



LUND UNIVERSITY

Shifting Gears:  
Lived Experience in Cycling Transportation  
and Urban Mobility

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**Abstract**

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This thesis takes an ethnographic approach in examining how individuals experience mobility, particularly bicycling, in their everyday lives in Lund, Sweden. Focusing on 8 individuals, this research delves into the personal experiences of individuals who have moved to Lund with varying degrees of familiarity with cycling as an everyday practice. This thesis explores three main research questions: first, how do previous mobility practices influence the way in which individuals relate to cycling as an everyday practice in Lund? Second, how are sensory, temporal, spatial, and corporeal embodiments experienced while biking? How do these experiences influence spatial and social interactions? Finally, what are the implications of the methodological and theoretical approaches taken in this research within areas of urban planning and cycling research? Grounded in a phenomenological approach, the research methods employed attends to the sensorial and experiential elements of cycling in Lund. I argue that for a fuller understanding of how and why individuals move around, cycling research, or mobility research in general, needs to pay closer attention to the journey between two places. This thesis demonstrates how qualitative research contributes to a better understanding of the ride *in between* point A and B – grasping the minute details, the fleeting, and unspeakable aspects of movement.

Keywords: cycling; bicycles; urban mobility; active transport; ethnography; phenomenology; urban planning; transport policy; Lund; Sweden

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

*“After your first day of cycling, one dream is inevitable. A memory of motion lingers in the muscles of your legs, and round and round they seem to go. You ride through Dreamland on wonderful dream bicycles that change and grow.”*  
(Wells, 1897 :29)

In August 2010 I moved from Toronto, Canada, with a population of about 2.5 million, to Lund, Sweden, with just over 80,000 inhabitants. I began a masters program at Lund University and for a year and a half my daily commute to and from school was primarily made by bicycle. Almost everyday, I mounted my bicycle and rode nearly 8 km from my house to school and back again. As a student with limited income, cycling was an inexpensive way of getting around, whether it was to school, to the grocery store, to the pub, or to visit friends. Commuting by bicycle became part of my routine, as it was part of many individuals in Lund. The friends I made all acquired bicycles within the first few weeks. Mountain bikes, city bikes, bikes with ten-gears, bikes with no gears all moved across the cobble-stoned streets. In Lund, the bike is a ubiquitous object.

My cycling experience prior to living in Lund was limited. In Toronto I rarely cycled. While I had learned to ride a bike as a child, bicycling was bound to a few streets, streets that were scarcely used by motorists, or to the confines of a driveway. For many city dwelling teenagers getting your drivers license was akin to going through a rite of passage. With the privilege of driving, you gained a sense of freedom and independence. Like most of my friends, on my 16<sup>th</sup> birthday (the legal age to obtain a drivers license in the province of Ontario) I was driven to take my written exam for my driver’s license and since then, driving a car has been an important element in my mobility. For years, my bicycle remained locked up, collecting dust in the basement of the apartment building I lived in. When I settled in Lund, biking appeared to be a natural way of getting around. As I mounted my bicycle, I became one among the many people pedaling through town, indistinguishable between the seasoned cyclist and the person riding a bike for the first time in years.

It was within the walls of academia that I was pushed to reflect upon this newly acquired daily practice. I began to think about how I experienced Lund by bicycle and my interactions with the space and with others. I also began to think about how the countless individuals, like myself, who have moved from cities where motor vehicles dominate and are now cycling on a regular basis, in utilitarian fashion, experience their surroundings. Within my own social circle, the individuals I knew all came from cities that were dominated by car

cultures, where cycling may not be seen as a usual daily practice. I wanted to understand how these individuals, like myself, related to this local culture.

I use my own experiences of relating to a wholly new way of mobility as a point of departure. This thesis will delve into the personal experiences of individuals who have had little to no experience with cycling as an everyday activity. It will focus on the relationship between an individual and their bicycle, which bringing to light the nuances and minute details of what and how people interact with the environment between point A and B. Through a combination of ethnographic methods, such as “ride-alongs”, in-depth interviews, and visual ethnographic practices, I aim to uncover some of the social interactions cyclists encounter.

### **1.1 Overview of Thesis**

The structure of this thesis is as follows:

Chapter 1 serves as the mainstay of the thesis. I begin with contextualizing the point of view used as a point of departure for this research. From there, I incorporate a brief discussion surrounding the importance of this research, followed by the research aims and questions. As the research is based in a specific setting, I introduce the field site. In chapter 2, I present the theoretical foundations through which this thesis frames its methodological approaches and analytical lens. Taking an inter-disciplinary approach, the frameworks highlighted depart from fields such as ethnology, sociology, cultural geography, and urban studies. Chapter 3 discusses the methodological approaches and the limitations within this research, as well as a brief review of previous literature related to the field of transport, cycling, and everyday mobility. Chapter 4 delves into an analysis of my empirical material. I combine concepts stemming from the theoretical framework with primary data collected throughout my fieldwork. In the concluding chapter, chapter 5, I state the relevance of this research to a larger context. That is, it leans towards the practical application and implications for city planning and policy making.

### **1.2 Importance of Study**

Taking an ethnographic approach to the study of mobility, particularly in relation to cycling can illuminate ephemeral and trivial underlying meanings that contribute to what movement means to a particular person in a given milieu. Instead of taking a rather sedentary methodological avenue of observing movement and quantifying it, this thesis will highlight a more practical and involved method of understanding how individuals relate to their bicycle,

the environment, and the meanings made between two points. Ethnographic research, that is as a researcher being present in the field and participating along-side individuals within the research environment, accesses knowledge about people and places from a micro level understanding. A focus on the experience of journeying by bike is a valuable approach that can be beneficial to city leaders in sectors involved with infrastructure, transport policy, and building sustainable cities. This research is important because it focuses on the nuanced experiences people have when they cycle and how newcomers to this activity uses a particular space, an understanding that cannot be uncovered from behind a desk.

In order to understand how bicycle cultures thrive in a city that constantly sees the movement of people from all over the world, with very different transportation traditions, it is important to grasp the particular perspectives from those who have not had cycling as a viable option of transportation. Insights from the research can be useful to city leaders and municipalities to gain an understanding to some resistances to this mode of transportation, address the fears, and use the positive elements experienced by cyclists to communicate and promote this kind of mobility. A cultural narrative surrounding how one relates to cycling cultures may provide insights into how space is negotiated, meaning is made, and how local culture affects newcomers. This research is not only beneficial to Lund Municipality, but the methodological framework can be implemented throughout various cities as an innovative approach to researching mobility experiences.

### **1.3 Aims and Research Questions**

The objective of this thesis is to examine how individuals experience mobility, particularly cycling, in everyday life and to recognize the potentials of bringing forth an experiential understanding of mobility practices. I want to explore how past encounters with cycling and with transport in general have the potential to influence the ways in which we relate to another mode of mobility. In the same vein, how previous mobility habits influence the way we interpret space, interact amongst others, and how it can be seen as a means of structuring social interaction. I intend to employ a range of qualitative methodological approaches to grasp an array of experiences of cycling in Lund. With an understanding of how individuals relate to mobility practices within a given space, I aim to illustrate the potentials of my findings within urban planning and policy making. Thus the main questions in this thesis are as follows:

- How do our previous experiences with cycling, or mobility in general, influence the ways in which we experience cycling in another environment?

- How are sensory, temporal, spatial, and corporeal embodiments experienced while biking? How do these multiple stimuli influence the way we move through space or interact with one another?
- What are the implications of the methodological and theoretical approaches in this research within areas of urban planning, transportation research agendas, and policy makers?

#### **1.4 Into The Field: Lund, Sweden**

It is worthy to provide some details of the setting that this research has transpired from. Lund is located in southern Sweden, in the province of Scania (or Skåne in Swedish) with a population of approximately 82,000 inhabitants, with a municipal total of over 110,000 people (Statistics Sweden, 2010). It is also part of the Öresund Region, which includes the city of Copenhagen, Denmark. The region promotes economic, social, political, and educational development through stronger cross-border cooperation (Øresund University Network, 2012). Lund, touted as “The City of Ideas” teem with youthful exuberance, largely due to the fact that Lund is home to Lund University, approximately 47,000 students enrolled (Lund University, 2011). Its reputation and consistent ranking amongst the top 100 higher education institutions in the world (Times Higher Education, 2012) is perhaps best exemplified through the mix of international students and Swedes. Lund’s global atmosphere is also enhanced by the presence of several multinational corporations, such as mobile phone and telecommunications enterprise, Sony Mobile<sup>1</sup>, and food packaging company, Tetra Pak.

It only took a few moments of strolling along the streets of Lund to gain a sense that this is a town that beckons to centuries past. At your feet, a stretch of cobblestones, often uneven, pave the way through the center of town. As you navigate an old section of town, the streets narrow and wind, disorienting without a map or spare time devoted to trial-and-error walks down each street. On particularly sunny days, especially within transitioning seasons of winter to spring, Lund’s town squares bustle with movement. Benches facing the sun enjoy a rotation of occupants, reveling in its light and warmth. At times you may find yourself engaged in an impromptu competition for space to perch. Adding to the historically preserved quality of the town is Romanesque style Domkyrka (Cathedral in English). The twin towers punctuate the townscape. In popular culture, renowned Swedish director, Ingmar

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<sup>1</sup> At the time this research was conducted, Sony Mobile existed as Sony Ericsson, which was bought out by Sony at the end of October 2011.

Bergman, features Lund in his 1957 film *Wild Strawberries*, where Lund conjures a museum-like atmosphere. Cobblestones, cathedrals, and town squares have the ability to connect centuries of history, to Bergman in 1957, to present-day sun worshippers vying for the optimal bench.

### **1.5 Material**

Much of the empirical material in this thesis has been collected throughout my time living in Lund; however, it was through fieldwork conducted during a 10-week internship at Lund Municipality's Technical Service Department (Tekniska Förvaltningen in Swedish) that gave shape and structure to the methods and analysis of this research. According to the European Road Safety Charter,

The Technical Service Department/Road and Traffic Office is responsible for the maintenance of roads, squares, pavements, bicycle paths and bridges in the city of Lund. Their task is to provide a good transport system for all road users in which quality, accessibility, environmental influence and road safety are wisely balanced against each other (European Road Safety Charter, 2010).

Between the months of September to November, 2011, I worked on a self-initiated project to investigate the experience of cycling in Lund from the perspective of international residents through ethnographic methods (a fuller discussion regarding methodological approaches can be found in Chapter 3 of this thesis) and produced a 10-15 minute video highlighting these experiences. The project brought to the fore an alternative approach to assessing user experience, an approach centered around qualitative research methods rather than quantitative methods such as geographic information systems (GIS) or transport preference surveys. The research within this thesis stemmed from this internship. This study is based on personal interviews and ride-alongs (methodological approaches are fully discussed in Chapter 3) with 10 individuals living in Lund (5 females and 5 males) between the ages of 22 and 37. Each informant was interviewed once for approximately 40 minutes to 1 hour. All of the interviews were video recorded for material for the film produced for the municipality, and were transcribed. With all informants, I conducted at least 1 ride-along. For 8 of the informants I conducted more than 1 ride-along, lasting between 15 to 30 minutes each.

The aim of the project was to convey the message that in Lund, you bike. Upon the completion of the video, it was released online to reach an audience that may have come or

are coming to Lund from cities where cycling is not integrated into everyday life<sup>2</sup>. The municipality stands to gain an influx of potential cyclists as they prepare for thousands of more residents within the next ten years due to the development of the European Spallation Source (ESS)<sup>3</sup>. Through an understanding of the everyday practices of mobility from a user perspective, city planners in Lund can better anticipate some resistances to cycling, address fears, and enhance positive elements through effective communication.

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<sup>2</sup> The video produced for Lund Municipality can be found at <http://vimeo.com/33726398>

<sup>3</sup> The European Spallation Source (ESS) is a science research facility dedicated to the study of neutrons, similar to the CERN research facility in Geneva. More information about ESS at [www.ess-scandinavia.eu](http://www.ess-scandinavia.eu)

## Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

This chapter is two-fold; first, it introduces the theoretical underpinnings through which I framed my research and second, presents previous research as it relates to this thesis.

### 2.1 Phenomenology

*“You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view...until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.” Spoken by Atticus Finch in “To Kill a Mockingbird” (Lee, 1960 :48)*

In order to make sense of the everyday experiences of people around us, it is perhaps most valuable to stand side-by-side and live our lives as the observed subject would. Daily life is scored with plans, spontaneity, mundane moments, and moments that inspire; everyday experiences are constantly in flux, “[p]henomenology sees the world’s significance not as fixed and waiting perception, but as emerging in its significance as the perceiver emerges.” (Spinney, 2006: 714). Phenomenology is instrumental in placing the researcher on the same side as the observed subject, “[t]he scholar is no longer an objective observer that stands at the side of his or her object of study and registers the course of events.” (Frykman & Gilje, 2003: 10). In this research, in order to grasp a breadth of spatial, temporal, sensual, and corporeal experiences of cycling in a particular environment, phenomenology posits a fundamental theoretical perspective. Phenomenology focuses on lived experiences of a particular phenomena, being in the moment and watching action unfold as it happens, “[t]he observer is not external to the field s/he describes, nor should s/he hesitate becoming passionately involved” (Melucci, 1996: 5). As a “theory that concentrates on how experiences are set out in action” (Frykman & Gilje, 2003: 15), the research employs methods stemming from a phenomenological approach, which will be discussed in chapter 3.

