interviewed and/or observed 56 blind and visually impaired travelers. The age of the participants ranged from 25 and older. In Kazakhstan, individual and focus group interviews were conducted in the Russian language whereas in Sweden, individual and go-along interviews were conducted in the English and Swedish languages.

My network of friends and colleagues in Kazakhstan and Sweden helped to enlist the participants for interviews and observations. Thus, in Kazakhstan I called up people for focus group meetings with the help of my friend, the member of Republican library for blind and visually impaired persons. My friend contacted interview participants to get their permission for me to call them in order to introduce myself. In our phone conversations I informed about my research and the questions I wanted to discuss. Closer to the end of the phone conversation I always asked whom else could I contact to invite for the focus group meeting, and I always obtained a new contact. Hence, the group of interviewees was expanded by the "snowballing" (Poria and Brandt 2011) strategy.

In Sweden I worked as an escort person to the group of blind and VIPs, members of SRF to collect the observation materials. I approached SRF in the following way: in April 2012, I sent a letter where I introduced myself and my research topic. I explained my wish to investigate travel experiences of visually impaired people and expressed an interest, if possible, in volunteering for SRF. SRF Helsingborg answered positively to my request and I have been volunteering with SRF since spring 2012. I signed up for an SRF arrangement and acted during this arrangement as an escort to the people who needed assistance. Sometimes I could escort two persons simultaneously. The majority of these people were retired persons who preferred to communicate in Swedish.

Every single observation and interview was unique. Participant(s)' age, gender, and professional status had to be constantly taken into account. Thus, during the go-along walks with the retired VIPs, we talked not only about travel experiences, but also about their previous jobs and families. Elderly VIPs preferred to talk rather than to listen. In contrast, younger visually impaired travelers opted more for discussion. Youth were more interested in my opinion as a researcher about inaccessible service environments and then shared their thoughts. Finally, I noticed that all interviewed travelers were never stressed or depressed by their disabilities.

It looked as if they accepted their visual impairment and lived with a physical inability to see.

All interviews were transcribed and/or described in detail. Although the transcribing took a long time, I always did it no later the next day after the meeting. I used video and tape recording to collect the field materials. I did not videotape all individual interviews, but I tape-recoded every individual meeting with the permission of the interviewed blind and VIP. Each individual interview included not only recorded conversation, but also my notes about how interview went (productive, emotional, cooperative, etc.). It helped me later to quickly refresh my memory. I did my notes in the Russian language, because it was easier to explain details of observation processes.

Since all findings from the field were divided into three groups: "confirmed observations", "surprised observations", and "openings", the first observation notes were mainly "surprises" or "openings" with a small number of facts, which supported "confirmations". Further, the more I traveled the less I added to the "surprised and openings" list.

Ethical issues

As a researcher, I had to minimize the risk for participants to be exposed to psychological harm (Silverman 2001). I had to guarantee participants the privacy of their reputation, professional career, employment, and life. Material collection and material interpretation were inseparable from ethical aspects (Silverman 2001). The Regional Ethical Review Board (Lund University, Sweden) approved my application concerning ethical considerations.

I did not sign any written agreement with the participants of this research, but all participants were informed about the fact that they were observed or interviewed as part of a research project. In the beginning of the interviews or observations, I introduced myself; explained that I am writing a doctoral dissertation in service studies at the Department of Service Management and Service Studies of Lund University; and told that I am interested in how visually impaired persons experience being out, in particular, in hospitality servicescapes, and I then told them about what a servicescape is. I also informed that I am from Kazakhstan. In addition, at the beginning of each individual interview I asked for oral permission for recording of the conversation.

I have learned to see when VIPs are tired and would like to be alone. My strategy was (1) to ask to help to find the VIP's hotel room; (2) assist, if there was any need for help; (3) wait, until this person next time asked for my help. If I happened to

see or feel any negative reaction from the VIPs' side on my observation activity, I would immediately stop it. But I never had a negative reaction from VIPs about the observation activity. Moreover, during the trips VIPs often indicated different physical barriers, which they thought would be the interest for my research.

The participants did not receive payment of any kind. My contribution was my volunteer work as an escort person for SRF members. The collected field material was only made available at bi-monthly supervision meetings, one internal departmental workshop, seven oral presentations at academic conferences, and a Rotary Club (Lund, Sweden) meeting – always in fully anonymized form.

I stored all collected material in my personal computer. These material included: audio and video materials, photos, field notes and texts. The field material was only tagged with the gender of a person involved, and the date and place for the interview or the observation. Whenever the material can be related to a person known by her name, the key with the names of these persons was kept in a file protected by the password and saved on the researcher's library at Lund University's server. This key will be destroyed immediately after the oral defense.

How I was learning to behave

I entered the field with my own image about visual impairment by seeing an "unfamiliar area of group life through images [they] … already possess" (Becker 1998:12). Most of what was known by me about blindness came from mass media, publications, occasional contacts, and common sense (Scott 1969:28). Different questions were continuously following me before the start of the field study work. If disability appears as a topic of conversation, how should I react properly (Scott 1969:29)? Will I be "judged" by the tone or timbre of my voice, or by the content of my words (Scott 1969:27), or by both?

In the beginning of the field work, a lack of communication experience made some situations extremely uncertain for me (Scott 1969:28). In my only friendship with a visually impaired person, I never felt "pity" for her, because she was always so capable. I had to forget when I was with her that she is blind because she is so full of energy and "sight". She "sees" things and then acts.

I want to share with the readers my first meeting with VIPs in conducting a focus group interview. At that time I was thinking that blind and VIPs are voiceless and dependent travelers. I will describe the group meeting, because this was my first experience with "a group". It was July 18, 2011 in Almaty, at the Republican library for blind and visually impaired persons (see Annex II, position 3). Eight people agreed to participate in this focus group interview. I talked individually with all of them in advance by phone and briefly explained my research topic. I

also mentioned that we would discuss the "physical barriers" they faced when traveling, but did not indicate exactly the focus of the topic.

Originally, I was planning to discuss only public eating places. I was not sure if I would include the topic of "public toilets" as well. That topic was still an evident issue "unspoken but present" (Richardson, 2000:934). In addition, I was uncomfortable talking about that on the phone with people I never met before. I decided to see how the group communicated, and then, if it went well, I would include a discussion about public toilets.

I was worried about how I would manage my first focus group interview. All I knew was based on the literature about focus group interview techniques. I should have an assistant and a person handling the audio recording. I still was not sure if I could get permission for recording. What if they said no? Then I should have to take "mental notes" which later would be transformed into "jotted notes" (Emerson and Shaw 1995:17-65), another task that was new to me.

I also was thinking that most of participants were either depressed because of their impairment or were to be pitied due to their physical condition. Furthermore, what could a sighted person possibly tell them? How could I reassure them if they complained about physical barriers? How would I raise the question regarding public toilets to them with men and women sitting in one room and most of them not familiar with each other? What if I did not get any comments? These were my fears.

I arrived at the library one hour in advance and was directed to the reading hall. I saw several people having a lively conversation. They were continuously joking. Two men were sitting on the table dangling their legs over the edge and a young girl around 20 years old was laughing at their jokes. One middle-aged man was working on the computer and from time to time commented on their conversation. After a few minutes, it became clear that all of them were participants in my focus group.

In Sweden my first meeting with a group of VIPs was in May 2012. The meeting took place at SRF office in Bokullagatan 3, Helsingborg. I was worried, because my Swedish was not perfect. Would they understand my questions? Would I understand their answers? How would we ever communicate? I came to the office and I was introduced to the SRF members. Before the meeting began, I had a brief chat with people about Kazakhstan and my research topic. I was accepted warmly as a newcomer. The room was full of conversations between participants. The meeting started with tea and coffee being served and then segued into a typical activity. We were given hard paper cards with printed figures. These figures were also embossed in Braille. The VIP informed me: "*Now we play Bingo. Do you know this game"?* "*Well, in general, yes"*, was my reply.

The game started. The moderator voiced a number and we had to find the same number on our cards. The players were excited; they were joking, chatting with each other, and everyone wanted to be a winner. I could quickly find the numbers on my card. However, the rest of the people around the table were not so fast. They had to touch their cards... Perhaps, for the first time in my life I valued the advantages of having sight. The reason why I have described my first meetings with visually impaired persons was to illustrate how I was learning about a blindness.

Getting access to the field of the study was important, but it was only part of the task. No less important was to create a researcher-participant relationship. I worked with SRF not only as an escort person, but also as a colleague. I participated in various activities organized by SRF, for example, Midsummer Fest (Summer 2012), SRF Anniversary' party (September 2012), and monthly meetings (2011-2014). I always assisted VIPs by serving tea or coffee, helping with a heavy luggage, if any. The constant access gave me a chance to not only to observe, but also to participate in everyday activities of SRF members. Observations involved me in every-day talks and jokes and therefore I was becoming closer to participants and was able better understanding behavior of visually impaired travelers. However, as a researcher I had to keep a distance and to provide objective information.

I found a similar situation in the research of Christer Eldh (2004). He writes, that conducting a fieldwork involved a paradox such as keeping both the identification and distance (2004). My research participants were changing, because I never selected participants to my observations in advance. The travelers decided by themselves when to have a trip. Not all interviewed were chosen by myself, because the participants were recommended to me by my friends and colleagues. It was rather I who represented a kind of continuity (Eldh 2004). I worked in the field and continued to read the literature. My knowledge and expertize about travelers with vision impairment was growing also. In my research analysis I was no longer dependent on my friendly relationship with the research participants (Eldh 2004). Therefore, I could demonstrate a clarity with regard to the research and participants' views.

The qualitative approach allowed me to use my own body as an "instrument of research" (Macpherson 2012). As an escort person, I always had to be a step ahead in case of narrow gangways or unfamiliar places. I have learned to guide a blind person with the VIP's hand on my elbow, but I never led. As an escort person, I did everything to avoid "power relations" between me and observant(s) (Jones *et al.* 2008). I had to practice "sensing for two" and "moving as one" (Macpherson 2012). The work of a guide person taught me to listen first and never to suggest until I was requested. However, I also had to do my research and

constantly communicate with the observant(s). It was psychologically stressful. I had to keep control not only of the physical security of the accompanied person, but to check my own movements and thoughts, often by "thinking in advance". I also tried to practice servicescapes with VIPs (Macpherson 2012), and as the researcher to be always ethically correct and candid.

As a researcher, I continuously learned new sides of being blind that are natural parts of their everydaylives. Every morning during the breakfast in Solhaga resort (see Annex II, position 7) VIPs discussed official morning news. Customers' activities included different entertainments as dancing, walking, etc. Every day we took nature walks, where one sighted person accompanied one or two VIPs. The walks were speedy. Once during the daily walking trip a blind person requested us to be careful, because there was a car behind us. In a few seconds I saw the car. Being sighted I did not hear the car prior to seeing it. In another walk a blind person raised the question: *where are the lilacs planted?* Fifty meters away I saw a lilac tree. I did not notice the smell until it was brought to my attention.

Once, in Solhaga resort the woman - entrepreneur from Angelholm made a presentation about different types of chocolate. She gave participants dried cacao fruit which was touched and smelled by all listeners. The participants had to indicate the ingredients in small pieces of different types of chocolate that were distributed. Blind people were the first who immediately indicated different ingredients like vanillin, oil, nuts, etc. I could feel these ingredients only after their comments.

I witnessed that travelers with vision impairment behaved tactically within new service environments. VIPs navigated unfamiliar places by four senses. Thus, VIPs "sized" spaces by acoustics. Smell and sound informed customers with vision disability on dangers. Vision was replaced by touch. Bright posters, carpets, turns, a sound of the telephone or fax machine at the reception desk, etc were their marks. The blind and VIPs mentally evaluated unfamiliar environments and then mapped them.

Work as escort person made me discover many things about VIPs' activities in service places. Watching TV was a part of the VIPs' daily routine. Once, during dinner the blind person asked her table partner: *Let's see the TV show Lets' Dance! Tonight is the last presentation. (Låt oss titta på Let's Dance! Det är absolut sista!).* Then she turned her head to me and raised the question: *Alma, who is your favorite: Anton or Molly* (two of the dancers competing)*?* I replied: *Anton.* Another person (visually impaired) commented: *I like Molly. She dances perfectly the rumba.* We then started to discuss the show.

Later the same evening we were watching TV in a big conference room (around 40 square meters). VIPs attentively listened to the jury and anchors' comments and

then gave their own comments. During the dance presentation, when the only sound was music, a blind person asked the escort person: *Is this nice? (Är det bra?).* She also asked how the parents of her favorite dancer looked. A blind person smiled when her favorite dancers were doing their dance show.

In Solhaga resort I observed daily activities of the blind and VIPs within friendly service environments. The customers did not experience barriers and difficulties. The organized service place considered the needs of the customers with vision impairment. Qualified personnel served the blind and VIPs. The customers with vision impairment could get the offered services without an external help.

I also could not avoid mistakes. On my first day in Solhaga resort I tried to assist the VIPs to wear a coat or to remind them about things they left behind. This was definitely not pleasant for them. I myself felt uncomfortable, because I had a sense that they (VIPs) did not like it. In further conversation with the escort person (she has 25 years' experience working with PwD), she informed me that there is no need to immediately run and assist a blind person. She continued: *even if a blind person is falling down, you never run to help, but wait for them to request the help*.

Despite almost two years of working with visually impaired people, I had some difficulties, which were sometimes difficult to explain. I will share an example of something that happened to me in August 2012 when I visited the Malmö festival with a visually impaired couple, participants of my research.

We had a nice time listening to a jazz concert at Södertull in Malmö. The vocalist was Anna-Mia Barwe whose natural vocal ability at the Hot House Jazz Tent completely charmed us. It was a warm evening and we decided to visit the trade fair, which was part of the festival. At this annual fair, different entrepreneurs introduce their products to the guests attending the festival.

It was recommended to me that I should taste the Swedish jam. Our movement through the fair was hampered by the overcrowded streets so we took our time. I walked slightly ahead, carefully guiding two people with walking canes. Suddenly the blind man stopped and said: *It is here. I hear his voice.* (He meant the voice of the jam seller). I became curious. I did not see any seller, and I could only hear the loud crowd around us. I turned my head in the direction his hand was pointing beyond the crowd. Suddenly I saw a small sandwich board and many other stands with different products. The blind man continued: *We annually buy jam from this entrepreneur. He also sells marmalade. It is not too sweet, and the berries taste natural.* We stopped and they introduced me to the seller. I started to taste different types of jam by taking plastic spoons from the packet in front of the sandwich board. I chose cloudberry jam and the blind woman wished to taste it. I took a spoonful of the jam and decided to feed it into her mouth. In a moment I

noticed her hand searching for the spoon. I immediately gave her the spoon. I was so embarrassed by what I had done plus I suddenly felt totally uncomfortable. I just wanted to help but it felt wrong. I realized that I still made mistakes because I continued to have misconceptions about what it means to be blind and not helpless.

To conclude, the fieldwork provided me with the chance to observe and to learn about the situation of blind and VIPs in service places. Becoming more of an insider and a participating observer, as working as an escort person for almost four years, made me understand the specific situations in customers' interactions with the organized servicescapes. The fieldwork changed me. I came to the field "to voice voiceless", because initially I perceived the blind and visually impaired travelers as helpless and dependent persons. However, I have learned from the observation and interview activities that travelers with disabilities are active and independent people. This finding had an impact on how I looked upon the gathered materials and analyzed them. My idea to emphasize a role of emerging constraints in customers' interactions with servicescapes shifted to the importance of customers' intentional acts to get expected services. Hence, I focused the analysis on the task-oriented acts of the blind and VIPs in a situation of ongoing constraints (see chapters 5-8). In the next section I introduce the material collection process.

4.3 Collection of the empirical materials

The process of materials collection was nonlinear. The field findings always forced me to search for additional literature, whereas the findings from the literature review motivated me to look for the practical evidence. I had continuously to move forward and back. The material collection lasted 3.5 years.

The first 10 interviews were conducted in November 2010 in Almaty, Kazakhstan (see Annex II, position 1). The purpose of these meetings was to gather empirical materials about physical barriers that hinder visually impaired customers. I wanted to find specific answers, and to provide evidence in support of the information that was revealed in the textual analysis about traveling with disability. The group consisted of 4 women and 6 men aged from 27 to 40 years old. One participant was adventitiously blind.

The interviewees were asked to recollect the details of their traveling and experience with hotels, regardless of whether the event was satisfactory or not. I paid particular attention to a body language of the interviewees, or to the way people articulated messages (Reiman 2007:90). I paid attention also to

participants' voice timbre, intonation, murmuring, and breathing, which helped in deciphering vocal cues (Jakobson and Waugh 1987:39). The research assistant videotaped all meetings, since the participants agreed to this.

In June 26, 2011 I conducted the first go-along observation (see Annex II, position 2). My colleague at the Department of Service Management and Service Studies of Lund University introduced me to a visually impaired traveler from Germany. The VIP came alone to Helsingborg, Sweden from Bremen, Germany to visit his friends. He regularly travels through Europe and prefers trains rather than planes or busses. My purpose was to understand whether there were any cross-cultural differences in the travel experiences of the visually impaired customers. For example, how do customers with visual impairment behave within service places in a foreign country?

The meeting took place on Helsingborg's city walkway near the beach. I focused on the line of the VIP's argumentation about accessibility barriers and on the ways that he used to handle various hindrances during his travel experiences. The meeting was not recorded, but the VIP gave his permission to use go-along interview materials for the research. The conversation was written down right after the meeting.

Later in July 18, 2011, I conducted a focus group interview in Almaty, Kazakhstan (see Annex II, position 3). The purpose of the meeting was to understand how the group discusses accessibility barriers within organized service places. The group included 8 participants aged from 26 to 41. One person was adventitiously blind.

It was the first time that I organized a focus group meeting. I invited two assistants. The first assistant listened together with me to all oral comments. The second assistant recorded the interview process and helped to serve coffee.

The venue was familiar and convenient for the participants. Interviewees were seated comfortably in a circle and a friendly atmosphere was created (Steele, 1999). During the focus group meeting, I paid particular attention to how participants developed their responses based on other responses. I also observed how VIPs were sharing common concerns about service environments, and how participants checked and balanced each other and identified any errors or extreme views (Kitzinger 1995). I paid attention to nonverbal responses such as a voice timbre of participants, because it may be important for providing additional information on a participant's reactions to the topic of discussion. I intended to obtain information about how discussants were coming up with new ideas (Silverman 2001).

I witnessed argumentative disagreement at a focus group meeting (Bryman and Bell 2007:522). Thus, one participant said that it is difficult to recognize VIP without white stick and black glasses (see Annex II, position 3). He also said that

often VIPs themselves do not use these attributes, but blame service providers. Only one VIP commented, saying that a lack of "blind features" is never a problem in high-star hotels and restaurants. However, the majority of the participants ignored these comments.

I could not avoid mistakes while processing the first focus group interview. Thus, during the meeting (see Annex II, position 3), I noticed that a 36-years-old VIP woman supportively was nodding in response to the arguments offered by other group members on non-accessibility of public toilets. Since the woman did not give any comment, I decided to encourage her and asked to provide an example (if any) about her travel experience of public toilet. The woman shared a case about hand washing. Her voice was quiet, and the comment was short. I was wrong about putting a direct question to her, which embarrassed the participant.

In March 31, 2012 I had an individual interview with a visually impaired woman from Sweden (see Annex II, position 4). My colleague from the Department of Service Management and Service Studies of Lund University introduced me to her. The VIP woman recounted her travel experience with her husband who is also a visually impaired person. The aim of the interview was to explore how constrained VIPs behave towards various barriers and difficulties in service places. The interview was recorded with the permission of the participant.

The only way for me to understand how visually impaired persons experience hospitality servicescapes was to take participation in the trips with the blind and VIPs and try at least if not actually to practice to observe how they do it. I was advised to check Synskadades riksforbund Fritid (SRF) web site which regularly organizes trips for VIPs. I checked the web site and sent the letter with a request to volunteer. In May 4, 2012 I conducted the interview with an adventitiously blind woman, SRF member (see Annex II, position 5). The interview was unplanned, because I was invited to introduce myself as a volunteer to work for SRF. However, during our conversation the blind person gave her permission for the recording. The interview took place in the house of the interviewed person. Therefore, it was a chance to observe how a blind person moves within a familiar space.

We talked about blind travelers. The woman shared with me her travel experiences. Being herself *adventitiously* blind, she told that *congenitally* blind people have some specifics in the environment perception. For example, colors are not important for the congenitally blind people. The congenitally blind person told her that "color" is just *a word* for him like *table* or *desk*. The woman also gave an example, which I want to share with my readers. Thus, sitting in the room, a congenitally blind man asked the teacher who was outside the door. The teacher responded she did not know, because the door was closed. *Hmm… can't you see through the door, because I can hear through the door?* The teacher replied that

the door was like a table then she knocked on the table. But the blind man objected*: The window is also like a table then he knocked on the window. So, why cannot you see through the door?* He was confused. Collected field materials called my attention to the difference in the perception of a service environment between congenitally and adventitiously blind people.

Meanwhile, I was accepted to volunteer at SRF. In May 12, 2012 I participated in a one-day trip to Helsingor, Denmark with the group of VIPs from Synskadades Riksförbund's (SRF), Helsingborg, www.rft.se (see Annex II, position 6). The group included 2 adventitiously blind, 3 visually impaired, and 8 sighted persons.

It was the first time that I was working as the escort person. The trip included a city walk in Helsingor and lunch on board the Scandia ferry. I planned to observe how VIPs interact with unfamiliar service environments. Because of rainy weather in Helsingor, our group had to sit in a local cafeteria. We had a general conversation about Swedish national drinks, and I observed how VIPs behaved in public eating place.

The next observation activity was held in Solhaga resort, Majenfors, Sweden (www.solhaga.se) lasted 3 days, from June 1st to 3d, 2012 (see Annex II, position 7). Solhaga resort was tailored for people with sight loss. Visually impaired guests could stay in the resort with a guide dog. The resort included several cottages with one or two-bed rooms in each. The tourists shared a common toilet and bathroom.

The group consisted of 26 participants, including 13 blind and VIPs. Among the VIPs one person was congenitally blind and 2 were adventitiously blind. I found it interesting to observe the blind and VIPs in a friendly service environment. In Solhaga resort, the customers with vision impairment participated in various activities, such as dancing and curling, for example. Curling was organized inside the building in a big room, around 40 square meters. The instructor divided people into pairs to compete. It is important to note that visually impaired were competing with sighted persons. The instructor assisted visually impaired players by applauding in the correct direction for the curling stone. Not all the VIPs participated in this competition, but all of them came to support the players. During the game, participants continuously commented on the competition.

