

LUND UNIVERSITY

# Experience by bike

A discussion on experience of place in Malmö

Bachelor Thesis in Human Geography

SGEK03: HT 17

Supervisor: Ola Hall

Author: Andrea Ax Karlsén

Department of Human Geography, Lund University



# Abstract

This essay sets out to contribute to a discussion about whether the use of bicycles can work as a tool for place experience, and as an element to greater understanding of place and integration. The research takes place in Malmö, and the aim is to open up for discussion whether the social factor should be added alongside ecological and economical factors when planning for bicycles. The theoretical framework consists of movement patterns and its constraints, the creation of/and experience of place. By using a mixed method approach, the reader is given both statistical data of movement patterns in the city collected with the rental bicycle system “Malmö By Bike”, as well as an ethnographic study of some of the most and least visited places with the mentioned bicycle system. The discussion of the results leads back to the theoretical framework and target points when trying to point out patterns of the most and least used places. Resulting factors were that in the most visited places, people were using the streets in a structured way. For the least visited places to go by bicycle, one striking factor was that these were in many cases work places, where people not working there have no reason to go unless being invited. The essay finishes with opening up for discussion, whether the use of bicycles could potentially have positive social outputs for a city’s inhabitants, when used as a tool for experience.

*Key words:* Experience, creation, place, Malmö, bike, bicycle, sense

Words: 13587

# Table of contents

<b>1</b>	<b>The background chapter .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Aim and research questions .....	2
1.2	Outline .....	4
1.3	Theoretical framework .....	4
1.3.1	Vehicles and reachable space .....	5
1.3.2	Creation of place .....	6
1.3.3	Experience of place .....	7
1.3.4	Theoretical summary .....	8
1.4	Method and material .....	8
1.4.1	Quantitative approach .....	9
1.4.2	Qualitative approach .....	10
1.4.3	Visual approach .....	11
1.5	Delimitations .....	11
1.6	Previous research .....	12
<b>2</b>	<b>The bicycle chapter .....</b>	<b>14</b>
2.1	Malmö By Bike .....	14
2.2	Bicycling and planning in Malmö Stad .....	16
<b>3</b>	<b>The statistical chapter .....</b>	<b>17</b>
3.1	Malmö By Bike: Maps and tables .....	17
3.2	Analysis: the statistics .....	21
<b>4</b>	<b>The ethnographical chapter .....</b>	<b>23</b>
4.1	Starting point: Folkets Park .....	23
4.2	Malmö Central Norra .....	26
4.3	Saltimeporten .....	27
4.4	Kronprinsen .....	29
4.5	Arriving destination: Malmöhusvägen .....	31
4.6	Ethnographical summary .....	32
<b>5</b>	<b>The discussion chapter .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>References .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Appendix: interview questions .....</b>	<b>42</b>



# 1 The background chapter

The aim of this essay came to me a while back, when discussing the geographical term sense of place (see e.g. Tuan, 1977; Massey, 1994) with a friend of mine living in Paris. She told me that she had begun using the rental bicycle system *Velib* instead of taking the *métropolitain*<sup>1</sup>. She said that at first, she felt disoriented most of the time since she suddenly found herself on small streets where she had never been before. But after a while, she learned her ways of moving around and discovered that these new streets contained picturesque boutiques and cafés, which before were lost to her. She also quickly learned how the different *arrondissements*<sup>2</sup> were connected to each other, something she had not noticed before when commuting under ground.

This then made me think of the ways in which municipalities work to plan cities, how they use infrastructure to make the different sub areas connect with each other and what factors they have in mind while doing this. Today, in Sweden, a third of the inhabitants commute to other municipalities for work (SCB, 2010:8-9), and therefore there is a great amount of thought put into buses and trains to make these travels possible. Studies have shown that commuting by public transportation such as bus or train enhance the commuters' willingness to engage in political actions in their community, since they are exposed to e.g. different settings and ethnicities, and therefore find inspiration in new ideas and structures. Whereas commuting by car can have the opposite effect since it isolates the commuter, and since he or she is forced to take the highways, the environmental setting is more narrow (Lidström, 2006:232-233).

A fairly new tool on the commuting radar is the use of rental bicycle systems, as a complement to the buses and trains. As mentioned already, Paris has *Velib* stations in the city centre, and other cities have followed such as London (Santander Cycles), Amsterdam (Your City Bike), and Copenhagen (Donkey Republic). Plenty of cities are becoming more and more bicycle friendly, with larger percentages of the population commuting to work by bicycle instead of taking the car, or taking the bicycle to another commuting node. With the many positive outcomes of biking, such as e.g. health benefits and a smaller ecological footprint (Trafikverket, 2017), the popularity of the bicycle is not questionable today. So when Malmö, the third largest city of Sweden, and according to the Copenhagenize Index, the fifth best bicycle city in

---

<sup>1</sup> The metro system in Paris, located under ground.

<sup>2</sup> Paris is divided into 20 sub areas called *arrondissements*.

the world (Copenhagenize, 2017), decided to develop a rental bicycle system, the classic geographical question *why there, and why then?* is not particularly difficult to answer.

Malmö has actually picked this up relatively late, since there are many cities already offering these types of services. (Interview, Malmö Stad, 2017)

With a rental bicycle system, enhanced construction of bicycle paths and an expansion of bicycle racks, Malmö is very much portrayed as an ecological city – an important element in today’s planning projects (Malmö Stad, 2014a:40, 44). But what if the bicycle is working not only as reducing of exhaust gas and heart attacks, but also as a tool for social comprehension and understanding patterns of a city’s construction?

With the words of my Parisian friend in mind, I wished to investigate further within the experience of place in my essay. I then decided to use the rental bicycle system, “Malmö By Bike”, as a mean to experience a handful of places in the city. When using the rental bicycles, data is simultaneously collected: a bicycle is picked up at one station at a certain time, and then left at another station a little while later. This therefore gives me the opportunity not only to conduct an ethnographical “tour de Malmö”, but also to complement this with statistical data of where the inhabitants actually go by bicycle. The goal of the thesis is to contribute to a discussion about the possible positive social outputs aside from health benefits and clean air.

## 1.1 Aim and research questions

The aim of this essay is to investigate whether the use of bicycles have the capability to make inhabitants experience their city better than the use of other commuting elements, and if it has positive social outputs such as understanding of one’s surroundings and integrating factors. For this essay, I have studied the bicycle plans of Malmö, where the bicycle is mainly described as positive in terms of economy and ecology (see Gatukontoret, 2012:7). My entry is thusly that another factor could and should be added to comprehensive plans, in terms of planning cities for bicycles: the social factor. In Malmö’s comprehensive plan, there is a willingness to work with ecological, economical and social sustainability consistent throughout the plan (Malmö Stad, 2014a:6-8, 15-16, 63-65). However, in the bicycle plans, focus is generally solely on ecological and economical sustainability.

One should, when reading this essay, assume that I make the difference between bicycling and commuting with other tools such as bus, subway or above all car. I have also decided to use bicycles instead of experiencing by foot, since

the use of vehicles expands an individual's reachable space (see Figure 1). I enter the research with a deductive reasoning, where I begin speaking of Hägerstrands (1970) constraints, referring to the use of vehicles, and movement patterns. I then operationalize creation of place and experience of place, concepts which later on in the essay will be analysed briefly and discussed. I link creation of place to usage of place by individuals. If people use and move around in a designated space, it becomes place. If these people feel safe here, then the place will be safe. Thusly, the way people experience place can create feelings of ease, of joy or even fright (see Jacobs, 1961; Tuan, 1974, 1977).

This essay will enter two arenas: the use of statistics and ethnographic research, and the essay consists of four questions, with the main research questions being:

- How can the usages of bicycles make inhabitants experience Malmö?
- Could commuting by bicycle have positive social outputs such as understanding and integration?

When gathering data, both statistical and ethnographical, the rental bicycle system Malmö By Bike is used. I have been given statistics from week 35, year 2017, of the bicycles' movement, which will be the fundamentals of the quantitative research. Having the results presented in maps and tables, these will help fore the qualitative part. Two methodological questions will help tackle the difficult task of examining experience of place, one quantitative and one qualitative in nature. The quantitative question gives both the reader and myself a view on particular places and their purpose to the city as a whole. The qualitative question is incorporated to broaden the discussion of place and shine a light on the various factors that enhance or decrease an individual's experience of place.

- Which areas in Malmö have the greatest movement by bicycle, and which have the lowest?
- Which factors make people use certain geographical areas in Malmö and how is this affecting the experience of place?

The first methodological question is answered with maps and tables, presenting in real numbers how the inhabitants of Malmö travelled during week 35. For the second question I am performing a participant observation, using embodied experience where I put myself as a researcher in the context. Hand in hand with the participant observation, four voices of Malmö and their thoughts of bicycling and place are included through interviews.

This essay is not meant as an empirical absolute, and should not be read as such, since studies of place experience requires much more data than one can possibly accomplish within the time limit. I enter the research with an interpretivist transparency, meaning that I understand that the objectivity of my

study can be questioned. However, the intention of my findings is to work as a contribution to a discussion about the movement pattern and usage of place in Malmö, and maybe provide with thoughts of the bicycle as not just an environmental or health benefiting element – but also of a part of a method for social benefits when one is coming to understand the city’s character.

## 1.2 Outline

The essay is divided into five parts. The first chapter, the one you are reading now, is the fundamental one with all the steps of the essay included. In the following chapter, information about Malmö as a city of bicycles, and of the rental bicycle system Malmö By Bike will be provided. The rental bicycle system is working as the mean to collect data – both statistical and ethnographical. In chapter three I present the statistical findings, and a short analysis of these. Chapter four contains the qualitative results: the embodied experience of going and exploring a few selected places in Malmö. Finally, chapter five summarizes the empirical findings and opens up for discussion about experience of place by bicycle as a tool for positive social outputs.

## 1.3 Theoretical framework

I will in this chapter speak of the linkage between the use of vehicles, the creation of/ and the experience of place. All of which is analysed in reference to a city’s bicyclists. Later on in the essay I will discuss how these theoretical elements could have an impact on the inhabitants of Malmö’s movement patterns and views of place. By beginning with referring to the work of Hägerstrand (1970), the goal is to describe in which the reachable landscape expands geographically when possessing a vehicle. I then continue by speaking of the creation of place, and the factors that construct it. In this essay, *creation of place* is operationalized in reference to the ways people use the places. This is then linked together with the human perception, the perceived senses while visiting these places by bicycle.