In such a perspective, it is imperative to take into consideration both the observed subject and the situated environment. As Frykman and Gilje (2003) posit that “[w]ho you are is very much about *where* you are and the materiality that you surround yourself with.” (p. 37, original emphasis). The researcher, when sharing in an experience, apprehends a feeling for the materials, sounds, sights, smells, and the uniqueness of a particular atmosphere. Spinney (2006) recognizes the phenomenology of place as a part of exploring our environment, “one in which all its material substance, colours, shapes, sounds, textures, and smells are experienced” (p. 714). Similarly, Urry suggests that “there are many spaces and practices which militate against solely visual experiences, where the other senses which

cannot be so easily turned off from a large part of experience and a particular way of ‘seeing’” (Urry 2000: 103 cited in Spinney, 2006: 714). Thus movement, particularly cycling, can be seen as a practice through which experiences and ways of seeing are composed of other senses. The experience is much more than how we ride and what we see while riding. It is not only the movements that inform our experience, it is also the space we move through that shapes how understanding of how to move and interact.

Phenomenology brings to fruition the possibilities of using the body (our own bodies) as a site of understanding cultural meanings and experiences. Frykman and Gilje (2003) focus on moving away from participant observer to sharing in experiences, “to go to things as they are and to the places in order to see how nature and the material influence people’s ideas and actions much more than they themselves are able to project into them.” (p. 14). In the context of understanding cycling experiences, going to things as they are, negotiating with people and the environment give way to understanding the micro elements of mobility. We see and feel from the bicycle. French phenomenological philosopher, Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1945), emphasizes the strength of human experiences and using the body as a means of understanding situated lived experience. Drawing upon Merleau-Ponty’s perspective, Silverman (1980) writes:

In understanding human experience, perception brings together our various senses as the body tends towards expression. Gesture, mobility, and spatiality are all aspects of bodily expression – they constitute the phenomenal field in which meanings of experience appear. This multiplicity of meanings is ambiguously experienced in the ongoing temporal activities of human life (p. 707).

Placed at the forefront of a phenomenological approach is the human experience ‘*in situ*’ (Frykman & Gilje, 2003: 29). Phenomenology highlights situated practices and experiences, which lends itself extremely well to the purview of mobility and transport research.

## **2.2 Habitus**

In this study, I highlight the individual experiences of mobility in a particular setting and juxtapose it with narratives relating to a previous mobility experience. Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus* implies that individuals embody a set of dispositions, “which are feelings, thoughts, tastes, and bodily postures.” (Reed-Danahay, 2005: 107). The habitus an individual carries with them from one environment to the next can perhaps be used to explain how experiences become meaningful and how individuals relate to the world around them. Frykman and Gilje (2003) reflect upon Bourdieu’s conceptualization:

[H]abitus can be seen as a ‘structuring structure’. Certain things become meaningful for people with certain experiences. Through the concept of habitus it becomes clearer that people are intellectually but also bodily and sensually formed by the circumstances in which they live. They strive to build a meaningful whole from impulses they are exposed to – they see the world through the grid that their habitus provides. (p. 38)

A reflection upon one’s habitus can be seen as a way to examine spatial and social interactions in an environment. As we move from one milieu to another, our perspectives follow us; they shape, structure, and make meaning, “[the] habitus is created from the past, moves in the present and stretched towards the future.” (Ibid. 2003: 38) Our habitus is interpolated within mobility practices and interpretation of space. How we relate to specific ways of moving and experiencing a journey between two points can be attributed to our previous dispositions.

In this view, knowledge of one’s habitus is conducive in rethinking how space and place is negotiated and social interactions conducted. Acknowledging the significance of previous dispositions present planners with an opportunity to achieve a deeper understanding of why and how individuals relate to space and each other. The distinctive choices we make in any given situation is not to be taken for granted, they are imbued with cultural meanings.

### 2.3 Performance

*“All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women are merely players...” Spoken by Jaques in “As You Like It” (Shakespeare, II.vii. 138-139)*

The analysis of cycling practices and experiences in this research has in part been inspired by Erving Goffman’s (1959) dramaturgical metaphor for social interaction. Goffman’s *“Presentation of Self in Everyday Life”* (1959) imagines social interactions of everyday life akin to theatrical performances. In Goffman’s theatrical performance, there are actors that prepare backstage, paying attention to their make-up, clothing, and props. When performing on the front stage, the actor works to maintain the appropriate visage and adheres to the script. The audience observes the scene, scrutinizing the sincerity of the performance. At times, the actor stumbles and misses cues or forgets a line. Aware of the mistakes, the audience shows empathy and does not pay heed, however, the more they notice the blunders they become impatient and jeer at the performers. The actor, now acutely aware of the vexation caused due to his/her discrepancies, masks embarrassment and continues. The

audience quiets, impressed with the actor's perseverance to complete the act in spite of their reaction.

For Goffman, social interaction follows this dramaturgical manner. To define the parameters of social interaction, Goffman (1959) writes:

[I]nteraction (that is, face-to-face interaction) may be roughly defined as the reciprocal influence of individuals upon one another's actions when in one another's immediate physical presence. *An* interaction may be defined as all the interaction which occurs throughout any one occasion when a given set of individuals are in one another's continuous presence... (p. 26, original emphasis).

We negotiate ourselves among other actors in pursuit of keeping face, "certain individuals appear in front of others who become onlookers to react to, judge and reward." (Frykman & Gilje, 2003: 41). In order to avoid social exclusion in particular settings, we adjust our behaviours and expressions to fit the bill. This requires a certain amount of knowledge of how to perform in a given setting. In terms of mobility and cycling, the significance to this thesis is the individual's highlighted accumulate varying degrees of knowing how to (1) ride a bike and (2) ride in a particular setting. It is fruitful to apply Goffman's framework to an analysis of mobility because it incorporates an array of influences outside the individual. We develop an understanding of the types of interactions that are facilitated, undercut, or overlooked. These interactions are not only about the face-to-face interactions, rather it becomes a layering of the influences produced by spatial networks. In other words, it is not just a matter of interactions between other actors, but also about the props found within the urban landscape, the interactions between the physical landscape, the built environment, and individuals within it.

## 2.4 Previous Research

Within this section, I address work that incorporates a quantitative and "rational" approach to finding out if people are cycling and what routes they take or not. I highlight studies that have employed qualitative methods, using ethnography and phenomenology of place and perception to delve deeper into the *experience* of cycling *and* mobility. The intent is to further strengthen the argument for research to place importance on the experiences of moving between spaces. Also, to emphasize that meaning can be derived from the fleeting moments held *in between*, illuminating the potentials of methods that help to make sense of mobility and specifically cycling.

The experience of mobility, particularly cycling, differs from one individual to the next. Steinbach, Green, and Edwards (2011) note that transport choices vary from individuals and can be shaped by one's habitus. As Steinbach *et al.* suggest cycling for transport is often shaped by existing and locally bound cultural meanings of mobility. Jones (2005) emphasizes the importance of understanding the performances and practices of biking within transportation research and urban planning. Through a performative understanding of architecture and the urban environment planners and architects include the users, "buildings not simply as material objects, but as urban texts that are written as much by their users as their architects" (p. 813). In his research, he focuses on his own experience of cycling in Birmingham, United Kingdom and highlights various aspects of his commute to work. He notes that within urban planning and policy making related to environmental sustainability, "[a]n embodied understanding of the bicycle, affected by and affecting its users and their perception of the urban has not yet reached the thinking of transport geographers and policy makers" (p. 815). Jones contends that through a performative understanding of cycling, urban planners and policy makers can gain insights into how and why individuals move in particular spaces. He posits that "physical actions *in* urban space are transformed into the performance *of* that space" (p. 827). The performances of transportation have implications regarding how space is interpreted and reinterpreted. For urban planners and policy makers involved with the promotion of cycling as an alternative mode of transportation, being on a bike and engaging with the urban environment themselves can broaden experiential understanding of the city and transportation.

In a similar vein, Spinney's (2011) project researching cycling in London, United Kingdom suggests that within everyday mobility, in order to understand how and why people move around, policy makers and planners should take into consideration the less representational elements of movement. Specifically within cycling research, he emphasizes that bringing in "those fleeting, ephemeral and often embodied and sensory aspects of movement" (p. 162) are vital in fully understanding the experience of mobility. He notes that, "the importance of this...is that bringing such new perspectives to 'transport' issues could lead to better policy making and planning because we have a better understanding of phenomena" (*ibid.*). Within his research he discusses the possibilities of video ethnography as a tool to help capture mobile experiences. Mobile video ethnography affords an alternative way of seeing mobility. Video ethnography facilitates more "nuanced understandings of daily corporeal mobility which move beyond seeing instrumental factors as solely determining why and how people move around" (p. 163).

Traditional methods of transport geographers, such as preference surveys and traffic counts say something about rational and representational factors for cycling, however, this methodological approach does little to uncover the “‘unspeakable’ and ‘non-rational(ised)’ meanings of cycling, which in no small part reside in the sensory, embodied and social nature of performance” (Spinney, 2011: 163). The individuals highlighted in his research suggests that “engagements with space invert the normative utilitarian codes of rationality that dominate road spaces, temporarily reframing them as playful and sensuous spaces” (p. 177). Mobile video ethnography was an alternative methodological tool to highlight the experiences cyclists had within the urban environment. Pink (2007) also made use of video as a means of capturing and making meaning of mundane practices. In relation to cycling and exploring meanings of particular places, Spinney (2009) examines how racing and touring cyclists create meaningful spatial relations to a certain place. He takes a phenomenological approach in understanding how cyclists constitute a particular place.

Spinney (2009) calls for a broadening of research methods within transport and cycling research. He suggests that there tends to be a sedentarist bias in mobility research, particularly of cycling. His research places a significant amount of attention to the experience of traveling between two places. He states, “research in the past has placed too little emphasis on the meanings of the journey itself, particularly those fleeting and ephemeral meanings that arise through cycling as an embodied and sensory practice” (Spinney, 2009: 829). He goes on to say, “...consideration of sensory, kinaesthetic, political and symbolic factors need to be more prominent in cycling research if more realistic understandings of people’s mobility and their travel choices are to be unearthed “ (Ibid.). Rajé (2007) echoes this sentiment and suggests that “...there is a need for the upgrading of travel and transport research methodologies to better reflect the lived experiences of difficult and suppressed journeys” (p. 67). This thesis emphasizes methodological approaches centered on the experiences of cycling in Lund and meanings made while traveling between two places.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

This chapter discusses the methodological approaches used throughout my research. It is through my theoretical underpinnings that I have chosen multiple methods, particularly ones stemming from phenomenological approaches. I begin by briefly commenting on the selected methods used to collect material for this study and explain why multiple approaches were taken. A fuller discussion regarding each method and their potentials within my research will be addressed towards the end of the chapter. Second, I will define my target population and the tactics used to recruit participants. Next, I will outline my approaches and how they were employed in my field research. Last, I move into a discussion that aims to problematize each method and touch upon the various limitations of each method.

### **3.1 Selected Methods**

The bulk of my fieldwork took place while in motion, thus, based on the focus of my study, it was necessary to exercise a breadth of methodological approaches. One of the aims of this research is to understand how and why certain individuals from non-cycle-friendly cultures relate to cycle-friendly cultures. When exploring how informants related to cycling cultures and whether they had changed their everyday mobility habits, in-depth interviews were conducted. In order to grasp an understanding of how individuals experienced their environment in everyday life while biking, ride-alongs were both planned ahead and spontaneously conducted. A significant amount of auto-ethnography came into play while conducting research, however, based on the degree of subjectivity, I reverted to a participant observer approach. The interviews conducted and, when planned, ride-alongs were documented through photographs and video, which allowed me to go back to the journey for further analysis.

It is imperative to understand that within the context of this research, not one method proves to be more or less effective than the next. Rather, what must be emphasized is that the selected approaches were used in conjunction with one another. Interviews were conducted to obtain biographical histories of each informant and delve into questions surrounding how and why they do or do not cycle in a particular way. To allow for a richer analysis of the ephemeral and fleeting moments occurring between point A and B, methods with a heavier weight on participatory action between researcher and informant were deemed extremely appropriate. Riding alongside informants and riding the same routes brought new perspectives to how experiences of everyday mobility and gave life to their articulations.

### **3.2 Target Population and Recruitment of Informants**

One of the objectives of this study was to acquire an understanding of how and to what extent individuals encountered cycling in their lives prior to living in Lund. Another objective was to highlight the specific experiences these individuals produce while relating to another dominant form of transportation. In order to fulfill these objectives, informants were individuals from cities who did not use the bicycle as their mode of transportation, that is, those who did not rely on the bicycle as a means of going from point A to B in their everyday lives. Informants spanned the globe, coming from cities such as São Paulo, Addis Ababa, Tokyo, and Paris, to name a few. Their reasons for having moved to Lund were not a factor for their inclusion – some were graduate students at Lund University, others were working and living in Lund.