The observation was time consuming and generated extensive field notes. Work as an escort person did not give me a chance simultaneously to write observation notes. Therefore, every evening I was writing detailed field notes on daily activities of the observed blind and VIPs.

In July 17-18, 2012 I observed a hotel with a visually impaired woman (see Annex II, position 8). It was an opportunity for continuous observation of the VIP in a hotel environment. I was able to immediately ask the VIP for an evaluation of the

emerging constraints, if any. Therefore, I had a chance to get first-hand comments on how and why the VIP experienced these.

We shared one room with two beds. The room equipment included a flat screen TV, free Internet access, telephone, air conditioner, small fridge, mini-safe, hot water kettle, two chairs, wardrobe, mirror, and two tables (big and small). The bathroom was equipped with a private toilet, private bath, hairdryer, towels, and amenities. I observed how the VIP experienced the hotel's physical surroundings. VIP's interactions with personnel were also the focus of my observation activity.

Ten days later in July 26, 2012, I conducted a focus group interview with 6 participants, 2 women and 4 men (see Annex II, position 9). One person was adventitiously blind. Participants aged from 33 to 50 years old. The discussants described their travel experiences of hotel lobbies, accommodations, and eating places. The focus group participants called my attention to the differences between customers and service providers in their understanding of constraints.

While conducting a focus group interview, I had less control over the group participants, unlike during the individual interviews, and therefore I made procedural mistakes (Greenbaum, 1998:57). During both focus group meetings (see Annex II, positions 3 and 9), there was one person who was dominating the others with his own opinions. In the first focus group meeting, it was 31-year-old man, GI (see Annex II, position 3). He was following the topic under discussion, but he preferred to talk more than to listen. The interview assistant stopped him verbally several times and encouraged the group to continue conversation. During a second focus group meeting (see Annex II, position 9), the dominant person was a 50-year-old blind man. He mainly talked about his traveling to different countries. The discussion ran the risk of leading into irrelevant issues that had nothing to do with the topic. This time I moderated the situation by inviting other participants to speak in turn and/or providing comments.

In August 16-19, 2012, I participated as escort person with a group of blind and VIPs in the trip to Schwerin, Germany (see Annex II, position 10). The trip was organized by SRF, Helsingborg in collaboration with the Röke Buss company (www.rokebuss.se) specialized in transportation and tourism. The group included one congenitally blind man, 5 visually impaired and 15 sighted participants. Among VIPs, 4 were women.

We stayed at *InterCity Hotel* (www.intercityhotel.com). The personnel contacted hotel guests in German and in English. Since the majority of the group spoke only Swedish, I had a chance to observe VIPs in a new language environment. The observation process was time consuming and generated extensive field notes.

In April 11, 2013 I conducted go-along observations by escorting a group of blind and VIPs to a one-day excursion to Arnold Kannibalmuseum, Horby, Sweden (see

Annex II, position 11). The trip was organized by SRF Helsingborg, Sweden. The travel itinerary included: SRF, Helsingborg (the departure), Gästgivaregården, Hurva (lunch in the cafeteria), Arnold Kannibalmuseum, Horby (excursion with a coffer-break), SRF, and Helsingborg (the arrival). During the trip I observed two travelers, a sighted and visually impaired. I measured how much time they spent for similar activities and how many services they could obtain.

In August 17, 2013 I conducted the focus group interview (see Annex II, position 12). The aim of the group meeting was to discuss ambient constraints in hospitality service places. This time I focused my attention on customers' behavior towards unexpected ambient constraints within organized servicescapes.

From 2012 to 2015 I periodically checked customers' testimonials from hospitality websites, such as www.blindcanadians.ca www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk www.eatoutmagazine.co.uk www.peoplefirst4aoda.com It became an additional source of empirical materials.

To conclude, the field materials always forced me to search for additional literature. The findings from the literature review motivated me to look for the practical evidences. And gradually, along with the materials collection, I made a conceptual journey, which I describe in the following section.

4.4 Conceptual journey

This section describes how the research concepts were identified. Thus, along with interview and observation activities, I constantly reviewed the literature. The scientific development in the thesis can be regarded as an "interrelated cumulative research process" where the outcomes of previous interaction processes proposed a further step (Dahlgaard-Park 2000:19). Therefore, the collected results were represented in a sequence that highlights the answers to the questions that were set during this research investigation process (see Annex III).

The initial findings from the literature review revealed that physical and social barriers at tourism destinations create non-accessible environments for the travelers with disabilities (see Chapter 2). Therefore, I centered on *the accessibility* as a main concept to explain collected empirical material (see Annex III, position 1).

The subsequent findings from the literature review identified the two groups of attributes that influenced customers with disabilities. The first group included physical and social barriers in service places. Constrained customers experienced senses of confusion, alienation, and vulnerability. Another group of identified attributes belonged to travel stimulus for PwD, or decision-making and the

freedom to move. Consequently, the first group of qualities is united by the variable *barriers and difficulties*, whereas the other – by the variable *freedom to move* (see Annex III, position 2).

Meanwhile, the work in the field was influenced by my perception about the travelers with disabilities. Although PwD experienced various barriers in service locations, they enjoyed traveling. I deepened my review of the literature on travelers with disabilities and identified that three servicescape factors (design, ambient, and social) may hinder customers' activities (Bitner 1992) and make them less mobile. The findings from a textual analysis centered on the concept of *servicescape*, as a place where customers experience various problems. Hence, my claim was that poorly designed servicescapes create non-accessible service environment for the blind and VIPs (see Annex III, position 3).

I continued to discover servicescapes. I applied a theory of *Production of space* (Lefebvre 1991) to understand how blind and VIPs act and move in hospitality service places. *Space* and *power* dimensions sharpened a proposed claim: non-accessible service environments exclude PwD from the offered services by making them less mobile. In March 2012 my research focus shifted from accessibility and servicescape concepts to *mobility* and servicescape concepts (see Annex III, position 4, 5, 6).

The mobility concept united *space* and *power* dimensions: poorly designed servicescapes (spaces) made customers with disabilities immobile (powerless). In addition, observational findings revealed that two blind persons or two VIPs may differently experience similar service environments. Thus, they used different amounts of time for a similar activity in a similar service place.

The qualitative methods helped me to identify specific moments which were not always visible, because they were simple and familiar (Wittgenstein 1968). The mass of collected material (notes, transcribed interview and observations reports, photos and video) continuously was re-read, re-watched, and re-listened to. It helped to refresh my memory and to focus on the research process. Thus, I noticed that interviewed participants never mentioned *a power* dimension to describe their travel experiences. Instead, interviewed people always underscored the importance of *time*. So, previously unnoticed, but recorded points of interviewed about lack of time changed the theoretical approach. Along with space, *time* was also important for blind and visually impaired guests. Constrained blind and VIPs required extra time to obtain offered services.

My research focused on three concepts: *constraints*, mobility, and the servicescape (see Annex III, position 7). Since the time-geography framework considers the spatiotemporal characteristics of constraints (Hägerstrand 1970), I decided to examine customers' activities with the help of the time-geography tools. Thus, I

noticed that various constraints that the blind and VIPs experienced in hotels and resorts fitted well with the constraints identified by Hägerstrand in his time-geography model (1970). In hospitality service places, the blind and VIPs experienced three types of constraints (capability, coupling, and authority) (see Annex III, positions 7-13). Constrained customers required extra time to overcome various constraints.

However, constrained customers intended to get expected services. They wanted to save time and to act independently. I decided to consider the acts and the moves of the hindered blind and VIPs towards emerging constraints as *tactical* (de Certeau 1984) (see Chapter 4). Overall, in spring 2013 the research focused on the concept of constraints and the concept of tactics (see Annex III, positions 8-13).

Based on the above presented ideas, I have proposed a conceptual map that illustrates and summarizes the scientific development of this research investigation. Annex IV describes the conceptual development process and focuses on the key concepts.

4.5 Analysis of the materials

The analysis of the empirical material followed the procedure presented by Lofland et al (Lofland *et al.* 2006). I came to the field with prearranged codes and their categorization (Lofland *et al.* 2006:201). The review of disability, tourism, and service literature about travelers with disabilities defined a paradox: PwD are loyal and constrained customers (see Chapter 2). Collected empirical materials provided evidence that customers with vision disability value travel for a chance to engage in a decision-making process, but organized servicescapes hinder their activity patterns.

Empirical materials of this research include transcribed and videotaped focus group interviews, detailed reports and photos of go-along interviews, sketches of the meetings, recorded and transcribed individual interviews, customers' testimonials and observation material. Collected materials were divided into three servicescape stations: lobby, accommodation, and eating place. I included empirical materials about customers' activities in hotel corridors, retail, and public transportation places in the lobby station chapter (Chapter 5). Materials about VIPs' experiences of public toilets were included in the accommodation station chapter (Chapter 6), whereas incidents from public eating places were included in the eating place station chapter (Chapter 7).

The fieldwork and selected theories focused my research investigation (see 4.3 and 4.4). My research analysis centered on the taxonomy "constraints-resistive

behavior" (Lofland *et al.* 2006). I arranged similar quotes, words and ideas into categories such as *barriers*, *constraints*, and *decision-making behavior*. All selected categories were then reinterpreted and rearranged by means of analytic concepts, such as c*onstraints* and *tactical behavior*. The process of coding was challenging. Identified codes connected tourism, leisure, disability research, servicescape literature, the time-geography framework, and the writings about tactics (intentional behavior). Every sentence was carefully coded by means of the list of categories and concepts.

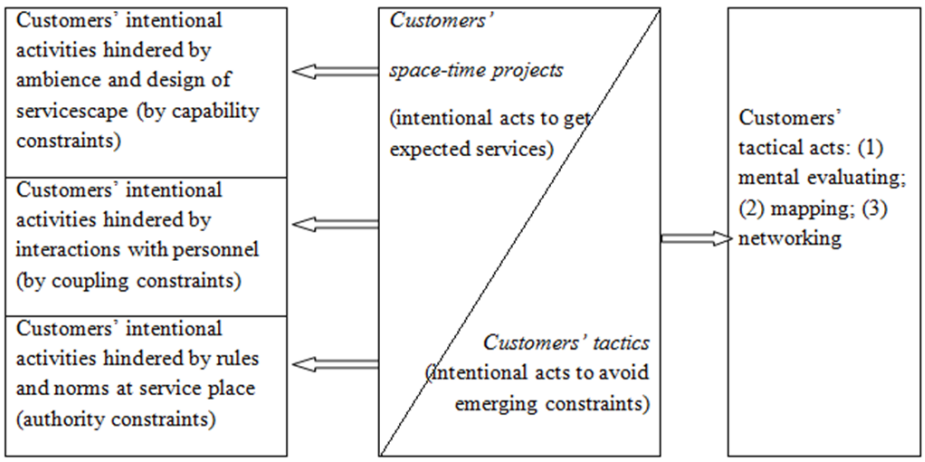

Figure 4.5
Research operational framework

Based on the literature review and categorization of the collected empirical materials I developed the research operational framework (see Figure 4.5). During my fieldwork I was witnessing different situations where organized servicescapes hindered the blind and visually impaired customers. The left part of the graphical device tells us that customers' intentional acts to get services were hindered by unexpected constraints in a servicescape. Inconvenient ambience and design were regarded as capability constraints, interactions with personnel as coupling constraints, whereas restrictive rules and norms at service places were considered as authority constraints. During my field work I witnessed how the blind and VIPs experience ongoing constraints in service places.

I saw also how constrained customers intended to avoid unexpected constraints by developing different tactics. The blind and VIPs evaluated and mapped unfamiliar service surroundings, and actively networked service personnel and other customers. Therefore, the right part of the figure demonstrates tactical acts of the constrained customers.

I focused my analytical attention on the customers' intentional acts and moves to obtain expected services (space-time projects) and on the ways that customers developed to avoid emerging constraints in servicescapes (tactical acts). I had to make my readers see what I saw, to make them trust the research findings, and to create a balance between structured text and the material interpretation (Crang 2007:132). I continuously evaluated the collected empirical materials with the help of theoretical findings, and finally identified two overarching analytic themes: (1) *Competition of space-time projects*; (2) *Tactical behavior: evaluating, mapping, and networking.*

4.6 Summary

A qualitative methodology helped me to identify specific moments in the daily activities of the customers with vision impairment. The individual interview method helped me to explain how the blind and VIPs perceive servicescapes, whereas the group interview method helped to discover unspoken topics and to come up with new ideas.The go-along method gave an understanding of customers' behavior and their decision-making processes. The observation of textual material provided me with customers' thoughts about travel experiences at hospitality servicescapes.

I came to the field with the idea "to voice the voiceless". However, my work as an escort person as well as the collected empirical materials changed my perception about travelers with vision impairment. The participants of this research project were blind and VIPs from Sweden and Kazakhstan. Participants shared with me their travel experiences in the hotels of Sweden, Kazakhstan, Russia, Germany, Japan, Turkey, and China. I met active travelers who were intent on developing their travel strategies.

I explained my conceptual journey, which ended up with the conceptual map. I entered the field being led by the concept of accessibility. Collected empirical materials inspired me to search and to analyze additional literature, whereas theoretical findings guided my fieldwork. I left the field being led by the concept of constraints and the concept of tactics. Finally, I described a material analysis process, proposed the operational framework of the research, and identified two analytical topics. In the following chapter I introduce the collected empirical materials and their analysis.

PART TWO

In Part One I explored tourism, leisure, disability research, and servicescape literature. I presented selected concepts and research methodology and explained my journey to identify selected concepts. At the end of Part One, I defined two analytical topics that were to be examined in the collected empirical materials.

The aim of Part Two is twofold. First, it is to introduce the collected empirical material that describes how the blind and visually impaired customers experienced hotel lobbies, accommodations, and eating places. The second aim is to analyze these experiences.

To fulfill this aim I examined the collected empirical materials with the help of the time-geography tools (Hägerstrand 1970) (see Chapter 3). From the time-geography perspective, the hotel lobby, accommodation, and eating place are stations where customers temporarily act in order to get expected services, or to develop their space-time projects. In the time-geography' view, capability, coupling, and authority constraints influence customers' space-time paths, space-time prisms, and space-time projects by forcing individuals to use extra time to overcome unexpected limitations. Customers may change planned acts and physical moves because of the emerging constraints (Hägerstrand 1970). I use the time-geography tools to investigate in what way the blind and VIPs experience constraints in the three hospitality servicescapes stations: lobby, accommodation, and eating-place.

How do the blind and VIPs respond to the constraints? One important point of departure is de Certeau's concept of tactics, to understand how the blind and VIPs went about trying to get the expected services (de Certeau 1984) (see Chapter 3). I complement the time-geography tools by the concept of tactics to analyze the behavior of the constrained customers.

In the current research, the blind and visually impaired customers were considered as rational and demanding to get expected services (see Chapter 2). I drew readers' attention to the active behavior of the constrained blind and VIPs. In the analysis of customers' interactions with hospitality servicescapes, I followed the operational framework (see Figure 4.5). Two overarching themes *Competition of space-time projects* and *Tactical behavior: evaluating, mapping, and networking*

linked together the findings from collected empirical materials and theoretical findings.

I did not compare service experiences of customers from Sweden and customers from Kazakhstan. However, collected empirical materials revealed that physical facility and service delivery in the observed hotels in Kazakhstan and in Sweden differed. Observed and interviewed travelers from Kazakhstan experienced a larger number of constraints in the local hotels compared to the domestic experiences of Swedish travelers with vision impairment.

Chapter V
Lobby station

The hotel lobby is a physical location, which is used for entry from the outside. The lobby is a place to create a right impression on the customers and to convey an image of the hospitality service place. Sometimes the hotel lobby is referred to a foyer or an entrance hall. It is common that hotel lobbies are equipped with furniture, such as couches and chairs, where guests and visitors may wait for services. In the hotel lobby, services should be offered at both daytime and nighttime.

The lobby is an open environment. Newly arrived customers want to get their expected rooms as quickly as possible. Personnel should provide customers with clear verbal directions. In hotel lobbies customers interact personnel and themselves. Hence, the lobby is a social place too.

In the current chapter some cases are not strictly belong to the customers' activities in hotel lobbies, but oriented to what I would call "service situations". Thus, I added some empirical materials, which describe the acts and the moves of the blind and VIPs in hotel corridors, retail and public transportation places, such as airports and train stations. Hotel corridors draw guests out of the lobby to the rooms and other service locations. It is interesting to note how the blind and VIPs experience hotel corridors where service desk personnel cannot "keep an eye" on customers' physical movements. In hotel lobby customers may experience a variety of shops and services, as, for example, to buy plane and train tickets. These types of services are offered by hotel service providers for customers' convenience. Hence, collected empirical materials about customers' activities in retail and public transportation places can provide additional facts concerning VIPs' interactions with servicescapes. Therefore, in this chapter all cases concerning customers' activities in hotel corridors, retail and public transportation places are regarded to be relevant in relation to the description of a lobby station.

The chapter includes five sections. In sections 5.1 and 5.2 I illustrate how the blind and VIPs experience hotel lobbies, hotel corridors, and retail places. The following sections 5.3 and 5.4 provide the analysis, which include my interpretation on what

is happening when customers with vision disability temporarily act, and move within lobby station. Section 5.5 provides a summary.

5.1 Getting lost in a service station

Collected empirical materials revealed that blind and VIPs had difficulties in using senses of hearing to navigate hotel lobbies and retail places. Interview participants told about a loud sound in wide lobbies that made an unpleasant din (focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.26.2012; go-along interview, Helsingborg, Sweden, 06.26.2011). A visually impaired woman said: *"A fountain located inside a store made it so I could not hear anything except the water noise. I became disoriented."* (woman, VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.26.2012). Focus group participants agreed that a sound of an air conditioner is noisy even during daytime: *"Sometimes it makes it hard to hear what other people are saying."* (woman, GII VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 08.21.2013). This means that a noise in service stations irritated customers with vision disability. Constrained customers may feel themselves frustrated.

However, the findings from empirical materials revealed that a lack of sound in service places also disoriented customers with vision impairment. A focus group participant said: *The corridor floor covered by soft carpet made me feel uncomfortable* (man, VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.26.2012). A soft cover limited VIP's ability to navigate service place with the help of hearing and touch. Hence, quietness in the hospitality servicescape was a concern for the customers with vision disability. Although public transportation was not a topic of focus group discussions, interview participants often pointed to the unclear sound of information announcements at airports. VIPs wanted also voice announcements concerning train or bus numbers to be easier to understand, because they were forced to ask people around them what bus or train was announced (individual interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, Nov 19-21, 2010; go-along interview, Helsingborg, Sweden, 06.26.2011). Visually impaired travelers worried if they could not hear travel information. Generally speaking, noise, quietness, and unclear sound in constructed servicescapes made the blind and VIPs experience anxiety and anger.

Inconvenient ambience in hotel lobby is a barrier for the blind and VIPs. Collected empirical materials revealed that in hotel lobbies, customers with vision disability had difficulties in using their sense of smell. The VIP shared her experience of a hotel when participating in a conference: *Once in Astana* [the capital of Kazakhstan] *the hotel lobby smelled like a dirty eatery. I noticed this nasty odor immediately after stepping into that hotel* (woman, GII VIP, focus group

interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 08.21.2013). Focus group participants agreed that inconvenient ambience is always a barrier to navigate by sense of smell.

Other examples demonstrate how VIPs were hindered in using a sense of touch to navigate unfamiliar service place. Thus, several participants in the focus group meeting mentioned their unhappy experiences of unpleasant touch at service premises. The VIP woman said: *Sometimes the walls of the hotels are made from materials that are unpleasant to touch* [they are too rough] (woman, GI VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.26.2012). Another VIP informed that a dirty surface was a barrier for her: "*In Japan the hotel stair handrails were dusty. When I told the personnel about it they were surprised, because they did not think anybody would touch them."* (woman, VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.26.2012). As seen, customers with vision disability had difficulties to use a sense of touch to find a way within organized servicescapes.

The findings from collected empirical materials revealed that a lack of contrast colors in hotel lobbies created problems for visually impaired customers, since they were not able to use some degree of sight. Key phrases included: *"It is necessary to have contrasting colors in the hotels. It is also important to indicate dangerous places where VIPs have a high risk of falling down".* "*Often the stairs and floor in the hotel are painted in the same color. It is difficult to realize where the stairs begin and end. Why can they not make the floor before the stairs ribbed like a washboard?"* (focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.26.2012). The observation of the hotel by the VIP also acknowledged the importance of a color contrast for those who could see a little (hotel observation with the VIP, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.17.2012). Walls, floor and ceiling painted in terracotta (dark red) disoriented the VIP in hotel corridors. In addition, windows alongside these corridors were decorated with dark red curtains, while the rooms' doors along the opposite side were painted in almost the same color, but only slightly different. In the evening the corridors were illuminated with subdued light and in the day time the windows were covered up by the curtains, which created a shadow. A soft carpet covered the floor in the hallway (hotel observation with the VIP, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.17.2012). Basically, a lack of contrast color in hospitality servicescapes caused customers with vision disability to experience a sense of anxiety.

When blind and VIPs were not accompanied in hotel lobbies, they used sticks or moved alongside walls. However, a movement alongside walls within hotel lobbies was dangerous for them. The findings from observation activities revealed that drinking machines, informational shelves, chairs, and plants were placed along the walls of hotel lobbies (hotel observation with VIP, Almaty, Kazakhstan, Jul 17-18, 2012; observation, Schwerin, Germany, Aug 16-19, 2012). A lobby in the hotel in Schwerin was decorated with big pots of greenery (small branching

trees) that made additional barriers. These pots had a height of about 1 meter and were about 50 cm in diameter. The blind and VIPs could not move without an assistance in the places decorated by plants, coffee-machines, cash terminals, and fixed paintings (observation, Schwerin, Germany, Aug 16-19, 2012). A similar design was observed in the corridors of the hotel in Almaty. Pots with small trees were placed in all of the hallways and near the first step of the staircase. The hotel corridor was intersected by a small hall (2 meters x 3 meters), which was decorated with large pots of greenery. These pots were at a height of about 50 cm and about 75 cm in diameter. Consequently, to get to the stairway the VIP had to cross this space (hotel observation with VIP, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.17.2012). A floor in a hotel lobby decorated by a carpet was another problem for visually impaired guests. Thus, a tiled floor in Almaty hotel lobby was covered by typical Kazakh designed (colorful) wool carpets. High selvage wool carpets increased the risk of falling when walking fast, and created a threat to stumbling. In addition, a high pile slowed the physical moves and blocked the use of sensory soles (hotel observation with VIP, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.17.2012). Observation findings revealed that stairs in the hotel in Almaty hindered VIP's physical movement, because stairs' handrails were not continuous. The handrails ended at the landings, and therefore the VIP was not entirely clear about where the next stair started (hotel observation with VIP, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.17.2012). In an Almaty hotel there were thresholds to the doors of the rooms, gym, sauna, balcony as well as the corridors' overpasses. In addition, the hotel corridor on the underground floor (where sauna and gym were located) had a low ceiling. This design required all hotel guests to bend down in order to pass. The doorway thresholds and the lack of signage indicating the location of these services were dangerous for the VIP. An observed VIP decided to ignore the offered services that were included in the room price. The VIP refused the offered services, because she had a risk of being injured (hotel observation with the VIP, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.17.2012). Inconvenient and unclear design of hotel lobby and corridors forced the VIP to carefully traverse the localities and to experience a sense of fear.