### 1.3.1 Vehicles and reachable space

Tools and machines enlarge man's sense of space and spaciousness. (...) A bicycle enlarges the human sense of space, and likewise the sports car. (Tuan, 1977:53).

With help from elements of movement, such as a car or bus, people within a certain space can move around easier. They can with this element, this tool, expand their daily movement pattern in reference to their time limit (Hägerstrand, 1970; Tuan, 1977). In Hägerstrand's (1970) model *Maximum Daily Prism*, this can be viewed illustratively with time (y) and distance (x) as axes. The average span for a walking individual, which can be seen in the prism to the left, is much smaller than the one where the individual has a vehicle (illustrated as driver), as seen in the prism to the right.

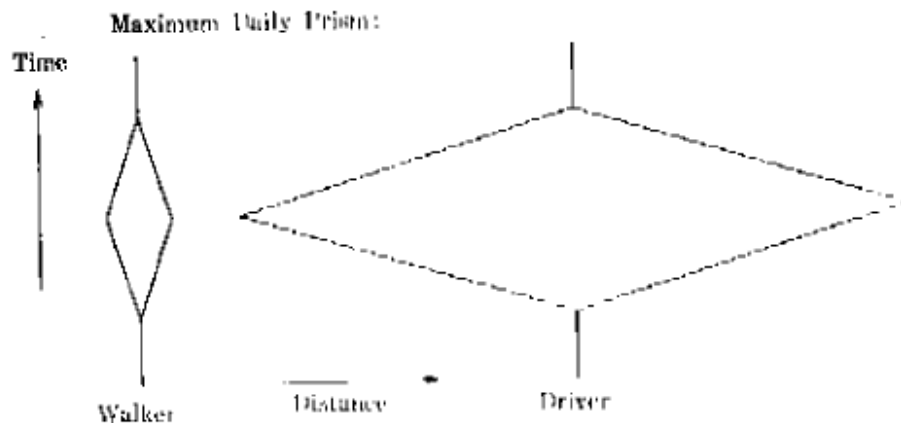


Figure 1: Maximum Daily Prism. Source: Hägerstrand, 1970.

Time-geographer Hägerstrand (1970) writes in his article *what about people in regional science* of movement patterns of individuals. He focuses on individuals' every day movements, and how these are restricted by capability (the biological limits and the tools the individual hold), coupling (communication) and authority (time limit) constraints. Thusly, the way people move around is more linked to our limitations rather than our individual decisions (Corbett, 2001:2). Hägerstrand calls the authority factor as tied to the rest place (Hägerstrand, 1970:12). Or, as quoted from the article "(...) there exists a definite boundary line beyond which he cannot go if he has to return before a deadline" (Ibid., 1970:13). This constraint also points to certain areas that individuals do not have access to, due to the fact that they have not been invited. For example, you cannot enter someone else's house without permission, and you certainly are not allowed inside a military base or prison without having a certain reason to go there. However, the faster you can move in space, the further you can go within your time limit. If you have a car, you can have lunch further away from your desk at your job than if you go by foot or if

you are restricted to taking the bus, which has its own timetable. The same goes for a bicycle owner, even though the prism around your fixed point would probably not be as big as for the car. Having the accessibility to a vehicle, in this particular study referring to a bicycle, gives power. The power to move around faster, further, the possibility of living in one area but working in another and thusly experience larger parts of the city. This is also the main reason for me choosing the use of bicycles in this research, rather than experiencing by foot.

### 1.3.2 Creation of place

A place is the order (of whatever kind) in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence. (...) A space exists when one takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables (...) In short, space is a practiced place. (DeCerteau, 1984:117).

It is not simply buildings, roads and parks which make a place, but the voyageurs. The pedestrians, the inhabitants who by moving forward turn place into space (Ibid, 1984:119). Jane Jacobs (1961) explained to us that it is the people walking on the sidewalks, which make for safe cities. That sidewalks and streets are simply sidewalks and streets if no one is using them, but they are turned into places and neighbourhoods if people walk there (Jacobs, 1961:107-108). By having experienced places and having memories about places that used to exist, places come to be – and they come to have different meaning to different people. The bicyclist could work as a part of a network, one of the many commuters in the morning taking the same routes as hundreds of others, routes provided by the municipality giving the commuters a distinct destination. But the bicyclist is also a person who defines space, who creates it when travelling within it. According to DeCerteau (1984) it is the users of the city, the walkers, who cut corners and take shortcuts and “make use of spaces that cannot be seen” (1984:93). DeCerteaus walkers and today’s bicyclists share somewhat a common denominator, being exposed to the city in ways incomparable to motorists or bus commuters. Even though specific bicycle paths exist in many cities, the shortcuts are often used not only by pedestrians but also of bicyclists. A pattern is hard to break, roads that tend not to be the fastest ones or the most appropriate ones are being used of a cities bicyclists, simply because they once got to know their way around a neighbourhood and now it is their way. It is *the* way. This way of using a city makes for the creation of place even in situations, which according to some (e.g. Auge, 1995:78-79) are non-places such as transit places.

### 1.3.3 Experience of place

To experience a place is to know and construct a reality, through an individual's emotions and senses (Tuan, 1977:8). Tuan describes experience as a range of different senses, both passive and direct, such as smell and taste but also of conception and interpretation of these senses. When an individual goes from point (A), which we refer to here as the home base, to point (B), which could be the work place, the individual in mind usually takes the same route every day. Unless there is a sudden obstacle in the normal way, our individual takes the same bus, or uses the same roads when he/she drives there. This way of commonplace commuting can cause something similar to a state of hypnosis for the driver or commuter, where he/she blanks out while driving on the same road he/she has been driving many times. According to researcher Griffith Williams, the driver's mind wanders away but the body remains in total control of the vehicle, immediately responding to sudden changes in the conditions of the road (Ibid. 1977:69-70). When our individual knows his/her way in space, moving from point (A) to point (B) requires little to no sense of exact place. The individual know where to turn left and where to stop at a stop sign. Unless awakened by a sudden obstacle, the mind will be elsewhere. However, if our person of interest changes vehicle or setting, the mind will be fully active to locate itself in the new surrounding. In the words of Tuan (1977): "spaciousness is closely associated with the sense of being free." (1977:52). A place can be crowded, and therefore seen to different individuals as either unstructured or even scary, whilst other people might think that crowded places feel vibrant and alive. This can alter depending on how you see them, how you interact with them. Norberg-Schultz (1996) describes place as a "total phenomenon", something made up of all the elements existing in a geographical area, and consists of "shape, texture and colour" (1996:414-415). The usage of bicycles allows for the bicyclist to hear, smell and feel a place in a way that a person driving a car would not. French writer and pilot Antoine de Saint-Exupéry explained how a machine, in his case the airplane, is supposed to create a distance between man and nature, but most of the time it enhances the problematical relation between them (Tuan, 1977:53). This assumption is also made by Lidström (2006), who has studied modes of transportation where commuting by car can have isolating and segregating effects on the experience (2006:452). When going by bicycle, or anything with an open roof such as a boat or sports car, the sense of spaciousness rests in some ways with you throughout the journey. You hold on to the sense of being free and not isolated from the outside world. When you grasp a place's ambiance, using not only your vision but all your senses, then you have the full picture and thus it becomes place (Norberg-Schultz, 1994; Spinney, 2007). "(...) The more intense a sensory encounter, the easier it is for participants to articulate their understanding of it." (Spinney, 2007:30).

When looking at tourist buses in e.g. London, the roof is usually not a roof but chairs for the tourists to sit on. This is a way to allow the people to experience places with more senses than just vision, but also smell and sound. In contrast, when the mode of transportation is passive, when a passenger does not have control of the vehicle and is isolated from the outside world, such as bus or subway, lived space diminishes (Tuan, 1977:54). Riding a bicycle does not simply usually give you a sense of freedom, but it also gives you a greater accessibility and a wider range of understanding your surroundings. Space, according to Tuan (1977), can be experienced through the relations to places and comprehended as a network of places (Ibid. 1977:12). This can be achieved by moving from one place to another, by noticing different attributes and ambiances in different spaces, just as my friend in Paris understood the network of the *arrondissements* in Paris.

#### 1.3.4 Theoretical summary

In our modern society, where time is money and more and more people are commuting to their work places, the use of vehicles have an impact on which areas are deemed reachable to us. The places we reside on and the places we see while moving from point (A) to point (B), will together work as a network of understanding the character and ambiance of a city, which potentially could affect the way people move, think and feel about individual places but also of the city as a whole. The bicycle as a tool for movement allows for vision as well as smell, hearing and sensation, which I in accordance with my theoretical framework wish to interpret in my research.

### 1.4 Method and material

It is a difficult task to do research on individuals' experience of a city while riding their bicycles. What different people see and grasp could depend on many things, such as relation to place or situational memories of specific areas. Tuan (1974) explains morbid sense of place as something experienced on a particular place that later on simultaneously could make someone always relate to this place with the experience in question. Say you have witnessed a burglary in a street corner, or broken up with someone in a park, these places will have a negative cognition to you when passing them later on in life (Tuan, 1974:452). Therefore, to gather as much information as possible and to be as objective as possible, the use of mixed methods will be applied to this essay, and it is thusly divided into two sections: a quantitative and a qualitative one. By doing this, the



reader is provided with the full picture, or as much a full picture as possible for the particular time and space limit that comes with a bachelor's thesis. I lay ground for the research by using statistical data, and present it in proportional symbol maps combined with statistical tables. I then broaden the empirical analysis by participating in the researched objects, and apply my embodied experience using all my senses making the "meaning (of the study) accessible to me" (Bryman, 2016:622).

#### 1.4.1 Quantitative approach

For the first part of the essay, I received data containing information about the movement of the bicycles for week 35 (last year: 2017) from Clear Channel, the company set out to create and maintain Malmö By Bike. With this data I have created proportional symbol maps in Geographical Information Systems (GIS), to illustrate possible movement patterns. These maps are often used when you want to show a relative or absolute number of a phenomenon (Maantay & Ziegler, 2006:73), and this information is of interest because it shows the frequency of the stations which are used often and which are not. In the statistical chapter, two maps are provided where this data is represented, using gradually growing symbols (circles) which represents the location of the bicycle stations and which ones are the more frequently used ones.