Most of my informants were informally recruited. For example, the topic of cycling was brought up in conversations and while in the planning stages of this research, would chime in. I then asked if they would like to take part of the interview process and filming for the video. Individuals were often interested and without prompting, recounted a memory they had with their bicycles. From following conversations and exchange of contact information, these individuals were recruited. Another means of recruitment was done via e-mail. While interning at Lund Municipality (Lunds Kommun in Swedish), my supervisor at the time sent emails to potential informants that fell within the parameters of my study population. For example, if an individual had immigrated to Lund as an adult, I could discuss their mobility practices in their previous hometowns and in Lund. Respondents were asked to contact myself directly so times to meet for interviews and ride-alongs could be established.

#### **3.2.1 Main Informant Profiles**

Within this thesis I highlight the experiences of the informants that were my key informants<sup>4</sup>. These were individuals that I met with for interviews and went for bicycle rides with. These short biographies serve to paint a picture of the informant as they are mentioned in later pieces of this text.

Sunnie was 28 years old and had the least amount of biking experience, as he had not known how to ride a bike at the time he moved to Lund. He was born in Ethiopia and prior to moving to Lund, he was living in Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa. He had been living in Lund for just over 1 year at the time of our interviews and ride-alongs. Sunnie's wife had

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<sup>4</sup> All key informant names are pseudonyms to maintain anonymity.

moved from Ethiopia to Lund during the first year of his studies. Sunnie was a master's student in a two year program.

Claudia was 25 years old and was born and raised in Escalon, United States. Claudia often said that she was coming from a car culture, so she did not bike for utility, nor did she know anyone else in Escalon that biked to commute. She had spent some time in northern Sweden, studying at Uppsala University on exchange, and was now enrolled in a two year master's program. At the time of our interviews she was living in Lund for over 1 year.

Alicia was 26 years old and was born in the Bahamas. Prior to Lund, she was living in Miami, United States and she had studied in the United States. She was very keen on cycling in Lund, though did not cycle for utility in the past. Alicia was also a master's student completing the first year of a two year program.

Justin was a 25 year old master's student from Nanking, China. He was in his first year of a two year program and was biking regularly in Lund. It was in Lund that he took up cycling as an everyday mode of transportation.

Jon and Sofia were a couple from Vestmannaeyjar, Iceland. They were living in Lund with their two sons, aged 2 and 4. Jon and Sofia had been residing in Lund for approximately 5 years at the time I had met both of them. Jon was employed at one of the major companies in Lund and Sofia was studying in a master's program. Both Jon and Sofia had strong childhood memories of learning to ride a bike and biking for leisure as teenagers, but they had not used the bicycle as a means of day-to-day transportation until they moved to Lund. They used their bicycles as their primary mode of transportation, even with their children.

Andre was 32 years old and was born in Brazil and lived in Belize City, Belize. He identified strongly with his heritage and said that he felt he was both Brazilian and Belizean. He had been living in Lund for 3 years at the time I had met him. He was living in Lund with his wife, their 5 year old daughter, and their newborn son. He had come to Lund as a masters student and upon the completion of his program, was working in Lund. Andre had the most experience with biking, as he biked for leisure and for utility in Belize. He was also knowledgeable when it came to matters of bicycle mechanics and reparation.

Ann was 23 years old and was born and grew up in Paris, France. She was studying in a master's program at Lund University and at the time of our first meeting, she was living in Lund for approximately 3 months. Throughout the course of my research, I had met with Ann informally numerous times – seeing her around town, or on campus. She had learned to ride a bicycle as a child and only cycled for leisure prior to living in Sweden.

### **3.3 Methodological Outline**

#### **3.3.1 Interviews**

Prior to formally arranging a time for an interview, it was not uncommon for my informants and I to have participated in a serendipitous ride-along. Having had engaged in this activity allowed for an interview environment that quickly lead, almost effortlessly, into anecdotal recounts of cycling experiences in Lund, in their hometown, both from childhood and adulthood. Most informants were interviewed in their own home, however, when a time could not be arranged to meet at their home, or they had suggested another location, then interviews were conducted at the location requested, such as their workplace. Each interview was video recorded and subsequently transcribed.

The interview structure most fitting for my research was semi-structured interviewing. As opposed to unstructured interviews which appear to be “just happening” (Davies, 2002: 95) and a structured interview that are highly organized and limits interviewees’ freedom to play with responses (ibid.), semi-structured interviews follow a set of research questions, however, researchers adapt and alter the format depending on responses solicited from interviewees. Davies explains,

[r]espondents are encouraged to expand on a response, or digress, or even go off the particular topic and introduce their own concerns. Most important, their responses are open-ended, in their own words and not restricted to the preconceived notions of the ethnographer (Ibid.)

Throughout the interview process, I remained flexible and anticipated frequent delineations from the interview questions.

#### **3.3.2 Participant Observer**

Similar to a go-along or ride-along, which situate the researcher within the experiences and practices of mobile habits as they occur (Kusenbach, 2003: 478), the participant observer approach was taken. Whether alone or with informants, I was constantly oscillating between complete participant and complete observer. Davies (2002) explains that at the outset of fieldwork, participation peaks and slowly declines as informants get used to the researchers presence,

[T]hey [the researcher] become more a part of everyday life, no longer a curiosity, and finally increase again (although not to the frenetic level of the introductory period) but be of a very different quality in that the ethnographers are involved with particular informants whom they have come to know well as assistants and sometimes as friends (p. 72).

Yet, the pervasiveness of traveling by bicycle contributed to a level of familiarity between my informants and I. Our situation was ‘normal’ without having to plan for a normal situation. To others around me, who were not my primary informants, were not deceived in any way, as I was just another person on a bike, moving along in similar fashion as them.

My planned observations were sporadic, however, set against the backdrop of Lund, making observations regarding cycling is a continuous process. Ranging from a few minutes to hours, I spent time sitting in various high and low traffic areas in Lund, often on my own or with informants, observing the ebbs and flows of multiple modes of transportation. As I did with my interviews and ride-alongs, several participant observatory moments were video recorded and documented through photographs.

### **3.3.3 Ride-Alongs**

The ride-along was used as a kinesthetic and sensory research tool. As a variation of the go-along, “[f]ieldworkers accompany individual informants on their ‘natural’ outings, and – through asking questions, listening and observing – actively explore their subjects’ stream of experiences and practices as they move through, and interact with, their physical and social environment.” (Kusenbach, 2003: 463). Two kinds of ride-alongs occurred: planned and spontaneous. In a planned ride-along, my informant and I determined a time and location to meet and he or she would take me along while they moved about town or around their homes. In this instance, informants knew ahead of time that I would be with them for a particular part of their day. Often, I would randomly meet one of my informants on the street. When this happened, I accompanied them for a few streets or ride with them until they have reached their destination (generally a few minutes up to half an hour). It was common for my informants and I to walk with our bikes. Some of the planned ride-alongs were video recorded, some were photographed, but all ride-alongs were translated into descriptive fieldnotes afterwards.

Many of the ride-alongs conducted included bike rides from an informant's home to their workplace, school, or to run an errand in town. The unplanned ride-along upheld a certain amount of authenticity to their everyday practice. When ride-alongs were planned, the goal was to remain as close to their daily routine as possible, as Kusenbach (2003) suggests, “[f]ollow informants into their familiar environments and track outings they would go on anyway as closely as possible, for instance with respect to the particular day, the time of day, and the routes of the regular trip.” (p. 463). Moving along with my informants encouraged them to talk about the surroundings, details of a particular place, recollect stories, and in

some cases, recognize other people in passing. This phenomenological angle helped to gain an understanding of the experiential elements of a situated practice.

### 3.4 Visual Methods: The Use of Video and Photography

Used extensively throughout my field research was video and photography. With regards to video recording, it was extremely helpful within participant observation and ride-along scenarios, although was mostly used during participant observations due to the difficulties faced when trying to use it for ride-alongs. The limitations of this approach will be discussed further in a later



**Image 1** Video camera mounted on rear rack.

section of this chapter. The video camera, a Canon XL2 MiniDV model, was mounted on the rear bicycle rack of my bike (image 1<sup>5</sup>). Mounting the camera in this particular way allowed me to collect data pertaining to two different methods. In one respect, while conducting ride-alongs, I was able to use the recording for audio purposes i.e. the conversations had between informants and myself. On the other hand, I was able to capture the visual elements unfolding behind us. In addition to mounting the video recorder on my bike, I set up a tripod at various locations during my observation periods and allowed the camera to run. Video allowed me to go back and observe movements, flows, and rhythms more intently. Spinney (2011) explains that, “[v]ideo opens up movement for analysis in a way which would be impossible with a static image” (p. 167), it allows us to play back moments for further reflection.

At all times I carried a point-and-shoot Canon IXUS70 digital camera. Due to its small size and simplistic features, it was relatively easy for me to take photographs while in motion. During ride-alongs I could access both the video recording and photograph functions and record or take pictures without disturbing our flow. During field observations I took photographs of bicycles and their handlers in an array of functions and social situations. The use of video and photographs while stationary and in motion provided two perspectives of seeing and experiencing movement.

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<sup>5</sup> All images were taken by the researcher.

### 3.5 Limitations

This section aims to examine the general limitations of each method paired with examples of various issues encountered within the context of my research. Two major limitations to this method were due to the physical confines of the interview environment and language. While interviews were a good way to gather informants' biographies and narratives about the role of the bicycle in their lives, the nature of the interview environment limited the amount of detail informants revealed regarding minute details of their everyday mobile practices. That is, "ethnographic interviews can miss out on those themes that do not lend themselves to narrative accounting, such as the pre-reflexive knowledge and practices of the body, or the most trivial day-to-day environmental experience" (Kusenbach, 2002: 462). The interview scenario restricted how much individuals could recount of mundane and subconscious habits that occur while in motion. The situated lived experiences of my informants were not possible to fully understand while sitting across from one another. The interviews were conducted in English, not the native language of some of my informants. Therefore, respondents might have been reluctant to go in-depth with explaining particular memories or expressing emotions. Informants may not have been able to find the appropriate word in English to describe their experience.

As a participant observer I was provided the time and access to collect various empirical materials, such as photographs, videos, expand on field notes, and have open-ended conversations. Parallel to the limitations presented with interviews, participant observations only allowed me to access certain aspects of an observable scene. Limitations pertaining to ride-alongs dealt with concerns of safety and social interruptions. On designated bicycle paths and low traffic streets it was possible to ride beside each other, however, on a busier street or street without a designated bike path it was safest to ride a safe distance behind or in front of each other. This limited our ability to communicate and hear one another. Often, my informants had passed something or someone significant while I was ahead of them. If that were the case, he or she had to break the flow of movement to wait for me to turn around. Conversely, had I been conducting a ride-along and encountered someone I knew, the rhythm was broken if only momentarily.

Limitations to video and photographic methods fall within the realms of practicality. In relation to video, the camera I was equipped with was not as compact as my point-and-shoot camera; therefore attempting to mount the video recorder on my handlebars was simply not an option. I lacked the necessary equipment to be able to mount both video and photographic devices. The video recorder used mini digital video (mini DV) tapes that

allowed up to one hour of recording time. This was often a setback in interview situations when I was concerned about switching and running out of tapes. It was a distraction to my informants and myself when I broke out of conversation to attend to the video device. Another issue regarding practicalities is using a device for an extended period of time. Eventually, the battery needs to be re-charged.

In sum, what deserves reiteration is that within the framework of my research, these methods are strengthened when used together. The researcher must live and breathe the mobile practices of informants. This is elemental in beginning to grasp and analyze the social and mobile experience. Immersion between that which is static and dynamic is necessary. It is through the weaving of traditional ethnographic methods with phenomenological approaches that illuminates how and why people move.

## Chapter 4: Discussion and Analysis

### 4.1 Setting the Stage, Knowing the Props: Locating our past in the present

Imagine an actor receiving their script for a play. The setting outlined, costumes pictured, and props discussed. The actor must learn how to work within every detail of the script in order to make his or her performance appear natural and believable. The actor may have been a villain in their last production, and for the current job, they play a lovelorn teenager. We depend on other actors to keep the pace of the performance and work together to create a cohesive play. The stage set, the props help to navigate the stage, and take cues on where to stand. When thinking about mobility practices, how do individuals learn to ‘read’ the script? How much of past roles in previous settings saturate the experiences of present local mobility scenes?

To gain insight into how individuals behave while cycling, why or why not they decided to cycle, it is fruitful to go beyond looking at the built environment, that is, beyond instrumental factors of transport choice. Steinbach *et al.* (2011) interpolates Bourdieu’s notion of habitus within an examination of transport choices in London. They posit that transport choices might resonate differently across urban, gendered, and ethnic identities. The uptake of one transport mode over another are likely to be shaped by ‘local mobility cultures’ (Jensen, 2009a), that is “[t]he significance of (say) a transport mode, or style of travelling, derives its meaning from the resonances those choices have in context.” (Steinbach *et al.*, 2011: 1124). Within this research, the personal histories and cultural backgrounds of the informants had influenced the choices and perceptions of Lund’s mobility culture. Before Lund, cycling carried different meanings for each individual. Deciding to ride a bike and how individuals moved within the environment can be looked at as a decision heavily influenced by our existing habitus.