To get injured is an ever present risk for the blind and VIPs. I have crosschecked the findings from observation activities by follow-up focus group meetings. The participants agreed that a lack of color contrast, and shadowed and flashing lighting disorient them in service places. A visually impaired man commented on inconvenient service surroundings in hotel lobby and corridors: "*There is a lack of handrails, contrasting colors, and signs in Braille in the hotels. The floor is often smooth and it is not clear where it begins or ends, where the corridors go or where the stairs are located. It is also not clear where the turns are."* (man, GII VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.26.2012). This means that blind and VIPs have a risk of being injured in hospitality service.

Focus group interview participants described how they were confused about unclear signs in the hotel elevators. "*There are often no Braille signs in the elevator. It is difficult to keep count of the floor numbers. Thus, the numbers could be normal as in 1, 2, 3, or out of sequence as in 1, 3, 5. Sometimes the sequence of the buttons is from the bottom to the top or sometimes vice versa. Also the buttons might be placed in two lines. The buttons might be sensory too."* (woman, GII VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 08.21.2013). The blind and VIPs had to guess what floor to go to if there was a ground floor button (focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 08.21.2013). Interview participant shared also how unclear signs in the hotel elevators changed their activity patterns. The VIP said: *Once my two friends* [VIPs] *decided take a walk in the middle of the night. It was too hot in the hotel room. They had to go down by the elevator. Unfortunately, they could not manage the elevator buttons so they spent a couple of hours stuck going up and down in the elevator. The next day they explained to our group how to manage the buttons* (woman, GII VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 08.21.2013). Instead of a walk in fresh air, the customers had to spend their time in a small cabin. It is obvious that unclear design of the elevator buttons put customers in a panic, since the incident happened during the nighttime.

Focus group participants shared their concerns about the risk of getting extra financial expenses if they happen to destroy offered goods and service accessories. In supermarkets, VIPs always had to maneuver around offered goods, which were placed in a "pyramid". "*I must pay for the destroyed stuff. It would be much easier if I knew the location of goods in the store. It is also difficult to determine the price and read the title."* (the comment was taken by group acclamation; woman, GI VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.26.2012). Generally speaking, the blind and VIPs experienced many negative feelings and emotions in servicescapes, because of inconvenient design.

Hospitality web sites informed how service spaces restricted vision impaired guests to maintain independence: *"…Put yourself in my shoes for a moment: Imagine yourself walking into a hotel lobby, blind, using a white cane or guide dog to navigate. What type of reception do you think you might receive?... I've found that even some high-profile hotels are ill-equipped to adequately serve their visually impaired guests"* www.blindcanadians.ca (applied on 06.07.2014). Hence, the blind and VIPs may experience a sense of dependency in hotel lobbies that are constructed to welcome visitors and guests.

Collected empirical materials revealed that customers' activities could be limited by the hotel's internal norms and rules. In hotel in Schwerin the group of six blind and visually impaired guests received the same sized plastic key, three laminated breakfast cards, and a paper card for public transportation (observation, Schwerin,

Germany, Aug 16-19, 2012). The guests were given instructions from the receptionist concerning all cards at the time of check-in, but it was impossible to understand the difference between these cards for a person who cannot see. Later one VIP threw away the card for public transportation, because she thought it was trash (observation, Schwerin, Germany, Aug 16-19, 2012). This means that customers with vision disability might be annoyed by the internal norms of the hotel that may force them to use extra time.

The empirical materials revealed a large number of comments about interactions with unskilled personnel at service desks. The VIP woman said that in a big hotel staff members looked busy and she felt that she was "*annoying them somehow"*. *"I think that perhaps I should not ask them, because they are too busy."* (woman, VIP, interview, Limhamn, Sweden, 03.31.2012). If VIPs happened to travel by plane they usually bought tickets on-line. Before the flight, blind customers had to make a phone call to remind the airport staff about her/his flight and special needs. However, VIPs were always a bit concerned if service personnel will remember her/him. An individual interview participant described an incident when airport personnel forgot to inform her about the boarding (individual interview, Nov 19-21, 2010). Basically, interactions with unqualified personnel annoyed customers with vision disability.

Interview participants shared that hotel personnel often were afraid to assist them (focus group interviews). A focus group interview participant said: *The personnel often consider VIPs as sick people. I can sense that by experience!* [said with a passion] *I picked it up in their intonation when they speak to me or how they look at me. I cannot see the look, but I feel it. I also feel when people stop talking about me when I enter a room. I sense it and I know that they were talking about me* (woman, GII VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 08.21.2013). Another participant of the focus group added: *I am resigned to suffer inconveniences like tasteless food just to have a friendly personnel* (man, VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, 08.21.2013). The blind and VIPs want to be perceived as a regular customers. Unskilled personnel negatively influence customers' emotions and reduce offered services.

Focus group participants agreed that the personnel attitude was different in different hotels. The more stars, the better the service was (focus group interviews). However, one participant noted that quite often service providers cannot recognize that a customer has a visual impairment. He said: *We cannot blame only service providers. We should have a stick or wear glasses* (VIP, man, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.18. 2011). Interviewed blind and VIPs said that a rough surface before any entrance (elevator, eating place, etc.) and a color contrast help them to move faster in a service place. VIPs emphasized the importance of "smooth" crossings.*"…better organized crossings with less sudden*

shifts. It is very uncomfortable when the sidewalk on the opposite side of the road is on a different level. The crossings should not be harsh. And the stairs in the hotel should not be steep (focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.26.2012). Thus, the blind and VIPs are aware about possible constraints in service places.

Individual interview participants shared their negative interactions with service providers. Key phrases included: *It is always uncomfortable to ask others for help...we are accustomed to surviving by ourselves*; *We are like others. There is no need to separate us. We cannot see, but it does not mean that we are inadequate*; *I lost my vision, but it does not mean that I am dead* (individual interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, Nov 19-21.2010). These comments underscore that in public service places visually impaired customers are still ignored and even separated. At the same time these phrases demonstrate that the blind and VIPs are not going to be the passive recipients of poorly organized services.

In short, collected empirical findings revealed that in a lobby station, the blind and VIPs experienced different sorts of emotions and problems. Customers with vision disability had difficulties in using their senses of hearing, smell, and touch in lobby, retail and public transportation service places. A lack of color contrast and poor lighting hindered visually impaired persons. Customers with vision disability worried about unclear design and signs in hospitality service places. Interactions with unskilled personnel frustrated hotel guests. In the following section I will illustrate how the blind and VIPs reacted towards various constraints in hotel lobbies, corridors, retail and public transportation places.

5.2 Finding a solution

Collected empirical materials revealed that constrained blind and VIPs actively used available senses to navigate hotel lobby stations. Focus group participants shared their navigation experiences in hotel lobby stations and corridors. The VIP said: *The noise of the vacuum cleaner is a reference point, because it helps me to locate where the accommodations are* (man, GI VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 08.21.2013). Focus group participants told that the muffled sound in hotel corridors meant that the corridors were narrow. If a sound became clear it meant a wider space, such as a lobby or hall. Wider spaces sounded differently because they produced an echo. Other participants shared instances about elevators' and vendor machines' sounds. VIPs told that the sound "Pamm" helped them to navigate and to find the elevator. The sound of vending machines pointed towards the hotel lobby (focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 08.21.2013). Interview participants said that a noise of water from the swimming

pool helped them to find a fitness center. They added also that swimming pools were warm and gave off steam. The VIP said: *"I might go along wall for a long time, hearing the sound and smelling the gym or swimming pool, and it takes time to find the entrance"* (woman, GII VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 08.21.2013). Focus group participants noted that fresh air and the sound of public transportation always help them to identify where an entrance to the hotel is. A smell of medicine helped customers with vision disability to find the medical center (focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 08.21.2013). Generally speaking, blind and visually impaired customers mentally evaluated unfamiliar service surroundings and mapped them.

In hotel lobbies the blind and VIPs searched for signs for orientation, such as the surface of the floor carpet, turns, sounds of vendor machines, and/or elevators. To find a room in the long corridor, VIPs counted doors: *I have to count and to feel* (woman, VIP, individual interview, Limhamn, 03.31.2012). A similar technique helped the constrained VIP from Kazakhstan: *In the hotel I try to find signs for the orientation. Sometimes it is difficult to find the room in the long corridor. That is why I just count doors* (woman, VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 08.21.2013). Interviewed blind and VIPs said that the most important thing is to find the way back (individual interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, Nov 19-21, 2010; go-along interview, Helsingborg, Sweden, 06.26.2011; individual interview, Limhamn, Sweden, 03.31.2012). The VIP woman said that she always checks *"where her room is, and is there any code for the door if she comes in late"* (woman, VIP, interview, Limhamn, Sweden, 03.31.2012). She also always checks the location of the emergency exit and memorizes it. *It is important to know how to get out of the hotel in case of a fire*. For her it is important only to know where she is staying: *Sighted people get so much info and we do not need as much. The first time it is important to find my way to the room and back* (woman, VIP, interview, Limhamn, Sweden, 03.31.2012). The VIP said that she always checks how much time it takes to find her room. She added that memorizing helps further navigation of hotel surroundings. She also asks the hotel receptionist how to get to different places and tries to remember what she is told: *I want to be independent* [said with an emphasis] *as much as possible.* She uses GPS to help her to find her way to the hotel when she is outside. Asking people she always gets different ideas which can help her to know more about the place she is visiting. The VIP shared how she used the hotel's business card in China to get back to the right spot. She traveled to Shanghai and Beijing. Going by taxi in China she always had to show the hotel business card in order to get back (woman, VIP, interview, Limhamn, Sweden, 03.31.2012). Basically, the blind and VIPs intended to keep control over their own activities in service places.

Focus group participants shared how they navigate service environment without any external assistance: *Requesting assistance is not comfortable for me.*

Therefore, in the supermarket I move carefully and try not to touch the shelves (woman, GI VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.26.2012). The VIP shared how she found her friend's accommodation in the hotel: *My room number was 412, and my friend occupied room number 710. I quickly found her, because her room was located approximately in the same location as mine, but further than one door away* (conversation with the VIP, May 2014). The VIP man told: *I have experienced "by foot" different floor coverings in some hotels abroad* (man, GI VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.26.2012). The interviewed visually impaired man narrated how sound helps him to navigate. Once he had a "*small problem*" in Copenhagen getting to the train to Helsingborg. The reason was that the track where his train was to arrive had been changed at the last minute. He had to change track with the help of other passengers. In such cases he had to be extremely careful, due to the use of different languages and an unknown place (train station). In Germany (country where he is from) he feels more confident and says that he can recognize the trains by sound. He said that the sounds of the trains are different (man, VIP, go-along interview, Helsingborg, Sweden, 06.26.2011). An individual interview participant shared her outdoor and indoor mappings: *Different structures of pavement also help me. I can feel where it is asphalt, stones, zebra crossings and other road hazards. I can usually tell larger things if I have good acoustics* (woman, VIP, interview, Limhamn, Sweden, 03.31.2012). Generally speaking, the blind and VIPs were not passive. They mentally evaluated, mapped, and memorized unfamiliar servicescapes.

Interviewed VIPs agreed that small hotels were more convenient, because it was easier for them to communicate to staff members (focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.26.2012). The VIP woman said: *In a small hotel I can get "a picture" of the whole place. I like the picture image in order to be geographically oriented* (woman, VIP, interview, Limhamn, Sweden, 03.31.2012). A group of VIPs had difficulties paying in the local currency because they could not distinguish the difference between the bills and the coins. They gave their trust to the barman to do the payment from their pockets (observation, Schwerin, Germany, Aug 16-19, 2012). For my question concerning how a VIP defines a person to trust, the answer was: *I would prefer to place my trust in a woman with a child. She cannot lie* (interview with VIP, July, 2013, Almaty, Kazakhstan). From the observation note: *Vision impaired customers could not easily identify similar money and coins. Therefore, a blind client had to ask to be placed near sighted guests for assistance* (observation, Helsingor, Denmark, 05.12.2012). The empirical materials revealed that blind and VIPs intended to create a friendly atmosphere during their interactions with sighted persons. The blind woman said: *"Blindness is different for each person. Some people have some sense of light and they are not afraid. However, that is not typical. It is very different if you can see just a little. For instance, I cannot be oriented by lamps, or anything. It is black,*

but when I talk to someone I always turn my face to that person, because I know it is important for the sighted person". She has prostheses in order to look "more natural": "*I am sitting with you and I am thinking that I can see you."* (woman, blind, interview, Helsingborg, Sweden, 05.04.2012). Overall, the blind and VIPs actively interacted personnel and other customers to create a friendly atmosphere and to get expected services.

To summarize, collected empirical materials revealed that constrained blind and VIPs actively used senses of hearing, smell, and touch to navigate service places. Customers with vision disability used memory, mentally mapped service spaces, and actively networked service personnel and other customers. In the following subsections (5.3 and 5.4) with the help of time-geography tools and the concept of tactics, I analyze how the blind and VIPs experienced hotel lobby station.

5.3 Competition of space-time projects

In the time-geography view, customers' intentional acts in a lobby station are their space-time projects. These projects may range from a large project such as check-in and check-out activities to mini-projects such as an intentional movement to a hotel elevator. Any mini-project development requires some amount of time. Therefore, when a customer experiences constraint, his/her space-time path changes by requiring extra time for its implementation. A failure of one of the mini-projects influences the customer's space-time prism, or a potential area of his/her activity. All of the above affect a customer's planned act in a lobby station, or his/her space-time project development.

Figure 5.3 illustrates a simple time-geography of an ordinary customer in a hotel lobby, which starts by check-in process and ends by visiting a lobby meeting place. The figure does not depict an actual happening but serves rather as an illustration. To get an accommodation and a breakfast place a customer may use elevator or stairs. In a lobby meeting zone, a customer may develop various activities such as interaction with other customers and personnel, checking Internet, talking by telephone, etc. In the current section I analyze with the help of the time-geography tools what is happening when the blind and VIPs temporarily act and move within a lobby station.

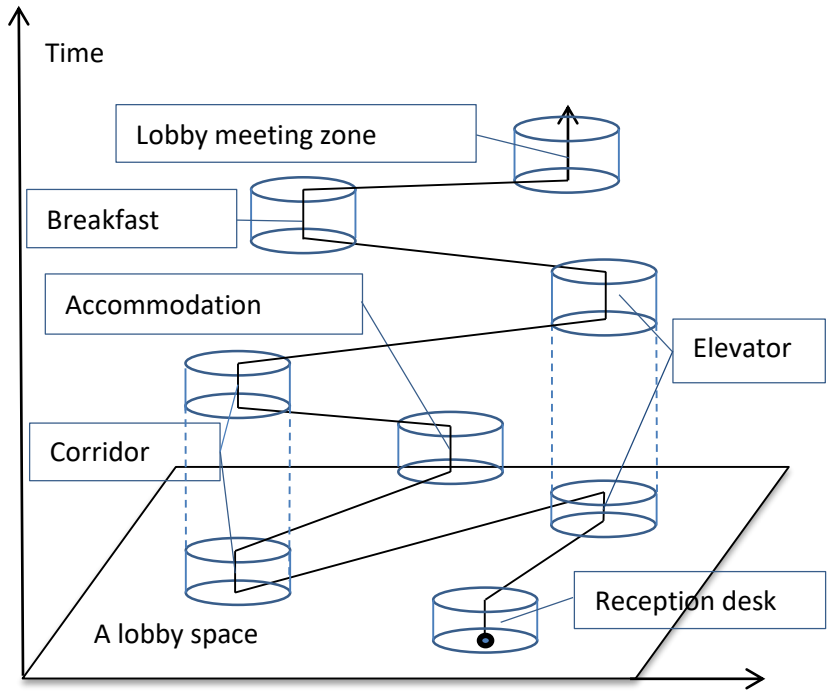

Figure 5.3
The time-geography of a customer in hotel lobby station

In a lobby meeting zone (see Fig. 5.3), a visually impaired woman had a problem hearing what others say, because of the noise of an air conditioner. Perhaps, the information would be of help for hotel guests, but a noise made the VIP difficult to hear. Therefore, a noisy air conditioner can be regarded as a capability constraint. VIP's intention to hear the message may include a set of acts, such as physical movement towards source of information, interaction with personnel or other customers, etc. All these mini acts may change customer's space-time path and therefore may influence VIP's to-hear-what-others-said project. Constrained customers faced a dilemma. If the woman decided to move without external help, she risks experiencing additional capability constraints, such as inconvenient layout or crowdedness in a lobby meeting zone. Such constraints may change the VIP's space-time path, because she would move slower. If the VIP decided to ask for a help to escort her, this act can be considered as a coupling constraint, which is also time-consuming. Hence, VIP's acts and moves were affected by the organized servicescape.

The quietness in a hotel corridor hotel hindered a visually impaired man to find his accommodation (see Fig. 5.3). The VIP said that a soft carpet in hotel corridor made him feel uncomfortable, because the carpet absorbed sound. A soft carpet

might be considered as a capability constraint. The VIP's ability to navigate by a sense of hearing became limited. He was concerned that he could not navigate by soles too. Constrained customer was in a difficult situation. If customer decided to stay and to wait until someone helps him to develop his cross-the-carpet mini-project, he would develop the ask-for-the-help mini-project, which might be uncomfortable for him. If the VIP decided to move without an external assistance, he would experience inability to navigate by senses of hearing and touch. Although VIP's space-time path would not change, his velocity seemed to be decreased significantly. Both choices were time-consuming for the VIP.

The VIP's cross-the-carpet mini-project was competing for time. The customer with vision disability decided to move without external help. A potential area of customer's activity or his space-time prism narrowed. The customer developed a mini-project by crossing the carpet without external help. However, he experienced a discomfort during his physical movement, because of the inability to use senses of hearing and touch to navigate. Basically, the organized servicescape hindered the acts and the moves of the VIP.

Unpleasant ambience in a servicescape sends signals about low quality services (Bitner 1992). Moreover, unpleasant odor in service places is extremely offensive for customers (Lucas, 2012). However, for the blind and VIPs unpleasant odor in service place is an additional barrier, because it would limit their ability to navigate by sense of smell.

A visually impaired woman said that hotel lobby smelled like "a dirty eatery". Unpleasant smell in hotel lobby station might be regarded as a capability constraint, because the VIP was not able to navigate an unfamiliar service place with a help of sense of smell. Residing at that particular hotel was the conference requirement, which might be considered as an authority constraint, since the woman could not change her hotel. Therefore, the VIP was doubly constrained in the hotel lobby station.

It is evident that the visually impaired woman intended to spend less time in a smelly service surrounding. Therefore, her daily space-time path and space-time prism were different from the planned. It seems that an area of her activities in hotel lobby narrowed too. Basically, the VIP developed her stay-in-the-hotel project, because she stayed at the hotel regardless of a malodorous environment. However, her project failed to compete for access to the offered services, such as visits of lobby meeting zone, for example (see Figure 5.3). Leisure researchers suggest that constrained VIPs are forced to use fewer served senses and feel themselves excluded from from a service space (Small *et al.* 2012:945). It seems that the visually impaired customer felt herself unimportant in a hospitality place.

A rough surface in a hotel corridor was unpleasant to touch for the visually impaired woman. The VIP was not accompanied to get her accommodation, and therefore she had to move alongside a wall (see Figure 5.3). A rough surface could be regarded as a capability constraint for the VIP, because the woman had limited ability to use a sense of touch to navigate. However, a rough surface was an element of interior design. Design in service place is a servicescape factor, which is created to aid customers and to create positive behavior (Bitner 1992). Hence, a décor of hotel walls hindered VIP's move-alongside-the-wall mini-project development. To avoid this constraint the woman had to develop an ask-for-the-assistance mini-project, which might be considered as a coupling constraint. The VIP had to move slower or to wait for a help. Her move-alongside-the-wall mini-project was competing for time and for the access to the offered services. It is clear that the construction of the servicescape annoyed the VIP and obliged her to spend extra time.

Unclear signs in hotel elevator hindered VIPs plan to gain access to fresh air outside the hotel during a nighttime. VIPs were locked for the two hours in a small space of the elevator cabin (see Fig. 5.3). Hotel guests were forced to spend their own time to search for access to the offered services. The VIPs' planned space-time paths changed, and their space-time prisms narrowed. The competition of customers' space-time projects for the time resource and for the offered services failed. Customers were disappointed by poorly organized servicescapes.

People working at the front desk of a hotel are required to be professional, hands-on, and supportive. Hotel clients and visitors judge a hotel by how its front desk operates. Therefore, interactions with unskilled personnel at servicedesk may restrict customers' activities in hotel lobby station (see Fig. 5.3).

A visually impaired woman expressed her unhappy networking with desk personnel, who had perceived her as a sick person. In her short monologue the VIP used the pronoun "I" in each single sentence. She also used phrases related to people's feelings: "I can sense", "their intonation", "they look at me", "I know…they were talking about me". The passion in her voice evidenced that interactions with personnel affected her feelings. In hotel lobby station the woman with vision disability was in a difficult situation. If she decided to avoid unskilled personnel, she risks getting less information and experiencing unexpected constraints, which lead her to spend extra time. If she decided to interact with unqualified service providers, she has to experience negative feelings and emotions. The VIP was disappointed. Interactions with unskilled personnel reduced the offered services. She was unwelcomed in the hospitality service place.

