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# Walking Along Wandering Off and Going Astray

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A Critical Normativity Approach to Walking  
as a Situated Architectural Experience

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Kajsa Lawaczeck Körner







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**Urban Darkness**

**Encounters and Companions**

**Orientations**

**Reflections on Method and Situatedness**

**Contrasting Opportunities**

# Walking Along, Wandering Off and Going Astray

A Critical Normativity Approach to Walking  
as a Situated Architectural Experience

Kajsa Lawaczeck Körner



**LUND**  
UNIVERSITY

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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A Critical Normativity Approach to Walking  
as a Situated Architectural Experience

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## Abstract

There is a lack of attention toward the diversity in experiences of architecture that are expressed through walking. Through the application of autoethnography and critical perspectives of queer and feminist theory, this dissertation develops a method for investigating experiences of architecture in regard to the activity of walking. In addition, this thesis addresses the influence of form, materiality, and social aspects on walk conditions, thus providing architectural perspectives on design and planning that aim to address a heterogeneity among people who walk or are involved in walk matters in their everyday life.

The result is an investigatory framework—*critical normativity*—that consists of three components: observations through a *walk diary*, the walk technique *going astray*, and the theoretical application of a *critical terminology*. These components work to address and situate experiences of spatiality and materiality and their impact on our walk experiences. The *walk diary* is a data collecting technique that stresses subjectivity of experiences, *going astray* is an approach that should encourage associations and openness in attitude in the investigatory phase, and the *critical terminology* is a theoretical framework addressing normativity and thereby positioning the interpretations of the empirical material. The applied main concepts of the *critical terminology* are: dis-/orientation, background/foreground, performativity, differences, situated knowledges and partial perspective, all of which are derived from queer and feminist theory.



The dissertation shows that the researchers, eventually also designers and planners, will benefit from actively engaging themselves in the world of walking by reflecting and incorporating their own walk experiences into their methods and work, in order to develop empathy with the research topic, as well as critically situating their own knowledge perspectives. This way—i.e. by applying a *critical normativity*—the formation of walk related identities will inevitably activate: questions of e.g. desires; power to act; identity formation; subjectivity and temporality in regard to the experiences of space and materiality. In the application of the investigatory framework—*critical normativity*—the impact and dynamics of time, in regard to variation in action possibilities, are also addressed. This points to the fact that, in order to include a range of walk needs and behaviors, perception of difference—in particular difference that has not been pre-defined—in itself should be addressed, along with further development of performativity perspectives and identity formation as important constituents of walk conditions.

Keywords: walking, architecture, embodied experience, identity formation, critical normativity, situatedness, walk diary, going astray, heterogeneity, differences, deviations, orientation, performativity.

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# 1. Introduction

## **Research Topic, Purpose and Aim**

To walk is partly to understand space—perceptually through tactile, visual, haptic, and cognitive sensations—but also to express and manifest pedestrian relations of desires, needs and preferences. Geographer Jennie Middleton (2010), (2011: 2872) in “Sense and the city: Exploring the embodied geographies of urban walking” and “‘I’m on autopilot, I just follow the route’: Exploring the habits, routines, and decision-making practices of everyday urban mobilities.” points to the lack of attention to the heterogeneous “experiential dimensions of moving on foot” within policy documents and transport research.

The overall topic for this dissertation is walking. Walking is here the subject matter as well as a method for observing and studying experiences of architecture, materiality and spatiality. Therefore, walking is addressed from several angles: as a method for investigating and gaining knowledge of urban contexts; as related to design for pedestrians; and as a phenomenological study of the relation between body and space. This way walking is, in this dissertation, understood as a way of gaining embodied experiences of space and urban situations, but also a way to raise questions regarding inhabiting a city and expressing desires. The study is critical of certain views regarding the role of pedestrians in the city, but does not see walking in itself as a subversive action or a mode of critique of society.<sup>1</sup> Rather, the criticality in this study is analytically directed towards simplifications of the walking subject. Taken together, these aspects form a perspective on walking as an action and a device that can work—in research and in architectural practice—to point out and illustrate norms related to walking in an urban context.

<sup>1</sup> As suggested by e.g. Michel De Certeau (2002), French Jesuit, and scholar in e.g. philosophy and social science, or situationists such as Guy Debord, Marxist theorist and writer.



The purpose of this dissertation is first and foremost methodological: to develop methods and theories that support investigations of embodied experiences of architectural space in regard to walking. This in order to discuss and propose a framework for how spatial planning and design can be done in a more including manner by acknowledging a range of differences in desires and identities among pedestrians. Furthermore, an intention, or hope of mine, is that these investigations will initiate design that can encourage more people to walk.

My investigations concern architecture, corporeality, materiality and socio-spatial conditions, and the methodology take into account perceptual, ethnographic as well as norm-critical theories. Through taking concepts from queer and feminist studies, and applying them to the topic of walking rather than that of gender (roles) in urban space in general, the appearance of power is discussed in the sense of which desires and needs of pedestrians can be expressed while walking. This way, the dissertation implicitly makes a power analysis but without departing from already categorized actors, groups, or forces of power in society.

One of the cornerstones of my research is the social implications of how architecture influences walking. Walking as a mode of moving around in a city can be considered a matter of justice regarding access, not only to material space, but also to society. Not only tracks, parks, and sidewalks that are made explicitly for pedestrians, but also urban space in general, offer material conditions that may enforce or reduce conflicts of interests regarding walking possibilities. Conflicts do not have to be regarded as unwanted from a planner's perspective—they can also be a source for democratic treatment of pedestrian needs.

A large group of the population is able to walk, but if walking conditions are poor, people might be excluded: socially as well as physically. In an extended context, planning strategies favoring the car might cause a greater car dependency, which might increase already existing social segregation, for instance simply between those who own a car and those who do not. This, coupled with the fact that car dependency also causes traffic regulation problems, environmental problems etc., makes an increased car dependency a simplified reflection of a complex matter related to walkers' needs and desires. Even if it partly shows how closely linked environmental and social issues might be, it only hints at the large social segregation complex, which cannot be reduced to ownership and economic issues, but contains aspects of identity tied to gender, sexuality, ethnicity, skin color, health status and psychological well-being.

The embodied experience of architecture and how the spatial and material appearance affects us add on to the list of aspects influencing our walking premises, and, in a greater perspective, the complexity of the interdependence between these factors needs to be considered when addressing pedestrian issues. So, even if larger parts of my investigation are based in the individual embodied experience of tangible matters, the study addresses these sociological aspects of architecture and walking.

The dissertation aims to contribute to architectural theory as well as to gender studies by discussing the impact of norms and normativity: in spatial existence, as well as in research and in practical investigations. This is done by developing a conceptual framework, *critical normativity*, which problematizes the appearance and consequences of normativity in relation to the design of cities, space and place. Normativity is, in this dissertation, to be understood as how the design of space will influence the utilization of space—that norms governing the design process and its decisions will have an impact on how a space can be used, and by whom. Since norm-criticality is the very basis for, and highly developed in, feminist and queer theories, I have found these to be particularly suitable for my investigations.

Planning and design of space is a way to control the usage of it. This is always conducted from a certain position—a position of institutionalized regulations and personal opinions, expressing norms. This way norms will affect the process of design and planning as well as be expressed through the organization of space. Norms are manifested in the physical form and to some extent reproduced in the experiences and use of architectural space. However, our experiences of architecture might also restrain or encourage us to act in line with normed preconceptions of space and materiality. But, even though designers have specific intentions, to some extent users have a freedom to interpret the design on their own terms. This way some people will have the possibility to affirm norms and act in line with them, while others might have to deviate and act against them. The acknowledgment of these deviations from norms of usage could contribute to an inclusive planning perspective, and in a long-term perspective such deviations could also create new unexpected norms for interactions with space.

This dissertation is based in an autoethnographic method with a self-experienced walk perspective, but in accordance with what I said above about the social aspects, this is a way to pay attention to both subjective and intersubjective aspects of pedestrian space. My attempt to critically review normed preconceptions

of architecture in my own experiences of walking in mundane urban situations, is supported by perspectives of feminist and queer studies that are able to step beyond specific issues in sex and gender debate, and relate to comprehensions of human existence and societal patterns in general. This way, the framework of *critical normativity*, and the thesis as a whole, also has as an objective to present perspectives on architecture and urbanity applicable to the practice of urban design and planning, regarding how the experience of architecture, including the identity issues that are part of this experience, might affect walking itself.

In order to address the complexity of the above stated matters and to develop a framework, I discuss and develop in this dissertation an investigatory approach—*going astray*—and a data-collecting technique—a *walk diary*—where I collect walk experiences that are then reflected upon in relation to a *critical terminology*.

### **Case settings**

The case settings are samples of everyday urban situations, primarily extracted from my *walk diary* and most of them are made during the course of a year and a half. These *walk diary* notes, (24 samples), include specific sites, as well as more thematic notes regarding, for instance, the character of neighborhoods, commerce, or darkness. Twenty-one of these *walk diary* notes emanate from walks in the central to peripheral parts of the city of Malmö, Sweden.<sup>2</sup> Two walk notes—a memory of a walk in Greensboro, Alabama, U.S., and one in Berlin, Germany—are recalled through memory, substantialized in retrospect. Memories of other sites and other walk experiences also occur briefly, as discursive examples in the analysis of the *walk diary* notes. In order to situate my walk experiences it has been methodologically important to include memories triggered by experience of the present. Taken together these situations cover a varied range of urban types and architectural contexts.

### **Theoretical Standpoints in regard to Walking, Normativity and Urbanity**

During my research process, I discovered, among other things, a fondness for walking in darkness. This fondness of darkness—possibly a deviating attitude in itself, but also an activator for my mixed emotions regarding the matter—would not have been

<sup>2</sup> See aerial photo on inside cover for sites.

possible to acknowledge without my data collecting technique—the *walk diary*—and the applied norm-critical theories. However, acknowledging and diving deeper into such deviating attitudes has also fed into the process of developing the technique of the *walk diary*, the attitude of *going astray* and the theoretical use of a *critical terminology*.

The purpose of applying a terminology based on norm-critical theories is to acknowledge e.g. contradictions, and inconsistencies among pedestrian desires and preferences, instead of erasing them, and, through this, be able to handle heterogeneity in the needs that pedestrians represent. The *critical terminology* has been elaborated on in reflection of my own subjective and varying notions of walking and architecture. This elaboration is made primarily in reference to the queer and feminist theory of Sara Ahmed (2006), researcher in race and cultural studies, as expressed in *Queer phenomenology: orientations, objects, others*, as well as to the philosopher and gender theorists Judith Butler's "Performative acts and gender constitution: an essay in phenomenology and feminist theory" (1988), *Undoing Gender* (2004), *Bodies that matter: on the discursive limits of "sex"* (2011a), and "Performativity, Precarity and Sexual Politics" (2009). Apart from these two theorists my terminology, especially regarding methodological aspects, also has its foundation in Donna J. Haraway's, researcher in science and technology, "Situated knowledges: the science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective" (1988) and *Simians, cyborgs, and women: the reinvention of nature* (1991). This kernel of texts, and others, have allowed me to meet and understand varying needs of walking, and pay attention to deviating needs related to urban design, rather than to strategies that reduce peculiarity and complexity in order to achieve generalized design solutions. The queer feminist and feminist theory concepts have also let me, or at times urged me, to address issues of corporeality in phenomenological thinking, issues of positioning and knowledge production in research, and issues of normativity in society in general. This way, theory, method and relevance are organically and analytically intertwined with my walk experiences and analysis of them.

Acknowledging heterogeneity as a starting-point is partly a critique of generalized statements of how architectural form and materiality are assumed to have an undifferentiated influence on individuals' walk experiences, but also a critique of how generalizations regarding pedestrians—or any group for that matter—tend to



render them as a homogenous group with common needs.<sup>3</sup> Generalized perspectives and repeated clichés of pedestrians, address them with design solutions independent of how location and site respond to a diversity of needs and desires, e.g. that certain dimensions, or measures, of walk paths have to be fulfilled when designing for pedestrians.

However, by addressing the heterogeneity of walk preferences and desires—acknowledging deviations and contradictions instead of erasing them—existing conventions and methods for design of urban space, that rather seek consensus in pedestrians as a grouped category, are implicitly addressed. In addition, generalizations that group pedestrians together may produce persistent ideas of a pedestrian uniformity, and consequently pedestrian needs and behaviors run the risk of being normalized into excluding categories. Pedestrians not responding to these ideas and needs risk being made invisible, excluded or even considered as undesired.

### **Limits of Research scope**

Walking as a topic in this dissertation is not to be understood as a category that excludes other ways of moving, rather as one perspective and state of being that has to be acknowledged along with others. However, I will use the term pedestrians, when referring to people and walking, because I do not have a more accurate term capturing the range of subjective identity aspects that are expressed in relation to walk activities.<sup>4</sup> This way the dissertation not only addresses walking, and urban design for walking, but also, in parallel, elaborates on identity matters. The writer Rebecca Solnit (2000: 5) describes walking, in *Wanderlust: a history of walking*, as “a bodily labor that produces nothing but thoughts, experiences, arrivals.” This suggests that subjectivity

<sup>3</sup> These issues are also addressed in disciplines such as universal design (UD). UD mainly concerns accessibility issues of spatial design often addressed from a barrier free perspective. Aimi Hamraie (2013)—researcher in universal design and a feminist historian and epistemologist—in “Designing collective access: a feminist disability theory of universal design” points to the need for implementing feminist theorization of both “architecture and geography” within the universal design discourse “in order to complicate the concepts of “universal” and “design” and to develop a feminist disability theory of UD wherein design is a material-discursive phenomenon that produces both physical environments and symbolic meaning.” Architect and educator Leslie Kanes Weisman (1994: 11) suggests a critical feministic approach to universal design in *Discrimination by Design: A Feminist Critique of the Man-Made Environment*, discussing how e.g. gender, race and class discrimination is done through “spatial dichotomies.”

<sup>4</sup> The term pedestrian is normative in the sense that it explicitly refers to moving by foot. However, anyone who wants to be part of a pedestrian world should claim their rights to it—both people able to walk and those who are not. Compare with Hall and Smith (2013: 272) and their inclusion of both mobility and immobility as part of “pedestrian activity.”

and identity aspects are expressed while walking, and that they are intertwined with the physical action. Moreover, the generative labor of walking suggests that it cannot be sufficiently studied without doing it in real life or literally incorporating it into the research process and method.

My work presents an architectural perspective on space and materiality, however, it also adds complexity regarding how access to cities and identity aspects are addressed, not least in planning documents, such as the regional policy document for equality *Jämställdhetsstrategi för Skåne* (Brewer, 2014), a document that covers the geographical scope of most of my cases. When referring to issues of access to a place via an architectural perspective on space and materiality, I consider it from being trained as an architect and how that has trained me to understand space in terms of three-dimensionality where our interpretations of materiality sets the limits for our actions. The materiality of space includes several aspects: bodies' relation to space, the formation of the space, and the actual materials being used in spatial design. My work thus, to some extent, touches upon and parallels the established body of research in geography and urban planning engaged in social aspects of space and identity matters, e.g. the feministic theorization made by Doreen Massey (1994) in *Space, Place and Gender*; Ali Madanipour's (2000) discussion on access to space in *Social exclusion in European cities: processes, experiences and responses*; Jean Hillier's (2007) multifaceted perspective at spatial planning *Stretching beyond the horizon: a multiplanar theory of spatial planning and governance*; Patsy Healey's (2007: 266) "relational approach to urban governance" in *Urban complexity and spatial strategies: towards a relational planning for our times*; Leonie Sandercock's (1997) diversity perspective in *Towards Cosmopolis: Planning for Multicultural Cities*. The list could go on. However, this dissertation does not engage discursively in an explicit way in this range of theorization, as my perspective has its foundation first and foremost in an architectural view of space with certain phenomenological and subjectivity-based implications, supported by the critical approaches of gender and queer theory.

Despite focusing on social aspects, this is not an inter-subjective study in the sense of asking for second- or third-person opinions. I have started from an assumption that materiality of architecture is culturally established in the street and my preconceptions of it will affect my conceived experiences of it, and that this will indirectly also reveal inter-subjective aspects. However, my autoethnographic approach has also kept me focused on subjective experiences that include intersubjective

relations. I thereby also, in collecting autoethnographic data, focus more on this particular method, and what it instantly provides, than on general descriptions of urban form elements, or on attempts to state particular design solutions as preferable for general user groups.

### ***Positioning myself as a Researcher***

I am trained as an architect, have a background in gender studies and previous experiences of more practical feminist work<sup>5</sup>. These experiences, along with studies in practical philosophy and human ecology, have formed my critical thinking, and will always be part of my background when researching design matters, architecture, and walking.

I limit my work to my own conditions and abilities: *I am able to walk without aid, my vision is pretty good*. My dissertation is strictly limited to discuss issues from a perspective of being able to move by foot. I could easily be accused of taking a basic normative perspective myself, or of discriminating people who e.g. are visually impaired or move by wheelchair. On the other hand, I do think that both persons with disabilities and privileges could produce useful knowledge by applying the method I present. I also think that the methods for reflection that I aim to present are valid for acknowledging different needs, whether they are governed by physical limitations, social limitations, or privileges.

I do not aim to be perfectly consistent in my role as a researcher, because I think it is neither possible nor preferable, thus not beneficial for research in the long run either: perfect consistency would simply not reflect the dynamic reality of my mind's relation to humans and matter in a truthful manner. I will behave differently in various settings depending e.g. on whether I am familiar with the place or not. The representations of different perspectives are expressed through my biographical self, my professional training as an architect, and me as a researcher. These identities are positioned when using autoethnography—they cannot be concealed by an assumed objectivity. These different positions do not only represent overlapping identities that I have within me, they also point out how I have orientated myself differently while walking. In opposition to notions of a unitary female identity Haraway (1991: 155) suggests identities as being “contradictory, partial, and strategic” including a greater

<sup>5</sup> In the late 1990s I was among other things part of feminist groups, which arranged e.g. non-academic feminist seminars, feministic self-defense, self-study groups.

complexity of aspects, where identity can be described as, or even exchanged for, “affinity.” Affinity points to the relationship between individuals rather than explicitly attempting to label or group individuals in regard to their identities.

### **Relation to Gender theories and Walk research**

My research fits in the gap between gender theorists, architecture theory, phenomenological space theory, the aforementioned geographical place theory, and how that can have an impact on policy making and the practices of architectural design and planning. In addition to that, a specific contribution is made through the application of feminist and queer theory in the context of walk research.

I want to make the role of urban mundane materiality of everyday life more visible in queer and feminist theory than I think it is today, elaborate on the profound queer feminist works regarding identity aspects and materiality of e.g. Butler (2011a), and by this continue on the work implementing feminist and queer theory in the field of architecture. (For similar implementations of feminist perspectives into space and materiality orientated discourse, see for instance the work on material feminism of e.g. Jane Bennett (2010: 21), researcher in political science, and her post-humanistic view of material matters as having agency and humans as “vital materialities,” or gender theorist Rosi Braidotti’s (2011: 22) “nomadic subject” as “theoretical figuration for contemporary subjectivity” in *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*.)

Architects often have a solid knowledge of factual conditions of space but less on the social implications of their designs. However, in *Behind straight curtains: towards a queer feminist theory of architecture* architectural researcher Katarina Bonnevier (2007: 15) provides “a theatrical queer feminist interpretation of architecture,” mostly exploring interior spaces. Nevertheless, there is a lack of knowledge of, and methods for, implementing feminist and queer theory outside the architectural academic discourse that stretches beyond addressing gender aspects related to e.g. women’s fear of moving around in cities (compare Carina Listerborn (2002) researcher in urban studies). Conversely, gender theorists have an extensive knowledge of social and bodily matters (e.g. Ahmed (2006), Butler (2011a), Haraway (1991)) but lack the specific architectural knowledge of physical and material impact.

The geographers Gill Valentine and Joanna Sadgroves’s (2012), Valentine’s (2007), and Massey’s (2005) intersectional elaboration on identity and spatiotemporal



aspects is of important theoretical value. There are geographers who address walking, such as Middleton (2009, 2010, 2011), however their concern is not focused on the architectural space of buildings and their spatial extension, that include what the three-dimensionality of built space offers in terms of bringing to the fore individual corporeality as well as social experiences.

In walk research you could, on a rough basis, say that two parallel research fields exist: on the one hand the walkability field that is often tied to transport walking, concerned with rational choice of route and often based in quantitative methods, and on the other, a walking discourse engaged in explorative research approaches rather than hypothesis-driven research. In the initial part of my research, I was part of a more walkability-oriented discourse, before getting the opportunity to work in a more explorative way. This shift is partly reflected on in chapter 3. *Reflections on Method and Situatedness*, but will also be taken up in the final chapter *A Critical Normativity Approach to Walking as a Situated Architectural Experience*.

### **Categorization in Walkability research**

The walk research in this dissertation relates more to a qualitative and explorative research discourse of walk studies. Examples of these types of studies will be further discussed in chapter 3.b. *Walking, Wandering, Strolling: Contextualizing Going astray* in regard to my approach. However, an early experience of taking part in structured forms of walkability research, right before my explorative and auto-ethnographical approach started, has formed some of the criticality applied in the dissertation as well as my methodological stances. Therefore, I find it important to point out the difficulties I have recognized in this field, here expressed as three main differences in regard to the more explorative approach that I came to choose for this dissertation.

Firstly, there is a predominance of quantitative studies within walkability research which is pointed out in the report “A pedestrian oriented view of the built environment: A Vista Observation Analysis (VOA) of urban form” (Körner et al., 2012), where I conduct a short overview of existing walkability research,<sup>6</sup> most of it belonging in the disciplines of either health and medicine, or geography. This report reveals the tendency in walkability studies to regard the pedestrian in terms of walking behavior frequency put in relation to e.g. health status or route choice

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix II for report.

(Körner et al., 2012). In these types of studies the built environment is to a great extent examined in terms of quantifiable aspects of urban functions (type or number of services), land use (type of buildings), or from a plan perspective: e.g. dwelling density, connectivity and type of net (street) structures. These factors are mainly seen as related to walking and its presets from an overall planning perspective, i.e. commenting or indicating what is sufficient in certain types of urban conditions. Still missing in the field of walkability studies is walking described from experienced based perspectives of architecture, and how that affects our possibilities to walk and our attitudes toward walking. In health related studies of walkability the human body is mostly present in terms of physical measurements of e.g. weight, length. In this thesis, I argue instead for perspectives taking their starting point in Butler's (1988, 2011a) notion of the body as intertwined with the mind, also the minds of others, which makes identity and materiality inseparable from the body. This body acts out e.g. desires, anticipations and norms, and it does so sometimes as a direct consequence of being in an architectural situation.

Secondly, I have sensed an assumption of rationality in the walkability field, regarding to, for instance, our choice of route, our acting for the benefit of saving time, or finding one's way as accurately as possible. In my earlier report (Körner et al., 2012: 10) I refer to studies mapping so called "[o]bjectively measured" walking rate as well as "perceived walkability" in regard to built environment. I do not perceive that these kinds of studies are open for other types of motives than purely rational ones. These kinds of walkability studies tend to evaluate expected perceptions or confirm already well-known knowledge, instead of asking what we might want to see, or search for matters not expected as related to walking. A hypothesis-driven approach tends to define fixed typologies or be based in predefined ideas of what a walking friendly environment should consist of, while the explorative approach instead looks for responses open to interpretation, reminiscent of pre-design investigations done by planners and architects. For instance, an instrument for measuring the influence of the built environment on walking, Irvine Minnesota Inventory (IMI) (Day et al., 2006, Boarnet et al., 2006) was tested in my own VOA-report (Körner et al., 2012). Originally designed for a far more car oriented North American urban setting, the limits of the IMI became apparent, when applied in a Swedish urban context where the assumed walkability factors were not present in the urban structure (Körner et al., 2012). As a contrast, I have, in my investigations, let myself be guided by a subjective

and not beforehand given categorization of my spatial experiences, reminiscent of how an exploring architect would initially try to open-endedly approach a site of interest, however, here eventually intertwined with analysis based in a critical (feminist and queer) theoretical apparatus.

Thirdly, there is a tendency in walkability research to separate walking into categories e.g. transport walking, strolling, recreational (see the discourse of architectural research e.g. Mattias Kärholm et al. (2014) for an elaboration of studies categorizing walking). In my initial walking research attempts (Körner et al., 2012), I used the label transport walking. However, I have abandoned this concept, because I do not consider it beneficial to separate walking into typologies—it is unnecessary and limits rather than expands the thinking regarding walking. Limiting because it suggests that just one type of walking can take place at a time, and that there is a finite set of walking modes. Unnecessary in the sense of being a tautology—I consider walking in itself a mode of transport.

Categorizations of walking also appear in more explorative walking studies, e.g. in the architecture and urban planning research of Filipa Matos Wunderlich's (2008: 125) division of walking into “purposive, the discursive, and the conceptual.” However, Matos Wunderlich's (2008) perspective points more to how walking is conceived, than to ways in which walking is walked.<sup>7</sup>

Instead of separating walking into types or modes, I have developed an approach that considers needs and preferences of pedestrians as intertwined and overlapping, which in turn can be the foundation for generating architecture that support a range of needs among pedestrians instead of separating them into pre-fixed user groups. I have borrowed concepts of queer phenomenological thinking (Ahmed, 2006) that elaborates on identity matters, this in order to problematize the relationship between a walking body and the spatiality and materiality of architecture. With a starting point in phenomenology—mainly that of Martin Heidegger, Edmund Husserl and Hans-Georg Gadamer—the researcher in architecture and urban planning, Beata Sirowy (2010), in her dissertation *Phenomenological Concepts in Architecture: Towards a User-oriented practice* points to the advantages of applying a phenomenological perspective on architecture in order to integrate a user perspective. Through the application of

<sup>7</sup> In “Walking and Rhythmicity: Sensing Urban Space” Matos Wunderlich (2008) elaborates on Henri Lefebvre's (2004) rhythm analysis, see also the geographer Sara Johansson's (2013) dissertation *Rytmen bor i mina steg* for an elaboration on rhythm analysis.

concepts such as “lifeworld,” “lived experience” and “interpretation” Sirowy (2010: 264, viii) argues that phenomenology can contextualize “social, cultural, and historical” “architectural interventions.” However, I have taken most of my phenomenological input for this dissertation from Sara Ahmed (2006, 2010), because of her radical view on the phenomenological bases of perception. This is given thought in chapter 2. *Walk Reflections*, especially in the section 2.a. *Orientations*.

I do not consider my own research an absolute opposition to approaches of typologized and quantified walkability research. Instead of excluding one perspective for another, I rather suggest an approach that makes use of conflicts and controversies, as suggested by Haraway (1991). I see my contribution as part of a range of walking research, along with critical approaches of narrative, personal writings and fictional ones, e.g. Solnit (2000), artist Sofia Hultin (2014), researcher in gender studies and African American studies Sarah Jane Cervenak (2014), writer Virginia Woolf (1980). These fictional, documentary, and critical walking practices, as well as the well-known alternative approaches of e.g. Certeau (2002) and the Situationists, will be further discussed in the section *Reflections on Walking investigations and Notions of walking* in chapter 3.b.

Taken as a whole, there is a great amount of different approaches and perspectives at work in the existing writing about walking. The research I have referred to above represents only a few examples of a wide and heterogeneous spectrum of walking studies. It is far from a complete review of walking research.<sup>8</sup>

However, it is in relation to this type of research I hope that my contribution will fit in, and add new perspectives of walking and architecture.

### ***Main Theoretical Concepts***

The terminology I use has been developed in response to the statements made in this introductory chapter, and derived from feminist and queer theory.

The elaboration of concepts such as *orientation/disorientation*, *background/foreground* (Ahmed, 2006), *performativity*, *deviation* and *difference* (Butler, 1988, 2011a, 2011b), *differences* (Scott, 1988), and *situated knowledges* and *partial perspective* (Haraway, 1991), has made it possible to address the complexity of presence in, and

<sup>8</sup> See also e.g. *Rights of passages* (Blomley, 2011), *Walkscapes* (Careri, 2002), *Walkability as an Urban Design Problem: Understanding the activity of walking in the urban environment* (Choi, 2012), *Sidewalks: conflict and negotiation over public space* (Loukaitou-Sideris and Ehrenfeucht, 2009).

experience of, spatial situations. In addition, these concepts have helped acknowledging difference—before generalizations and categorizations—as a source for producing multifaceted knowledge responding to the heterogeneity among pedestrians. A brief overview of the main concepts in the terminology central to the thesis follows below.

In order to elaborate on corporeal matters in regard to architecture while walking I have borrowed the abovementioned concepts—orientation/disorientation and background/foreground—from Ahmed's (2006) "queer phenomenology." When discussing phenomenology—in terms of direction, orientation and background—Ahmed (2006) mainly has her basis in the philosophical works of Edmund Husserl, touches to some extent upon Martin Heidegger's and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's work, but also the theories of Karl Marx. Her main contribution to phenomenology is the norm-critical contextualization of perception of objects in regard to identity aspects: who is the perceiving subject and who is the object aimed for? This then extends to what consequences it might have on individuals' lives. Ahmed's (2006) perspective points to how we always enter the world from somewhere; that we are constantly positioned or positioning ourselves and therefore never just observe it.

Orientation is in Ahmed's (2006) phenomenological interpretation considered as a two-way encounter, where we can sense an object, and the object touches us. Ahmed (2006: 27) states that phenomenology claims

that consciousness is intentional: it is directed toward something. This claim immediately links the question of the object with that of orientation.<sup>9</sup>

Both our consciousness and our bodies are orientated or directed toward things (Ahmed, 2006). The perception of objects and things is not merely a question of being exposed to something: it is rather a matter of where we are located and positioned (Ahmed, 2006). In Ahmed's (2006) understanding of phenomenology, being orientated comprises both location and a carried position, where background aspects in terms of familiarity are considered as crucial for understanding the perception of an object. Background includes temporal/historical, as well as spatial aspects, in the sense that we by default place certain objects and spaces in the background in order for other things to appear in the foreground (Ahmed, 2006).

<sup>9</sup> "The radical claim that phenomenology inherits from Franz Brentano's psychology is that consciousness is intentional: it is directed toward something." (Ahmed, 2006:27)



In order to further develop the norm-criticality in my analysis, I have borrowed the thinking of performativity theory regarding gender identity, as elaborated by Judith Butler (1988, 2004, 2009, 2011a). Butler's (2011a) norm-critical perspective—regarding how the difference between female and male gender is maintained through perceptions of oppositional differences of sexes, and how homosexuality is constructed in terms of deviations from the norms and normativity of heterosexuality—has been applied in order to understand the social impact of physical matters of bodies and architecture. My reading of Butler (2011a) gives that if we do not question Cartesian dualism—the separation of body from mind—of what a human “is,” we will continue to reproduce the inequality we want to reveal, fight, and overcome. The binary of body and mind, sex and gender, and our willingness to attribute this binary to sexual identity, is the mechanism that produces and reproduces an unequal dichotomy between sexes. Butler (1988, 2011a) sees sex and gender as performative—that they are constituted and maintained through actions and speech acts. In the introduction to *The question of gender: Joan W. Scott's critical feminism*, Butler (2011b) points out how Scott does not consider sexual difference as a problem in itself—the problem arises when we try to give them opposing and excluding meanings that produce inequality. Instead, difference has to be considered as “differences” (Scott, 1988: 176), and for what they are, instead of being assigned as a figure of thought in order to keep sexes or sexuality separated (Butler, 2011b). Butler's (1988, 2011a) critique of social norms and language as normative provides a possibility for analyzing a body in spatial and social situations. Her discussion is furthermore essential for the development of later analytical concepts on bodies in space, such as Ahmed's (2006) queer phenomenology.

Lastly, I apply the concepts of “situated knowledges” and “partial perspective” as presented by Haraway (1991) in *Simians, cyborgs, and women: the reinvention of nature*. These science concepts of Haraway's (1991) have been used in order to problematize methodological aspects of my research. The concept of situated knowledges was developed by Haraway (1991) as an alternative to traditional Western theory of science claiming universality. It positions and produces knowledge by acknowledging partial perspective from well-defined positions (Haraway, 1991). I have applied partial perspectives in the sense of e.g. allowing myself to have contradictive opinions of a situation, and collecting experiences as part of recurring visits to the same site. This should be contrasted with a universalist perspective, where I would have claimed a position of objectivity or neutrality in my observations, and strived towards a resulting

consensus partly by legitimizing generalizations about other people.

In all, the aforementioned concepts comprise the core of the theoretical work and support a projective critical analysis all through the dissertation.

## **Method**

In this section, I will briefly describe the main method, autoethnography, and how it informs the technique of collecting data through the *walk diary*. This dissertation is built on qualitative data, more specifically data collected in autoethnographic walk studies tied to several urban cases, routes, or fragments of walk situations. In one specific case this data is also supported by a previous, more generalized observational study (Körner et al., 2012) and a couple of quantitative facts derived from a structured walk study.<sup>10</sup> The data from these initial studies (explained in *Appendix I: Additonal notes on Methods and Appendix II: A pedestrian-orientated view of built environment: A Vista Observation Analysis (VOA) of urban form*) has been used in the dissertation primarily as a reason to stimulate further autoethnographical points of view at the same sites, and to elaborate on methodology.

## **Architecture and Autoethnography**

An autoethnographic approach has been applied in order to analyze space and walking, through my own embodied experience of it. I have studied material culture—as it appears in architecture and built form—while acknowledging the fact that autoethnography is occupied with culture in terms of how it appears at site in a first-person perspective. Such a perspective includes, however, inevitably, the interpretation of self-experienced empirical material through the lenses of social constructs. I have mainly supported the interpretations of my *walk diary* data and other findings through norm-critical theory, e.g. feminist and queer theory, as presented in the section *Main theoretical concepts* (p. 27). To some extent the method and research design is derived from autoethnography, as in the work of anthropologist Heewon Chang (2008), and gender theorist Laura L. Ellingson and researcher in communication and

<sup>10</sup> Both studies were part of the research project Urban Walking (2011-14), Lund University, Sweden. Founded by “Samordnad stadsutveckling”, grant dnr 250-2010-370: FORMAS (The Swedish Research Council), Trafikverket (Swedish Transport Administration), and Naturvårdsverket (Swedish Environmental Protection Agency).

autoethnography Carolyn Ellis (2008). Chang (2008: 46) applies an autoethnography that “combines cultural analysis and interpretation with narrative details.”

There is already a latent ingredient of autoethnography in a common working process of architecture, in the sense that architects often form a starting-point from their own experiences of a place when describing its spatial and material qualities. Architects create a narrative about experiences of architecture, and this is, in fact, an important tool in the design process as well as in reviews of existing architecture. In addition, it is a tool acquired in all phases of architecture education.

Subjective experiences of architecture are important to discuss when architecture is evaluated, because we live in it and experience it in each moment. However, subjectivity is a complex influencing force, which should not be reduced to personal opinions. Neither should it be acknowledged as a truth or unquestionable fact. However, most of the time—within the practice of architecture—the subjectivity is not methodologically positioned: why it should be part of a spatial analysis or how it is manifested in the design. This also implies that architects shoulder the responsibility of interpreting the needs and preferences of others, i.e. of concerns other than those that traditionally come with the profession and education.

Therefore, I do not consider the use of the self-experienced situations as a new approach in itself. However, by applying an established research method—autoethnography—I want to bring subjectivity to the foreground and position it as present in the investigations. Thereby making it possible to reflect upon the value-laden language that has its foundation in personal thoughts, and how that influences the descriptions of architecture, and in the same instance outline a possible technique—the *walk diary*—for applying an autoethnographic approach, within the research community at large as well as within the discipline of architecture. The *walk diary* serves here as a collection of observational material from walks, sometimes including reflections on the observation itself.

## Autoethnography

*You think you have found the perfect method—autoethnography—to overcome your methodological crisis, because it lets you be you. You think it is perfect because it goes so well with the feminist and queer theory you find relevant and intriguing. You begin to keep a walk diary. Collecting your notes and ideas. Writing down anything you are experiencing while walking. You are really excited about it. Think it is a splendid idea. It has such potential. You keep on collecting your walk experiences. Organizing them. Looking for topics. Reading about the method. Quite soon you have a lot of notes. Then you start stressing about what to do with them. Doubts. You question the relevance of the notes. You question your own judgment. You question your own potential. You question the method. You question the theories. You question the choice of writing a PhD thesis. Then you find a text, “The critical life” (Pelias, 2000), and you try this: writing in second person. (140813)*

The autoethnographic collecting of data is a first step in an introspective, but also outreaching process. The autoethnographic texts presented in the dissertation are reworked extracts of my initial diary notes. It is in this critical review of my experiences that it can be transformed into knowledge accessible to people other than just myself. This means that autoethnography is not about telling the story of your own life, or

a license to dig deeper in personal experiences without digging wider into the cultural context of the individual stories commingled with others. Autoethnographers should be warned that self-indulgent introspection is likely to produce a self-exposing story but not autoethnography. (Chang, 2008: 54)

Some facets of autoethnography can however be more autobiographical than others, but with an intention of making personal experiences available to a greater audience through the recognizability of the stories. Autoethnography stretches over a wide range of writing approaches. Chang (2008: 47-8) recognizes this in a comprised list of Ellis and Bochner’s (2000) overview of autoethnographic writing:

autobiographical ethnography	literary tales
autobiology	lived experience
auto-observation	narrative ethnography
autopathography	native ethnography
collaborative autobiography	new or experimental ethnography
complete-member research	opportunistic research
confessional tales	personal essays
critical autobiography	personal ethnography
emotionalism narratives of the self	personal experience narrative
ethnobiography	personal narratives
ethnographic autobiography	personal writing
ethnographic memoir	postmodern ethnography
ethnographic poetics	radical empiricism
ethnographic short stories	reflexive ethnography
evocative narratives	self-ethnography
experiential texts	self-stories
first-person accounts	socioautobiography
impressionistic accounts	sociopoetics
indigenous ethnography	writing-stories.
interpretive biography	

The width within the spectrum of autoethnography shows how different modes of the method will position the researcher differently in relation to their research subject, and thereby form the types of situated knowledges that are produced. The private me is easy to understand as expressing personal views and thoughts, towards other people as well, while the professional me—researcher and architect—is autobiographic more in relationship to the discourses addressed through my observations. Within a professional field accepted truths exist, and common knowledge for describing and valuing things related to the profession. However, these situated knowledges are often not accessible to, or clarified for, anyone outside the discourse. There might also exist discourses within the discourses, with differing situated knowledges. An autoethnographic method utilizes these situated knowledges in the positioning of the researcher.

Carolyn Ellis and Arthur P. Bochner (2000: 740), researchers in communication and autoethnography, point to an important aspect, in how application of autoethnography may “vary in [researchers’] emphasis on the research process (graphy), on culture (ethnos), and on self (auto).”<sup>11</sup> Without contesting that the focus will vary, reducing research process to “graphy,” however, is partly contradictory; research process is rather all parts combined, where “graphy,” as I see it, is the writing process.

I have applied autoethnography mainly to expose subjectivity, and how subjectivity forms embodied experiences of architecture and walking, where the emphasis on process, culture and (corporeal) self varies, as will be shown in chapter 2 and 3.

My autoethnographic writing comprises self-observed accounts of embodied experiences, blended with memories, narratives and reflexive writing. By shifting between “I,” “you” and “we,” I have experimented with the storytelling voice of the text, and used the inherent diversity of fictional possibilities in an experiencing subject. Memories that have occurred during the writing process are not presented as *walk diary* extracts, as I consider them as part of the analytical process. The *walk diary* notes are presented in the dissertation graphically as symbolic pages, followed by adherent analysis and interpretation, and it is in the reading of them together that the results evolve. The two text types express different narratives or story telling techniques, where the *walk diary* has a direct but also fragmented style that mirrors the appearance of thoughts and memories, while the analytical and interpretative parts are written in a more cohesive and academic style. On some occasions the straightforward writing style of the diary notes spills over into the analysis. However, the intention of this manner of writing has been to reflect the directness and associative manner of how thoughts might appear while walking.

### **Walk diary**

In the *walk diary* I have accumulated my own walk experiences over a period of time, 2013-2015, and extracts of it are shown in chapter 2. *Walk Reflections* and 3. *Reflections on Method and Situatedness*. The original empirical material of the *walk diary* is sometimes worked up to include texts and images/collages, and is presented along with

<sup>11</sup> Ellis and Bochner (2000) refer to Reed-Danahay’s (1997) book *Auto/Ethnography: rewriting the self and the social*.



the text of the dissertation. Such a mix is not unusual in diary-based observational accounts: “time-space diaries” is in the anthology *Mobile Methods* by Monica Büscher et al. (2011: 9), researchers in sociology and mobility, categorized as one cluster of methods—out of several—for researching mobility. These diaries are comprised of texts, photos and/or digital recordings (Büscher et al., 2011), however, they are not limited to walking but rather concern all sorts of travels.

The *walk diary* is not to be understood as a manual used to consistently and regularly access and order observations of an empirical reality—it is rather a sufficient technique at hand for collecting stories of everyday walk experiences. Furthermore, it is not only a matter of collecting, but also a generating research action. In this research, walking has been both a means to provide embodied knowledges, and part of the studied subject. Ellingson (2006) describes the autoethnographic method as providing an arena for producing embodied actions, where the researcher engages in the studied matter rather than reflecting on or observing it at a distance. In the *walk diary* I have collected my own subjective, personal, professional and sometimes contradictory experiences of walking. I have observed how my body has been able, or not, to move in different spatial settings. I have partly been the studied subject—the pedestrian—and partly the observing researcher/architect.

Just after I finished a walk, I would always sit down and make notes. I did not want my thoughts and impressions to be disturbed by writing during walking. This would, of course, affect what I wrote down—I could not remember every tiny detail of my walks. On the other hand, that was not the intention. Instead, I wanted to focus on separate events, occasions or associations that would come to mind during the walk, and stood out as memorable. This formed my subjectivity, made the observations particular for me, and situated my knowledge when collecting the diary notes, instead of trying to provide a complete, evened out, or objective view of matters.

In the beginning, I brought my computer along, and started writing as soon as the walk was finished. I would bring a camera in case there was something interesting I wanted to document. After a while, I bought a smart phone, which made the data collection easier and more causal. The photos have been taken both while walking and at revisits. A similar technique for collecting data about walking has been applied from a geographical perspective on space and place by e.g. Middleton (2009, 2010, 2011) where she let several people gather their experiences and reflections on walking and walks. This was done by logging one week of “walking patterns” in regard

to distances, date, time, locations, optional notes of experiential character and photos of “significant or interesting” moments (Middleton, 2009: 1944).

In the first stage, I used the *walk diary* to collect any kind of walk experience. I would write down all kinds of thoughts or reflections related to walking. This material was continuously analyzed in order to inform the future process of data collection. From the diary, I extracted themes of interests—sometimes because they were recurring and sometimes because of their original character. I then analyzed and organized them in order to find more overall theoretical concepts, which could give rise to new perspectives of walking and architecture.

During the different steps of the research process, autoethnography has provided helpful strategies in order to understand what I am doing and what I am not doing in the research process at large. It has provided tips and tricks for avoiding pitfalls, e.g. to start making the analysis as soon as possible in order to develop the method all along, and accordingly identify themes of interests, looking for “recurring topics” as well as “exceptional occurrences.” (Chang, 2008: 131) The identification of interesting themes in an early stage has allowed me to underpin my overall research problem with specific questions. I then incorporated the new questions in my observations of spatiality and walking. E.g. in my autoethnographic text about Fågelbacksgatan/Kronprinsen in the *Orientations* section in chapter 2.a. I formulated questions regarding my own arrival at the site, inspired by Ahmed’s (2006) concept of bodily orientation, affect and arrivals in the chapter “Happy objects,” in the anthology *The affect theory reader* (Gregg and Seigworth, 2010). My *walk diary* thus became a dynamic methodological and theoretical catalyst as well as a database.

My walk tours, mainly conducted at different locations in Malmö, Sweden, with only a few memorized sidesteps to Greensboro, Alabama, U.S. and Berlin, Germany, have been my general case studies that provided me with examples of urban settings to look closer at. The main interest has been on how elements of urban spatial situations influence walking, while the pointing out of exact geographic locations usually has been of lesser concern. This has generated a discussion in the thesis on how it is possible to differentiate descriptions of urban complexity in regard to walking.

The length of the *walk diary* notes presented in the dissertation vary simply because sometimes it has been valuable to review a longer walk, while other times single moments have been of interest. Of course, this, in itself, creates a subjective view of what is discussed and shown in the dissertation. The notes are organized

according to different themes as presented in chapter 2 and 3. Two walk situations in chapter 3 are named by their geographic locations: Lorensborg and Dammfri. These sites were part of the two earlier studies—"A pedestrian-oriented view of the built environment: A Vista Observation Analysis (VOA) of urban form" (Körner et al., 2012) and the structured walk study—and have mainly been addressed in a discussion about methodology and matters regarding science theory.