Cycling in Lund can be characterized as a common-place mode of transportation. Bicycle paths lead towards the city center, males and females of all ages travel on rickety bikes or top notch velocipedes. For my informants, this scene represented anything but common practice. Many of the initial reactions recollected suggested a sense of novelty. Upon arriving to Lund, Andre was taken aback by the predominance of the bike, “I was amazed because when I get (*sic*) to the train station I saw the amount of bicycles and said ‘Wow, they have so many bicycles!’” (Andre, transcription, 24 November 2011). (see image 2 on page 28). What was more striking for Andre, however, was the infrastructure built around cycling. Andre recalled the setting in Brazil, “[i]n Brazil, you know, the bikes are just all over. But in Lund, there is a path. I think it’s important to have your own path, like a car.”

While the bicycle was visible as a mode of transportation in São Paulo, having experienced relative chaos next to the organized bike routes of Lund instilled a notion of value surrounding the built environment and transportation.



**Image 2** View of bicycles parked in Clementstorget, adjacent to Lund Central Station.

Even though majority of the informants had learned to ride a bike in their youth, the practice was an inappropriate mode of transportation or “invisible as an adult mode of transportation” (Steinbech *et al.*, 2011: 1129). Claudia, for example, learned how to ride a bicycle as a child, but as an adult, did not bike for utility. In her hometown in Escalon, United States, it was not considered a legitimate form of transportation, in the utilitarian sense. As an adult, cycling was relegated as precisely that, child’s play. It was not part of the vocabulary, the realm of everyday routine. It eluded the script of everyday social interactions. In Claudia’s hometown, biking was considered a *faux pas* (socially unacceptable behavior). Drawing upon Goffman (1959), exhibiting a *faux pas* should be avoided in order to maintain the performance, “[u]nmeant gestures, inopportune intrusions, and *faux pas* are sources of embarrassment and dissonance which are typically unintended by the person who is responsible for making them and which would be avoided were the individual to know in advance the consequences of his activity.” (p. 205, original emphasis). It was not only the activity of biking as transportation that was considered a *faux pas*, but how one looked after traveling from one place to another. Claudia reflected that it was her physical appearance after she arrived to her destination that was considered the most significant *faux pas*.

In the past, Claudia was criticized for arriving at her friend’s house slightly unkempt, her hair wind-blown and slightly sweaty. The negative reactions to her appearance after a

bike ride detracted her from the practice. Moving to Lund, however, shifted the perception of the faux pas. Where biking for utility was a faux pas in her community, she learned that it was the opposite opinion in Lund. It was a faux pas in Lund not to conform to the local mobility culture in some degree (at least to own a bike). In Lund, cycling was an established element of daily life and the ubiquity of the practice enforced a sense of comfort and acceptance. Bicycles were a visible presence on the streets of Lund and an abundance of bike parking racks. The differentiation in faux pas between Claudia's hometown and Lund is significant because it suggested that mobility choices are shaped and derived from local context. Within her hometown in California, the social interactions and responses surrounding her choice to bike acted as a disincentive. Yet, in Lund the visibility of biking as transportation, the bike facilities, and bike parking racks, contributed to the shift in her perception of what was or was not a faux pas.

Cycling can perhaps be considered as a taken for granted practice. Cycling was one of those activities you learned as a child, whether or not you continued to cycle for leisure or utility in adulthood. This was not the case for Sunnie. Growing up in a village in Ethiopia, the opportunity to learn how to bike was scarce. In fact, Sunnie explained that learning to bike was not an acceptable activity. Within the community, biking was associated with the desire to leave home. When he moved to Addis Ababa, biking was not considered a viable mode of transportation for commuters. Bicycles carried a culturally bound and locally significant meaning. He explained that bicycling was not common practice and older generations thought of the bike as a tool to facilitate an individual from leaving home and responsibilities to the family. Bicycling was seen as an object of facilitating a negative event, and therefore avoided. When he came to Lund, he reflected upon the value and viability of cycling. What was noteworthy about his change in view was that it was not only owing to the bicycle being a very visible and practiced form of transportation, but shaped by his social network. It was in Lund that he saw cycling as a part of his everyday mobility,

After I settled here, I remember it was after two weeks when I came to Lund and I had been observing all the places, I looked at many bicycles, and there were many bicycles, and I saw many people riding a bike...there were Ethiopians that were living here, and studying here before me and they were the ones showing me around, and the first thing they told me was 'if you want to survive in Lund, you have to learn to bike'. (Sunnie, transcription, 28 November 2011)

Sunnie's impressions was culturally bound and continued to be rooted in his heritage. His social network, the diasporic community in Lund, helped inform him of the value of cycling.

The multiplicities of reactions to the Lund scene reflect a broader image surrounding individuals' own experiences with transport and mobility, “[h]umans sense such environments in diverse ways. This is not a matter of individual psychology but of socially patterned ‘ways of seeing’.” (Urry, 1999: 35) There was heterogeneity of vision and of experience that can perhaps be connected to past experiences. The lack of accommodating infrastructure, the invisibility of the bicycle as a legitimate form of everyday travel, the low status cycling had played in individual lives were specific to local mobility cultures. These previous ways of travelling, of thinking about and seeing cycling contributed and shaped initial reactions and perceptions of their own transport choices in Lund. Although the appearance of Lund hints towards cycling as an acceptable form of transport culture, the community surrounding the individuals of this research significantly shaped the choice. The support of the network in collusion with the built environment provided conditions that fostered the decision to cycle.

Past experiences and varying degrees of knowledge surrounding bicycling as a mode of transportation is a significant element in shaping the initial reactions of local mobility. The informants in this research reflected upon their previous experiences of mobility as a means of negotiating their own mobility in Lund. It was not just about the visibility of cyclists, biking facilities, and forms of infrastructure that informed their idea of transportation, but rather elements that were culturally rooted and locally informed. The legitimacy of biking as a mode of transportation, and its benefits resonated more on a cultural level, through the dispositions the informants carried from previous local mobility cultures.

#### **4.2 When In Rome, Do As the Romans Do: From Spectator to Actor**

With scripts in hand, the actors commit themselves to every element of their role. Where to stand, what props to use, what costumes to change into. The director guides the actors through the vision of the scenes, and in coordination with other actors in the scene, the performance is pulled off without a hitch. But before lines are memorized and movements engrained in the body, the actor must be committed to the role. The actor familiarizes him/herself with the impending character – a prima ballerina, a black belt karate sensei. In order to fulfill the role and portray it convincingly, the actor might take a ballet class, or a karate class. Mimicking postures and speech, the actor blends in, his or her novice appeal fades and they become no more indistinguishable than the “expert”. With all the work put into becoming well-versed in the language and bodily movements of unfamiliar territory, the question of why one chooses a certain role, a role that is emotionally and/or physically

demanding, arises. In similar regards, the informants of this research went through similar motions as the aforementioned actors. This section examines the question of why some of the informants took up biking in the utilitarian sense, and why some were more hesitant to the activity. In addition, it discusses *how* these individuals learned to play their part and, considering the varying degrees of biking competency, negotiated space. These examples highlight how social interactions, formal or informal, were established, and meaning was created within space.

For some of the informants, cycling, while a dominant and visible mode of transportation in Lund, was not necessarily a first choice in getting around. Other transportation alternatives, such as public transportation or even walking, were considered before taking the bike. For example, Ann was adamant in her decision not to travel by bike. To her, public transportation was a more appealing, comfortable, and familiar way of transportation. She explained that in Paris, she commuted by train to school, to work, and felt that biking in Paris meant risking life and limb. In Lund, however, her resistance was futile and temporary. As she settled into student life in Lund, she realized that biking was an essential element in building and fostering social relationships. When I had met Ann at the start of her school semester in 2011, she was convinced that she would not cycle, let alone own a bicycle. Though, meeting her again at the end of spring semester 2012, she was happily propped on a bicycle, and explained how proud she was that she figured out how to ride her bicycle in a dress without having to worry about her clothing getting dirty or stuck in the bicycle chain. What happened within the school year? Why did her attitude to cycling change?

When asked why she changed her mind about biking, she explained:

It was not so much an issue during the day, more at night. Everyone would go to clubs or Nations (Lund University student bars) or whatever, cycling. Then you feel like you are the annoying person, they have to be slow. Because you don't have a bike, you walk, and you're basically handicapping the whole group, and I was annoyed about that. So I needed a bicycle, at least at night (Ann, transcription, 24 October 2011).

The bicycle, in this answer, was much more than an efficient and practical object. The bicycle was an important dimension in creating positive social relationships. Ann reflected that not biking negatively impacted social dynamics. In addition to “handicapping” the group, she expressed that she felt that she was the “annoying person”. In this regard, she acquired a stigmatized identity (Goffman, 1963). Within her social circle, biking was part of the social environment and was part of the criteria for social inclusion, “[o]ver time, identity establishes

the limits of a group with respect to its natural and social environment. It determines the membership of the individuals, it defines the requirements for joining the group, and the criteria by which its members recognize themselves and are recognized.” (Melucci, 1996: 31). Not having a bike or wanting to cycle slowed the group down. Being the walker in the group contributed to a level of social exclusion, and the bike served as a means to break the boundary.

Hansson (2006) wrote about the technique of camouflage as a cultural practice. An individual masks behaviours, traits or ideas in order to blend into a larger group, “[w]e use different strategies to blur and hide those unwanted qualities under a surface of acceptable characteristics and qualities. This transformation is sometimes an everyday mundane action allowing us to blend into different social settings.” (Hansson, 2006: 137). Ann is an exemplar of a cultural camouflage strategy in that her attitude towards biking transformed in order to conceal her stigmatized identity and strengthen her inclusion within the social environment. The process of camouflaging, through Ann’s example, was a relatively individual process. Even though the pressure to blend in came from the social group, it was mostly on an individual level that she transformed her behaviour. Camouflaging, however, was also perpetuated on a less individual level.

Camouflaging was a process that could be a shared experience. Some of my informants expressed a sense of responsibility and obligation in other individuals’ transformation because they themselves could relate to their situation. In a ‘pay it forward’ manner, some informants explained that they would be willing to help others learn and familiarize themselves with cycling in Lund. Andre reflected: “I have a friend and she doesn’t know how to ride a bike. I say, ‘I’ll teach you! I’ll show you!’ It’s important, you know. I think it’s a good way, the same way that people told me when I arrived here.” (Andre, transcription, 24 November 2011). Similarly, and previously noted, Sunnie learnt through the diasporic community, and he expressed a strong willingness to help others in similar situations as he found himself in.

Owning a bike was just one part of the process in camouflaging. Another part of the process was being able to perform *on* a bike. To move with and through space and others was integral to blending into the scene. How did individuals learn the movements? How does one distinguish between what is “acceptable” and “unacceptable” behaviour on a bike? Again, there were multiple levels of knowledge based upon previous experiences with transportation. Whether the informant was learning to bike as an adult or reacquainting themselves with the bike for utilitarian purposes, much of the knowledge about how one

should ride was produced through their own observations and social interactions. The phrase, “when in Rome, do as the Romans do”, could accurately describe the experiences of how some informants gained knowledge.

As noted, some of the informants had observed that cycling was very much a part of everyday mobility in Lund. In addition to observing the dominant mode of transportation, many of the informants took note of the behaviours and bodily movements of other cyclists. They learned where to ride and where spaces were deemed unacceptable for bikes. They picked up on details of social interaction. For example, double riding (one person pedaling and another person seated on a bicycle rack over the front or rear tire) was a common practice for nearly all of the informants. Having observed other individuals ride a bike with another person seated on the rear or front bike rack, this image was deemed as socially acceptable. What is interesting to note is that not all of them knew that this was illegal<sup>6</sup>. The reason for double riding was not done out of some kind of rebellion or resistance to transportation laws. Double riding was a social, yet intimate practice. For Sunnie, as his wife did not know how to ride a bike, this was an opportunity for them to bond and travel together. He had expressed that he was unsure if it was legal or illegal, but he observed that there were many people doing it. Claudia reflected upon the moments she had with her friends, and saw these moments as opportunities of strengthening friendships and memory-making moments.

As the informants did as the Romans or Lundabors (Lund residents in Swedish) did, they picked up on illegal yet generally socially acceptable, behaviour. In another instance, some informants performed socially unacceptable behaviour, for which they were publically reprimanded for. Both Ann and Justin discussed that they used to bike on the sidewalk. This largely stemmed from confusion when a marked bicycle lane ended, or riding in the center of town, where busses, cars, other cyclists, and cobblestones created higher levels of insecurity in riding. Riding on the sidewalk led to a breakdown in the performance of everyday life. Riding on the sidewalk was not permissible and disturbed social order and coordination of pedestrians,

Take, for example, techniques that pedestrians employ in order to avoid bumping into one another. These seem of little significance. However, there are an appreciable number of such devices; they are *constantly* in use and they cast a pattern of street behaviour. Street traffic would be a shambles without them (Goffman, 1972: 6 cited in Jensen, 2006:153).

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<sup>6</sup> I am neither promoting nor condoning such practices; rather, I am highlighting how individuals learn practices within local culture, regardless of whether it is legal or illegal.

Rather than divert attention and accept the action, as many individuals did with double riding, they were called out and told not to ride on the sidewalk. What is interesting to note is that Ann and Justin rode on the sidewalk in the center of town. Their level of confidence in their safety decreased as there was no demarcation for bikes. Busses and cars came too close for comfort. Avoiding parked cars pushed them further into the middle of the road. Their behavior could be reflecting a need in infrastructure changes.