The GIS data used to create the maps is collected from:

- Malmö Stad (bicycle paths and rental bicycle station coordinates),
- Trafikverket (roads),
- Department of Human Geography (land cover).

These maps will work as foundation for the ethnographical study in chapter four, where I will be able to select which areas to observe.

Tables are created manually in excel using the statistical data from Clear Channel and information from Malmö Stad (see document Målpunktsanalys för hyrcykelsystem i Malmö, 2014). The tables complement the maps, giving the reader more concrete names, numbers and target points.

At the end of chapter three, I will analyse briefly on which factors could possibly underlie why certain stations are used more frequently, such as relation with target points (e.g. commuting possibilities or neighbourhoods, see chapter 2).

### 1.4.2 Qualitative approach

This section is made with qualitative, semi-structured interviews with users of the rental bicycle system and a systematically described ethnographical study with participant observation. To observe a surrounding is a commonly used method, but also a challenged one in ethical terms since it was mainly used as a way of performing research on so-called “deviate societies”, with e.g. the joke about a rural village and a university student (Guest et. al, 2017:2-3). However, for this particular research, it would be impossible to grasp the essence of the essay without being able to describe the places in focus. “You had to be there” is a phrase commonly used in these form of studies, where the researcher otherwise would not be permitted to the whole picture (Ibid. 2017:5). There are different ways of using observation as a method, and my role as a researcher is what is known as *complete participation* or *overt full member*. When being a complete participant, the researcher is fully integrated with the surroundings and the people, and the researcher is open with his/her role (Bryman, 2016:434). This type of participant observation is non-negotiable in my situation, since I live and reside in Malmö already, and have travelled by bicycle in this city countless times. This can have an effect on the findings, obviously, since one can question the validity of my bias. When conducting an ethnographical study, or any qualitative study, one must be aware of the possible subjectivity of the researcher. I chose therefore to actively speak of this problem, to use reflexivity strategy, and thereby making a point that I am aware of this potential problem (Burke Johnson, 1997: 284).

Since I am using a theory that builds on experience, I will be the main link between the place and the reader of this essay, with help from four interviewed residents of Malmö. However, I combine my eyes, ears and nose with interviews, and let other inhabitants of Malmö represent some of the descriptions. The interviews conducted are qualitative and semi-structured, since I wish for the descriptions to be flexible and for the interviewee to him-/herself tell me what is of relevance to the study. A few questions are written down beforehand, to start our conversation in such a way that could escort the interviewees in a certain direction, but in the end it is the interviewees themselves who lead the discussion (Bryman, 2016:466-468). To get in touch with people, I have used a somewhat accidental (convenience) sampling method, where I have interviewed people who have been close to hand. The individuals being interviewed in this research are all friends of friends, with the one criterion that they all use the rental bicycle system Malmö By Bike.

I began my quest for interviewees by simply standing next to different stations asking people if they would be interested in participating in my study. However, many of the users of Malmö By Bike are in a hurry, and also since this study is conducted during winter with fewer people using bicycles, it did not go successfully. So, to be able to reach people, I asked around among my friends

and acquaintances to see whether anyone might be interested in speaking to me. This left me with four individuals, all in there 20's: three women and one man. I met up with them either in cafés of their choice, or at their home. This to contribute to the semi-structured interview pattern, with my interviewees feeling at ease and giving them room to speak freely. One of the interviews I did with a couple, who both use Malmö By Bike, which can be problematic in ways that the transcribing part could be difficult or the interviewees might not want to speak as freely as they would have were they alone (Ibid. 2016:503-504), however in this particular situation the participants took turns in speaking and encouraged each other to talk openly. The interviewees did not know beforehand what the essay was going to be about, as a way of trying to diminish the possible errors in ecological validity when participants simply say what the researcher want's them to say. All the interviews were conducted in Swedish, and are then translated by myself into English.

### 1.4.3 Visual approach

It is, as stated by Spinney (2007), difficult in terms of expressions of embodied experiences when being simply written down (2007:30). Or more acutely pointed out by Pow (2000) in Spinney's article: "it is often difficult for people to express their experience of senses other than vision due to the limited vocabularies associated with non-visual dimensions." (Pow, 2000:169 in Spinney, 2007:30).

The use of photography is a discussed method, and has had its ups and downs over the decades. I have chosen to incorporate images taken by myself during my trips around the various places, since I aim to investigate with all my senses how these places are experienced, and then present it in comprehensible ways. The images will be used as one of the basics of the ethnographical chapter, something Bryman (2016) calls *photo-elicitation* where "(...) the researcher uses the images as a springboard for discussion (...) concerning the meaning and significance of the images (...)." (2016:452). The photos included in the essay are incorporated as a visual aid for the reader to "see what I see", and thusly experience what I experience with one of the senses – vision.

## 1.5 Delimitations

One of the obvious limits to my research is that it is conducted in November and December, relatively cold months for a country such as Sweden. This could affect the number of people being outside, and the number of people

using their bicycles. Another problematic issue therefore is that the statistical data and the ethnographic study are not conducted at the same time. The statistical data provided by Clear Channel consists of week 35 in 2017 (28<sup>th</sup> of August until 3<sup>rd</sup> of September). One could argue that if the ethnographic study was done at that time period instead, or if the statistics were collected during November or December, the results would be different.

As there is a time and writing space limit, factors such as socio-economic status or gender have been ignored, which could have a potential impact on both the experience of place and the usage of bicycles. Had more extensive research within the field been done, this could maybe have given other inputs to the experience of place, but then the study would have been made differently.

Since I am using the rental bicycle system and not my own bicycle, the research is geographically limited to specific places. These places need not be the very most visited places in Malmö, neither the very least visited places in Malmö. I am also restricted to a certain area of Malmö, which does not include suburbs and certain parts of the city centre. However, the use of Malmö By Bike made possible the statistical chapter, and with a time limit – a geographical limit is much welcomed.

## 1.6 Previous research

When it comes to sense of/experience of place there is a great amount of material to go to for knowledge. I have chosen the work of Yi-Fu Tuan (1977), who has written about experiencing places with all human senses. Doreen Massey (1994) who adds the individual to the equation in socio-economic and gender related turns poses the question whether a local sense of place is necessary in today's globalised world. This since, in many ways the "local" is not locally produced anymore. And influences from every corner of the world can be seen everywhere in e.g. ethnic restaurants and shops (1994:146). Since the local is now global, Massey argues that the eager search for sense of place in a world where we become more and more uncertain of the meaning of place evidentially could form a nationalistic way of thinking, *us versus them. Our place* versus the *other places* where *other people* live. Sense of place, and experience of place, is something quite particular for each individual. But generalisations can be made to some extent; such as the fact that different movement patterns differ because of economical factors and where individuals either chose – or have to – live. People who work at the same place can have different sets of emotions towards their daily point (B) because "their unequal status propels them into different circulatory routes and work areas". (Tuan, 1977:41). Furthermore, gender plays a role in who and where people circulate,

and which feelings that arise from different places. Massey points out that women tend not to be as mobile as men, due to certain different aspects such as the feeling of displacement or lack of safety (Massey, 1994:154). These aspects of sense of/experience of place have inspired me in my work, since I wish to look at bicycles and bicycling as a way of understanding larger amounts of geographical areas.

Justin Spinney (2006, 2007) writes about the experience by bicycle in several ways. Firstly in his article about movement in and out of a place and the creation of place that follows (Spinney, 2006). Secondly of so-called *non-places*; places where people do not socially interact with each other, but simply roads that people travel on. Spinney then uses a form of participant observation to encounter the roads that are defined as non-places, or transit places (Spinney, 2007). Spinney's research has been a great inspiration to my own work, where his methods and theories are applied to Malmö.

In many ways, studies of experience by bicycle are relatively unknown. Lidström (2006) conducted a study about the correlation between commuting and political engagement within a municipality, and drew the conclusion that when exposed to one's surroundings while commuting, one become more engaged in political issues. This essay point to this factor but adds the bicycle as a new layer to the research.

## 2 The bicycle chapter

In this chapter, I will describe how Malmö has come to be portrayed by many as a city of bicycles. Further on I discuss the bicycle's role in planning, and which main factors it, according to comprehensive/ and bicycle plans, brings to a city and its residents.

### 2.1 Malmö By Bike

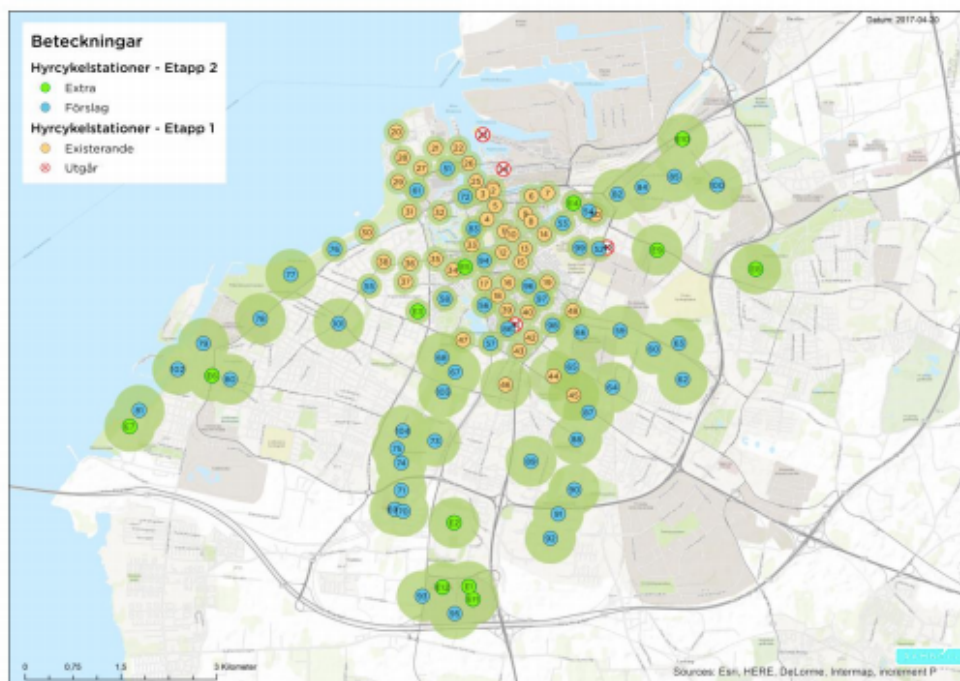
(...) The technical committee in September 2012 gave a formal assignment to the municipal department Gatukontoret to investigate the prerequisites for a rental bicycle system in Malmö, and that was perhaps the formal start in 2012. (Interview, Malmö Stad, 2017)

Many cities today have rental bicycle systems, as a substitute or complement to commuting. Paris has approximately 1800 stations in the city, situated no more than 300 meters apart from each other (Velib, 2017). London has 750 stations with 11500 bikes (Transport for London, 2017). Malmö is since May 2016 one of the cities in the world that now also provides rental stations, with 50 stations in the city center of Malmö of 500 bicycles. On the municipality webpage, the city says that the rental system is something that could be used by anyone in need of commuting or residing in Malmö, and either you can buy a full-year account or you can rent bicycles for one or three days. The system is constructed so that you can have your bike for maximum one hour, and then you have to return it to a station where you either go on with your day or you pick up another one and continue your journey (Malmö Stad, 2017).