### ***Disposition of the Dissertation***

The dissertation is organized as follows: (1) *Introduction* is this chapter stating objectives, limits and contribution of the dissertation, a positioning of me as a researcher, and the applied theories and methods. In (2) *Walk Reflections* the empirical material and theoretical framework is elaborated in four sections (a) *Orientations*, (b) *Urban Darkness*, (c) *Contrasting Opportunities*, and (d) *Encounters and Companions*, where *walk diary* notes and reflections on these have led to the structuring order of the chapter. The next chapter, (3) *Reflections on Methods and Situatedness*, is divided into two sections: (a) *Revisiting Vistas*, which is a methodological discussion that also becomes a theory of ideas, and (b) *Walking, Wandering, Strolling: Contextualizing Going astray*, where the investigatory approach—going astray—of the *walk diary* is positioned in regard to similar approaches. The findings of the dissertation are contextualized, discussed and summed up in the last chapter (4) *A Critical Normativity Approach to Walking as a Situated Architectural Experience*.

THE WALL WITH ROUGH BRICKS

THE SMOOTH WALL

THE LONG FENCE



HOME





## 2. Walk Reflections

*You cannot imagine yourself living in a place where it is not possible to walk. When you stayed in Greensboro, Alabama, USA, for six months you were completely dependent on your car. Sometimes it felt like an extension of your body. You had lunch in it, used it as storage or in order to cool off from the heat. (130221)*

There are no neutral encounters. Space is not neutral. We are not neutral.

This chapter contains reflections on my empirical material—mainly the walk diary notes. The theoretical reflections are separated into four sections: a. *Orientations*, b. *Urban Darkness*, c. *Contrasting opportunities*, and d. *Encounters and Companions*. Where section a. concerns materiality of space and body; section b. is an elaboration of darkness as an urban design element; c. touches upon social and political aspects of walking and cities; and d. discusses intersubjective aspects of walking. These themes have evolved in the intertwined relation between data collection, analysis, and writing. The autoethnographic sections are elaborations of the walk diary notes, in the sense that the diary notes have been rewritten and reworked with regard to their narrative quality. This was done primarily in order to make them more accessible to the reader. However, in the rewriting process, reflections have produced associations as well as evoked memories, which have then been incorporated into the analysis of the texts. This process in itself inspired new autoethnographic text, e.g. reflections upon method and work process. These iteratively generated texts have thus allowed an autoethnographic writing process in the dissertation as a whole, that incorporates walk diary notes made from memory, i.e. after immediate observational connection to walking sessions. The overall intention of this chapter is to show how subjective experiences can inform the description of urban complexity and walking, and, to illustrate how a disparate range of factors is affecting the experiences of space, and, moreover, can be made comprehensible and useful in an urban design context.



### a. Orientations

*Uncomfortable and unpractical. You are sitting on a cold iron bar and trying to write. (130906)*

This section, 2.a. *Orientations*, develops reflections on walking in regard to routines; materiality of space; orientation possibilities; identity formation; and bodily matters. The main theoretical bearing in this section is the critical *Queer phenomenology* of Sara Ahmed (2006), where—which is not the case in classical phenomenology—corporeality, identity, and history, as the terms of familiarity, are seen as important parts of the attentiveness in any studied situation. The walk diary has been used in order to look at everyday moments, situations or events, which at first sight might appear as less important or interesting in regard to walking and the experience of space. However, I have highlighted these routine-like phenomena in reflection of how they bring corporeality, identity and history to (my) mind, which I suggest can contribute to a nuanced understanding of the relation between space and walking, and, more specifically, to what it means to walk in urban conditions.

### ***Queer phenomenology, Orientation and the Familiar***

A phenomenological perspective provides an opportunity for problematizing the perceptions of objects and things—how they appear to us. It helps describe the relation between an experiencing subject and a perceived object, how they influence each other and so form the experience of the situation. Furthermore, a phenomenological approach makes it possible to acknowledge a moment as an object of perception. Sara Ahmed (2009) acknowledges phenomenology as a starting point, while at the same time distinguishing herself from the habit, in the phenomenological tradition that follows Husserl, of supposing a generalized, or dehistoricized, perceiving subject. In Ahmed's (2006) *Queer phenomenology*, the notion of orientation is central, and comprises position and location when describing how we inhabit space:

Space acquires “direction” through how bodies inhabit it, just as bodies acquire direction in this inhabitation. Adding “orientation” to the picture gives a new dimension to the critique of the distinction between location and position. (Ahmed, 2006: 12)

Ahmed (2006) suggests this in regard to e.g. Neil Smith's—researcher within anthropology and Geography—and Cindi Katz's—researcher within e.g. geography, environmental psychology and women studies—(1993: 69) geographical distinction between location and position:

“location” fixes a point in space, usually by reference to some abstract co-ordinate systems such as latitude and longitude. Location may be no more than a zero-dimensional space, a point on a map. “Position,” by contrast, implies location vis-à-vis other locations and incorporates a sense of perspective on other places, and is therefore at least one-dimensional.

In Ahmed's (2006) perspective, bodies become shaped by space and vice versa.

If orientation is about making the strange familiar through the extension of bodies into space, then disorientation occurs when extension fails. Or we could say that some spaces extend certain bodies and simply do not leave room for others. (Ahmed, 2006: 11)

Ahmed (2006: 51) also uses the terms “orientated” and “failed orientation” when discussing matches and misfits between objects and subjects. Ahmed's (2006)

perspective points to that to be orientated<sup>12</sup> is about knowing and anticipating what will come. It is about routine actions and taking things for granted. It is about having an idea or wish for how something might turn out. It is about how some bodies are being confirmed while others are made invisible. Disorientation is not only about losing orientation it is also about being disappointed over being put aside, or even being excluded and made invisible.

Besides comprising location and position, Ahmed's (2006) orientation also includes action as in busyness and sense of engagement and belonging. This way, pairing of object and subject is contextualized in relation to actions. Orientation is about objects and subjects facing each other "in the right way" in order to be able to work together, and to adjust one's position in order to face "the right way" is to orientate oneself (Ahmed, 2006: 51). Ahmed (2006:51) relates to this moment of working together as when "we are occupied and busy."

These deviations from traditional phenomenological thought means that a subject's self-perception and identity is included in what is acknowledged and problematized in acts of perception. And, the overall queer perspective in Ahmed's (2006) phenomenology interrogates knowledge production about bodies' abilities to inhabit space in relation to them diverting from heteronormativity. Ahmed (2006) suggests that a queer phenomenology could turn our attention toward things that have been assumed as deviating or being too far away from us. In the introduction she states that she wants

to offer a new way of thinking about the spatiality of sexuality, gender, and race [...] offer an approach to how bodies take shape through tending toward objects that are reachable, that are available within the bodily horizon. (Ahmed, 2006: 2)

However, Ahmed's (2006) queer phenomenology also focuses on routines and their relation to background aspects—what is taken for granted, left unreflected upon, or unnoticed—and how routines are able to exclude everything that is not considered a part of the routine itself.

<sup>12</sup> Ahmed (2006) uses the term orientated in *Queer Phenomenology*. According to the site: Wiktionary there is a distinction in use of orientated and oriented, where the former is used in British English and the latter in North American English (<http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/oriented>). However, a well-educated (three master degrees in architecture) and British English speaking friend of mine, Bernard McCabe, described the difference as following: "Orientated is used for actually moving at an object or facing a different direction: "The box was orientated to the sunrise." Oriented is the existing direction..." "I am oriented to lefty politics." I will use Ahmed's spelling although I am writing in North American English.

Ahmed (2006: 57) states that “repetition is not neutral work; it orientates the body in some ways rather than others.” It is not the routine or familiar that is queer in itself, but the action to not take it for granted; to direct our attention toward the familiar as normative, and this in order to let us see what it makes invisible and thereby categorizes as deviating. This is what queers Ahmed’s (2006) norm-critique of phenomenology as a discipline, but also her phenomenological interpretations of body and space in the lived world. I would say that this is what queer—as a theoretical concept—usually partly does; acknowledges deviations from generalizations and, by that, points out existing norms, and the construction of normativity and how it is maintained over time.

A queer phenomenological perspective (Ahmed, 2006) requires that the subject problematizes its position in its relating to an object, i.e. that the subject questions from which perspective it experiences objects, as related to the position from where it is able to speak. In addition, the experiencing subject has to understand the context of the object—from where it comes and how it ended up where it is right now (Ahmed, 2006). I would say that the result of Ahmed’s (2006) queer phenomenology—of what orientation and disorientation capture in the relation between subject and object—is two-fold: 1) it brings forward the normative forces of routines and familiarity, and 2) it points out separate subjects’ needs and desires, reflections and experiences, in regard to spatiality. Ahmed (2006: 179) concludes by saying that

A queer phenomenology would involve an orientation toward queer, a way of inhabiting the world by giving “support” to those whose lives and loves make them appear oblique, strange, and out of place.

Out of context, or taken into contexts where queer is not already recognized as a possible position, this might sound a little bit too general or even thin. However, it is in the reasoning regarding orientation, location, position and background that queer phenomenology develops. I do not think Ahmed’s (2006) queer phenomenology is always coherent, clear, or easy to follow. However, I find her redefinitions of already well-established words especially useful—from an architectural and a walk perspective—due to their spatial implications for what it means to turn and move around, and that this is not a neutral action. Moreover, applying a queer phenomenological perspective on my walk experiences makes it possible to bring forward and critically analyze my subjective experiences in regard to spatial and material matters.

Ahmed's (2006) perspective on phenomenology points to how objects and bodies shape one another. In order to understand what orientation means we have to understand disorientation, and see what is left out when we experience a misfit between object and subject (Ahmed, 2006). It is in reflection of this phenomenological vein that I position my discussion about walking and the situating of bodies in an architectural context. Ahmed (2006) uses the production of sexual orientation to describe how space, including designed space, is used.

Despite applying queer phenomenological interpretations of dis/orientation, I have not focused specifically on gender, sexuality or ethnicity in my studies. Instead, I have used these terms in describing the relationship between body and material settings as moments of orientation and disorientation. This way, the framework functions in highlighting the subjectivity of the subject; how subjectivity governs our experiences of materiality therefore cannot be understood as neutral. Materiality and spatiality is, in such a perspective, understood as having intentions that I might be able to follow or not. Acknowledging subjectivity—in a material and walk context as discussed in this dissertation—is thus a way to: (1) position the experiencing subject in relation to its embodied experiences of materiality; (2) recognize how designers may acknowledge their subjectivity as affecting intended as well as non-intended design outcomes; and (3) focus on how subjectivity can be a starting point in order to acknowledge not one, but a range of conditions and desires amongst pedestrians. In this way a queer theoretical stance contrasts approaches looking for universal perspectives.

### **Backgrounds: Routines, History and Material settings**

*You think you know your way between home and the bus to work. Every morning you walk or bike the same way. You have your favorite spots. Then there are places that you pass quickly. (130409)*

A routine helps organizing things I do often. It offers repetition without reflection and is part of everyday life, and therefore familiar to me. The routine can have a neglecting effect in the way it directs my attention toward certain things and situations, whilst others are left out. It brings some moments and objects to

the foreground and other things are moved back.

I want to explore routine-like assumptions about spatial experiences in regard to walking, and how this familiarity makes us take certain designerly presets for granted. I want to do this in order to elaborate on how experiences of architecture's material and spatial conditions have an impact on walking. Go-along methods are pointed out as

illuminating how people get into and frame settings, and how settings for conduct become routine parts of the self, we clarify the importance of place as a fundamental category of everyday experience and practice [...] make visible and intelligible how everyday experience transcends the here and now, as people weave previous knowledge and biography into immediate situated action. (Kusenbach, 2003: 478)

The familiarity of a background governs the orientation of our bodies in space; routines affect how I might act or how I think that I am able to act. Our understanding of a thing or an entire situation is formed by social conventions forming the background that in turn sets the premises for how things can appear and situations may take place. It becomes a well-known backdrop. Something to lean on. The familiarity of a situation helps us orientate ourselves in a space (Ahmed, 2006). In relation to walking and spatial matters we may reach a better understanding of how body (subject), space (object) and walking (action) are regulated and relegated to different degrees of attention by routines. What is perceived as background is

produced by acts of relegation: some things are relegated to the background in order to sustain a certain direction; in other words, in order to keep attention on what is faced. Perception involves such acts of relegation that are forgotten in the very preoccupation with what it is that is faced. (Ahmed, 2006: 31)

Within the framework of orientation Ahmed (2006) uses the word background and foreground in order to make the structure of normativity, and its becoming, visible—to understand the mechanics of norms. Ahmed (2006: 37) points out how useful Husserl's understanding of background—as being something we take for granted—is, because “[i]t allows us to consider how familiarity takes shape by being unnoticed,” and this is how she uses the familiar in order to propose a queer phenomenology. In addition, background is in Ahmed's (2006) phenomenology separated into temporal and spatial aspects, where the temporal refers to any type of history or biographical

information forming an object or a person, and spatial refers to the object's location in the rear of a space, and how that makes other things appear in the foreground.

By referring to Husserl's phenomenology and how it is founded on an idea of excluding what is familiar and "made available by ordinary perception," Ahmed (2006: 32) claims that phenomenology, as a discipline, also has a history that has excluded the familiar, and as a consequence ignored its own privileges while interpreting the world. Ahmed—partially in congruence with earlier phenomenological critique of Husserl, such as phenomenologist Aron Gurwitsch (1964), in *The Field of Consciousness* (which she does not mention)—emphasizes the importance for phenomenology to include the background of objects in order to comprehend them. By the exclusion of what is familiar—referring to what is defined as familiar in advance or just understood as pre-given—we will exclude the objects and things at the center of our attention, and therefore exclude aspects influencing our perception (Ahmed, 2006).<sup>13</sup> The matter of what we face is also a matter of what we are not facing:

We are reminded that what we can see in the first place depends on which way we are facing. What gets our attention depends too on which direction we are facing. The things that are behind Husserl are also behind the table that he faces: it is "self-evident" that he has his back to what is behind him. We might even say that it is the behind that converts "the back" into the background. A queer phenomenology, I wonder, might be one that faces the back, which looks "behind" phenomenology, which hesitates at the sight of the philosopher's back. (Ahmed, 2006: 29)

Orientation toward e.g. the writing desk might govern how we

inhabit certain rooms and not others, and that you do some things rather than others [...] [w]hat is behind Husserl's back, what he does not face, might be the back of the house—the feminine space dedicated to the work of care, cleaning, and reproduction. (Ahmed, 2006: 30-1)

Ahmed's critique of the consequences of bracketing the background here points to a neglect of the fact that spaces are traditionally assigned for certain groups of the population, more specifically a neglected genderized division of space in phenomenological thinking, which e.g. Gurwitsch's (1964) and Sven P. Arvidson's

<sup>13</sup> Gurwitsch (1964) uses the theoretical concepts of thematic field and margin when elaborating on background related matters that effects the perception of the object—theme. Also see Arvidson (2006) who draws on Gurwitsch's work regarding how attention is directed.



(2006) elaborations on background matters do not point out. From Ahmed's (2006) perspective, the background should be at the center of our attention, along with the body experiencing the object. To ignore a background would be to ignore the context of how an action takes place, and how some spaces are created on the behalf of others.

Biographical history: yours, mine, the object's, and phenomenology's—we all carry our personal biography with us. It may at first seem contradictory to bring back the biography of the observer into phenomenology, since that was originally seen as part of the theoretical obstructions of pure observations of the present here and now (see Husserl's (1978) *The crisis of European sciences and transcendental phenomenology: an introduction to phenomenological philosophy*, originally published in German in 1933 and in English in 1954). However, the notion of biography, in Ahmed's (2006) reasoning, has more to do with the inevitable stream of formation that a subject is situated in. Background, in Ahmed's (2006) understanding of it, can be seen as separated into three layers referring to the relationship between subject and object: (1) familiarity and routines, that some things will appear in the foreground as a consequence of the backgrounding of others and vice versa, (2) biographical history<sup>14</sup>, that subjects are to some extent temporally defined, and (3) physical setting; that material aspects depend on their relationship to social conventions. A queer phenomenology perspective points to how the subject's background history forms privileges and non-privileges that affect the subject's perception of the world and objects (Ahmed, 2006). Furthermore, a queer phenomenology, contrary to the bracketing fundamental to classical phenomenology, points to how an object has a background history and a story for its arrival that will locate it at a certain, non-neutral, place (Ahmed, 2006). Derived from socio-cultural anthropologist Arjun Appadurai (1986) ethno-phenomenological thinking of how we have to follow objects in order to understand what their histories might imply, Ahmed (2006: 39) poses the question

How did I or we arrive at the point where it is possible to witness the arrival of the object?

A diversifying of background into temporal and spatial aspects will differentiate a

<sup>14</sup> Compare with Haraway (1991) notion of situated knowledges and Butler's (2011a) perspective on intersubjectivity claiming that I am not the sole writer of my identity. I will return to Butler later on in this chapter and to Haraway's views in chapter 3.

critique of normativity by pointing out different shapes that it can take. And, in line with such reasoning, human beings can also be located in the background, due to other human beings and objects being located in the foreground. Although it is not always easy to transfer Ahmed's reasoning on dis/orientation and back/foreground into realities of one's own life experiences, it becomes useful from an architectural perspective due to the explicit connotations regarding movement as well as spatiality. I will mainly use the queer interpretation of background and foreground in order to describe how spatial elements will influence my movement and the possibility to orientate myself at different places.

### ***Angle of Arrival***

We cannot neglect the relation between background and foreground, and that together they set an ambience affecting us, depending on from where we approach or enter a situation. However, predefined interpretations of how a situation should be or is intended to be experienced could affect us in the sense that we might not be able to respond to the situation at all. Such predefinitions could even force us to sense or direct our attention in an excluding manner, such as when restrictive social conventions would stand in the way of our possibility to express ourselves. This concerns ethical matters both on a scientific and personal level, due to the possible exclusion or obscuring of important findings as well as of individual needs and desires.

Regarding scientific findings, a certain take on things always represents how the scientist/discourse regards the problems of research. A reflection on the research questions in regard to affect—in the sense of being partly a product of the relationship between background and foreground, and thereby positioning issues of the studied theme—could help expose discursive as well as subjective biases, and that these biases will form our orientations toward matters. In the chapter “Spatialities of feeling” in Non-representational theory geographer Nigel Thrift (2007) points to how the lack of context has been a problem in sociological studies of emotions, where the use of e.g. questionnaires neglects how the investigatory setting is affecting the respondent (the body). Thrift (2007: 175) outlines an interpretation of “affect as a set of embodied practices that produce visible conduct as an outer lining,” where the intention is to capture the everyday appearance and emotions of affect as embodied experiences in their physical context. Thrift (2007) means that such a perspective sees affect through the lens of processes and bodily conditions.

In all, Thrift (2007:182) outlines “[f]our different notions of affect”:

Each of them depends on a sense of push in the world but the sense of push is subtly different in each case. In the case of embodied knowledge, that push is provided by the expressive armoury of the human body. In the case of affect theory it is provided by biologically differentiated positive and negative affects rather than the drives of Freudian theory. In the world of Spinoza and Deleuze, affect is the capacity of interaction that is akin to a natural force of emergence. In the neo-Darwinian universe, affect is a deep-seated physiological change involuntarily written on the face.

While Thrift (2007) makes an effort to capture the dimension of affect in different theoretical domains, Ahmed (2010) has a more direct approach. In the chapter “Happy objects” she suggests an approach to affect or ambience as something that is “sticky”: “Affect is what sticks, or what sustains or preserves the connection between ideas, values, and objects.” (Ahmed, 2010: 29)

Ahmed’s discussion of affect starts out in happiness. Happiness is “a happening” that involves affect, it is an “evaluation or judgment” causing positive valuations, and it is intentional because it is directed toward something (Ahmed, 2010: 29).<sup>15</sup> Regarded as a spatial matter, happiness may be part of an atmosphere. The immediate impression of an atmosphere may, however, to some extent be brought in by the experiencing subject.<sup>16</sup> Happiness can cause good feelings and contribute to the creation of so-called “happy objects” (Ahmed, 2010: 30). We direct our attention toward “happy objects” such as the family, because they promise us happiness (Ahmed, 2010: 30). As they are passed around as “social goods” they will “accumulate positive affective values,” and this is what makes affect “sticky’.” (Ahmed,

<sup>15</sup> Ahmed (2010:30) asks how can we “theorize positive affect and the politics of good feelings” and thereby continues the work of Patricia Clough (2007) *Introduction to the Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social*.

<sup>16</sup> With Teresa Brennan’s (2004) *The Transmission of Affect* as a basis, Ahmed (2010:37) discusses what it means to “feel the atmosphere” when entering a room. Ahmed (2010) sees two partly contradictory arguments presented by Brennan: 1) the atmosphere is something that will get into people entering the room, 2) the impression of a room (situation) will be affected by if I e.g. feel anxiety when entering a room. This partial contradiction is illustrated by Ahmed (2010: 36) by quoting Brennan: “If I feel anxiety when entering a room, then that will influence what I perceive or receive by way of an ‘impression’.” (Brennan, 2004: 6) I understand the latter as the feeling (or pre-feeling, something I un/consciously have) of e.g. anxiety that will influence my impression of the atmosphere when I enter a room or space. Ahmed suggests that the first argument describes atmosphere as something that is in the room by itself, while the latter makes anxiety “sticky,” because “it tends to pick up whatever comes near.” (Ahmed, 2010: 36) Ahmed (2010) describes stickiness, e.g. anxiety (a feeling), as something that will angle my arrival or understanding of a room. Moreover, it is important to stress that Ahmed’s (2010) definition of affect acknowledges subjectivity while Brennan’s (2004) perspective could be interpreted as being based in a more objective location of affect.

2010:29) Affect is not regarded as a separate entity by Ahmed (2010). She stresses “the messiness” it involves; “the unfolding of bodies;” “the drama of contingency;” and how the proximity of objects touches and moves us (Ahmed, 2010: 30). This line of thought points to similarities with Thrift’s (2007) more complex image of embodied affect. However, Ahmed (2010) emphasizes a more intimate and intersubjective vein of thought, in turning to the two-fold production of the familiar. A question may be asked: What happens if I direct myself towards a so-called happy object like the family and do not feel happiness? I am confronted with an object, which keeps its status “by identifying those who do not reproduce its line as the cause of unhappiness.” (Ahmed, 2010:30) Those who are not able to create a family, or do not want to, will not only possibly feel unhappy but might also be blamed for it. They are not taking part in the reproduction or helping to maintain the family as a happy object. Instead, from Ahmed’s (2010:30) perspective they become “‘affect aliens’: feminist kill-joys, unhappy queers, and melancholic migrants.” This points to the impact of (inter)subjectivity in Ahmed’s (2010) understanding of affect—that the same objects cause differing affects depending on our identities and degree of family likeness.

As well as Ahmed’s phenomenological reasoning regarding orientation does work as a theoretical outset for my investigations of corporeal and intersubjective existence in space, I do not consider her affect discussion as an all-together clear or even wholly consistent theory. Rather, I find that her reasoning definitely pinpoints the situatedness of existence, including the moods of existence, like, for example, what it is to feel uncomfortable. She asks what it is to feel something else than what might be expected of you. Being out of tune. Something that chafes. Or even something that can make you, me, and things, invisible. Ahmed’s (2010) perspective on and understanding of affect could capture the intangible, such as sensing, for instance, anxiety and happiness spatialized into atmospheres and ambiances—the contexts we enter. Atmosphere is with Ahmed’s (2010: 37) perspective regarded as felt from a certain point and orientation:

we may walk into a room and “feel the atmosphere,” but what we may feel depends on the angle of our arrival. Or we might say the atmosphere is already angled; it is always felt from a specific point.

I would say that atmospheres *often* are supposed to be felt from a limited range of positions. In Ahmed’s (2010) sticky object version of affect, it becomes something

we cannot avoid. It sticks to us and to objects whether we want it or not, following us and the objects around. Affect understood as something sticky makes it very hard to step out of my own affectual state. It will have a strong influence on my angle of arrival in a situation, because if we are not able to be part of an affect or arrive from the right angle we could be neglected and excluded. Thereby, angle of arrival and affect evoke questions of accessibility, inclusion and exclusion. In a discussion on affect and place-making in public spaces among youths in Vancouver, Canada, anthropologist and social researcher Cameron Duff (2010) points to the potential of affect in order to nuance the understanding of place-making with regard to identity matters. Application of affect theory makes it possible to diversify how place-making takes place, e.g. the creation of meaning and affinity (Duff, 2010).

Stickiness could potentially turn affectual sensations into something quite static: that I have no possibility to reposition myself towards an ambience, that there are no alternative interpretations of, or possibilities to choose, how to experience a situation. Even if a choice is possible, the possibility to choose will only appear if I have access to a selection of choices—positions or roles. Instead of a sticky surface full of dust and hair, affects could be like a field of tensions where my position concerning affect could vary or be unstable. Maybe we are drawn to the affects themselves, and maybe they are more magnetic than sticky. In my investigations this tendency towards the magnetic relate to what role I take on in my autoethnographic walk notes, and in what way my roles—positions—affect how I look upon things and matters. Sometimes I dwell in personal experiences, one moment I am the architect, and the next I become the researcher. These positions were not chosen beforehand, but appear in the analysis and interpretation process. They are my privileges, shortcomings and limitations.

In the following subsections of *Orientations* I will reflect on my own walk experiences from a starting point in the queer phenomenological and affect-based perspectives presented above, such as maintaining an attention towards how it is difficult to escape the ambiances of a situation if you experience a misfit. This in order to see how it can ultimately provide a differentiated view of architecture, space, and materiality, in relation to walking.

If you neglect the background you will not grasp the atmosphere. I will let orientation in this expanded phenomenological sense lead the way as I conduct my autoethnographical walking, and complement this with reflections in terms of affect as something magnetic, and back/foreground as discussed above.

### **Materiality of Space: Niches, Folds and Edges**

*Next to the bike roundabout at Kungsgatan a guy has installed a drum set. Looking focused and concentrated, he starts playing. Tuesday morning at 8 a.m. You wish you could stay and listen. (130312)*

In several of my walk notes I have paid attention to material, folds, edges, corners and their relationship to the body. The drum set was placed in the corner on the sidewalk. It is a wide corner. The sidewalk and the bike lane are distinguished from each other only through their different paving materials. Behind the drummer was the corner of a brick building and a raised flowerbed with a brick edging; together they created a background, placing the drummer in the foreground. The drummer could—quite effortlessly—orientate himself in such a way that the space became a stage suited for his performance. When it is not a stage you could e.g. sit on the edge of the flowerbed.



Figure 2.1. Autoethnographic collage of drum corner.

Next time I see someone using the space this takes place:

*Today a woman was sitting at the corner. Same place as the drummer. Begging. She was sitting next to the flowerbed facing the canal. You passed her. (140623)*

The same space is inhabited with different purposes. Taken into use. The drumming man appears self-confident. For the begging woman it also becomes a type of stage where she can expose herself and her poverty, but this comes with a whole other ambience than the drummer situation did. Both of them had the guts to inhabit the space for their own purposes. Describing a situation in terms of how bodies' "orientation" allow us then to rethink the phenomenality of space—that is, how space is dependent on bodily inhabitance." (Ahmed, 2006: 6)

It is not for me to say whether the drumming man and the begging woman experienced orientation or not. I can only say something about how I experienced their possibilities for orientation, and how I orientated myself differently towards them. I noticed the woman, but I did not stop and give her money. I did not fulfill her wish, as I partly did with the drumming man, crediting him for his innovative initiative. I was not disorientated in relation to the spatial situation that I experienced when neglecting the begging woman. It was the privilege of avoidance—an orientation with negative connotations that exposes the normative aspect of how I inhabit the place. Therefore, it becomes important to nuance the orientation wording, by exploring aspects of background, and thinking that orientation is a dynamic notion stretching between disorientation and orientation. I could have interviewed the begging woman and the drumming man about how they arrived in the situation: from where and why.

In regard to seeing affect—as a position fluctuating in a field of tension—I always tend to rationalize my behavior towards begging in terms of my willingness to give money. I am used to seeing them—the beggars. I have a plan in my head for how to handle the situation, for how to justify my actions. A routine for taking care of an ethical matter. And, as Ahmed (2006) points out, repetitiveness is not a neutral action that gives bodies an orientation. My chosen



orientation is partly backgrounding the woman in my view.

The surprising and slightly crazy character of the drummer situation was beyond my routines. As cynical as it might sound, I would probably not have made a note in my walk diary about the begging woman, had it not been for the drummer's previous inhabitation of the spot. She and her fellow beggars have become a part of the urban backdrop that I have taught myself to rationalize, in order to keep my own feelings of despair at a distance.

The two situations also point to not moving being as important as moving, when discussing walking. In "Stop and Go: A Field study of Pedestrian Practice, Immobility and Urban Outreach" the sociologists Tom Hall and Robin James Smith (2013: 275) argue that if mobility definitions only favor actual movements, they will exclude interconnected activities of walking such as "pauses and stillness." In addition, these activities will be understood as obstacles restricting movement and that needs to be overcome:

This is more than the value-neutral twinning of two opposed concepts. Instead, movement is affirmed, is where the action is; stasis is condemned, pathologised. Thus, we have a normative binary, in the sense that one side is preferable to the other, is recommended. (Hall and Smith, 2013: 276)

This way mobility is pointed out as a value in itself (Hall and Smith, 2013). By referring to geographer Nicholas Blomley's (2007) study "How to turn a beggar into a bus stop," Tom Hall and Robin James Smith (2013) researcher in sociology and ethnography, stress that such a division of mobility and immobility could easily reduce e.g. begging into an activity opposing mobility. This is not saying that we should encourage begging, but it shows that arguments promoting mobility, such as walking, can be misused in order to initiate interventions where unwanted citizens are removed from the streets because they are understood as hindering continuous mobility flow. Instead, it is suggested that immobility and mobility are intertwined concepts, capable of enhancing each other (Hall and Smith, 2013).

*Small shifts in the facade. Dislocation of the bricks' positions. Folds in space. Anything interrupting smoothness. The direction is straight, but the wall continuously folds. Breaking straight lines. Pauses. You think of the differences in materials—bricks and mortar. You think of details. Their impact on your experience. Voids and bumps seem to make your movement easier. More pleasurable. You like walking close to them. Have them within reach. Maybe touch them. At least see them in the corner of your eye. (130319)*

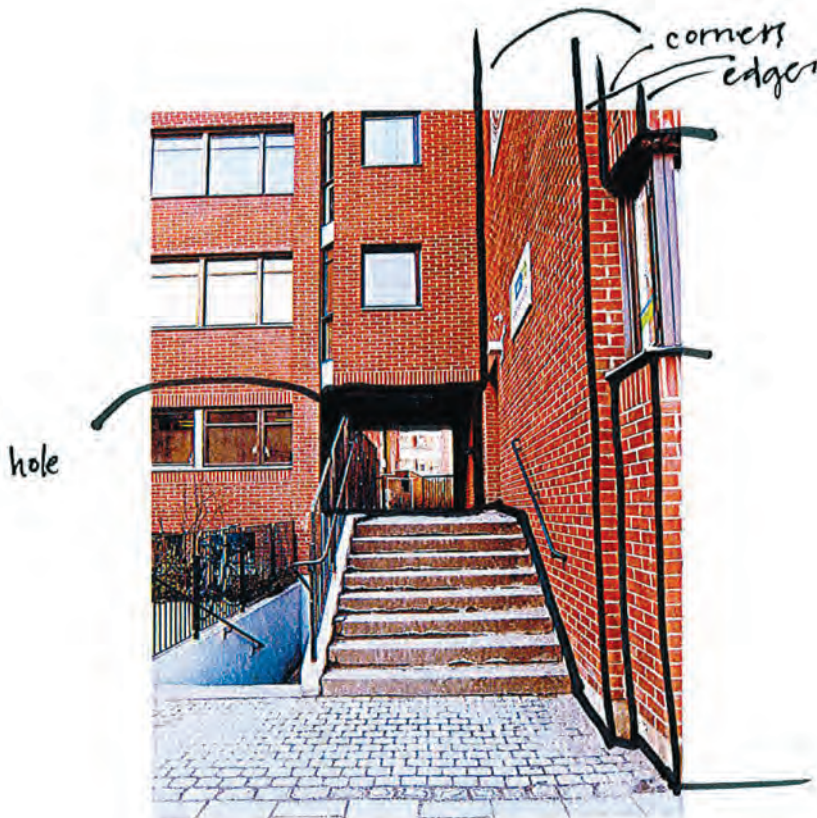


Figure 2.2. Autoethnographic collage showing a situation on the way to the bus.

Experiences of forms and materiality, e.g. difference between texture of a brick and a mortar joint. I noted how they helped me orientate my body and had an effect on my sense of moving in the space. Even though peripherally experienced, the subtle changes in form and material created an ambience of pleasantness for me. They seemed to have facilitated my movement forward. Duff (2010) points to the importance of mundane places for creating meaning for communities and neighborhoods. That public places for a moment or two can be transformed into something that affords one privacy (Duff, 2010). His perspective on affect implies how materiality served as a facilitator for place-making, e.g.

niches and corners in malls and arcades; quiet spots in parks, beaches, and other open spaces; as well as particular cafes and bubble tea shops. In explaining the significance of these places, a number of participants spoke of the absence of formally recognised spaces for youth in the city of Vancouver. (Duff, 2010: 889)

This observation of how the occurrence of folds had an impact on my sense of experiencing orientation led me to further make notes about it my *walk diary*.

*A sense of a fence*

*You are walking between home and the bus to work. You are looking for folds at Fågelbacksgatan behind Kronprinsen. It's morning and you are on the way to the bus. You are paying attention to how the folds shift. Big and small. How your body tracks them in different ways. You perceive small folds as unevenly spread ribs distributing the air between you and the shapes of facades, bushes, flowerbeds and fences. You think the bigger folds become spaces of departure from where you can spring off to the next one. It makes you feel good. You see folds come and go. You pass them and they let you pass.*

*You let your mind wander to the entrance of Holma. You think of the greenery of the allotment gardens and how they provided you with forms and softness. They let your eyes wander and your body follow. You think your visual impression is a bodily experience. You think that the part of your body facing the greenery senses it more than the other side of your body. (130822)*

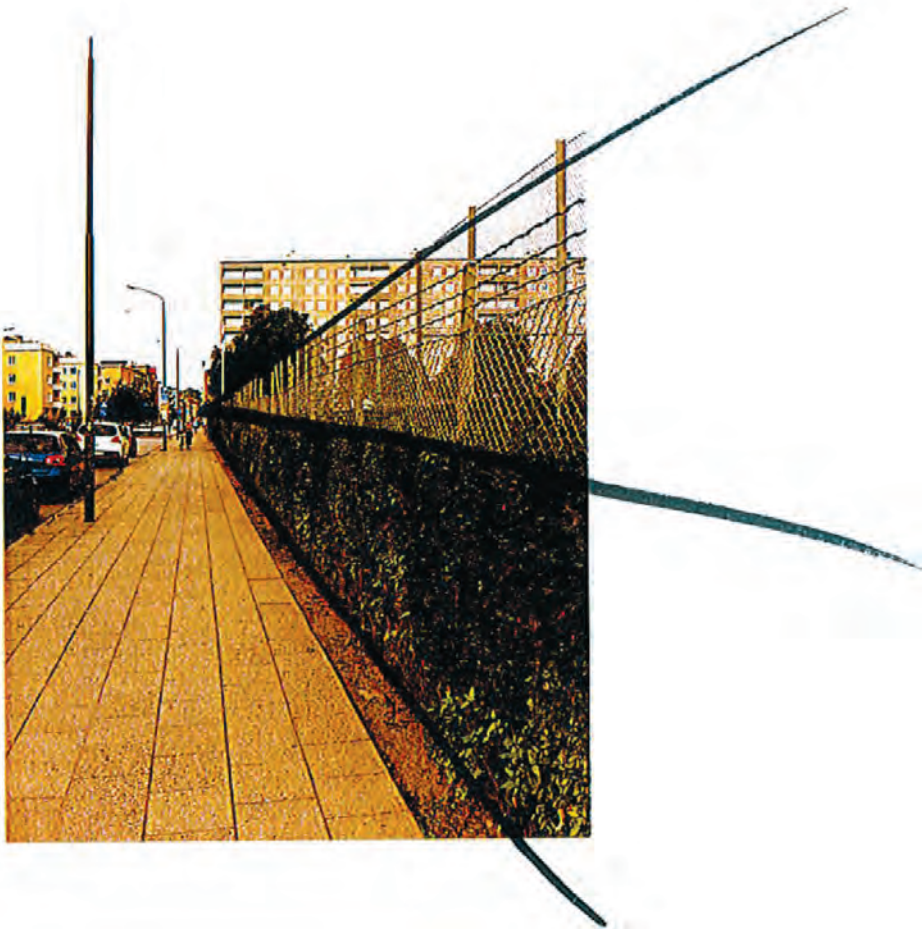


Figure 2.3. Autoethnographic collage showing fence along sports field at Fågelbacksgatan.

When I moved along the fence it felt like my arrival was always far ahead of me. It was possible for me to turn my body towards the fence, but it was hard to get something in return. Something I could hold on to that might help me orientate myself. No elements interrupting the horizontal direction. Something to rest against. In order to orientate—to expand, reach out, locate, and position—my body needs something to hold on to in the horizontal direction.

The happy object (Ahmed, 2010) of pedestrians, i.e. the sidewalk, is there but it did not evoke any happy feelings. I just felt tired, bored and the situation appeared

as a bit comfortless. It is like the sidewalk on its own promises something that I cannot experience. However, the folds seem to have an ability to provide breaks and pauses—mental or real. When they appear, my sense of bodily orientation seems to increase. Is it because they are allowed to step out of the background?

The walk notes regarding the folds and the fence were two attempts done in order to understand what it was that might create the sense of a place as nice or boring. Instead of just saying: “It is the long fence that makes the stretch unpleasant,” I wanted to see what it was about the fence that was causing unpleasantness and what it was about the nice stretch that was causing pleasantness. I found out that I wanted to direct my body toward folds, corners, and edges, and the lack of this possibility affected my sense of the place. The walk notes about the drumming man and the begging woman pointed out identity matters and how they seem to fluctuate in appearance and impact, depending on the circumstance of a situation. Together, these walk notes on the relationship between body, spatial and material matters, and Ahmed’s (2010, 2006) perspective on queer phenomenology and affect, to some extent underpinned a focused observation at Fågelbacksgatan and a further study of the different layers of backgrounds: routines, history and physical setting.

### ***Degrees of Orientation: Corporeal matters and Walking***

I chose this site—Fågelbacksgatan behind Kronprinsen (the Crown Prince) in Malmö—because it was recurring in my *walk diary*. Kronprinsen is the name of a building that was constructed in the 1960s and which is the only high-rise in that part of Malmö.

I passed the site more or less every day without really noticing it. A mundane place. It was just there. I wanted to look closer at a situation that was a sort of spatial background in my everyday life, and how that might determine the experience of a space.

*Fågelsbacksgatan*

*A corner.<sup>17</sup> You are turning your gaze. A slanting wall.<sup>18</sup> The amount of air between you and the house is increasing. You are looking at the red stop-light. Looking up toward a grey concrete facade with balcony niches in different colors.<sup>19</sup> Turning toward another stop-light. Pressing the button.<sup>20</sup> Looking at the concrete facade again.<sup>21</sup> You are in the place you want to conduct a closer study of. Standing at a corner.<sup>22</sup> Traffic. Noise. You have walked from tranquility to noise. That is how you arrive at the place. The wall of a house, its folds and the lack of folds. Slots, window niches positioned too high.<sup>23</sup> A door with wood carvings, a door handle.<sup>24</sup> Small basement window<sup>25</sup> with grilles. Joints in the sidewalk paving.<sup>26</sup> Small shifts in the facade, brick wall joints.<sup>27</sup> You are sometimes turning your gaze, sometimes your entire body or you just let everything pass in the periphery.<sup>28</sup> An ugly doorway with an obscure door handle.<sup>29</sup> A drainpipe.<sup>30</sup> Vertical ducts for electrical cables along a facade.<sup>31</sup> Flowerbed edging made of stone.<sup>32</sup> A car. A give way sign. Seams. You are stepping on a sewer cap. You are subconsciously orientated by your foot.<sup>33</sup> A sewer grate, a fence, poles, bushes, signs. Vegetables, people shopping. It is calm here now. The busy street is behind you. Fewer people's movements and directions. You are turning*

- <sup>17</sup> Along the right side of the body.  
<sup>18</sup> Along the right side of the body.  
<sup>19</sup> Way above the head.  
<sup>20</sup> Just above the waist.  
<sup>21</sup> Way above the head.  
<sup>22</sup> Along the right side of the body.  
<sup>23</sup> Above the head.  
<sup>24</sup> Along the right side of the body.  
<sup>25</sup> Lower part of your leg.  
<sup>26</sup> Foot.  
<sup>27</sup> Along the right side of the body  
<sup>28</sup> Different ways for perceiving material and form.  
<sup>29</sup> Along the right side of the body. Waist.  
<sup>30</sup> Along the right side of the body.  
<sup>31</sup> Along the right side of the body.  
<sup>32</sup> Perceived at a distance.  
<sup>33</sup> The sole of your foot.

*and going over to the other side of the street. The right side of your body is always facing the buildings. There is a lot of space (air) between your left side and the other side of the street. Now: smooth concrete wall, few joints between huge concrete elements.<sup>34</sup> Sharp, well defined corners.<sup>35</sup> You have to raise your gaze high in order to find more corners, edges to look at.<sup>36</sup> Further down at the building you are discovering a corner where mosaic has fallen off.<sup>37</sup> You can see more mosaic that looked like smooth grey surfaces from a distance. Beautiful details lost in the distance next to the big and smooth. A concrete edge<sup>38</sup> defines a flowerbed next to a small path, a colorful bush. Corners creating spaces.<sup>39</sup> Big smooth surfaces without windows.<sup>40</sup> Grey metal railings, pots, plants.<sup>41</sup> You are turning and looking up high towards Kronprinsen.<sup>42</sup> It is far away. Your feet are turning you toward the ground and the cobblestones. Your gaze is getting stuck on a wall with details in white rough bricks.<sup>43</sup> A dirty edge. Concrete panels forming square flowerbeds. Folds. Folds along the lower parts of your legs.<sup>44</sup> Flower beds forming creases, shifts. Recurring big corners.<sup>45</sup> Corners become your reference points. You are making the same walk once more. Taking a few photos. Strolling. You ask the greengrocer if you can take a picture of the vegetables. He says yes. Should I interview him about the place? The second time you are walking at the back of Kronprinsen you are turning your body and gaze toward the houses on the other side of Mariedalsvägen. You think they look nice against the clear blue sky.<sup>46</sup> Balconies, windows, bay windows. Angular and straight. This is what your hood looks like. This is where you are arriving from. While you are walking you can feel every single joint and seam in the street.<sup>47</sup> (130926)*

- <sup>34</sup> Far away from the right side of the body.
- <sup>35</sup> Along the right side of the body.
- <sup>36</sup> Above the head.
- <sup>37</sup> At first in your view then along the right side of the body.
- <sup>38</sup> The lower part of your leg.
- <sup>39</sup> At a distance.
- <sup>40</sup> At a distance.
- <sup>41</sup> Your foot and along the lower part of your leg.
- <sup>42</sup> Way above the head.
- <sup>43</sup> Vision and tactile experience is synchronized.
- <sup>44</sup> You are measuring the distance between the edge with the lower part of your leg.
- <sup>45</sup> In your view and along the right side of the body.
- <sup>46</sup> Affection!
- <sup>47</sup> Foot.





Figure 2.4. Photo of smooth wall, Fågelbacksgatan.

When walking next to the big smooth surfaces I sensed them as almost refusing my body. They did not offer many opportunities for directing my body or keeping myself busy. However, it was not a complete disorientation, because I still knew how and where to walk. But I cannot say it was a pleasant moment.





Figure 2.5. Autoethnographic collage, Fågelbacksgatan.

The contrast in experience of walking first next to a building of great scale, and then being confronted with subtle details of e.g. flowerbeds, facade materials, and niches, made me aware of how I am used to objects being too far away from me, too big, and out of reach. This became evident when something was suddenly near and close.



Figure 2.6. Autoethnographic collage, Fågelbacksgatan.

When edges and corners were within reach, it felt as if I could measure the distance to an edge of a flowerbed with the lower part of my leg (fig. 2.6). In the situation of fig. 2.6 edges and corners become important features of the space in the sense that they stage an allowing ambience.



Figure 2.7. Autoethnographic collage, Fågelbacksgatan.

So does materiality, when I simultaneously sense the subtle texture of bricks next to my cheek and the paving with my soles (fig. 2.7).





Figure 2.8. Autoethnographic collage, Fågelbacksgatan.

Or, when I looked at a wall because I felt something with the soles of my feet (fig. 2.8):  
“My feet are turning me toward the ground and the cobblestones. My gaze is getting  
stuck on a wall with details in white rough bricks.”<sup>48</sup>

<sup>48</sup> My vision and tactile experience are synchronized.