The bicycle was a significant prop for enhancing social interaction. Learning to bike as an adult or taking up biking for utility contributed much more to building the framework for stronger social networks and sense of community. There was a dichotomous relationship that formed between those who biked and those who did not see it as an integral part of their own mobility in Lund. Relating to the local mobility culture in Lund was a matter of social alienation or social inclusion. It is important to understand, though, that the informants were coming from varying degrees of personal experience of cycling and thus negotiated space and their behaviours in several ways. Owing to the bicycle's accessibility in Lund, it encouraged some informants to consider it a viable means of transportation. Informants learned about rules, boundaries, and interactions by observing and experiencing daily rhythms themselves. What should be taken into consideration when thinking about cyclist behaviour is that this kind of mobility is accessible to a wide range of people, even those who are learning to ride for the first time as an adult. As Hiles (1996) says:

There is no test to pass or driver's license fee to pay. "Expert" cyclists may sigh and shake their heads as they watch other bicyclists improvise their way through traffic, but the behaviour they are seeing goes hand in hand with a vehicle that's as available to five year olds and people with Down's syndrome as it is to three-time Tour de France winner Greg LeMond (Hiles, 1996: 61).

What Hiles is suggesting here is that one should remain cognizant of the fact that the bicycle is a mode of transportation that can be picked up and dropped off, learned and re-learned by majority of individuals. The informants observed on their own what was deemed acceptable riding and noted that biking was not only an important element to mobility, but also to social inclusion. The knowledge they gained regarding cycling was something that they wanted to pass off to someone, reflecting a sense of moral obligation to individual's experiencing an unfamiliar mobility culture. Various interpretations of space and individual behaviours are fostered and perpetuated by social networks, informal interactions with other actors in the setting, which suggests that transport choices and mobility are much more complex and warrants a deeper understanding on an individual level.

### 4.3 Elements of Placemaking Through Movement

*“[W]e create meaning and belong in a place according to how we are in the place...our movements in and through a place ultimately define our engagement with it and constitute it as a place.” (Spinney 2006: 712)*

This research aims to highlight the trivial and the ephemeral experienced in a specific form of mobility. Through this research what is brought to the fore is an understanding of how an individual may come to make sense of space, create meaningful interactions, and constitute place. In this section, I discuss how Lund became imbued with meaning through various elements of everyday life.

#### 4.3.1 Weather

Weather often plays an instrumental role in mobility choices. Individuals may base their decisions regarding mode of transportation as it pertains to the weather. Leaving the bicycle at home may be an easy decision if it is raining or snowing. Though it may also be the reason why an individual bikes. The same street during summer may feel completely different in the rain, or covered in snow. For some of my informants, they were experiencing stark seasonal changes for the first time. Individuals explored new routes and took detours depending on the conditions the roads were in due to changing weather. The environments through which we travel to and from places react in markedly different ways.

Andre compared the weather in Lund and Belize City:

[h]ere it is a different environment, the weather changes. In Belize it can be hot, really hot. And sometimes you prefer to walk because otherwise you're going to be all sweaty. But here, it's the opposite, here is cold. And then you ride in snow and 'oh, the snow is so heavy now and I don't want to ride my bike' so you decide to walk or take a bus. So different environments [are] going to tell you the way you use (*sic*) the bicycle (Andre, transcription, 24 November 2011).

It was the relationship between bike, rider, and environment that informed movement. It can be reductive to say that an individual decides not to cycle solely based on observable weather conditions. Revealed through conversations with other informants, it was not only about the observable weather pattern – rain, snow, sun, etc. but also about how these changes affected the way they felt the pavement below. Riding on dry cobblestone is strikingly different than riding on it in a downpour, or just after. The stones were slick and sometimes unforgiving to bicycle tires. During my own experiences riding on different qualities of pavement and in wet weather conditions, I noted my body tense in anticipation for a potential slip, and I lowered my speed considerably. For Sofia and Jon, they changed routes knowing that a particular path

would be more slippery. The physical landscape that made Lund charming and attractive also acted as a deterrent. Places were avoided, and detours considered.

Sofia and Jon rode their bikes rain or shine. In ideal conditions, that are sunny and dry, they had little difficulties taking their children by bike to school, or ride into the city center. They were more relaxed and explained that they were not as stressed about safety in dry conditions. It was when it rained or snowed that they felt insecure and more conscious of their environment. They were more aware of the features of the street – the distance of the curb, the storm drains, and the quality of the pavement. They expressed disdain towards the cobblestones in the center of town. The cobblestones posed a danger to them because they became slippery in wet conditions. The environmental factors changed the way they rode in the street. Sofia and Jon negotiated their space on the road differently based on changes due to weather. In dry conditions, they would ride closer to the right side of the street, near the curb. In wet conditions, however, they moved further away from curb and positioned themselves towards the middle of the street. Sofia and Jon explained that they felt safer riding in the middle of the street in wet conditions because the road was flat and did not slope towards the curb. They did not feel safe nor in complete control of their bike when they had to ride on cobblestones that were uneven and wet. Riding in wet conditions also affected the predictability of movements. While riding closer to the curb, areas of the streets that sloped inward to the curb were avoided, and the only way to avoid the chance of slipping was to move left, into traffic. This is significant in that the design of city streets should take into consideration the differences between multi-modal experiences. In this example, the design of the city street affected the riding position of cyclists, and areas of Lund that they were more or less inclined to ride through in different conditions.

The relationship between body, bike, and pavement is significant because it exposes situations where experiences are constrained or enriched. I recalled my own experiences of riding in windy conditions. Riding against the wind, I struggled to gain speed. Blustering gusts of wind threatened to throw me off balance. I took twice as long to get to my destination, even on the lowest gear. When I noticed another person riding against me, enjoying tailwind, we would exchange a brief glance, envying them cycling with ease while I pedaled harder. Demerath (2003) posits that “[b]rief exchanges one might have with strangers about the weather, a bus schedule, or a newspaper one is holding, can be especially fulfilling for the way one’s understandings are reinforced across a gap of unfamiliarity (e.g., “Is it hot, or what?”)” (p. 228).

Andre, recalled the exhilaration that the weather conditions produced while cycling in winter. He talked about arriving in Lund in the middle of winter, “I had the chance of riding in snow because I came January 2009. And it was snowing and cold, and it was fun. It was fun because of the experience of getting to know snow and ride the bike, afraid of dropping. So it’s all new experience (*sic*) that, you know, find in life.” (Andre, transcription, 24 November 2011). This was particularly eventful for Andre and was a positive memory in his experiences of being in Lund. Demerath (2003) considers the specific relationship through which our bodies and our environments are intertwined while walking,

[w]hen walking, we can not only see the weather, but also feel it, hear it, even, at times, taste it...as we are put into contact with the weather more fully while walking, we are made more aware of the relationship between our bodies and our environment, and what our bodies are capable of...It can be an invigorating experience to make it through a blizzard or up a hill, not only physically, but in terms of meaningfulness: “Now *that’s* a hill!” “Wow, it is really coming down!” We emerge from such experiences with a better sense of what a hill or blizzard can be, and what *we* can be in relation to them (Demerath, 2003: 227, original emphasis).

This meaningfulness produced while walking parallels the experiences that emerged from Andre’s experience of biking in winter.

The changing of seasons produced very different experiences and uses of space. For some of my informants, cycling in rain or snow was not a deterrent. More than half of the informants did not have any specific cycling gear for winter or in rain. The bike they used in summer was the bike they used in winter, with no special equipment added. Their experiences, however, spoke more about the adverse affects the built environment had on their daily routine. What should be taken into consideration in terms of urban planning and urban (re)designing are the differences of users. Accommodating infrastructure is perhaps one way of increasing the level of comfort and safety during all seasons. The weather was also a means of connecting to the environmental conditions of Sweden. The informants were able to build certain memories and connections to Lund based upon having experienced biking in a particular season or weather condition they never had the chance of experiencing before.

### 4.3.2 Landscape

*I have been familiar with that street for years, and had always supposed it was a dead level; but it was not, as the bicycle now informed me, to my surprise. The bicycle, in the hands of a novice, is as alert and acute as a spirit-level in the detecting the delicate and vanishing shades of difference in these matters. It notices a rise where your untrained eye would not observe that one existed; it notices any decline which water will run down. I was toiling up a slight rise, but was not aware of it. It made me tug and pant and perspire; and still, labor as I might, the machine came almost to a standstill every little while. At such times the boy would say: 'That's it! Take a rest – there ain't no hurry. They can't hold the funeral without YOU.'* (Mark Twain in "Taming the Bicycle")

An actor rehearses stage cues and movements. The more they rehearse, the more they memorize their part, able to perform without hesitation, and anticipate the next transition. Similarly, as one's surrounding landscape, through engagement, becomes memorized and familiar. Oftentimes, riding encompassed much more than just being seated on the saddle and pedaling. A cyclist may get out of their saddle and peddle standing to make it up an incline. Approaching a speed bump or a small curb, you may stand slightly to allow your legs to absorb the shock. There is an intrinsic connection between *seeing* and bodily movements. An individual taking the same route becomes familiar with the road, its contours and inclines.

The first time I made my way by bike from my house (approximately 4 kilometers) into town was completely different than the second, or the third, and so on. The first few times of familiarizing myself with the chosen bike route I was unaware of the contours of the road. Where the bumps and pot holes were. I could not anticipate when I needed to change gears or to rise slightly off my seat to absorb a harsh curb jump. Within a week I could anticipate the next slope or bump in the road, and choreographed my movements accordingly. The movements became ingrained within my body. The road was in some ways predictable. Landscape was an aspect that contributed to the constitution of place.

For some informants, the landscape did more than provide them with something to look at. It also provided them with temporal cues. They learned to perceive distance and time based upon the landscape, and their feeling for and knowledge of it. Ann knew, more or less, how far away from home she was after she biked up a certain hill, "...well the street is terrible. It's because it's like that [gestures arm at a sharp angle] for 1 kilometer, so [when] you actually get up the street and you can't breathe anymore and you're still 10 minutes away from home!" (Ann, transcription, 24 October 2011). There was a sense of knowledge gained.

Ann's perception of gradient is also noteworthy because it was initially considered a barrier and was given as a reason for not cycling.



**Image 3** Andre standing on his bike to pedal up an incline (left). Ann showing perceived gradient (right).

In a sense, the struggle to bike uphill may be indicative of the habitus and the rider's individual knowledge surrounding the mechanics of the bike. Spinney (2006) suggests that, "...the development of the rider's habitus and practical know-how are inseparable from the development and affordances of the machine. The longer the rider and machine have time to develop together the more pronounced and intimate becomes the symbiosis." (p. 721). With more time spent on the bike, an individual not only gains a sense of knowledge regarding the physical demands required by the landscape, but also about the abilities of their body on a bike. While some informants did not shift gears as some did not have gears, they used their bodies to respond to the changing landscape. The knowledge of knowing when to shift gears, habits of standing on the pedal to help ease tensions on leg muscles while riding up a hill were small but important aspects in making a ride more enjoyable. Individuals shift into a gear that will make a hill far less strenuous in a habitual manner. These habits are learned over time, and by watching other individuals on bicycles, however without having the experience and knowledge of the affordances of the particular bicycle one rides, makes the ride less enjoyable for individuals just learning or re-learning as adults.

### 4.3.3 Soundscape

*I mount my bike. Getting into a comfortable position, the seat creaks underneath the shifting weight. I gain momentum. The pebbles and asphalt grind against the tires. The flat ride offers me time to warm up my muscles. The sound of friction produced from my generator resting against the tire is constant, yet quickly fades into the background. I have come to a spot in my journey that requires a shift in gears. The gear shifter clicks and snaps in place. On the decline, I shift gears again and allow my feet to rest stationary on the pedals. While I cruise down the hill,*

*the wind grazes over my ears and produces a continuous noise, audible to me alone. A bicycle bell sounds from an unknown distant behind. I stay on course. Approaching my destination I begin to brake. The locking tires drag and scrape the cement. As I lock my bike, the distinct snap reassures me that my bike will be there upon my return (fieldnote excerpts, October 2011).*

While mechanical elements alert cyclists if they have popped a tire, changed gears too soon or too late, or even lost a bicycle chain, what are other sounds are solicited while making a journey by bike? Do individuals listen for specific noises or voices? How do sounds or the lack of particular sounds influence movement within a particular space? Through an exploration of sound, we can further our understanding into how sounds constitute a particular place, time, and practice. Tine Damsholt (2008) explores the concept of soundscapes within her ethnographic study of citizenship ceremonies, she posits that “[l]ike a landscape, a soundscape is simultaneously a physical environment and a way of perceiving that environment; ‘it is both a world and a culture constructed to make sense of that world’ (Thomson, 2004), and I might add ways of doing or practicing that specific environment.” (p. 59). Cycling is a sensory experience. This section, through an exploration of sound, aims to further an understanding into how sounds constitute a particular place, time, and practice.