In brief, ongoing constraints in hotel lobby station influenced customers' planned activity patterns. Emerging constraints changed customers' space-time paths and space-time prisms by forcing them to act slower and to experience negative

feelings and emotions. Constraints influenced customers' activities during a process of getting services, or had a continuous character. The blind and VIPs faced dilemmas, or had to decide what constraint caused less damage and required less time to overcome them. Customers' space-time projects were competing for time and for the access to the offered services.

However, constrained blind and VIPs were not passive. In the following section I examine how the blind and VIPs went about dealing with the constraints in a lobby station. For this purpose I complement the time-geography tools by the concept of tactics of de Certeau (1984).

5.4 Tactical behavior: evaluating, mapping, and networking

The blind and VIPs intended to realize their own plans (travel strategies) or to develop their space-time projects. They used every opportunity to oppose emerging constraints in a lobby station. The interviewed VIP said that an emerged sound of the vacuum cleaner helped him to define where the accommodations are. A sound of the vacuum cleaner was unexpected for the VIP. The customer with vision disability developed a tactic. By a sense of hearing, the VIP mentally evaluated and mapped service surroundings. If the customer did not develop this tactic, he would spend much more time to navigate by moving alongside the walls or waiting for an escort person. However, the tactic helped VIP to move faster and to extend the area of activities. The VIP took advantage of an opportunity to move independently within unfamiliar service space. The customer with vision disability kept control over servicescape, although temporarily.

When several informants were asked for an elaboration on their navigation in the hotel layout, how, for example, to find a room, they did not seem perplexed. A visually impaired woman informed that she always counted the doors to find her own. She said also that a carpet and turns in hotel lobby station helped her to map and to memorize unfamiliar service surroundings. These tactical acts helped the VIP to move faster and to extend the area of her activities. If the woman did not count doors and memorize the way, she would daily experience a problem to find her room. However, the customer used knowledge from her previous travel experiences, and therefore acted with a confidence.

The blind and VIPs intended to talk to people who may be useful to them to navigate and to get offered services. The interviewed VIP said that she always checks an emergency exit with help of the hotel service desk. This type of interaction with a personnel might be considered as a strategic act of the VIP. Like

any travelers, the blind and VIPs plan their travel activities. They also plan to get information about emergency exits in case of fire, for example. According de Certeau (1984), individuals act strategically when they have a knowledge about a place, have an experience about how to act at that place, and when they have the time. However, in this particular situation, the VIP's acts should be regarded as tactical. Although the woman had time to talk to personnel and could predict a situation when she might return late, the woman did not have knowledge (the code) and experience (how to enter the code). The interaction with personnel was the VIP's networking tactic, which helped her to get required information. If the VIP did not interact with the personnel, she risked having problems. However, a networking tactic helped the VIP to feel confident about her own ability to find an emergency exit.

To conclude, the blind and VIPs wanted to get expected services in hotel lobby. If there was a possibility, constrained customers were developing different tactics such as evaluating, mapping, and networking. Ambience and design of the constructed servicescapes as well as customers' knowledge and travel experiences helped them to act tactically in difficult situations. Tactical acts helped the blind and VIPs to navigate a lobby station, to keep a temporal control over service surroundings, and to get expected services.

5.5 Summary

The findings of this chapter revealed that blind and VIPs had problems during their experience of the lobby servicescape. Noise of air conditioning and fountain as well as a silent service environments disoriented customers with vision disability. Inconvenient odor limited customers' ability to navigate by smell, whereas a sense of touch was hindered by rough, dusty, and smooth surfaces. A lack of contrast color and poor lightning limited customers with vision disability to use some level of sight. Plants, glass elements, shelves, furniture disposition increased a risk to be injured in a place where guests enter and leave the building or are transferred to the various public areas. Unclear design of elevator buttons, plastic keys, laminated cards for breakfast and other services confused the blind and VIPs. Interactions with unskilled service desk personnel reduced the offered services. However, the blind and VIPs used every opportunity to oppose unexpected hindrances. They were developing different tactics, such as mental evaluation and mapping of a lobby station, and a networking to personnel and other customers.

The time-geography tools helped to analyze the findings from the empirical materials collected in a lobby station. Emerging constraints in a lobby station

forced the blind and VIPs to use extra time. Noise, silence, inconvenient surface and odor, lack of color contrast, unclear design, etc. were regarded as capability constraints. Interactions with unskilled service personnel and restrictive rules and norms at hospitality service places were regarded as coupling and authority constraints respectively. Constraints hindered customers in the hotel lobby station. Consequently, customers' space-time paths changed and their space-time prisms narrowed. In practicality, the blind and VIPs developed fewer projects.

Constraints controlled customers' activities in a lobby station, by forcing them to do unwanted acts, such as continually asking for an assistance. The acts and the moves of customers with vision disability were dependent on the organized servicescapes. Therefore, customers with vision disability used any opportunity to oppose emerging constraints. Tactics gave the blind and VIPs a chance to be accepted and appreciated in a lobby station for who they were, regardless of their physical disability.

In the following chapter, I examine customers' interactions with service environments in a hotel accommodation station.

Chapter VI
Accommodation station

In Chapter 5 I have analyzed how the blind and VIPs experienced the hotel lobby station. The analysis of the collected empirical materials demonstrated that customers with vision impairment were active regardless of ongoing constraints. In the lobby station, customers' space-time projects were competing for time and for the access to the offered services. In Chapter 6 I continue to investigate customers' interactions with hospitality servicescapes by focusing on the accommodation station.

The hotel accommodation is a physical location where customers stay on a short-term basis, usually from a single to several days. Air conditioning, TV, hairdryers, etc. are ordinary attributes of a typical hotel room. Small and lower-priced hotels offer the most basic services and facilities, whereas large, higher-priced hotels may provide mini-bars and meals through room services. In hotel accommodations customers value privacy. Comfort in accommodation is one of the keys to encourage customers to stay longer and return to the hotel. Guests very much appreciate being able to immediately have access to a variety of amenities without leaving the hotel room.

In the current chapter some cases do not strictly belong to customers' activities in accommodation station. Thus, I added a few cases about how the blind and VIPs experienced public toilets. It is quite common that hotel accommodations are equipped with a bathroom, which includes toilet facilities. Therefore, I found it reasonable to include cases from public toilets and hotel accommodations, and call them "service situations".

The chapter includes five sections. In sections 6.1 and 6.2 I illustrate how the blind and VIPs experience hotel accommodations and public toilets. The following sections 6.3 and 6.4 provide the analysis, which includes my interpretation of what is happening when customers with vision disability temporarily act, and move within accommodation station. The last section summarizes analyzed findings.

6.1 Getting lost in a service station

The collected empirical materials revealed that blind and VIPs had difficulties using their senses of hearing and smell in hotel accommodations. In the Schwerin hotel, rooms did not have air conditioning (observation, Schwerin, Germany, Aug 16-19, 2012). Consequently, hotel guests had to open windows to get fresh air. However, the hotel was located in front of the public square, and therefore the outside space was too noisy late in the evening or early in the morning due to pedestrians and public transportation. Consequently, the customers had to experience either stuffy air or noisy space in their accommodations. Organized servicescapes disappointed customers with vision impairment. The VIPs had to fix inconvenient ambience during a stay in hotel accommodations. To escape inconvenient ambience in the rooms, the elderly VIPs preferred to sit on sofa and chairs in the hotel lobby with an air conditioning. The customers interacted and had coffee. In contrast, the young VIPs were going out of the hotel and had walks (observation, Schwerin, Germany, Aug 16-19, 2012). As seen, during the trip visually impaired customers had different experiences of a similar service place.

When I asked focus group participants for an elaboration on their negative service experiences in hotel accommodations, they said: *Sometimes tobacco odor is strong in the room. It is impossible to get that smell out* (man, GII VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 08.21.2013). Another VIP shared how the odor nuisance in the hotel accommodation overwhelmed her behavior: *The accommodations had a masculine smell near an open vent. It was an odor of acrid smoke and something else* (woman, GII VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 08.21.2013). Hotel accommodations with bad odors annoyed visually impaired customers, and therefore customers felt themselves unwelcomed.

Focus group participants agreed that a sound of the air conditioner during the nighttime might be too noisy (focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 08.21.2013). The VIP added: *Sometimes, during the night I awake because it is too cold or hot. I then have to wake someone up to assist with adjusting the temperature or I just need to suffer through it* (man, GII VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 08.21.2013). Inability to fix a temperature annoyed the VIP. He did not have a restful nighttime, and therefore experienced a discomfort.

The collected empirical materials revealed that blind and VIPs had difficulties with reading emergency information, service offerings, working hours of hotel service centers, etc. In the observed hotels, the emergency information, additional services, and welcome letters were printed on paper and laminated (observation, Schwerin, Germany, Aug 16-19, 2012; hotel observation with VIP, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.17.2012). In the hotel in Schwerin, customer information was

provided in English and German, but printed in a small font. The first channel on the TV also provided the emergency information in both languages but the reception desk did not inform the blind and visually impaired customers about this service (observation, Schwerin, Germany, Aug 16-19, 2012). Customers with vision disability worried about a lack of access to the emergency information.

Design of hotel accommodation was another barrier for visually impaired customers. The VIP called the researcher's attention to the lack of contrast colors and inconvenient design of hotel accommodation (hotel observation with VIP, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.17.2012). A combination of inconvenient design with a lack of contrast in colors forced the VIP to carefully traverse the inside of a hotel room. It was difficult for the VIP to deal with furniture in the room. Thus, wardrobe drawers were tiny and had the same color as the door panel. A small black handset telephone placed on the dark surface of the bedside table seemed to just blend into the table. A trash basket was the same color as the furniture (red-brown) in the room and was placed under the desk. The observed VIP commented on the dangerous elements of the furniture in hotel accommodation and called the researcher's attention to how dangerous the design of hotel accommodations might be. For example, a design of table lamps was unsafe because the lamps had a sharp pointed brass fitting that attached the glass lamp shade to the lamp. If a guest were to fall near the table, the fitting could injure them, or if the lamp fell off the table, it could injure someone close to it, because the glass shade could break. A fixed edge of the lampshades on parietal located floor-lamps, walls decorated with a mirror, mirror-enlarger stuck-outs from the wall in bathrooms had a risk of damaging face or eyes when moving along the wall. A wooden bed headboard had a protruding edge (in the form of shelves above). This made it inconvenient if the guest wanted to lean back on the pillow to read a book or watch TV. The shelf was the same color as the headboard, which also added an element of confusion and anxiety for the visually impaired guest. Furthermore, I witnessed how the physical movements of the observed VIP were hindered by high thresholds separating balcony and room as well as smooth tile floors in bathrooms. The wooden round table between the two armchairs had a height equal to the height of the chair seat. The combination of the low table height and the standard seat height was not convenient for visually impaired guest. The VIP hardly placed her glass of water on the table. She also managed to burn her fingers by accidentally putting them into her cup of hot tea (hotel observation with VIP, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.17.2012). Generally speaking, inconvenient design of hotel accommodations disappointed the observed VIP.

I found a similar design of window curtains in accommodations in the observed hotels in Germany and Kazakhstan. Thus, the windows in hotel rooms had an entire curtain sewn into one continuous canvas. So to open the window or get to the balcony, the guests had to push it fully aside. I saw how the VIP tried to draw a

curtain back by searching for the curtain's edge and believing that this was possible. As a result, the woman was entangled in the curtain. Finally, the VIP moved it to the side, which proved to be the right decision (hotel observation with VIP, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.17.2012). Basically, inconvenient design of window curtains irritated customers with vision impairment.

Observed VIPs hardly managed a TV remote in hotel accommodation because there were only buttons with no indication as to what they did (observation, Schwerin, Germany, Aug 16-19, 2012). It was not possible also to identify the warm or cool buttons on the air conditioning remote control. Key comments of the focus group participants included: "*Air conditioner controls are difficult to manage, because the remotes have a sensor screen or unclear buttons."; "It makes it hard to set the temperature on the remote with unclear signs"; "It is always difficult to manage the remotes for TV and air conditioners. You never know what to press."; "There are different buttons on air conditioner remotes such as air cleaning or dehumidifying. There is also a button for cleaning air from tobacco smoke. It is difficult to remember all these small details on the remotes* (focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.26.2012; focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 08.21.2013). It means that in hotel accommodations, the blind and VIPs beforehand had to test electronic equipment such as TV, air conditioning, air cleaning, and dehumidifying, and then to memorize the buttons on the remotes.

Constructed servicescapes may exclude customers with vision disability from the offered services. From the observation note (hotel observation with VIP, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.17.2012): *There were different drinks, nuts, and chips in a cooled mini-bar. However, the price list was printed on laminated paper making it difficult to read. The bottles, cans and packets were placed randomly on the shelves, and behind the guard rail of the mini-bar. There was no other option for a blind guest to explore the mini-bar than opening the bottles, cans, and packets in order to know what was there. This of course made using the mini-bar for a VIP rather costly.* Focus group participants commented on inconvenient signs in hotel accommodations: "*Why do hotels not have embossed room numbers on the door handles? In this case the door handle would be bit wider and doubled, perhaps. In fact, the design of the door would not be significantly different."; "Braille is necessary…It never hurts, it only benefits"* (focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.26.2012). Unclear signs in hotel accommodations annoyed the blind and VIPs.

The findings from observation activities revealed that blind and VIPs had trouble placing an ordinary key in the lock, as the lock's location and the key's direction took time to assess (hotel observation with VIP, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.17.2012). In turn, an electronic key also was not convenient to use. The arrow on the plastic

key indicated the direction to unlock the room door. There was an audible snap with a green light when the card was correctly entered into the lock. You then had no longer than two seconds to quickly turn and push the handle of the room door open. Guests with poor vision usually attempted several times to unlock the door before entering the room. I witnessed a woman with poor vision joyfully scream when she did successfully open her door on the first attempt (observation, Schwerin, Germany, Aug 16-19, 2012). The blind and VIPs were annoyed by having to use an electronic key to open their rooms.

The collected empirical materials revealed that management of bathrooms and toilets in hotel accommodations was inconvenient for the blind and VIPs (observation, Schwerin, Germany, Aug 16-19, 2012; hotel observation with VIP, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.17.2012). An observed VIP said that it is difficult to recognize bath accessories such as faucets for hot or cold water and different toiletries, because of the absence of embossed signs. Moreover, identical faucets for the sink and shower and the water temperature were regulated by a single tap rotation. Consequently, the VIP had to guess about cold or hot streams of water. Although the bathroom and toilet were combined into one room, the layouts were not always clear for the VIP. Thresholds to the shower cabin (because of the sliding doors) hindered the VIP's activities. Small trashcans were placed in a remote corner (behind the toilet and under a metallic coil pipe). In order to open the trash container, a hotel guest needed to press a small pedal, but to do this the client had to move their leg into the corner between toilet and the wall with the metallic coil pipe, which was not convenient even for a person with normal vision (hotel observation with VIP, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.17.2012). Focus group participants also discussed inconvenient design of bathroom facilities in hotel accommodations (focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.26.2012). A liquid soap (three plastic bottles) in bathrooms had different colors (blue, white and yellow), but to determine which was soap, shampoo or conditioner was difficult even if you smelt them (hotel observation with VIP, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.17.2012). The titles were printed on paper labels in a very small font. The bottles containing liquid soap were placed over the sink and shower. The soap pours out by squeezing the bottle, but there were no embossed labels or instructions on how to do it. There was only a label in German covering these bottles (observation, Schwerin, Germany, Aug 16-19, 2012). The VIP told that towels were placed in different corners of the bathroom and it was not clear how to use them (hotel observation with VIP, 07.17, 2013, Almaty, Kazakhstan). Basically, unclear design of bathroom facilities in hotel accommodations irritated customers with vision impairment and forced them to experience discomfort.

A large number of cases underscored the inconvenience of ambient factors in public toilets. VIPs shared their experience in using public toilets. Focus group participant said: "*It is always uncomfortable to ask cafeteria personnel about the*

toilet's disposition (focus man, VIP, group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.18.2011). Another participant shared a case when even after a waiter's explanation, he could not manage the toilet room and had to leave it (focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.18.2011).

Interviewed blind and visually impaired travelers said that toilets in a train station at times were not clean. Blind people had to touch walls to get sink and bowl in the toilet room. Travelers often "followed" the sound of water or even the smell. The comments included: *"It would help if the wash button and the soap were placed on a certain level and direction". "In the toilet room we cannot manage the disposition of sink and bowls".* Participants recommended to add a tactile cue on the door of the toilet about sink and bowl positions or to use voice message (focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.18.2011). Some cases illustrated how design and ambient factors simultaneously influenced the moves and the acts of VIPs: *"Although it was possible to recognize the toilet by the smell of the cleanser, however, it was difficult to know if it was the men's or women's"* (focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 08.21.2013). This means that blind and VIPs experienced a frustration in the organized service place.

The comments of focus group participants about interactions with hotel personnel ranged from a total engagement to absolute disgust. Vision impaired guests had troubles when personnel did not inform them about additional hotel services: *It is also difficult, when no one informs us about hotel services. For instance, emergency buttons in a bathroom in a Chinese hotel were unexpected for me, because I did not know they had that service* (woman, GII VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 08.21.2013). *Once in Japan in 2006 I accidently pressed the emergency button in the bathroom. A staff member immediately knocked on my door speaking in Japanese. I did not understand what happened, because I did not understand them* (man, GII VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 08.21.2013). Focus group participants agreed that quite often personnel do not inform vision impaired guests about the internal disposition of hotel room and bathroom. Interviewed VIP said that she did not know about the kettle in a hotel room (woman, VIP, interview, Limhamn, Sweden, 03.31.2012).

Focus group participant told about inadmissible cases in serving hotel guests: "*Once in a hotel room I found that the drinking glass was broken. I could have accidentally injured my hands or face."* (man, GII VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.26.2012). Customers with vision disability are worried about their service surroundings in hotel accommodations if personnel do not keep them informed about a disposition of the room and the offered room services.

Interactions with unqualified personnel negatively influenced customers with vision disability. The VIP said: "*Hotel personnel consider VIPs as extra work. In addition, they are afraid to assist blind guests"* (woman, VIP, focus group

interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 08.21.2013). The VIP woman said: *"I did not know that the curtains were open and the light was switched on in my room for one week while in a hotel in Japan"* (woman, GI VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.26.2012). This implies that VIPs felt themselves unwanted at hospitality service place.

Hospitality web sites provided comments on poor service environment toward vision impaired guests. "… yet you'd be surprised by how many lodging facilities there are that are not prepared to accommodate people who are blind or have low vision." (www.peoplefirst4aoda.com posted 12.30.2012). "Blind people are always keen to maintain their independence, however with a limited number of businesses providing adequate facilities for them, particularly in the hospitality and catering sector…" (www.eatoutmagazine.co.uk applied on 06.07.2014). As can be expected, customers with vision impairment intended to act independently in hospitality servicescapes.

In short, collected empirical findings revealed that in accommodation stations, the blind and VIPs had problems using senses of hearing, smell, and touch to act in the most effective, productive, and convenient way. A lack of color contrast and poor lighting hindered visually impaired persons. Customers with vision disability worried about unclear design and signs in hospitality service places. Interactions with unskilled personnel frustrated hotel guests. In the following section I will illustrate how the blind and VIPs reacted towards various constraints in hotel accommodation and public toilets.

6.2 Finding a solution

Collected empirical materials revealed that blind and VIPs actively used available senses to navigate hotel accommodations. Consider this short narrative of the VIP woman in a hospitality area: *Once in the hotel my friend became sick and I needed to buy medicine. It was night and the downtown was unfamiliar to me. I did not know in what direction the pharmacy was located. I could see lighted signs, but I could not read them. I had to enter each building to check them out. The first two places were office buildings. I went by my sense of smell. The third place was a pharmacy, because of the medicinal odor* (woman, GII VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 08.21.2013). The VIP was restricted by time, because her friend required medicine. Service premises were not familiar to her. But she used a sense of smell to navigate the unfamiliar servicescape.

The interviewed vision impaired woman shared what she does first when she enters a new hotel accommodation (woman, VIP, interview, Limhamn, Sweden,

03.31.2012). Thus, when she enters the hotel room she can hear from the acoustics the size of the space: *This sound helps me to grasp a size of the room.* The VIP uses also senses of smell and touch to explore a service place. That is how she gets her first impressions about the place. The VIP usually has a good impression about the space by going around the room. She uses her hand: *Okay, that has to be the door of the bathroom…* She discovers where the bed is placed, where she can leave her luggage. She takes off her shoes and goes around the wall and checks what is around the room: lamp, chair or something else? She explores the room. She is open to surprises like she had in England at a hotel. For example, she discovered the water boiler and realized that she could make tea. *Well, perhaps, before arriving, a sighted person could check the room by TV or website, to discover how it will look. It would probably be the biggest difference between sighted and VIPs. If sighted people have a picture of the place in their minds via TV or Internet "in advance" then they can compare it to the real thing.* Sometimes she takes a camera and makes a picture in order to show people where she has been. To find her way to her accommodation the VIP checks the room, memorizes the door and the emergency exit. She always makes her mapping by remembering where a "carpet" is or where there's a "turn" (woman, VIP, interview, Limhamn, Sweden, 03.31.2012). The woman mentally evaluated mapped and memorized hotel premises. The VIP was satisfied by her ability to act independently within unfamiliar service place.

The findings revealed that customers with vision disability arranged with personnel about service facilities and actively used memory skills. The VIP man narrated during the focus group meeting: *While traveling with the group I requested that the group leader should give a hotel orientation. How, for instance, to operate the equipment in the room: to manage the remotes for TV and air conditioner? I have to know how to switch them on and off. Hotel accommodations in Japan are equipped with lots of sophisticated electronics, which are difficult for VIPs to manage* (man, GII VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 08.21.2013). Another participant added: *It is difficult to control the air conditioning in the hotel room. Sometimes, during the night I awake because it is too cold or hot. I then have to wake someone up to assist with adjusting the temperature or I just need to suffer through it. Nowadays I ask the hotel personnel to set the air temperature in advance. I am also interested in the location of the gym and drink machine* (man, GII VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 08.21.2013). Basically, the blind and VIPs are determined to interact with personnel and other customers about unfamiliar service surroundings of hotel accommodation. These interactions help VIPs to feel relief and act confidently in hotel premises.