In this situation, my feet orientated my attention toward the wall. I felt the wobbly texture of the ground and linked it to the unevenness of the wall. A tactile sensation, via the sole of my foot, helped me read and understand the surrounding visual situation. The reading of the situation was twofold; a tactile sensation produced a visual intent and thereby directed my view, which in turn influenced my overall experience of the place. Tactile and visual sensations were simultaneously and reciprocally experienced, which produced a sense of everything suddenly being near and close. I felt as the space spoke to me. I was orientated—located in space and experienced a clear position. My embodied sensation of materials helped me experience the space as coherent. I would describe this as a moment when my body and the space were orientated towards one another, partially through my tactile and visual experience of the material texture. The space and I were more in tune with one another than in the previous moment where I moved along the smooth wall (fig. 2.4), where everything felt out of touch: “smooth concrete wall, few joints between huge concrete elements.<sup>49</sup>” Here, the sense of orientation was weaker. I could still walk but sensed the smooth wall as being out of reach. I still knew where I was located but I had lost my obvious position. However, when there were no form elements to orientate towards I felt lost because everything felt out of reach. I had nothing to hold on to, although the wall was close to me distance-wise. The design was not aimed towards my possibilities—I could not meet it or it could not meet me. This, in turn, influenced my sense of how to inhabit the space. The space did not seem to fit my body or maybe any kind of walking body. The properties and qualities of an object do not exist within the object itself; instead they are relational and affected by the way an object works or is used by others (Ahmed, 2006). Our possibility to locate and position ourselves will affect our orientation towards things and how we perceive them (Ahmed, 2006). However, we will be aware of what orientation means when we regain it from moments of disorientation (Ahmed, 2006). Maybe the form elements in fig. 8 have a greater flexibility than the texture of the smooth wall, in how they can be interpreted and bodily experienced. Thereby they provide a wider range of possibilities for entering the situation—you can enter from slightly different positions and still quite easily sense orientation. The relationship of background and foreground is visible here in the temporal aspects of the entire observation situation—that the degree

<sup>49</sup> Far away from the right side of my body.

of orientation changes while walking. It is not a fixed state.

This points to how orientation from a walk perspective, and within a spatial situation, includes more than just finding your way from A to B. You orientate in the spatial situation through several intertwined bodily sensations, e.g. haptic, tactile, but also a feeling of familiarity with the situation, materials and forms, or lack thereof. Haptic refers to how we sense a space through our bodily movement. Matos Wunderlich (2008: 129) points to how walking has a specific affect on haptic sensations because it inevitably forces the body to sense the space through touching and through feelings.

My point is not that visual and tactile similarities in materials should always be linked to one another, or always be considered coincidental. I am rather pointing to how reflections on bodily relations to form can emancipate us from solutions tied to fixed aesthetics. This way, a design approach can be stressed, one that explores how links between form, material and (social and physical) body can be established in order to create experiences of orientation in space; meaning that a walking person can experience a position in the foreground as well as in the background of nearby spaces.

The background concept worked most efficiently when describing the spatial orientation in regard to material objects, and in regard to a routine—that I brought something of my daily routine into the foreground of my study. However, I find it difficult to, within the frame of background concept, explicitly elaborate on the biographical aspects of how identity matters are expressed or held back in this particular situation.

Ahmed (2010) points to how the atmosphere of a place is predefined and therefore might include some bodies or exclude others. I would say that my position in relation to the atmosphere fluctuated during my walk, through the different roles I could choose between. However, along the smooth wall I could not choose another role—I ran out of options. My available selections of possible positions—the architect, the researcher and Kajsa—were not wide enough there.

### ***A slice of History: a City within the City***

The place observed above—Fågelbacksgatan/Kronprinsen—is described in an inventory of Housing areas in *Malmö: Bostadsmiljöer i Malmö: inventering. D. 2, 1955-*

1965 (Tykesson and Ingemark Milos, 2002a)<sup>50</sup> about Kronprinsen. The description in the inventory mainly refers to the block Kronprinsen, but also to some adjacent buildings. The place I have observed is located at the south side of the Kronprinsen complex. Even though the place is not explicitly addressed, I consider the inventory of interest in providing a context for the ideas and planning behind the Kronprinsen block. This context can help situate the autoethnographic observation and give a historical reference for the site.

In the following paragraph I will make a review of Kronprinsen as presented by Tyke Tykesson (architect) and Anna Ingemark Milos (culture and communication) (2002a). The idea of Kronprinsen was to be “a city within the city” [Sw: ”en stad i staden”] (Tykesson and Ingemark Milos, 2002a: 88). It is pointed out as the height of modernism in Malmö, where both form and program manifest the modern and rational of the time. Already by the end of the 1930s, the developer, Hugo Åberg, had started to plan for Kronprinsen. In 1957 he was able to buy the land from the previous owner, a regiment. His intention was to build in line with American building heights, and mark the line between the city and the adjacent neighborhood, Slottsstaden. The Kronprinsen complex is located west of, but still close to, the central parts of Malmö. The architect behind it was Thorsten Roos in collaboration with Kurt Hultin (architect) and Carl Nordström (engineer). The Kronprinsen complex consists of five skivhus,<sup>51</sup> which were completed in 1964. These are connected through a shared ground floor. Moreover, one part of the complex is a two-story bar house hosting a medical clinic and a church. This is located east of the complex. The residential part of the complex consists of two six-story buildings, two ten-story buildings, and one twenty-seven-story building. All in all, there are 677 apartments. The connecting ground floor originally housed, and still does, both an indoor shopping mall, called Kronprinstorget, and service related businesses on the outside. In the beginning, this included all kinds of services, e.g. offices, shops, cafés, church, medical clinic. There were also sport facilities available for the tenants and visitors. The roof of the common ground floor provides

<sup>50</sup> This is one of three parts in an inventory of housing environments built after 1945 in Malmö, Sweden. This inventory was done between 1999-2001 within the frame of Malmö Kulturmiljö, and the project leader was the architect Tyke Tykesson (Tykesson and Ingemark Milos, 2001). The purpose of the inventory was to increase the knowledge regarding architecture and cultural environments [Sw: kulturmiljöer] built after WW2 and between 1945-75, and the project was initiated by the Swedish government and parallelly executed in three major cities in Sweden (Tykesson and Ingemark Milos, 2001).

<sup>51</sup> Skivhus is a type of residential multistoried building. For a discussion regarding the translation of the Swedish terms for variations of residential high rises/tower blocks see Ibbotson (2002).

an elevated two-level inner yard for the tenants, designed by Per Friberg. The high rise is covered in shifting nuances of blue mosaic tiles. All other buildings are made of concrete elements. All balconies are made as niches. The balcony niches in the concrete facades are painted in different colors. In the 1990s, some changes were made to the exterior: new entrances to the shopping mall and changes to the elevated inner yard. At the top floor of the highest skivhus a restaurant and TV-studio—broadcasting the local channel to Kronprinsens’ residents—were located. The broadcasting service ended in 1980s, but the restaurant has continued to exist. The basement contains a garage—1300 parking spaces—using an elevating system, which makes the parking more space efficient. It was still in use in 2000. East of the complex is a sports arena and an adjacent office building. Toward Fågelbacksgatan, there is a six-story building. The authors describe the impression of the neighborhood from Fågelbacksgatan as more unified than from the north side.<sup>52</sup>

The decision to have almost twice as many parking spaces as apartments points to a car orientated perspective on human mobility within a city, where your car would always be within reach and visitors could always arrive by car. In addition, it assigns the inhabitants with a specific identity regarding both consumption and how to move around. Within a household you would—theoretically—not need to share a car with someone else, and when leaving the housing complex you would preferably move by car and not on foot or by other means of transportation.

### ***Proximity: so close but still so far away***

Some objects or spaces are out of reach, because we are not able to experience them. They can be geographically close but still sensed as being far away and out of reach for us. Perception of objects and things is not merely a question of being exposed to something: it is a matter of orientation and how we are positioned when we perceive something and our location “depends on where we are located, which gives us a certain take on things.” (Ahmed, 2006: 27)

My focused observation elaborated on background as a material and spatial concept. Firstly, through the process of regarding the site as a material background that I only used to pass by, and then turning it into something that I consciously directed my body toward—whilst walking—I got to see how body parts were activated or

<sup>52</sup> All of the information in this section is retrieved from the book *Bostadsmiljöer i Malmö: inventering. D. 2, 1955-1965* (Tykesson and Ingemark Milos, 2002a).



related to form elements. Some body parts seemed to have more objects and forms to orientate towards than others. I was drawn to details: edges, corners, uneven surfaces, and textures. While big smooth surfaces proved to be difficult, my directed intention brought the edges and corners into the foreground of attention.

Secondly, through the focus on how form elements and details related to my body, I could both break down the routinely felt background into smaller moments, and see how a sense of familiarity was varying.

Thirdly, I could expose how I experienced myself as being moved to the background in moments of weaker *orientation* or *disorientation*. In all, the focused observation of Fågelbacksgatan produced material and space-related knowledge of what it can mean to be orientated or disorientated in a space. To some extent, my application of Ahmed's (2006) orientation helped me expose normative aspects of my bodily movement, but also disadvantages—that I sometimes failed to make the space work for me. This touches on the time-aspects of background, as in biographical history, but does not capture in detail its actual becoming and historicity in the sense of what impact new experiences will have on forming my possibility to express desires.

A queer phenomenology explores how bodies are shaped by space and materiality, and how objects and space have the potential to enforce and create certain habits (Ahmed, 2006). The orientation between bodies and space, and how bodies are directed toward objects, tends to shape them in certain ways, where some objects will not be perceived because the body is not turned towards them—"they are 'beyond the horizon' of the body, and thus out of reach." (Ahmed, 2006: 55) Ahmed's (2006) perspective points to how material, space and form are also results of social processes. She stresses that the relationship between object and subject depends on how they are positioned in reciprocity to each other, and that my intersubjectively defined position in relation to the object also enables me to act or not act in a certain way (Ahmed, 2006). As already mentioned, Ahmed discusses Husserl's phenomenology relating to a table, however when the table does not meet my needs it is not the table itself that lacks properties:

The table is "too high," which means I cannot write at the table: the "tooness" refers not to the table's presence for itself but to how it is or is not ready for me. (Ahmed, 2006: 50)

The frustration over a table being too high or low is not about the table having certain properties (Ahmed, 2006). It is about how I can use it or how I am expecting to be able to use it. In the situation with the smooth wall (fig. 2.4) I experienced it as being out of reach for me, and not able to provide me with a direction. I sensed the same thing in the situation with the fence (fig. 2.3). This points to how disorientation would be part of the relationship between objects and subjects, and what happens when the intentions of the body like mine does not meet the intention of the materialized space.

Bodies might shape objects, and some objects might be shaped to fit certain bodies (Ahmed, 2006). A match between object and subject makes it possible for actions to take place, however, it is not a coincidence that some bodies and objects seem to match; “[o]bjects, as well as spaces, are made for some kind of bodies more than others.” (Ahmed, 2006:51) This is a norm-critical contextualization of objects and subjects with regard to action, location and position. Certain spaces only let certain bodies or actions expand and be part of the space. When I did not manage to adjust myself to the situation—as when passing the smooth big concrete wall and the long fence without being able to attach to its close presence—I felt lost. Or as Ahmed (2006: 51) puts it “a matter of *failed orientation*: a tool is used by a body for which it was not intended, or a body uses a tool that does not extend its capacity for action.”

My reading and writing about the ideas behind Kronprinsen as presented by Tykesson and Ingemark Milos (2002a) expanded my understanding of the complexity of the buildings. The inventory part of Fågelbacksgatan/Kronprinsen and their elements, contributes to my visualizations of the neighborhood as an architectural and political project. Some of the facilities are still there, others have closed. The church, for instance, is gone. However, the history and architecture of the buildings are described in quite a distant manner, focusing on the men behind the project and how they tried to implement their visions. The storytelling projects an ambience onto the site, and the voice of the text has a position that I would like to know better when reading the text. It would have been interesting to read a text where the different writers had positioned their statements in relation to personal experience of the sites, in conjunction with their professional knowledge. In addition, it would have been interesting if they had contextualized the modernistic vision of the time and how it related to the realization of the project.

My focused observation did not capture the ideological intentions behind the design, and the inventory did not capture an embodied response to the outdoor area

facing Fågelbacksgatan. However, together they can, to some extent, problematize gaps between design intentions and use: the building experienced as a machine responding to all our estimated needs and desires also brings a designed positioning; it needs to stretch out to the surrounding neighborhood too. I would say that Kronprinsen—along Fågelbacksgatan—has conveyed such an intention to some extent, but I think the moments where I experienced a weaker orientation were when this failed; the building and its surroundings were neither orientated towards each other, nor towards me.

Thinking in terms of orientation/disorientation works when I look at moments as separate moments, but in relating this figure of thought to an architectural perspective of buildings and urban areas there might be weak spots. Firstly, when I see one moment in the light of a previous one, because they seem to affect one another, it is a constructed division: it is hard and maybe not even useful to separate walking into separate moments. However, it might be a necessary step in the analysis of the empirical situations. If I have sensed orientation and then become disorientated, it seems likely that the next step would be to gain, or at least hope for, future orientation. It is, in other words, likely that my attitude toward the situation has an influence on my experience of it. And, of course, my biographical history—in terms of privileges and non-privileges—becomes important here, and the ways in which it is part of a dynamic process that can give the distinction between orientation and disorientation nuance.

Secondly, it seems like I can experience some degree of disorientation and still use the space: I can still keep on walking, but with a little less comfort. It is as though I have skills enough to manage the situation. Of course, this type of disorientation differs from the life-encompassing perspective Ahmed (2006) is presenting regarding how you are able to sexually orientate yourself, a perspective that will have a much greater and more decisive influence over your life choices and well-being. In “Psychogeography and feminist methodology” critical psychologist researcher Alexander John Bridger (2013: 292) uses the term disorientation—in a situationist sense—as a technique in order to explore a well-known setting in terms of “emotional effects,” i.e. how disorientation can evoke “new ways of making sense” of a place by “disrupt[ing] the usual relations of movement.” I do not understand Bridger (2013) as applying disorientation in an explicitly queer sense, although I think the result of such a study could be interesting in regard to, and perhaps also in contrast with, the existential position of

a queer phenomenological interpretation.

Returning to Ahmed (2006) and her discussion regarding if the table is ready for me: Is the city ready for the pedestrians? Are the cobblestones, corners, niches, flowerbeds, joints, paving and sidewalks ready to meet their conditions and preferences?

Qualities cannot be assigned to objects and subjects without taking into account which actions are going to be taken. And it must also be done in relation to by whom an action is taken. The misfit between an object and a subject,

is not, then, “in” the thing or “in” the person but rather is about whether the person and the thing face each other *in the right way*.” (Ahmed, 2006: 51) What we face can also be part of the background, suggesting that the background may include more or less proximate objects. (Ahmed, 2006: 37)

Encountering in the right way suggests a normativity able of causing inequality. In other words, a critique of existing normativity, power structures, or presumptions, only allowing for certain kinds of orientations or positions to take place. Ahmed’s queer phenomenology has partly paved the way for how we can examine such moments of inequality. I think the wording “face each other *in the right way*” (Ahmed, 2006: 51) needs elaboration in order to be less static with regard to identities and their appearance, thereby facilitating the diversification of phenomenological reflections about space, body and walking.

Ahmed’s (2006) perspective points to how objects might be made exclusively for some bodies, and thereby almost tied to certain identities. I would argue that varying degrees of orientation take place depending on your identities, but considered in regard to walking in urban settings this will be more affected by movement and temporal aspects than it is in the interior-oriented context that Ahmed uses for her queer phenomenology. In my walk perspective, orientation and disorientation are then matters that range between strong and weak. Applied on urban design aimed for pedestrians, this would mean that we need a design capable of harboring the variation of pedestrians’ capacity for action and embodied experiences. If we design for a certain discourse or a certain range of conceptions to take place, we need to know what kind of actions that discourse really allows for. Good intentions are not enough. We might not be able to include everyone’s preferences, but we have to speak openly, and in a more precise way, about whom the design of a space is directed toward. Ahmed’s

(2006) queer phenomenology points to how body and social facts are intertwined, and that cultural and social aspects might govern our understanding of material and form. Signs and symbolic meanings of material and form are loaded with connotations capable of evoking emotional responses. This way, a pedestrian body should be understood as more than externalized measures of physical properties and needs, more than something that can be met by standard technical solutions. A “utilitarian approach,” i.e. merely focusing on technical solutions providing easy and effortless pedestrian movement, might exclude other important embodied aspects of walking (Matos Wunderlich, 2008: 136).

As previously pointed out, I have—so far—not managed to elaborate on the becoming of identity formation and its relationship to time. Ahmed’s (2006) thinking departs from a common ground of identity-related theorists that take queer into consideration the way that Butler does in *Bodies that matter: on the discursive limits of “sex”* (2011a, first published in 1993<sup>53</sup>), and in “Performative acts and gender constitution: an essay in phenomenology and feminist theory” (1988), going more in-depth on identity and body and how they work, and are formed through social behavior, conceptual constructions, and language traditions. Butler’s (1988, 2011a) reasoning about how conventions are shaping bodies, and how they are acted out by them and Ahmed’s (2006) perspective on how objects form our behavior, create a powerful succession of thinking useful for spatial analysis. In what follows I will look a little further into the implications of identity formation through Butler’s notion of performativity, or how we adapt our behavior and actions depending on conventions and expectations.

### ***The Battleground of the Body*<sup>54</sup>**

The formation of different identities is in this dissertation discussed as closely linked to bodily matters, which implies that identities are also thought of as tightly linked to time aspects, and that identity matters—such as desires and needs—are acted out through the body. And in line with Butler’s (1988, 2009, 2011a) performativity theorization they are understood as temporal since they are changing over time within the same individual. In addition, such a theoretical conceptualization of identities also considers them historical, since perceptions of how they are constituted and reproduced—what

<sup>53</sup> Published prior to Ahmed’s (2006) *Queer Phenomenology*.

<sup>54</sup> “Your body is a battleground” is an artwork by Barbara Kruger from 1989.

it can be, or how it is able to change—can undergo periodical change (Butler, 2011b). This directs the attention to the defining of typologies out of supposed common group preferences. A historical, lived, and temporal approach to how bodies perform identities is more dynamic and open for change than typologization rhetoric tends to be. Butler (2011a: 26) asks if there exist “a materiality of sex that is not already burdened by the sex of materiality.” This is not to say that e.g. gender is a role projected onto a body with a given sex, but rather that the “materialization of bodies” is governed by “cultural norm” (Butler, 2011a: xii).

Butler (2011a: xii) uses the notion of “performativity”—in order to depict the iterative cultural constraining of subjectivities—and its production of sex and gender, which is described “as that reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constraints.” Acting out gender is a restricted ritual:

Performativity is neither free play nor theatrical self-presentation; nor can it be simply equated with performance. Moreover, constraint is not necessarily that which sets a limit to performativity; constraint is, rather, that which impels and sustains performativity.

Here, at the risk of repeating myself, I would suggest that performativity cannot be understood outside of a process of iterability, a regularized and constrained repetition of norms. And this repetition is not performed by a subject; this repetition is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject. (Butler, 2011a: 59-60)

Through such reasoning, performativity almost becomes what keeps an individual together. Butler’s (2011a) perspective on the relationship between gender and bodily material matters shows that acting out a gender is not simply a performance—as in a voluntary action, but performative in the sense of being a restricted and even forced action that we have to adapt to, maintained through actions and speech acts, and dependent on a constrained social context. This liberates gender from essentialism, i.e. that I do or say certain things due to e.g. my sex or skin color. In addition, if gender were a performance, I would only need to act out a different kind of role in order to change the gender roles, and believe me I have tried.

But we would doubtless make a mistake if we thought that we might remake our gender or reconstruct our sexuality on the basis of a deliberate decision. And even when we decide to change gender, or produce gender, it is on the basis of some very

powerful desires that we make such a choice. We do not precisely choose those desires. [...] But in relation to both gender and sexuality, none of us has the choice of creating ourselves *ex nihilo*. We are transformed and acted upon prior to any action we might take. And though we can radically rework our genders or even try to rework our sexualities (though often failing), we are in the grip of norms even as we struggle against them. (Butler, 2009: xii)

In the performativity sense, I am not the sole writer of my sex and gender. Analogous with this, we can talk about the intersubjective social construction of context for walking in cities. I am not the sole narrator of my pedestrian story—present or future. In this perspective, we are to a great extent dependent on each other's ideas and expectations regarding how to act out our pedestrian identities. Performativity (of gender) has to be understood as a process that can be repeated in different contexts, bringing different struggles into the creation of self, it

describes this relation of being implicated in that which one opposes, this turning of power against itself to produce alternative modalities of power, to establish a kind of political contestation that is not a “pure” opposition, a “transcendence” of contemporary relations of power, but a difficult labor of forging a future from resources inevitably impure. (Butler, 2011a: 184)

Therefore, a binary gender construction of heterosexuality needs a restrained social context where it can be performed, in order to control which desires are allowed to be acted out (Butler, 2004). However, the individual's desire to act in a certain way does not necessarily coincide with the social expectation of a gender (Butler, 1988: 531). Therefore, Butler (2004: 2) wants to separate “the life of gender” from “the life of desire” by asking, “What does gender want?” She stresses the importance of understanding the impact of the fact that “the social norms that constitute our existence carry desires that do not originate with our individual personhood.” (Butler, 2004: 2) Desires—to act out a gender—need a social context confirming and recognizing them (Butler, 2004). Referring to Hegelian understanding of desire linked to recognition, she concludes

that desire is always a desire of recognition and that it is only through the experience of recognition that any of us becomes constituted as socially viable beings. (Butler, 2004: 2)

In line with the above reasoning on identity formation, identities, desires and needs should be treated as different sources for knowledge production, not as imposing unquestionable matters of fact. In the chapter “Paranoid reading and reparative reading, or, you’re so paranoid, you probably think this essay is about you” (in *Touching feeling: affect, pedagogy, performativity*) queer and gender theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (2003: 124) asks in what ways knowledge is “performative, and how best does one move among its causes and effects?” The question intends to generate a shift from a static epistemological focus of “[i]s a particular piece of knowledge true, and how can we know?” to a performative understanding of knowledge asking

What does knowledge *do*—the pursuit of it, the having and exposing of it, the receiving again of knowledge of what one already knows? (Sedgwick, 2003: 124)

In the lecture “Performativity, Precarity and Sexual Politics” Butler (2009) widens the application of gender performativity in order to describe the conditions of, and possibilities for, illegal immigrants to exercising rights within the frame of the nation state. This in order to expose how a person that is not acknowledged as a citizen of a nation state will run the “risk of not being qualified as a subject of recognition.” (Butler, 2009: i) Here, in this dissertation, performativity will be applied in order to expose the impact of time and change on identity related matters—such as needs and desires—that occur while walking.

### ***Orientations of the general and the specific Body***

To generalize can be a privilege. In the moment, generalizations make everyday life easier. We jump to conclusions—take an interpretative prerogative and generalize out of presumptions and experience. We choose what we want to see and direct our attention towards it. Instinct. Intuition. Oblivious consciousness. Sensible or not. The problem might not be so much the generalizations themselves, but rather when we do not know what they imply or where they come from. When generalizations are formed out of someone else’s experience and presumptions, for example. Or, when we feel that occasional utterances shape notions for us to adapt to. Luckily we do not always have to take them for granted. Or accept them as a truth. That, however, does not mean they won’t still affect us, have the possibility to form our lives, or restrict our actions.



*-Hey girls! someone shouts at us.*

*Do not call out "Hey girls!" to us. We want to be left alone. We want to walk here in our nice summer clothes without you shouting at us. We do not want to be ignored. We do not want you to stare at us. Do not make any comments. As everyone else, we want spaces of our own. Let us walk without hesitation. Let us walk without hurrying.*

*An hour later. Your shouting makes us consider optional paths. We are the ones who reluctantly choose possible comments from you over walking down a desolate street. It is a compromise and a statement. Once again it annoys us. We do not want to let you define our paths. In order to escape your gaze we walk along the edges of the walkways. Because you are looking at us. While we look away. We are used to looking away. To pretending that we are ignoring you. To not being curious or turning around. To bracing ourselves and walking fast. Right now we have no escapes, except for the distance to where you are sitting.  
(140806)*

This took place on a summer evening in the beginning of August. It was around 8.30 pm, and I was on my way to a Pride event in Folkets park, Malmö. I was walking on my own. In this moment, my experience was far from a seamless inhabitation of the city. I was not a dweller here. Someone tried to dwell in me. Occupy my space and body. Intrude. I tried to use the distances of the space to hide, made up alternative routes in my head. However, I chose to take the risk of feeling uncomfortable again. The path became a catwalk and an adjacent low wall provided seating for an audience. Form and material provided the spatial conditions for the situation to take place. The shouting man turned it into a place for harassment. In this situation, the material was a facilitator for a lifestyle founded on unequal ideas of sexes and desires. The shouting man gave voice to, and acted out, a macho culture spilling over onto the surrounding space, onto me, and anyone present.

From a planning perspective, this situation raises questions regarding which bodies a place for walking, sitting, or hanging out is designed for: Which kinds of scenarios were expected to take place here? Who were the presumed users of the space? Is the space more orientated towards a particular user over others? Whose

experiences and presumptions are being manifested in the materiality? Why precisely these manifestations? Which desires are being supported or denied? To remove the seating area or simply avoid designing similar situations, which would perhaps be a practical resulting impulse, is not a solution. Rather, a set of questions, like those raised here, that has the capacity to relate design solutions to identity discourse, and allow a multiplicity of subject formations to take place, would be more beneficial.

What orientations do we take? Through Ahmed's (2006) queer phenomenology I can position and locate myself and the shouting man; that our bodies are allowed to inhabit the space in different ways; that I consider alternative routes, trying to be invisible—trying to make up for my sense of disorientation. It is as if I am trying to blend into the background, and change the shouting man's focus—what is in his view and what he turns toward—while, from my perspective, the shouting man is enjoying the sense of being perfectly anchored and orientated in the situation.

However, in order to not only confirm one body's disorientation on the behalf on another body's orientation, identity needs to be considered in terms of time. Here, the impact of my identity as a woman dramatically changed from one step to another. I was peacefully walking in a semi-crowded space when a man suddenly disrupted the peacefulness with his shouting. Pointing out restraints and expectations for my frame of performativity.

As shown, Ahmed's thoughts on matter and who it is that experiences a matter, and Butler's on how an understanding of identities is collectively formed, have helped us see alternatives to typological frames for space formation. The situation with the shouting man raises questions that spill over onto theorization itself, in ways similar to how Ahmed's phenomenology is a reaction to Husserl's. In relation to traditional and often cited architectural theory, my investigations, based on Ahmed's (2006) phenomenology can be juxtaposed with an architectural phenomenology-related reference: architect Juhani Pallasmaa's (1996: 10) *The Eyes of the Skin*<sup>55</sup>, where tactility is stressed as being essential "for our experience and understanding of the world." This approach to architecture is founded in a critique of architecture focusing too much on visual impressions, which will exclude bodily sensations (Pallasmaa, 1996). As a consequence of this visual bias, Pallasmaa (1996) sees an evolving detachment between architecture and the people who are supposed to inhabit it. Pallasmaa (1996) considers

<sup>55</sup> The reason I refer to the *Eye of the skin* (Pallasmaa, 1996) is because it is often mentioned in discussion touching upon embodied matters and architecture.

Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology—due to its idea of perception as an embodied experience—as an escape out of a Cartesian dualism that is assuming a spectator as being completely separated from the object of study. *The Eyes of the Skin* is a call for a body-oriented architecture, where Pallasmaa (1996: 32) states that an

over-emphasis on the intellectual and conceptual dimensions of architecture contributes to the disappearance of its physical, sensual and embodied essence.

He argues for embodied experiences as central when perceiving architecture, and, as a consequence, architecture should be designed from the perspective of bodily sensations (Pallasmaa, 1996). Pallasmaa's (1996) descriptions of architectural experiences—as an embodied matter tightly related to our senses—is of course relevant, and promises an approach that to some extent could support what I have tried to do with my autoethnographic studies. However—and this should be clear based on my above recognition of Ahmed's (2006) notion of orientation—an embodied perspective must not necessarily oppose either a conceptualizing or an intellectualizing of architecture, on the contrary, they are part of the angle by which I approach a situation. Moreover, Pallasmaa (1996: 67) furthers the idea that a one-way communication between the bodily experiences of architect and user is what is at work in architecture:

As the work [the architecture] interacts with the body of the observer, the experience mirrors the bodily sensations of the maker. Consequently, architecture is communication from the body of the architect directly to the body of the person who encounters the work, perhaps centuries later.

The embodied experience represented in the architecture is, in this type of reasoning, the one of its designer. Not only does it imply a straight line of communication between the designer's intent and the users of the space, the argumentation is also problematic because it does not separate the desires or interpretations of the designing body from the experiencing bodies. There is no situating of either of them. In addition, Pallasmaa here presents a generalized view of the body where all receivers of the design are assumed to be the same—have the same needs and abilities. Therefore, it becomes difficult to grasp whose tactility and body he describes and refers to. Is it a general body? Is it the tactility of a male body? A female body? A queer body? Or just any desexualized user-body? In addition, it illustrates a quite grandiose idea of what an architect's role is in relation to the produced work, pointing to the idea of the architect

as a lone genius able of controlling any future action in connection with it.

The question regarding who the body might be in Pallasmaa's (1996) phenomenological reasoning, as actualized also when he states that

[a]rchitectural meaning derives from archaic responses and reactions remembered by the body and the sense. Architecture has to respond to traits of primordial behavior preserved and passed down by genes. Architecture does not only respond to the functional and conscious intellectual and social needs of today's city-dweller; it must also remember the primordial hunter and farmer concealed in the body. (Pallasmaa, 1996: 60)

Who is the farmer and who is the hunter? How shall I as an architect remember them?

I experience myself in the city, and the city exists through my embodied experience. The city and the body supplement and define each other. I dwell in the city and the city dwells in me. (Pallasmaa, 1996: 40)

The city is there for Pallasmaa, and he is there for the city. The I who speaks in this text sounds like a paternal I with no restrictions and endless possibilities. I envy him. Or, sometimes I wish I were a boy. The I in Pallasmaa's text has the prerogative to interpret how the city will appear. My envy stops there.

Refraining from positioning your experience is problematic in how it implies one embodied experience as representative for bodies in general, or as if one body is able to speak for everything body-related, supposedly illustrating everyone's preferences and conditions. Haraway (1988: 581) approaches the embodied vision from another angle, which situates it:

I would like to insist on the embodied nature of all vision and so reclaim the sensory system that has been used to signify a leap out of the marked body and into a conquering gaze from nowhere. This is the gaze that mythically inscribes all the marked bodies, that makes the unmarked category claim the power to see and not be seen, to represent while escaping representation.

In Haraway's (1988) perspective we cannot claim an all-encompassing objectivity. Instead, "partial perspective" and "limited location" are what can provide a realistic

objectivity and actually “situate knowledge.” (Haraway, 1991:190, 192)<sup>56</sup> We could perhaps try to interpret Pallasmaa’s (1996: 40) statement: “I dwell in the city and the city dwells in me” as a utopian idea of a city including everyone. However, a general embodied understanding of the world and the self could hardly make such a seamless inhabitation possible. There are other aspects—limitations and privileges—that influence the possibilities of how to inhabit a city: how we orientate ourselves, what perspective we have on the situation, and how the impact of identity matters fluctuates.

Both Pallasmaa (1996), mainly, and Ahmed (2006), partly, rely on Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology, in particular *Phenomenology of perception* (first publication in 1962). Nevertheless, as shown so far in this chapter, they end up with quite different perspectives on space and materiality. Pallasmaa’s (1996) approach shows difficulties in grasping a situation like “Hey girls!”—where bodies with conflicting desires are trying to inhabit a space or simply exist—because his phenomenological take on architecture and body neither considers a space in relation to positions nor to action possibilities and differing interpretations of space. It locates bodies in relation to form and material by discussing tactile and haptic sensations, but not in regard to other restraining or encouraging aspects, inequality or conflicts. It lacks the capability of grasping my resistance to what happened in the situation above: that I did not respond in a positive way to the shouting man.

Touch is the sensory mode that integrates our experience of the world with that of ourselves. Even visual perceptions are fused and integrated into haptic continuum of the self; my body remembers who I am and where I am located in the world. (Pallasmaa, 1996: 10)

Pallasmaa (1996), despite this acknowledgment of various modes of tactility, stays with a unidirectional perception, whereas Ahmed’s (2006) queer phenomenological perspective takes into account the position and location from where I experience the situation.

In one of the situations at Fågelbacksgatan the tactile sensing of the cobblestoned paving via my feet, evoked a visual and (while still close) more remote

<sup>56</sup> “Feminist objectivity is about limited location and situated knowledge, not about transcendence and splitting of subject and object. [...] But not just any partial perspective will do; we must be hostile to easy relativisms and holisms built out of summing and subsuming parts.” (Haraway, 1991: 190, 192)

sensing of a wall with a rough brick surface (fig.2.8). This reciprocity and enlargement of sensuous spectrum of walk experience influenced my total comprehension of the place. The situation with the shouting man, on the other hand, while also being a situation that triggered a sensuous complexity with several dimensions, was felt as inhibiting my bodily freedom in space. As corporeally sensed situations, these are more than unidirectional tactile or haptic experiences of material and form. They show that a multitude of perceptual and inter-relational sensations are active in the total impression of the spatial situation. The shouting man is sitting, watching and commenting what passes in his view. I am walking, passing, and watching. My view changes as I pass. His stays fixed. He has orientated himself in the place, found himself a stable niche. I am negotiating my orientation as I am walking. What could disorientate him in order for him to get a hint of how I experience the situation? What could change the impact that his macho identity has on this situation?

Here, an analytical approach that takes the bodily orientation, and history, into account, together with the partial perspective and performativity required by the situation, would stand a chance to capture for instance the moment of inequality between me, the space, and the shouting man, a moment felt as a corporeal fact because of how it included the impact of subjectivities. Moreover, such a range of analytical concepts expose the conflicting responses to architectural and bodily materiality, both between different subjectivities, but also temporally, as when walking the same path more than once, under different conditions. While Pallasmaa's (1996) approach very well could capture the body of the shouting man, as a dwelling body having the position of a privileged body, the other body (mine), experiencing intrusion, would in that same perspective be neglected, since we would have a kind of phenomenology that would not take into account how expectations of (other's or my own) behavior will affect how we are able to inhabit space. Expectations linked to e.g. sex and desires. Neither does it take into account how these expectations will form our experience of materiality and space. The missing part in Pallasmaa's perspective on body and architecture is a critical positioning of which subjective embodied experiences are expressed, but also what they could be. Such a perspective misses how and why experiences and actions take place, and it misses that action possibilities might be limited or aided due to identity. Despite being explicitly tied to architecture, his reasoning does not recognize the intertwined cognitive, cultural, and physical processes; it denounces analysis of physical movement in regard to which collective forces might govern the experience. The remaining

questions to planners and architects will be: Whose embodied experiences are being expressed in the design of public space? How can these spaces be interpreted by a diversity of users?

### ***Walking and Routines***

In the writing and analysis process of the *walk diary*, I started to look upon familiar places in a new way. Places I used to treat as a background started to grow on me, when I consciously directed my attention towards them in my walk notes. I began to feel attached to them. This along with reading Ahmed's (2006) *Queer phenomenology* made me pay attention to routines and what impact they might have on experiences and presumptions of spaces; in which ways routines might affect our use and inhabitation of space. Walking, without the sole intention of just transporting myself, makes the creation of "a sense of belonging, familiarity, emotional attachment and thoughts for particular urban locations" (Matos Wunderlich, 2008: 136) possible. Furthermore, the walking itself, as a practice where you give yourself space to think, evoked questions of how routines and preconceptions might govern not only mundane worlds, but also scientific matters of analysis and conceptual understanding of space and walking. In addition, my repetitive observations of familiar places differentiated the knowledge of how physical matters might affect the sense of walking, and that walk experiences can be expressed and described in terms of choices, desires and needs. The fact that routine comprises everydayness and the mundane is important in what I try to capture in these various aspects of walking, as well as in my differentiating of the experiences of architectural matters.

Matos Wunderlich (2008: 127) considers walking a routine part of our "lifeworld" and stresses the impact it has on forming our everyday life. She applies a phenomenological approach to walking describing it as

an embodied practice of our everyday life which, although naturally performed, it involves a purposive sensibility and some sort of pre-reflective knowledge. (Matos Wunderlich, 2008: 136)

Matos Wunderlich's (2008) phenomenological perspective is mostly concerned with walking as an embodied action, while the phenomenological approach applied in this dissertation has its basis in the embodied experience, and works as a means in order to expose normativity in regard to urbanity and walking.

In her studies of walking and pedestrians, Middleton (2009, 2010, 2011) has used diary notes from several informants along with in-depth interviews. In my studies I refer to the routine-like experience of a spatial setting in relation to my walking, while Middleton (2011: 2871, 2870) points to “the importance of making an analytic distinction between conceptions of habit and notions of routine,” where “habitual behaviour is a means for coping with the challenges of negotiating the city on foot.” “[W]alking routines,” in this sense, do not have to coincide with “habitual routines,” it is rather the repetition of routines that can create habits (Middleton, 2011: 2871). Middleton (2011) uses the walking routine in order to expose the constituents of habits. I use the familiarity of routines only to the extent that it supports my exposure of spatially conditioned desires and choices. Both Middleton (2011) and Matos Wunderlich (2008) focus, in a more anthropologically observing manner, to a great extent on the act of walking as a human habit and activity, while I use it as both a subject to study and as repeated part of an investigatory technique—applying the *walk diary*.

### **Orientation and Identity formation**

New things can happen when the background becomes more than just something that is keeping us in place. In recognition of Ahmed (2006) I pointed to how acknowledging the background will make it possible to create new habits and maybe walk down new paths. The cases in this section have provided knowledge regarding the significance of how material details relate to how the body turns, locates and positions itself in space. In acknowledging these relations it also became clear that orientation takes place between space and the entire body as well as between space and separate body parts. It has also been shown above that the distance between body and matter does not necessarily stand in a linear proportion to the impact of sensing: close as well as distant impacts have an influence on the walk experience. Subtle variations in form and material could be applied in order to meet the preferences of more than one type of body, and, different ones within the same body. This all points to the fact that material and form details have significance in describing a city. Describing a city through its details can provide a better idea of how it answers to its users and their preferences. From a research or planning perspective, you could zoom in on details or extend the observation to a larger scale, maybe including an overall city structure, where both the myopic and the extended perspective could be employed in order



to study the possibility for orientation. Bodily dis-/orientation is, in line with this reasoning, not only a matter of how we are able to face material form and details in the street, it is also about how we are able to orientate ourselves in a greater city context towards infrastructure and public facilities in order to make use of them.<sup>57</sup>

As pointed out, the observation at Fågelbacksgatan/Kronprinsen showed that to be orientated—to be located and positioned in a space—is partly a combination of (interaction between) haptic, tactile, and visual experiences, and background aspects of the situation and of the experiencing subject. The experience was partly governed by my previous knowledge of the space. I have passed this site many times. I know it pretty well. I feel comfortable being there. I do not feel like an intruder. However, moments of weaker orientation appeared, and I could consider this when I extended the notion of what my biographical background could touch upon to also include desires, choices and basic needs. I noticed how I am used to things being situated too far away from me. In my life, and in my education to become an architect, I have learned to accept distance as a fact in most situations.

Some individuals may have more space for action than others due to their possibility to face the situation “*in the right way*,” as Ahmed (2006: 51) puts it. I would say, based on my walks, that it varies from moment to moment. With regard to bodily movement, the degree of orientation—as in facing in the right way—seems to fluctuate due to the temporal aspects of walking. My body has become used to being out of reach of things, both in terms of physical distance within the familiar, but also, based in cultural social conventions, how I as a woman sometimes can inhabit an urban situation. Orientation is most apparent when contrasted with situations where you lose it. Some bodies will more or less always be orientated, others not, and many will wander in and out of orientation. Ahmed’s (2006) perspective on phenomenology points to the need of experiencing disorientation in order to consciously reflect on what it means to be orientated—to be positioned and privileged. Orientation seems to fluctuate as much as affect does. Affect, understood here as driving a dynamic change of positions, was seen to be helpful when describing the tension between different intra-subjective identities, such as in the case with the drummer and the begging woman. Biographical identity matters, then, can be told in temporal terms of needs and desires in regard to possibilities, not only telling the story of a past but also including the

<sup>57</sup> This can be juxtaposed with how space syntax analyzes orientation possibilities of urban spaces. While space syntax focuses on visibility this dissertation takes a body oriented perspective.

present and a possible future. As a pedestrian subject, I am not a passive receiver of constraints, but I activate them as I walk:

The body is not passively scripted with cultural codes, as if it were a lifeless recipient of wholly pre-given cultural relations. (Butler, 1988: 526)

Although we are restricted by conventions, Butler's (2011a) perspective also shows that our freedom of action will differ with varying identities of e.g. sex, sexuality, ethnicity and skin color. I believe her perspective on identity deepens the understanding of the relation between the action possibilities we have, and our available selections of identities. Some we can choose, others are unavoidable. The setting might change as you continue to walk—and thereby activate different identities—and walking as a medium itself provides you with possibilities for escape. If you are not physically held back you can get out of one situation and into another.

I have extended my palette of professional identities by becoming an architect and researcher, while other parts of me are more personal, more basic and unavoidable. In some situations, my female gender might stand in my way, blocking action potentials, just as my white skin and heterosexuality can provide me with privileges. Identities sometimes become windows of opportunity—in other situations they are just a burden. If they are beneficial for me in the long run is another question. However, identities become restrictions when they are linked to a common norm of the undesirable, or a privilege when they are connected to norms of the desirable.

A phenomenology that neglects a problematization of subjectivity—neglects to question from *where* something is experienced—will produce privileged subjects by default. Pallasmaa's (1996) phenomenologically based emphasis on the role of sensing in architectural experience was meant as a stance that acknowledged an inside observer in contrast to a completely detached observer perspective. Orientation can work as an efficient spatial analytical tool, for instance in regard to walking, but Ahmed's (2006) norm-critique focuses to a great extent on normativity caused by heterosexuality and as a consequence tends to neglect norms produced outside heteronormativity. However, as shown above, an inside observer is no guarantee for a critical analysis or view of embodied experiences. Neither is studying something from a subjugated position, in itself “‘innocent’.” (Haraway, 1991: 191) The embodied experience must, in order to show how norms govern people's action and life possibilities, be grounded in a critical positioning of the interaction between the experiencing body and the experienced

object, as suggested by Haraway's partial perspective. This will be further elaborated on in chapter 3. *Reflections on Method and Situatedness*.

Pallasmaa's (1996) perspective of how he experiences the city through his body implies privileges of the perceiver, privileges not clarified in his body-related reasoning. Still the basic idea—diminished into an auto-centric one in Pallasmaa's reasoning—of a mutual exchange between me and the city or how we could dwell in each other, triggers my thoughts regarding desires and the possibility to act them out. My autoethnographic investigation regarding intersubjective formation of identities and poly-subjective relations to physical matter is a way to reach beyond these classical shortcomings, and still accept the positioning of the body in theoretical reasoning as important.

How can the urban design given in a specific situation balance the desires, conditions and needs of different bodies? In contrast to common sense-based thoughts of safety, and experiences actually sensed by many, one desire of my own, for instance, is to walk in darkness, but it is not acted out without complications. The writer Sylvia Plath (2000: 77) reflects in her diary on the complications of having desires conflicting with existing norms:

Being born a woman is my awful tragedy. From the moment I was conceived I was doomed to sprout breasts and ovaries rather than penis and scrotum; to have my whole circle of action, thought and feeling rigidly circumscribed by my inescapable femininity. Yes, my consuming desire to mingle with road crews, sailors and soldiers, bar room regulars - to be a part of a scene, anonymous, listening, recording - all is spoiled by the fact that I am a girl, a female always in danger of assault and battery. My consuming interest in men and their lives is often misconstrued as a desire to seduce them, or as an invitation to intimacy. Yet, God, I want to talk to everybody I can as deeply as I can. I want to be able to sleep in an open field, to travel west, to walk freely at night.

I do not consider my birth a tragedy. However, I consider the expectations projected on my body as a possible source of tragedy.





Figure 2.9. Walk paths in darkness.

## **b. Urban Darkness<sup>58</sup>**

In the following section, I will discuss aspects of darkness in terms that emphasize its appearance as a material and spatial matter. This is an attempt to step out of stereotypical descriptions of darkness in order to see what it could be: how a matter of ambivalence and ambiguity can be treated as a resource in the urban landscape. The *walk diary* notes in this section are either more emotional reflections of darkness, or specifically referring to darkness as forming the experience of space.

<sup>58</sup> Prior to this dissertation, an extended version of this chapter was presented as a paper at the 2015 Symposium of the Nordic Association of Architectural Research Urban mobility—Architecture, Geographies and Social Space, November 5 & 6, Dept. Urban Studies, Malmö University, Sweden.