Ann explained that she always had her headphones on while cycling. I reflected back upon my first meeting Ann. She expressed a strong opinion against the idea of getting a bike. The thought of biking was unfathomable. When push came to shove, however, she found herself a bike owner and biked every so often. Aside from the practical use her headphones provided (they kept her ears warm), she listened to music for two other marked reasons: to “kill time” and to keep her motivated. For Ann, the journey by bike was a tedious event, met with arduous inclines to tackle and confusing demarcations of cycle space. Biking was a chore masked as an efficient mode of transportation.

In this vein, the senses needed to be distracted. The environment made enjoyable in one’s own way. When Ann biked she included her personal soundscape. As she described most of the inclines she encountered as painful, it was her music that motivated her and provided a tempo with which to follow. Her favourite bands gave her a beat to ride to, a rhythm to push to. On a downhill ride, the same music gave her a different feeling. As she pointed out, “[w]ell, you don’t actually cycle. But this kind of music is good as well because you just enjoy yourself. It’s going fast and no effort, which is nice.” (Ann, transcription, 24 October 2011). Music enhanced the moment of minimal exertion. For Ann, her portable cheer squad subdued sounds in the environment. She explained that even when she walks she

listened to music, however, without her hands on bicycle handlebars she had the freedom to change songs to something she liked. On her bike, she listened to whatever came on. Anything to escape the reality of doing something she had not yet found complete enjoyment in.

Music was not only used as an escape. Music was also listened to in order to enhance the experience of biking and how an individual interpreted their own space. For example, Claudia listened to music that enhanced the particular experience she received from cycling. She mentioned that she felt like she was playing a game and to match this game-playing journey, so sometimes she would listen to an electronic band from Sweden, *Slagsmålsklubben*. This music is heavy on synthesizers and incorporates sound clips from video games, such as those found on the Nintendo console. Though she listened to music, it was not her preferred soundtrack choice. She explained that instead of being sucked into the headphones, she would much rather listen to the atmosphere around her. It was the sounds from the natural surroundings that she favoured. She was on the lookout for people she knew while riding in town, as well as if someone recognized her and called her name out. These social moments were not to be missed, “I really like to see if I see anybody I know. I would much rather *hear* if they said ‘Hey, Claudia!’ when I’m passing so I can say ‘Hey, what’s up’, get off my bike and say ‘hi’.” (Claudia, transcription, 2 November 2011). It was not only about hearing a familiar voice. Claudia wanted to feel the “atmosphere of the town”, which meant being able to hear the goings-on of her surroundings. An ambulance passing, a bus, bikers coming from behind, even hearing babies all constituted the immediate surroundings. When she was riding alone, the vibe of Lund could be felt; there was life to be felt and to be heard. When I rode with Claudia, I was not only contributing to her soundscape, but our conversation made its way into the soundscapes of those around us, whether they realized it or not.

Most of the time it was possible to ride side-by-side and carry a conversation. Other times, you must fall in line or risked being clipped by a passing car or bus. Conversations in motion were literally a “walk and talk” moment on two wheels. While sitting on the back rack or on the handlebars of a friend’s bike, conversation is easy, maintaining the same distance from one another for the entire journey. Take, for example Andre, mounted on the back of his rear bike rack was his daughter’s bike seat. He took his 4 year old daughter to and from school everyday. From the back, his curious daughter asked him a slew of questions. From planning her day, explaining who she would see, and who she would play with at school. As they passed people, she pointed them out to her father. In one instance, she

considered an elderly couple as being akin to her own grandparents. Her soundscape influenced what was talked about, what was noticed and brought to attention. Andre's soundscape, at times, forced him to become more aware of his surroundings, to place more focus on the use of other senses.

A notable aspect of exploring soundscapes was the identification of the lack of specific sounds, how it altered the feeling of a place, and how some informants engaged themselves because of it. Initially, Alicia listened to her music while biking, mostly out of what she explained as habit and for entertainment. When she realized she could not hear her surroundings, such as cars, ambulances, or people passing, she stopped listening to music. Alicia thought that it was her music that helped her keep up a certain pace, however, she realized otherwise, "I found that when I didn't listen to music surprisingly my speed was better and rode at a steadier pace during the ride since I was not looking for guidance from the music in terms of rhythm." (Alicia, transcription, 27 October 2011). She explained that it was important for her to listen to her body. This sentiment was similar to Claudia's preferences to go the ride listening to the natural surroundings. Without external sounds from headphones, she was able to pay attention to her breathing. With a little laboured breathing, she encouraged herself to pump harder.

For some informants, to be able to hear oneself breathing heavily or even to think aloud was a liberating feeling. Being on a quiet street could be considered as a taken for granted experience, however, for Sunnie, this was not. In Addis Ababa, he explained the streets teemed with cars, trucks, and people. He painted a vivid picture of an everyday street scene - thousands of share taxis (or minibus taxis) passing through the city, assistants on the minibuses shouting the destination, and people hurriedly pushing their way through to board the taxi. He recalled, "[y]ou have 3,000 or 4,000 mini vans [in the capital] in Ethiopia with all these people yelling, everyday, on the streets. I was really crazy. So when I came to Lund, it was peace and quiet." (Sunnie, transcription, 28 November 2011). The change of pace offered some time to reflect, and as an aspiring rap artist, it gave him the opportunity to compose new rhymes. While I rode along with Sunnie, he bopped his head up and down and quietly (though just loud enough for me to hear him) rapped to his own beat. Some pedaled to the beat of their own drum, while others sought encouragement from top charting musical hits. How individuals listened and what they listened for in one environment could potentially influence behaviours in another.

The sounds or absence of sound is notable because they are part of the rhythm of city life, "[t]he rhythms of the city are the coordinates through which inhabitants and visitors

frame and order the urban experience” (Amin & Thrift, 2002: 17). Varying degrees of decibel levels can signal a particular time of day, for example the morning rush or afternoon rush hour. The stillness and silence of a particular place can deter inhabitants from entering a particular place or be a retreat. The urban experience encompasses not only that which can be seen or unseen, but what is heard and unheard. They reveal how people constitute and make meaning in a particular place, and negotiate one’s movements within the city and amongst each other.

#### **4.3.4 Exploration and Knowledge of the Scene**

The bicycle was a tool not only for utility, getting to and from various points. For my informants, the bicycle was used as a means to explore Lund, thereby contributing to their situated knowledge of Lund. Exploration of Lund was elemental in facilitating a sense of belonging and awareness of areas in Lund. Sunnie, for example, used his bike as a means of getting to know the surroundings, “I simply take my bike and then ride around Lund so that it would help me know many places in Lund.” (Sunnie, transcription, 28 November 2011). This was an activity that he enjoyed doing when he was bored or when he was stressed. Not only did he spend time simply exploring and wondering by bike on his own, this was an activity that he and his wife could do together. Even though his wife did not know how to ride a bike, they would bring the bike along. Sometimes she would sit on the back rack while he biked, or they would walk side by side with Sunnie pushing the bike along. Also, while on his bike, Sunnie explained that he was able to use that time to practice his Swedish. As an individual enrolled in classes to learn Swedish, the time on a bike was also a time to recollect what he had learned and practice aloud. This aspect also enhanced his feeling of inclusion in Lund and within Sweden, providing him with an opportunity to continue to develop his communication and conversational skills in Swedish. What was meaningful to his practice and engagement with the environment was the sense of belonging and identity within Lund.

Sunnie expressed that he felt as though he had been living in Lund for a much longer time than in reality. His knowledge of places in Lund built a stronger connection to the community and inclusion into Lund. He expressed that the bike is the best way to get to know Lund and to really be a participant in the local culture:

[I]f you are in Lund and you want to get the sense of Lund, you have to ride a bike...it’s when you use your bicycle that you get they feeling of living in Lund. Now, you know what is really surprising, I feel like I have been living here for 20 years, I feel like I am a local here because I know many places in Lund, I know almost every place in Lund. And there were

several incidences that many people that were visiting Lund, met me on the spot and asked me for directions...I was able to show them! So I am feeling local here. It's my city!...I feel that it is really my city. (Sunnie, transcription, 28 November 2011).

The bike enhanced a sense of belonging and locality to the scene. Sunnie felt as if he were a resident for much longer than in actuality. He attributed this feeling to his ability to bike around and explore Lund more intimately. Moreover, his contemplation points towards a notion of ownership of space. Sunnie considered himself a resource of local knowledge, which was attributed to his use of the bicycle as a means of exploring and getting to know Lund for himself. Being a resource of local knowledge was exemplified through the anecdote regarding his ability to point visitors to Lund in the right direction.

Exploring Lund and the surrounding areas provided a greater opportunity to know various paths. Additionally, the bike was preferred over other modes of transportation. For Andre, he regarded biking as an opportunity to get to know areas outside of Lund, such as beaches nearby. He argued that even though places just outside of Lund were accessible by public transportation, he preferred the bicycle. In discussing his excursions outside of Lund, Andre stated that,

It was fun because you get the opportunity to know different paths. And you get to see people. Because on the bus, you're just going to sit on the bus. You're not caring about the environment, looking at where you are, your location. So, on the bike, you can see all of this. You can see people, the nature, you can see all of it. (Andre, transcription, 24 October 2011).

The bicycle gave Andre a sense of autonomy in that he could chose what path to take to a certain destination. When he was on a bike, he could take different paths and get to know the landscape of Lund and the surrounding area. On a bus, however, he felt distanced from the stretch of landscape outside the windows of the bus. The idea of exploration was made possible through the flexibility and convenience of the bike. He could take different paths if he wanted to, paths that the bus did not go down. One aspect of Andre's bike rides to various parts in and around Lund that was worth noting was that for him, being in an environment in which he could see people and sense their movements through town made the environment more enjoyable for him. For Andre, it was a happier environment when you saw people, an element of Lund that he attributed to seeing the life of the town. He was able to get to know different places, paths, and meet and see people living in Lund while he brought his bike out for rides.

In a similar vein, Ann spoke about using the bike as a means of getting to know the experience and atmosphere of the town. She explained that her sister was slated to visit and that she wanted to take her cycling. Even though Ann was initially against the idea of biking in Lund, she came to understand that biking was an aspect of local culture that she could not ignore. The problem for her, though, was that she was unsure of where one could rent a bike for one or two days, “I actually don’t know where to find an extra bike that she could use so we can go somewhere. But I would like to cycle with her because it’s big here, she’s here for 6 days she may as well experience that part of the town.” (Ann, transcription, 24 October 2011). While Ann came to understand that biking was a very integrated part of everyday life, she did not know where the resources were in order to show someone else the props and tools that make up the Lund atmosphere. There was a sense of willingness to promote the scene, even if she had been more or less against it from the get go. The problem then, was that she lacked the knowledge and support in order to go through with the idea of getting an extra bicycle for her sister. Throughout our conversations, she had not spoken about borrowing one from a friend, rather she spoke about renting a bike, similar to the bike share systems in Paris, Vélib’. This also nods back to her experiences with mobility and transportation in Paris. She referred back to the bike sharing system as perhaps a measure of what other cities are doing to accommodate and encourage individuals to commute and explore by bicycle.

Through interaction and exploration of Lund on their bikes, the informants expressed a deeper connection to the space. Being in the environment, connecting to the space through familiarization, they formed emotional and meaningful attributions to the city. This feeling of connectedness contributed to a sense of belonging, a feeling of being at ‘home’. Informants felt more independent when they did not have to rely on the bus or other forms of public transportation. It was through the use of their bicycle that they gained a sense of autonomy. There was a strong connection made between the relationships between people and the natural environment, which strengthened their feeling of “being rooted in one’s locality” (Aldred, 2010: 39). They identified with a certain aspect of Lund that to them is specific and special to Lund. Biking in Lund was a highlight and added positively to their experience of being in Lund.

#### 4.4 Play, Competition, and Performance

Competition permeates everyday life. They are the staccatos of our dramaturgical lives. Our interactions amongst each other evoke a sense of play. The most mundane tasks become the inspiration for imaginary games. The built environment transformed into a racetrack. Objects in the city re-imagined as starting lines and finishing lines, goal posts, and podiums. In “*The Secret World of Doing Nothing*”, Billy Ehn and Orvar Löfgren (2010) reveal the competitive mentality in mundane activities:

Informal competitions, usually experienced only by one person, who may even think of them as an embarrassing whim, are actually part of a broad movement. Events we believe we have invented, rules we believe we have created, and the imaginary winners’ stands we triumphantly climb, all turn out to be shared with others – but in secret. (p. 3).

Can I shave 5 minutes off my commute to work? Will I make the green light at the intersection? Is this grocery check-out lane faster and will I beat the customer in the next lane? We play to enliven the routinization of everyday life. Moments of play and competition transform people and spaces. Play can make the unfamiliar familiar. When on a bicycle, play and competition pervade the experience. How does play and competition influence encounters with pedestrians, motorists, and other cyclists? How is the physical environment incorporated into game playing? In what ways do the experiences of cycling re-imagine the urban landscape? For the individuals in this research, play and competition were a significant component to their biking experience.