When preparing for the rental system, Malmö Stad divided the potential users into three groups: commuters, tourists and residents. For the commuters, the stations were supposed to work as a complement to/ and facilitate the existing public transportation (Malmö Stad, 2014b:6-7). For the tourists, the rental bicycle stations are meant to work as an easy and interesting way of moving from attraction to attraction, (Ibid. 2014b:8) and for the residents, the target points are much similar to those of the commuters and tourists and were as follow:

- Neighborhoods
- Work places
- Trade places
- Culture and entertainment
- Sport and leisure
- Meeting places; squares, parks, bath

Hand in hand with these target points were geographical delimitations, such as a maximum range distance of 200 meters between the stations and connecting commuting traffic nearby (Ibid. 2014b:2). Since the launch, Malmö Stad has conducted a survey about how the residents of Malmö have received the rental bike system. It states that most of the usage is for recreational travels, and second is for commuting. 57 per cent of the travels, which are used for commuting, are in combination with other commuting possibilities such as bus or train travels. “We wanted it to be an extension of the public transportation, that one could move easier from point A to point B.” (Interview, Malmö Stad, 2017). This becomes clear when observing the second phase of the rental bike system, where the upcoming 50 stations should be located. The focused places were now especially Hyllie station to the south, but also Limhamn to the west and Rosengård to the east. Rather than spreading the stations, they are suggested to follow certain passages to make it easier for commuters in these particular peripheral areas (see Map 1).



Map 1. Map of the rental bike stations in Malmö. Source: Malmö Stad, 2017.

## 2.2 Bicycling and planning in Malmö Stad

There are many positive sides to using a bike instead of taking your car. According to the Swedish government administration authority Trafikverket, fifty per cent of the distances where people use cars are less than five kilometers long. Not only are these distances relatively short, but Trafikverket also states on their website that it is in the first five kilometers driven by car that release most exhaust gas (Trafikverket, 2017). A part from the environmental issues that comes from excessive usage of cars, the average life span of people who commute by bike tends to be longer and their lives tend to be healthier. In Malmö's comprehensive plan for bike usage, environmental and health aspects are the most referred to positive outcomes mixed with *cheap* and *accessible* (Gatukontoret, 2012:7). The aims of the bicycle plan are among others to enhance the percentage of bike rides from 23 percent to 30 percent, and to contribute to Trafikmiljöprogrammet (traffic environmental program) and its goals of a clean, quite and sustainable transport system (Ibid. 2012:9).

Easier access to urban areas is incredibly valuable, but by improving access, bicycle use could also potentially develop an individual's sense of place. (This Big City)

The quote above is from a website called This Big City, a blog about sustainable cities which analyses everything from architecture to transport systems. The article, which this quote is taken from, focuses on the use of bikes in cities, and the positive outcome that many municipalities and individuals tend to forget – the social impact. In Malmö 2012, there were 427 kilometres of bicycle path in the city, with plans to within the following years expand in both commuting purposes as well as recreational purposes (Gatukontoret, 2012:8, 21-26). A part from this, elements such as handrails and bicycle pumps should be installed to make everyday biking easier for the inhabitants of the city. Malmö Stad is working to “(...) help consolidate and strengthen the city's position as a recognized bicycle city, both nationally and internationally” (Ibid. 2012: 9). However, to find any information about experience of place connected to bicycles and planning, one must turn to blogs, such as the one quoted above, or academic articles (see Lidström, 2006; Spinney, 2006, 2007). Therefore, I wish for my research to be contributed to the discussion of the social angle being added to planning documents, alongside with the previous mentioned positive outcomes of planning for a bicycle friendly city.



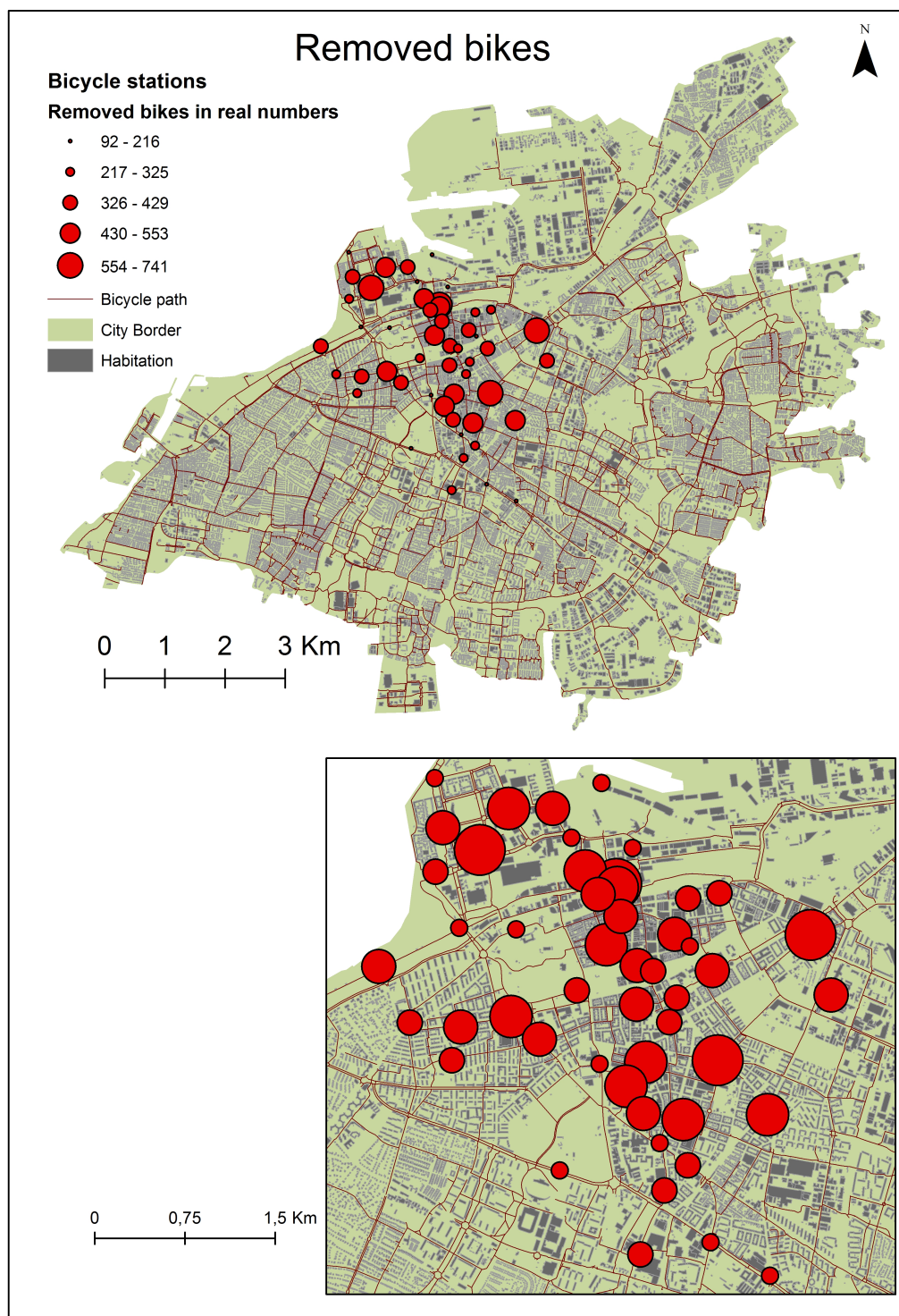
## 3 The statistical chapter

I will in this chapter present the empirical findings from the quantitative approach. The chapter consists of two maps, five tables and some analytical thoughts of the results.