Collected empirical materials revealed how savvy decisions helped the blind and VIPs to save time and to act confidently within hotel accommodations. From the

observation in a bathroom of the hotel accommodation: *Soap, shampoo, and conditioner were in identical plastic bottles with titles printed on paper labels in small fonts. The VIP showed how she managed the bathroom accessories. She poured some liquid in her palm of her hand and then mixed it with the index finger. The VIP said that shampoo is always soapy whereas a body lotion is creamy. She added that liquid soap and shampoo are almost equivalent. Although unclear signage forced the VIP to spend extra time, she realized her intention to identify bathroom accessories and saved time for future use of the bathroom* (hotel observation with VIP, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.17.2012). Interview materials supported the observation findings. A focus group participant shared how he managed the plastic key to open a room during his stay in a hotel: *It is not difficult for me to manage an electronic key. There are only four ways to insert it: two per each side* (VIP man, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 08.21.2013). Another VIP shared how she made the hotel room more comfortable to breathe: *To make the air fresh I always leave the door open* (women, VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, 08.21.2013). Basically, VIPs do not ruin hotel internal rules by opening whole window, for example. Instead, they actively used a knowledge from previous traveling and escaped emerging limitations.

To summarize, the collected empirical materials revealed that constrained blind and VIPs actively used senses of hearing, smell, and touch to navigate service places. Customers with vision disability mentally mapped service spaces, used memory, and networked service personnel. In the following subsections (6.3 and 6.4) with a help of time-geography tools and the concept of tactics I analyze how the blind and VIPs experienced the accommodation station.

6.3 Competition of space-time projects

In the time-geography view, customers' intentional activities in the accommodation station are their space-time projects. These projects range from a large as the stay-in-the-hotel-room project to mini-projects such as sleep-project or turn on air conditioner mini-project. Any mini-project development requires some amount of time. Therefore, when a customer experiences constraint, his/her space-time path changes by requiring extra time for its implementation. A failure of one of the mini-projects influences the customer's space-time prism, or a potential area of his/her activity. All of the above affect a customer's planned act in the accommodation station, or his/her space-time project development.

The Figure 6.3 illustrates a simple time-geography of an ordinary customer in hotel accommodation station, which is framed by enter and exit moments. The figure does not depict an actual happening but serves rather as an illustration. A

new arrived customer starts from a room observation, which may include a checking of electronic equipment and may continue by taking a bath. Customer may develop various in-room activities such as watching TV, connecting Internet, talking by phone, sleeping, etc. In the current section I analyze with the help of the time-geography tools what is happening when the blind and VIPs temporarily act and move within an accommodation station.

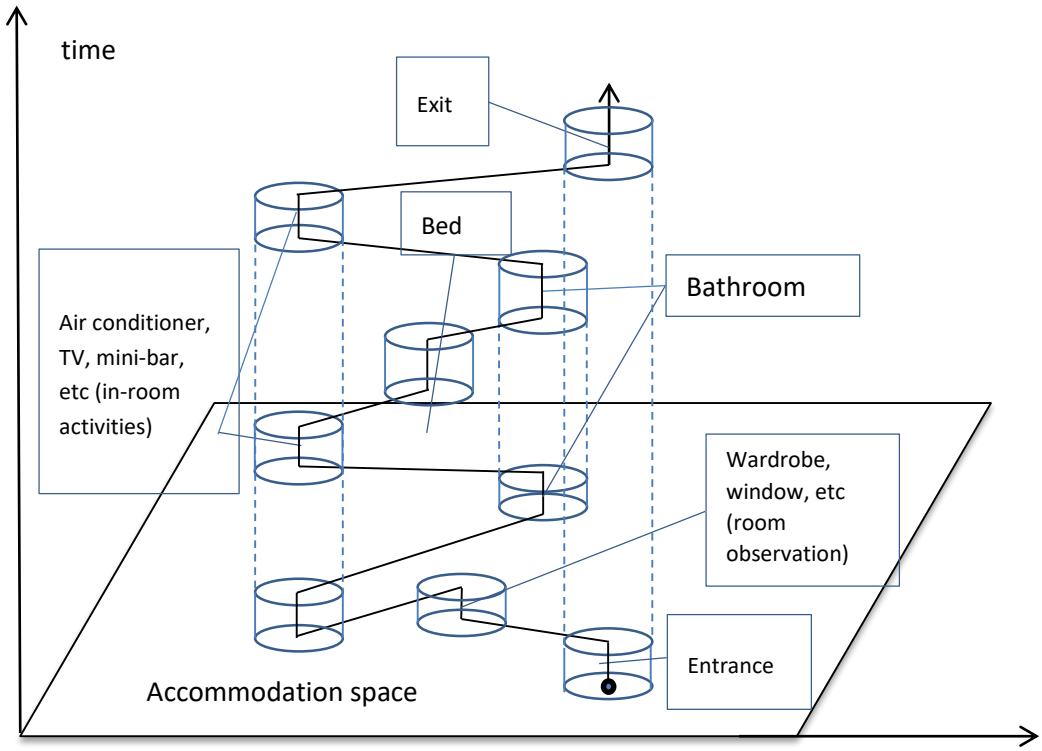

Figure 6.3
The time-geography of a customer in hotel accommodation station

The hotel accommodation is a private place, and therefore offered services should be accessible for customers without any external help. A focus group participant shared his experience of his unsuccessful sleep, because of inability to fix air conditioning in hotel room (see Figure 6.3). The constraint was unavoidable for the VIP. The customer experienced a capability constraint, because he had to wake up several times during the nighttime to fix the air temperature. Thus, the customer's space-time prism became extended. In the time-geography view, an extension of the space-time prism means that constraints do not hinder individual's activity (Hägerstrand 1970). However, in this particular case the extension of the

space-time prism signaled that the VIP did not sleep, and it thus included the nighttime. Hotel personnel did not inform visually impaired guest how to manage air conditioning in the room. Leisure researchers consider a lack of access to information as a constraint, which may generate negative feelings and emotions (Small et al. 2012). The VIP's sleep project failed to compete for time and for the convenient ambience (calm and fresh physical surroundings). The customer was disappointed by the inconvenient servicescape of a hotel accommodation.

Service researchers regard odor as one of the ambient factors of servicescape that aids customers' activities (Bitner 1992). However, breathing poor odor nuances was not only inconvenient, but also offensive for the hotel guests. The VIP had to stay in a room, which had a tobacco smell. The customer was forced to experience unpleasant odor during his stay in the hotel accommodation, and could not avoid inconvenient ambience. It is quite difficult to evaluate the VIP's space-time path and space-time prism, since the customer probably intended to avoid an environment that had a bad odor, and therefore to spend less time in his room. In this regard, one can say that VIP's stay-in-the-hotel-room project failed. His project could not compete for the access to servicescape (ambience), since a bad smell was unavoidable. The VIP's stay-in-the-hotel-room project did not compete for time too, because the customer intended to avoid the malodorous accommodation station. The customer was unwelcomed in the organized servicescape.

A use-of-mini-bar project in hotel accommodation was difficult for a customer with vision impairment (see Fig.6.3). A reflective surface and lack of embossed prints, and disorderly placed items may confuse a customer with visual impairment. Visually impaired guest can ask for help and experience a coupling constraint. Or a VIP can avoid a mini-bar service and experience a sense of exclusion from service offerings (Small et al. 2012). Hence, a capability constraint (a design of the mini-bar) can generate additional constraints. A mini-bar is an unavoidable constraint, if a VIP decided to use this service. The VIP's use-the-mini-bar project cannot compete for time without external assistance. Hence, to get a mini-bar service, a VIP is obliged to disrupt his own private environment.

Service providers may perceive a visual impairment as the customer's personal problem (Darcy and Buhalis 2011). The woman said that the personnel were "afraid to assist", which means that the personnel "did not assist". It is likely to be extremely unpleasant for the customer to feel herself as an "extra work" in hospitality service place. The VIP's interaction-to-personnel project failed to compete for time and for access to the servicescape. If the customer avoided a coupling to personnel, she might risk the experience of other constraints. Take for example an inability to read an emergency information via laminated surface. As seen, interactions with unskilled personnel imposed additional burdens on the VIP.

In brief, ongoing constraints in hotel accommodation station influenced customers' planned activity patterns. Emerging constraints influenced customers' space-time paths and space-time prisms. Quite often constraints in accommodation station were unavoidable. Customers with vision disability were forced to experience constraints during a service process. The blind and VIPs faced dilemmas, or had to decide what constraint may cause less damage and require less time to overcome them. Customers' space-time projects were competing for time and for the access to the offered services.

However, constrained customers were not passive. In the following section I examine how the blind and VIPs were opposing the constraints in the accommodation station. For this purpose, I complement the time-geography tools by the concept of tactics of de Certeau (1984).

6.4 Tactical behavior: evaluating, mapping, and networking

The blind and VIPs intended to realize own plans (travel strategies) or to develop their space-time projects. They used every opportunity to oppose emerging constraints at accommodation station. A focus group participant shared how she managed to get fresh air in the hotel accommodation by keeping the door open. Stuffy air was a capability constraint. The woman said that this trick helps when she experiences inconvenient ambience in a hotel accommodation. It seems that the VIP had acquired this knowledge and skills from her previous travelling. The tactic helped the woman to feel confident in case of unexpected problems such as inconvenient ambience at the hotel accommodation.

Another focus group participant narrated how she navigated unfamiliar service environment in order to buy medicine during the nighttime for her friend in the hotel accommodation. The woman did not expect that her friend would become sick. Unexpected illness might be regarded as a capability constraint. Although this constraint did not belong to service environment, the VIP was obliged to move through the constructed servicescape in order to get a pharmacy. The VIP did not have enough time, and therefore she had to act quickly. The VIP knew that in the pharmacy she could buy medicine to help her friend. The VIP's acts were tactical. A sense of smell helped the woman to navigate the environment, which she previously had mentally mapped and memorized. The VIP extended her space-time prism, and developed her find-the-drug-store project. She gained relief and experienced a sense of contentment. The VIP did not ask hotel personnel for a help, and therefore avoided a coupling constraint. Taking into account her physical disability, a decision to act independently was risky. However, the VIP made her

decision and kept control over the emerging situation with the help of developed tactic. Her courage made her proud of herself, since she helped her friend.

A “plastic key” was a matter of concern and could require time among interviewed visually impaired travelers. Inconvenient design of an electronic key was the authority constraint, which forced customers to spend extra time. The VIP made only four attempts to “read” the key. This action saved his time and made him feel independent of the service environment, because he did not ask for help. It seems that the VIP was an experienced traveler. The VIP found this solution by himself, shared it with others, and demonstrated a confidence in a seemingly unmanageable situation. The VIP created a tactic, which further helped others to develop their stay-in-the-room projects, and to be in control of a situation.

Customers with vision disability intended to use any opportunity to act tactically to develop their travel strategies. For this purpose they actively used knowledge and experience from previous trips. Thus, identical design and paper labels of bath accessories in hotel accommodation were impossible to read for the observed VIP. The woman had difficulties to use her senses of touch and smell, what can be considered as a capability constraint. However, the VIP opened body-washing pieces and poured some liquid on her palm. If the VIP did not do that, she could not develop her take-a-bath project. She evaluated and memorized bath accessories. This tactic helped the VIP to keep control over a situation.

Some rules and norms in hospitality service places were difficult for the blind and VIPs to follow. Interview participants shared how they avoided restrictive situations (focus group interviews, Almaty, Kazakhstan). The blind and visually impaired guests had to deal with an entrance code and an emergency exit, which can be regarded as authority constraints. These constraints were unavoidable for the blind and VIPs. Interview participants said that they *always* network with personnel to check the way from the hotel room to an emergency exit. They found time to interact with personnel in order to get knowledge (where to go in the emergency).These coupling acts of the blind and VIPs inform us that customers are aware about possible constraints in the hotel accommodation station. Brennan et al (2008) suggest that visually impaired persons develop coping strategies (Brennan *et al.* 2008). More precisely, VIPs may use knowledge and experience about how “to cope” with constraints in service places from previous trips and activities. However, in the time-geography view, individuals cannot act strategically, since constraints are emerging. Therefore, in the environments with unexpected constraints, the blind and VIPs act tactically in order to develop their travel strategies. Hence, consideration of space-time constraints may regard VIPs’ coping strategies as tactical acts.

The VIP networked with personnel in advance in order to prevent unexpected situations such as inability to manage the remote control of the air conditioner in

his accommodation. If he did not act tactically, he would experience a problem with the remote control during the night time, and therefore would not be able to sleep. Developed tactics helped the VIPs to get expected services and to keep control over time and the service environment.

To conclude, the blind and VIPs wanted to be in control of their own situations in service places. If there was a chance, constrained customers were developing different tactics such as evaluating, mapping, and networking. Ambience and design of the constructed servicescapes as well as customers' knowledge and travel experiences helped them to act tactically in difficult situations. Tactics helped the blind and VIPs to navigate a lobby station, to keep a temporal control over service surroundings, and to get expected services.

6.5 Summary

The findings of this chapter revealed that blind and VIPs had problems in their experience of the accommodation servicescape. Noise from air conditioning, stuffy air, tobacco and mold odor limited customers' ability to navigate by senses of hearing and smell. Lack of contrast color was a problem for visually impaired to use some level of sight. Decorative lightning, such as floor lamps, wall sconces, and chandeliers as well as design of the furniture, created a risk of injury to the blind and VIPs. Plastic keys, laminated instructions on emergency exit, and interactions with unskilled personnel frustrated customers with vision disability in hotel accommodations. However, constrained blind and VIPs were not passive. They used every chance to oppose unexpected limitations by developing different tactics. They mentally evaluated and mapped service surroundings and networked with personnel.

The time-geography tools helped to analyze the findings from the empirical materials collected in the accommodation station. Emerging constraints in accommodation stations forced the blind and VIPs to use extra time. Noise, stuffy air, inconvenient odor, lack of contrast color, decorative lightning, etc. were regarded as capability constraints. Interactions with unskilled personnel and laminated instructions were regarded as coupling and authority constraints, respectively. Constraints hindered customers in the hotel accommodation station. Consequently customers' space-time paths changed and their space-time prisms narrowed. In practicality, the blind and VIPs developed fewer projects.

Constraints controlled the blind and VIPs by forcing them to use extra time and to do unwanted acts, such as to dry accommodation from a mold odor, to fix air conditioning overnight, to use a plastic key, etc. As shown, customers with vision

disability had difficulties managing ordinary daily activities, and therefore felt themselves insecure in a place where they had to stay a long period of time. The blind and VIPs used any chance to oppose constraints in the accommodation station. Tactics helped customers with vision disability to be the way they wanted to be and to act with confidence.

In the following chapter, I examine customers' interactions with service environments in the hotel eating place station.

Chapter VII
Eating place station

In Chapter 6 I analyzed how the blind and VIPs experienced the hotel accommodation station. The analysis of the collected empirical materials demonstrated that customers with vision impairment were active regardless of ongoing constraints. In the accommodation station, customers' space-time projects were competing for time and for the access to the offered services. In Chapter 7, I continue to investigate customers' interactions with hospitality servicescapes by focusing on the eating place station.

The hotel eating place is a physical location where food and drinks are catered for hotel guests. Small hotels may offer only a breakfast, whereas larger hotels may additionally supply a lunch and a dinner. Hotel eating places may range from canteens (with basic services) to cafeterias and restaurants (with additional services). The more services that are offered with regard to a public eating place, the higher are the customers' expectations on the offered services. Customers may get services in two forms: buffet or waiter-served. A buffet service requires customers to take the food they want as they walk along and to place it on a tray. A waiter service requires customers to order food items and drinks and to wait while these are prepared. Along with the offered services, a public eating place is equipped with furniture, such as tables and chairs. Public eating locations are social places where customers interact with each other and with personnel.

In the current chapter, I found reasonable to integrate cases collected in hotel eating places with the materials from public eating places outside of a hotel, such as public canteens, cafeterias, and restaurants. I did so because all public eating places are designed to accommodate and to be considerate towards all of their guests, regardless of visual capacity. Hence, in this chapter the collected cases pertain to what I would call "eating place situations".

The chapter includes five sections. In sections 7.1 and 7.2 I illustrate how the blind and VIPs experience hotel eating premises and public eating places outside of a hotel. The following sections 7.3 and 7.4 provide the analysis, which include my interpretation of what is happening when customers with vision disability

temporarily act, and move within an eating place station. Section 7.5 provides a summary.

7.1 Getting lost in a service station

The collected empirical materials revealed that blind and VIPs had difficulties using a sense of hearing to navigate public eating places. Loudness and crowdedness at public eating locations influenced the acts and the moves of customers with vision disability. A focus group participant said: *The space of the canteen was big with a high level of acoustics, which hindered me from grasping the contents of the conversation* (woman, VIP, individual interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.15. 2012). The blind woman commented about a noise near the cafeteria: *"My husband wanted to go to the beach and then have a lunch in the cafeteria nearby. But I do not like to be on the beach during the day time. I cannot hear, because of the noise of kids running around.. I do prefer the evening time."* (woman, blind, conversation, Helsingborg, Sweden, 11.04.2013). An anticipation of inconvenience such as noise prevented the activities of the blind and VIPs in public eating places.

Inconvenient ambience at a public eating place may hinder the blind and visually impaired customers. A focus group participant described how the inconvenient smell of a cafeteria influenced her further activities: *There is not a strong smell of food in a restaurant, unlike in cheap cafeterias. At times I smell of food after visiting such cheap food establishments. I feel uncomfortable to be among my colleagues when everyone can tell that I recently ate lunch at a cheap cafeteria* (woman, GII VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 08.21.2013). Inconvenient ambience of the servicescape irritated the VIP after a service process. The woman was worried about the risk that she might be perceived as a low-income person, and therefore would have to experience negative feelings and emotions.

A lack of contrast color was an additional barrier for visually impaired guests in hotel eating places. Observed VIPs had difficulties in identifying certain aspects of the breakfast service (observation, Schwerin, Germany, August 16-19, 2012). White utensils, cups and plates were nearly invisible on the white tablecloth. In the buffet breakfast, the plates and glasses were placed near the food, while the flatware (knives, forks, spoons) was located near the exit from the buffet area. Water with and without carbonation was placed in metal containers. It was not convenient for VIPs to obtain water from these containers because they were placed too close to the shelf with the glasses. To identify the type of water, the guest had to remove the bottle of water from the container. Food and drinks were placed on opposite sides of the buffet area and divided by a path of about two

meters. The access to the food and drinks was convenient, but VIPs and blind guests had difficulties with the food and drink selection. The names of the main courses were written on paper in small italic font and placed near the item. Tea, salad, and fruits were not labeled at all. It was difficult for VIPs to choose tea from the shelf containing different types of packaged tea. The blind and VIPs could not manage a sugar bowl and milk jug, because of the inconvenient design. The sugar bowl had a hole with a metal pipe sticking out. The amount of sugar could only be regulated visually. The same was true for the milk jug. Lump sugar and packaged milk were available in the buffet, but without any VIP labeling. A salt and peppershaker had the same design, but with pressed-in (indented) letters "S" and "P" respectively. (i.e.: Braille, embossed lettering) (observation, Schwerin, Germany, Aug 16-19, 2012). The blind and VIPs were annoyed by a lack of contrast color, which made invisible a disposition of plates, caps, and flatware. Customers with vision disability had difficulties in selecting meals and drinks at buffet breakfast.

Unclear design of service place hindered the acts and the moves of the customers with vision disability at hotel breakfast places. Although the pathway between the rows of tables allowed comfortable movement, the tables were placed too close with limited space for the chairs (observation, Schwerin, Germany, Aug 16-19, 2012). Rectangular wooden tables with sharp edges had been placed diagonally in order to be parallel to each other. The path between these tables was narrow even for one person and a visually impaired guest would have had a problem accessing the buffet in the corner of the cafeteria (hotel observation with VIP, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.17.2012). A dining area in a ferry was equipped with small tables. Such a design of tables was inconvenient and even dangerous for the blind and VIPs. Thus, a placing of a cup or glass back took more time for customers with vision disability, because they had to employ both hands. One hand was used to check the table edge and the other hand was used for placing the cup on the table (observation, Helsingor, Denmark, 05.12.2012).

Observed blind and VIPs moved along the walls within unfamiliar layouts of eating establishments (observation, Schwerin, Germany, Aug 16-19, 2012). The breakfast was offered on the first floor of the hotel, in the cafeteria. The cafeteria and the bar were located to the right side of the reception area. The pathway to the café was decorated with big pots of greenery (small branching trees). (observation, Schwerin, Germany, Aug 16-19, 2012). Inconvenient design of the entrance area of the eating place was observed in the hotel in Almaty. The bar on the one side and an ornamental partition on the other side narrowed the entrance to the cafeteria. As a result only one person at the time could enter. The observed VIP was confused by the layout and started to move more slowly (hotel observation with VIP, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.17.2012).

Individual and focus group interview participants commented on public food spaces. Key phrases included: “I do not like steps, narrow entrances, small toilets…”,”There is too much sound all around. I feel myself like in a big barrel full of the sound.” (individual interviews, Almaty, Kazakhstan, November 2010); “I do not know how closely the tables are placed. I do not want to accidently touch anybody.”; “There is not a menu provided with a big font.”; “There are a lot of steps and doors.”; “It was so loud around me…and the walls were made of glass…” (focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.18.2011). Focus group participants shared cases that described inconvenient offerings of paper menus with glossy covers. They also said that large installations of glass for decoration create a dazzling effect. Focus group participants recommended that public buffets have wide hallways and entrances, menus in big fonts, circle-designed and one-legged tables. They commented on the need to change the door direction to swing outwards (or to use only one direction) (focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.18.2011). Generally speaking, crowdedness, loudness, unclear layouts, menus in small fonts, customers’ belongings, unused chairs, plants, unnecessary equipment are some of the many barriers that may hinder physical movements of the blind and VIPs in public eating places.

Interviewees explained why they avoid crowded and self-service public eating places. A focus group participant said that waiters at train station canteens usually are overloaded by the queue of hurrying passengers, and therefore do not have time to offer the menu (man, VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.18.2011). Another participant added that in McDonalds he was not able to choose ingredients for the sandwich and felt awkward from bumping into customers from behind. It was also hard to manage a tray with hot drinks and a liquid meal (man, VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.18.2011). Hence, every visit to crowded and self-service eating places had its difficulties and frustrations for the blind and VIPs.

Travelers with disabilities felt uncomfortable about calling upon the waiters in the public cafeteria. (man, VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.18.2011). An interviewed VIP said that sometimes personnel ignored his question about what was on the plate (man, VIP, individual interview, Helsingborg, Sweden, 06.26.2011). It seems that personnel may have lack of skills on how to serve customers with vision disability. Consequently, customers with vision disability may feel themselves uncomfortable in a hospitality service place.