Bicycling spurred creativity. Objects in the city re-imagined and appropriated to make experiences more enjoyable. For example, a traffic post imagined as a personal leaning device. Sofia, for example, revealed that light posts at intersections were enough to facilitate competition. The bicycle journey, for Sofia, was sometimes inconvenient and riddled with unnecessary stops and dismounts. In order to make these stops comfortable, Sofia made use of objects around her. Resuming motion required less effort when she did not have to dismount. Light posts were beneficial to her in that she could come to a complete stop without having to dismount (see image 4 on the following page). This made the start-up process seemingly effortless. While this characteristic was not the defining aspect of whether or not Sofia would cycle more or less, it highlighted how the design of the urban environment created a more or less enjoyable journey for her. The desire for a relatively effortless journey fostered a sense of playfulness and competition. Through her solo competition she also facilitated subtle social interactions. She became more aware of those around her, the passing of bikes, the cars ahead, and the curb beside her. Indeed, while play is contained to the

imaginations of the individual, it is through play that social and spatial awareness is heightened.

The built environment informs us how we should interpret and use a given space. Benches mark out where one should sit. Paved paths indicate where one should walk. Painted lines demarcate where one should drive, walk, or bike. Yet, even through urban design and structuring objects, play occurred. Spinney (2011) noted, "...[s]ocio-legal signals in the built environment attempt to define how we should move around, setting out desired forms of conduct and framing what movement means by making certain movements easier to perform than others. The corollary of this that that alternative urban rhythms become harder to imagine." (p. 176). Within this research, the specific methods addressed the elusiveness of alternative urban rhythms that Spinney speaks about. Taking a qualitative approach to researching the everyday experiences of transport and mobility can perhaps better reflect the realities of how spaces are used, "...a rider can carve out a space for playful and sensory encounters even when engages in the supposedly utilitarian practice of getting from A to B." (Spinney, 2011: 177). Through micro-level understandings, policies on a macro-level can also establish a better sense of the experiences individuals had within the built environment.



**Image 4** Leaning on posts as to not dismount at lights. Holding on makes starting up again easier and also literally feel the town. It was part of the competition to make it to the post first.

How else is play manifested? To go beyond the interaction between biker and built environment, I consider the relationship between individual and their bike. The style of the bicycle warrants some reflection. It is not only through our (re)interpretation of space do we evoke a sense of play. For Sunnie, his bicycle transformed the way he perceived himself. When he mounted his bike, he was not *just* Sunnie riding to any given destination. Rather, he

was a competitive cyclist akin to those seen participating in Tour de France. Sunnie explained, “[w]hen I am on [my] bike, I am on fire. I don’t know, I really want to make it faster, you know, because I used to watch biking competitions of Tour de France and Lance Armstrong. My bike is like a racing bike, so I really want to do that (moves side to side) lean when I am turning. So I have these kinds of feelings when I ride my bike.” (Sunnie, transcription, 28 November 2011). In this sense, play was attributed to the kind of bicycle one rides.

The built environment attempts to structure behaviour and organize movement. Signs, signals, and demarcations suggest how and when one should move through any given space. They nod to what is allowed and forbidden. Those who go against the grain run the risk of being labeled as ‘deviant’ or participating in criminalized acts. What may be regarded as reckless and unruly riding may actually be calculated and controlled play. Claudia characterized her riding as a controlled recklessness. The interactions between other people were a dance. The more she became comfortable riding, the more she tried to push the boundaries on what she could do on a bike, for example, riding the bicycle without her hands on the handlebars (see image 5 on page 49). In regards to her cycling practices, she explained that she always felt in control,

If I’m out biking, I feel like playing a game with myself. I feel like a lot of people like biking to play the game, and then I ride to play a game. I’m riding fast, I’m jumping over little jumps, I’m swiveling my handlebars. I never feel like I’m ever going to wreck anything, cause damage, or hurt another person when I’m being kind of reckless, I always feel like I’m in control of my bike. So someone can look at me and say, ‘oh, she’s crazy’, but I’m really not. I would never hit you. (Claudia, transcription, 2 November 2011).

Jumping off curbs was part of the performance. Although, it was not simply done for pleasure, or for show, these elements of play and performance were another way of knowing Lund. Maneuvering streets, avoiding potholes, in play-like fashion, were all aspects of place-making. As Phil Jones (2005) explains,

...the bicycle allows me to create my own, micro-geography of the city, reconstructing various spaces in a highly embodied fashion: the street with the bad potholes that shake your teeth out; the steep slope where you can get the rush of zipping past traffic queuing for the lights; the high curbs you can jump the bike off to land with a satisfying jolt. Whatever. This is the cyclist’s performance of the city, making and remaking the stage, even as the ‘hardware’ is changed all around me through urban regeneration and planning policy (p. 827).

For Jones, being on a bike meant that he was able to create and recreate space throughout the city as he pleased. For Jones and for my informants, their rides were not merely rides between two points. These rides were pregnant with meaning. Whizzing down a hill, holding onto lamp posts, or curb hopping, these actions were not meaningless nor should they be overlooked as such. For some informants, riding in particular ways made them seen or unseen in the street. They negotiated space with pedestrians, cars, and other cyclists. Goffman (1972) notes:

...when the individual is in a public place, he is not merely moving from point to point silently and mechanically managing traffic problems; he is also involved in taking constant care to sustain a viable position relative to what has come to happen around him, and he will initiate gestural interchanges with acquainted and unacquainted others in order to establish what this position is! (p. 154).

From observations and conversations with my informants, they were constantly negotiating space. Finding their spot on the pavement, signaling with hand gestures, nods, and eye contact with pedestrians, drivers of cars and busses, and other people on bikes. The movements of cyclists and, myself included, can be thought of as a dance. Individuals on bikes danced their way across Lund. As for my informants, they were watching for their personal space, ensuring that they did not step on toes – or roll over any. Dancing and performing a character was not only for idle onlookers, passersby, or friends on the ride, but also for other kinds of traffic. Establishing their position was not just for audience members, but for actors in perhaps another character i.e. the walker, the runner, the bus, the car, etc. Making contact with drivers in cars, busses, and other cyclists were all a part of the dance.



Alan Blum (2001) suggests that it is through performance that makes the unseen seen, “[p]erformance challenges the self-containment and

**Image 5** A video still image of Claudia riding without the use of her

in so doing, saturates the scene with an aura of danger. Performance brings into focus the passivity of the spectator by giving it body for all to see. Performance makes it impossible to sustain the invisibility of the body, making the unseen seen someone to be seen.” (p. 17). The way one moves from one point to another was a means to negotiate space, claim space, and relinquish space.

Play and performance were not something separated by gender or age. In Sofia and Jon's case, their children were as much a part of the game as they were. In fact, it was their children that facilitated the day's diversion. Their two children, seated in their child stool on the back rack, brought in their parents as part of their play. As mom and dad ride side by side, their parallel riding almost immediately turns into a race. For their kids, the journey between A and B are marked by imagined start and finish lines. Sofia recalled a typical morning ride, "[w]e like to race sometimes. They [the kids] wanted us to race. I mean, it's not a huge race, but they wanted to be a little bit a head of each other." Jon teasingly responded, "Yeah, today's bicycle ride was about who's going to get there first. About who's the best. We all know who won, huh!" (Sofia and Jon, transcription, 25 October 2011). The bicycle ride to and from school was made meaningful for both the parents and the children.

The experiences of play in urban space and amongst individuals can be perhaps best left summed by Silverstone (1999):

Play brings the child out in the adult; and the adult out in the child...In play we have a license to explore, both ourselves and society. In play we investigate culture, but we also create it. There is safety in this but also danger, since boundaries cannot always be held, and the trust we require may not always be offered. We act but we also act out. We make mistakes. We get stuck. We misread the signs. And sometimes tragically so. But there is pleasure in it. The pleasure of the game well played, the move well made, the chance well taken, the risk well run, the challenge well met, the guess well made, the dream fulfilled. There is pleasure in participation. In the partnership and in the rivalry. In observation. In identification. In sublimation. In regression. In playing and in playfulness. (pp. 64-65)

We transform the urban landscape to suit our needs. The urban landscape made playground through every aspect. This is significant in (re)development of urban design as the lived experiences of its uses should be taken into consideration. How do people move with any given space? Why do they move in certain ways, in different conditions, on different styles of bikes? Throughout the frame of this research, I highlighted the importance of using qualitative approaches in order to address these questions. These are valuable in that they bring to the fore the more complex and dynamic interpretations of space.

#### **4.5 When the Curtain Closes**

What happens at the end of the show? When the last performance has been given, the stage disassembled, how are the actors transformed? Are they stronger actors because of the role they played? Or have they been defeated by the performance and unwilling to perform a similar character in future acts? Paralleling this research, how have the informants been

transformed in terms of identifying with the local culture? How, if so, has biking become more a part of their identity? This section addresses how some of the informants have shifted their attitudes and perceptions regarding cycling as an everyday mode of transportation. In addition to their perceptions of transportation, but their understanding and constitution of place. How did cycling contribute to their constitution of place? What kind of relationship to Lund was formed from their experiences? How have their experiences contributed to how space is constituted? Throughout this research, it was clear that if and when some of my informants move away from Lund, either back to their hometowns or to another city, bicycling was an aspect of mobility and city life that they would miss or look for in a new city.

It was not just about being able to bike, getting to various places efficiently and cheaply. It was more about the social aspects biking afforded in Lund. Most of my informants learned about where to get a bike and even how to ride a bike from their social networks. Sunnie, for example, gained knowledge surrounding the local mobility scene through this diasporic community. In a sense, the social networks of individuals are influential in reinforcing or perpetuating perceptions regarding transportation. The reasons for biking or not biking were largely informed by cultural factors of previous local mobility cultures. When informants came to Lund, some had not considered or thought about using the bicycle as their first option for getting to and from various places. Some felt insecure riding in traffic so they rode in spaces that provided them with a sense of security. Some had never learned to ride a bicycle or were re-learning how to ride as an adult. While the reasons for not cycling and their decision to use the bicycle as a mode of transportation differed, there was a common element that pushed them towards the idea of taking it up. All of the informants had met other individuals who identified with their own backgrounds and helped to change the ideas surrounding their transport choices. There was a shift in their identities and their mindset regarding cycling as a means of utility. As exemplified by Ann earlier, she had not considered cycling in the least but then changed her mind about it. Sunnie, coming from a background that did not culturally accept cycling, eventually learned how to ride a bike while he was in Lund because it was practical and afforded him with more opportunities to explore, know, and feel at home in Lund.

When I brought up the question with informants whether or not they would miss biking if and when they were to leave Lund, it was unanimous that using the bike to commute would be missed. Claudia lamented that she would miss biking because back in California she would have to rely on someone to give her a ride by car or loan a car for herself. There

was a sense that Claudia felt as though she was losing autonomy regarding her mobility. Autonomy was a significant aspect that informants experienced. The bicycle meant that they did not have to rely on others to get them from place to place. They had the freedom to change directions, explore new routes, or take the same path everyday.

For some informants, they had learned how to ride a bike for the first time in Lund. That was an experience and skill that they will indeed carry with them for quite some time. It was not only learning how to ride a bike, but some had learned about the mechanics of the bike and how to repair certain elements of the bike. Sunnie, for example, explained that it was not only learning how to ride a bike that he would remember, it was also that he was taught how to replace a flat tire and fix his bicycle chain. This was a valuable skill for him to learn because it meant that he could repair his bike cheaply and he felt that he would be able to help others whose bikes needed repair. He had acquired the skills and tools necessary, something that was particularly important to him. Not only had living in Lund provided him with the opportunity to learn how to ride a bike and feel comfortable doing so, he also picked up on a new skillset that he considered beneficial. Biking provided a way into local culture and society. There were parallels to the experiences held by the women in the 1890s, when the accessibility and affordability of bicycles created significant social changes (Rubenstein, 1977). The oft-cited American suffragette, Susan B. Anthony stated in 1898,

Let me tell you what I think of bicycling. I think it has done more to emancipate women than anything else in the world. It gives women a feeling of freedom and self-reliance. I stand and rejoice every time I see a woman ride by on a wheel...the picture of free, untrammelled womanhood. (Quoted in Macy, 2011: 77)

Decades later, Anthony's quote resonated amongst my informants, both men and women. This quote parallels the experiences of social inclusion that bicycling affords. Individuals' attitudes towards biking changed when they realized how much is personally gained.

From a relatively low level of importance in the lives of my informants, biking moved up significantly at the time I had met most of them. Initially, what was conveyed to me was that there was little value placed on biking, especially for utilitarian purposes. This, however, transformed throughout their experience in Lund. The bike was efficient, practical, and convenient. On a much more personal level, it allowed some informants to feel like they belonged within Lund. The bike was in fact *the* way of belonging in the scene of Lund. The social impacts were significant in the lives of my informants. Not only was it an affordable means of getting to places, the journey was filled with meaning that added to the constitution on place. The bicycle was not *just* a mode of transportation for the interviewees. It was a tool

through which bonds were solidified, identities negotiated, and spaces were made meaningful.

## **Chapter 5 Applicability**

This thesis not only contributes to the academic field surrounding cycling transport and everyday mobility, but the methodological and theoretical framework also lends itself in a more practical sense. Within the realm of urban planning and policy making, the use of qualitative methods, such as those used within this research, are beneficial because it highlights the day-to-day experiences and practices of transport system users. The city of Lund may benefit from strengthening social networks in order to foster and perpetuate positive mobility experiences for newcomers and visitors to Lund. Last, I recommend that effective communication within online and offline marketing and campaign strategies will continue to establish the importance of the bicycle to local mobility culture in Lund, and create a strengthened identity for the city.