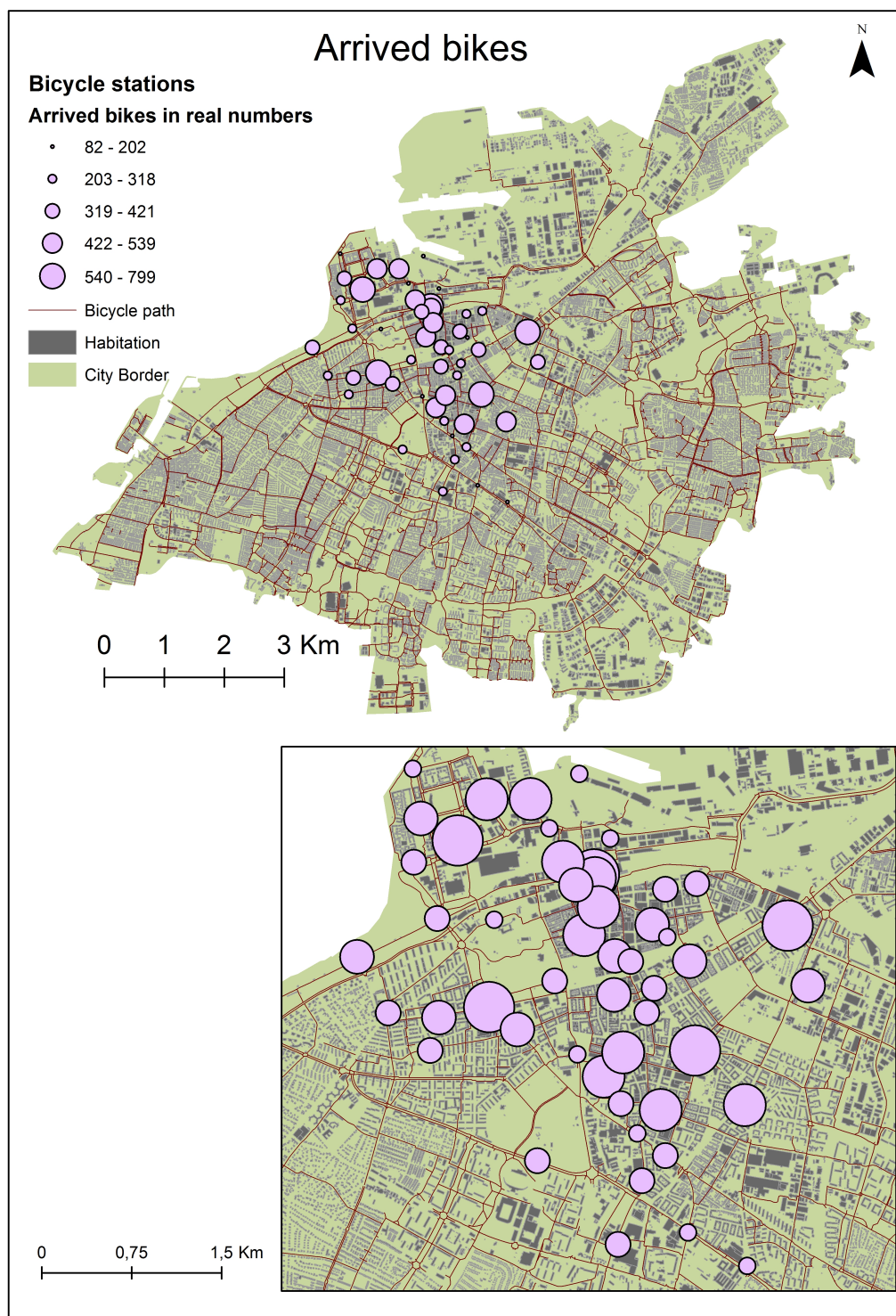
### 3.1 Malmö By Bike: Maps and tables

With data provided from the GIS-department of Malmö Stad and Clear Channel, two proportional symbol maps have been created. These maps are often used when you want to show a relative or absolute number of a phenomenon (Maantay & Ziegler, 2006:73). For this essay, the data have been classified using natural breaks, since these were identified as the best way of showing the differences between the stations. It is commonly known as the best way of classifying when there are “relatively big differences in the data values” (Esri, 2017).

The first map is of Malmö; with the rental bicycle stations marked as red circles. The larger the circle, the higher amount of times the station is being used during one week in late summer of 2017. Normally, we interpret larger symbols as having “more meaning” (ArcGis, 2017), which is the main reason one usually wishes to show with a proportional symbol map. Map 3 is done the same way, with the purple circles representing the amounts of arrived bicycles at the different stations. I have chosen to create rather simple maps to provide the reader with illustrative aid, and not add other elements to the analysis such as age, socio-economic status et cetera. The maps are then interpreted in tables (see Table 1-4) where station number and name are included. For all of the stations in question, the amount of docking opportunities is between 21 and 27. One station (Södervärn Väster) has 21 docking opportunities, one station (Scaniabadet) has 27, four stations (Masttorget, Malmö Central Norra, Malmöhusvägen and Sallerupsvägen 1) have 23 and four stations (Jörgen Kocksgatan, Saltimporten, Folkets Park and Kronprinsen) have 24 docking opportunities (Malmö By Bike, 2017). The fact that they differ in this matter could have an impact on the statistics, however since the bicycles do not have a mother station, I chose not to include it as an issue for my research.



Map 2: Removed bikes in real numbers, week 35, 2017. Map data: Malmö Stad (2017), Clear Channel (2017), Department of Human Geography (2017), Trafikverket (2017). Map layout: Andrea Ax Karlsén (2017).



Map 3: Arrived bikes in real numbers, week 35, 2017. Map data: Malmö Stad (2017), Clear Channel (2017), Department of Human Geography (2017), Trafikverket (2017). Map layout: Andrea Ax Karlsén (2017).

According to the dataset, where the results can be viewed in the maps above, the following stations are the most used ones, and the least used ones. They are presented in tables, with the real numbers of amounts of times used between the 28<sup>th</sup> of August and 3<sup>rd</sup> of September 2017.

**Table 1: Highest amount of removed bicycles**

Station name (station number)	Number of times removed
1. Malmö Central Norra (1)	741
2. Masttorget (27)	631
3. Folkets Park (19)	623
4. Sallerupsvägen 1 (50)	613
5. Kronprinsen (35)	553

Table 1: Highest amount of removed bicycles in Malmö, week 35 (28<sup>th</sup> of August until 3<sup>rd</sup> of September), 2017. Source: Clear Channel, 2017.

**Table 2: Lowest amount of removed bicycles**

Station name (station number)	Number of times removed
1. Saltimporten (23)	92
2. Jörgen Kocksgatan (24)	111
3. Malmöhusvägen (32)	167
4. Scaniabadet (20)	174
5. Södervärn Väster (41)	181

Table 2: Lowest amount of removed bicycles in Malmö, week 35 (28<sup>th</sup> of August until 3<sup>rd</sup> of September), 2017. Source: Clear Channel, 2017.

**Table 3: Highest amount of arrived bicycles**

Station name (station number)	Number of times arrived
1. Malmö Central Norra (1)	799
2. Masttorget (27)	650
3. Folkets Park (19)	646
4. Sallerupsvägen 1 (50)	645
5. Kronprinsen (35)	611

Table 3: Highest amount of arrived bicycles in Malmö, week 35 (28<sup>th</sup> of August until 3<sup>rd</sup> of September), 2017. Source: Clear Channel, 2017.

**Table 4: Lowest amount of arrived bicycles**

Station name (station number)	Number of times arrived
1. Saltimporten (23)	82
2. Jörgen Kocksgatan (24)	126
3. Södervärn Väster (41)	144
4. Malmöhusvägen (32)	154
5. Scaniabadet (20)	176

Table 4: Lowest amount of arrived bicycles in Malmö, week 35 (28<sup>th</sup> of August until 3<sup>rd</sup> of September), 2017. Source: Clear Channel, 2017.

**Table 5: Most popular travels, from starting point to destination**

Starting point	Arriving destination	Number of times travelled
1. Isbergs Gata (22)	Malmö Central Norra (1)	81
2. Masttorget (27)	Malmö Central Norra (1)	79
3. Malmö Central Norra (1)	Masttorget (27)	69
4. Masttorget (27)	Nordenskiöldsgatan 8 (25)	64
5. Östra Varvsgatan 9 (21)	Malmö Central Norra (1)	63
6. Lilla Varvsgatan 14 (28)	Malmö Central Norra (1)	61
7. Malmö Central Södra (2)	Masttorget (27)	58
8. Station Triangeln Norra (18)	Hästhagens Idrottsplats (34)	56
9. Malmö Central Norra (1)	Isbergs Gata (22)	54
10. Masttorget (27)	Isbergs Gata (22)	51

Table 5: The ten most frequent travels in Malmö during week 35 (28<sup>th</sup> of August until 3<sup>rd</sup> of September), 2017.

### 3.2 Analysis: the statistics

The one difference in the tables presented above is that the stations with the least amount of arrived bicycles differ in ranking order. A part from that, the least popular stations are the same; Saltimporten, Jörgen Kocksgatan, Södervärn, Scaniabadet and Malmöhusvägen. The most popular stations are both used as starting points and arriving destinations, and they share the same ranking. Malmö Central Norra, which is located just outside the central station, is the most used one without contest. By looking at maps 2 and 3, one can see that the patterns look very similar to both removed and arrived bikes, and that the popular stations are relatively spread out. What is interesting also, is that comparing the most and least used stations with the most frequent travels, we are introduced to other places such as Isbergs gata, Östra Varvsgatan 9, Lilla Varvsgatan 14, Station Triangeln Norra, Nordenskiöldsgatan 8, Malmö Central Södra and Hästhagens Idrottsplats. All these stations, a part from Station Triangeln and Malmö Central Södra, are residential areas, which could indicate that in these areas there are people using the rental bicycles as their main vehicle. Furthermore, in most of the cases, these residential areas are connected with a commuting node such as Station Triangeln, Malmö Central Södra or Malmö Central Norra, implying that the bicycles are mainly used for transportation to such a commuting node.

According to statistics from Malmö Stad, the stations in the top and bottom are of these natures, and have a bicycle station because of these target points:

**Table 6: Target points of the most popular stations**

Station name (number)	Target points
Malmö Central Norra (1)	Commuting node
Masttorget (27)	Trade place
Folkets Park (19)	Neighbourhood, Meeting place: square/park
Sallerupsvägen 1 (50)	Neighbourhood
Kronprinsen (35)	Neighbourhood, Trade place

Table 6: The target points for the five most frequently used stations. Source: Malmö Stad, 2014b.

**Table 7: Target points of the least popular stations**

Station name (number)	Target points
Saltimeporten (23)	Work place
Jörgen Kocksgatan (24)	Work place, Culture and entertainment
Södervärn Väster (41)	Work place, Neighbourhood, Commuting node
Scaniabadet (20)	Meeting place: bath
Malmöhusvägen (32)	Culture and entertainment

Table 7: The target points for the five least frequently used stations. Source: Malmö Stad, 2014b.

What is striking is that three of the five least visited places are work places. These locations are often places where people are not allowed or invited to unless they have some form of business there (Hägerstrand, 1970; Corbett, 2001). For the most used stations, the target points are either neighbourhoods or trade places. Trade places are so called private/public spaces, which roughly (and without further analysis of socio-economics, gender and the likes) are places where you do not need an invitation to go.