### A quiet Battle

The following *walk diary* note was made in response to darkness being a recurring theme in my *walk diary*. I went out walking when it was dark and then sat down to gather the feelings and thoughts my walk had evoked.

*There are bright summer nights. Then there are pitch-black winter nights. Holes for escape.*

*We like walking in darkness. Although, we feel as if we are taking a risk along our dark walks. That we should not be doing this. We have been taught to be afraid of darkness. That is dangerous to walk at night. To move fast. Not to hesitate. To look like we know where we are going. Rather ride our bike than walk. To pretend that we are talking on the phone. To look busy. To appear safe. To have confidence. To walk with determination. To hold our keys in our hand. To be on guard. To not take any risks. To learn how to defend ourselves. To look over our shoulders. To run fast. To not act stupid. To toe the line.*

*Sometimes we are walking on our own. Most of the time together with someone else. There is nothing in the city that supports our urgent need for walking in darkness. It is up to us. I am not Bella<sup>59</sup>. We—you, me, and Bella—just want some peace and quiet, but I will not fight back. I do not want to fight back. I just want to walk alone at night. I want to let darkness pass, and for darkness to let me pass. I want to have a mutual understanding. An agreement. My desire to walk in darkness is a constant battle. (140527)*

In the analysis process of my *walk diary* notes I suddenly remembered how much I had enjoyed my runs in the dark, when I was staying in Greensboro, Alabama, US, a few years earlier. The calmness of them. However, before my first run I had to overcome my fear—a fear fueled by people telling me how it was not a good idea to go out walking or running at night. One should rather drive than walk. No one ever specified what the danger was. I remember my own skepticism towards those ideas. That I thought the danger was more in people's minds than actually out there. Still, their fear affected me.

<sup>59</sup>

Bella is a character in the novel *A dirty weekend* by Helen Zahavi (1991).

Due to the rural location of Greensboro the darkness is quite intense, with few disturbing light sources, and most nights you can get a pretty clear view of the stars. I would always go running along Main Street. Occasionally lit. Most of the run in darkness. Always hot and humid. Sometimes stepping into a circle of light. Always music in my ears. Just needed to get out. Then, one night, suddenly surrounded by five, six, seven, or eight stray dogs—the same dogs that would run around in my backyard during the day. My heart stopped until I decided they were my friends. My desire to run won over fear. Foolish or not. Initially, the encounter with the stray dogs was scary, but it did not stop me from jogging at night. They turned out to be friendly, and their presence in the street created a sense of safety. I did not have to react with fear. Instead, I could act out a desire of getting out into the warm and humid darkness. In “‘Bold Walk and Breakings’: Women’s spatial confidence,” geographer Hille Koskela (1997: 309) points to the impact of routines on experiences of space and fear, and states that “[m]aking use of space a[s] part of one’ s daily routine erases the myth of danger from it.”

In “Night Spaces: Darkness, Deterritorialization, and Social Control” Robert Williams (2008: 527), researcher in political science, outlines the need for future research regarding to what extent

the reterritorializing modalities generate or otherwise reinforce patriarchal, capitalist, racist, and hetero-normative relations.

In this section I will not so much focus on reterritorialization modalities in regard to social and political division of space and how it relates to darkness. Nevertheless, my phenomenological exploration of darkness builds on my previous theoretical elaboration, in the section 2.a *Orientations*, of spatial matters in regard to queer feminist theories questioning the norms produced by e.g. heteronormative thinking. This way, the politics of normative production, and how it may be questioned, is automatically addressed.



### **Night, Fear and Calmness**

*Everything is pitch black—like walking into a cave. You are making jokes about the risk of colliding with possible rapists and that they should wear safety reflectors. We have been walking this route for a long time. Always in the evening. (130214)*

I am sometimes scared. I more or less always bear in mind places I want to avoid. I constantly consider which way feels safe enough to choose. I make up plans in my head. Most of the time I avoid desolate places. Sometimes I have to pass them. However, I try not to rush. Instead, I try to grasp the tranquility darkness can bring. Sometimes I manage, and then I feel calm. It cannot be avoided that darkness brings with it another kind of intersubjectivity—another relationship to the ones I meet or think I will meet—than that of daylight hours.

Prior to my decision to research darkness, I reflected upon safety aspects and why I/we are taught to be afraid of darkness. Among other things, I took part in demonstrations related to this subject matter, e.g. *Take back the Night [Sw: Ta natten tillbaka]*, and partly in conversations with feminist friends. However, when thinking of night and darkness I have seldom left the theoretical and political comfort zone that a focus on safety or fear of crime, in a sense, provides. To a significant extent I kept myself busy with stereotypes.

The intention here is neither to romanticize darkness nor to neglect possible fears of it. However, darkness does not have to imply a sense of fear per se. The feeling of fear may or may not be grounded in statistic accounts of violence. Still, the fear factor can be questioned in order to diversify and problematize notions of darkness, and avoid being caught in discriminating and dichotomic clichés. In the chapter “Mäns våld blir kvinnors ansvar—riskkalkylering i det offentliga rummet” in the anthology *Speglingar av rum* (Friberg, 2005), researcher in geography and gender studies, Birgitta Andersson (2005), points to how the use of the word fear—when talking about how women relate to the possibility of becoming a victim of men’s violence<sup>60</sup> in public

<sup>60</sup> Andersson (2005: 70) uses the term “men’s violence.” I prefer to talk about a macho-oriented culture or behavior in order to not reproduce stigmatizing categories regarding gender.

places—is problematic. Firstly, because a lot of women do not identify themselves as being afraid although they in some sense, subconsciously or consciously, estimate the probability of being a victim of men’s violence (Andersson, 2005). Secondly, due to its tendency to maintain one-sided and stereotypic notions of how women are scared and vulnerable and “need the protection of bold and strong men.”<sup>61</sup> (Andersson, 2005: 70) Still, fear sometimes stops me from walking at night. What might be hiding out there in the dark? It is difficult to separate notions of darkness from their connotations of night. At the same time, the spookiness of dark places at night can be the same as what I experience in a desolate place in broad daylight. The problem is not that fear, night, and darkness are associated with one another, but rather how they are used almost synonymously in some safety-oriented discussions. Assumptions coupling darkness with night and danger are difficult and deceptive because they make us believe that we will be safe if darkness is avoided or extinguished. Instead we have to acknowledge first of all that night is an explicit time reference while darkness can appear anytime. Darkness is the matter that can fill night. Even though they often appear together, they cannot be used interchangeably. An argumentation based on a mix-up of darkness and night tends to assign the phenomena with fixed properties, which may be perceived as true or unquestionable facts. In addition, an understanding of darkness, night, fear, and risks as interconnected and inseparable phenomena provides a diffuse point of departure for what they could actually be if treated in a more delicate manner.

Instead of “fear” Andersson (2005: 70) suggests “risk” for describing how women calculate the risk of being affected by men’s violence. This in order to include feelings of “fear and worry” as well as “anger and powerlessness.” (Andersson, 2005: 70)<sup>62</sup> She points to how, by avoiding risks in public spaces, women take responsibility for men’s potential violence against them, and this way avoidance behavior is not shown in the statistics regarding violence (Andersson, 2005).<sup>63</sup> However, exchanging fear with risk does not only broaden the way in which fear can be problematized, it also points to how it can include both the behavior of victim and perpetrator; that the possible behavior of victims can be problematized in terms of risk avoidance, but also

<sup>61</sup> My translation of ”behöver beskydd av orädda starka män”. (Andersson, 2005: 70)

<sup>62</sup> My translation.

<sup>63</sup> Andersson (2005) also draws on Elisabeth Stanko’s (1990), researcher in criminology and sociology, work in *Everyday violence: How women and men experience physical and sexual danger* when elaborating on the matter of risk, fear and violence in relation to gender.

that possible perpetrator actions and behavior can be discussed in terms of putting other people at risk, thus avoiding the problem being seen as a one-sided—women's—responsibility.

What, then, is neglected and excluded when darkness is understood as equal to risk or fear? When reflecting upon my *walk diary* notes regarding walking in darkness and regarding darkness itself, I tend to come back to my experience of calmness, or the restfulness of it. This might seem an obvious reflection when regarding darkness from a sleep perspective—that darkness can provide us with a place for rest. However, it is more difficult to find examples of where its restful or recreational potential is regarded, or being designerly or policy-wise taken care of, as an urban element. Even if there are exceptions, and a lot of examples lately with regard to night-oriented urban design, it appears as if darkness, as such, is often either treated as a condition merely to eliminate through lighting devices, or in the other end, as something that just is left without much consideration, causing dark spots or entire desolate areas within urban landscapes. In the following discussion about darkness, I will focus on how walking in darkness may show its material and spatial potential by evoking embodied sensations. I will do it in relation to my *walk diary* notes as well as in reflection to various disciplinary accounts of darkness.<sup>64</sup>

New reflections on walking and space (as here in Urban Darkness) have evolved sometimes during the analytic process of earlier *walk diary* notes. Therefore, some observations and reflections are not included as extracts from the *walk diary*, but nevertheless show important catalytic effects of the iterative process of autoethnographic writing and its consecutive stages of reflection.

<sup>64</sup> For an extensive and profound historic overview of darkness see e.g. *Evening's Empire: A History of Night in Early Modern Europe* (Koslofsky, 2011).

**To act out a Desire**

*I like the darkness. It makes me calm. I like the idea of being surrounded by darkness. To walk into darkness is to walk into something very unknown and comforting at the same time. In my utopian city I would be able to walk into the darkness and feel safe. The only thing stopping me from walking alone in the darkness is the idea of something dangerous waiting for me out there in the dark. I like the quietness even on a stormy night. It is like there are fewer sounds. (140929)*

What happens if darkness is approached as a vital part of the desire to move around in a city at night or on a late Swedish winter afternoon? Or when the darkness of a park is so alluring that you cannot resist it? As when you want to touch a cloud. Feel its fluffy texture. Get caught in it.

Although I like walking in darkness, I do not always consider it a good or comforting thing in itself. For some reason the darkness that meets me when I step out after a day at work at my office at the School of Architecture can put me off. Waiting for a bus—on the outskirts of The Engineering Faculty (LTH) of the University Campus in Lund—in darkness on a late November afternoon makes me blue. Maybe it has to do with the area having the characteristics of a day-time activity type of neighborhood, containing—to a great extent—companies, offices and university functions, with a few instances of student housing being the only exceptions. After work-hours, few people are spotted in the neighborhood. The LTH and the nearby plant for commercial science and company development, Ideon Science Park, have few places that serve as more than transportation paths. Almost all of the public spaces in this area are designated for some kind of transportation on foot, by bike, or by car. Here, spaces programmed to offer other functions than transport, or waiting for transport, e.g. bus stops, are essentially missing. Therefore, it might be difficult, despite the presence of more open, empty, or superfluous parts that might afford other types of activities, to experience walking here as something more than just pure transportation. Other desires linked to walking are put aside due to how the spatial situations are fragmentarily lined up, yet linearly linked and materially made manifest. Therefore the environment is neither directed beyond purely rational walk needs, nor

is it offering any urban design benefitting from, utilizing, or adjusting to darkness. In this situation, the consequence is a limiting built environment only offering walking as a mode of transport, to be performed in daylight. In contrast, a pedestrian related design in an area like this could very well take into account several possible walk scenarios and desires. This scenario, and lack of possibilities, suggests that solutions that fit a diversity of walking practices in one and the same area are hard to find, and that a conventionalized categorizing of walking into either transport, strolling, or recreational, becomes meaningless and redundant. In my own evening confrontation with this place at this time of the year another desire of mine also happens to compete with my desire to walk in darkness—namely to get home and eat, partly because there are few places here that serve food at this hour.

In relation to the constrained typology of walk practices that I experienced in the design of the campus area, here reflected upon, we may ask more generally how these norms appear in the first place, and what effect these design solutions have upon us as habitual beings. Do normative habits, and even urban design for normative habits, form the habits themselves? And if so, how could design for dark spaces be conceived differently?

To walk in darkness is—to some extent—to question a norm of fear. It means directing your attention toward something you perhaps have been taught to fear. First you might hesitate. Getting caught in clichés. Feeling the fears you are used to feel. Then you might challenge that fear. Trying to step out of it. Pushing the boundaries of your comfort zone. Suddenly you are not focused on the fear, but rather on the matter of darkness. To be held back by darkness and let it form options for moving outdoors is partly to act in line with a norm and contribute to its continuity. Acting against a norm is not easy because it might be forced upon us. Butler's (2011a) reasoning regarding gender performativity points to how forcing and constraining aspects of norms and normativity are parts of how they are upheld and acted out; that they are often not voluntarily adapted to by humans. Instead, they are expected behaviors that are difficult to oppose. This way we are assigned habits responding to predefined

desires. As Butler (1988,<sup>65</sup> 2011a) points out: gender—understood as a performative act—is temporal in its repetitiveness, but the perception of what a gender identity is supposed to stand for, is also temporal in a historical sense—it changes over time and history. Even though I try, and sometimes manage, to challenge my own fear—breaking the restriction fear projects upon me—the urban design itself seems to be part of the problem in its ignorance of what darkness and I can do together. I cannot change the past of darkness, but I can—by actions and habits—try to impose alternative perspectives for how to understand and experience it in the future.

How can design regarding darkness and light be formed in order to open up for new habits of moving around between dusk and dawn? A strict dichotomy of darkness and light constructs oppositions where it might be easy and convenient to attribute fear to darkness; to assign the phenomenon with specific emotional responses. Dichotomies are upheld by oppositions; polarized standpoints founded upon simplifications of phenomena. Butler's (2011a) discussion regarding the construction of opposing categories of e.g. female/male gender and sex, heterosexuality vs. homosexuality, can be applied as an analogy in order to understand the mechanisms of dichotomies, where the opposition, or the counter-parted not being, seems to be one of the defining aspects. In the same way as a sex is assigned a certain gender—defined by constraints for how to behave—in order to separate the meaning of man and woman to preserve and give heterosexuality a meaning (Butler, 2011a), darkness and light is separated and assigned with properties which prevent us from understanding them as varying and ambiguous phenomena. Dualisms risk restricting which properties subjects and objects can obtain, and darkness is no exception. A less strict dichotomy of darkness and light would regard them as less static or fixed, e.g. that darkness in relation to light can be both scary; hide someone, and desirable; something I can escape into or hide in.

<sup>65</sup> Butler (1988: 521-2) describes the historical and performative acts of gender in regard to sex: [a]s an intentionally organized materiality, the body is always an embodying of possibilities both conditioned and circumscribed by historical convention. In other words, the body is a historical situation, as Beauvoir has claimed, and is a manner of doing, dramatizing, and reproducing a historical situation, [...] The historical possibilities materialized through various corporeal styles are nothing other than those punitively regulated cultural fictions that are alternately embodied and disguised under duress.

*by Light: 2008* was a light event in central Malmö.<sup>66</sup> In three parks, Slottsparken, Slottsträdgården and Mariedalsparken, light installations were shown for ten days during the fall. *by Light* has been arranged in Malmö on other occasions as well, however not on a regular basis. Some light installations from the previous art event *Malmö by Light: 2004*<sup>67</sup> have been made permanent, e.g. in Folkets Park and at Möllevången. During *by Light: 2008* a variety of indirect lighting installations were implemented, where the purpose of the light was not to light up a spot for a specific activity, e.g. sitting or walking. One installation in Slottsparken during *by light 2008*, used indirect or peripheral light by directing the light sources towards bushes and trees next to the path. Another example was a round white plate hanging quite low in a tree. The white plate transmitted a soft light that, from a distance, gave the illusionary impression of a full moon. This changed the experience of how the park was located within the greater architectural landscape of the surrounding city. The eye was tricked due to the placement of the full moon, which distorted the spatial perspective: was I suddenly in a forest discerning the horizon in the distance?<sup>68</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Information referred to here regarding *by Light: 2008* was retrieved 150304 from <http://malmo.se/Stadsplanering--trafik/Stadsplanering--visioner/Malmos-stadsmiljo/Ljus-i-Malmo/Ljusarrangemang-i-Malmo/by-Light-2008.html>

<sup>67</sup> Information referred to here regarding *by Light: 2004* was retrieved 150304 from <http://malmo.se/Stadsplanering--trafik/Stadsplanering--visioner/Malmos-stadsmiljo/Ljus-i-Malmo/Ljuspromenad-traditionell/Ljuspromenad-Mollevangen.html>

<sup>68</sup> I have been in contact with the Municipality of Malmö regarding the names of artists involved in these works but have not been able to retrieve sufficient information. Regarding the artificial full moon Johan Moritz, who is responsible for the *by Light* events, does not recall it being part of the event. I, however, do remember it, but might be mistaken on the exact time of it being there.



Figure 2.10. Art work *Ljusparasiter* by Suzanne Rönnertz. Photo by the author.

In Folkets Park at *Malmö by Light: 2004* an artificial meadow—*Ljusparasiter* (*Light parasites*<sup>69</sup>)—was designed by the artist Suzanne Rönnertz out of reinforcing bars and metal plates covered with glow-in-the-dark paint. The glowing meadow created an ambient light.

<sup>69</sup> My translation.





Figure 2.11. Lampposts Folkets Park, Malmö. Design by Johan Moritz. Photo by the author.

Close by, alongside the pond in Folkets Park, there are lampposts, designed by light designer Johan Moritz, using indirect lighting by projecting light from below onto a white surface. These examples show subtle variations in using indirect light instead of illuminating an entire area. Applying indirect light could be one starting point in order to come away from an oppositional understanding of light/dark, and instead nurturing the ambiguous character darkness and light are able to maintain together.

Although the attention toward issues regarding lighting and light in city planning and the design of urban settings has increased in the past years, a focus on darkness is still missing. A next step would be to look closer at how light can vary in intensity, but also how the appearance of darkness can be given a more proper range and diversity. In “The Gloomy City: Rethinking the relationship between Light and Dark” Tim Edensor (2013: 1)—geography and environmental management—evaluates contemporary nocturnal practices, such as “nyctophobia,” as well as positive notions of darkness. Edensor (2013: 10) means that increased lighting in cities has created an unequal relationship between night and day, where the darkness is minimized “through excessive illumination.” Drawing on human geographer Nina Morris’ (2011) work on a relational perspective on dark and light, Edensor (2013: 13) points to how this relationality can be shown through the use of gloom, i.e. applying “subtle accounts of lighting,” and that there needs to be a “co-presence of darkness” in order to experience effects of light. The return of urban darkness in a new shape, different from “medieval and early-modern gloom,” could be considered an improvement of the experience of city nightlife (Edensor, 2013: 15).

Morris (2011: 316) in “Night walking: darkness and sensory perception in a night-time landscape installation” looks at the effect of the “ambiguous relationship” between dark and light: “the instability between the two,” and how we experience the surrounding world in relation to this. Experiences regarding distance, details and colors are disturbed, forcing a greater attention to sensations of smell, sound and tactility (Morris, 2011). Morris’ (2011) relational perspective on darkness and light points to how e.g. tactility and materiality can be studied in order to produce new perspectives on things that are familiar in daylight. Such light as moonlight can provide a view of a valley but not of the thing in your immediate proximity (Morris, 2011). Distance becomes distorted and the closeness of objects does not necessarily result in a view of them, and Morris (2011: 335) points to how this makes it possible for a viewer “to

be both visible and invisible.” The ambiguousness of darkness does not only concern possibilities for hiding or exposure. In “Cycling through Dark Space: Apprehending Landscape Otherwise” Matthew Cook (mathematics, engineering and innovation, computing and technology) and Tim Edensor (2014: 16) point to the ambiguous experiences—as in including both scary, illusionary and dreamlike sensations as well as “the sensual joys solicited, movement through the nocturnal rural landscape”—of moving by bike in rural darkness, and that this is facilitated by how

the non-representational and the representational aspects of encountering landscape are folded together in particular forms of mobile experience.

In order to take care of the ambiguity in emotional experiences and physical properties, as well as the relational aspects of darkness, e.g. its potential to distort the distance of objects, we need a framework capable of hosting this experiential range and these ambivalences. A theoretical framework for deconstructing dichotomies—as Butler’s (1988, 2011a) above—provides a norm-critical analysis that can handle relational aspects and ambiguity without erasing them. Butler’s performative perspective on gender and sex shows how oppositional categorization of gender and sex is maintained by projecting restrictions onto them—restrictions resting on what they are *not* rather than what they could be or do. Being aware of how this construction takes place could also work in preventing assumptions about darkness and light from being made. And, instead investigate the relational properties of darkness and light in non-dichotomic terms.

### **Sensing Darkness**

*Darkness does not make any sounds. It is soft and surrounds me. It is invisible and makes me invisible. It is comforting and relaxing. It leaves my thoughts alone. It leaves me alone. It does not tell me what to do. It does not support me. It is confusing. It does not guide me. It does not judge me. It is empty and slow. It does not expect anything. It smells cold. It does not distract me. It does not interrupt me. It does not want my attention. It could be anything. (140527)*

Sometimes when I see a dark spot, I want to dive into it. There is something alluring about darkness that makes me want to step into it. Touch it. Feel its texture. It seems to have a certain thickness. A density. Darkness appears to simultaneously be a physical and an intangible matter—both compact and untouchable. I want to touch it but it always seems to be out of reach. Still, I can experience it as something to turn my body towards, almost lean on. My body's movement is formed by the appearance of darkness. But how can something so airy look so solid? Most of the time I walk in the light. Then the desire overwhelms me. I want to cut through it.

These embodied experiences of darkness reflect immediate tactile sensations of material and spatial kinds. Psychiatrist Eugène Minkowski (1970: 429) describes dark spaces as “more material” than light spaces in *Lived time: phenomenological and psychopathological studies*. The slowness and density of darkness

does not spread out before me but touches me directly, envelopes me, embraces me, even penetrates me, completely, passes through me, so that one could almost say that while the ego is permeable by darkness it is not permeable by light. (Minkowski, 1970: 429)

The experience of darkness is described here as something direct, and simultaneously overwhelming and comforting. How can the directness of darkness be harbored and help us in the design of dark spaces?

The directness of darkness points to more than the subject being embraced by it. It shows how the subject wants to interact with it, and that darkness can be something you want to get close to, not just be a passive observer of. It shows that you can turn to it, by assigning its properties to yourself, offering fear, but also restfulness and textures of sorts harder to explicate as precise or well defined. Cook and Edensor's (2014: 13, 17) study on cycling in darkness in rural areas points to how the reduction of a clear view brings forward “animated qualities of the landscape,” and increases experiences of “aural, tactile and proprioceptive sensations.” It is the direct contact with, and exposure to, darkness—in contrast to car-travel—that produces these non-visual sensations (Cook and Edensor, 2014). In *Phenomenology of perception* Merleau-Ponty (1989: 283)—very much inspired by Minkowski (1970)—in a short passage describes night as being

not an object before me; it enwraps me and infiltrates through all my senses, stifling my recollections and almost destroying my identity [...] it is pure depth without

foreground or background, without surfaces and without any distances separating it from me.<sup>70</sup>

Merleau-Ponty's description of the night also expresses a directness of darkness as well as its tendency to make shapes vaguer or disappear, however, in the same instance, the dramatic tone in this passage suggests that Merleau-Ponty's conceived stability of personal identity is destroyed or stifled, and seems above all like an attempt to draw attention mainly to the fear of losing control rather than exploring the tactile experience of being embraced by darkness. There is a tendency for the dramatic tone of expression in this passage, i.e. language itself, to play a role in taking attention away from the observed object, the night, as a carrier of darkness that has more qualities, thus making it difficult to grasp them as actual matters. Instead of giving night and darkness shapes and qualities that can be searched, operationalized and practically applied, the message in Merleau-Ponty's passage runs the risk of being mystifying. In addition, implying that identity is a stable entity is problematic if you want to nuance the knowledge in general, because it locks identity to fixed labels of qualities.

How, then, should we avoid getting stuck in clichés when trying to capture the sense of something as very intangible and at the same time as obvious and present, as darkness and night? What I am trying to do here is a contrasting phenomenological approach: to explore the bodily and sensational consequences of interacting with darkness, and the dynamics of this interaction, by addressing its emergence and appearance in differing situations. Recording the tactile sensations, when walking through darkness, could be a step towards a re-evaluation of darkness, and contribute to the utilization of its qualities. Cook and Edensor (2014: 18) describe the experience of biking through darkness as a sort of displacement that increases "the affectual and sensual capacities of the body, and enriches and enhances the encounter with landscape." Materiality in terms of tactile sensations then becomes one range of aspects to record in relation to darkness. However, the slower pace of walking suggests a closer encounter with darkness, and therefore maybe a more embodied and tactile experience of it than one would have when biking. This suggests an approach to design that could be more oriented towards varying degrees of tactile sensations depending on the speed of the experiencing person.

<sup>70</sup> Here, Merleau-Ponty refers to Minkowski's (1970: 394) *Le temps vécu*.

### **Shades of Darkness**

*I am walking with you at night. The two of us. Both of us like walking when it is dark. We talk about of how nice it would be to walk alone in the dark without calculating risks. We are passing through a range of darkness. Partly lit. Dusky. Half-lit. Pitch black. Glimpses of light. Never glimpses of darkness. Shadow darkness. Definite darkness. Voids of light in a mass of darkness. It is as if darkness is thick and light carves voids into it. Sometimes sharp edges. Sometimes they fade into each other.*

*I like stepping over the threshold from light to dark: the few seconds when my vision is lost. Then shadows. Shades of black. More shadows. An outline—a landscape of darkness. (131003)*

Darkness can shift. Differ in density and be experienced as more than a void or an absolute solid. Appear in different shades, nuances and colors. Shadows can come in different shapes and tones creating a landscape of darkness. My desire to walk when it is dark is not limited to a desire for experiencing absolute darkness. It stretches beyond wanting to pass through shades of it. Moving between different intensities of darkness that are gradually shifting from compact to shadowy. And, a desire to walk when it is dark does not have to stand in conflict with the use of light or walking next to a lit space. Moreover, the atmosphere and experience of darkness can shift—bright summer nights differ from dark winter nights, and pitch black is seldom experienced in a city. Intense snowing creates a type of white darkness in the middle of the day. A snow-covered night landscape does not only provide light—it provides another range of darkness. The density of vegetation as well as darkness shifts with seasons, and darkness interacts with varying “thickness of vegetation.” (Cook and Edensor, 2014: 9)

The orientation that form and material can provide in daylight through subtle expressions might be obscured in gloom and darkness, but also altered for other subtle impressions of e.g. shadows and nuances of darkness. And here I mean orientation in the queer phenomenological (Ahmed, 2006) sense—that dark spaces orientate us in certain ways due to our previous experiences and our presented position toward the matter. The materiality and spatiality of urban form will influence what shapes

darkness as well as how our bodies are able to move around. The shades of darkness create physical backgrounds and foregrounds—even if so dimly experienced—able of orientating or disorientating bodies within a space. When moving in darkness next to e.g. a well-defined circle of light, I can see into the light while a person in the light range will have difficulties seeing what is going on in the darker parts. The spatial variations can increase if darkness is understood as shades differing in intensity, rather than just a solid mass or void. It can be qualitatively differentiated, shifting from dusky to opaque. Such spaces of graded darkness may be separated by a sharp edge or blended into one another creating subtle divisions or zoning of a space. Light, material and space can thus work together, providing richness of darkness and shadows. Pallasmaa (1996:46) describes shadows as crucial because they decrease “sharpness of vision, make depth and distance ambiguous, and invite unconscious peripheral vision and tactile fantasy.” Pallasmaa’s (1996) perspective on darkness points to its potential to evoke personal or illusionary sensations. However, the potential in the life-world of darkness to evoke tactile sensations could stretch beyond just fantasies or illusions. Shadows or shades of darkness appear in a whole range of registers that can be intentionally activated in designed elements in the sense that shaped materiality and spatiality can support the formation of shades that darkness will take.

This might give thoughts about in what ways pedestrian directed architecture and design could guide in the dark: should certain directions be emphasized by having visible (white, illuminated, lighting) objects along certain paths, while deliberately avoiding them at others? The city night is partly lit, creating paths of light where we can or are supposed to move. This way, the manner in which cities are lit can discipline the movements of the citizens, adjusting them to certain routes, or making them feel like they ought to move along specific paths. To use shades of darkness or gloom would be an alternative way of differentiating between darkness and light. The encounter with gloom can serve as ways to “sharpen[s] the senses and make[s] one aware of others, producing a heightened, tactile sense of mobility” in the sense that it makes us attentively consider possible paths in contrast to just following the illuminated ones (Edensor, 2013: 11). Edensor (2013: 5) points to how the “illumination was part of a bourgeois reordering of the city,” where light was utilized in different forms, by e.g. the use of transparent and reflecting materials (glass), and “illuminated streets, more rationally planned thoroughfares [...] more spacious settings, clearer vistas and cleaner air.” These illuminations were made in order to take care of an overcrowded city and its

environmental consequences, but also to let the shadows hide the unwanted elements (Edensor, 2013). Moreover, the increased illumination of cities has contributed to the creation of the “‘24-hour city’,” where e.g. shopping and entertainment are always accessible (Edensor, 2013: 5). Consequently, lighting directs our attention toward certain parts of the city and its functions, it creates paths, and reaffirms patterns of movement; it provides us with a certain orientation toward objects in the urban landscape as well as toward the city itself.

Philosopher Otto Friedrich Bollnow’s (2011) reflections on night space and darkness in *Human space*,<sup>71</sup> is preceded by reflections on twilight spaces. Twilight spaces are described as “transitional phenomena” where “the clarity and observability of day space, and with it the given fact of the horizontal, are gradually lost.” (Bollnow, 2011: 204) Other twilight space related phenomena are fog and intensive snowfall. However, Bollnow (2011: 209) considers twilight spaces to be experientially two-fold: with feelings of despair, “nothingness,” and “anxiety,” caused by conditions of obstructed vision affecting orientation possibilities, but also, ambiguously, with intimate feelings. Twilight is thus described as gradually preparing us for the night, by presenting to us

the spaces of fear, in which man is tormented by a feeling of uncertainty and lostness. And yet this twilight may acquire some quality of an enclosing “intimacy”. And this feeling is then completed by night. (Bollnow, 2011: 210-11)

The contradictive experiences of twilight, as described by Bollnow (2011), simply suggest a range of different affective states, thus pointing out differing attitudes towards darkness among people. However, quite a dramatic tone appears in these reflections on night and darkness, a tone that tends to obscure our actual and differentiated vision of the matter. Bollnow’s (2011) essentialist notion of twilight spaces—almost implying a prescribed notion of the matter—can be juxtaposed with Cook and Edensor’s (2014: 8) more explorative and less judgmental reflection on twilight, where a respondent refers to dusk as an array of e.g. colors: “greys, brown, orange and purple,” “shades and shapes.” In addition, by pointing out positive aspects of darkness their reflection also questions “the hegemonic ideals that largely shaped the modern illumination of the

<sup>71</sup> First published 1963 in German.



city.” (Edensor, 2013: 8) By referring to Williams (2008)<sup>72</sup> Edensor (2013) also stresses the temporal disguise that darkness can provide and how that can be used in order to reorganize space at night.

A focus on the nuances and shifting colors that darkness can take on, directly points to the architectural dimensions and scenographic qualities of darkness—that it can be used as a form element in itself. Design has the possibility of highlighting the temporality of darkness—or the flexible formations and alterations it can manifest, and how that can be utilized in urban design. In this way, darkness also provides opportunities for elaborating on, and manipulating, the relationship between spatial qualities and the power it takes to alter them.

### ***Darkness: an Urban Landscape Element***

Already at an early stage I categorized my notes on darkness as belonging in the pile of interesting topics. I missed a differentiated view of it in walkability research,<sup>73</sup> which was the walk research context that I was most familiar with at the time before I started my autoethnographical walk studies. I perceived it much as a non-subject in this particular research context often devoted to transport walking. I assumed also—in a greater social context—that liking darkness was not too common. The representation of darkness in e.g. mass media, and mainstream pop culture is often negative or expressed in terms of bad connotations. A common attitude is to be scared of, or fear darkness, almost to the point where we would prefer not to have it at all. Darkness, as it were, is causing danger and risks. Or is something threatening in itself. My walk experiences indicate something else. That liking darkness does not have to be a deviating view, or that I am not the only one enjoying it, because I have met others during my walks in the dark, and been accompanied. Alternative approaches to darkness point out that our cities

<sup>72</sup> Williams (2008: 518) writes that due to:

its transgressive meanings and societally harmful uses, darkness threatens to deterritorialize the rationalizing order of society. Darkness serves to deterritorialize society when it obscures, obstructs, or otherwise hinders the deployment of the strategies, techniques, and technologies that enforce the rationalizing order of society, thereby allowing potentially transgressive behaviors to occur under a veil of anonymity.

However, Edensor’s (2013) interpretation of Williams (2008) stresses the spatial aspects of darkness more explicitly than Williams reasoning does, which partly has its foundation in Foucault’s (1980) material discussion in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*.

<sup>73</sup> See introduction for discussion about existing walkability research and Appendix II *A pedestrian-oriented view of the built environment: A Vista Observation Analysis (VOA) of urban form* for a short review of it.

are light-polluted.<sup>74</sup> That we cannot see the stars because of the artificial light. Or, that too much light has negative effects on the eco-system. “[E]cological light pollution” is separated from “astronomical light pollution,” where the former interferes with the eco-system and the latter disturbs the “the view of the night sky.” (Longcore and Rich, 2004: 191)<sup>75</sup>

As mentioned above in the passage about me leaving my office to go home, the gloominess of a late December afternoon tends to put me off. The time of year, however, also influences my reflections. Writing about the joy of darkness in the beginning of January 2015, when sunlight is rare, and has been for the past month, is difficult simply because darkness is then rather overwhelming and enduring in this part of the world. In retrospect, I see that my summer experiences and reflections are more vivid. By saying this, however, my intention is not to glorify or romanticize the darkness as a seasonal phenomenon, but rather that those experiences and reflections are situational in both a temporal and spatial sense.

*Afterwards we spoke about how darkness and night have the quality of intimacy and closeness. We might talk about things at night that we would not bring up in broad daylight. And, with people that we might not know so well. A facilitator for intimacy and escape. Why do we think that darkness has the capacity to keep secrets? Maybe there is a non-spoken agreement that what is said at night will stay there. (Night walkers workshop, 140920)*

<sup>74</sup> In a light document for Malmö Stad, “Stadens Ljus,” Isling et al., (1998:16), state that over-illumination is a problem within the city of Malmö. There are campaigns and non-profit organizations engaged in light pollution issues, e.g. IDA (International Dark-Sky Association, <http://www.darksky.org/about-us>), Edensor (2013:12) refers to the Geogise website on light pollution (<http://www.geogise.com/environmental-issues/light-pollution.php>) and the list of different types of light pollution:

Five kinds of light pollution are conventionally identified by those campaigning against excessive illumination: “light trespass” (invasive lighting—say from a neighbour’s porch light); “light clutter” (confusing and chaotic lighting); “overillumination” (unnecessary lighting such as large office blocks illuminated all night); “glare” (wherein contrast between dark and light is too great and can result in temporary blinding for pedestrians or motorists); and “skyglow” (where light is uncontained and leaches into the sky, as with the red glow that surrounds cities).

<sup>75</sup> International Dark-Sky Association lists several so-called Dark sky parks, where it is possible to see natural light sky phenomena without the disturbance of artificial lighting. For more information about Dark sky parks, see their website: <http://www.darksky.org/night-sky-conservation/dark-sky-parks>.

It is easy to romanticize and mystify darkness. In my *walk diary* notes and readings about darkness, the theme of escape has appeared. Notions of escapes and escapism tend to lead to argumentations avoiding the concrete, although it is easier to hide in darkness than in broad daylight. However, I try to avoid clichés and routine-like expressions of shadows as well as darkness, when referring to the tactile sensations they might initiate. Kanaleneiland (NWK)<sup>76</sup> describes a person walking at night—“[a] Night Walker”—as someone that

“does” the walk of a refugee, of an escaped prisoner, of a guard at a country’s borders, of a homeless man seeking for shelter, of a city-boy with a broken gps, (NIGHTWALKERS et al., 2012: 13)

pointing out a person walking at night as some sort of alien in or to society. It seems as if this person has a limited range of possible identities to act out, and they are mostly linked to a male gender. However, the photos on NWK’s website reveal a more mixed gender group in terms of who these people are and could be.<sup>77</sup> In my phenomenological reflections on darkness I have tried to focus on its potential rather than type-casting it for specific purposes. I do not see a person walking in darkness as a certain type or character. However, it seems like these assumptions also have to appear in order for us to be able to see them and step out of them. Therefore, I have tried to be aware of the convenience that these clichés might offer, and instead push myself to move beyond them.

The application of an autoethnographic method and the technique of keeping a *walk diary* made it possible to explore my own experiences of darkness in terms of a desire to look at clichéd notions that might appear, and to contextualize a matter we all have to face: how we are affected by darkness. Comprehending darkness, as part of a desire to move around in a city, and investigating what sort of resistance this desire might face, opens up for acknowledging its positive aspects and what it

<sup>76</sup> Nightwalkers Kanaleneiland (NWK) is an art project run by Expodium—an art collective located in Netherlands. “NWK is a series of voluntary collective night strolls in the city followed by a discussion about the subconscious relations between the participants and the land they walked on.” (NIGHTWALKERS et al., 2012: 4) Expodium developed night walks in order to investigate the potential of a run-down area—Kanaleneiland, Utrecht, Netherlands—that was the target of a coming gentrification process (NIGHTWALKERS et al., 2012). The intention was to increase the “awareness of the given social context” in order to implement a “bottom-up response” as a counterpoint to the top-down management in the changing process of Kanaleneiland (NIGHTWALKERS et al., 2012: 4). Nightwalkers’ exploration of the city is done collectively and in a situationist and psychogeographic tradition (Doulos, 2012).

<sup>77</sup> For photos go to <http://www.expodium.nl/index.php/?so-far/nightwalkers/> (retrieved 150512).

can give to a walking person. In addition, writing about darkness has also served as a means for challenging my own fears, and has, to some extent, moved my boundaries in this regard. When reflecting on the phenomenology of darkness I had to review my own presumptions of it. My unreflected presumptions of darkness formed my experiences of it. This links back to the questioning of routines, and how they can be excluding, when governed by unreflected presumptions. When I tried to let go of my presumptions of darkness I was able to have associations about, and reflect on, darkness in terms of e.g. texture, shades, (sounds)—how it felt. Instead of trying to state what it is—in order to describe it from an objective point of view—I started out in my own experiences of it, and tried to be transparent regarding my attitudes towards it, in order to find new ways of approaching it.

In my *walk diary notes*, I tend to come back to the ambiguous potential of darkness: its tendency to evoke conflicting sensations of e.g. fear and restfulness. In addition, I point out the ambiguousness of darkness in material and spatial terms, e.g. how it can shift in color, intensity, how it can appear as both solid and airy, and thereby affect the experience of distances within a space. Acknowledging the variations—sometimes conflicting—in the experience of darkness makes it difficult to apply a dichotomic thinking of it, as something only opposing light. A performative perspective that questions dichotomic ideas—such as Butler’s (1988, 2011a)—provides an alternative understanding of darkness, where its meanings, connotations and usage can shift. Darkness thus becomes situational, and changes over time as well as with spatial conditions. Darkness is, in such a performative perspective, understood as reappearing or recreated in each and every moment, with the ability to take new shapes.

It is quite common to talk about different sorts of light while different sorts of darkness seldom, or never, appear as part of architectural design discussions. The development of a more differentiated knowledge of, and view on, darkness—beyond a mere deprivation of light—can produce design strategies that can comprise a variety of walk experiences. Comprehending it as having a scale of material and spatial properties, as in e.g. intensity, nuances and shades of darkness, makes it to a moldable form element that can give the body direction in space. This way a re-evaluation of darkness—as a dynamic form element with shifting properties—extends the possibilities of how the city landscape can be designed in order to provide orientation for walking bodies.

In addition, reasoning about the full potential of darkness benefits from being done without locking it into specific emotions, e.g. fear, or time periods, e.g. night. This way darkness—as part of the urban nightscape—can work for us, instead of being something we feel that we have to avoid. Bollnow (2011: 212) discusses darkness in regard to moving around in a “night space,” separates it from a “day space,” and states that

Yet it would be wrong to look at night space merely as a deprivation of day space caused by lack of full visibility and the possibility of localization. Rather, night space has its very own character, which needs to be recognized.

The term “night spaces” is understandable, but it limits darkness to a certain time of day, and almost implies a specific type of space for darkness. It is important, in this respect, to recognize spaces of night and darkness on their own premises, but also to resist a categorization, and the existence of a certain specific character, in order to avoid generating fixed typologies and essentialist ideas of it.

Approaching darkness as a material and spatial phenomenon able of giving us orientation in space is, as we have seen, a step away from only considering it in terms of presumptions and bad connotations. However, as much as the body needs to be positioned and located in space in order to experience orientation, darkness has to be positioned and located in space and in relationship to the bodies inhabiting the space. If light can be given a direction and orientate us, darkness can, too. Moreover, to develop a more differentiated view of darkness than as deprivation of light would produce possibilities for moving around in a range spanning from light to darkness. The tactile experiences of both darkness and its shades are elements the body can orientate towards in order to understand a space. This way darkness cannot be given certain properties without recognizing the specificity of the situation. In addition, in a country like Sweden with a great amount of dark hours during active working and leisure time, designing for darkness is a necessity. To utilize the materiality and spatial qualities of darkness would be an alternative way of differentiating between the shifts of dark and light. In extension, to consider darkness as a spatial and material element of the urban landscape has the potential to create new behaviors, and new ways of inhabiting the city. Ahmed (2006: 62) states that:

When bodies take up spaces that they were not intended to inhabit, something other than the reproduction of the facts of the matter happens.

And, addressing darkness as part of a desire to move around in a city partly opens up for acknowledging it in terms of qualities rather than faults.

I hope that my phenomenological discussion about darkness can spark an initiated and wider discussion on how darkness can be understood as a dynamic form element within urban design and planning, and recognized as something that can be designed and given shifting purposes, taking into consideration for instance its way of altering the experience of spaces' distance and transparency, thus providing room for a diverse range of movement patterns. Even if light and lighting is gaining more and more attention within the discourse of city planning, darkness has to be more specifically addressed. A next step for urban design would be to recognize darkness as a material and form element that can be given a purpose—beyond that of representing lack of light. Hence, darkness could be understood and recognized as a diverse architectural phenomenon with specific situational and temporal properties, which can inform urban planning and design. This would let darkness, with its own qualities, work for us in the formation of space, and also recognize darkness on its own premises.





Figure 2.12. Walking route Hyllievång to Holma.

### **c. Contrasting Opportunities**

What started out as a test to see how it would be to walk from the newly established and highly commercialized outer part of the city, Hyllievång, towards the center of Malmö, resulted in a comparison regarding the experience of two neighborhoods: Hyllievång and adjacent Holma, which is a suburb established one generation earlier and located slightly closer to the city center. Instead of using fragments of walk experiences, the narrative of this walk exposes a longer and more coherently directed attention toward social and material aspects at the scale of more recently established urban and suburban environments. The reflections on architecture are here, instead of focused on the near relation between body and space, made more in consideration of cultural perspectives on these neighborhoods.



**Consumption and Events**

*You want to test if it is possible to walk from Hyllievång towards the city center. You ask a friend to join you. First, you make a detour into Emporia, the shopping mall, in order to find a restroom. You are listening to taped bird twitter and feel like emptiness is eating you from the inside. You feel despair and meaninglessness. The place in itself and your presumptions of consumption make you feel melancholic. You feel like you are losing something—besides maybe money—when you visit Emporia. However, you do not know what it is. You think the 10-13 years old boys are doing the right thing—using the arched entrance roof of Emporia for ball games. You would like to join them. Throw your feeling of despair right back into the place it came from.*

*You leave Emporia and choose to walk toward Holma when heading downtown. You cannot find a clear pedestrian connection between Hyllievång and Holma. You have just crossed a parking lot that you think looks like a neglected accident, when you pass a pond where a shopping trolley has been dumped. You wonder if it is an art installation. (130414)*



Figure 2.13. Pond with shopping trolley, Hyllievång , (130414). Photo by the author.

Was the shopping trolley in the pond a comment on consumerism? I do not know.