In short, the collected empirical findings revealed that the blind and VIPs had difficulties concerning the use of the senses of hearing and smell in public eating places. A lack of color contrast, dazzling surfaces from a glass, and flashing lighting hindered visually impaired persons. Customers with vision disability worried about narrow layouts and unclear design and signs in hospitality service

places. Interactions with unskilled personnel frustrated hotel guests. In the following section I will illustrate how the blind and VIPs reacted towards various constraints in public eating places.

7.2 Finding a solution

A visually impaired woman said that the sound of flatware helps her to identify the location of the eating establishment (focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 08.21.2013). The woman did not expect to hear this sound. However, it helped her to navigate an unfamiliar service place. The VIP mentally evaluated and mapped the physical facilities of a hotel to identify the eating place.

The blind man narrated how he travels alone without an external assistance. He lost his sight accidently, but previously he was an active tourist. Being blind, he still travels a lot. Nowadays he always networks with sighted friends who have already visited the place of his visit. The friends orally navigate him about a tourism destination. The blind man creates a mental picture and follows the instructions. When crossing new spaces, he has to listen more. Different sounds help him to navigate his movement (man, blind, interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, November 2010).

The blind and VIPs were highly rational in their practices in public eating places. Before eating, each blind and VIP cover (or are covered by the assistant) either the chest or knee (observation, Helsingor, Denmark, 05.12.2012). Napkins are important components in the meal process. Prior to the meal blind clients use their hands to get to know the position of the plate, the cup/glass, sometimes touching the food with their fingers, and from time to time using their fingers to check the space around the plate and to keep track of the meal when placing items back down. The blind guests asked the accompanying person about the food on their plates, for instance what vegetables were included in a garnish (observation, Helsingor, Denmark, 05.12.2012). The blind people use touch to check how much water there is in the glass. Thus, they place their forefinger on one side of the glass' edge and tilt a bottle on the other side. The fingertip turns inside the glass and helps to check the glass's capacity (observation, Solhaga Majenfors, Sweden, June 1-3, 2012; Hurva, Sweden, April 11, 2013). Salt and peppershakers had the same design, but with pressed-in (indented) letters "S" and "P", respectively. I instructed the VIP to feel the indented letters on top of the ceramic shakers. She touched the top of the shakers, and then still poured the contents into her hand to taste (observation, Schwerin, Germany, Aug 16-19, 2012). In public eating places the observed blind and VIPs avoided asking personnel for assistance. VIPs in our group were eating the same items for breakfast and dinner (which was also offered through a buffet service) (observation, Schwerin, Germany, Aug 16-19, 2012). At

the buffet breakfast, the blind and VIPs had difficulties with the food and drink selection (observation, Schwerin, Germany, Aug 16-19, 2012). A selection of the breakfast offerings was impossible for the customers with vision impairment. An escorted VIP kept asking me the question, *what is this*, pointing to the food and drinks. The congenitally blind person did not ask questions, but listened to the escort person and then made a choice. Both customers were creating a network with escort persons, although they expressed themselves differently (observation, Schwerin, Germany, Aug 16-19, 2012). The blind and VIPs intended to keep friendly relations to people who might be useful in their travel activities. Interview participants explained why they prefer to visit the same cafeteria. Key comments included "*The personnel already know me."; "It does not take time to explain what I want."; "The personnel know what I would order."; "The place is familiar to me."* (individual and focus group interviews).

An interviewed VIP woman said she likes to explore, as this is her adventure. For example, *if I ask what place is best to eat at and you call only three of them. However, perhaps, there is a fourth place which is best for me, but because you only called three you made the choice for me. I like having my own picture as ASAP* (woman, VIP, interview, Limhamn, Sweden, 03.31.2012). She appreciates exploring by herself instead of asking people; otherwise it is not her choice but others making the choices for her.

The research findings revealed that networking helped the blind and VIPs to create communication projects in public eating places. The travelers planned to spend one day in Helsingor (observation, Helsingor, Denmark, 05.12.2012). They started out the trip on the Scandlines ferry, which lasted 20 minutes. At the cafeteria on the Scandlines ferry, the blind woman commented on embossed lettering on the bottle of beer. She said that the taste and smell of *Carlsberg* (the name of a beer) always reminds her of Scandlines' atmosphere. She also remarked that the Carlsberg company produces not only beer, but equipment and other items. Other tourists also commented on Carlsberg's products and Scandlines' services. A short comment of the blind customer built up a conversation that also involved the other passengers who were sitting around. It was a good start for the trip, which lasted one day. The conversation created a friendly atmosphere and helped participants quickly introduce themselves.

In summary, the collected empirical materials revealed that constrained blind and VIPs actively used senses of hearing, smell, and touch to navigate service places. Customers with vision disability used memory, mentally mapped service spaces, and actively networked with service personnel and other customers. In the following subsections (7.3 and 7.4) I analyze with the help of time-geography tools and the concept of tactics how the blind and VIPs experienced public eating place stations.

7.3 Competition of space-time projects

According to the time-geography point of view, the customers' intentional acts in a public eating place station are their space-time projects. These projects include various intentional activities such as breakfast, lunch, dinner, movements between tables, reading a menu, an interaction with personnel and other customers, etc. Any project development is time-consuming. However, various constraints force customers to use extra time to overcome unexpected limitations. Constraints in a public eating station influence the customers' planned activity patterns.

Figure 7.3 illustrates a simple time-geography of an ordinary customer in a hotel breakfast place. The figure does not depict an actual happening but serves rather as an illustration. A customer gets a sitting place by moving between tables. Then the customer reads a menu and orders a breakfast. During breakfast, a customer may interact with other people sitting around. At the end of the breakfast a customer may visit a restroom. With a help of the time-geography tools in the current section I analyze what is happening when customers with vision disability temporarily act and move within public eating stations.

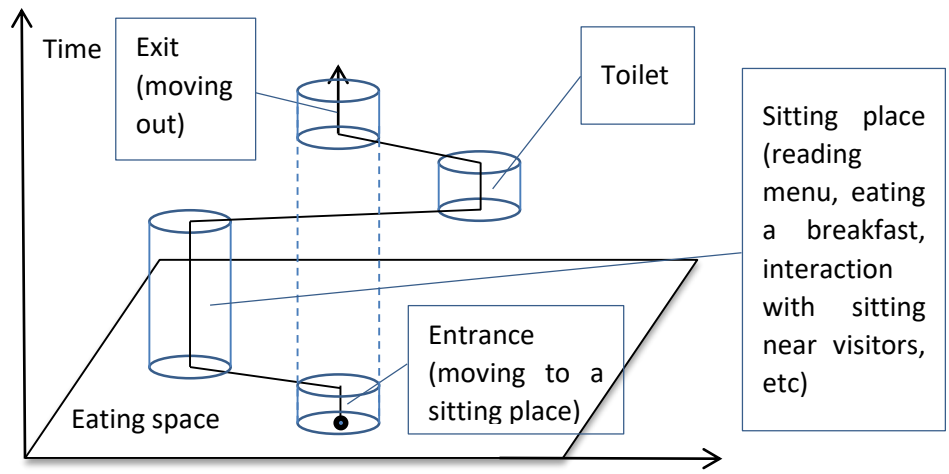

Figure 7.3
The time-geography of a customer in eating place station

A visually impaired man had difficulties finding a place to sit at the cafeteria, because the unclear disposition of tables and noise hindered his physical moves (see Figure 7.3). Narrow layouts and noise can be regarded as capability constraints since the customer could not use his senses of touch and hearing. These constraints were unavoidable for him. The VIP's space-time path changed, because his velocity was lowered. His space-time prism or the area of his movement narrowed. The VIP found his place, or developed his mini-project.

However, the constructed servicescape controlled the VIP's physical moves and acts by forcing him to move more slowly. The customer with vision disability felt himself unwanted in a hospitality space.

A visually impaired woman was not able to grasp the contents of the conversation with her friends, because of a high level of acoustics in a canteen (see Fig. 7.3). Acoustics can be regarded as a capability constraint since the VIP could not use a sense of hearing. The constraint was unavoidable for the customer. Moreover, the constructed servicescape forced the VIP to experience limitations in her hearing during a service process. Although the woman was sitting at the table, her space-time path changed, because she was not able to do a planned activity (to hear what her friends say). The VIP planned to spend her time at the service place and to network with her friends. However, the VIP did not develop her interact-to-friends project, because of the failed competition for time and for the access to the servicescape. The customer felt herself unimportant and unwelcomed at the service place, because she was excluded from service offerings (Small *et al.* 2012).

Inconvenient ambience followed the VIP even after her lunch in a cheap cafeteria. The lingering smell might be considered as a capability constraint, because the woman was hindered in her interactions with her colleagues, or could not interact. The constraint was unavoidable. The woman was forced to experience an inconvenient smell after a service process. Although the VIP developed her lunch project, she could not develop her planned activities. Her next space-time projects were competing for time, because she was forced to wait until this inconvenient smell disappeared. The VIP's further space-time path and space-time prism changed too. The woman intended to avoid the contacts with her colleagues, because she did not want to be perceived as a "low-income" person. The area of her activities decreased significantly. The VIP was trapped by a smell, felt embarrassed, and therefore she was excluded from a public space.

Serving the blind and VIPs places some specific requirements on people working at public eating places. While service staff may see them, visually impaired guests may not. Some of the personnel may start to act like it is an awkward event, or perhaps their behavior becomes just plain embarrassing. For example, the VIP said that he was uncomfortable about calling a waiter in a public eating place, because he felt himself different from other customers. The VIP did not want to call the attention of other clients to his physical disability. He intended to get the expected services, but had a problem about calling the personnel. In the time-geography view, interaction with unskilled personnel might be considered as a coupling constraint, because the VIP could not act as a regular customer. The VIP's space-time path and space-time prism changed, because he was forced to wait until personnel could serve him. The customer was trapped by the inconvenient servicescape. He was temporarily excluded from service offerings (Small *et al.*

2012). The customer with vision disability felt himself unimportant and unwelcomed in the hospitality place.

In brief, ongoing constraints in hotel eating place stations influenced customers' planned activity patterns. Emerging constraints changed customers' space-time paths and space-time prisms by forcing them to act slower and to experience negative feelings and emotions. Often these constraints were unavoidable for the blind and VIPs. Constraints influenced customers' activities during and after a process of getting services, or had a continuous character. Customers' space-time projects were competing for time and for the access to the offered services.

However, constrained blind and VIPs were not passive. In the following section I examine how the blind and VIPs were opposing the constraints in hotel eating place station. For this purpose I complement the time-geography tools with de Certeau's (1984) concept of tactics.

7.4 Tactical behavior: evaluating, mapping, and networking

The blind and VIPs intended to realize their travel plans, or to develop their space-time projects. They used every opportunity to oppose emerging constraints at eating place stations. A visually impaired woman said that a sound of flatware helped her to identify the location of the eating establishment. A sound of flatware might be considered as a capability constraint, if it would limit VIP's ability to navigate by the sense of hearing. But the customer developed a tactic. She used a sound of flatware to evaluate and to map the service environment. If the VIP ignored the sound of flatware, she would have to spend more time navigating the service surroundings. She could also ask for external help, but it would be a coupling constraint, which is time-consuming. The tactic helped the VIP to avoid other constraints, to speed up physical movement, and to save time. The area of customer's activities extended and she gained access to a servicescape. The VIP felt herself confident, because she could keep the control over a situation.

Another VIP developed a tactic to identify salt and peppershakers, which had the same design. A visually impaired woman touched the top of the shakers, then still poured the contents into her hand to taste. In time-geography language, the VIP developed a spice-identification mini-project and the area of her potential activities increased and she developed. She evaluated shakers, tasted spices, and mapped them. If the VIP did not do this she may have had to spend more time to identify spices. She could ask for an assistance, which might be regarded as a coupling constraint. The tactic helped the woman to avoid a capability and a

coupling constraints. The woman identified the spices by herself and did not ask for a help. The tactical act allowed the VIP to save time, to act independently, and to do more activities such as interaction with friends sitting nearby. The customer with vision disability felt that she belonged in the service space. She kept a control over service surroundings, although temporarily.

The blind person developed networking tactic by commenting on embossed lettering on the bottle of Carlsberg beer at the cafeteria of Scandlines ferry. A short comment of the blind customer built a conversation about the Carlsberg company, which further involved the other passengers who were sitting around. The blind woman was not familiar with all passengers. However, she occasionally found a topic for common discussion. The conversation created positive emotions among the customers at the cafeteria. If the blind woman had kept her silence, the visually impaired and sighted customers would not have been able to interact. The networking tactic generated follow-up comments from the other customers, which created a friendly atmosphere, and helped customers to socialize. The conversation was a good start for the trip, which lasted one day.

To conclude, the blind and VIPs wanted to be in control of their own situations in service places. If there was a chance, constrained customers were developing different tactics such as evaluating, mapping, and networking. The ambience and the design of the constructed servicescapes as well as customers' knowledge and travel experiences helped them to act tactically in difficult situations. The developed tactics helped the blind and VIPs to navigate hotel eating place stations, to keep a temporal control over service surroundings, and to obtain expected services.

7.5 Summary

The findings of this chapter revealed that the blind and VIPs had problems in their experiences of hotel eating places. Noise, acoustics, crowdedness, and inconvenient odor hindered customers' ability to navigate by sense of hearing and smell. Lack of contrast color, flashing lights, and glass walls were barriers for the VIPs to use some degree of sight. Plants, glass elements, rectangular tables with sharp edges, small tables, narrow pathways and entrances increased the risk of being injured. Interactions with unskilled personnel reduced the offered services. However, constrained blind and VIPs were not passive. To obtain the expected services, customers with vision disability used every opportunity to oppose emerging constraints. They were developing different tactics by mental evaluation and mapping of an eating place, and by networking with personnel and other customers.

The time-geography tools helped to deepen an understanding of the findings from the empirical materials collected in hotel eating place station. Noise, acoustics, crowdedness, inconvenient smell, lack of color contrast, plants, narrow pathways were regarded as capability constraints. Interactions with unskilled personnel and self-services were regarded as coupling and authority constraints, respectively. Constraints hindered customers in hotel eating place stations. Consequently, customers' space-time paths changed and their space-time prisms narrowed. In practicality, the blind and VIPs developed fewer projects.

Constraints controlled customers' activities in eating place stations, by forcing them to do unwanted acts, such as to wait and to ask for help. Constrained blind and VIPs looked like subordinates in a public eating place where customers should feel relaxed and welcomed. Therefore, customers with vision disability used every opportunity to oppose constraints. Tactics provided the blind and VIPs the possibility to deal with unexpected difficulties, to act with a dignity in a public eating place and therefore to feel themselves satisfied.

In the following chapter, I examine how two customers, sighted and visually impaired, were developing lunch projects at a cafeteria.

Chapter VIII
Exploring hospitality servicescape from the time-geography perspective

In the previous three chapters I introduced and analyzed empirical materials collected in three hospitality servicescape stations: the lobby, the accommodation, and the eating place. The blind and visually impaired customers acted as socially active, notwithstanding their physical disability. They did not have any false expectations about constructed service places. Indeed, constrained travelers with vision disability used every opportunity to oppose unexpected limitations by developing different tactics. The blind and VIPs were learning how to deal with emerging constraints at servicescapes, and also encouraged others to try to do the same.

In the current chapter I illustrate and analyze collected empirical materials from the trip to Arnold Kannibalmuseum, Horby, Sweden. It was a one-day excursion, where I had the opportunity to accompany the members of SRF from Helsingborg. During this trip I was not only a researcher, but also the escort person to the blind and VIPs. During the course of the trip, I observed two travelers (observation, Horby, Sweden, April 11, 2013). One was the VIP and another was a sighted person. The collected empirical materials served to deepen an understanding of how sighted and visually impaired customers experience common service places.

The analysis is focused on the customers' lunch projects at the Hurva cafeteria station (observation, Hurva, Sweden, 11.04.2013), one of the service places that the travelers visited during the one-day trip. I measured the amounts of time spent by customers for their mini tasks to develop lunch projects. Customers' mini tasks included different acts, such as to navigate a physical movement in the cafeteria, to select a meal, to pour a drink, to make a payment, etc.

The chapter includes four sections. In sections 8.1 I illustrate how the two travelers, sighted and visually impaired, experience identical service places. The following sections 8.2 and 8.3 provide the analysis, which includes my interpretation of what was happening when the observed customers had lunch in the cafeteria. Section 8.4 provides a summary.

8.1 Getting lost in service stations and finding a solution

The one-day trip to Arnold Kannibalmuseum, Horby, Sweden started at 11 o'clock in the morning. Two travelers, one sighted and one visually impaired, took their places in the bus with the rest of the tourists. The service environment in the bus was comfortable for the travelers. They were listening to the driver's comments about the different tourist destinations that the bus was passing. Thus, the driver simultaneously worked as a guide person. He continuously called the travelers' attention to the different tourist destinations that the bus was passing.

During one and half hours of the trip, the sighted traveler listened to the guide-driver and looked at the sights out of the bus window that the driver commented on. In addition, the sighted traveler read Linderödsåsen (the magazine distributed in bus), had a conversation with the person sitting next to him, called friends by using a mobile, and checked e-mails and sent messages also through the use of the mobile phone device. In contrast, the traveler with vision impairment listened to the guide-driver, made phone calls by mobile, and had a conversation with a person sitting next to him.

At 12-30 noon, the bus arrived at Gästgivaregården, Hurva for lunch. The lunch lasted for 1.5 hours and was offered in two forms: a buffet and a fixed meal served by a waiter. The sighted individual chose the buffet service. He selected and placed a meal on his plate, made a sandwich, and poured two glasses with water and coffee. After the lunch, the sighted guest walked inside the cafeteria, had a short conversation with the cafeteria's owner and exchanged business cards, took a photograph, went out and walked around the building, answered a phone call from his mobile, made a payment, and visited a restroom.

The VIP had a lunch that was served by a waiter. The waiter delivered a meal and beverages. The VIP was seated and had a conversation with the adjacently seated escort person. That person made a sandwich for the VIP. After lunch, the escort person helped the VIP to make a payment by pressing the code on the VIP's card. He also accompanied the VIP to the restroom and informed about the restroom's disposition.

At 13-40 o'clock, the bus departed from Gästgivaregården, Hurva and one hour later arrived at Arnold Kannibalmuseum, Horby, which is a small museum belonging to a couple from Horby. The husband was working as a guide person whereas his wife was responsible for tea and coffee with homemade cookies for visitors of the museum. Although the museum was popular among tourists, the place was not equipped for the visitors. All of the items were placed on the walls and on the tables in the two small rooms. The layout of the spaces between the tables was narrow.

The owner of Kannibalmuseum told the customers about the current exhibition. The observed travelers listened to him. The sighted person touched the exhibited pieces, raised questions, took photos, and walked inside the museum. The VIP was rather less active. He touched exhibited pieces offered by the guide and by the escort person. After the presentation, the owner of Kannibalmuseum invited customers to drink tea and coffee and to have some cookies at his house, which was next to the museum building. Both the sighted and the VIP attended the coffee break at the owner's home. When the coffee break was over, the owner offered customers to visit a sales exhibition at his garage. The sighted traveler visited the exhibition, bought souvenirs, and had a conversation with the owner about the items offered for sale. The visually impaired guest was sitting and talking to another VIP in a coffee room. He did not attend the sales exhibition, because the pathway to the garage was smooth and wet after some rain that had fallen. All in all, the day trip lasted 7 hours and ended at 18 o'clock. In the following two sections, I present the analysis of customers' experiences at Hurva public eating place.

8.2 Competition of space-time projects

From the time-geography perspective, Hurva cafeteria was a station where two customers were developing their lunch projects. The observed customers had 90 minutes to implement their lunch projects. A lunch was offered in two forms: a buffet and a fixed meal served by a waiter. A buffet-lunch project was difficult for the VIP. The customer with vision disability was not able to navigate the overcrowded service place, to select meals and drinks, to put them on a tray, and to find a sitting place. Unclear disposition of the offered food items, narrow passages between tables, lack of tactile signs, noise, and crowdedness could be regarded as capability constraints for the VIP. In addition, the customer was limited in time. Therefore, the VIP had only one option to develop his lunch project, namely to be served by a waiter.

The dining tables for the waiter-served and buffet customers were placed in the same service premises. This seemed to be the norm established by the public eating place. This fact might be regarded as an authority constraint for the VIP. Ongoing noise and a crowded locality limited the VIP's ability to communicate with the other guests who were sitting across from him. In other words, the VIP was doubly constrained. Therefore, the VIP failed to develop his interaction-to-across-sitting-customers mini-project.

A waiter-served lunch was time-consuming for the VIP, because one waiter alone served a group of customers with disabilities. The waiter stopped and served

everyone around the table. He was also delivering water and coffee for every guest. Similar to other diners around the table, the observed VIP was obliged to wait until the waiter came and served him. Therefore, one-waiter service might be regarded as an authority constraint for the VIP. Basically, the VIP's lunch project was competing with the lunch projects of other diners around the table for the waiter's service, or for the access to the servicescape (see Chapter 1).

The waiter offered only baked fish (the main course), two salads, bread, tea, and coffee. He did not introduce to the blind customers the various salads, pastries, and cookies offered by the buffet lunch. It seems that the waiter did not have enough time to inform every guest about the lunch offerings. The waiter was developing a serve-the-customers project. The VIPs' waiter-served-lunch projects were competing for time with the waiter's serve-the-customers project. Hence, time was a resource for both, namely for the VIPs and for the waiter.

In contrast, the sighted customer easily managed his buffet lunch project. He selected meals, fetched drinks and avoided colliding with other customers and with the physical surroundings. However, the customer's buffet lunch project was also competing for time. The sighted person saved time, because he served himself. For this reason he saved time and could walk inside and outside the eating-place, and have a short conversation with the manager of the Hurva cafeteria.