At the station Saltimeporten, there is no residential area close by, which probably is one of the answers as to why it is so drastically non-used compared to the other stations. The second target point that presents itself in the least popular table is culture and entertainment. Malmöhusvägen is a station located in between several museums, and not much else. This could mean that the station is mainly meant for tourists, or even weekend trips, making the station less popular in numbers. Scaniabadet is the station located along the beach road, with the target point meeting place: bath. That it is among the least used ones could definitely be a seasonal reason, with it being much more used in summer time than winter. However, these statistics are from late August/beginning of September, a time when it is still relatively warm in Malmö.

## 4 The ethnographical chapter

In this chapter I will provide with an illustrative description of a few of the locations of the bicycle stations in Malmö, constantly linking back to creation of place, experience of place and the use of my vehicle. I have interviewed four inhabitants of Malmö, and with their perspective combined with my own tour de Malmö By Bike, I wish to give the reader an embodied experience of a few places in the city.

Its one of the best things I know, I absolutely love biking. In terms of transportation I think its both better for the environment and myself. Then you also get to see the city, and see people. I don't know, I just think it is so nice! (Interview, Matilda, 2017)

### 4.1 Starting point: Folkets Park

Folkets Park feels like an activity station. (Interview, Linnéa, 2017)

It feels like a place you go to do things, going to bars or other activities. (Interview, Pontus, 2017)

Malmö city centre is relatively small, or at least according to a “Malmöbo” (local resident). From my starting point in the southernmost parts of the city centre to the ocean in the north, takes about 15-20 something minutes for every day bike riders. It is no more than approximately four kilometres from east to west, and from north to south. I start my journey at one of the most commonly used stations in the system: Folkets Park. It is located in a youthful area in the southern parts of the city centre, with bars and restaurants, small shops and markets. As can be understood, Folkets Park is the station the closest to the park with the same name, a park with playgrounds as well as bars and clubs, and during summer the lawns are crowded with people. Across the street from the station is S:t Knuts square, which today according to some is one of the most popular addresses one can reside on (see ETC, 2015; Sydsvenskan, 2015), and is just a few minutes away from the appreciated square Möllevångstorget. Here there are people moving in various directions; a few people enter the park with their strollers, some are walking towards the square. Many inhabitants are



walking in and out of the super market located a few metres from the bicycle station, and the bicycle path is heavily used in both directions.

Möllan to me is kind of like the core of Malmö. It's a great meeting point, maybe not the most central of places but I feel like it is *the* meeting point. (Interview, Linn, 2017)



Picture 1: S:t Knuts square. Source: Author, 2017.



Picture 2: View of the location of bicycle station Folkets Park, standing in front of the park. Source: Author, 2017.

I pick up a bike at Folkets Park, setting my next target to Saltimporten, which is the least used station of them all. I take Spångatan/Torpgatan, a road with a lot of bicyclists, and pass by City Hall and go through an underpass where a lot of commuters go every day.





Picture 3: The underpass nearby the City Hall. Source: Author, 2017.

From Folkets Park to Saltimporten, you go from the southern to the very northern parts of the city centre, thusly passing through the centre and the central station - the most frequently used station - whilst biking. After the underpass I enter the area called Lugnet (the calm), an area that in the 60s and 70s due to its poor living standards was demolished by the municipality and then rebuilt. Here we have the beginning of an avenue reaching all the way to Värnhemstorget, which is one of the most used bicycle paths according to the bicycle plan (Gatukontoret, 2012:8). I pass by some cafés and shops, and one of the infamous bicycle roundabouts, where no one stops for anyone. Here we enter another part of Malmö, the old town, which begins with the canal and one of the bridges taking us from the southern side of the city to the northern. There are more people here, but they all seem to move a little slower. Maybe it's the store windows luring people into walking in a different way. Maybe it's the fact that this area does not provide as clear and distinct bicycle paths, making the bicyclist feel more like a disturbing element to the surroundings. Even so, biking along Kalendegatan in the commercial parts of the city is making me slow down, and I become more aware of my surroundings.



Picture 4: Kalendegatan, Malmö. Source: Author, 2017.

## 4.2 Malmö Central Norra

One of the target points highlighted by Malmö Stad is communication, and since 57 per cent of the bicyclists who use Malmö By Bike claim that they use it in connection to other existing public transportations (Interview, Malmö Stad, 2017) – it is not a big surprise that the most used station in the collected data is Malmö Central.



Picture 5: Malmö Central Norra. Source: Author, 2017.

Here people are coming and going every five minutes it seems, either with trains arriving with people working in the city, or buses arriving with people going to

another city for work or school. This particular area of the central station is the original main entrance, but is a slightly bit calmer than the side facing the bus node just around the corner. There are plenty of sounds, from trains and buses of course but also of people talking to each other or on the phone, many of them seem stressed to get to work/school. I feel a bit stressed, the pace here is much different than the one at Kalendegatan. At the same time, I also smell the various foods and beverages from inside the station, where restaurants and cafés are lined up like a food court. Once inside there is both a sense of stress alongside a sense of people laughing and enjoying themselves while eating sandwiches or drinking coffee. The way people move around, the way people use the station every day gives it a sense of relation to people, much like creation of place is described by DeCerteau (1984). One can imagine the different individuals spending large amounts of their time here, having a favourite café where they always buy their coffee, making the central station a network of places (Tuan, 1977) where the people working there and the commuters all work as a structured team to create the place that is Malmö Central.



Picture 6 and 7: Inside the Central Station. Source: Author, 2017.

### 4.3 Saltimporten

I would never go to the area around, like, Slagthuset. It feels a bit dodgy. (Interview, Linnéa, 2017).

Saltimporten is located near Slagthuset, an industrial area in the northern parts of Malmö. To get to the least used station, I have to cross parking lots and ride alongside trucks and fast moving cars. I take wrong turns plenty of times, and there is not one single person around to ask for directions. Since I am surrounded by water, the wind is blowing with strong force and the lack of bicycle paths make me almost regret going here at all. The feeling of misplacement is striking, and when I arrive at the station I feel almost like I have finished a marathon.



Hard winds hit me in the back, and I look out over the water separating me from what feels like the “real” world. According to Hägerstrand (1970), the use of vehicles gives you the possibility to reach space otherwise closed to you. However, the struggle to get here by bicycle indicates that not many individuals would have the time/strength to leave here for one hour during lunch, and if they would do so they would probably go by car. For a visual comprehension of the difficulty reaching this place, see Picture 8 and Map 4.



Picture 8: On my way to Saltimporten. Source: Author, 2017.

It's not like I go anywhere just because there is a station there. (Interview, Matilda, 2017)

The lack of anything but offices and industry here makes the absence of people not difficult to comprehend. Since you do not tend to visit places you have no business to (see Hägerstrand, 1970; Cornett, 2001), my hypothesis is that not many Malmöbor go here just for fun.



Pictures 9 and 10: View of Saltimporten. Source: Author, 2017.



Map 4: Map of the surroundings of Saltimporten. The red circle represents the location of the rental bike station. Source: Google, 2017.

## 4.4 Kronprinsen

During week 35, the week when the data was collected by Clear Channel, Kronprinsen was the fifth most popular station in Malmö. It is located in the western part of the city centre, and the station can be found on one of the most well-known streets of the city: Regementsgatan, right outside of the shopping mall Kronprinsen. The street is crowded with cars and buses, and people going in and out of the blue building carrying grocery bags in their hands. In comparison with other parts of Malmö, this area feels very much like a neighbourhood. This is a distinct example of what Jane Jacobs (1961) meant by the inhabitants making the city feel safe simply by using the sidewalks, everyone is calm and walking in a certain pace.

The buildings here are colourful and with the park nearby the air smell relatively fresh even though I am standing right next to a large road. A part from Kronprinsen and a few shops along Regementsgatan, the area is mostly residential. Two of my interviewees, Pontus and Linnéa, live here and they both agree that the area is a nice and structured neighbourhood, where the residents all seem to work together to keep the place clean and safe.

It feels safe to be in a residential area, knowing that people live there and that they are near you. (Interview, Pontus, 2017)



Pictures 11 and 12: Kronprinsen, entrance Regementsgatan. Carl Hillsgatan, an example of residential area. Source: Author, 2017.

With the even stream of people walking calmly on the sidewalks, there is a sense of safety. The sounds here come mostly from cars, or people talking to each other in low-key voices. Jacobs (1961) points out that it is not the actual police which are policing the streets, but it works as a “network of voluntary controls and standards among the people themselves, and enforced by the people themselves.” (Jacobs, 1961:108). Something that resident Linnéa confirms in our interview:

There is a sense of safety here, it feels like everyone wants it to be quiet and calm and safe. Maybe it’s not the “friendliest” community, but very beautiful and calm. It’s not like the *Möllan spirit*. (Interview, Linnéa, 2017)

I pick up another bike, and decide to go to one of the least used stations, Malmöhusvägen. Since it is not at all far from Kronprinsen, I wonder what could make it so drastically different in ranking. The easiest way to that station is to go via Mariedalsvägen, passing by the park with the football field to the right and the old fishing stalls to the left.



Pictures 13 and 14: Fishing stalls “Fiskehoddarna”. Mariedalssvägen, the football field. Source: Author, 2017.

## 4.5 Arriving destination: Malmöhusvägen

The station I park at is in the middle of a cluster of museums. Malmö Museum, The Technical Museum and Kommendantshuset (another museum) are just a few steps away from where I am now standing. Malmöhusvägen is one of the least popular stations, only a few minutes long bike ride away from Kronprinsen. When I have Malmö Museum, one of Malmö's oldest buildings, in front of me, I have a parking lot just behind, and behind that the canal, which is dividing this old part of the city from the beginning of the western harbour – Västra Hamnen. In this particular area I feel very lonely, it is just I and one other person parking her car in the parking lot. What makes it different from Kronprinsen, a part from the lack of people, is that there are no residential buildings in the nearby area. Thusly, the one target point of this station ought to be the museums; culture and entertainment (Malmö Stad, 2014b). When I arrive at Malmöhusvägen, since there are not many people to be found here, it is almost silent. You can hear cars from a distance, but otherwise it is just you and Malmö Museum. There is a moat surrounding the museum, with birds swimming, giving the place a sense of peacefulness. However, if I do not wish to enter the museums, I find myself pretty lost.



Picture 15: Malmöhusvägen. The parking lot. Source: Author, 2017.





Picture 16: Malmö Museum. Source: Author, 2017.