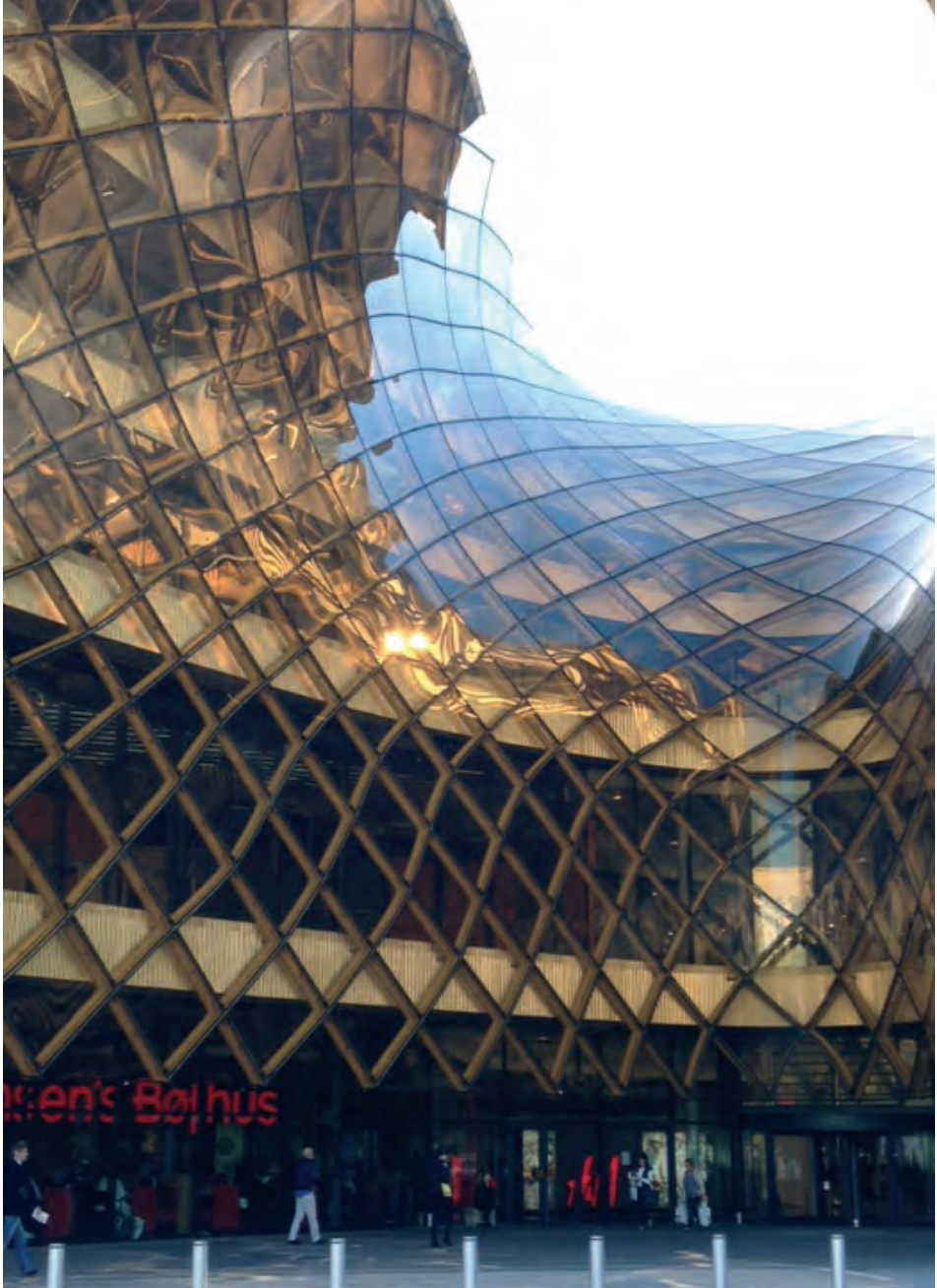


Figure 2.14. Facade of the Emporia entrance. Photo by the author.

The activity of the ball-throwing boys pointed out an alternative use of the facade of the shopping mall. Did the curved form and shiny material of the facade evoke or invite actions like this? Apparently it did, in some way.

The alternative uses of the places expose conflicts of interests. These incidents deviated from the norms for the intended usage of the places: ponds are not supposed to host shopping trolleys and glossy shopping facades are not playgrounds. In addition, they contrasted the experience of walking in a highly dense commercialized space such as the shopping mall, and evolved into the discussion below about consumption in relation to walking and spatiality.

Hyllievång today is to a great extent associated with, and dominated by, the huge shopping mall Emporia,<sup>78</sup> the sports and events venue: Malmö Arena, the Malmö Mässan exposition hall, and the metro station. Today, in this area, there are few non-commercial public spaces for pedestrians to orientate themselves towards.<sup>79</sup> The public square on top of the metro station is an exception. Still, this square also serves as an extended entrance space for the Arena, which is a commercial space. In *For Space* Massey (2005:152) points out some common concerns about “the decline of public space’.” She outlines several problems with an increasing commercialization of public space, e.g. control of public space is handed over to “non-democratically-elected owners” that exclude groups of non-profitable visitors (Massey, 2005:152). Massey (2005:152) notes that a commercial privatization is a big threat to public space but on the other hand there is a “tendency to romanticise public space as an emptiness which enables free and equal speech.” This romantic idea of public space as a container, which we could supposedly fill with democratic ideas, ignores a theorizing of how space and place is produced through “social relations which are most likely conflicting and unequal” (Massey, 2005:152). It is the “heterogeneous and sometimes conflicting social identities/relations,” which form any kind of public space, big or small (Massey, 2005: 152).

<sup>78</sup> 93 000 m<sup>2</sup> according to their website <http://www.emporia.se/Om-Emporia/> (retrieved 150123).

<sup>79</sup> By today, I mean when I am writing this, 150123.





Figure 2.15. Public square, Hyllievång, (130414). Photo by the author.

The domination imposed on the area by these two commercial institutions, the arena and mall, and the few non-commercial public spaces, might to some extent change in the future as the amount of residential housing increases. Both Emporia and the earlier established Holma are built from a perspective of more or less enclosed pedestrian zones and car dependency; a perspective where walking is an activity supposed to take place within a limited space and in certain spots. However, in comparison, the result is very different. Architectural researcher Mattias Kärrholm (2014: A5) reflects on the location of Emporia in Hyllievång and states that

It is possible to draw parallels between the development of trade and the planning of the car dependent society of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the beginning the arguments focus on increased freedom of choice, however, as options decrease, freedom of choice is turned into its opposite. No one can escape. The result is a straitjacket that it will take years to build our way out of.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>80</sup> My translation, original text: "Det går att dra paralleller mellan handelns utveckling och planeringen av 1900-talets bilsamhälle. I början handlar argumenten om en ökad valfrihet, men i takt med att alternativen dör ut förvandlas valfriheten till sin motsats. Ingen kommer undan. Resultatet blir en tvångströja som det tar decennier att bygga sig ur" (Kärrholm, 2014:5).

Emporia suggests an escape into consumerism and abundance. Inside this shopping mall, supported by a scenography of colored interior sections, walking is directed toward consumption. The boys using the facade for ball games contrast the restricted use of the space. Their activity opposes the forced stroll you are supposed to take through the shopping mall, where you circulate around a floor-plan shaped as the figure eight (or infinity). There is something very practical, and symbolic, about the design of a shopping mall plan in the shape of the sign for infinity. Practical in the sense that the plan will keep people moving smoothly, and they will never come to a dead end. The shape allows strolls going on undisturbed for an unlimited time, restrained only by opening hours. And shops may be entered repeatedly, with still more choices of places to browse, in case you missed something in an earlier round. Symbolic in the sense that, as the largest shopping mall in the region, this place represents a very strong belief in what consumption can do for us, both through its reputation and through its existence. It manifests itself as a never-ending story narrated around unstoppable consuming subjects. However, when you have explored the possibilities for shopping, or when you have run out of money, there is not much else to do or discover at Emporia. If I liked shopping, I might have wanted more of it after entering Emporia. Kärholm (2014: A5) describes the planning strategies behind Emporia “as plain as they are well-known: consumption as an enclosed and self-absorbed fantasy world.”<sup>81</sup>

### ***Looking at Hyllievång...***

As already mentioned, the entire neighborhood of Hyllievång is very much designed around events—sports, expositions, shopping and concerts—complemented with residential housing. Even though the shopping mall, Emporia, is only one part of Hyllievång, its ambience very much affects the experiences of the entire neighborhood. Both neighborhoods—Hyllievång and Holma—have things for one to discover. However, the exploration of Emporia is dominated by the constructed [shopping infinity] program, and once that has been grasped, there isn't much more to do. You have seen the goods—that's it. If you cannot fulfill the request of the shopping mall you are out: excluded and non-positioned—disorientated. Is this a disorientation I choose? In my case, to some extent yes, due to my critical awareness of consumption and its consequences already as I enter the place, but for someone who lacks the economic

<sup>81</sup> My translation, original text: “projektets stadsbyggnadsmässiga princip är lika fantasilös som välbekant: konsumtion som en sluten och självupptagen sagovärld”. (Kärholm, 2014:5)

means to take part in the shopping experience, the disorientation would not have been a choice. And, even if you are able to participate in the world of consumption offered by Emporia, it is a transient and short-term activity that is ultimately controlled by others, by the establishers of the commercial space.

In retrospect, stepping out of the shopping mall and experiencing the grand scale of its exterior along with the exterior of Malmö Arena and the Exhibition hall evokes memories of when I walked down the Strip in Las Vegas, U.S., in 2004. Even though I was walking next to buildings—both in Hyllievång and Las Vegas—they all seemed so far away. The outdoor grand scale of shopping malls is replaced, as you enter them, by an indoor setting aimed at referring to the scale of a medieval street (Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, 1977).

My memories of walking along the Strip are that of long distances punctuated with chaotic experiences of light, noise, people and spectacular events such as white tigers restlessly wandering back and forth within an artificial and meager indoor space, or a ship sinking and re-emerging every hour. Driving along the Strip resulted in a different experience in regard to the appearance of the space. My experiences of The Strip in 2004 partly points in the same directions as the architects Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour's (1977) description—in *Learning from Las Vegas: the forgotten symbolism of architectural form*—of the hotel and casino complexes of 1970s' Las Vegas. In Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour's (1977) mapping of Las Vegas, they use e.g. diagrams, collages and Nolli maps, in order to show that due to the vast spaces between buildings along the Strip, the buildings need to be experienced at a certain speed in order to make sense in the greater space they are in. Experienced as limited views, the scenery of the Las Vegas' Strip becomes "less spectacular; its enormous spaces must be seen as moving sequences," (Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, 1977: 35), which points to how the dramatic scenery is only there to guide us when driving in a car. This rules out the possibility of apprehending the space while walking without hurrying, maybe a fast runner would at least have a theoretical possibility of being given orientation and meaning by the dramatic scenery that the large scale is meant to impose on the visitors.

On the Strip the usage of enormous signs has turned architecture into materialized signs and symbols creating an "antispacial" "architecture of styles and signs," where the signs and symbols work to mediate both physical and commercial information, this way "[s]tyles and signs make connections among many elements, far

apart and seen fast. The message is basely commercial; the context is basically new.” (Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, 1977: 8- 9) This does not leave any options for an architecture of “subtle expression,” instead merely that of “bold communication.” (Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, 1977: 9) Has spectacular design such as e.g. the facades of Emporia taken the “architecture of styles and signs” (Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, 1977: 8) and the following symbolical meanings to a more ambient level, an implicit one, where glossy colorful materials combined with a grand scale have replaced the text messages, but in the end are there to work in the same utilitarian way?

Without the intention to romanticize one experience over the other, Holma— at first sight looking a bit boringly common and lacking in maintenance—opened me up to more vivid experiences and associations. It had elements, such as the allotment gardens and greenery, which triggered memories and imagination. This was how the spatial aspects of the worn-out 1970s functionalist Holma offered a more open-ended dynamic than the densely programmed yet outskirts-located city part of Hyllievång and its prime attractor Emporia. Emporia is designed to trigger very specific responses in its visitors—a need for shopping. The structure demands and requests an almost obligatory behavior. The triggers are directed towards a shopping desire, but very much also towards a possibility of spending time close to potential shopping, and sense a glamorous ambience for a limited period of time. The organization of space and functions seems to constantly demand something from you. And, as a user of the space, it becomes difficult to step out of this limited frame of actions possibilities. As a contrast, the spaces in Holma, even if scarce and not explicitly invitational, provide an open opportunity—to walk, see and reflect on your own terms. This self-awareness and freedom to actively orientate the body, produce a sense of being bodily anchored when walking in Holma. You are in that sense more within a space than when walking in Hyllievång where you often find yourself repeatedly standing on the outside and looking into things—e.g. Emporia, or at large scale objects in the distance, e.g. Malmö Arena, Malmömassan, parking lots—when moving in between and around the buildings themselves. The spatial organization almost creates a sense of refusal of the human corporeality, which is reinforced by the glossiness of facade materials—their shiny and hard surface. This sense of refusal is recurring on several scales in the neighborhood of Hyllievång, indoors as well as outdoors, indicating few occasions of orientation taking place while walking there. Disorientation becomes apparent in the absence of details for the body to turn towards while walking in Hyllievång.



But, I also feel disorientated in relation to the limited social connotations offered by the spaces in Hyllievång, i.e. glamorous shopping and commercial events. With one exception: the pond with the shopping trolley. Although quite far away from me, the shopping trolley, and the pond together created a multifaceted point for orientation. This particular accidental and almost sculptural situation opened up for associations and curiosity regarding its purpose, but it also offered, in combination with the pond, a complexity of materials, surfaces, and forms for my body to orientate towards—a subtleness of textures and spatiality that I missed in Emporia, and while walking along the monotonous facade of the Arena building, for instance.

On the fourth floor—the rooftop—of Emporia a green park is set up that suggests an open public space in the otherwise commercialized setting of Emporia. However, the possible moments for deviations are limited here—both in terms of actions, and in terms of evoking associations deviating from the imposed overall user value of the space. The rooftop park offers a designed walk leading to a designed vista point for viewing Malmö with the aid of installed binoculars. The interior of the shopping mall allows for few alternative uses, and this sense of behavioral restrictions in time and space spills over into the green area upstairs. Therefore, the performativity of identities in regard to this top-floor outdoor space still appears strictly constrained to the expression of shopping desires, while the playing boys could find a gap—in connection to the exterior facade—in the otherwise restricted environment for an alternative intervention to take place that expressed a desire decoupled from consumption.

This space, resembling many other commercialized spaces, raises the question: for whom, and for which walk experiences, are they intended? Are there alternative ways of inhabiting them, and could such diversity be supported in the design?

### **...walking in Holma**

*Then you find a sidewalk along a road leading over the highway towards Holma. You enter Holma through what you perceive as a dislocated entrance in relationship to where you came from. You realize that this is one of two pedestrian entrances facing the new established Hyllievång. (130414)*

The Hyllievång and Holma neighborhoods are undergoing transformation, however, the difficulties in finding a walkable path when heading towards Holma says something about how the involved planners and decision-makers of Hyllievång (have failed to) prioritize Holma. The fact that it is easier to drive to, and in, the Hyllievång neighborhood than it is to walk there prioritizes driving over walking, and this prioritization also has an impact on adjacent Holma and its locally situated walking-friendly planning. The entrance to the Holma area is quite small, however, its size is not of great importance to me when I approach it, it is rather the location and position in relation to the newly established context that bothers me; how these two neighborhoods seem disorientated toward each other. That no additional design or adjustments have been used in order to orientate them, their inhabitants, and their potential users, towards each other.

When writing down my observation of the walk through Holma, I reflected upon the location of the metro station in Hyllievång. It was positioned there at a time when there was not much built in the area, except from a water tower, which was already there when the development of the area started. Why was the metro station not placed within the existing infrastructure of close-by Holma?<sup>82</sup> How do you argue for whom an important infrastructural hub should be orientated towards? Placing a station in Holma would have changed the neighborhood for the better as well as for the worse. The access between Holma and the central parts of Malmö would have improved. However, maybe at the expense of the semi-private spaces within Holma—a greater flow of people through the neighborhood could possibly threaten their existence. On the other hand, a greater amount of people moving through a space is often argued as enhancing public life in a positive way. Incorporating Holma into a greater infrastructural net could be argued to increase accessibility to and from the neighborhood, and thereby in a longer perspective work to even out social inequality between neighborhoods.

Helena Holgersson (2014: 223), researcher within sociology and culture studies, presents a theoretical model opposing “consensus-oriented post-political urban planning” in order to expose conflicts of interests. In her study of the redevelopment process of a neighborhood in Gothenburg, Sweden, she did walk-along interviews with

<sup>82</sup> Months later I listened to a radio documentary “Från kullarna i Holma” where the reporter suggests something similar. The reporter, Fredrik Pålsson, discusses the idea of placing the metro stop in Holma instead of Hyllievång. Audio file available online: <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/avsnitt/315948?programid=4384> (retrieved 150610).

people in charge of decisions and the political process. Holgersson (2014: 223) points to how the on-site interviews regarding the future development produced knowledge about the site's past, its "conflicts of interests," and in addition implicitly describes the decision makers' perceptions of its former inhabitants. This is conceptualized through "the hegemonic gaze" referring to what "the extent to which they all referred to a similar—stigmatizing and selective, but taken for granted—representation of the area's past," and how this "was reflected in the descriptions they made of this place while they were there." (Holgersson, 2014: 223) Holgersson's example shows how assumptions made in the design and planning process can be exposed. This way an analysis of such assumptions contextualizes design decisions in regard to conflicting interests, and makes it possible to outline future outcomes of them, as well as their impact on the actual design.

*You feel happy when you see the allotment gardens at the entrance. The allotment gardens get all your attention, although there aren't any plants yet. You think of your own allotment garden and how much you enjoy it. You vaguely recall passing here in a car some years ago, looking for the allotment gardens. (130414)*



Figure 2.16. Autoethnographic collage of entry situation to Holma, (130414).

The look of the allotment gardens influenced my entire experience of Holma to a great extent. They instantly opened up my mind for things to happen. Like a promise of something taking place. Despite them being ordered in rows, the overall impression was that there was nothing definite about them more than the possibility of growing something. If I had entered Holma from a different location, something else might have informed my impression of this neighborhood. The allotment gardens invited me to think, to wander off in mind, to imagine. They did not tell me what to do. They invited me to a world in which I could participate without any particular demands. They did not claim parts of me. They were neither intrusive nor competitive. Entering Holma from this position made me pay attention to other green spaces and flowerbeds within the neighborhood. It orientated me towards the greenery. I realized I wanted more of it. It directed my attention and gave me a perspective that I could experience the site through while we continued walking.

A couple of years ago I signed up for one of the municipal allotment gardens. The City of Malmö offers several areas of allotment gardens to choose between.

I dismissed this neighborhood because I thought it was too close to the highway. Instead, I chose another area on the other side of the city. In order to reach it, I need to drive there. To Holma I could have biked. I also prioritize.

These types of associations—as well as the one regarding the placement of the metro station and the possible ones depicted in regard to Hyllievång—are, if seen in the perspective of walk-based investigations, methodologically important, due to how they situate the embodied experience of a place. They position my subjectivity in regard to my statements and judgments about the environment as I am passing through it. In addition, environments with the ability to evoke a rich spectrum of associations have a value in how they can enrich the experience of a place. Moreover, such environments—where an open-ended range of experiences can be evoked—have a methodological value in themselves as the locus for walking, thinking and talking can bring forth otherwise hidden individual, as well as collective, experiences.

*You keep on walking with your friend—an architect like yourself. It is quiet and a bit desolate. It is a Sunday in mid April. You walk and walk. You do not have any problems finding your way. You just follow the path. No cars. Only for pedestrians and bicyclists. You like the layout. The path passes open green yards. You think the path is a little bit too wide sometimes. A pedestrian highway. (130414)*

The grand scale of Hyllievång made the once large-scaled Holma appear as more intimate. There were details—flowerbeds, joints in the paving, bricks. Still, there could be more of them: textures and form elements capable of evoking haptic and tactile bodily experiences. As a pedestrian in Holma, you are, to a great extent, orientated toward the public spaces. It appears as if the entire neighborhood of Holma is located and directed toward the usage of pedestrian public spaces, and as if the design has emanated from the very idea of using common spaces. In contrast, and despite the historical links between shopping centers and more intimate food and clothing markets, in Hyllievång you are often turned towards the buildings as objects—looking at them, or being corporeally conquered by them. Parts of that outdoor experience of looking into something of another isolated world stays with you even when you pass

through the shopping facilities of Emporia. It is as if you never really and wholly enter the space in the way you do when met by the worn and sometimes shabby, but still publically inviting, garden architecture of Holma.



Figure 2.17. Autoethnographic collage of entrance to Holma, (revisit 130823).

The proximity of corners, edges, flowerbeds, greenery, bricks, joints, and paving provided orientation clues for our walk through Holma. Not only in a strictly navigatory sense, but also as clues that evoked curiosity for continued walking. They had the quality of directing my attention. Their level of detailing suited the pace of a walking body. However, when the path widened the subtleness was slightly diminished. Still, the space had potential for being redesigned in order to provide the orientation possibilities offered just moments before.





Figure 2.18. Autoethnographic collage of walk path through Holma, (130414).

*You keep on walking and you face a dark narrow tunnel. You realize this is the only pedestrian path heading towards the city center.  
(130414)*



Figure 2.19. Tunnel exit/entrance in Holma, (130414). Photo by the author.

It looked like an ungenerous gesture. Suddenly the sense of proximity in Holma was gone and replaced by a dark tunnel providing few clues for what was to come or where to go. Even distant things and matters need a certain degree of proximity in order “to make or leave an impression,” and “orientations involve different ways of registering the proximity of objects and others.” (Ahmed, 2006: 3) Whether it is a metro station, allotment gardens, or accessible walk paths, their geographical locations in relation to users indicate prioritizations—intentional and accidental. Here, the reflections regarding orientation of objects and functions in the city are imposed on a greater scale than discussed before in Orientations. It becomes evident that orientation is not only a matter of how the body is able to orientate itself in the street, moment by moment, it is also an important part of our inclusion in the greater scale of a city, such as for instance here, regarding a placement of a metro station that has the potential to change a neighborhood’s orientation toward a wider segment of a city and connecting distant parts with one another. This shows how the concept of orientation—as a spatial analysis tool—is applicable to different scales of social and physical positioning in an urban context.

### **Good Intentions**

*You like the idea of the State providing affordable housing to the citizens. Taking responsibility. Building Folkhemmet. On the other hand, you have prejudice and ideas about Million Program (Welfare state housing) neighborhoods in general. Prejudice you have mixed feelings about. This makes you feel trapped in your privileged view of others. You have never lived in such a neighborhood yourself. Only looked at one from the living room window. Only passed through it on your way to the sitter when you were a kid. (130414)*

In order to further situate my impressions of Holma, I will outline parts of its origin and history as depicted in *Bostadsmiljöer i Malmö: inventering. D. 3, 1965-1975* (Tykesson and Ingemark Milos, 2002b). At the time when their inventory was written, Emporia and Hyllevång were not built. In the following paragraphs, I will



bring forward parts of the inventory regarding descriptions of materiality, form and space inventory. I will also include descriptions of planning ideas for Holma referred to in the inventory—accomplished as well as non-pursued plans. All information in the following paragraphs is from *Bostadsmiljöer i Malmö: inventering. D. 3, 1965-1975* (Tykesson and Ingemark Milos, 2002b), except for the *walk diary* notes, unless otherwise noted.

Holma is located on the southern outskirts of Malmö. The ambition was to extend with more housing south of Holma further down to an outer beltway, Yttre Ringvägen, and a bigger shopping mall in Hyllie. In the early 1970s the physical expansion of Malmö stopped, and therefore the plans were not realized.<sup>83 84</sup>

The plan of Holma is typical for the time—1970—in its traffic separation, and only bikes and pedestrians can move around within the neighborhood.<sup>85</sup> Cul de sacs are located around the neighborhood and connected to parking lots. The buildings are divided into groups where each group is meant to have a “common square area.”<sup>86</sup> These are linked via a north-south located main street. Holma has an orthogonal structure composing open inner yards, and the authors especially stress that Holma is easy to get an overview of. Lower buildings—3 stories—have mainly yellow and brown brick facades, while high rises—8 stories—have light-colored plastered facades.<sup>87</sup>

*You and your friend keep on walking. You are surprised by the implications of the plentiful flowers and plants in one of the inner yards. You think it looks like someone really cares. (130414)*

<sup>83</sup> The information in this entire section is drawn from *Bostadsmiljöer i Malmö: inventering. D. 3, 1965-1975* (Tykesson and Ingemark Milos, 2002b).

<sup>84</sup> However, today the outer ring road is there, and the shopping mall and some residential housing projects have been realized in Hyllievång.

<sup>85</sup> In the inventory Holma is referred to as typical for the later part of the Million Program, and the original design of the buildings is regarded as reflecting the idea at the time—early in 1970th—about Million program (Tykesson and Ingemark Milos, 2002b).

<sup>86</sup> My translation of “allmängiltigt torgutrymme”. (Tykesson and Ingemark Milos 2002b: 76)

<sup>87</sup> The information in this entire section is drawn from *Bostadsmiljöer i Malmö: inventering. D. 3, 1965-1975* (Tykesson and Ingemark Milos, 2002b).

Some of the inner yards are described as being remarkably flourishing during the summer and are taken care of by the tenants. There are also allotment gardens for the tenants to use. Holma—when completed—was, as other Welfare state housing<sup>88</sup> areas, criticized for its inhuman scale, and became depicted as an area burdened with criminality and social problems. This initiated renovations in the 1990s.<sup>89</sup>

*You pass a square and a parking lot. You think the maintenance of buildings, fences, and paths in Holma is poor. You think that engineers and politicians got carried away with an idea of a future that did not happen—at least not as they anticipated it. It seems like they had forgotten what a material could be. That your touch and your eyes can feel a material. (130414)*

The renovations did not change Holma's status. MKB<sup>90</sup> initiated a voluntary self-management of inner yards and stairwells. Tenants who participated got a rent reduction. The inner yards were renovated to a varying degree during the 1990s.<sup>91</sup> Due to renovations, the color scheme of the buildings is quite motley. The initial color range of brown and yellow has been supplemented with pastel and complement colors. Some facades have been plastered, along with additions of e.g. entrances in a postmodern style. Some of the buildings were supposed to host services, e.g. grocery shops, hairdresser, at the ground floor. In the inventory, the low amount of available services in relationship to amount of residents—3200 in 1998—is stressed. Another feature, characteristic of the period, is Holma's location next to a green area. The artificially made hills covered with grass next to Holma are stressed

<sup>88</sup> The Swedish term for this type of Welfare state housing project is Miljonprogrammet.

<sup>89</sup> The information in this entire section is drawn from *Bostadsmiljöer i Malmö: inventering. D. 3, 1965-1975* (Tykesson and Ingemark Milos, 2002b).

<sup>90</sup> Malmö Kommunala Bostadsbolag (MKB), Malmö municipal housing company.

<sup>91</sup> Extensive renovations have been executed and these are regarded as reflecting the critique of these types of neighborhoods during the 1990th (Tykesson and Ingemark Milos, 2002b). Tykesson and Ingemark Milos, (2002b) stress the importance of MKB's self-management project as crucial for the development from a problem area to "mönsterexempel"—a model area.

as an important identity-building factor for the children of the neighborhood.<sup>92</sup>

### **A Displaced Walk**

The walk through Hyllievång and Holma was something different from my everyday walks to the bus or my evening strolls. My friend and I were visitors. It was most apparent in Holma due to the domination of residential housing, which implies ownership. In Hyllievång it felt like all people were visitors. The ambience in Hyllievång appeared as quite anonymous in the sense of being dominated by commercial establishments.

The reflections regarding the walk between Hyllievång and Holma address the complexities of the relations and uses that have appeared through the establishment of a new neighborhood next to existing buildings, infrastructure and neighborhoods. The identity of Holma as a geographically peripheral neighborhood in Malmö has partly changed due to the establishment of Hyllievång: from geographical edge to a neighborhood between others. However, the question of how this has affected the accessibility—in a social perspective—to Holma, including mobility in the direction away from Holma, still remains. An overall design question appears: what does Holma, and other close by neighborhoods, gain from the establishments like those of Hyllievång?

When you walk between these two neighborhoods, to some extent you walk backwards in time. The histories of two contrasting planning perspectives/policies and some of their spatial consequences are brought to the foreground through the walk and autoethnographic observation. The contrast in experiences of the two neighborhoods partly illustrates a shift in planning perspectives: what things we are supposed to orientate towards, and how these planning perspectives to some extent represent and visualize ideas of what a good and livable life should contain.

When I entered Holma—with the Emporia experience in mind—feelings of joy, or, at least curiosity were evoked in me. This feeling of curiosity was a bit of a surprise to me, because most of the time I have heard negative things about Holma, e.g. from news reports. Violence, assaults, crimes. Stories depicting a place in decay, implying poverty and exclusion. At the same time I have heard colleagues and architects telling stories of change, renewal and the potential of this neighborhood. I have reacted to their overwhelming enthusiasm; how fantastic the place is or what a

<sup>92</sup> The information in this entire section is drawn from *Bostadsmiljöer i Malmö: inventering, D. 2, 1965-1975* (Tykesson and Ingemark Milos, 2002b).

great potential it has, and how they seldom mention social problems. While walking there—I did the same as they—I deliberately tried to turn my focus toward spatial and material aspects. I tried to take the position of a professional, but personal memories and associations occasionally interrupted me.

When I am writing this—in 2015—things are continuously changing in this part of Malmö. The autoethnographic text part is time bound to 2013 04 14 when my friend and I did our walk there. More allotment gardens have been added next to Holma and an public indoor swimming pool is about to be completed. Hyllievång is also expanding with e.g. residential housing. Because the transformation is taking place right now, it would still, as I write, be possible to include other perspectives on how this transformation of Holma and Hyllievång could be done. Or to include more programmed planning perspectives as presented here, in order to diversify the orientation possibilities of the areas and their users. Spaces providing continuous and varying moments for orientation appear as engaging—maybe even encouraging—from a walk perspective. Despite places being in flux, we know how to navigate, maybe even feel a sense of trust in the situation. In such situations, orientation takes place on the terms of the walking person. This links back to Ahmed's (2006: 11) discussion regarding orientation toward things: from where and by whom something is perceived: "some spaces extend certain bodies and simply do not leave room for others," and "disorientation occurs when that extension fails." Such a perspective points to the intentions and impact of design—whom and what a space is aimed to serve and facilitate for.

To describe the experiences of Hyllievång and Holma merely in terms of disorientation and orientation is to simplify the impression of them. It is obvious that the two neighborhoods to varying degrees provide different opportunities for deviating associations and actions to take place when walking there, i.e. how the individual walk experience can be formed. In the section *The Battleground of the Body* I discuss how Butler (1988, 2011a) makes an important distinction between performativity and performance in regard to how gender identity is understood to be constructed. In Butler's perspective performativity refers to gender as being forced upon us by constraints and rules, in contrast to understanding gender as a role that we chose to take on—a performance. Neither in Hyllievång nor in Holma do I have a complete freedom to act out or choose whatever action or identity I want to perform. The functions of the spaces control you in one way or another. However, the degree

of imposed restrictions—how limiting they might appear—on a walking person varies between the two areas. The autoethnographic observation points to a wider range of possibilities as well as a lesser amount of restraints for how to behave in Holma than in Hyllievång. The Holma neighborhood thus offered a higher degree of flexibility and variations for acting out pedestrian desires and needs than did the spatial settings of Hyllievång.

The walk between Hyllievång and Holma in some parts also resulted in a more substantial and diversified description of how the affordances<sup>93</sup> given in an environment can range from less to more obligatory actions, indicating that possibilities for action are forced upon us to varying degrees. The walk reveals what it feels like to be in a space that provides more open offers, in contrast to a place that demands certain actions of me. Sociology and communication researcher Monica Degen et al.'s (2010: 73) study on “Bodies and everyday practices in designed urban environments” regarding peoples’ experience and sense of urban design in two separate British settings—a town center and a shopping mall—points to the “wide range of engagements with the affordances of the built environment” that takes place. Their study stresses the differences and ambivalence in preferences of and between bodies:

Depending on what people are doing, their awareness of, and bodily effectuation with, elements of the built environment can be very different. Not only are bodies multiple, but so too are environments; and not only multiple in the sense of many, but multiple in the sense of ambivalent. (Degen et al., 2010: 73)

Another type of emphasis on multiplicity, specifically tied to walking, is Kärholm et al.'s (2014: 1) approach to taking care of the diversity among pedestrians, which rests on the concept “interseriality.” This perspective stresses relational aspects between walking types “*and how the ongoing transformation of a walking assemblage ultimately also produces a mutable but sustaining walking person.*” (Kärholm et al., 2014: 1) In addition, it suggests a set of theoretical concepts—mainly picked up from existing

<sup>93</sup> Psychologist James Jerome Gibson (1986: 134) in *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* points to how affordance of a thing depends on whether or not it works for the purpose of the user:

what we perceive when looking at objects are their affordances, not their qualities. We can discriminate the dimensions of difference if required to do so in an experiment, but what the object affords us is what we normally pay attention to. The special combination of qualities into which an object can be analyzed is ordinarily not noticed.

theorization—“*walking sorts, walking assemblages, objects of passage, interseruality and boundary object,*” in order to describe the multifaceted aspects of walking, as opposed to studies that set out from its “predefined categories.” (Kärrholm et al., 2014: 12, 13)

My own argumentation above regarding the differentiation between pedestrians’ desires and identities when walking can—in line with Degen et al.’s (2010) range of environmental engagement, and Kärrholm et al.’s (2014) suggestion of a diversity of walk concepts—be juxtaposed with planning approaches founded in a design that proposes fixed typologies of pedestrian areas, e.g. contemplative (often green) paths, or spaces where a lot of people can meet (often shopping streets with cafés, restaurants, squares). My approach to acknowledging as well as utilizing differences in behaviors and heterogeneous needs among pedestrians rests on a theoretical framework of identity formation, where orientation and disorientation—including location, position and background aspects—are the spatial concepts for depicting the heterogeneity. To the main theoretical bearing in Ahmed’s (2006) queer phenomenology and Butler’s (1988, 2011a) performativity theory, I have added the matter of walking, in an attempt to consider it in relation to how the body is able to relate and orientate itself in regard to the material and spatial settings. This approach does not explicitly take into account different types of walking. Instead, it focuses on the experiences of spatial form and materiality—while walking—and how these might affect, and appeal to, the pedestrian.

In the logic of fixed typologies, pedestrians tend to become passive perceivers despite the fact that moments appear—in fixed functional spaces—where an active pedestrian is capable of taking command and e.g. wandering off in their imagination. Still, in these types of predefined pedestrian situations the walking person is assigned with specific needs that the functions of the space should meet, and it does not take into account the mechanisms for how identity is expressed, neither in a sense of performativity nor as moments of interseruality. The consequences of design based on fixed functions is a separation of walking into quite rigid categories, where the pedestrian is type-cast and could even be assigned with preferences in order to fit the purpose, e.g. a pedestrian in a shopping street is supposed to want to consume and is therefore often offered few optional activities. This way the typologies become excluding categories, instead of taking into account the variation in identities that could be expressed while walking. Although different types of walking might exist—i.e. that the purposes of my walking shifts over time—it is important not to appeal

to specific differences in a way that apply them in an excluding manner, because that might hinder other activities from taking place. An alternative approach—as argued for in this thesis—would add more complexity to the process by taking into account temporality in relationship to identities, desires, and needs. Such an approach is not opposing e.g. a commercial interest, but it does not make it the sole starting-point for urban planning regarding walking.

An approach to planning that stresses the complexity of frictions rather than looks for generalized solutions for handling conflicts would also suggest another way to handle controversies. Instead of comprising or erasing them, the friction of conflicts could be exposed in order to create alternative interpretations of the usage of space, e.g. in letting places like the pond with the shopping trolley exist next to highly defined and controlled spaces such as the shopping mall. This way, consensus of usage and accessibility to space can be disputed and challenged. Compare with e.g. architectural researcher Gunnar Sandin's (2013) theoretical framework for how to acknowledge disparate and marginalized views in the planning process, proposed in "Democracy on the Margin: Architectural Means of Appropriation in Governmental Alteration of Space." This approach takes into account conflicting opinions regarding differing proximity between "the architectural object of planning" and the "actors" concerned with a new establishment, and actors that include both authorized and non-authorized persons related to a project, e.g. political and architectural decision-makers, civil servants, neighboring citizens, or homeless persons (Sandin, 2013: 246).

The result of the autoethnographic observation of Hyllievång and Holma points to a possible application of the concept of orientation and disorientation on the greater scale of a city. This in order to recognize socio-spatial conditions for and consequences of planning decisions. This was done in reflection on how the complexity of a new establishment—Hyllievång—affected the position of a close-by neighborhood—Holma—not only in direct connection to itself, but also in the city as a whole.

The sense of orientation—as an element of location, position, reachability and proximity—is dependent on how other people, the spatial situation, and I myself interact, and how the spatial is prepared or able to tackle the ambivalent and heterogeneous needs of its users. In addition, that they in each moment might set the frame for how it is possible to encounter objects and space while walking. If the proximity between bodies and objects is lost, some degree of disorientation is likely to



appear. Or if the proximity between whole neighborhoods is disturbed they will have difficulties working together and serve their inhabitants so they can interact on equal terms. Ahmed (2006: 67) describes disorientation as

when one thing is “out of line,” then it is not just that thing that appears oblique but the world itself might appear on slant

and this way the body or an entire situation can be unsettled. She continues by saying

If we consider how space appears along the lines of the vertical axis, then we can begin to see how orientations of the body shape not just what objects are reachable, but also the “angle” on which they are reached. Things look right when they approach us from the right angle. (Ahmed, 2006: 67)

In line with such a reasoning orientation and disorientation could work as a spatial analysis tool. However, I found it problematic to use the wording “right angle” (Ahmed, 2006: 67) because of how it implies a fixed or static position. Instead, and in particular from a walk perspective, I consider angles as more flexible and temporally dependent perspectives or positions. This is, in turn, related to a continuous identity formation that takes place while walking, and the possibilities for deviating associations to be evoked by the space you move in.

In addition, the discussion in section 2.c. *Contrasting opportunities*, points to the value of associations you get in an autoethnographic approach being two-fold: methodological and experiential. Firstly, the specific technique—the *walk diary*—that I applied in order to record my observations has made it possible to include, if not everything I see, at least also things and events that might first appear as not relevant for the explicit study of walking and architectural matters. Acknowledging such moments of deviating associations is methodologically important due to how they influence the formation of subjectivity and what position I might take in a situation. It suggests a method that can take into account material, corporeal as well as socio-spatial conditions related to walking. Secondly, deviating associations have a direct experiential value for pedestrians in an environment. Urban planning strategies incorporating possibilities for a richness of associations as part of the walk experience would be the opposite of functions implying a constant way of doing. Instead, it would let form and spatial elements facilitate wandering off activities, rather than prescribing activities represented in functions in order to populate urban spaces. Thus

a possible way of investigating and thinking space emerges: to create dynamic spatial situations not aimed for limited activities, but rather spaces more able to attract people to inhabit them or move around in them on their own terms.

#### **d. Encounters and Companions**

This thesis, and the investigations shown above in the walk reflections, emanates mainly from a one-person perspective of matters since it presents how an autoethnographic approach can inform descriptions of architecture and walking. However, even though my *walk diary* notes focus on my own experiences, other people do populate my stories. Not only do I sometimes walk together with others or am approached by strangers on my walks, I also react and reflect on the expectations of others—also absent others—as I walk. Whether I am walking alone or not, there is always some degree of intersubjectivity activated in the walk situations, in the sense that other people are influencing my impressions, experiences and expectations and in the end my options for movement, and vice versa.

**Unavoidable Encounters**

*At one point, you tried to go for a walk—in Greensboro, Alabama, U.S.—beyond the stretch of the sidewalks. Three persons, independent of each other, pulled to the side and asked you if you needed help. Was there something wrong with your car? Running was ok, however walking... When you got back to Sweden you wanted to drive everywhere. It was like you did not think it was possible to walk. You had been caught in a self-imposed net of comfort. (130221)*

I walked on a road, passing the local hospital and a sports field often populated by people. The road did not have a proper sidewalk however it was not a road for high speed. You could easily walk in the grass alongside the road. I had never been approached by people in cars when running here, so their reaction that I must be in need of help of some sort was a great surprise to me. Did it look like I had no purpose with my walk? Did I appear to be lost? The situation indicates that although I was walking on my own I was most definitely not alone. Other people had opinions of my purpose for walking; they cared for my wellbeing, they found my walking puzzling, worrying...

In some sense, it could illustrate the wish, or even norm, to help someone supposedly in need. Me being a white person, and the people approaching me also being white, needs to be mentioned as well. I experienced Greensboro—and several places in the south of the U.S.—as ethnically segregated to a great extent. I can only assume that these people approached me as they themselves wanted to be approached by others. Their response to my behavior could indicate a great trust in what a car can provide: transportation, shelter, or safety. The people approaching me were affected by my behavior, a behavior I considered as noncontroversial. I was affected by their response. We did not share the same understanding of what walking along this road announced. Worlds colliding.

*Manifestation against the registration of Romani people by the Skåne police department. Location: Davidhalls torg, Malmö Sweden, 131004.*

*This takes place along your daily path between home and the bus to work. On this occasion, it is Saturday and you are going to meet a friend for coffee. Suddenly a white man appears and disturbs the manifestation, holding a sign and shouting. This is met with anger and violence by some of the participants.*

*Months after the incident, when you pass the site, you still have the picture in your mind of a man kicking another man in the head. Acting out violence and aggression. None of the people involved in the fight are Romani. The male Romani speaker is interrupted and silenced. Parallel to this situation there is an audience that opposes their violence. Tries to intervene. For a short moment the main views of the protesters, yours and the rest of the audience's, are neglected. It all appears as if some bodies can just claim the right to appropriate space on the behalf of other bodies. Until someone with more authority interrupts: the Police.*

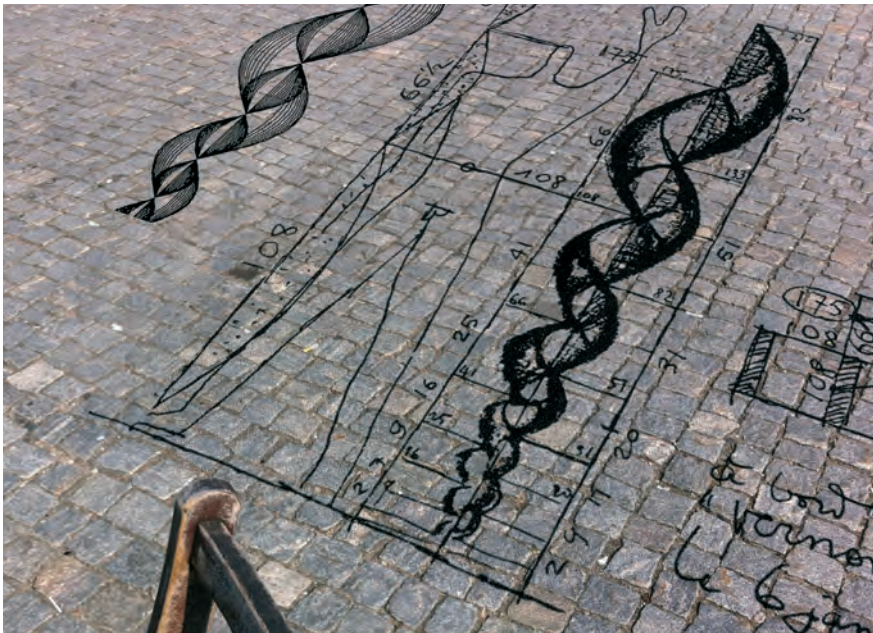


Figure 2.20. Collage: imposed norms.

Butler (2011c) argues—in “Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street”—that the alliance between bodies in a demonstration is forming and being formed by the materiality of public space. The public realm interpreted in terms of inclusion may appear as: accessible and used by everyone; a collective participation of groups and individuals formed through debates and dialogues; and a container for memories and history (Hannah Arendt, 1958). Anthropologist and geographer David Harvey (2008) states that the right to the city goes beyond the individual, instead, it is a collective action and human right, although often ignored. However, Butler’s (2011c) alliance discussion points to the idea that inhabiting a city means more than neutral encounters of bodies within a space: in addition, that it includes degrees of intersubjectivity. Political acts take place when bodies act together, and the important matter is what happens between bodies (Butler, 2011c).

The manifestation at Davidhalls torg temporally transformed the space: through the arrangement of bodies in the square, but also through how the materiality itself formed options for how the protesters could inhabit the space. The square provided a temporal scene for the manifestation, materially defined by e.g. its slight elevation from surrounding streets, stone edgings of the flowerbeds in the square, and rows of bushes. However, the alliances between bodies at the manifestation were interrupted by violence. It was as if the fighting men took their bodies and the space for granted in their violent claim on the situation, whereas in fact their actions created nothing but wounds, fear, anger and chaos. The violence seemed given for those involved. It seemed given for the provocateur to appear and disturb the manifestation, and for some bodies to respond with violence—almost as an agreement of violence. Bodies being very sure of how they can inhabit and act in a public space. For a short moment they behaved as if they owned the place. In this situation, they took part in a culture of violence that accepts aggression and hatred as a response to disagreement. The bodies of the speaker, the manifesters’ and other members of the audience could not take anything for granted after the fight started, neither space nor a right to express views. In addition, being registered due to ethnicity is an imposition, but a continuous one that stretches over time and space. The violent interruption exposed several fights and broken alliances that Romani people have to face regarding space, publicness, and institutions. In the moment, it concerned a right to freedom of speech, and in the greater societal context, the right to not be an object of suspicion, prejudice and exclusion.