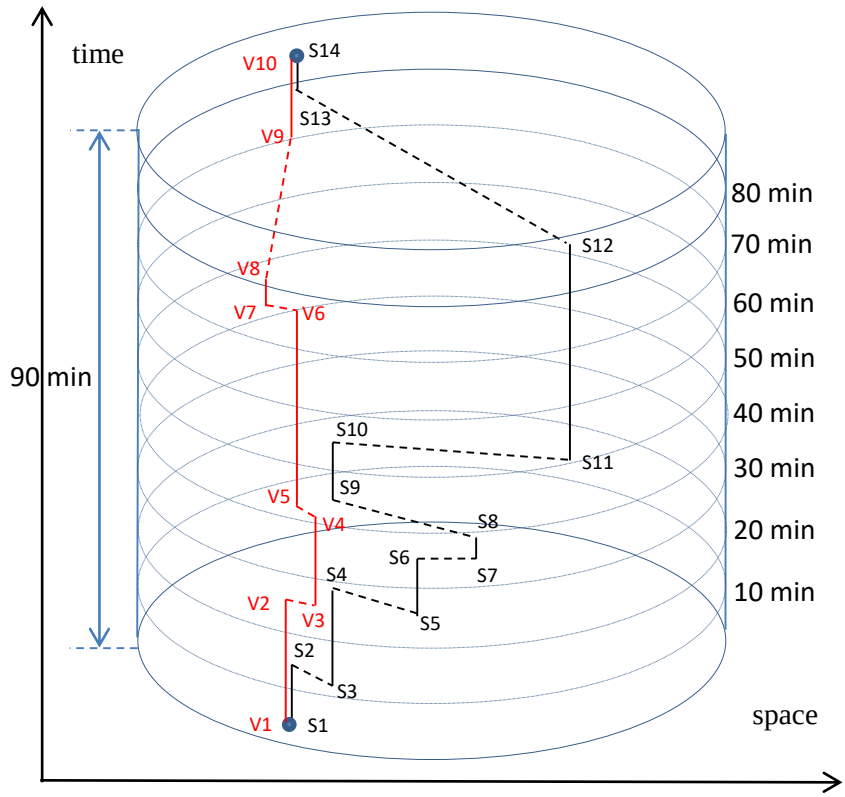

Figure 8.3
Joint interplay between customers' paths, emerging constraints, and service location

The Figure 8.3 is a visual presentation of how two customers experienced the Hurva cafeteria station. The graphical devices (S) and (V) illustrate space-time paths and space-time prisms of the sighted and visually impaired customers, respectively. As seen, the graph (S) is more extended compared to the graph (V), which means that the sighted customer had more opportunities for the different activities unlike the VIP. Both customers developed their lunch projects, which had identical beginning and ending times. However, the ranges of their activities differed dramatically. The customer with disability had fewer choices in the public eating place compared to the sighted person (see Annex VI).

Figure 8.3 also reveals that the VIP had fewer choices, in contrast to the sighted customer. The VIP's activities were blocked by a constructed servicescape, because the customer was not able to use four senses to navigate an overcrowded service environment. The VIP might prefer a waiter-service lunch, because he might want to be served and to feel himself relaxed. However, any of the choices required the VIP to spend additional time to get expected services. Thus, a buffet

lunch hindered the VIP's ability to use a sense of hearing to navigate, and senses of smell and touch to select meals and drinks. A waiter-served lunch was also time-consuming for the VIP, because of other customers and the limited number of personnel. The customer with vision impairment hardly knew in advance about these situations. It seems that available time and the customer's capacity to use the servicescape are top priorities for the developing space-time projects, or the customers' intentional acts.

Although the VIP was more constrained compared to the sighted customers, he actively made his choices regarding the offered services. In the following part, I examine how the observed VIP behaved toward the emerging constraints.

8.3 Tactical behavior: evaluating, mapping, and networking

The observed VIP intended to get the expected services. Sitting at the table, he started to investigate the physical surroundings. The VIP used his hands to get to know the position of the plate and the cup/glass. After that, the VIP networked with the person sitting next to him to give him a bottle of water. Generally speaking, the VIP acted tactically. With help of the sense of touch, the observed VIP mapped the served table. The tactic helped him to understand the disposition of the serving items on the table. He did not find where the drinking water was placed. Therefore, he developed a networking tactic. VIP's tactical acts helped him to save time when he started to eat. However, the most important aspect was that the tactics helped the customer with vision disability to act confidently. His next act supports this idea.

The VIP poured water into the glass without external help. He used the sense of touch to check how much water should be in his glass. For that purpose, the VIP placed his forefinger on one side of the glass's edge and fixed a bottle on another side. His fingertip was turned inside the glass and helped him to check the water level. The VIP continued to network by asking the adjacent person to make a sandwich for him. If the VIP did not network, he would have needed extra time to search for the ingredients to make a sandwich.

When the lunch was delivered, the VIP started to eat. From time to time he checked his lunch by placing fingers around the plate. The VIP tested if any food was spilled. If any was found, the food was placed back on his plate. He controlled the service space around him. Despite noise during the lunchtime, the observed VIP had a conversation with the guest sitting next to him. The VIP cultivated an active interaction with an adjacent person. Later on, the VIP informed that person

of the pincode in order to do the payment by credit card. Close to the departure time, the same person accompanied him to the restroom and instructed him about the restroom disposition. Thus, the VIP acted tactically. He mentally evaluated and mapped the service place. He also networked with a person in his periphery. These tactics helped the VIP to feel that he belonged to the service place.

Observed customers, sighted and visually impaired, were limited in time. Therefore, both persons intended to spend less time to develop their lunch projects. The sighted customer served himself by having a buffet lunch, and therefore he saved time for additional activities at the service place. The sighted person did not experience as much constraints as did the VIP. The VIP's lunch project was competing for time and for the access to a servicescape. Emerging constraints limited his access to the offered services, and therefore the VIP was forced to spend extra time to overcome them. In this regard, the VIP was doubly constrained.

However, the VIP used every chance to oppose the constraints in a service place. If the VIP had not acted tactically, he would have been dependent on the service environment. He would have to spend much more time and would have to wait until the waiter comes and serves him personally. The tactics helped the VIP to keep control over time and the service surroundings around him.

In summary, the two observed customers differently experienced the identical service place. The lunch project of the sighted customer was competing for time. Time was a resource to develop his lunch project. In contrast, the VIP's lunch project was competing not only for time, but also for access to the offered services. Therefore, time and the access to a servicescape were resources required for the VIP's lunch project development.

8.4 Summary

In Hurva cafeteria, the observed VIP had difficulties with navigating the surroundings with the help of available senses, such as hearing and smell. Unclear design of a cafeteria dining place hindered the VIP's ability to navigate with the help of touch. One-waiter service was time-consuming for the VIP. The customer with vision impairment was framed by time. He was limited in choices. Emerging constraints were different and mostly unavoidable. The VIP experienced constraints during a service process. However, the observation activity did not provide me with information about the VIP's thoughts. Therefore it was quite difficult to understand what feelings and emotions the constrained VIP experienced in the Hurva cafeteria.

However, the VIP intended to develop his lunch project. To get expected services, customers with vision disability used any opportunity to oppose emerging constraints. The VIP used available senses, mentally evaluated and mapped service surroundings, and interacted with the waiter and with the customer sitting next to him.

The time-geography tools helped to deepen an understanding of the findings that were based on the empirical materials collected in the Hurva cafeteria. The VIP faced dilemmas and had to decide what constraint would cause less damage and would require less time. The VIP's velocity was slower and his space-time prism was narrower compared to the sighted customer. Consequently, the VIP obtained fewer services compared to the sighted customer.

Emerging constraints controlled the VIP's activities in the Hurva cafeteria station by limiting his choices and by forcing him to wait for the expected services. However, the observed VIP used every opportunity to save time. Developed tactics helped the VIP to act with confidence within an unfamiliar service place.

The following chapter will present a discussion of the overall findings as well as a conclusion.

PART THREE

The aim of Part Three is to discuss and summarize the findings of the current research analysis. In Part Two, I illustrated and analyzed how the blind and VIPs experienced hospitality servicescapes. With help of the time-geography tools (Hägerstrand 1970), I examined customers' acts and moves in three hospitality servicescape stations: the lobby, the accommodation, and the eating place. The space-time projects illustrated customers' intentional acts to get expected services. The space-time paths depicted various constraints that customers with vision disability were forced to practice at the service places, whereas the space-time prisms helped to identify the extension of customers' activity areas. I complemented the time-geography tools with the concept of tactics (de Certeau 1984) to gain a better understanding of the behavior of the constrained customers.

The findings from the research analysis revealed that emerging constraints influenced customers' activity patterns during and sometimes after a service process. The blind and visually impaired customers faced dilemmas that forced them to decide what constraint might cause less damage and require less time. For customers with vision disability, the questions how and in what direction to move were continuously addressed by senses other than vision.

Another finding of the current research analysis was that unexpected constraints differed. Some constraints were unavoidable for the blind and VIPs. Unavoidable constraints forced customers with vision disability to experience negative feelings and emotions at hospitality service places. Some constraints aided the acts and the moves of the blind and VIPs to navigate unfamiliar service surroundings.

Constrained customers wanted to get expected services regardless of limited access to service offerings and time pressure. The blind and VIPs used every chance to oppose unexpected limitations by developing different tactics, such as evaluating and mapping service places and networking with personnel and other customers. The tactics helped the blind and VIPs to save time, to control the process of getting services, and to develop planned activities or space-time projects.

Part Three is structured in the following way: discussion (9.1 and 9.2), conclusion (9.3), research implications (9.4), limitations, and future research (9.5).

Chapter IX
Discussion and conclusion

The aim of the current study was to gain a deeper understanding of customers' interactions with servicescapes. The research gap was addressed through the specific case concerning how the blind and visually impaired customers act and move in hospitality servicescapes. The two sub-questions at the focus of this research investigation were: (1) *In what way do the blind and VIPs experience constraints in hospitality servicescapes?* (2) *How do the blind and VIPs respond to the constraints in service places?* The current study drew on: (1) the concept of constraints and the concept of tactics as found in existing literature and (2) empirical material both from the literature and from the current research itself.

The study theoretically and empirically justified the complementarity and usefulness of the concept of constraints (Hägerstrand 1970) and the concept of tactics (de Certeau 1984) (see chapter 4). According to time-geography, human activities occur in time and space, and therefore have temporal and spatial qualities. In the current research the space-time projects visualized customers' intentions to get expected services, whereas the space-time paths described the process of individuals' space-time projects development. Customers' intentional acts and moves were limited by various constraints. However, ongoing constraints did not violate customers' intentions to get expected services. The blind and VIPs used every opportunity to oppose emerging constraints by developing different tactics. Hence, a combination of the time-geography tools with the concept of tactics helped to investigate customers' behaviors and decision-making processes.

The qualitative research included individual and focus group interviews, go-along observations, and virtual outputs (on-line customers' testimonials). I tested the empirical findings from the interviews through the observation activities. Observational occurrences were tested via the interview questions. On-line customers' testimonials provided additional support for the gathered material. Ethical approval was obtained from the Regional Ethical Review Board in Lund (www.epn.se). Empirical materials were collected in the three stations of hospitality servicescape: lobby, accommodation, and eating place.

The current research findings (see chapters 5-8) revealed that the blind and VIPs intended to develop planned activities at hospitality servicescapes. However, inconvenient design and restrictive rules at service places, as well as interactions with unskilled personnel hindered customers' activity patterns by forcing them to use extra time to overcome unexpected barriers. Hence, time and an access to servicescape were required resources to develop customers' intentions to get expected services, or their space-time projects. These resources were limited, since customers temporarily acted at the service station. In the following sections I discuss two topics: *A scarcity of resources* (9.1) and *A struggle for resources* (9.2).

9.1 A scarcity of resources

The current research findings are in line with Bitner's (1992) statement that servicescapes may hinder customers (see Annex V). An organized servicescape exerts a force on the customers and therefore their goals might not only be aided, but they may also be hindered by the service settings (Bitner 1992:61). Consequently, manmade servicescapes influence customers' behaviors. Bitner paid less attention to customers' activities as a process, because she did not consider time and space dimensions in customers' interactions with servicescapes (see Annex V).

With help of the time-geography tools (Hägerstrand 1970, 1982), I explained how the blind and VIPs experienced hospitality servicescapes. In the current study, a space-time project meant customer's intentional acts to get expected services. Space-time paths depicted individuals' acts and moves in service locations whereas space-time prisms defined their activity areas.

The time-geography tools called attention to the "situational settings" (Hägerstrand 1970:9) which shaped customers' acts and moves. In Hurva cafeteria (observation, Hurva, Sweden, April 11, 2013), time and access to servicescapes were scarce for the VIP to develop his lunch project. However, the circumstances that shaped the observed VIP's acts and moves could have been otherwise. The VIP could have saved time and obtained more services if two waiters served a group of VIPs, or if the design of the cafeteria included tactile signs, secure layouts, and convenient ambience. The VIP may have been able to act faster if his group had arrived at the eating-place 30 minutes before or after the ordinary lunchtime and therefore he could have moved within a less crowded and less noisy service environment. As described, the outcome of the VIP's lunch project implementation in Hurva cafeteria was sensitive to not only his capability to overcome emerging constraints, but also to the VIP's position at a particular time and place.

Another good example that illustrates how situational settings influence the outcomes of customers' space-time projects is the cross-the-corridor mini-project of the VIP-woman, which she developed to accomplish her stay-in-the-hotel project (woman, GI VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 07.26.2012). The rough surface of the wall was a capability constraint that decreased the VIP's velocity, and therefore influenced her stay-in-hotel project implementation. Time and an access to the servicescape, such as a smooth surface or an external help, were scarce for the VIP at that moment. If the corridor were equipped with handrails or if personnel accompanied the VIP, she could have moved more quickly. Generally speaking, *a scarcity of resources is due to characteristics of the situational settings, such as time, service place, and the customer's capability.*

Time and an access to the servicescape were essential resources for the development of the customers' space-time projects. The VIPs planned to develop their go-by-the-elevator mini-project (woman, GII VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 08.21.2013). However, service providers did not inform customers how to manage the elevator's buttons. Visually impaired customers had to spend night hours in the small cubicle of the hotel elevator, and therefore, time was getting scarce. Access to the servicescape (a clear disposition of the elevator's buttons) was scarce during VIPs' go-by-the-elevator mini-project's development. Consequently, the VIPs failed to develop their walk-out projects. Overall, the VIPs experienced a scarcity of time and a lack of access to a servicescape during their space-time projects development. To put it more simply, *a space-time project's outcome, whether the project will succeed or not, depends on the customer's capability to overcome unexpected constraints and available resources, such as time and an access to a servicescape.*

Since the time-geography framework does not consider customers' feelings and emotions, I analyzed customers' feelings with help of the constraints described in leisure studies (Jackson and Scott 1999, Small *et al.* 2012). Tourism and leisure researchers suggested that constrained blind and visually impaired travelers experience negative feelings and emotions at service places (Daniels *et al.* 2005, Poria *et al.* 2011, Small *et al.* 2012) (see Annex V). Small *et al.* (2012) analyzed how VIPs lost a feeling of control over their environments within unfamiliar service places. VIPs felt themselves excluded when they had troubles with access to information, wayfinding, and with interactions with unprofessional service providers. Ongoing constraints excluded VIPs from the offered services, and therefore customers had less-served feelings (Small *et al.* 2012). Leisure researchers call readers' attention to the limited access to services, and to the psychological states and attitudes that hinder a person's participation in the expected activity (Jackson 1999) (see Annex V). The research on leisure defines constraints as any factor that prevents a person from participating in leisure activities (Crawford and Godbey 1987). However, the research concerning the

constraints on leisure does not consider time and space dimensions in customers' activities within service places.

The current research findings revealed that a scarcity of access to servicescapes and a subsequent lack of time for project development forced the blind and VIPs to experience negative feelings and emotions. The following two cases illustrate that customers suffered inconvenient servicescapes and spent their own time to overcome ongoing constraints. Thus, the VIP experienced a noisy environment during her stay in a hotel (woman, VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 08.21.2013). A noise from the air conditioner influenced her sleep project during the nighttime. The VIP was not able to interact with others during the daytime when a noise of air conditioner hindered her sense of hearing. Therefore, the VIP experienced negative feelings and emotions. Although the customer's stay-in-the-hotel project failed to get a resource (an access to servicescape or calm environment), the woman completed the project. Another case illustrates how customer's activities were spoiled by a persistent smell of a mildewed accommodation (woman, VIP, focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 08.21.2013). The VIP's change-the-room mini-project failed, because of the lack of available accommodation. Her stay-in-the-room project demanded convenient ambience at service location. She dried the damp room daily and therefore was forced to spend extra time for this unplanned activity. Although the VIP developed her stay-in-the-hotel project, she experienced negative feelings. The current research findings revealed that *blind and visually impaired customers may become resigned to suffering from a lack of access to servicescapes, if there is no alternative way to develop their space-time projects.*

To summarize, a development of a customer's space-time project depends on the individual's capability to overcome emerging constraints at service station and on the available resources, such as time and an access to a servicescape. In most cases, these resources are scarce. The blind and VIPs become resigned to suffering from a lack of access to servicescape, if there is no alternative way to develop their space-time projects.

9.2 A struggle for resources

The current research findings revealed that space-time projects failed if customers were not able to control a situation, or to find a way out of the situation. In Hurva cafeteria (observation, Hurva, Sweden, 11.04.2013), the observed VIP as well as the other customers sitting around the table were in high demand of a waiter's service. A waiter was the resource that could help them to save time for the alternative activities, such as a walk, conversation, etc. An observed visually

impaired diner was developing different tactics, such as mental evaluation and mapping of a service place, as well as networking with the customer sitting next to him. These tactics helped the VIP to prolong the communication with the waiter by raising different questions about offered meals, drinks, and the service place. However, one-waiter service was an unavoidable constraint, and therefore time and an access to a servicescape (the waiter's service) were scarce for all VIPs. It appears that diners with vision impairment were aware that the waiter was limited by time. However, every diner intended to prolong the duration of the waiter's service because it would help to escape a coupling constraint, such as networking for help, and it would save time for alternative activities, such as walking, conversation, etc. Consequently, visually impaired diners intended to "prolong" personal interactions with the waiter, or a coupling constraint. In other words, *customers may intentionally experience constraints in order to develop their space-time projects and to be in control of a service process.*

The current research findings are in line with Hägertrand's statement that space-time projects were competing for the "trajectories and room" to get expected aims (Hägerstrand 1985:204). A noise of air conditioner during the daytime hindered customers with vision disability from hearing (focus group interview, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 08.21.2013). Quietness was a resource that could help VIPs to develop their interaction projects. However, all customers, including the VIPs, demanded cool air, which was a resource to develop their stay-in-the-hotel projects. Without cool air, the customers might experience a discomfort. Under these circumstances, the VIP's interaction-to-customers mini-project was competing with his breathe-a-fresh-air mini-project. The VIP required quiet and fresh service surroundings, but failed to get this resource. Hence, space-time paths of the VIP and other customers were "in a conflict" (Hägerstrand 1985:204).

In Hurva cafeteria, all diners around the table wanted to extend the interaction time with the waiter, whereas the latter intended to minimize them. The waiter was shifting from one customer to another in a sequence. Since there was only one waiter to serve a group of VIPs, he intended to work faster, and therefore to speed up every serve-the-customer mini-project. Although time was scarce for the waiter and for the diners around the table, the VIPs intended to keep the one-waiter's service for a longer period of time. The networking tactic helped VIPs not only save time, but to act with a confidence within unfamiliar service place. It is important to mention that time was scarce for the waiter and all diners. Therefore, diners' lunch projects were struggling with the waiter's serve-customers project for time. An investigation of this finding revealed that *customers' space-time projects not only compete, but also struggle for the resources.*

Aubert-Gamet (1996) suggests that customers may behave not just as passive recipients of what a service place offers to them (Aubert-Gamet 1996). Customers

do not want to spend time and efforts being subjected to the control of the service places. Constrained customers intend to resolve the emerging problems. Although the author does not focus on customers with disabilities in general, our findings are in line with her statement that every attempt of a customer to participate in a service process is an act of a freedom (1996:32) or an act against a control from the servicescape (see Annex V).

The idea that customers with disabilities are active in their behavior is also discussed in the writings of Baker (2006, 2007), Daniels *et al.* (2005), and Small *et al.* (2012) (see Annex V). In particular, Baker (2006) explains that VIPs wish to be accepted by service places and their everyday communities (2006:45). Ongoing and interrelated constraints excluded customers with disability from the offered services (Daniels *et al.* 2005, Small *et al.* 2012). Constrained blind and VIPs used four senses to navigate service places (Small *et al.* 2012). Tourism and leisure researchers found that constrained VIPs resisted the control of service places by developing coping strategies (Baker 2006). Thus, Small and her colleagues note, "holidays [for visually impaired persons] were very empowering when constraints were negotiated" (2012:947). The researchers regard constraints as unexpected, and suggest that VIPs act strategically. However, it is quite difficult to act strategically in environments with unexpected constraints.

I made use of de Certeau's (1984) concept of tactics to gain a better understanding of customers' behaviors towards unexpected constraints. The current research findings were in line with the researchers whose theoretical argumentations are based on the writings of de Certeau (1984) on resistive tactics (Quinlan and Bates 2012, Datta *et al.* 2007, McCormak 2008) (see Annex V). Quinlan and Bates (2012) suggest that wheelchair protesters acted tactically against non-accessible public transportation, McCormak (2008) calls our attention to the behaviors of women-tacticians towards caseworkers' bureaucracy, and Datta *et al.* (2007) analyze tactical acts of migrants in an unequal labour market. Similar to the blind and VIPs in hospitality servicescapes, the actors wanted to get the expected services (McCormak 2008), to make public transportation accessible (Quinlan and Bates 2012), and to transcend a social exclusion (Datta *et al.* 2007) (see Annex V). As noted, various tactics helped constrained individuals to develop their strategies. The researchers did not discuss, however, how tacticians used senses of hearing, smell, touch, and taste, as well as memory to oppose unexpected constraints.

The current research findings revealed that customers' tactical behavior helped them to escape emerging constraints and to develop their projects. To investigate new places, individuals with vision impairment used available senses, as hearing, smell, touch, and taste. The blind and VIPs were preoccupied with what they need to know about a hotel services and their own capabilities to move and to act within unfamiliar service spaces. They checked hotel websites, shared own testimonials

on hotel services, and actively networked (friends and relatives) to create travel strategies (individual and focus group interviews). The blind and VIPs strategically charted own "tours" within unknown service places. To avoid unexpected constraints, the blind and VIPs had to memorize service surroundings. A mental evaluation and mapping helped customers to keep a control over time and space, to feel secure, and to feel independent.

The current research findings revealed that the more accessible a servicescape was, the less time was required for a customer to get offered services. The more capability an actor had to overcome constraints, the easier was the space-time project development. Hence, the current research findings revealed that the *projects' struggle for resources depended upon the interplay between, on the one hand, a servicescape, and on the other hand, the capability of a customer*.