## 4.6 Ethnographical summary

Having visited these places by bicycle, one can point to a few similarities as to why some of them might be frequently visited, and why some of them might not be. At Malmö Central, Folkets Park and Kronprinsen, there were people walking around in the area, either using the commercial possibilities or simply using the sidewalks for walking dogs or with strollers. These places all had some form of commercial business, with cafés/restaurants, supermarkets or retail stores. Folkets Park and Kronprinsen also shared the common denominator of being both residential and commercial. All these places were easy to get to, with distinct bicycle paths and handrails to facilitate the journey.

Saltimporten and Malmöhus were both relatively empty places, where no one used the sidewalks. At Saltimporten there was no commercial at all, and only museums at Malmöhusvägen. To get to Saltimporten you had to cross large roads, and neither of the places had bicycle paths leading up to them.

A mix of smell from restaurants, people talking on their phones or to each other and a sense of structure made the frequently visited places easily grasped for me as a researcher. I could come to some understanding of the purpose of these places, and with people using the sidewalks I did not feel misplaced. These places inevitably became easier to comprehend and experience.



## 5 The discussion chapter

In this essay, I set out to discuss the questions:

- How can the usages of bicycles make inhabitants experience Malmö?
- Could commuting by bicycle have positive social outputs such as understanding and integration?

To help answer these questions, or at least make general assumptions to them, the essay is divided into two parts, a quantitative and a qualitative one. Each part with its own empirical results and sub question:

- Which areas in Malmö have the greatest movement by bicycle, and which have the lowest?
- Which factors could possibly make people use certain geographical areas in Malmö and how is this affecting the experience of place?

In this final chapter I will discuss my findings and the linkage I see between it and the used theoretical framework. Firstly, I follow the general pattern of the essay by dividing the chapter in two parts, discussing the empirical findings. Secondly, I combine the two in a concluding paragraph, discussing the empirical findings in relation to the theories and thoughts on positive social outcomes.

### **Quantitative approach**

I have, using the statistical tool GIS and data collected from the rental bicycle system Malmö By Bike, been able to map which stations have the highest and lowest amount of movement during one week (35) of 2017. This is of importance to the essay when linking the statistical findings to the theoretical framework in which the way people move in/ and utilize space makes it into place (see Jacobs, 1961; Tuan, 1977; DeCerteau, 1984). The results in relation to the target points set out by Malmö Stad (2014b) when deciding locations of the rental bike stations turned out to be varied, except for the one factor that the less popular stations tended to be nearby work places (see Table 7). This is interesting when for instance referring to Hägerstrand (1984) and the authority constraint, which implies that places where people need an invite to enter tend to not be visited by others than the people working there.

Another interesting finding in my statistical chapter is that the most frequent bicycle rides (see Table 5) were either from a residential area to a commuting node, or from a commuting node to a residential area. This indicates that most of the journeys are in commuting purpose. However, the five most popular stations differed from these bicycle stations (see Tables 1, 3 and 5), perhaps telling us that the users of the system have different purposes: either they are commuters who use Malmö By Bike every day, or there is a large group of people going to and from Folkets Park, Sallerupsvägen 1 and Kronprinsen every now and then during the week.

With the statistical data I then continued my research, now being able to limit the ethnographical and qualitative part to the stations with the highest and lowest usage frequency. What one needs to keep in mind, however, is that the statistics of this essay builds on data collected by the rental bicycle system, and people using their own bicycles have not been taken into consideration for this particular study.

### **Qualitative approach**

Many researchers believe that social studies to some extent need to be lived and experienced by the researcher (Bryman, 2016; Guest et. al, 2017). Having created maps and tables of the most and least used stations in Malmö, I therefore set out to visit these places myself, through so-called embodied experience. As this is a limited essay, both in time and writing space, three of the most frequently used stations and two of the least used stations were selected: Malmö Central, Folkets Park and Kronprinsen (popular) and Saltimporten and Malmöhusvägen (unpopular). In between these stations, some of the transit areas when going from one place to another were also incorporated, to give more depth to the experience when biking.

Four interviews with five participants in total were performed, one in the very beginning with Malmö Stad to get a wider image of Malmö as a city of bicycles and the creation of the rental bicycle system Malmö By Bike. Three interviews were conducted with four interviewees about their bicycle habits and which places they use and do not use. The interviews with the residents are incorporated with my qualitative empirical findings, and they are all conducted after the participant observation, to keep me from having too many assumptions about the places beforehand. The interviewees did not know until after the interview was finished what exactly I was looking for, giving them the freedom to speak openly about places and bicycling as they wished. This as a way of trying to control the ecological validity of the study, where the interviewees otherwise might just have told me what I wanted to hear. The downside to this way of performing the interviews is that some of the places where I conducted the participant observation were not mentioned in the interviews, neither as places they knew of nor places they would not tend to visit.

The main factor experienced when visiting the most popular places was the different amount of people and movement in the areas. At Malmö Central there were hundreds of commuters as well as people visiting the cafés and bars, with a mixture of people rushing to their trains as well as customers having lunch or a cup of coffee. Folkets Park was crowded with young families with strollers walking towards the park and groups of people who were moving towards the square. Kronprinsen had a large amount of middle aged to elderly people going in and out of the mall, and families walking around the streets looking into shop windows or walking their dogs. All these places, even Malmö Central with its somewhat rushed users, were coordinated and structured. The people there had a purpose, either simply visiting a public space such as the park or going somewhere by train. There was a sense of structure, with the people using the place making for the place to be experienced as structured and therefore safe. While visiting Kronprinsen, one of the residents there whom I spoke with stated that the people living there had an unspoken bond where they all wished for it to be “(...) quiet and calm and safe (...)” (Interview, Linnéa, 2017). What one can experience when arriving to these places by bicycle is thusly that many of the users of the sidewalks and streets contribute to making the place as a whole feel structured and safe. Much like one can assume when reading DeCerteau (1984), Jacobs (1961) and Tuan (1977).

To put this in contrast when visiting the least popular places, the amount of people could on both occasions be counted on one hand. According to DeCerteau (1984), it is the voyagers, the people using the space that makes it a place (1984:117). As a visitor in these two certain areas (Saltimporten and Malmöhusvägen), I feel somewhat misplaced. Saltimporten consist of a cluster of work places, which leads me to the conclusion that you either work here and therefore go here, otherwise you do not. When referring to Hägerstrands (1970) constraints, it is true that you with the help of your vehicle (in this case Malmö By Bike) can get to this location, and maybe eat at the one restaurant located here, which you by foot would not have had the time to do, but without an invitation to one of the offices there are not many factors as to why you would. In the case of Malmöhusvägen, the station is located in a cluster of museums; places people go with a sole purpose and probably on special occasions, such as tourists visiting on weekends. These factors could however be impacted by both the limited amount of time I had while visiting the places, and also the cold November weather.

### **Conclusion: could experiencing the city have positive social outputs?**

To do research on the experience of place is by no means easy, and can be questioned in various ways. I have named a few critical elements, which could have contaminating impacts of the study such as the fact that the ethnographical chapter is focused much on my own experience as a researcher. Even though the study is complemented with interviews and constantly linked back to the

theories, I understand that the validity could be questioned, both in terms of external validity (can the results of my study be generalised?) and inferential validity (can I draw any conclusions from my study?). With the time and writing space limit, I am also aware of the possible errors that could occur, and that the focus of this essay intrinsically requires much more empirics. However, with the data collected, one can see a general pattern in the places mentioned where the usage of a certain space makes it a place, and thusly why bicyclists might visit it. If the space in question has some form of movement and structure, it will seem more like a DeCerteauian place to the person experiencing it. Or, in the words of Spinney (2007) “(...) the more intense a sensory encounter, the easier it is for participants to articulate their understanding of it” (2007:30).

Previous research on correlation between people commuting to work and political engagement has come to the conclusion that when going by car you isolate yourself from the environment, but when commuting with public transportation you experience your surroundings and become more aware of different ethnicities and environments. Thusly leading to a greater will to engage politically (Lidström, 2006:232). I have in this essay the wish to contribute to a discussion on whether the use of bicycles as a way of commuting could help inhabitants of Malmö experience the city as a network of places. This with following potential social outputs, such as greater understanding and integrating effects. Lidström (2006) means that there is a “politically mental regional enlargement” (Ibid.,) that comes from experiencing larger areas when commuting, which in this context I reference to the use of bicycles in planning. With its many sub areas, with different standards of residing and living, one can imagine it easy for the people of Malmö to mainly know one’s home base and a few nodes of commercialism or communication. The different places I have visited during my ethnographic study very much have their own character, and even though e.g. Kronprinsen and Malmöhusvägen are just a few streets apart they differ in many ways. Kronprinsen had a sense of structure, with people using the sidewalks, whereas Malmöhusvägen was empty of people. However, when understanding the connection of two places, one can at least grasp the closeness between them. When going from point (A) to point (B) by bicycle, I also became aware of the transit surroundings, where I going to Saltimporten had to make decisions on which street to use and where to turn. Thusly, letting me experience streets formerly unknown to me. Massey (1994) points to the fact that individuals’ senses of place could have segregating outcomes, as a way of comprehending one’s own neighbourhood. However, when understanding a place as a whole, its ambiance and structure, it is seen as a total phenomena of place (Norberg-Schultz, 2003). When going to the various stations, the fact that I was open for different smells and sounds made the experience of these places more embodied than had I travelled by bus or car. If lived through embodied experience by bicycle, one might be able to connect the different sub areas to a Tuanian network of places, making the experienced ambiance of Malmö more clearly to its inhabitants. Or, in the words of Malmöbo Matilda:

I feel like I am becoming a part of the city, I mean I am a part of the commuting traffic, but I become a part of the city when I go by bike. (Interview, Matilda, 2017)

And Linnéa:

It is also a great way of discovering a city, I know I did that when I first moved to Malmö, that I biked to different places, so I learned the ways of the city fast. That way it didn't become this confusing like now I am taking the bus or subway and all of a sudden I am in a completely different place. You get a connection, a context, it doesn't become dots on a map. (Interview, Linnéa, 2017)

To conclude, this essay is constructed through mixed methods in order to provide information making possible a discussion about experience of place and social outputs. The methodological sub questions help pointing to certain areas in Malmö, be them heavily visited or not so visited by the rental bicycle system. The qualitative sub question then provides the reader with different factors and elements experienced in these geographical areas, such as amount of people and structures of the area, and finally in what way these factors and elements impact the experience of the bicycle rider. I have in this essay come to draw a few conclusions about what factors make for experienced places, such as the use of place and the structure of as well the users as the target points. One can see a possible pattern of people going places where they feel welcome, and where they have a purpose; be that commercial, neighbourhood or to commute further. I entered the research aiming to answer the questions whether bicycles could work as a tool for place experience, and if the experience one has when visiting places by bicycle could have positive social outputs. I may only have scraped the surface of these aims, but with the empirical findings in this essay, one can at least discuss some assumptions about the possible positive output such as understanding of one's surroundings. This can be seen in the ways the interviewees speak about their experiences and see a potential pattern, such as the quotes above by Matilda and Linnéa. When comparing their views with my Parisian friend, the similarity in the ways of expressing themselves is striking. In terms of integration, a discussion on whether a deeper understanding could lead to integrating outcomes is interesting, especially in reference to Massey's work on local and global sense of place. Especially in the case of Malmö, where it appears that the most visited places already had a purpose, a structure, whereas the unvisited places remained relatively unvisited and therefore lack in people movement and lack of understanding of place. However, to be able to establish any distinct correlation between the use of bicycles and integration, more research is required.