### **5.1 Qualitative Research Methods and Urban Design**

Qualitative research methods within this research allowed me to gain an understanding of how and why individuals moved within a particular space. Being in the field, participating in the scene as it unfolds was an insightful means of observing how individuals negotiate spaces and each other. Urban planners stand to gain from incorporating a more qualitative, bottom-up, out-from-behind-the-desk approach to understanding transport needs and choices. Rajé (2007) stresses that "...policy-making is about achieving real changes in people's lives and all policy decisions should be demonstrably rooted in knowledge and research that reflects local experience and practice" (p. 60). Transport research centered on the local and individual experiences brings to the fore insights and understandings regarding the day-to-day experiences of mobility. In order to plan strategically for infrastructure or policy, there should be a strong micro-level understanding before macro-level changes are made.

Within this research, I highlighted that transport choices and biking were based upon the social and cultural aspects of an individual. While informants explained that the bike was convenient, efficient, and inexpensive, there were more personal and meaningful explanations that were brought up. Biking was an experience that gave the informants a sense of autonomy regarding their mobility; they experienced weather, landscape, and sounds differently. Ingersoll (2006) suggests that, "we need to 'see more' than instrumental and utilitarian goal satisfaction in the hardware supporting and sustaining mobility as well as in the fluid practices themselves. It may be unintentional, but mobility practices are inherently also practices of identity and meaning construction" (cited in Jensen, 2009b: 154). I have

employed various methods that sought uncover and gain a deeper understanding of mobility practices in Lund.

Through observations and through my own experiences cycling in Lund, I became acutely aware of the interactions between various modes of transportation, such as buses and cars, as well as with pedestrians and other cyclists. Riding along with informants, I was able to pinpoint routes that were taken or avoided. City planners should take into consideration the experiences individuals have during all seasons. Taking this into consideration will then mean rethinking the design and infrastructure. For example, cobblestones may add to the medieval feel of the town, however, may deter some individuals from biking through the center of town when it is wet outside, after rain or snow. One change planners should consider is how the road is paved in areas through the center of town. Perhaps a path of smooth and large closely laid bricks rather than cobblestones may be a more appropriate and accommodating design for the function of the road.

Riding along with informants I gained insight into their immediate experiences and interactions within the urban landscape. I learnt how space was interpreted and the hardware of the city became incorporated into their journey. For example, the competition to a lamp post was spurred on by the thought of having to dismount at a stop light, something that made the journey inconvenient. Being the first person to the lamp post meant that the individual could lean while not having to dismount – which meant that momentum was easier to gain when the time came to start again. The design of the city should therefore reflect the practices and experiences individuals travelling by bike have. One way of doing this could be by attaching a rail to lean on at intersections. The addition of having something to lean on may appear to be a simple and subtle change, but it is a change that affects the experience of the journey. With greater social awareness of how transport and infrastructure affects local residents' experiences, planners can appropriately design the urban landscape to better suit the practices of users.

## **5.2 Know Your Scene: Connecting Networks**

There were various ways individuals come to own a bicycle and even learn how to ride a bicycle. Aside from purely observing that biking was a dominant and acceptable way of getting to places, the informants of this research learned about biking and received their bicycles through people that they knew in Lund. Their social networks and diasporic community played an integral part in shaping and influencing mobility choices. One approach to promoting biking within Lund could be to locate appropriate channels of

communication for various social networks. Having open communication with various residents in Lund is another way of increasing social inclusion and an opportunity to promote bike safety and knowledge regarding bike maintenance.

Lund is a town that stands at the junction of so many cultures. As exemplified within this research, individuals were from a myriad of backgrounds, each with varying levels of experience with biking. In order to support and encourage newcomers to Lund to hop on a bicycle, what is required then by Municipal leaders is meaningful engagement within the community. For example, in Lund, non-governmental organization, Tamam, works to encourage and engage immigrant youth to be active and learn about various activities in Lund<sup>7</sup>. This organization has the potential to support and encourage newcomers, young and old, to use the bike as a tool to explore Lund, get to know other people in town, and to simply have fun. Adequate support from the Municipality could be in the form of bicycle donations to Tamam, or providing a space for bicycle workshops where individuals can learn how to bike, and learn about bike maintenance. Through this, the Municipality can further communicate the mobility culture of Lund, promote a safe bike environment, and provide information regarding bicycle routes to various locations, such as the beach, grocery stores, coffee shops, schools, or cultural landmarks. In Toronto, this kind of social orientation program is in play. Bike Host is a program that aims to encourage newcomers to build networks through the program's volunteers and mentors, practice English, connect to the landscape of Toronto, and make friends (Keung, 2012). By engaging with local organizations, the Municipality can learn about the cultural barriers or motivators to mobility and help reflect these understandings in their decisions regarding transport.

Another appropriate avenue for local planners and politicians to promote cycling would be to have a strong presence during the start of Lund University's school semesters. With international and Swedish students departing and arriving at the end and start of fall and spring semesters, the Municipality can take advantage of the hustle and bustle to inform students on where to buy bicycles, provide bicycle route maps, information regarding safety, and where to sell or donate bicycles at the end of their time in Lund. A stronger presence can help enhance the legitimacy of cycling as a viable mode of transportation to students who may have not thought of it as such. The Municipality can locate departments within the university to help volunteer with promotion and providing workshops on the official arrival day. Such collaborations would open up communication between city officials and a range of

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<sup>7</sup> More information regarding Tamam can be found at [www.tamam.se](http://www.tamam.se)

individuals from varying backgrounds and mobility experiences. Being present on arrival days is an opportunity to promote cycling, strengthen the sense of community and support, and learn about individuals arriving to Lund with various experiences regarding transport. This is also one way of gaining a level of awareness regarding the individual experiences and competencies of cycling.

In this research, the informants spoke about the social aspects cycling afforded. Establishing connections throughout the community is another way of enhancing and highlighting the positive elements of cycling. Municipal leaders are not only engaging within the community, but the residents themselves have the opportunity to meet others and strengthen social inclusion within Lund.

### **5.3 Market the Scene: Communicating Mobility**

One way of encouraging individuals to (re)consider the bicycle as a viable mode of transportation and to highlight the strength of Lund's local mobility culture is through effective communication and marketing. Although, city planners of the city need not spend or invest in more money towards marketing campaigns. I suggest that Municipal leaders use the internet as a tool to introduce Lund as a city that places cycling as an accessible and valuable mode of transportation. Lund as a city may benefit from collecting and archiving all local and international news spots on a central website, such as the Municipality's own website. Amin and Thrift (2002) suggested that by writing about local scenes and collecting information regarding a certain city that certain element becomes embedded within the city and becomes known for whatever it is that is being highlighted. They write:

In chronicling local events, a narrative of the city is constructed, and over the years the city comes to be memorialized in detail. This street, that pub, that corner, that personality, become known, and through their collective naming we see others and other parts of the city. The city becomes accessible, and through the places named in the chronicles it becomes a spatial formation (Ibid, 2002: 24).

By compiling local and international news clips could help to solidify and increase the legitimacy of cycling for newcomers and visitors to Lund. Individuals who may not have the economic means to own a car, who may be afraid to learn how to ride a bike as an adult, who place cycling on a lower rung of transportation hierarchy, or individuals looking for cities to explore by bike can have access to knowledge about Lund's mobility culture. Already, there has been international news coverage specifically discussing Lund and its mobility culture. For example, BBC News put together a short, yet effective, piece highlighting the dominance

of bicycling in Lund. In the 2 minute film segment entitled, “The City Where Bicycles Dominate” (2009), the BBC establishes bicycling as an important aspect in the city of Lund. In the New York Times, Lund was featured in the travel section online and in a print edition. The article, “A College Town With a Bit of Viking Mayhem” (2011), showcases the history of Lund and the sites to see in town. The author makes a note of the affinity to biking, “[a]nd while you’ll see plenty of bikes - nearly half the 83,000 residents commute on one - don’t be surprised if you find yourself strolling down the middle of a cobblestone street wondering how many people even bother owning a car” (Juskalian, 2011). One bike advocacy blog, Copenhagenize.com, featured Lund in the entry, “Lund, Sweden loves bikes and public transport” (Coleville-Andersen, 2009). In this entry, they gave facts regarding the modal split of transport and also link to the aforementioned BBC segment. These examples have the potential to frame and cultivate the mobility culture in Lund.

Lund has the opportunity to build and strengthen the position of bikes in the minds of individuals living in Lund and newcomers – without even having to spend many resources on doing so. City planners and the tourism board can utilise the existing online footprint that Lund has relating to cycling. Søren Jensen (2005) suggests that the Internet is an excellent and effective way of creating an idea of the experiences of the local culture that is being promoted. She posits that Internet presentations of local experiences create a forum through which locality and experiences can be conveyed. Local organizations should take advantage of the Internet because “...they are themselves capable of delivering small-scale experiences via their use of different media, texts, images and sounds. When combined, these sources of information have the potential to create a vivid image of the locality promoted. In addition to this, the Internet has the advantage of promoting instant access to a wide array of destinations.” (Ibid, 2005: 147). For the informants of this research, biking was a significant aspect of Lund’s atmosphere. In order to explore, feel the vibrancy of the town, and create meaningful connections to the space, the bicycle was a key component.

As Amin and Thrift (2002) noted, “[a] city named in certain ways also becomes a city through the practices in response to the labels. They [individuals in the city] perform the labels...people and places script each other” (p. 23). Having the scene archived and made accessible from one source may have the potential to further legitimize the bicycle as a viable means of transportation, as well as sustain the practice for the future. Hetherington suggests that the city becomes known through the ways it is named,

[M]aps, photographs, paintings, televised images, textual descriptions, poems, and so on...They arrange, order, include and exclude, they make

knowable a space to everyone who might choose to look at these representations and also make it possible to compare it with another space...Those representations contain truth claims (not necessarily scientific) about a space. They perform place myths as places (cited in Amin & Thrift, 2002:23).

In addition, newcomers and tourists to Lund will be able to gain a sense of the importance and significance that the bike has established in Lund. Another element that could be incorporated is allowing visitors to contribute to the website – sending photos, sharing stories, taking pictures of streets that are problematic (potholes), or bike maintenance advice. This could not only benefit the community, but this could give city planners an idea of how people think about biking in Lund and how individuals talk about it.

## Chapter 6 Conclusion

This research was inspired by my own experiences of transitioning between a car-dominated city, where cycling was relatively invisible as a viable alternative to transportation, into a city where biking was deeply engrained within the local mobility culture. At the outset of this thesis, I aimed to examine how individuals experienced mobility in everyday life. I explored how previous experiences with cycling, and other forms of transportation, influenced the ways in which an individual relates to another mode of transport. Informants carried a mobility habitus, which influenced the ways in which spatial and social interactions were negotiated. Further cycling research needs to include a narrative surrounding past experiences and conceptualizations of what cycling could be as an everyday practice. Within this research, the informants' narratives created an understanding of their mobility in previous environments and how it influenced their transportation choices in Lund. Through the methodological approaches used within this thesis, a deeper understanding of how and why individuals move around.

For a more realistic understanding of how transport affects the daily lives of users, it is important to rethink and add more to the research toolbox. The methodological approaches within this research attended to the sensorial and experiential elements of cycling, which was another area of exploration for this thesis. Interviews provided informants with an opportunity to dispel their thoughts regarding cycling in Lund. Ride-alongs and observations focused on the physical practice of being on a bike. Video recordings and photographing journeys were useful in uncovering interactions between the landscape of the city, between other people, and forms of transport. These methods accessed the experiences of the journey, and put into focus how and why individuals moved within a space, as well as it allowed for individuals to talk about their experiences. Such mobile methods contribute to expanding the breadth of knowledge produced surrounding people's lived experiences of cycling in everyday life.

While each city is unique, and differs slightly or dramatically in infrastructure, the methods and theories within this research can be used to understand local mobility cultures in other cities. Whether it pertains to the hardware of the city, or marketing cycling, the needs of the users and practices should be understood from a micro level perspective. That is, an approach used to uncover the fleeting and ephemeral moments of mobility. Further cycling research should incorporate a fuller understanding of the journey *between* two places.

Whether it is a walk down the street, a car ride to the grocery store, or a bike ride to work, everyday journeys are worthy of exploration.

For city planners and policy makers, attention needs to be placed on the sensorial, experiential, symbolic, and cultural factors of transport choices, rather than solely on instrumental factors. Cycling, within this research, was more than simply a mode of transportation. It was a tool through which individuals negotiated identities, forged and solidified friendships, and heightened social interactions. The bicycle, for informants, facilitated a sense of social inclusion and belonging in Lund. The informants created meaning as they biked across cobblestoned streets, and their engagement within the landscape fostered a sense of place. They were made aware of their physical abilities, as they biked up hills and cruised down them. Cycling (re)enforced a sense of play, competition, and performance. Through these elements, informants literally felt Lund as they secretly raced amongst one another to lean on lamp posts. These moments influenced the way space was interpreted, routes taken, and paths avoided. The bicycle meant more than a cheap, convenient, and efficient mode of transportation. Informants related to cycling on a much more personal level, where meaning derived from fleeting and unspeakable moments between two places.

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