### **Companions**

During my walks in darkness I have been accompanied by friends or family most of the time, the exception being my runs at night when staying in Greensboro, Alabama, U.S. The speed of running as opposed to the pace of walking might have influenced me to do it on my own. There was a great reluctance among most people I knew in Greensboro to walk or stay outside when it was dark. The only exception was the dogs, which sometimes joined me.

When visiting e.g. Holma I had different companions on different occasions. In retrospect, I have noticed that I seem to have chosen to bring company when visiting places outside my routine areas or when pushing the limits of my comfort zone. One example is when a friend and I participated in a workshop held by Nightwalkers in Malmö, Sweden, in September 2014, in collaboration with the art gallery Krets, Malmö Sweden. First the artists Nikos Doulos and Bart Witte from the initiating group of artists, Expodium, gave a presentation of their work and of previous night walks. A night walk in the neighborhood around Möllevångstorget in Malmö then followed. We were asked to walk in pairs where one of us should take the lead and the other was supposed to follow at a distance. We were not supposed to talk to each other. If we wanted we could meet up later for a discussion or just leave for home. My friend and I decided to test walking as instructed for a while. The two of us took turns leading the way and our spontaneous reaction afterwards was that it felt quite liberating: both as a follower not having to make decisions about where to go, and also as a leader knowing someone was behind you. You were not alone—someone known was watching your back. We both agreed that being the one following was, in part, a meditative experience. Being the one to take the lead—in the context of not being on your own and therefore not preoccupied with the matter of being out at night alone—gave more room for a curious attitude towards the situation. We felt more relaxed than when walking alone in the dark. The knowledge of other pairs walking around—like us—contributed to a sense of being part of a greater community, a greater context. Both my friend and I, are persons who want to be able to move around when it is dark in a city, but might hesitate. This because it is not always easy to act from a position of confidence in the situation of walking alone in the dark—a confidence in your own ability to tackle whatever might appear in the darkness. The absence of possible conversations between us also gave more focus to what happened around us. Afterwards we felt quite excited about how liberating it felt and talked about

doing it again. When I took the lead, I felt a greater freedom to take paths that were not so crowded. I would most likely not have done it on my own. It seems like the situation—walking as described above, around midnight—provoked other kinds of behaviors than what I usually act out.<sup>94</sup>

### ***Intersubjectivity and Space***

My main method—to go out walking and more or less see what happens—differs in many ways from predetermined and structured walk research designs, such as intentionally involving a questionnaire, where using a questionnaire allows for collecting answers from recruited groups of individuals. The recruitment process might differ from strict targeting to more spontaneous appointments. Accidental moments and encounters, however, might be difficult to recognize and give justice to when using a questionnaire or other pre-determined procedures. Moments of significance appearing when you are out walking on your own, or in company, have their own logic and force their influence upon you at their own pace. In recognizing and following these occasional occurrences, the open-ended autoethnographic method has become a way of acknowledging other people's experiences and their influence on situations. I have thus been able to incorporate intersubjectivity aspects in the study. In other words, the walk study as a whole includes other people's experiences and wills, although the focus has been on one person's experiences of walking. I would argue that these found voices and moments would not have been included if I had not at times simply let myself wander off in unexpected directions. These experiences could be difficult to predict, place in pre-situated interviews, or analyze quantitatively. It is therefore from a methodological perspective important to stress that one person's story can produce a lot of detailed information, which could easily get lost in approaches that collect a range of opinions to be grouped into one demographic or hermeneutic body. Ellingson and Ellis (2008: 448) point to how

Autoethnography becomes a space in which an individual's passion can bridge individual and collective experience to enable richness of representation, complexity of understanding, and inspiration for activism.

<sup>94</sup> On a later occasion my walk companion read these notes and added the following comments: How could this be applied in an architectural (planning) context? How can the concept be evolved? Are there other places, times or situations where it could be applied?



Some of the encounters from my observation walks have initiated novel ways of using space: the drummer at Kungsgatan, and the boys throwing a tennis ball at the facade of Emporia points to alternative usages to the intended ones. Others have articulated space as being appropriated on the expense of others: the man shouting “Hey girl” to me in Folkets Park, or as here in the manifestation at Davidhalls torg, where a few persons claimed preference in a situation. The begging woman pointed out my privileges—that I can choose to turn my back on a well-known part of society and the urban settings, such as begging. And, of course, the dogs, which went from potential threats to encountered bodies to something like companions.

All of these encounters have affected my behavior to some extent, as I also affected those I met, for better or for worse. But neither the impulse to encounter others, nor the effect of encounters, is random. I have been approached by people or walked together with others. As a result, my experience of a situation is always in some sense affected by other people’s behavior and attitudes, as is the way in which I orientate myself—both when others are present and not present. I might feel more relaxed when I have company and may therefore more easily let my mind wander. But I might also be distracted by conversation.

I have noticed how agreeing to consider darkness as sometimes nice to move around in results in my attention changing from being dominated by fear to instead being directed towards material, textural and spatial qualities. This has led me to develop alternative perspectives on movement in darkness, and to take paths that would otherwise be out of bounds due to the preconceptions of my upbringing and of culturally formed customs, i.e. from the intersubjectivity disciplining my own actions. To some extent we always act within a framework; a context of social and cultural norms, (as well as judicial laws and regulations). A framework that imposes expectations on identities—who we are according to ourselves but also in the eyes of others. Our gender, along with other identities of e.g. walk possibilities and behavior, cultural and social aspects, sexuality, ethnicity, and socio-economic factors, will inform the ways in which we are able to occupy space. This kind of perpetual awareness of others, their norms and their peculiarities, can, as shown above, be juxtaposed with Ahmed’s (2006) and Butler’s (2011a) perspectives on sexual identity formation, which point out that no matter what sexuality we have, it is formed in relation to other people. Being a heterosexual is not only about how people orientate “toward others, it is also something that we are orientated around, even if it disappears from view.”

(Ahmed, 2006: 90-1) Heterosexuality, as well as whiteness, in a Western context, is the starting-point that we very seldom mention by name; it is just there as a self-evident and tacit norm, just as normal behavior on the street is not thought of as something that needs to be problematized. Preconceptions of expected behaviors—as part of a greater discourse regarding how to act—will have an impact on how we do act, and sometimes affect this counter-productively: “They continue to signify in spite of their authors, and sometimes against their authors’ most precious intentions.” (Butler, 2011a: 185) In relation to what we have seen in terms of materiality and subjectivities as formatting our experiences of (walking in) urban space, I have also had to, in introspections, ask what does this identity formation mean when it comes to how I formulate my methodological claims:

How can varying identities be recognized, and the dynamics of their production be problematized, in relation to my observational methods?

### 3. Reflections on Method and Situatedness

This chapter mainly concerns theories of science and research methodology. Questions regarding the impact of deviations and their effect on knowledge production as well as on the researcher's position are discussed, both relating to the general issue of subjectivity and objectivity in applied research methods. This has been done in reflection on my empirical work tied to walking. Apart from my main methodological approach, the autoethnographic study based on *walk diary* notes, I will here also render some thoughts on a vista observation study, and a structured walk study with a quantitative questionnaire approach. The main theoretical influence in my discussion of methodology is Donna Haraway (1991), and her emphasis on the impact of the constructed circumstances of the studied situation, including the position of the one who performs the study. This is also discussed in terms of identity matters and their construction, with regard to Judith Butler's (1988, 2009, 2011a) theory of performativity. The first section—3.a. *Revisiting Vistas*—also sums up methodological findings of chapter 2. *Walk Reflections*.

In the second section of the chapter—3.b. *Walking, Wandering, Strolling: contextualizing Going astray*—the approach applied in this dissertation will be juxtaposed with similar explorative approaches to walking.

### a. Revisiting Vistas

*Time passes. At the end of August, you revisit Holma. You enter from the same entrance as last time. You feel happy when you see the allotment gardens. You pass the inner yard and you think you can feel the texture of flowers although they are at a distance. You think everything looks green and lush. You and a friend walk toward the square, a guy passes and asks: -Are you architects? (130823)*

What do we—researchers and architects—expect to see or find when we visit a place we are not familiar with? What do we think we will find?

I am walking here in the company of a friend. In this situation, we were the others visiting a neighborhood on the margins of Malmö. I did not feel at home here—I felt like an intruder. If I am not from the margin, can I ever be more than a colonizer?

Writing from the position of having grown up in the margin—black southern lower class community—and moved to the center, bell hooks (2000: 203), researcher in English, writer, political activist and feminist, asks:

Moving, we confront the realities of choices and location. Within complex and ever shifting realms of power relations, do we position ourselves on the side of colonizing mentality? Or do we continue to stand in the political resistance with the oppressed, ready to offer our ways of seeing and theorizing, of making culture, towards that revolutionary effort which seeks to create space where there is unlimited access to the pleasure and power of knowing, where transformation is possible?

Professionals engaged in the field of walking have to make themselves visible in their research and work, by exposing their attitudes and anticipations about pedestrians and walking. Privileges and limits have to be exposed, however, not comprehended as fixed or static. Instead, problematized in terms of temporal and historical changes; that their impact will fluctuate with changing circumstances.

As already mentioned in section ...*walking in Holma*, Holgersson (2014: 209) introduces the term “hegemonic gaze” in order to describe the power perspective of decision-makers in regard to a site. This indicates that there is a need to include subjective notions of people in charge of decision (Holgersson, 2014) as well as future users and inhabitants. Such a concept would help point out the power differentials that are at work in decision-making and design processes. By applying walk-alongs as described by Margarethe Kusenbach (2003), researcher in sociology, Holgersson (2014) situates the knowledge of her informants, but her study—although not specifically concerned with research about walking—also exemplifies the situatedness that walking in itself can produce. I have not applied a go-along method in the sense that I have selected informants and interviewed them while walking. Still, I found these methodological comments relevant for the collection of my *walk diary* notes, due to my being accompanied and approached by other walkers and them becoming a part of my walk stories. The type of situated and autoethnographic knowledge produced during my walks can only be retrieved by being on site and actually walking. By walking on site we can create autoethnographic data that would not be possible to obtain from off-site discussions without the activity itself.

Moreover, go-alongs provide unique access to biographies by taking a spatial versus a chronological approach; they emphasize the many contexts and symbolic qualities

of everyday spatial practices; and they render visible some of the filters that shape individual environmental perception. All of these topics are firmly grounded in the three-dimensionality of the life-world. (Kusenbach, 2003: 478)

Duff's (2010) study on affect and place-making among youths in Vancouver, Canada, points to how a range of people's experiences of and feelings toward places can be put together in order to create a versatile understanding of a place e.g. what it can be, mediate, be transformed into, and be used for. The study takes into account "the *affective experience of place-making*" when describing how people establish a sense of belonging to a place (Duff, 2010: 893).

Instead of letting lay/wo/men only contribute through e.g. answering predefined questionnaires, it would be fruitful to let them be involved in the knowledge process in an open and explorative way. This will raise questions about who should do the observations, how and why they should be chosen, how many they should be, and whether many participants will provide more knowledge or just confuse. Ellingson et al, (2008) suggested how autoethnography could be applicable in intersubjective studies, where the researcher positions her/himself as a participator of the study in contrast to an outside observer of a discussion or as an assumed objective interviewer. This demands reflection on whose subjectivity and personal experiences are being used, in order to avoid reproducing excluding norms—situating the knowledge positions represented.

In the following section subjectivity will be discussed in regard to applied methods, results and theory of science.

### ***The Situatedness of Subjectivity***

In autoethnography the self-experienced knowledge is the situated knowledge in the sense that it presents the partial perspectives of the researcher. I am not claiming that my observations and interpretations fully explain or expose facts of the spatial situations (cf p. 77 how Sedgwick (2003: 124) regards knowledge as performative). Thus the researcher can make explicit the meta-perspective of subjectivity that is always present within the work and process of research. Acknowledging subjectivity points to how it is possible to utilize contradictive experiences, of e.g. walking and architecture—both within and amongst individuals. I have let memories and associations—to some extent a consequence of applying autoethnography—be part of my observations and writing, in order to depict how they might affect my experiences. This in an

attempt to show, or admit, how, and from where, I have observed something, thus stating clearer (the complexity of) my relationship to the observed. This does not, in itself, guarantee a complete transparency—there will always be unnoticed matters influencing our observations and impressions. In order to problematize the subjectivity of experiences—how they can clash or even represent conflicting desires—Haraway’s (1991) concepts “situated knowledges” and “partial perspective” become useful. These concepts are useful for the understanding of contradictions in experiences between individuals as well as within the same individual. Situated knowledges and partial perspective are science theory concepts (Haraway, 1991) which provide for a critical alternative to traditional science perspectives claiming objectivity.

Situated knowledges are produced in the positioning of our partial perspective of the world, i.e. how it matters from which position you look at something (Haraway, 1991). Her reasoning points out that a perspective on a matter is always part of a social construct. “[T]he Privilege of a Partial Perspective” (Haraway, 1991: 183) lies in the very claiming of it—the announcement of where you have spoken from. In her critique of the claims of the Western tradition to an objective science and dichotomic thinking—where phenomena are studied from a distance in order to reveal supposedly objective facts or the actual truth of the world—Haraway (1991) politicizes science and knowledge production, and introduces the cyborg figure as an alternative to dichotomies.<sup>94</sup>

By applying the cyborg, Haraway unsettles binary thinking. Haraway (1991) points out the need to describe science as a network instead of a construct of dichotomies such as body/mind or nature/technology, and her manifesto is an epistemological and ontological critique of an assumed universal objectivity. The dilemma of dichotomies is that they “present as opposites what are actually interdependent,” and reduce possibilities to contrasting extremes where “one will inevitably be valued over the other.” (Ellingson and Ellis in 2008: 447)

A cyborg blurs the line between technology and nature. It has no distinct border between human and machine, it is

a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction. [...] a kind of disassembled and reassembled, postmodern

<sup>94</sup> Harding (2004:5) points out that theories of feminist research have evolved as a response to a science tradition founded on e.g. “Androcentric, economically advantaged, racist, Eurocentric, and hetero-sexist conceptual frameworks.”

collective and personal self. This is the self feminists must code. (Haraway, 1991: 149, 163)

In the process of reassembling this kind of partial perspectives and the privileges of them, situated knowledges become a means to providing a larger vision and a greater understanding of the actual field or topic of research. Situated knowledges are about discussing the world from these positions in order to obtain non-hegemonic knowledges, but also about distinct power-conscious investigations of the world, and the same as a “feministic objectivity.” (Haraway, 1991: 188) This is how we can gain rational knowledge according to Haraway (1991). I understand Haraway’s rational knowledge as a continuous critical process that defines my subjective position as e.g. a researcher, and that the position has a continuous effect on my view of a research field or topic.

The strength of Haraway’s (1991: 149) “Cyborg Manifesto” is in its clear power-oriented critique of western science, and in the critical continuation of previous feminist work. Situated knowledges and feminist objectivity consist not only of a critique of a traditional Western science theory, but were also suggested as an alternative to social constructivism and feministic empiricism<sup>95</sup> (Haraway, 1991), at the time of their introduction as concepts. These two latter approaches to science also emanate from a critique of the traditional Western approach, where objectivity is taken for granted and science is considered to be about universality (Haraway, 1991). I understand Haraway’s (1991) main critique of social constructivist perspectives, briefly summarized, as concerning (1) the assumption of a separation of body and mind, and (2) its tendency to relativism. Haraway (1991: 180) refuses any kind of essentialist feminism claiming women have “a privileged epistemological position” due to being women. A subjugated perspective is not a guarantee for scientific and conscious scrutiny of the world, nor is a multiple seeing of the world from several standpoints at the same time possible as claims of objectivity (Haraway, 1991).

The methodological stance in the “Cyborg Manifesto” (Haraway, 1991) makes it difficult to take a singular universal position from where knowledge is produced.

<sup>95</sup> “Nature is only the raw material of culture, appropriated, preserved, enslaved, exalted, or otherwise made flexible for disposal by culture in the logic of capitalist colonialism. Similarly, sex is only the matter to the act of gender; the productionist logic seems inescapable in traditions of Western binarisms. This analytical and historical narrative logic accounts for my nervousness about the sex/gender distinction in the recent history of feminist theory.” (Haraway, 1991: 198)



However, Haraway's (1991) approach is not a relativistic claim where any perspective will do. An inside perspective of science, the scientist's view, will not produce a better understanding of a phenomenon, because of its tendency toward relativism as

a way of being nowhere while claiming to be everywhere equally. The "equality" of positioning is a denial of responsibility and critical enquiry. Haraway (1991: 191)

Instead, knowledge-claims have to be positioned; how and from where the world is being studied. Partial perspective is suggested as an alternative, where the very objectivity lies in a transparent and clear positioning of where I am studying a phenomenon from (Haraway, 1991). The world as an empirical matter then becomes "a power-charged social relation of 'conversation'" rather than just an object for neutral observations "depend[ing] on a logic of 'discovery,'" (Haraway, 1991: 198). Ellingson (2005: 135) refers to Haraway (1988) and states that

each of my knowledge claims reflects specific "situated knowledges"—that is, perceptions of the world from an individual's particular standpoint (Haraway, 1988).

This points to how partial perspective also has the ability to embrace our own incoherent experiences of the world.

### **Deviation Spots<sup>96</sup>**

The two following autoethnographic observations are made as a consequence of the result from an earlier study: a structured walk<sup>97</sup> that was part of a transdisciplinary project about urban walking, where 106 participants were asked to answer a set of questions regarding their experience of walking in three separate architectural situations. For the study, walking routes in three neighborhoods in Malmö were used: Dammfri, Lorensborg and Rönneholm. These routes had already, previous to the questionnaire study, been examined in "A pedestrian-oriented view of the built environment: A Vista Observation Analysis (VOA) of urban form." (Körner et al., 2012).

The items that I specifically designed for the structured walk study had as an objective to find out how well people orientate themselves and what kind of material/

<sup>96</sup> The deviation spots are in the autoethnographic collages mentioned as "the place of deviation."

<sup>97</sup> See *Appendix I: Additional notes on Methods* for a more detailed description of the structured walk study that was part of the project Urban Walking. When I refer to the structured walk study it is to be understood, if nothing else is pointed out, as part of a larger study where I designed items that concerned the material and spatial support of walking.

architectural support they found along the advised routes, but after analyzing the data from this study, I found that it did not generate any particular information that could inform the understanding of what may or may not encourage walking. However, according to the result of the questionnaire, two places—one in Lorensborg and a one at Dammfrigången—along these structured walk routes stood out as showing a significant variation among the participants regarding to how transport walking<sup>98</sup> was sensed as supported or not supported by the built environment. I will accordingly refer in the following to these two places for observation as “deviation spots.”

Lorensborg is a residential neighborhood located in the west part of Malmö, and was built in late 1950. The neighborhood was at the time the first big scale housing complex in Sweden. The entire neighborhood is described as from the beginning having a mixed character that have become even more diversified due to changes and renovations. The building heights vary between 3-16 stories, hosting 2500 apartments.<sup>99</sup>

Dammfrigången stretches both through the southeast part of Rönneholm and northeast part of Dammfri. The deviation spot is located in Rönneholm.

Rönneholm is described as a heterogenic neighborhood because it is made up of building styles from several epochs—mainly 1930 to 1970. Here, at Dammfrigången, the buildings are from the early 1950s—architects are HSB Arkitektkontor and Thorsten Roos—with some additions during the 1970s and 1980s. However, most of the buildings were built during the 1940s and 1950s. There are about 4800 apartments in Rönneholm. The character of the neighborhood varies from closed inner yards to free-standing residential houses—lamellhus<sup>100</sup>—with open yards, varying in height between three and four stories.<sup>101</sup>

The variation in the judgments of what these two places could afford, were greater than elsewhere in the structured walk study. This was shown in the standard deviation measure of the answers to the following items stated in the questionnaire:

<sup>98</sup> The Urban Walking project specifically focused on transport walking, a categorization I have abandoned in this dissertation.

<sup>99</sup> This section is a review of the Lorensborg's chapter in *Bostadsmiljöer i Malmö: inventering. D. 2, 1955-1965* (Tykesson and Ingemark Milos, 2002a: 108-119).

<sup>100</sup> “Lamellhus” is like “skivhus” a type of residential multistoried building. For a discussion regarding the translation of the Swedish terms for variations of residential high rises/tower blocks see Ibbotson (2002).

<sup>101</sup> This section is a review of the Lorensborg's chapter in *Bostadsmiljöer i Malmö: inventering. D. 1, 1945-1955* (Tykesson and Ingemark Milos, 2001: 140-145).

I perceive it as difficult to orientate myself at this place. (Lorensborg)  
I immediately understand how I can continue to walk from this place. (Lorensborg)  
I perceive it as easy to orientate myself at this place. (Dammfri)

I asked myself why there was a discrepancy, and this question led me to investigate these two locations more closely on my own terms, i.e. through an autoethnographic return to the places.

The standard deviations shown in the statistical analysis of the answers suggest that participants focused differently, even contrary to each other, in regard to items that concerned how they felt that the physical environment supported their walking. In a first step of analysis of the statistical result, standard deviation worked as an indicator for pointing out partial perspectives of sites—suggesting that the participants varied with regard to what kind of situated knowledges they had about the site. Therefore, it became important for me to acknowledge these differences in terms of partial perspectives, in order to capture the variation in how the place could be experienced from a pedestrian perspective. It led me to return to these two spots of deviation, now as part of my autoethnographic study, in order to find out more about why the experience had varied, and if there was something in the material and spatial setting that could cause these varying responses.

When I went back to the two deviation spots for my new observations my intention was to focus on what might have caused the variations within the answers. I deliberately tried to place myself in a mindset where I could go astray. Let my mind wander in order to stay open to unpredictable matters and associations, and in order to see what contradictive impressions could be exposed.

In two collages, figure 3.1, and figure 3.2, I have depicted the findings of the revisits at the deviation spots. The footnotes were added after the walk session when rereading the notes. The photos were taken at the occasion for the autoethnographic observation.



You start walking the predefined route. Extremely windy. Always difficult to make your way to the neighborhood as a pedestrian. No obvious paths to follow.<sup>1</sup> It is fun to be back. You feel a little bit at home. You like the ugliness of the starting-point.<sup>2</sup> A road barrier at the entrance leading to “the place of deviation.” People pass through across the inner yard. All the greenery is gone; this changes the place and the possibility of getting an overview.<sup>3</sup> Great difference between wintertime and the green time of the year. You think that the lack of greenery, i.e. the empty flowerbeds along the house, makes the space more anonymous during winter. Maybe even more public. Do the plants and flowerbeds make the space of the inner yard feel more private during the green period of the year? Today you perceive the space as more accessible and public.<sup>4</sup> The sense of care and personal touch is gone when there are no flowers in the flowerbeds. You are standing at “the place of deviation,” facing the walk direction. An enclosed playground has been built outside the newly opened pre-school. The playground is located in front of the wall you are looking at. The wall delimits the space. The path leading straight toward the wall could be perceived as contradictive. There is a clear direction within the space. However, at the same time, the path looks like it ends at this wall. The sudden 90-degree right turn in the path might not be clearly visible when standing at “the place of deviation.” Is the shape of the space, coupled with the 90-degree turn, giving ambiguous information? It is possible to see what is happening further down the path. But does it align with the space you are standing in at the moment? Yes and no.<sup>5</sup> Habits might influence weather you perceive that you are “allowed” to walk here or not. Is it “your” inner yard? Yes and no. It is a passage. The 90-degree turn makes it less of an obvious passage. Maybe the privacy is more apparent when there is greenery. What type of greenery reinforces or reduces the sense of privacy? Here, the greenery and flowerbeds are well taken care of, and have a personal touch. Someone cares.<sup>6</sup> 140120 kl.9-9.30

<sup>1</sup>Confusion.

<sup>2</sup>My situated knowledges: unknown place from the beginning but as I return for the autoethnographic writing I feel a little bit more at home. Affect my sense of ownership?

<sup>3</sup>Visual direction.

<sup>4</sup>Commonness, everydayness, lack of private areas in the architecture: how can it be expressed in form? Does my presumption that a residential yard should have a certain degree of privacy create a sense of confusion: whom does this place belong to? In the summertime the yard looks much more tended to. I feel more invited. Invited to a place that I very much feel belongs to someone else, but I am allowed as a guest.

<sup>5</sup>Visual, walking, spatial directions. Loosing and finding direction. The corner of the building I am following could give me information about a crossing road but instead it leads to a dead end. The wall could mark an end, but instead this is where the path continues. It is possible to get a glimpse of how to continue or I simply would not perceive it. This is a conflict. I can either follow the path on the ground or get lost in edges and walls. Or do both. Does the deviation take place here in a mix of contradictive information? I can feel the ground with my feet, but can I feel the space with my body? Do some of us trust our feet while others focus on the space? Does a conflict happen when these components cannot be combined?

<sup>6</sup>Sense of ownership.

Figure 3.1. Autoethnographic observation of deviation spot in Lorensborg, 140120, shown as a collage.





<sup>1</sup>Bodies inhabiting space.

<sup>2</sup>Confusing.

<sup>3</sup>Public and private.

<sup>4</sup>Walking direction. Confusion. Sense of ownership.

Figure 3.2. Autoethnographic observation of deviation spot in Dammfri, 140122, shown as a collage.

Both sites have an important common feature in their physical layout: the abrupt 90-degree turn of the expected paths. The statistical deviation spot at Dammfrigången is located just after the turn while in Lorensborg it appears right before the 90-degree bend. In Lorensborg, the turn of the space is partly a consequence of a building and block layout. At Dammfrigången fences define it, while the surrounding space has a completely different shape than the walkable path has. In Lorensborg, the participants in the structured walk study were standing looking at the turn when answering the questions in questionnaire. At Dammfrigången they had just exited from it. For my autoethnographic observation I positioned myself at the same locations.

At both deviation spots I found it hard to see any particular logic between the form of the surrounding architectural space and the stretch of the path; and they neither coincided nor supported one another (see figures 3.3, 3.4, 3.6 and 3.7). In Lorensborg, there was a discrepancy between the direction of the path and the space created by surrounding buildings, where the path from a distance seems to head straight into a wall and where the sudden 90-degree turn was hardly visible at first. Already in the initial vista observation analysis made a year and a half earlier (Körner et al., 2012), the discrepancies between visual and path directions, and a blockage of long sightlines, had been noticed at both sites. Figures 3.3 and 3.6 stem from the vista analysis done in the VOA study, I have only added the deviation spots and a dashed line indicating the area referred to as incoherent. These adjustments in plan drawings were done after the questionnaire data was analyzed. The view from the walk path is marked in light blue in figure 3.3 and 3.6. The dotted light blue field indicates a partly blurred view, and the red line shows the walk path from where the observation was done. The photo of the collage in figure 6 stems from an earlier occasion than the actual revisit, but reflects thoughts that appeared when revisiting for the autoethnographic observation.

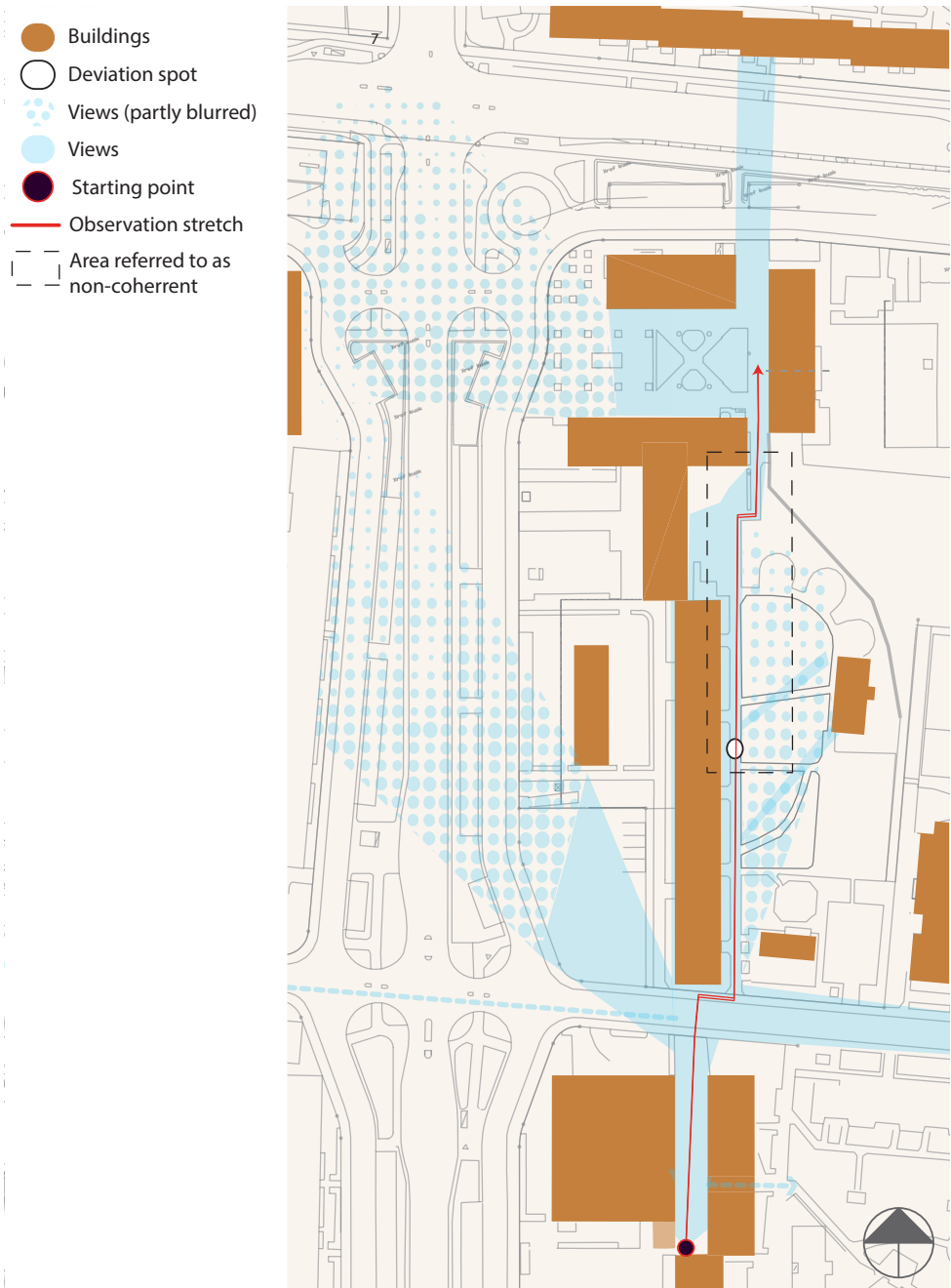


Figure 3.3. Adjusted plan image of walk route in Lorensborg, from the Vista Observation Analysis (VOA) (Körner et al., 2012) collage.

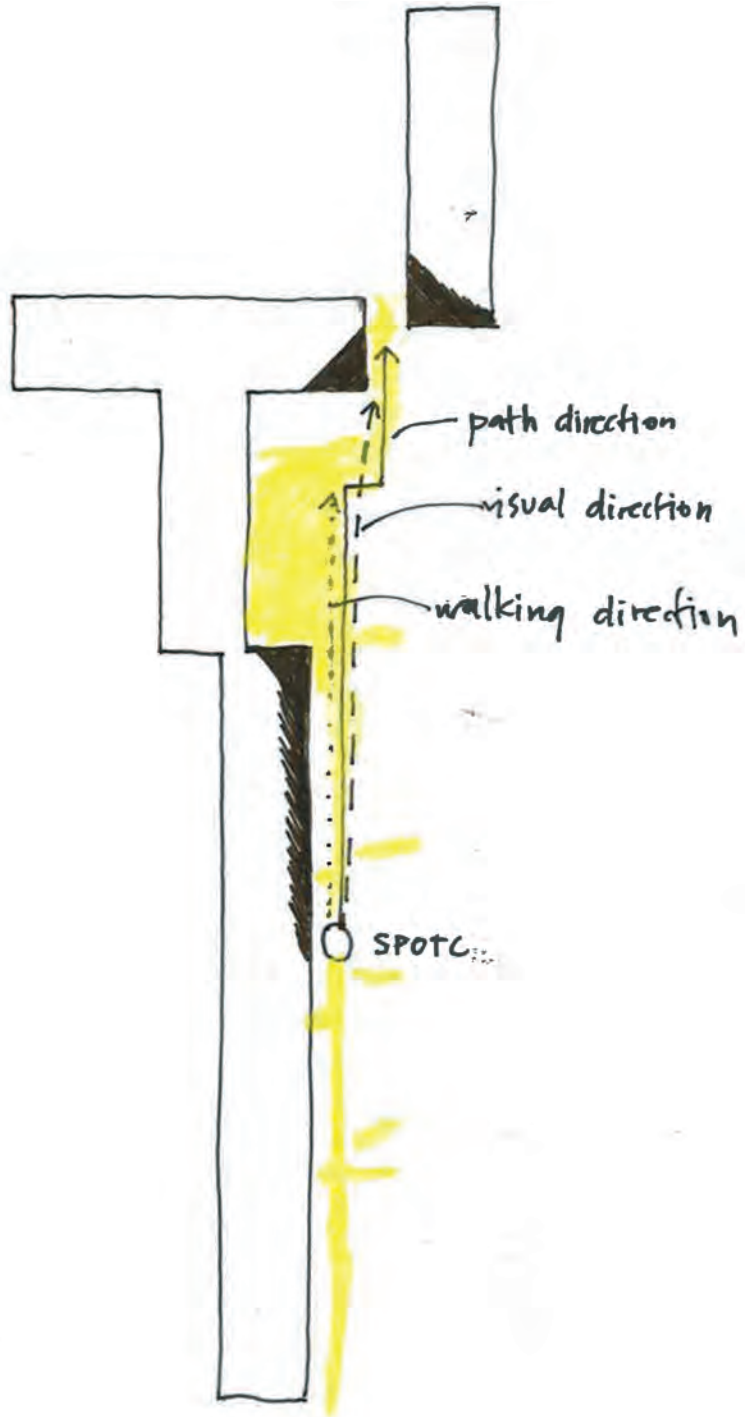


Figure 3.4. Diagrammatic plan of the Lorensborg situation. Yellow fields indicate where it is possible to walk. Analysis from autoethnographic observation 140120.





Figure 3.5. Collage showing inner yard of Lorensborg, with greenery. (Photo from 111004)

The discrepancy between path and spatial conditions at the sites of both deviation spots was, in itself, not a new observation for me, however, when revisiting the locations, I tried to let myself extend my observations of the environment and its place qualities beyond obvious wayfinding and navigation aspects, which were the focus in the VOA and the structured walk study. Instead, I tried to do alternative interpretations of space and material matters, and in what sense they could influence the experience of the on-site walking possibilities. This in order to contextualize the deviation measures of the structured walk study.

When returning, the autoethnographic observation at the deviation spot in Lorensborg points to the impact of a wall as well as to a sense of allowing the presence of strangers. This could be described as a discrepancy that concerns the relationship between the intended walk direction (wanting to go ahead), the actual path allowed (including a 90-degree turn), and the visual orientation provided by the surroundings at the location (which affected my sense of social belonging). The sense of anonymity in that place, and the fact that I experience it as public and private at the same time, is described through my impression of the flowerbeds and their potential greenery. I associated flowerbeds with potential care, even though it was not present at the moment. This indicates how a sense of care might give a welcoming impression while simultaneously functioning as a sign of privacy. At the time of year when the structured walk study was conducted, the greenery was still partly present.

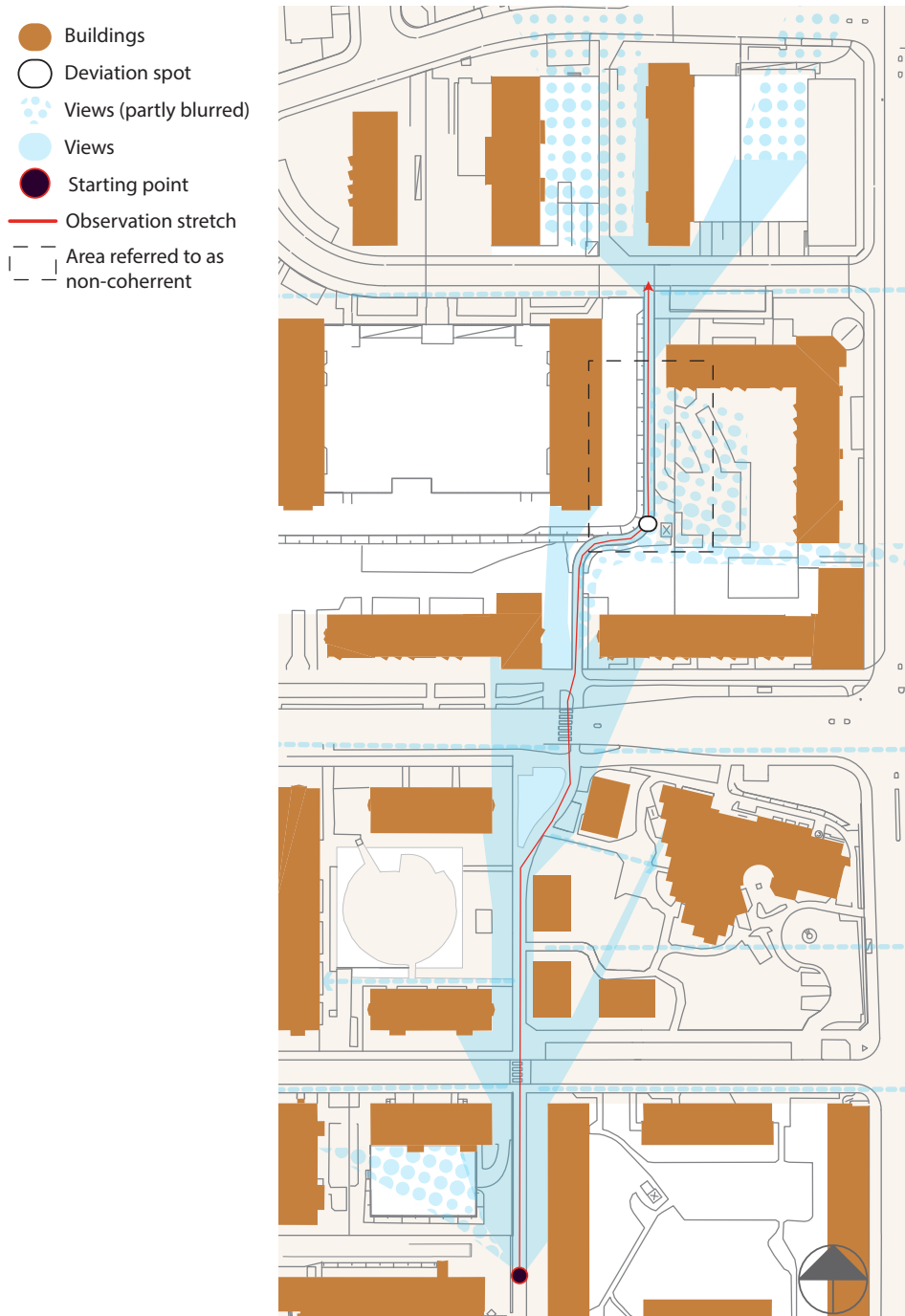


Figure 3.6. Adjusted plan image of walk route in Dammfri, from the Vista Observation Analysis (VOA) (Körner et al., 2012).

Such a path/space discrepancy became even more apparent at the deviation spot at Dammfrigången due to fences along the path.<sup>102</sup> With secretly smoking schoolboys in mind, I arrived between two fences. As in Lorensborg, I found myself standing in quite a vast and open space, but I was locked between fences here, which made only a thin stretch accessible for passage. The turn partly obscured the sight, but the fences gave me just one direction to follow. Again the impact of materiality is acted out through the fences, which only give one possible direction for walking. The anonymity of the deviation spot at Dammfri is of another character than in Lorensborg. This place is public but for whom? Bicyclists, pedestrians, or both? While walking along the path you can look into private inner yards. The plain greenery, e.g. lawns and bushes, and asphalt paving make them look quite common and anonymous. Still they are more or less enclosed yards, and you find yourself walking on a thin strip cutting through a private space.

<sup>102</sup> I do not argue for a specific way that an apparent visual direction should coincide with the actual path taken. Rather my point is that way-finding, navigation, and orientation possibilities seem to—partly—have to do with how visual and path direction related matters coincide and how we can measure a distance not only by vision but also with the movement of our bodies. They are experienced together and interfere in order to help us find our way. This reasoning is assumed from a perspective of a seeing person. A visually impaired person has to rely on tactile impression and sound to a much greater extent than a fully seeing pedestrian.

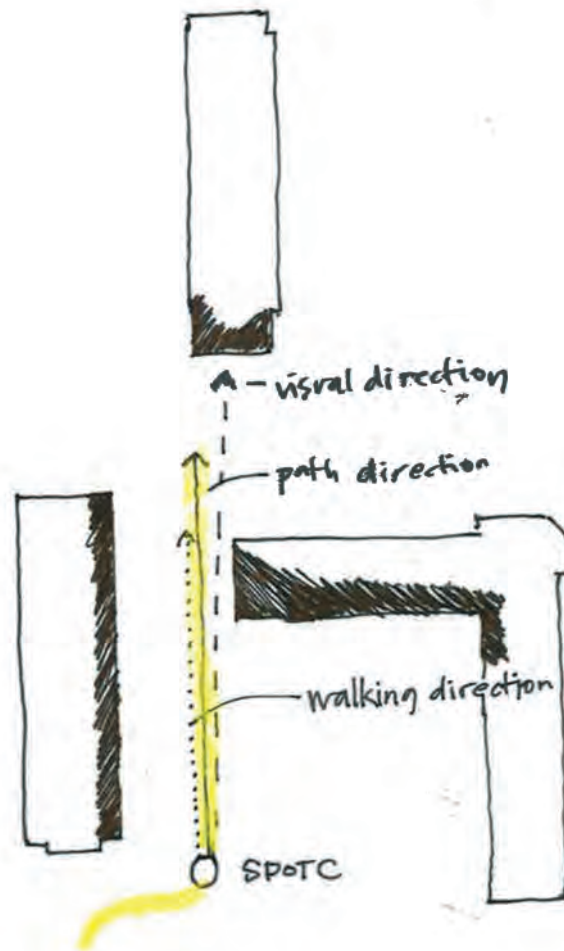


Figure 3.7. Diagrammatic plan of Dammfrigången situation. Yellow field indicating where it is possible to walk. Analysis from observation 140122.

### ***Arrival of Things***

The revisits to the deviation spots stimulated me to recognize not only my own short-term historicity here, but also how the buildings and blocks had come to appear, and reappear, historically and periodically in the present. This way the return made me recognize an historical account of the sites, where I focused on information that had a link to my observatory experiences: planning aspects regarding pedestrian implementations e.g. traffic separation.

In *Bostadsmiljöer i Malmö: inventering: D. 2, 1955-1965*, Tykesson and Ingemark Milos (2002a) present a historically orientated inventory of Lorensborg. Lorensborg consists of five sections or blocks: *Hallingsborg*, *Lorensborg*, *Vendelfrid*, *Nytorp* and *Knutstorp*.<sup>103</sup> The overall plan of Lorensborg (stadsplan), from 1956, was called “elastic” in the sense that building heights were regulated, but exact location of buildings could be changed during the working process (Tykesson and Ingemark Milos, 2002a: 110). However, the final result would in the end follow the illustration plan. The plan was designed by city planners Gunnar Lindman and Gabriel Winge, and architects Thorsten Roos, Bror Thornberg, Fritz Jaenecke and Sten Samulesson.<sup>104</sup>



Figure 3.8. Lorensborg late 1950s (retrieved 140925 from <http://www.malmo.se/Medborgare/Kultur--noje/Arkiv--historia/Kulturarv-Malmo/L-O/Lorensborg.html>).

<sup>103</sup> The path investigated in two earlier studies only stretches through a smaller section of Lorensborg; the block called *Lorensborg*, and parts of the adjacent *Nytorp*. Therefore, I will mainly refer information regarding these two blocks.

<sup>104</sup> This entire section is a review of the Lorensborg chapter in *Bostadsmiljöer i Malmö: inventering. D. 2, 1955-1965* (Tykesson and Ingemark Milos, 2002a: 108-119).