**Further thoughts**

Having written this essay, a few evidential thoughts have emerged. Each individual's sense of place is in fact – individual. One must be aware of the difference between my experience as a researcher, who links back to a theoretical framework, and the experience of another person or several other persons. With this said, I am not looking to portray certain places in Malmö as non-places, since e.g. the people working at Saltimporten most definitely relate to it in other ways than I do, and experience it in different ways than I do. For further research, more data could be collected and analysed during various periods of time thusly giving the statistics more depth. With more interviews, and possibly with several authors, the discussion would be broader and give more inputs as to why planners could incorporate the social benefits of commuting by bicycle in comprehensive plans.

## 6 References

- ArcGis, 2017. [website] *Proportional symbol*.  
<http://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=951daa05f38749de939b34239cc5145d> (Retrieved: 2017-11-15)
- Auge, Marc, 1995. From places to non-places in *Non-places – an introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*.  
<http://14.139.206.50:8080/jspui/bitstream/1/668/1/Auge,%20Marc%20-%20Non%20Places,%20Introduction%20to%20an%20Anthropology%20of%20Supermodernity.pdf>
- Bryman, Alan, 2016. *Social Research Methods*. 5<sup>th</sup> edition. Oxford University Press.
- Burke Johnson, R, 1997. *Examining the validity structure of qualitative research*.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/profile/R\\_Johnson3/publication/246126534\\_Examining\\_the\\_Validity\\_Structure\\_of\\_Qualitative\\_Research/links/54c2af380cf219bbe4e93a59.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/R_Johnson3/publication/246126534_Examining_the_Validity_Structure_of_Qualitative_Research/links/54c2af380cf219bbe4e93a59.pdf)
- Clear Channel, 2016. *Clear Channel lanserar Malmö By Bike*.  
<http://www.clearchannel.se/nyhetsdetaljer/items/clear-channel-lanserar-malmoe-by-bike-20160513-pa-loerdag-klockan-12-oepptar-malmoes-nya-hyrcykelsystem-malmoe-by-bike-med-stor-> (Retrieved: 2017-11-20)
- Copenhagenize Index, 2017. [website]. *Home: the index*.  
<http://copenhagenize.eu/index/index.html> (Retrieved: 2017-11-20)
- Corbett, John, 2001. *Torsten Hägerstrand: Time Geography*.  
<https://cloudfront.escholarship.org/dist/prd/content/qt2t75b8sj/qt2t75b8sj.pdf>
- DeCerteau, Michel, 1984. “Walking in the city” in *The practice of everyday life*. University of California Press.
- DeCerteau, Michel, 1984. “Spatial stories” in *The practice of everyday life*. University of California Press.
- Esri, 2017. [website] *Data classification methods*.  
<http://pro.arcgis.com/en/pro-app/help/mapping/symbols-and-styles/data-classification-methods.htm> (Retrieved: 2017-11-15)
- ETC, 2015. [website]. *Medvetet men trivsamt i hipsterkvarteren*.  
<https://malmo.etc.se/kultur-noje/medvetet-men-trivsamt-i-hipsterkvarteren> (Retrieved: 2017-12-10)

- Gatukontoret, 2012. *Cykelprogram för Malmö Stad, 2012-2019*.  
<https://malmo.se/download/18.3744cbfb13a77097d8748de/1491304922305/Cykelprogram+f%C3%B6r+Malm%C3%B6+stad+2012-2019+2012-10-30.pdf>
- Guest, Greg – Emely E. Namey & Marilyn L. Mitchell, 2017.  
 “Participant Observation” in *Collecting qualitative data: a manual for applied research*, 2017. SAGE Publications Ltd.  
<http://methods.sagepub.com/base/download/BookChapter/collecting-qualitative-data/i409.xml>
- Hägerstrand, Torsten, 1970. *What about people in regional science?*  
 Ninth European Congress of the Regional Science Association.  
 Regional Science Association Papers I: Carlestam & Solbe (red)  
 Omtidens vidd och tingens ordning. Statens råd för byggnadsforskning. Stockholm.
- Jacobs, Jane 1961. *The use of sidewalks: Safety*.  
[http://www.miguelangelmartinez.net/IMG/pdf/1961\\_Jacobs\\_TheUsesofSidewalksby\\_excerpt.pdf](http://www.miguelangelmartinez.net/IMG/pdf/1961_Jacobs_TheUsesofSidewalksby_excerpt.pdf)
- Lidström, Anders, 2006. “Pendling och medborgardeltagande i Göteborgsregionen” in Lennart Nilsson (red) *Nya Gränser. Västsverige*. Göteborgs universitet, SOM-institutet.
- Maantay, Juliana - John Ziegler, 2006. *GIS for the urban environment*. Esri Press: Redlands.
- Malmö By Bike, 2017. [website] *Availability Map*.  
[https://www.malmobybike.se/sv/availability\\_map#anclamapa](https://www.malmobybike.se/sv/availability_map#anclamapa)  
 (Retrieved: 2017-11-20)
- Malmö Stad, 2014a. *Översiktsplan för Malmö – Planstrategi*.  
[http://malmo.se/download/18.5bb0a05f145db1bc43d6ac4/1491302698823/OP2012\\_planstrategi\\_antagen\\_140522.pdf](http://malmo.se/download/18.5bb0a05f145db1bc43d6ac4/1491302698823/OP2012_planstrategi_antagen_140522.pdf)
- Malmö Stad, 2014b. *Målpunktsanalys för hyrcykelsystem i Malmö*.
- Malmö Stad, 2017. *Målpunktsanalys hyrcykel, etapp 2*.
- Massey, Doreen, 1994. “A global sense of place” in *Space, Place and Gender*. Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Norberg-Schulz, Christian, 2003. *The phenomenon of place*.  
<https://parametricplaces14.files.wordpress.com/2014/04/phenomenon-of-place1.pdf>
- Spinney, Justin, 2006. “A place of sense: a kinaesthetic ethnography of cyclists on Mont Ventoux” in *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. SAGE Publications.
- Spinney, Justin, 2007. “*Cycling the city: non-place and the sensory construction of meaning in a mobile practice*” in Horton, Dave – Paul Rosen and Peter Cox, 2007, *Cycling and the Society*. New York: Routledge.
- Statistiska Centralbyrån, 2010. *Fler pendlar till jobbet*.  
[http://www.scb.se/statistik/\\_publikationer/le0001\\_2010k03\\_ti\\_04\\_a05ti1003.pdf](http://www.scb.se/statistik/_publikationer/le0001_2010k03_ti_04_a05ti1003.pdf)



- Sydsvenskan, 2015. [website]. *Malmö's hetaste gata. Plats 8: S:t Knuts Väg*. <https://www.sydsvenskan.se/2015-10-14/malmos-hetaste-gata-plats-8-st-knuts-vag> (Retrieved: 2017-12-08)
- This Big City, 2011. *Urban bicycle networks and an improved sense of place*. <http://thisbigcity.net/urban-bicycle-networks-and-an-improved-sense-of-place/> (Retrieved: 2017-11-06)
- Trafikverket, 2017. *Säkerhet på cykel*. [https://www.trafikverket.se/resa-och-trafik/Trafiksakerhet/Din-sakerhet-pa-vagen/sakerhet\\_pa\\_cykel/](https://www.trafikverket.se/resa-och-trafik/Trafiksakerhet/Din-sakerhet-pa-vagen/sakerhet_pa_cykel/) (Retrieved: 2017-11-23)
- Transport for London, 2017. [website]. Finding a docking station. <https://tfl.gov.uk/models/cycling/santander-cycles/find-a-dockingstation?intcmp=2321> (Retrieved: 2017-10-03)
- Tuan, Yi-Fu, 1974. "Space and place: humanistic perspective" in Agnew, John – David N. Livingstone & Alisdair Rogers (1996) *Human Geography – an essential*. Blackwell Publishing.
- Tuan, Yi-Fu, 1977. *Space and place: the perspective of experience*. London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Velib: Mairie de Paris, 2017. [website] *Stations in Paris*. <http://en.velib.paris.fr/Stationsin-Paris> (Retrieved: 2017-10-03)

## 7 Appendix: interview questions

The interview with Malmö Stad was conducted before the study had begun, and was meant as an entry to my understanding of Malmö as a bicycle city. I therefore prepared the following questions:

- How did Malmö By Bike come to be?
- What did the process look like?
- How did you know where to place the stations?
- How is Malmö Stad working with bicycles in general?
- What response have you had to Malmö By Bike?
- What difficulties have you noticed?
- Where are the future stations to be placed?

Since I intended for the interviews with the rental bicycle system using residents of Malmö Stad to have a semi-structured form, I had a few questions prepared but quickly let the interviewees decide which subjects to discuss. The following questions were used in all three interview situations:

- How often do you commute with bicycle?
- How often do you use Malmö By Bike?
- Which places do you bike to and from in Malmö?
- Could you describe these areas with a few words?
- Why do you use your bicycle?
- Which benefits do you see with going places by bicycle?
- Which downsides are there?