Tactics and strategies in de Certeau's (1984) conceptualization were used to clarify Bitner's servicescape typology (1992). Tactics were connected to customers, who temporarily acted in the "alien territory" (de Certeau 1984:36), or hospitality servicescape. According to de Certeau's notion of "the owners of a place" (1984:36), the blind and VIPs were tacticians. Hotel guests had limited time, which was framed by check-in and check-out moments. The blind and VIPs used four senses to navigate, and therefore could hardly predict what might hinder them in the next moment. They also had a lack of experience in the new service places.

In contrast, service providers planned and designed servicescapes (Bitner 1992). Servicescapes influenced customers' perception about offered services. Customers' behavior patterns were predictable when people encountered typical service settings (Bitner 1992:61). Service providers acted strategically. They owned a place and therefore kept control not only over the servicescape, but also over time. Before purchase, the customers commonly looked for cues about the service place. Manmade servicescapes continuously controlled customers' activities with the help of ambience, design, and social interactions. Therefore, emerging constraints could be considered as the servicescape's strategies.

From the time-geography perspective, a servicescape is a place where customers temporarily move and act. Customers intend to develop their space-time projects. A project in time-geography is a set of linked mini-tasks or mini-projects, which have to be undertaken by a customer within constraining service environment in order to get expected services (a goal). Accordingly, a *servicescape might be viewed as a place of dynamic interplay between emerging constraints (strategies) and tactical behaviors of the constrained customers* (see Figure 9.2).

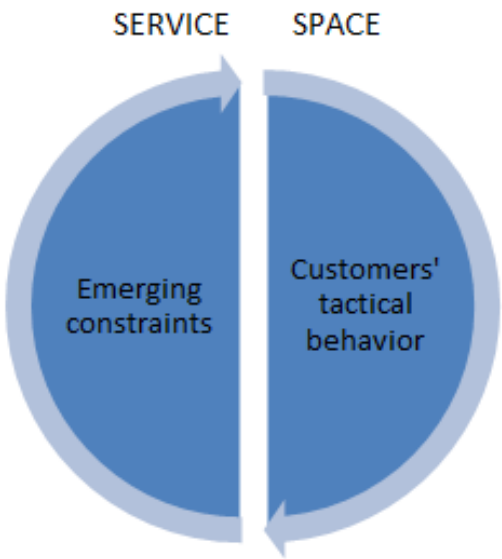

Figure 9.2
Dynamic interplay between emerging constraints and tactical behavior

All in all, customers' space-time projects not only compete, but also struggle for the resources, such as time and access to servicescapes. The space-time projects struggled when resources were getting scarce. Because of that, a struggle for resources depended upon the interplay between, on the one hand, the servicescape, and on the other hand, the capability of a customer. Customers may intentionally experience constraints if this would help them to develop their space-time projects and keep control of the service process. Under all these circumstances, a servicescape might be viewed as a place of dynamic interplay between emerging constraints (strategies) and tactical behaviors of the constrained customers.

9.3 Conclusion

In the current research, the time-geographic approach captured the spatial and temporal sequence and co-existence of customers' activities and underscored the "dynamic interplay" necessary for an understanding of environment-user interactions. The blind and VIPs navigated service environments with the help of four senses. Within organized service places, customers experienced various

constraints. Capability constraints included customers' capabilities and dominant characteristics of service environment that limited customers' movement and communication. Coupling constraints included customers' time to interact, to socialize, to cooperate, etc. Authority constraints were norms and rules at service places that limited customers' to perform their acts and moves at certain times and in certain spaces. Therefore, *constraints were belonging not only to service places, but to customers' capabilities also.*

Constraints changed customers' space-time paths and space-time prisms, and therefore influenced the outcomes of space-time projects. Customers required additional time to overcome unexpected constraints. Constraints forced the blind and VIPs to face dilemmas at hospitality service places. Therefore, customers with vision disability had to decide what constraint may cause less damage and may require less time to overcome. Emerging constraints influenced customers during and sometimes after a service process. The blind and VIPs in hospitality servicescapes could endure constraints when they did not have an alternative way to develop their space-time projects and realize travel strategies. Consequently, the blind and VIPs experienced negative feelings and emotions within hospitality service places. Hence, *constraints in hospitality servicescapes were not equal.*

The space-time projects of the blind and VIPs were continuously in search of resources, such as time and an access to the servicescape. Constrained blind and VIPs intended to get expected services regardless of the emerging constraints. But constraints were different for the customers in the different situational settings. Customers used every opportunity to oppose emerging constraints. Customers with vision disability had to memorize service surroundings and to keep control over time and service space. Hence, customers' tactical acts were caused by situations, but secured the attainment of a goal. Therefore, *the outcome of a space-time project, whether it will succeed or not, depends on situational settings, namely time, place, and a customer's capabilities.*

The current research findings moved the servicescape phenomenon forward and supported an expanded conceptualization of the term, which is in line with Bitner's (1992) original definition, where a servicescape is a place where services are rendered. The findings from the textual analysis revealed that Bitner's conceptual model of servicescape focused on the physicality of service location. Further, the servcescape conceptual model was enhanced by consideration of social interactions as a form of environmental stimulus to form customers' behavior (see Chapter 2). The time-geography approach to customers' servicescape interactions considered time and space dimensions where customers continuously experience various constraints. These constraints belonged to organized servicescapes and customers' capabilities.

To summarize, the current research findings revealed that blind and VIPs used four senses to navigate hospitality servicescapes. Emerging constraints influenced their intentional acts and moves during and sometimes after a service process. The blind and VIPs faced dilemmas, and experienced negative feelings and emotions. Constraints were not equally important. Some constraints were unavoidable and some constraints facilitated customers' acts and moves. However, the blind and VIPs intended to get expected services and to develop their travel strategies. They used every opportunity to oppose emerging constraints by developing different tactics. Their tactical acts included mental evaluation and mapping of service surroundings and a networking between and among personnel and customers. Consequently, *the servicescape conceptual framework should consider constraints and time and space dimensions in order to understand that servicescape is not a static, but rather is a dynamic place.*

9.4 Research implications

The current research findings revealed a significance of time and space dimensions in customers' interactions with servicescapes. Although servicescapes are planned and constructed for customers' convenience, customers experience various constraints. These constraints are not only due to constructed service surroundings, but are also due to customers' limited capabilities to use servicescapes. Therefore, ambience and design of the service place as well as interactions with customers and rules and norms at service locations influence customers' intentional acts to get expected services.

The implications delineated here are in line with Poria et al's (2011) claim that it is the responsibility of service providers to be sensitive and responsive by offering customers respectful service experience (see Annex V). The basic approach taken here is to emphasize that organized servicescapes should cater to the needs of all guests without exception. Although it is difficult to design the servicescape around every type of disability, the use of inexpensive equipment and creative thinking are possible ways to create accessible service environments.

The time-geography approach to customers' activities extended the research of Small *et al.* (2012) and Poria *et al.* (2011), by showing that two VIPs with a similar level of visual impairment could differently perceive similar barriers. The findings of the current study revealed that constrained blind and visually impaired customers used any opportunity to avoid unexpected constraints by developing different tactics.

9.5 Limitations and future research

This study has limitations that need to be addressed. Firstly, the results of the study are based on an analysis of the activities solely of customers. The current study does not provide comments from the service providers' point of view. Some research publications discuss service experience of blind and VIPs from the perspectives of customers and service providers. For instance, Poria and his colleagues (2011) in the research on travel experience of VIPs argue that hotel staff classify hotel accommodation as "accessible" for customers with disability, whereas blind and VIPs do not (Poria *et al.* 2011:581). Another limitation is that I did not focus on additional types of guest facilities such as hotel business centers, day spas, fitness centers, etc.

Further research may examine other time-geography tools, such as the pocket of local order concept (Hägerstrand 1982), which could help to investigate organized servicescapes as a resource to develop customers' space-time projects. In addition, further research may focus on different types of disability, such as deafness, dual-sensory disability, etc. and explore additional information that is "hard to see as the significance of what looks like self-evident" (Hägerstrand 1985:194).

While studies about consequences of customers' cultural differences exist, future research could analyze more systematically differences in the social lives of PwD in different countries. It could also help to explain the theoretical underpinnings of such differences. A focus on gender aspects may call our attention to the fact that disabled women are more likely to experience public space as threatening compared to men.

Further research might be focused also on a human rights perspective. Interesting and important research might concern how the design of physical objects and light have an important impact on what possibilities different kinds of people are exploring in the same setting.

The results from observations and interviews suggest that the blind and VIPs acted tactically towards emerging constraints. I have identified three types of tactical behavior: non-visual evaluation, mapping, and networking. The findings of the current study may lead to further research that explores in more depth the tactical behavior of the constrained customers.

Empirically testing the characteristics of customers' interactions with other service settings, such as retailers, airports, etc. and comparing different tiers of servicescapes would be useful. The results could help service providers within these service settings understand which environmental features can directly influence successful and stable performance.

Annexes

Annex I

Examples of interview questions

1. Basic opening questions:

- Can you please tell about travel experiences?
- What is a common idea do you have about hotel services towards blind and visually impaired guests?
- What do you think is the biggest problem VIPs meet in a hotel lobby (accommodation, eating place)?
- What steps might be taken to make service places accessible for the blind and VIPs?

2. The follow-up questions for exemplifications and specifications:

- Really?
- What happen then?
- Is that so?
- So you mean that [summarizing what VIP just said]… or am I wrong?

3. Examples of interview questions based on the literature review:

a) *How consumers with disabilities perceive "welcome"* (Baker, Holland, Kaufman-Scarborough, Journal of Services Marketing, 2007, Vol 21(3). pp 160-173

- Think of time, roughly within the last few years when as a hotel customer you had a particularly welcoming (unwelcoming) environmental encounter (physical environment as customer's cues, layout, signage,

furniture, color, lights, texture, scale, cleanliness). By welcoming (unwelcoming) we mean that you felt (did not feel) you belonged in the hotel, you were (not) valued as a customer, and you were (not) comfortable with that hotel experience. When did this incident happened?

- What was the hotel? (hotel, resort, bed & breakfast other)
- Why you were at the hotel?
- Is this a hotel you usually stop in, or were you a new customer?
- What place exactly you can counter as a most difficult (easy) experience in the hotel from physical environment point of view: during check-in, breakfast or during staying (living) in the room?
- What exactly was happened?
- What specifically was it that made you interpret the encounter as welcoming (unwelcoming)?
- What has been the result of this experience? Told other about it? Taken any other action?

b) *The Creative Problem-Solving Process and the Physical Environment*, by Meghna Bhambore, 2006. From the hotel experience:

- Orientation (time, space, situations):
    1. Can you describe the first impression of the hotel' space? Did it match your expectations? Why?
- Complication actions (tensions, discomfort, sequence of event):
    2. What made you uncomfortable in the hotel space?
    3. Most difficult decisions in the hotel area?
    4. Most tense/difficult moments?
- Resolution (describing the outcomes):
    1. What was the solution?
- Evaluation (perceived meaning and attribute of behavior):
    2. Consequences of the solution?

3. Would you like to return to this hotel again?
4. What three words /adjectives would you use to summarize/describe your impressions towards this hotel space?

4) Other questions:

- From your previous experience by staying at the hotel do you recognize the feeling “uncomfortable atmosphere”? If it was a physical environment then what exactly made you these feelings? Can you please describe it?

Annex II

Records of the field material

Position	Date	Unit	Duration	Place	Language	Participants (VIP/blind)	Topic	Aim
1	Nov. 19-21, 2010	Individual interview	From 40 to 90 minutes	Almaty, Kazakhstan, Republican library for blind and VIPs (RLVIP)	Russian	10 (9/1)	Travel experience of blind and VIPs	To collect material on physical barriers in hotels and resorts
2	June 26, 2011	Go-along observation	1 hour	Helsingborg, Sweden, walk near the beach	English	1 (1/0)	Travel experience of VIP	To identify the cross-cultural differences in travel experiences of PwD
3	July 18, 2011	Focus group interview	2 hours	Almaty, Kazakhstan, RLVP	Russian	8 (7/1)	Accessibility barriers for blind and VIPs in public eating places and public toilets	To obtain how the group discusses accessibility barriers
4	March 31, 2012	Individual interview	2 hours	Limhamn, Sweden, cafe	English	1 (1/0)	Travel barriers and constraints for the blind and VIPs	To explore how VIPs avoid barriers and difficulties in service places
5	May 4, 2012	Individual interview	1 hour	Helsingborg, Sweden, the house of the interviewed person	English	1 (0/1)	Barriers and constraints for the blind travelers	To explore how blind people experience familiar places
6	May 12, 2012	Go-along observation	One-day trip	Helsingor, Denmark	English and Swedish	5 (3/2)	Physical mobility of the blind and	To observe how the blind and VIPs interacts with servicescapes

							visually impaired travelers	
7	June 1-3, 2012	Go-along observation	Three-days trip	Solhaga, Majenfors, Sweden	English and Swedish	13 (12/1)	How move and act the blind and VIPs in accessible service places (in the resort for the blind and VIPs)	To understand how servicescapes aid the blind and VIPs
8	July 17-18, 2012	Go-along observation	Two days stay in a hotel with the VIP	Almaty, Kazakhstan, Hotel Tien-Shan	Russian	1 (1/0)	The observation of the VIP in the hotel	To understand how blind and VIPs interact with servicescapes
9	July 26, 2012	Focus group interview	2.5 hours	Almaty, Kazakhstan, restaurant *Assorti*	Russian	6 (5/1)	The experiences of blind and VIPs in hotel and resorts	To identify constraints in hospitality service places
10	August 16-19, 2012	Go-along observation	Four-days trip	Schwerin, Germany, InterCityHotel	English and Swedish	6 (5/1)	The mobility experiences of blind and VIPs in a hotel	To observe the blind and VIPs in the hospitality space in a foreign country
11	April 11, 2013	Go-along observation	7 hours	Horby, Sweden, Arnold Kannibalmuseum	Swedish	8 (7/1)	The extension of customers' activities in public eating place	To compare the activity patterns of two customers, a sighted and VIP
12	August 17, 2013	Focus group interview	3 hours	Almaty, Kazakhstan, restaurant *Assorti*	Russian	3 (3/0)	The ambient constraints	To explore ambient constraints
13	2012-2015	Virtual outputs from customers' testimonial	periodically	Vision Group hotels	English		Customers' testimonials from VisionGroup hotels	To support collected field material

Annex III

The research process (composed on Dahlgaard-Park 2000:19)

Position (see Annex II)	Output from previous studies	Propositions/Research aim	Facts and knowledge from further literature studies (based on empirical findings)	Models/Frameworks (part conclusions)	Final conclusion
1 (individual interview, Nov 19-21, 2010)	PwD are "voiceless" and dependent travelers (review of disability, tourism, and leisure literatures)	To find evidences on why the travelers with disabilities should be "voiced as voiceless"	If service locations limit customers' activities, then why do they travel?	PwD experience non-accessible service environments	**Accessibility** is a main variable
2 (go-along observation, June 26, 2011)	Service places may create non-accessible environments for PwD (position 1);	-To understand how PwD experience tourism destinations; - To identify the cross-cultural differences in travel experiences of PwD	Why PwD meet barriers in service locations?	Service places **hinder** PwD Travelers with disabilities may experience sense of **independence**	
3 (focus group interview, July 18, 2011)	The paradox: people with disabilities are loyal and constrained customers (positions 1-2; servicescape framework (Bitner 1992, Tombs and McCall-Kennedy 2003);	-To identify accessibility barriers in public eating places and toilets	How three factors of servicescape (Bitner 1992, Baker 1987) force customers with disabilities to the dependency?	-Two VIPs differently experience identical service place;	**Servicescape** is the research concept
4 (individual interview, March 31, 2012)	Servicescapes exclude customers with disabilities from service offerings (positions 1-3); -The research centers ***space*** and ***power*** dimensions (the review of servicescape literatures; the study of theory of *Production of Space*, Lefebvre, 1974)	To explore how VIPs experience barriers and constraints in service spaces	How space and power dimensions may influence customers' activities?	- Three factors of servicescapes may force customers with disabilities to apply extra efforts **Space** and **power** are main dimensions	The research centers the concept of **mobility** and the concept of **servicescape**
5	Servicescapes exclude the	To explore how blind	Mobility of the blind and	-The blindness does not limit	

(individual interview, May 4, 2012)	blind and VIPs from service offerings (literature review); (positions 1-4);	travelers experience familiar places	VIPs in servicescapes	physical mobility if space is familiar; -The blind and VIPs are active travelers	
6 (go-along observation, May 12, 2012)	Poorly designed servicescapes hinder physical mobility of the blind and VIPs (positions 1-5); (the review of mobility literature)	To observe how the blind and VIPs interacts with service environments	Poorly designed servicescapes force customers to apply more time and efforts to get services	-Poorly designed servicescapes make customers less-mobile; -Two VIPs differently experience identical service place;	
7 (go-along observation, June 1-3, 2012)	Time and space dimensions are important for customers' activities in servicescapes (positions 1-6); (the study of time-geography model of Hägerstrand 1970)	To understand how servicescapes aid the blind and VIPs	To understand the role of space and time dimensions in customers' activities	The blind and VIPs are independent and active travelers The shift from space and power to ***space*** and ***time*** dimensions.	The research centers the concept of **servicescape,** the concept of **mobility,** and the concept of **constraints**
8 (go-along observation, July 17-18, 2012)	Servicescapes generate various constraints (1-7); (theory of production of space; time-geography model)	To understand how blind and VIPs interact with Servicescapes	How constrained customers answer to the emerging constraints?	-Poorly designed servicescapes hinder the mobility of blind and VIPs; -Constrained customers try to save time to get expected services	
9 (focus group interview, July 26, 2012)	Customers resist emerging constraints (positions 1-8); (the notion of tactics, de Certeau 1984)	To identify constraints in hospitality service places	How constrained customers develop different mobility tactics?	-Blind and VIPs plan their travel activities; - Three factors of servicescapes produce three types of constraints; The constraints in service places are emerging.	The research centers the concept of **servicescape,** the concept of **mobility,** and the concept of **constraints,** and the concept of **tactics**
10 (go-along observation, August 16-19, 2012)	Hospitality servicescapes may hinder the mobility of blind and VIPs (positions 1-9); (the review of the literature)	To observe physical mobility of the blind and VIPs in hospitality servicescapes	How constrained customers get services?	Constrained customers develop different mobility tactics	

11 (go-along observation, April 11, 2013)	The shift from the concepts of mobility. Constraints in service places require customers to spend extra time(positions 1-10); (the review of the literature)	To compare activity patterns of a sighted and VIP	How constrained customers answer emerging constraints?	The concepts of **servicescape, constraints,** and **tactics** are main concepts of this research investigation	The research centers the concept of **servicescape**, the concept of **constraints** and the concept of **tactics**
12 (focus group interview, August 17, 2013)	Hospitality servicescapes produce emerging constraints. But constrained customers develop different tactics (positions 1-11); (the review of the literature)	To explore ambient constraints	What processes happen when customers interact with servicescapes?	Constrained customers develop different tactics to overcome emerging constraints	
13 (virtual outputs, from 2012 to present)	Hospitality servicescapes produce emerging constraints. But constrained customers develop different tactics tactics (positions 1-12); (the review of the literature)	To explore how blind and VIPs experience Vision Group hotels	What processes happen when customers interact with servicescapes?	Servicescapes produce different constraints.	
14 Spring, 2015					The research focuses on the concept of **constraints** and the concept of **tactics**

Annex IV

The conceptual map

	individual interview 11.19.2010-11.21.2010	go-along observation 06.26.2011	focus group interview 07.18.2011	individual interview 03.31.1012	individual interview 05.04.2012	go-along observation 05.12.2012	go-along observation 06.01.2012-06.03.2012	go-along observation 07.17.2012	focus group interview 07.26.2012	go-along observation 08.16.2012-08.19.2012	go-along observation 04.11.2013	focus group interview 08.17.2013	virtual outputs 2012-2015	Spring 2016
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Accessibility														
Service escape														
Mobility														
Constraints														
Tactics														

Annex V

Literature review

Concept/category / Authors	Time-geography framework	Capability/ Intra-personal constraint	Coupling/ Inter-personal constraint	Authority/ Structural constraint	Time	Space	Tactics/ strategies	Hospitality services cape (lobby, accom-modation, the eating place)	Ambient factor of services cape	Design factor of services cape	Social factor of services cape	Blind and visually impaired customers
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Aubert-Gamet 1996	no	no	no	no	no	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	no
Aubert-Gamet and Cova 1999	no	no	no	no	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	no
Baker *et al.* 2006, 2007	no	no	no	no	no	no	yes	no	no	no	no	yes
Bitner 1992	no	no	no	no	no	yes	no	no	yes	yes	no	no
Daniels *et al.* 2005	no	yes	yes	yes	no	no	yes	no	no	no	no	no
Datta *et al.* 2007	no	no	no	no	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no	no
de Certeau 1984	no	no	no	no	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no	no
Eroglu *et al.* 2005	no	no	no	no	yes	no	no	no	yes	no	no	no
Ek and Hultman 2008	no	no	no	yes	no	yes	no	no	no	yes	no	no

Hägerstrand 1970, 1982, 1985	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no	no	no
Jackson and Scott 1999	no	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
McCormack 2009	no	no	no	no	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no	no
Poria *et al.* 2011	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
Quinlan and Bates 2012	no	no	no	no	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no	no
Small *et al.* 2012	no	yes	yes	yes	no	no	yes	no	no	no	no	yes
Yalch and Spangenberg 2000	no	no	no	no	yes	no	no	no	yes	no	no	no

Annex VI

Customers' activities during a lunch time in the Hurva cafeteria

	The VIP		The sighted customer
V1-V2 (20 min)	Serving by the waiter, select meal, etc	S1-S2 (10 min)	Selected meal, took flattery, poured a glass of water
V2-V3	Sitting at the table	S2-S3	move to the table
V3-V4 (15 min)	Lunch	S3-S4 (15 min)	lunch
V4-V5	Sitting at the table	S4-S5	Move to the group of other participants
V5-V6 (35 min)	A conversation with a neighbor	S5-S6 (10 min)	A conversation with other participants
V6-V7	Sitting at the table	S6-S7	Move to the waiter for the payment
V7-V8 (6 min)	The payment	S7-S8 (2 min)	The payment
V8-V9	Move to the restroom	S8-S9	Move from the payment place
V9-V10 (15 min)	The restroom	S9-S10 (10 min)	Walk inside the cafeteria, talk to the cafeteria owner, making photos, talking by the phone
		S10-S11	Move outside the building
		S11-S12 (38 min)	Walk outside the cafeteria
		S12-S13	Move inside the cafeteria
		S13-S14 (5 min)	Restroom
Total 90 min		Total 90 min	

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