The northeast block—*Lorensborg*—is dominated by a high-rise designed by Thorsten Roos and Bror Thornberg and built by MKB. Initially its concrete elements and balconies, covering most of the facade, dominated the building. An extensive renovation was executed in 2000, where the opaque balconies were removed for sheets of glass. In addition, the entire facade was removed and replaced with bigger glass parts. In the north corner of the block some services and shops are located around a square. The square is defined by three buildings: a one-story building in the north a one-story building in the south attached to the high-rise, and a skivhus<sup>105</sup> facing east. The square is one out of five squares/places [Sw: platsbildningar] in the entire neighborhood. Due to the big scale of the neighborhood, these five squares/places were supposed to replace one common central square for the entire neighborhood. Moreover, there is a school located in Lorensborg—Lorensborgsskolan. In *Nytorp*, located south of *Lorensborg*, a small shopping mall is situated in a one-story building. Moreover, *Nytorp* consists of: one 16 story building attached to a 9 story building, and four separate 4 story buildings. The entire neighborhood of Lorensborg has cul de sacs attached to the main street—Lorensborgsgatan—that runs through the area. Along Lorensborgsgatan parking streets are located. The parking streets separate the residential houses from the main street. The authors stress how the increasing importance of the car is manifested in the plan layout of Lorensborg, as well as in the provided services and parking opportunities.<sup>106</sup>

Dammfrigången is located in the southeast part of Rönneholm, and as already mentioned is described by Tykesson (2001) as having a heterogenic composition of buildings styles. Still Rönneholm has a lot of functionalistic buildings placed according to the functionalistic city plan from 1935 designed by Eric Bülow-Hübe. The street grid structure within the neighborhood is characterized as “traditional” (Tykesson, 2001: 142), where heavily congested streets set the boundaries of it. Many buildings have underground garages. Parking is also available along all streets. Some streets in the east part have been turned into cul de sacs in order to prevent through traffic.<sup>107</sup>

In retrospective, it seems as if the design behind Lorensborg has relied

<sup>105</sup> “Skivhus” is a type of residential multistoried building. For a discussion regarding the translation of the Swedish terms for variations of residential high rises/tower blocks see Ibbotson (2002).

<sup>106</sup> The information in this entire section is drawn from *Bostadsmiljöer i Malmö: inventering. D. 2, 1955-1965* (Tykesson and Ingemark Milos, 2002a).

<sup>107</sup> The information in this entire section is drawn from *Bostadsmiljöer i Malmö: inventering. D. 2, 1945-1955* (Tykesson, 2001).



to a great extent on the idea of e.g. traffic separation as enough to meet needs of the pedestrian. The concept—as applied in Lorensborg—has been questioned and abandoned, however, traffic separation is still applied in other forms, e.g. pedestrian (often shopping) streets. The place at Dammfrigången is also part of a semi-traffic separated stretch—bikes and pedestrians have to share a space. Ahmed (2006: 39) suggests that in order to understand the phenomenology of things we have to ask:

How did I or we arrive at the point where it is possible to witness the arrival of the object?

There is certainly a history of how things have arrived in Lorensborg and at Dammfrigången. Things as ideas transferred into objects and material: e.g. walls, path, asphalt, gates, entrances, plants. Together they form the spatial situations. Defining directions, possibilities, and functions. In both of these cases there seems to be some sort of trouble caused by different degrees of separation as a way to address pedestrians. In the inventory of Lorensborg and Rönneholm—especially in the former—city planning ideals emerge that aimed to solve everything with one strategy. The problems in the two neighborhoods are similar, despite the different types of plan solutions for them that is a result of them being planned on separate occasions. Even though there is space dedicated exclusively to walking, the plan of Lorensborg in itself becomes an argument for a car-orientated life. The intention was good, but the initiators behind the plan seem to have been able to imagine only one or few possible lifestyles. At the two spots of deviation that I returned to, the unilateral ambition to lead forward became materially dictated by the design that was meant to accommodate the walk procedure, but, in fact, due to the turn of the path, at least for a moment did the opposite, namely became a point with no possible or certain way out. This in contrast to neighborhoods and city plan solutions where the walker can rely on the constant existence of alternative routes.

However, it is important to keep in mind that to write the history of a site is also to produce its history through the lens of the present. Compare with how definitions of sexual difference change over time—they “are historical, subject to change and to alteration.” (Butler, 2011b: 14) The history is both performatively produced—formed by our time and its



constraints—and represents partial perspectives on a matter.<sup>108</sup>

### ***Disorientation and matters of Inaccessibility***

In general, the spaces and buildings of Lorensborg are of a greater scale than the ones around Dammfrigången. In connection to Dammfrigången there are more folds and corners, which—if made accessible—could provide directions to a pedestrian according to my findings from the autoethnographic observation at Fågelbacksgatan (see p. 58), where I pointed out that form elements such as corners and edges can provide the body with subtle navigation assistance, and how the absence of them can disorientate the walking body. Architectural elements were there seen as providing directions and navigation for orientating visually and bodily while also acknowledging the haptic and tactile senses. The autoethnographic observations at the two deviation spots indicate that experiencing orientation is more than just knowing where to go. It is about how we are able or tend to interpret the material setting: what meaning we give to the design of e.g. greenery, buildings, fences, paths; how the materials in themselves are understood and which connotations they have; what it is to arrive at a site; and how we adjust, or not, to all these aspects.

There is an existing structure for walking in Lorensborg, but it does not cover all parts of the neighborhood. Therefore, it can be hard to find out where to walk when arriving in the neighborhood. The annoyance of not knowing this raises questions of access to space—the sense of private and public space in relation to sense of ownership and belonging—and possibilities of passing even if one isn't a resident of a specific building or neighborhood.

For what happens when we are physically or/and socially shut out? Bodies that are “in line” with a space are able to extend into that space, and “the body ‘straightens’ its views in order to extend into space,” while queer moments appear when bodies are not able to extend into space: when they are “out of line.” (Ahmed, 2006: 66) Ahmed's perspective points to how these queer moments could indicate inaccessibility in the analysis of walking and experiences of architecture. That a space only allows certain bodies to enter, even though it is not explicitly expressed which needs and desires the space is aimed towards.

Bodies could also be understood as adjusting to space when extending into it.

<sup>108</sup> This is part of a greater discussion regarding Joan W. Scott's perspective on how to handle and understand sexual difference.

This of course presupposes that the bodies are in the right condition to fit the space or situation. Bodies that are aligned with, or have an understanding of, how to continue to walk, could in philosopher Michel Foucault's perspective be understood as docile bodies adapting themselves to the space. Docile bodies as in being disciplined by the material (Foucault, 1995). While Foucault (1995) means that power and control of people is transferred through materiality, Ahmed (2006) describes what happens when we go against norms partly given by materiality, when we cannot follow the material normativity or are made invisible by it, and where the latter in itself can be a way for exposing unequal consequences of existing norms. The next step would then be to look at which partial perspectives—positions and views of matters—these moments of dis/orientation could represent. Finally, this invites—in line with Butler's (1988, 2011a) gender performativity reasoning (as explained in chapter 2. *Walk Reflections*)—a deeper digging into how identities of pedestrians are being reproduced. In this dissertation, I have widened the application of performativity in order to cover identities related to pedestrian matters, this because of how the performativity perspectives manage to address contradictions on an individual level, by stressing both the involuntarily and emancipatory aspects when acting out identities.

To say that gender is performative is to say that it is a certain kind of enactment; the “appearance” of gender is often mistaken as a sign of its internal or inherent truth; gender is prompted by obligatory norms to be one gender or the other (usually within a strictly binary frame), and the reproduction of gender is thus always a negotiation with power; and finally, there is no gender without this reproduction of norms that risks undoing or redoing the norm in unexpected ways, thus opening up the possibility of a remaking of gendered reality along new lines. (Butler, 2009: i)

### ***Acknowledging Deviations and Heterogeneity among Pedestrians***

The results of the autoethnographic observations in this chapter, along with the variation in the questionnaire result at the deviation spots indicate that research about pedestrian needs, desires, and preferences may benefit from a perspective of acknowledging heterogeneity, as an alternative to searching for demographic consensus with regard to participants' experiences. It may also benefit from problematizing how heterogeneity in itself is comprehended, something that will mainly be discussed in the section *Difference: what is it good for?*

Space and material should be designed in ways that encourage people to

inhabit places on their own terms, e.g. being able to sit down, rest or walk in their own pace, without being hindered by physical limitations or identity aspects of e.g. mobility conditions, gender, sex, sexuality, skin color, ethnicity or socio-economy. This is not to say that everyone should act out their desires without respect for other individuals, but rather that the appearance of differences in desires and needs have to be given great focus in the planning of urban situations. Spatiality and materiality should be intended to provide the variety for such actions to take place. This also gives rise to questions regarding how individual behaviors can initiate new habits in the long run. Could e.g. my own and other peoples' desire to walk in darkness, and the acting out of this desire, change the norms of behavior, for instance, attitudes for how to deal with darkness in an architectural and urban planning context? As mentioned above, it seems like the materiality at the deviation spot in Dammfri already had the details that can afford orientation, but they are out of reach of the pedestrians and maybe of the bicyclists too. Accessibility questions were also evoked through temporality; changes over time became visible through my impression of the flowerbeds in Lorensborg. That the degree of anonymity of the Lorensborg space differed a lot between seasons and that it affected the sense of its accessibility for me as a non-residential:

the lack of greenery i.e. the empty flower beds along the house makes the space more anonymous during winter time. Maybe more public. (Autoethnographic observation, p. 160)

The deviation spot in Lorensborg and its adjacent surrounding might need more details for the human body to turn to, temporal (e.g. greenery) as well as permanent (e.g. edges, corners, niches), while the space of the deviation spot in Dammfri seems to have them but they are not accessible (e.g. behind fences and bars) to pedestrians.

This points to how temporal aspects become important when recognizing difference in experience of a site. Besides revisiting and applying a third method—autoethnography—at the two deviation spots, the autoethnographic observation also made it possible to include variations in e.g. my mood, attitudes, opinions, associations, which stress my different identities. In addition, by making me a participant of the observation it became possible to expose the situated knowledges I bring into a specific material situation. This type of situated, rather than pre-conceived, knowledge leads to a type of resilience in the conception of walking behavior that coincides with what (Kärholm et al., 2014: 1) has called “interseriality:”

as a concept capable of handling a “relation of relations”; i.e. how different sorts of walking relate to one another and how the ongoing transformation of a walking assemblage ultimately also produces a mutable but sustaining walking person.

Such an approach implies different types of walking, however, still intertwined, while my approach focuses on generated differences of occurring needs and preferences expressed or suppressed during walking. Deviations are the methodological starting-point, while differences is what should be highlighted in order to provide heterogeneous material and spatial situations. Kärholm et al. (2014: 10) discuss interseriality and walking in relationship to “relational perspective on intersectionality” as presented by Valentine (2007). Valentine (2007: 18) states—regarding the reflection upon “multiple identities”—that

it is possible to move beyond theorizing about the intersection of categories to an understanding of how identifications and disidentifications are simultaneously experienced by subjects in specific spatial and temporal moments through the course of everyday lives.

Ahmed’s (2006) norm-critical perspective on how our position and location will define our orientation towards, and impression and experience of, things, to some extent operationalizes a concept of identities applicable in spatial situations. Haraway (1991) says that it is our differing partial perspectives that situate our knowledges; Ahmed (2006) says that our location and position direct our orientation. Both of these theoretical views enable a positioning of understandings of worlds. Although, not explicitly expressed, there is a tendency towards a fixed underdog perspective being more valid than other, more privileged ones, in Ahmed’s queer phenomenology—that some experiences and identities are taken for granted, and thereby establish a predefined criticality of the world. E.g. when Ahmed uses quotation marks—when not explicitly quoting other sources—I read them as indicating a common understanding of a phenomenon. This instead of explicitly explaining what she means and thereby avoiding creating a new unreflected normativity.

Haraway’s (1991) situated knowledges, on the other hand, refuse claims that one perspective is more valid than another. Haraway (1991) ultimately considers partial perspectives from specific positions as providing us the possibility to discuss new ways of understanding the world and how it might work. We have

to seek perspective from those points of view, which can never be known in advance, which promise something quite extraordinary, that is, knowledge potent for constructing worlds less organized by axes of domination. (Haraway, 1991: 192)

Both Haraway (1991) and Ahmed (2006) provide an epistemological critique of a science claiming objective and universal knowledge. Haraway's (1991) partial perspective is a means in order to include several world views to provide diversified knowledges. Furthermore, partial perspective assigns power to subjective knowledges through transparent descriptions of from where they are obtained. Ahmed (2006) addresses both spatial and temporal aspects when applying her background concept. Haraway's (1991) partial perspective indirectly discusses time in the sense that the experiences of matters are not fixed—it depends on from where and by whom they are experienced. However, neither of them address time as explicitly as e.g. Butler (1988, 2011a) does in her performativity concept, or when Valentine (2007: 18) addresses it in terms of “temporal moments.” Kärrholm et al. (2014: 10) suggest an exchange of “intersectionality” for “*interseriality*,” where “categories by Valentine can be described as series, albeit with some kind of shared identity, rather than as groups,” and therefore embrace “even more heterogeneous and differentiated perspective.” This would contrast an intersectional perspective where shared identities have been/are to a greater extent linked to established groups.

An approach that acknowledges difference as a source of information, will contrast generalized solutions based on similarities that might exclude or hinder certain walk behavior due to a focus on pedestrians as members of a homogenous group. Observations devoted to difference rather than generalities will acknowledge the variations of needs and desires before defining any common grouping of pedestrians' preferences. A heterogeneity approach would focus on the variation among pedestrians in order to identify how walking could be encouraged as a multifaceted activity and thus made accessible to a greater amount of people. Such an approach evokes issues regarding how difference can be problematized.

***Difference: what is it good for?***

All through this dissertation, I argue for a critical discourse questioning normative categorizations of difference in regard to e.g. qualities or capacities, such as grouping of individuals' e.g. needs in regard to e.g. age, gender or cultural aspects. Gender difference is often in everyday life situations mentioned in terms of desires—that

our gender forms certain wishes and needs. This is often done by default and, at the same time, feminist and queer research continuously increases its ontological and epistemological impact on how we chose to problematize genders and their appearances. This presumed gap between research discourse and parts of the practical world indicates that further work needs to be done in order to implement alternative approaches—at all levels in society—for how to comprehend and recognize difference.

The grouping of individuals is problematic because it tends to point out certain actions or needs as tied to e.g. a specific gender, age or ethnic group, and thereby produce essentialist notions of for instance what a person of a certain sex should desire. As we have already seen, in regard to Butler's performativity perspective on gender and sex, such categorical thinking is often expressed as dichotomies of e.g. gender, sex and sexuality, which in turn set up rules and norms for how people should behave, and can function as separating devices. In *Analysing policy: what's the problem represented to be?*, Carol Lee Bacchi (2009: 17), researcher within politics and international studies, points to how "dividing practices create members of targeted groups as themselves (responsible for) the 'problem'." Instead of developing definitions for a specific pedestrian design or categorizing walking into types defined by differences, I see my approach as a critical perspective that acknowledges how walk needs and desires are, and can be, expressed within urban settings. Such an approach contests predefined groupings of pedestrians, and instead aims to have an open approach to how walking can appear. However, categorizations might be helpful in an initial step, when identifying individuals that have less access to specific sites or areas of society, or when identifying privileged individuals. But, they should, to avoid static societal modeling, not be applied for the sake of defining common group identities for pedestrian design applications.

In order to understand how differences of gender are constructed and maintained we have to understand the relationship between desire and recognition of desires. However, pointing out a general relationship between recognition and desires is not enough in order to acknowledge how recognition of some individuals' desires will rule out the recognition of other individuals' desires (Butler, 2004). We have to include a reasoning of how inequality is produced, and how restraints cause inequality. Butler's perspective (2004) points to how an existing understanding of e.g. race, ethnicity and sex will restrain humans' possibilities to act. Butler's (2004) reasoning regarding identity and how it is forced upon individuals indicates that humans will

be treated as what they are expected to be instead for what they desire to be. And, the recognition of some people “as less than humans” will deprive them of the possibility to live “a viable life,” where the actual recognition or not of someone’s desires thus becomes a force distributing power for action possibilities among individuals (Butler, 2004: 2). Not only will acting in line with existing social constraints maintain status quo, but individuals will also become the carriers and maintainer of norms that might not be constituted by, or beneficial to, themselves.

If, instead, humans are seen as sharing some identities but not others, and it is recognized that the impact of these identities might shift in regard to situations and circumstances, an understanding for how to handle difference in desires and preferences becomes possible. And in addition, if categories were seen as non-fixed and dynamic they would work more effectively than when being linked to specific abilities or identity aspects. However, maybe such thinking of identities would even make the concept of categories and typologies redundant. So what can replace or even dissolve a categorization-thinking or at least be a first step for redirecting the focus to formation of identity rather than to categorization of it?

Historian Joan Wallach Scott (1988: 176) in *Gender and the Politics of History* discusses how to handle gender difference and outlines a reasoning of plurals, where differences becomes more a workable category than the category of difference (in singular founded on mutual exclusion), stating that difference should neither be ignored nor accepted “as it is normatively constituted.” Moreover, that there must be “systematic criticisms of the operation of categorical difference.” (Scott, 1988: 176) In *The question of gender: Joan W. Scott’s critical feminism* (2011b) Butler stresses the importance of Scott’s work for the development of her own gender theories. Elaborating on Scott’s theory of differences Butler (2011b: 21) points out that instead of trying to give meaning to varying sexual identities, we should accept their incomprehensibility, and that more work needs to be done about “how difference works in the production of other kinds of categories,” and that there is a lack of research regarding differences. Sexual difference should be accepted for what it is and not be applied as normative in the sense of giving different categories inherit meanings:

Sexual difference was not the cause, but rather, the means for articulation, and the mechanism for historical reproduction and change. As a result, it has no necessary content, but it always carries some historical content or another. It is in the business of producing one historical reality or another. (Butler, 2011b: 21)

This brings in an additional perspective of time with regard to identity formation—a historical one. Transferred to the discussion about differences in embodied experiences of walking and architecture, it indicates that these experiences do not only vary from time to time, but that they make it impossible to link a certain experience to a certain identity aspect, e.g. gender or ethnicity. These differing experiences will also be historical in regard to the comprehension of difference itself—the meanings difference has been given have changed through history.

In line with the applied feminist and queer theory in this dissertation I suggest an analytical perspective—a *critical normativity*—for how to step out of a frame of limiting norms by exposing the normativity I speak from. The applied theories form a conceptual base for such an analysis, and acknowledge the potential of deviations, contradictions and conflicts—e.g. Haraway (1991), along with identity formation theory of Ahmed (2006) and Butler (2011a)—and together with an autoethnographic method they make it possible to take care of clashing and differing opinions. *Critical normativity* is not a general norm-critical perspective that distances itself from ruling norms, e.g. a subversive approach, or only addresses norms outside the own discourse, e.g. a subjugated positioning directed toward superiority. Instead, *critical normativity* aims to expose norms of the experiencing subject and the environment—materiality and spatiality—that the subject interacts with. A *critical normativity* is a type of norm critique, but has to expose norms of superiority as well as those within the frame of subjugated positions; that norms are part of the situated knowledges that will position partial perspectives of an experiencing subject. This in order to contest assumed notions of deviations, as well as the ruling normativity itself. Moreover, a *critical normativity* stresses identity formation, by its awareness of the norms produced through identity and the fact that this is a continuous process.

In parallel to the above identity formation theories, I will comment on a few of the overall statements of a civic walk document, in regard to how differences among pedestrians are suggested to be handled according to the document. Representations of problems within in public policy documents need to be investigated in order to point out “the premises and effects of the problem representations they contain.” (Bacchi, 2009: 263) Anita Larsson (2002: 20), researcher within architecture, points to the need of implementing a new perspective within the planning practice, that challenges assumptive knowledge claims about whose knowledge is being represented in the



planning work, by asking “who is subject and who is object in the planning.”<sup>109</sup> A reluctance towards changes within the practical planning discourse, along with lack of knowledge regarding equality work<sup>110</sup> and methodology, are pointed out as causing trouble in the implementation of “the general equality goals.”<sup>111</sup> (Larsson, 2006: 29)

Malmö stad has presented a Walk route plan [Sw: Gångstråksplan]<sup>112</sup> with the purpose of identifying important walk routes [Sw: “stråk”]<sup>113</sup> in Malmö (Sallhed-Canneroth et al., 2014). This in order to improve the conditions for walking within the city, and eventually improve the amount of pedestrians (Sallhed-Canneroth et al., 2014). Most importantly, pedestrians are described as a heterogeneous group in the document, and a range of actions and implementation are suggested in order to improve the situation for walking in Malmö (Sallhed-Canneroth et al., 2014: 7). The Gångstråksplan document (Sallhed-Canneroth et al., 2014) is limited to transport walking and uses Mariela A. Alfonzo’s (2005: 825), researcher in urban planning, “Hierarchy of walking needs” in order to establish the presets for when walking will take place.

Within this model of walking behaviors, “feasibility” is identified as a fundamental factor indicating when walking will take place or not (Alfonzo, 2005: 825). Feasibility is an evaluation of whether “a walking trip” is practical and fits a purpose related to “mobility, time or other responsibilities,” which is operationalized in terms of individual physical and health presets, e.g. ability to move, age, weight, and number of children and adults in a household (Alfonzo, 2005: 824). If feasibility is not fulfilled other modes of transportation will probably be chosen although other needs are met within the “Hierarchy of walking needs,” i.e. “accessibility,” “safety,” “comfort” and “pleasurability.” (Alfonzo, 2005: 825) From a heterogeneity perspective departing in differences—as discussed above—this conceptualization of walking needs becomes problematic because it tends to erase, rather than acknowledge, the variations among pedestrians. It does not take into account combinations of preferences and desires related to walking; instead it is founded in a predefined hierarchy of needs

<sup>109</sup> My translation of “vem är subjekt och vem är objekt i planeringen.”

<sup>110</sup> Jämställhetsarbete.

<sup>111</sup> My translation of “de generella jämställhetsmålen.”

<sup>112</sup> Malmö stad has in addition developed a Pedestrian program (Fotgängarprogram). However, I will focus on the Gångstråksplan and its strategies for walking.

<sup>113</sup> There is no good translation for the term “stråk”, see article “Some Thoughts on Stråk” (Persson, 2004). However, I will here use the English term walk route

following on each other. In using Alfonzo's (2005: 825) "Hierarchy of walking needs" as a basis, the possibility of including a heterogeneity among pedestrians is already reduced, because of how the suggested walk model states an order in which needs and desires will occur.

In the document "target points" [Sw: "målpunkter"] are stated as important for connecting and defining stabilized walk routes within "pedestrian zones" in the city of Malmö, where shopping and restaurants are pointed out as target points facilitating walking (Sallhed-Canneroth et al., 2014: 10). In what ways these target points—within the pedestrian zones—increase walking between e.g. home and school or home and job is not clarified. A focus on commercial functions will only address people of a certain income. Other listed target points in connection to these walk routes are: squares, big sports facilities, culture, library, big work places, high-schools and colleges, center of a borough (Sallhed-Canneroth et al., 2014). This widens the amount of possible preferences among pedestrians, however, it is still very much focused on specific types of activities that a walking person is supposed to have an interest in.

Monotone parts of walk routes should be enhanced by adding activities aimed at "adults, children and dogs." (Sallhed-Canneroth et al., 2014: 23) Suggested implementations are e.g. event lanes [Sw: "händelsebanor"] (that are play-oriented, e.g. twisting paths, and decorations, where e.g. prints of paws on the ground or three dimensional dots [Sw: "ploppar"] are intended to encourage walking (Sallhed-Canneroth et al., 2014: 23). These design implementations address a bodily encounter with the environment mainly based in play. Architecture is addressed in terms of scale, aesthetics, high degree of details, choice of ground material, where "active" facades, variation, and "fine architecture" are stated as good for walking (Sallhed-Canneroth et al., 2014: 21-3). This is illustrated with an image of a specific architectural style from a limited time period. The variations in experiences among pedestrians, of architecture, style and aesthetics as well as play-oriented implementations, are not addressed.

In my review of the Gångstråksplan I cannot find a methodological approach or theoretical model that addresses understanding of difference itself, and how that will form the understanding of expressed differences among pedestrians. Variations among pedestrians are in the document resting on assumed categorizations of human behavior. This does not mean that the document completely ignores differences between pedestrians, it is, however, to a great extent expressed in terms of disabilities e.g. being visually impaired or having difficulties to move. But, the document also

addresses e.g. age differences, women's fear. To some extent the document could be said to apply a norm-criticality because it acknowledges differences among people who might in some way be hindered or limited in walking, due to e.g. their physical abilities. However, it does not address the constitutive features of the norms that these differences are supposed to deviate from. The document does therefore not express a critical normativity perspective, in the sense of explaining itself and the phenomena it describes as part of the norm from where it works. Instead of suggesting already fixed functions for improving walking condition, a planning document could point out how a variety of experiences and pedestrian relations to architecture could be addressed and accommodated. This by introducing methods for investigations of pedestrians' preferences that eventually could provide involved professionals with knowledge of what criteria their design should meet, rather than presenting predetermined ideas about how it should look, or what is considered good or boring architecture, in regard to walking possibilities.

Juxtaposing the Malmö Municipality walk route document with a regional planning document exposes differences in methodological approaches. The regional planning documents covers the geographical scope of Skåne, where Malmö is located. In the regional plan: *Jämställdhetsstrategi i Skåne 2014-2016* the aim is to appoint overall guidelines for how equality of opportunity between the sexes can be integrated [Sw: "jämställdhetsintegrering"] within different sectors in Skåne (Brewer, 2014).<sup>114</sup> This document is not specifically aimed at walking in urban settings, however, it addresses equality in several areas of society, includes most of the geographical scope of my cases, and is therefore interesting in regard to how documents for cities can be developed in order to respond to heterogeneous needs among pedestrians. The Swedish government has given each County administrative board [Sw: *länsstyrelse*] in Sweden the assignment to develop a strategy for how to integrate equality between the sexes [Sw: *jämställdhet*]. And, in the strategic plan for Skåne, the impact of identity aspects on individuals' lives are articulated as being those of sex, gender, class, ethnicity, age and sexuality (Brewer, 2014). When describing how to work with "jämställdhetsintegrering" the focus is on power, gender and heteronormativity:

- The power equality difference between men and women [Sw: "könsmaktsordning"] is constructed through the

<sup>114</sup> "[J]ämställdhetsintegrering inom olika områden i Skåne" (Brewer, 2014: 5). Skåne is a County region located in the very south of Sweden. Malmö is located in the southeast part of this region.

separation of women and men, where men are the norm and regarded as superior to women<sup>115</sup> (Brewer, 2014: 20).

- Gender is understood in terms of social and cultural constructions changing over time and space (Brewer, 2014).
- Heteronormativity is understood as limiting the individual's space for living [Sw: "livsutrymme"] (Brewer, 2014: 23).

Butler (2004) states that the question of what constitutes a livable life (compare with the formulation "livsutrymme" in the planning policy above) is an ethical matter concerned with the distribution of power and justice. The framework presented in *Jämställhetsstrategi i Skåne 2014-2016* (Brewer, 2014) provides a starting-point for working with equality issues, but needs further elaboration on methodological approaches of identity matters with regard to spatial and material conditions.

In the implementation and operationalization of strategies aiming to handle equality questions, further development has to be made. This has to be supported by theory and methods capable of handling the varying experiences that can be made visible, if we step out of limiting notions and generalized argumentations about how differences can be understood, as well as expressed among individuals.

### ***Autoethnography and Situated Knowledges in regard to Architectural matters***

Autoethnography is intended to challenge a dichotomic thinking just as much as Haraway's (1991) theory on situated knowledges. Ellingson and Ellis (2008: 451) point to the importance of feminist theory for the possibility of "legitimizing the autobiographical voice associated with reflexive ethnography." Autoethnography questions dichotomies because of how it stretches "beyond polarities such as researcher-researched, objectivity-subjectivity, process-product, self-others, art-science and personal-political." (Ellingson and Ellis, 2008: 450) However, the dualism of "researcher-researched" is questioned when the researcher becomes a participant and incorporates personal reflections in the study (Ellingson and Ellis, 2008: 450). The overbridging of binary thinking also takes place when researchers challenge their own position in relation to the knowledge production, and acknowledge that several experiences can take place at the same time, e.g. when I explored my mixed emotions

<sup>115</sup> "[K]önsmagnsordning kännetecknas av att den särskiljer kvinnor och män och där män är norm och kvinnor är undantaget, män är överordnade och kvinnor underordnade" (Brewer, 2014: 20).

in regard to darkness, or my varying experiences at the Fågelbacksgatan site.

Ellingson and Ellis (2008) assume the view that the world is socially constructed and we produce the knowledge about it, this in contrast to a world-view where the researcher goes out and finds or collects data about the world. This perspective on autoethnography shows how, instead of collecting data of others from an assumed position of objectivity, autoethnographers use their own personal narratives and observations as empirical material. This way, the knowledge of space and material matters is understood as being produced in response to the person interacting with it. Ellingson et al.'s (2008) perspective points to how recognizing knowledge as a social construct and abandoning a dichotomic thinking enables and forces researchers to participate in the knowledge production, and thereby admit how their involvement affects the result.

The narrative writing is an important tool in the autoethnographic method. A methodological shift among ethnographers in the 1970s “from participant observation toward the observation of participation” opened up for writing “a single narrative ethnography” including both “the Self and Other,” this in contrast with limiting the story to a one-person perspective of either researcher or participants (Tedlock, 1991: 69). In order to make reflections on one's position and how it affects the research, autoethnography, by “generating diaries, journals, freewriting, field notes, and narratives of his or her lived experiences, thoughts, and feelings” becomes a method for collecting data as well as for “[i]ntrospection.” (Ellingson et al., 2008: 451)

In addition, to make use of one's own personal reflections is to make use of a contradictory self—ambivalence, clashing opinions and variations in experiences over time. A perspective of *critical normativity* has the means to handle tendencies of relativism that might appear when using an outspoken subjective method such as autoethnography. The focus on variation and possible contradictions in Haraway's (1991) partial perspective helps accommodate the conflicts in the sense that they are seen as giving nuances to knowledges—partial perspective differentiates instead of evening out. In such an approach, contradiction, consequently, is considered a resource rather than a scientific failure causing inconsistency (Haraway, 1991). This points to objectivity becoming a matter of producing and organizing partial knowledges instead of defining universal rules. The critical and subjective position in situated knowledges, contrary to the usual depreciation of any subjectivity in research, becomes a premise precisely for producing objective knowledge, where according to

Haraway (1991: 193):

The split and contradictory self is the one who can interrogate positionings and be accountable, the one who can construct and join rational conversations and fantastic imaginings that change history.

To some extent it is the inner contradiction that we, as humans, possess, that makes this possible. In the application of autoethnography, the intention has been to stress the importance of acknowledging subjective experiences of walking and architecture—whether they are expressed as personal thoughts or professionally oriented statements—as a counterpoint to claims of objectivity and generalizations producing limiting norms. In addition, the intention has been to show critical aspects that need to be considered in order to guarantee scientific value and accountability. In autoethnography, personal experiences are acknowledged as more subjective “*because* more detached accounts exist.” (Ellingson, 2005: 136) Such a perspective on subjectivity indicates that there are other, less attached, subjective experiences of the I—experiences that are less personal or not part of a private self. In Haraway’s (1991: 193) understanding it is the “critical positioning” of identity matters that produce objectivity. In line with this reasoning, less attached experiences of me are also to be considered as subjective—they are just part of another subjective context e.g. a professionally related one. And in addition, objectivity then partly becomes a matter of how these different subjective experiences are being organized.

As pointed out in the method section in chapter 1, I do not consider an autoethnographic approach something alien or new in an architectural discourse, since subjective experiences are a vital part of design processes and reviewing situations. In relation to Chang’s (2008: 47-8) compilation of different types of autoethnographic writing, (presented in this dissertation in chapter 1 p. 33), I position my approach to autoethnography primarily as “experiential texts” and “personal experience narrative[s].” I have focused on direct experiences, but also emerging associations in connection with the material settings I have walked in.

Although it is important to rely on “insight, intuition and impression” in the interpretation of qualitative data such as narrative observations, the narrative in itself does not provide a systematic structure for the analytical process, which in turn might be a problem when establishing scientific accountability (Dey, 1995: 78). To apply these three I’s is both a strength and weakness of autoethnography, however, I

regard this weakness as partly overturned by the possibility for people other than the researcher to recognize themselves in, or feel empathy for, the story being told. In autoethnography, generalization can be retrieved from the position that other people can recall themselves, or other people's experiences, in the stories being told:

a story's generalizability is always being tested—not in the traditional way through random samples of respondents, but by readers as they determine if a story speaks to them about their experience or about the lives of others they know. (Ellis, 2004: 194-5)

An autoethnographic story provides the possibility of gaining insight into other peoples' ways of thinking and understanding matters. It is the self-narrative part of autoethnography that helps us to understand ourselves, our relationship to other people, and the culture we live in (Chang, 2008).

Coming from an architectural background, autoethnography fits well with the working process and how many architects are trained. In architectural design work, several parallel processes—analysis, interpretation and design proposals—take place simultaneously. The methodological structure of autoethnography allows several ongoing parallel processes, due to its non-linear research process (Chang, 2008). Acknowledging that parallel processes and contradictive experiences are taking place at the same time can make it easier to overcome dichotomies through forcing a constant shift in focus.

The participating role of the researcher in autoethnographic method has much in common with the role of an architect, whose subjective opinions can be a strong driving force in the design process. However, by learning from autoethnography, the investigatory parts of design processes could be further developed in terms of how empirical material is retrieved and how the analysis process is executed. A problem in applying autoethnography could be that it easily produces a lot of data, which can be difficult and time-consuming to organize, in regard to an actual design process. In addition, if several people's autoethnographic stories are to be used, this demands a well-developed structure that can hold all the information. A possible solution for that would be to limit the studies to few places, or only one place or situation at a time, which is often the case in design situations where a specific site is the object of a design proposal. The production of a lot of empirical material will, as for most methods, always come with demands regarding the organization of it and issues of

what is excluded and included in the material. The advantage, however, with an autoethnographical method, in the case of walk studies, is that each particular result (each walk) may reflect unforeseen phenomena, and is thus in principle usable in design situations, if you accept that it is not a comprehensive account of a situation.

When analyzing by way of a *critical normativity* we have to admit that we cannot step out of the reality we are studying, designing, and living in, and by that also clarify what we include in our knowledge production and what is left out; that we cannot escape or isolate ourselves from ourselves and the reality we want to describe. However, this cannot be done without the support of theoretical concepts such as Haraway's (1991) situated knowledges, which, as pointed out, can allow us to embody and position our varying critical and partial perspectives in the very process of studying architecture and walking. Analyzing the outcome by applying Haraway's (1991) partial perspective, i.e. where differing opinions are accommodated in order to produce a heterogenic understanding of a situation, is a less distanced positioning than aiming for a general story of a place. We can make use of our own inner conflicts and other people's contradictive opinions instead of reducing them to a consensual result.

#### ***Reassembling the Perspectives: Time and the production of Norms***

The focus of the autoethnographic observations made at the deviation spots, was initially mainly concerned with visual aspects, just as it had been in the vista observations. Such a focus could only provide me with limited information and quite soon led to a dead end as far as new knowledge was concerned. I tried to reorient my focus toward other aspects of my autoethnographic observations, when revisiting the places, however, I found it difficult to let go of the visibility focus once it had been acquired. The autoethnographic observations very much became vista focused in relation to navigation and wayfinding aspects. In addition, it seems as if I easily got stuck in the lingo of an architect, e.g. in how I connected a notion of public space to a notion of anonymity. Hence, I could not avoid bringing forth a partial perspective of a presumed architect, or an architectural education.

However, the attempts to reorientate myself toward aspects other than visual in the autoethnographic observations rendered some new knowledge. Memories of previous visits triggered new associations. The fact that the places and I change over time, seasons come and go, slowly helped me bring up novel findings and perspectives to apply, and directed my attention toward other things and matters when revisiting



the sites. In line with such reasoning, neither a place nor I can be considered as fixed or static regarding our appearance—both are subjects to the impact of time.

In addition, I tried to stay open to how the places could be experienced differently, also sociologically: that a passage was partly blocked by a gate, other peoples' and animals' doings effected the ambience, e.g. the closet smokers, the dog with the oilskin coat. These observations evoked questions of identity and how it is linked to access to a place, moreover the impact of identity on walk conditions. This type of information was neither possible to capture in the original VOA, due to the restricted procedure for vista observations, nor in the structured walk study, due to the predefined questions.

The autoethnographic result from the return to the two deviation spots differs from the other cases discussed in the thesis, in how the findings of these deviation cases are mainly of a methodological kind: the variation in answers from the questionnaire has generated an investigation method regarding revisits, but no significant answers that can point out favorable pedestrian design solutions.

In the following discussion, the combination of Haraway's situated knowledges and Ahmed's orientation concepts will be discussed in order to see how they complement each other, but also how they need Butler's performativity concept in order to capture the mechanisms of norm reproduction as it relates to aspects of time.

The notion of partial perspective has been applied at three levels in the analysis of the deviation cases:

- i) in a first analysis step in order to utilize different opinions from individuals in the questionnaire
- ii) in order to capture variations in the results due to the application of different methods and the positions of the researcher
- iii) in order to problematize the variations in experiences within one individual.

Firstly, when revisiting the deviation spots, I wanted to look closer at the sites in order to understand what might have caused the differing views regarding the material settings. In a first analysis step, these varying impressions of the same place represented partial perspectives of the deviation spots. These partial perspectives were represented through the statements that people made in response to the questions in the questionnaire, and indicate a disagreement on whether or not it was easy to

orientate at both sites, and at the deviation spot in Lorensborg it also concerned an immediate understanding, or lack thereof of, of how to keep on walking at the site.

Acknowledging the disagreements, as shown in the standard deviation measures, was a way to handle dissensus and difference instead of trying to erase it for the benefit of consensus-oriented generalizations. In these cases, the result of the questionnaire to a great extent reflected views in regard to 1) specific sites and 2) to which questions were asked. There were no open questions in the questionnaire to which I had data access. However, the discussion of the result points to how measures for standard deviation can partly be applied in order to decide places for revisits, in order to gain further knowledge regarding how differently the same materiality can be interpreted by different persons. This way the statistical material also represents some of the partial perspectives that can appear in the interaction with a site.

Secondly, the application of different methods at the same sites had an impact on the produced knowledge, pointing to how important it is to clarify in what ways applied methods form the result. It might sound obvious—that the method will form the result—but it is nevertheless crucial to observe. A projective critical perspective—as a *critical normativity*—becomes important precisely in how it always questions the position of the researcher and applied methods. These positions are questioned in order to understand what will be included and excluded in the research process, and how that—in an architectural research context—might have an impact on future design processes and proposals.

In contrast to my first methodological approaches—in the Vista Observation Analysis (Körner et al., 2012) and the structured walk study—autoethnography as a method, and situated knowledges as a theoretical standpoint, clearly position the subjectivity of the researcher in the presentation of the collected data, gathered as autoethnographic writing and notes made on site. Partial perspective, in this sense, works to position the method and the researcher. I argue that this can be done independently of applied method, as long as the researchers are more present in the research process by being open with how their own subjectivity—situated knowledges—has an impact on the performed studies. Every method and researcher comes with their situated knowledges, and they are transferred into the data collection, analysis and interpretation phase. Nina Lykke (2010: 140), researcher in gender studies, states that

Haraway's discussion of situated knowledges illustrates how feminist debates on epistemology relate not only to the question of how to handle intersectional gender/sex as a scientific problem, but also to how they often spill over into discussions of the conditions for knowledge production in general.

Together with the three applied methods—i.e. autoethnography, VOA, and questionnaire—the historical inventory by Tykesson and Ingemark Milos (2001, 2002a) brings in an additional perspective for describing the spatial conditions of the two deviation cases. Taken together, these four perspectives produce knowledges valid for describing the sites in relation to each method. The interferences between, and juxtaposing of, various types of methods,

point to the lack of a single objective truth. The existence of each form and its criteria for knowledge production implicates the other forms as not objective—as not the only way to represent findings. (Ellingson, 2005: 135)

The crystallization of methods broadens the view of the research matter (Ellingson, 2005). It is important to stress that my methods and their results have not been applied with the intention or expectation of presenting an objective truth or complete picture of the situations. However, autoethnography is the only one of these methods that I find explicitly calling for a critical positioning of subjectivity. Critical, in the sense that you have to be aware of, and emplace, e.g. your anticipations of places and situations. A crystallization of methods not only questions a dichotomic thinking in methods and research in general, but also recognizes “that all methods and genres are constructed and inescapably privilege modes of power.” (Ellingson, 2005: 136)

In retrospect, it could be said that the VOA (Körner et al., 2012) had an ingredient of autoethnography in the sense of me being the one making the observations, which meant that aspects, such as my height and my previous knowledge of the sites, were influencing my observations. However, this was not explicitly elaborated in the interpretation of the VOA result.

And thirdly, partial perspective has, to some extent, captured my inner conflicts. The situated knowledges represented in differing partial perspectives have appeared in the cases of both chapter 2. *Walk Reflections* and this chapter, although not explicitly addressed as partial perspectives in chapter 2. Changes in experiences over time were present, for instance, as seasonal, and changes of attitudes regarding my experiences of a site that was familiar to me, happened when walking at

Fågelbacksgatan. Temporality also played a role in the conflicting opinions of my own observations of how a situation could be comprehended as confusing or easy to read, e.g. at the deviation spots of Lorensborg and Dammfri.

Acknowledging inner conflicts has made it possible to expose different identities in the various *walk diary* notes. The storytelling voices do not only shift between “I,” “you” and “we” in how they address the reader, this shift also embraces different parts of me: personal and professional. I can be an architect, or researcher who shares a common lingo with my colleagues—as I tended to do in the deviation cases—but I can also be a more personal me who is sometimes more alone—as in some of the notes about darkness—or, a common us, that encompasses an understanding of a collective with shared experiences—as in the *walk diary* note about the shouting man in Folkets park.

In combination, the concepts of dis/orientation and situated knowledges work well in order to capture parts of the complexity that embodied experiences of walking and architecture comprise and express. The findings of chapter 2. *Walk Reflections* and the methodological reflections in this chapter, suggest that there is no such thing as a general subject that can work as a model for urban planning for pedestrians.

Ahmed’s queer phenomenological approach suggests an understanding of the world where subjective experiences of it differentiate and contribute to a wider understanding of life matters. Haraway’s theory argues for the acknowledgement of the partiality of subjectivity when handling theories of research and science. In line with Ahmed (2006) and Haraway (1991), multi-subjective viewpoints were shown to support theorization on walking based in heterogeneity rather than confirmative universalism: Haraway in a meta discussion of scientific and theoretical approaches—situated knowledges and partial perspective—and Ahmed based in a phenomenological understanding of everyday life situations and identity matters. Ahmed’s concepts of dis/orientation and background have a clear spatial and material connection, and can therefore be operationalized in regard to embodied experiences of walking and architecture. As already pointed out: our interpretations of space and material will affect our possibilities for orientation, and social and intersubjective aspects will, too. Ahmed (2006: 67) refers to sexual orientation when she says that when one object appears

“out of line,” then it is not just that thing that appears oblique but the world itself

might appear on a slant, which disorientates the picture and even unseats the body.

This can be true for walking too—that my walk possibilities are obstructed by other reasons than purely physical aspects. However, from a walk perspective it becomes important to understand this as part of an ongoing dynamic process, where the actual movement opens up for modifications to take place. My options might change both as I am walking through different settings and within the same situation, because different aspects of my identity will be exposed or come into use. As pointed out in chapter 2, my application of Ahmed's orientation and background concept is not sufficient for capturing time aspects concerned with the temporality of identities, i.e. that the impact of identities can change from moment to moment. Haraway (1991: 155) suggests "affinity" for identity and stresses their tendency to be "contradictory, partial, and strategic." Haraway's perspective on affinity in regard to identity problematizes parts of identity, as well as of relationship, but does not go as deep into the mechanisms of identity formation and norm reproduction as Butler (1988, 2009, 2011a) does. Haraway's perspective on affinity stresses relationship. If this is limited to the sharing or not of affinities with other individuals or if it also comprises the affinities between identity aspects themselves is not further reflected upon in this dissertation. Instead, I have chosen to apply Butler's existential and political identity discourse because of how it—in its reflection on the performativity of sex and gender identity—addresses time aspects in the present as well as historically. Identities are in such a temporal perspective understood as being a continuous process that is constantly produced through all our actions. Performativity describes the involuntary aspects of identity formation; that identity is often forced upon us rather than being a free choice, but a performativity perspective also opens up for emancipatory moments to appear, where other identities can be performed (Butler, 2009). In such a performativity perspective time is both important in terms of repetition; that something is repeated in the moment and therefore can work as a mechanism for maintaining norms (Butler, 2011a), and in terms of a historical time; that our representations and definitions of gender norms today constitute how we understand them historically and vice versa (Butler, 2011b).

The historical aspect of time is especially important in problematizing difference—historical perspectives of what we think difference is or should do will form the comprehension of difference itself. In Butler's (2011b) perspective, identity formation of gender and the understanding of difference are tightly connected, because

when identity differences of gender is constituted as a dualism it works as a separating device. In such a reasoning, it is not only the construction of opposites that maintains gender identities, but also the fact that we have to alienate ourselves from desires and qualities assigned to a different sex or sexuality than our own (Butler, 2011a), and thereby as a consequence act as social beings mediating and forming future identities. In my investigations, this means, for instance, that it becomes problematic for me to express a desire to walk in darkness, or sometimes simply walk in peace on my own terms, as in the case of the shouting man in Folkets park, or even more difficult to explicitly confront the shouting man without being further verbally attacked.

The application of situated knowledges as comprising a variation of partial perspectives goes in line with a use of differences in plurals (as suggested by Scott (1988)), where both standpoints consider the variations important to acknowledge, without rendering one perspective power over another.

A thinking that accommodates differences becomes crucial in order to comprehend the presets for pedestrians, and should be incorporate in planning strategies and design processes. An important theoretical issue in planning and architectural research, but also a policy issue for future urban development, could be to acknowledge the extent to which temporally and historically conditioned identities and desired differences could be incorporated in planning strategies and design processes. This would support strategies aiming to accommodate ethical matters in the planning and design of cities—that design should meet the needs and desires of citizens in order to provide opportunities for living a satisfactory life. It would be important to suggest actual strategies for this, such as those I have tried here, like implementing phases that allow projective critical analysis. This would form the base for a *critical normativity* that could work as a design and planning device.

In order to see which stories and needs are being accommodated, a guiding question in the analysis of collected pedestrian experiences could be:

What differences in identities are expressed and allowed in this walking situation?

Within a framework of *critical normativity* in practical investigation, it becomes important to stay open to the ways in which different subjectivities of the own self can appear. This in order to find the variations in embodied experiences that are being expressed while walking. In the next section *going astray* as a strategy for doing this, will be discussed.

### **b. Walking, Wandering, Strolling: Contextualizing Going astray**

A great amount of reflections, narrations, histories and descriptions have been written about walking, e.g. science-orientated, fictional, and autobiographical. In this section I will elaborate on some of the significant features of my investigatory approach—*going astray*—which is part of the *critical normativity* framework. Furthermore, I will elaborate on how *going astray* as a method for investigating experiences of architecture relates to other similar approaches concerned with walking and spatial matters.

### ***Going astray and Associations***

What is astray does not lead us back to the straight line, but shows us what is lost by following that line. (Ahmed, 2006:79)

This citation is part of a greater discussion where Ahmed (2006) talks about the term astray in relation to sexual orientations—how same sex desire is not following the straight line of heterosexuality.<sup>116</sup> I will not focus on sexual identity, but rather take the citation as a starting-point for exploring what *going astray* can bring in relation to walk experiences. The method has evolved during my work process and it is only in retrospect that I am able to summarize it.

In chapter 2 and 3, autoethnography has been applied in various ways in order to produce knowledge of embodied experiences of walking and architectural matters. It has been done with an open-ended, but neither oblivious nor unaware, attitude, and not in search of specific results. When collecting data for the *walk diary*, and in the analysis and interpretation of the empirical material, I have tried to let myself go astray in the sense of trying to stay open to any kind of knowledge that is relevant for walking. In the analysis process, I did not disregard topics or findings due to the lack of apparent architectural meaning or connection, instead, I tried to see their possible form-, space-, and material-related aspects. And, in the beginning of the data-collecting phase, I did not decide on categories or themes that I should focus on in advance. Instead, I gathered a variety of impressions that occurred during my walks. This way, several topics occurred that I could look closer at with a more directed awareness. In addition, due to the open attitude, different identities could be exposed: professional roles—the researcher, the architect—as well as a personal self.

*Going astray* has not been done without effort. I had to force myself out of my comfort zone. I stepped into situations of hesitation and doubt. I confronted boredom. I was disappointed, and surprised by fear. I gained confidence. This may sound like clichés about life in general. Still they are examples of obstacles I had to overcome in the process of developing the methods and techniques of *critical normativity*.

<sup>116</sup> Ahmed (2006) discusses—in *Chapter 2: Sexual orientation*—astray in relationship to Sigmund Freud's ideas regarding sexual desires, hetero- and homosexuality.



*I like the darkness. It makes me calm. I like the idea of being surrounded by darkness. To walk into darkness is to walk into something that is very unknown and comforting at the same time. (140929)*

Experiencing something “unknown and comforting at the same time” exposes ambiguity. Something is helping and hindering me at the same time, and I have to admit that this takes place at the same time. I had to overcome a feeling of uncertainty in order to be able to step out of my comfort zone and let the *going astray* happen. I had to put myself in a frame of mind where I felt free enough to expand my own boundaries, where I could also experience moments of emancipation: to go out walking when it was e.g. shadowy and dusky—daring to step into something unknown.

The dictionary definition of going astray, or astray, as an act of wandering off is not neutral or purely positive. Instead, going astray and astray are described as something that deviates from the correct, causing confusion,

Go astray: Wander off the right path or subject; also, wander into evil or error.<sup>117</sup>

Astray: 1. out of the right way; off the correct or known road, path, or route: 2. away from that which is right; into error, confusion, or undesirable action or thought.<sup>118</sup>

Ahmed’s (2006) perspective on astray points to how it might work as a tool to expose things we have not seen before.

If orientations point us to the future, to what we are moving toward, then they also keep open the possibility of changing directions and of finding other paths, perhaps those that do not clear a common ground, where we can respond with joy to what goes astray. (Ahmed, 2006: 178)

These new things might not all be pleasant. *Going astray* seems to force you to see the familiar in a new light; to put yourself in a situation you initially might not feel at all comfortable with; to expose yourself to something unfamiliar. It does not have to be a dramatic change, it just requires you to, in some sense, step out of a daily routine. On an individual level *going astray* might have the potential to expand a person’s

<sup>117</sup> Definition from Dictionary.com (Ammer).

<sup>118</sup> Definition from Dictionary.com (Unabridged).

boundaries, or even produce new routines that could trigger the inhabitation of previously avoided spaces—spaces that have not been accessible before. This has been most apparent in my change of attitude toward darkness, but also in regard to how I look upon e.g. the neighborhood Holma.

Not only have I walked in the places of darkness, I have also, in a sense, inhabited darkness. I have exposed myself to it, and considered its different appearances, e.g. shifts and texture. This way my inhabitation of darkness and its spaces has taken me through the tracing of darkness as a phenomenon. Ahmed (2006) discusses how bodies and spaces shape one another, how some spaces have been designated for specific bodies, and how this has excluded other bodies. But, there are moments when we can expand the boundaries and let the unexpected take place.

When bodies take up spaces that they were not intended to inhabit, something other than the reproduction of the facts of matter happens. The hope that reproduction fails is the hope for new impressions, for new lines to emerge, new objects, or even bodies, which gather, in gathering around this table. (Ahmed, 2006: 62)

My explicit and conscious choice of walking in the dark has not only made me inhabit new places in the city, it has also changed my attitude toward darkness. On a gloomy day in December I—like a lot of other people—am quite fed up with darkness dominating most of the day. However, now I do not feel as negatively affected by it as I used to do, in terms of insufficient access to light. Instead, I have accepted darkness for what it is, to a greater extent, and try to experience it in terms of qualities and opportunities. Being exposed to darkness has almost had a therapeutic impact on me, and neutralized negative associations that I had. Darkness has become less one-sidedly controversial.

In *Gå vilse med punktlighet och precision: en guidebok A-Ö*, artist and researcher Monica Sand (2011) presents a list of exercises that can be done in order to explore, and gain new experiences of, places that we know well. Sand's (2011) perspective on getting lost<sup>119</sup> comprises losing orientation without fear; to accept the sense of fear that disorientation might evoke. To accommodate and accept this ambivalence resembles a *going astray* approach as suggested here. However, my approach is not executed through a range of explicit exercises, but rather through collecting associations that appear while walking. I have let my

<sup>119</sup> Gå vilse means getting lost.

associations be part of the *walk diary* notes in order to describe the picture I see myself walking in—a picture sometimes greater than the actual spatial situation.

*Kronprinsen. Grey colossus. At least it goes with the weather. A pity it is so impermeable. You want to touch the thin blue mosaic body. It is elegant and it was the future. You pretend that you are in Berlin. Alexanderplatz and Fernsehturm are around the corner. You live in a metropolis. Where you can just keep on walking. You skip to Hansaviertel. January and grey, but the lawns are green. Concert/Art gallery is concrete nostalgia. Calm and quiet, and a harsh waiter. You talk to a dog that tries to sneak in to the kitchen. Was it here you and your friend got the map pointing out the architects of the different buildings? Then the two of you leave. You are strolling. Looking at starchitecture. Niemeyer's house looks restored. Nice semi-transparent stairwell. You enter the library to ask about Corbuiser's house. The librarian goes through folders. Looks at a road map. Finds the area. "- Well, it's a few metro stops away." Maybe you will go there later on. You remember the window recesses in the library. They had sloping table-tops. You go outside. A small square with a pond. It looks like Alto's house has been clad. The pillars say something else. Suddenly you are in Malmö. You are looking at a facade by Fritz Jaenecke and Sten Samuelson. You try to remember where it is in Malmö. Maybe Katrinelund. You also want a long balcony. A lot of closets. You look at Kronprinsen. You are back in Malmö. Turning toward the horses. What if they fall down? (130218)*

While walking along Fågelbacksgatan behind Kronprinsen on a grey day, the grey concrete evokes the memory of a trip to Berlin and Hansaviertel. Maybe my study of urban walking has made me more open, and sensitive, to what the spatial situations might trigger in my mind, or trained me to be more aware of associations.

These associations are part of a process where you let yourself see a place in a new light, where you e.g. connect one impression of a site to other places and experiences, and this way partly let associations contextualize a situation. The spatial situation reflected upon in the *walk diary* note above might, at first glance, not be anything special. However, there is something about how the material—the

concrete facades—made me associate: let my mind wander. How form and material evoked associations that extended my experience of the space, but also gave me new perspectives on the spatial situation. The *going astray* produced associations that displaced the walking into another setting and time frame, and gave the experienced moment a greater context, and loaded it with memories.

Letting your mind wander in order to make space for associations is an essential part of *going astray*. By relating associations to everyday situations, e.g. when I walked between my home and the bus, walked to relax, or as part of explicit explorations (e.g. Hyllievång-Holma). The associative aspect of my investigatory approach to walking, as presented here, suggests a de-romanticized way of making use of associations, compared to e.g. the situationist *dérive* that will be further discussed below.

Having a *going astray* approach in mind when researching walk presets will not erase all previous notions of the matter. Instead, it will—together with a projective critical analytical phase—work as a conscious strategy to be aware of prenotions—images, historical figures and categorizations—associated with walking.

To challenge fears; to inhabit new places in order to give yourself more space for action; to create new routines; to change your attitudes, have all been crucial steps of *going astray* in order to produce new insights about architectural matters in regard to walk experiences. They are a result of *going astray*, but also reveal moments of emancipation. This way *going astray* can, to some extent, also be a means for challenging social conventions in order to map out new ones.

### **Reflections on Walking Investigations and Notions of Walking**

Different methodological approaches to the study of walking, or techniques for studying spatial and social matters, will eventually generate different notions of the matter itself, and expose various epistemologies. I will discuss some examples, which use walking as a method, but also some influential and often cited theoretical notions of walking itself.

In “I’m Every Lesbian” Hultin (2014) recounts the histories of homosexual women and cities. Hultin (2014) has interviewed lesbians about their memories and reflections in regard to places in the cities where they live. These stories are part of a series of city walks—so far in Belgrade, Boxholm, Malmö, Norrköping, Tensta, and Tirana—with attached guiding maps linking individual stories to specific sites (Hultin, 2014). You can do the walks on your own: guided by the maps while listening

to Hultin's readings. However, when I participated in one of her walks in Malmö, I was part of a group of people, and the artist was reading the stories to us live. By giving voice to the stories and telling them in first person, Hultin generated an instant intimacy. It took me a while to realize that she was not only telling one person's story, but several. Weaving the separate stories together by using a continuous "I" and at the same time stopping at the mentioned places, was a powerful method for creating involvement with the interviewed women and their experiences. Not only did they give a history of the sites that was new to me, the stories also evoked memories of my own in relationship to these places.

Woolf's (1980: 298) diary note from 28<sup>th</sup> of March, 1930:

To walk alone in London is the greatest rest.

expresses walking as both an action through which to inhabit public space as a woman, and her notion of what a free life is or should be—that the possibility to walk around alone in London can initiate a great feeling of calmness and peace. In Woolf's fictional work, walking and promenades are central to depicting the lives of women (Larsson, 2014). When Woolf walks in London, she lets her mind wander, and tells the story of her everyday life and friends. Her diary notes embrace the commonness of everyday life, and often ends with reflections about the city of London in general or specific spatial and material situations. A few days after making the above diary note, she writes:

*Tuesday 1 April*

And we have to go to & dine with Raymond now, this very potent, astonishingly exciting warm evening. I sit with my window open & hear the humming see a yellow window open in the hotel: I walked back from Leicester Square. What queer memories have got themselves mixed into this evening I asked. Something from a very soft, rather mystic evening; not feverish & fretful; no; by the sea; blue; gentle. [...] Nessa is at Charleston. They will have the windows open; perhaps even sit by the pond. She will think This is what I have made by years of unknown work—my sons, my daughter. She will be perfectly content (as I suppose) Quentin fetching bottles; Clive immensely good tempered. They will think of London with dislike. Yet it is very exciting; I shall sip my wine at Raymond's, & try & elicit something from Lytton. And so must change. (Woolf, 1980: 298-9)

Woolf's (1980) "I" is exposed and situated in her constant reflections upon people, environment, events and space. She lets the reader walk with her both in London and in her thoughts, see what she sees, partake in associations coming to her mind, and even in the pointing out of how the windows will be used.

Solnit (2000: 5) mixes historical material, philosophical reflections, and fictional stories about walking and wandering with her own experiences, when writing *Wanderlust: a history of walking*. Solnit's (2000) personal stories of wandering create a narrative in some parts, making it easy to follow her argumentation and reflections. In addition, she situates the logic of the discussed themes, as well as making a clear distinction between her own ideas and experiences of wandering and walking, in regard to research, fictional work, and historic descriptions.

The works discussed above exemplify three different modes of autoethnographic studies. Although this is not a specified method, and the texts may not even be scientific works, e.g. Woolf (1980), the end-product is clearly situated; you know from where these authors speak in their stories. They invite the readers to take part in their world; we can mirror ourselves in their feelings or gain insight on and learn of matters we were unaware of. The generous gesture of sharing your inner thoughts with a greater audience is partly what makes it possible for the reader to empathize with it. You do not have to agree, or have the same experiences, but it seems to have the effect of opening up for understanding, rather than dismissal.

*Human Space* by Bollnow (2011) (first published in 1963) is an example of a text written in a tradition where it is assumed that the speaking subject is expressing an universal view of a matter. Bollnow's (2011) perspective on wandering points to a common notion of walking as something capable of opposing the restrictions and routines of everyday life, almost an act of resistance (also see e.g. situationism, Certeau (2002)). In the section "The joy of departure" (Bollnow, 2011: 112) reflects upon the attraction of wandering and on wandering as a critique of modern civilization,<sup>120</sup> where its lack of purposes and aims are important features. Bollnow (2011: 112) addresses wandering both as an actual act, and as a state of mind where the wanderer has let go of the restraints of everyday life, and "tries to break out from the over-increased purposefulness of his existence." Wandering, in Bollnow's version, is depicted without

<sup>120</sup> This is part of a greater discussion about the matter of wandering and wanderer in his book *Human space* (Bollnow, 2011). Even though Bollnow refers to a more rural wandering and my study is limited to urban situations it is interesting to compare Bollnow's description of a wandering with *going astray*.

situating the walking subject, and assumed to be an exclusively male activity.<sup>121</sup> The walking subject is described as a man who rises above the masses through his activity, while being locked up in daily routines is for common people, and does not meet his (the wanderer's) standard for what a free life should be. I read Bollnow's critique of common life, in *Human Space*, through the eyes of a male wanderer, as an implicit (and involuntarily) autoethnographic story, unreflected and not emplaced in regard to whom this wanderer actually is. His reflections end up in a dichotomic reasoning of either being a free man—where women have no place<sup>122</sup>—or a man locked up within middle class conventions. Although *going astray* suggests an aspect of letting go of routines, it does not oppose everyday life itself, and is not limited to a specific sex. Instead, *going astray* calls for an acknowledgement of common life, and for seeing our routines in new light by looking closer at them, in contrast to alienating ourselves from them.

In *Wandering: philosophical performances of racial and sexual freedom* Cervenak (2014: 3-4) points out wandering as being “as much an interior as it is an exterior activity, it at once resists decryption and sustains an unavailable landscape of philosophical desire.” In contrast to Bollnow (2011), Cervenak (2014) points this out from a perspective of racial and sexual freedom, and comments on the lack of research exploring wandering in terms of being an internal activity. Cervenak's (2014) starting-point is the literature and everyday reality of African Americans in the U.S., and what possibilities they have of wandering freely. Her perspective on wandering does not only raise the issues that African Americans have to face while wandering, but it also clearly situates whose wandering experiences we are listening to and what their presets might be.

<sup>121</sup> Describing wandering as an exclusively male action is causing several problems. Firstly, it excludes experiences of women, or any person who does not identify themselves as belonging to the male sex. Secondly, even if I, as a woman, could identify myself with his wanderer the expectations on me differ from expectations on men, and these expectations would probably get in my way if I tried to act in line with Bollnow's wanderer. E.g. compare the depiction of Robyn Davidson in the film *Tracks* from 2013, the screen adaptation of her 2700 km walk through the Australian desert. In the film, she is depicted as an odd, stubborn, depressed and grumpy person, while the few documentary photos shown in the film show a rather cheerful and enthusiastic person. Why can she not be both? Why is her independence reduced to stubbornness?

<sup>122</sup> Bollnow's *Human Space* was published in 1963. It would be easy to explain his complete neglect of woman as possible wanderer as part of the zeitgeist. However, it seems too easy. Virginia Woolf wrote several essays and diaries where her reflections about walking in London are a recurring subject, e.g. *The London scene: five essays* (Woolf, 1982) and *The diary of Virginia Woolf. Vol. 3, 1925-1930* (Woolf, 1980). Woolf's work might not have been published and accessible for Bollnow at the time of his writing of *Human space*. Still, Bollnow must have been aware of the existence of women in society.

Most importantly, the difference between Bollnow's notion of wandering and walking and Woolf's, Cervenak's, Solnit's, Hultin's and my own walk investigations appears in the positioning of the walking subject—its gaze on environment and the experienced. The male perspective is assumed in Bollnow's description of wandering. His wanderer is not anchored in a specific physical or social setting, and has no clear "I." A diffuse positioning of the writing, or described, subject, implies a universal wander.

*Just by mentioning what my research concerns—walking and architecture—researchers as well as architects almost by default seem bound to say: “-The Situationists!” or “-You should read ‘The Practice of Everyday Life’ by Certeau”.*

*However, I could never see myself in Michel's individual, or as walking next to Guy. I cannot see their positions. They are floating around. Speaking from everywhere and nowhere.*

*My first encounter with situationism was in 2002; I was living in a small rural town in Denmark attending an Art and Graphic Design School. The first semester, my understanding of Danish was worse than poor. First, I thought Debord was Danish, because of my teacher's broken French-Danish pronunciation. (150513)*

There are methodological commonalities between the situationist *dérive*<sup>123</sup> and *going astray*, such as staying open to what might appear to you while walking. They call this alternativity *dérive* or drifting, I call it *going astray*. Both approaches seek to question norms but end up with quite different interpretations and findings. *Going astray* is an open-ended approach, but not in a naïve or unsuspecting sense. Whereas I apply a feministic and queer interpretation of normativity, and want to formulate a practical and applicable tool for addressing pedestrian design issues, I understand situationism

<sup>123</sup> *Dérive* or drifting is presented in *Theory of Dérive* by Guy Debord (1956). This was first published in French in *Les Lèvres Nues* #9 (November 1956) reprinted in *Internationale Situationniste* #2 (December 1958), and later translated to English by Ken Knabb. The situationists developed *dérive* from the literal concept *flânerie* (Hollevoet et al., 1992), and did psychogeographic mapping of a city through this type of planless walking or strolling (Knabb, 2006). Despite the *flâneur* being a reappearing figure in walk related literature, Solnit (2000) declares that he has neither been properly defined, nor existed outside the fictional world. Solnit (2000) identifies Walter Benjamin's *The Arcades Project* as the main reason why the *flâneur* became theorized and a research topic toward the end of last century.



as questioning norms in general by resisting a given order forced upon us by the design of the city plan. Sandin (2003: 57) points to how *dérive* was supposed to generate “impulses that lead away from the expected movement patterns,” and “create states of disorientation,” in combination with an attentiveness toward “the different urban settings that were addressed.” Eventually, the explorations of new movement patterns through the city aimed to find new radical ways for urban life (Sandin, 2003), pointing to a wish for *dérives* to create a new narrative of urban everyday life where walking is an act of resistance against the existing ways of living. This way, the situationist approach tends to romanticize chaotic and confusing experiences of *dérives* in the sense that the unexpected is understood as almost having an inherent potential for initiating societal change, or being the prerequisite for it to take place. In addition, such a view on the unexpected implies a normativity that it should deviate from.

The situationists strived towards a consensus or objectivity during their *dérives* by doing it in

several small groups of two or three people who have reached the same level of awareness, since cross-checking these different groups' impressions makes it possible to arrive at more objective conclusions. (Debord, 1956)

This approach neglects the differences of identities. The experiences are not emplaced in relation to how they are achieved, or by whom the drifting is done. Such a statement implies that a common unified experience of a city and its parts exists. As already stated, acts of *going astray*, in contrast, focus on pointing out the heterogeneity of experiences within and among individuals, a focus which is ensured through the application of the presented theoretical framework regarding identity formation; orientation; performativity; and situated knowledges.

In “Psychogeography and feminist methodology,” psychology researcher Alexander John Bridger (2013) points to the sexism and anti-feminism within the situationist movement: the biased male gaze, which is not positioned in the situationist method, the fact that Debord supposedly took the important situationist work by novelist and critic Michèle Bernstein and put his own name on it, and also that women were more or less supposed to only engage with household-related and administrative work (Bridger, 2013).<sup>124</sup> In Phil Smith (2015), researcher in theatre and performance,

<sup>124</sup> Bridger (2013) refers to an online-published interview (<https://www.stewarthomesociety.org/interviews/rumney.htm>) with Ralph Rumney husband of Michèle Bernstein.

work *Walking's new movement: opportunities, decelerations and beautiful obstacles in the performances, politics, philosophies and spaces of contemporary radical walking* he points to how present psychogeographic works of women are still, to a great extent, not being acknowledged, due to the ignorance of some devoted male psychogeographers. Still finding it useful, from a feminist psychology perspective, Bridger (2013: 285, 291) suggests a development of situationist psychogeography through adding “concepts such as embodied subjectivity and heteronormativity” in order to study “how their [people’s] experiences of environments are shaped by gendered subject positions, and reciprocally, how we come to shape those environments.”

In concert with Bridger’s (2013) critique of the situationists’ psychogeography, I also see other difficulties with the situationist approach. Returning to the matter regarding normativity and norms I find it problematic to describe

cities hav[ing] psychogeographical contours, with constant currents, fixed points and vortexes that strongly discourage entry into or exit from certain zones. (Debord, 1956)

I understand psychogeography—in the situationist sense—as engaging with ambiances of the city, and as ambiances are neither fixed nor constant it would make it difficult to neglect the temporal impact that bodies’ movement has on the appearance of cities.<sup>125</sup>

However, situationism is still an influential stepping stone for explorative walking e.g. NIGHTWALKERS; walking research such as Bridger’s (2013); artistic research e.g. “Exploring ‘an area of outstanding unnatural beauty’: A treasure hunt around King’s cross, London” (Battista et al., 2005). NIGHTWALKERS et al. (2012), referred to in chapter 2.d. *Encounters and Companions*, build on situationist work. They perform their walks during the dark hours of night, although Debord (1956) states “that the last hours of the night are generally unsuitable for dérives.” The militant research collective Precarias a la Deriva’s (2006) application of dérive has more commonalities with *going astray* than the original situationist method. In “A Very Careful Strike – Four hypotheses” the focus is on everyday life and related spaces.

[T]he arbitrary wandering of the flaneur, so particular to the bourgeois male subject with nothing pressing to do,

<sup>125</sup> A very concrete example of how bodies are temporally able to change the actual outline of a space is a demonstration, e.g. the several days long walks by the Suffragettes (early 1900s) and the African-American Civil Right Movements (1950-60s) in the U.S. changed the appearances of the cities in regard to which bodies were able to inhabit the streets.

is exchanged

for a situated drift which would move through the daily spaces of each one of us, while maintaining the tactic's multisensorial and open character. Thus the drift is converted into a moving interview, crossed through by the collective perception of the environment. (Precarias a la Deriva, 2006: 34)

The intention of the dérives is to raise questions concerning the "precaritized everyday lives" of both the collective and of people they meet during their dérives (Precarias a la Deriva, 2006: 36).

It seems as though the situationists' followers and interpreters have quite a forgiving and accepting attitude towards flaws of the situationist dérive and psychogeography. Interpreters of situationism almost treat it as a buffet, where they pick whatever suits their purpose or taste. The applications are as impertinent and flippant in their elaborations, as the attitude of Debord himself, in his texts. This does not have to be a negative thing. On the contrary, it might be a pragmatic way to handle the heritage of situationism in order to adapt it to a contemporary setting.

*The Practice of Everyday Life by Certeau (2002) was one of the first things I read for my graduates studies. The Practice of Everyday Life was difficult in several senses, but I really tried to believe in Certeau's practice of everyday life. Maybe the sometimes heroic tone of Michel got in the way of my reading of his everyday life, just as the grand gestures of Guy to some extent blurred my understanding of his dérives. (150513)*

My questions regarding Certeau's (2002) *The Practice of Everyday Life*, first published in French 1980 and then in English 1984, mainly concerns four aspects: (1) the static and prescriptive consequences of applying a dichotomic power analysis in terms of strategy and tactic, (2) the individualistic<sup>126</sup> point of view where the perspective of

<sup>126</sup> Compare Sandin (2003: 102):

Certeau is however more concerned with the spatial possibility and orientation of the individual, and the ability to exceed a rule, a spatial structure, a language, whenever it is used, and less with the fate of society's and philosophy's spaces as such, which is more of Lefebvre's concern.

the masses or a collective is not taken into account, although his reasoning departs from generalizations about how humans act, (3) the absence of a situated subject: from where are these announcements made?, and (4) how much of his writing is anchored in an analysis of actual embodied experiences of life? Or how much has Certeau himself walked? Especially 2, 3 and 4 point out aspects relating to identity formation and its influence on walk possibilities. My autoethnographic method departs in the situatedness of my story; that it is my story being told although it is recognizable to other people than me, and that I have walked a lot during my research process. Generalizability lies in whether or not other people can relate to the story I am telling—that they can recognize, or identify themselves in some sense with, the exposed experiences (Ellis, 2004).

In my view, neither the situationists of the 1950s nor Certeau were doing anything radically new, they just created another flaneur—an obstructive male figure that was still, to a great extent, locked up in a literary figure. Certeau (2002) used walking, to a great extent, as a practice in order to expose strategic and power-related patterns of cities—as in e.g. strategies and panoptic views. My autoethnographic studies intend instead to depict and problematize what it is like to be exposed, and respond, to a material and social reality while walking.

I apply identity theories (Ahmed, 2006, Butler, 1988, 2009, 2011a), which are making power structures visible through showing how actions and speech acts produce and manifest power.<sup>127</sup>

An approach where you involve yourself in the practical reality of walking will also have to include the contradictory and ambiguous impressions you gain, and, by this, counterpose generalized statements. Monica Büscher and John Urry (2009: 104), researchers in sociology and mobility, stress the importance of the involvement of the researcher in the world of walking because it will produce findings that are “methodologically generative” as opposed to results exposing e.g. structures, and

<sup>127</sup> Also see Duff (2010: 893):

More specifically, I have argued for an analytics of place that goes beyond de Certeau's urban rhetorics of practice and tactics to include the affective experience of place-making. This affective dimension is far more than a mere aesthetic or experiential concern. For affects exceed the indicative mood or sense of place to include the action-potential, the dispositional orientations, conveyed within place. To fail to attend to this affective dimension is to miss the push and pull of place. It also renders one less sensitive to the fine distinctions marking thick and thin places so critical to the everyday experience of the city.

patterns. Walking a lot makes it hard to neglect the variations in walk experiences—both coherent and contradictive ones. Acknowledging this ambiguity will also make it difficult to reduce the power to binaries, as e.g. Certeau's (2002) categorization of agency in terms of strategy and tactic does. Hall and Smith (2013: 290), in their study about mobilities and immobilities of homeless people and social workers in Cardiff, U.K., explore walking as constituted by both mobility and immobility, this way abandoning a dichotomic categorization built on exclusion, for a dynamic understanding of difference where the parts "can play out differently, each amplifying the other." In line with Büscher's and Urry's (2009) reasoning regarding the involvement of the researcher in the practical reality of the study, I think that the field work of e.g. Hall and Smith (2013) indicates how the tendency of romanticizing street life and pedestrians can be reduced, when the researcher has to face the same complexity and challenges that homeless people and social workers deal with on an everyday basis. Kristin Ross (1996: 69), researcher in comparative literature, criticizes Certeau's (as well as Althusser's) works because she finds that, in them "a philosophical or epistemological notion of space has been fetishized; the mental realm of the text enveloping the physical or social one," and also that Certeau reduces the pedestrian to an "anonymous" "character in a kind of rhetorical textbook." The rather sarcastic title "Streetwise: The French Invention of Everyday Life" (Ross, 1996) illustrates an overall critique of Certeau's (and Althusser's) work, and indicates how his perspective on pedestrians and the street tends to romanticize common life.

The approaches of clearly stated subjective and personal investigations—Hultin (2014), Solnit (2000), Woolf (1980), Cervenak (2014) and my own study—juxtaposed with some common attitudes—e.g. Bollnow (2011)—and often cited references—such as Certeau (2002) and situationism—when discussing notions of walking, wandering, and spatial matters, points to the disadvantages of neglecting the influence of identity forming aspects on how walking is described, comprehended and experienced. Cervenak's (2014: 6) point—although referring to wandering and not explicitly to walking—regarding the need for a new approach for understanding the matter of wandering, is as relevant for walking,

We need a new way to think about wandering as philosophical performance, one not contingent on its availability to discourse or to analytics of bodily enunciativity, exterior-oriented narratives of kinesis, and individual agency.

Even though they do not describe their methods as autoethnographical, Hultin's (2014), Solnit (2000) and Woolf's (1980) texts exemplify various types of autobiographic material through capturing identity aspects and situating walking in relation to spatial settings. I position my research about walking and architecture along approaches like these, where subjective notions are acknowledged as important features in describing the social and material reality, as well as contextualizing research and historical descriptions regarding walking. However, I add on an explicit theoretical framework of queer and feminist theory—a *critical terminology*—in order to problematize identity forming aspects and their temporality. *Going astray* suggests a self-reflecting walking, where critical introspection is as important a possibility as reflections on the spatial situation. In this introspection, the aim is to reveal contradictive experiences, associations, and preconceptions of participating subjects, and the phenomena they touch upon. The autoethnographic notes are a first step in the introspective process in order to let the reader know from which position a space is experienced: from where I speak regarding a specific matter. It is not the personal view in itself that is interesting—why it is being told is what will situate the knowledge.

#### 4. A Critical Normativity Approach to Walking as a Situated Architectural Experience

This section sums up the findings of the previous reflections regarding pedestrian relations to architecture. What is at stake in my investigation is a possible overall shift of attention towards the inclusion of more possibilities—differences. As a lead concept, developed and tried in this thesis, and possible to apply in urban planning strategies, I have suggested the notion of *critical normativity*. A *critical normativity* approach has the intention of capturing the heterogeneity of pedestrian needs and walking. This approach implies a thinking that has its starting-point in theories that take difference and deviation in regard to subjective and intersubjective experiences of walking and architecture into account.

### **Framing Critical Normativity**

In order to establish a framework for a *critical normativity* I have developed, and used, three investigatory components: *going astray* (a walk attitude functioning as an associative phase), *critical terminology* (an elaboration of feminist and queer perspectives that theorizes walk experiences and pedestrian relations to architecture) and a *walk diary* (a technique for data collection). Together these components have worked to address themes related to walking, corporeal matters, architecture, materiality and social space.

In a *critical normativity* approach—as presented and applied in this dissertation—the production of normativity itself, but also established norms connected to space and walking, have been addressed and made visible. Through this I have also pointed to the complexity of factors that designers and planners have to face in order to design spatial conditions that can meet the varying needs and desires of pedestrians. This way, a *critical normativity* approach would have as its objective to suggest inclusive and alterable norms in regard to the heterogeneity expressed amongst pedestrians. This approach is applied to the investigation of norms of the studied situation, as well as those brought into the study by the researcher, and thus addresses issues of discrimination and special treatment. It will be directed towards how and why someone/things are included or excluded. The more exact ways in which this inclusion of needs should be manifested in regard to the design of urban environment, and be part of professional spatial practices, has only been sparingly commented on here, and needs to be further investigated, and evaluated in applications.

*Critical normativity*, as I use the term, is not about producing an alternative social normativity that prescribes a specific political direction or identity, nor is it here used as a general stance against normlessness. It is, in other words, not used here as a normativity aiming for a better world that ought to, or should, be constituted in a certain way. Rather, *critical normativity* should work as an ongoing attention towards the norms we reproduce through our actions, in the constant making of our everyday lives. I have here shown a way to apply such an investigatory position when collecting and analyzing walking related empirical material. Applying a *critical normativity* approach in the data collection phase—as in the *walk diary*—is a way to stay open—as in *going astray*—to deviation and difference in regard to assumptions in established practices, including specific research contexts. Applying a *critical normativity* approach in the analysis phase—as in a *critical terminology*—is to keep an eye on what cultural



context and what norms you bring into your own norm-critical investigation and study.

The applied critical theories of Sara Ahmed (2006, 2010), Judith Butler (1988, 2009, 2011a, 2011b) and Donna Haraway (1991, 1988) are normative in the sense that they politicize sex, gender and sexuality, and suggest explicit ways of acknowledging these matters and how they affect individuals' living conditions. However, I am not suggesting that *critical normativity* should only be applied in regard to these specific theories. A *critical normativity* could be based in other critical perspectives; the only requirement would be to situate the knowledges and norms you bring into the study.

### ***Pedestrians and Walking: A Practical Reality***

We become pedestrians in response to a social and physical reality that we meet as soon as we start walking. Pedestrian cultures shape us into pedestrians. Paraphrasing writer, feminist and philosopher, Simone Beauvoir's (1968: 273) famous quote "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" you could say that:



Figure 4.1. Collage by the author of this dissertation.

By using the technique of keeping a *walk diary* over a longer period of time I have been able to see how important it is to walk a lot in order to be able to understand the premises for walking and its conditions. You need empathy with pedestrians, and embodied experiences of walk situations in order to understand our world and conditions. And, by moving around in the social and physical reality of pedestrians and cities, this dissertation has shown techniques for developing such an empathic form for knowledge production and design strategies.

#### *Going Astray and Deviating Associations*

Due to the open attitude of *going astray* and the subjectivity of the *walk diary*, spontaneous observations, i.e. not planned in advance, have been possible to incorporate in the study. For example my walks in darkness were seldom explicitly done for the study, but were included because of how darkness triggered my associations, or memories of interesting conversations I had with my walk companions. Walking a lot, in combination with keeping an open mind and having a willingness for *going astray*, in the sense of being willing to take a deviating interest in what might unexpectedly appear to you while walking, will eventually provide you with moments of peculiarity. Two such moments occurred during the walk in Hyllievång-Holma, where the entrance facade of the shopping mall was used for ball games, and a shopping trolley was observed in the pond. These moments of peculiarity initiated associations that deviated from the recommended use of the places and were valuable because of how they orientated my attention towards alternative relations to the materiality of space. In addition, they fed into the discussion about consumption, spatial use and access. These moments would have been difficult to incorporate in a more programmatically defined research approach e.g. observing or answering questions according to a certain scheme.

The benefits of acknowledging deviating associations are, as already pointed out, two-fold: they have an experiential value, and are of methodological importance. A spatial setting that, through its spatial and material factors, can evoke a wealth of associations, could be experientially valuable for pedestrians in how this wealth would imply a less forcing or restricting encounter with the space. Such a wealth of associations may encourage activities that let people inhabit space on their own terms instead of demanding a constant doing that is very particular, which in turn could have excluding consequences. From a methodological standpoint, the occurrence of deviating associations should not be considered as good per se, but rather as

pointing out the need for problematizing how walking and architecture might activate associations, and which desires these associations might respond to or allow the expression of. Power relations produced in a specific situation can be mapped out by addressing: desires, identity formation, and deviating associations:

What identities are in/excluded? Which desires are being recognized? On what premises can associations take place? Which actions might be encouraged or held back?

These questions need to be asked in regard to materiality of space as well as to other bodies within a spatial situation.

The *critical normativity* framework has worked to address expressions of power, such as in Hyllievång where the boys using the Emporia facade for ball games temporarily gain power over the space—they interpret the situation on their own terms and make use of the space. This way, they give themselves power to act out desires that simultaneously interfere with the possibility for other users to be there without being hit by a ball; innovative and annoying at the same time. This highlights how the formation of identity and the expression of desires are relevant in regard to subjectivity, and how they form our experiences of space, and its possibilities. Moreover, it indicates that deviating associations can capture heterogeneity, but that they still need to be positioned in regard to expressed non-/privileges in order to expose power differentials established in the interaction with the materiality of space.

#### *Intersubjectivity, Identity Formation and Time*

As we have seen, the impact of identities, their continuous formation, and the possibility to act out desires, are, to differing degrees, formed by other people's behavior and expectations. However, with my own walk experiences as a basis, and while walking a lot on my own, the application of autoethnography has still made it possible to address aspects of intersubjectivity. The experiences articulated through my autoethnographic stories have included people I have walked together with or encountered, and thereby shown that my actions to varying degrees take place in relation to other people's expectations and behaviors, such as the case with the shouting man in Folkets Park, the man approaching us "as architects" in Holma, or when I walked together with different friends in the darkness in places which I might have avoided if walking on my own.

Walk companions and encounters appear in various ways and thus actually make it impossible for me to be the sole writer of my pedestrian life. This fact is

reflected in the statement that we become pedestrians in a constant flow of interaction with others. Butler's (2004) perspective on performativity points to how we are not the sole creator of our own gender. Instead it is a condition defined outside and "beyond oneself," but it is still an improvised act, i.e. it is not "automatic or mechanical," and just as gender is always being performed within in a framework of certain social restraints (Butler, 2004: 1), so is the identity of a pedestrian.

In my walk notes, my focus on the body has varied between purely physical aspects of materiality and inescapable social dimensions of it, as in the *walk diary* notes regarding my walk between my home and the bus, where I have both noted experiences in regard to material and form aspects, e.g. how edges, niches and corners formed my walk experience, and to the social encounters with the drumming man and the begging woman. At Fågelbacksgatan, I was initially orientated to a great extent—sensing on what premises I was able to turn toward form features or not, but also how the lack of form features made me feel lost. My bodily experiences here showed quite clearly that sensing—or lacking a sense of—materiality in architectural space influenced the social aspects of walking, and further, that the sense of being in or out of place at some occasions, might have an impact on how we are able to experience objects, space, and materials as options or obstacles in other situations. Our history follows us around, but its impact will fluctuate in the moment, and not every material setting will be able to respond to our varying desires.

As pointed out, walking in darkness has been a powerful and embodied experience, evoking tactile sensations. At the same time, it is almost inseparable from the social and cultural codes and connotations related to darkness as a general concept. Therefore, it was harder to shift attention toward either physical or social aspects—in darkness they felt intertwined and almost inseparable.

My autoethnographic observations have also shown how the impact of my different identities has varied between revisits, but also from moment to moment. Not only is a variety of identities expressed through walking, they are also temporal and have been shown to be changing from one step to the next. This way exposing how the impact of identities fluctuates while walking. The possibility to move can also—in regard to identity—be a catalyst, allowing for emancipatory moments to appear as well as possibly activating an involuntary intrusion, or even restrictions. *Emancipatory*, as the overall experience and exploration of my walks in darkness that have made me walk more on my own in dark places. In addition, it has expanded my action

possibilities—I have abandoned an identity of being scared for a bolder one. This way, my desire to walk in darkness to some extent drove me away from stereotypical notions of how to act in regard to darkness. My encounter with the stray dogs in Greensboro was another moment of emancipation, where I could re-evaluate my impression of them. They turned from scary intruders to friendly companions. *Involuntary intrusion*, as in the case of Folkets park, where the words of a shouting man interfered with my state of being, and forced me to negotiate my action possibilities in order not to let him control my experience. *Restrictions*, as when walking down the Strip in Las Vegas, where any desires other than consumption-related ones were hard to express. This spatial situation more or less forced me into an identity governed by shopping and gambling desires and illustrated the power that a space and its facilities can have over its users—it would take quite an effort to go against the imposed use of the space. These four cases: impression of darkness, the stray dogs of Greensboro, Folkets Park, and walking down the Strip, serve as examples of how *critical normativity* can differentiate power relations in regard to temporality and identity by incorporating disparate impressions and experiences instead of looking for generalizations or consensus regarding experiences of walking and spatial matters.

The shifts between “I,” “you” and “we” is another aspect of variation in identity and how that can situate my autoethnographic experiences in relation to the reader. Addressing the reader with a “we” implies speaking through a collective, a “you” puts the reader more directly in my position of experience, while the voice of the “I” is the most personal me brought forth in this dissertation. In addition, some identities have evolved less voluntarily. In the autoethnographic observations (for instance Lorensborg and Dammfri), such variations also appeared in the different descriptive expressions, where some are more typical for architectural descriptions while others are more linked to personal experiences. On the whole, the subjectivity of autoethnography and the *walk diary* technique made it possible to shift between partial perspectives—my own differing subjectivities—and this way, to some extent, reveal my non-/privileges and action possibilities.

The aforementioned aspects of identity point to matters of changeability and mutability—that identities need to be considered temporal in their appearances and expressions. They also point to the fact that norms of identity formation, regarding sex, sexuality and gender, are partly dependent on: a controlling social context; unawareness of performances; a need to be confirmed in order to persist; and that

this identity formation is historical (Butler, 2011b), dynamic, and changeable (Butler, 2004). Comprehending identity formation as historical means that the understanding of e.g. female/male gender and sex of today will shape how we think they have been acted out during other time periods. Simultaneously, our historical notion and cultural definition of sex and gender will form our present notion of them.

Applied on pedestrian circumstances, this would mean that not only material conditions of the physical reality will set the premises for walking, but that they are also set by the heterogeneous spectrum of identities and desires that are being acted out or held back. This way, the applied approach of *critical normativity* has elaborated on, and partly made visible, the norms and the mechanisms of normativity that were brought in by me and the research traditions that I got acquainted with, giving rise to a question that could also be raised in relation to urban design:

How can varying identities be recognized, and the dynamics of their production be problematized, in regard to applied methods in the study of walking and architectural matters?

The successive experiences of the same sites, material, and forms changed over time in my observations; the same body was not “the same” but varied in its relations to physical space. By acknowledging time as an important factor in regard to walking, and allowing recurrent (temporally separated) investigations of the relationship between body and the same physical objects at different times, we may envision urban environments that sustain changes in needs and conceptions. We may analogously also envision how pedestrians experience objects, space, and material in regard to their different bodies.

In addition, my investigations have shown that recurrent visits to places can be fruitful in regard to adding experiences associated with the place. One association led to another, and memories of previous visits fueled this process. By way of repeated visits to a site you will thus cumulatively develop situated knowledges, through memorizing, associating, and, by that, practically engaging in walking. Moreover, to let yourself *go astray* and incorporate deviating moments and associations into the research is to engage in a research mode that allows for several processes, which feed into one another, to take place at the same time. This more accurately reflects the moments in your research process where you reorganize and re-evaluate your work and your objects of study.

*The search for, but not elimination of, "deviation spots"*

Apart from my main autoethnographical approach to places, I have also, in chapter 3, pointed out some differences between this approach and the way that an initial, so-called structured walk study was performed. I made methodological use of the structured analysis by taking an interest in those responses from participating individuals where there were big differences (least convergence) between the answers to questions in a questionnaire. I labeled the geographical counterpart to these data occurrences "deviation spots." In these cases, a *critical normativity* approach served as a way to address the power of interpretation that comes with each method.

The detection of, and search for deviation spots in structured data material tied to the questionnaire, was found to be interesting for several reasons: first of all, because the data in itself included partial perspectives, and secondly, because it showed an ambivalent relation between the environment and the intention of the persons walking in it. The experiences people had of these sites seemed to vary a lot, according to the questionnaire, and in this way the deviation spots worked as a means of acknowledging differences in experiences of places and sites. Thirdly, the data identified suitable places for revisits and further investigations in the study. From a methodological point of view, and in a meta-perspective of research ideologies, the deviation spots also served as a way of showing the partiality of interpretation of the quantitative data, as well as of the self-experienced views.

The deviation spots showed, statistically as well as in the autoethnographic return to these geographical spots, that a generalized notion of affordance must be handled critically,<sup>128</sup> in that the environment offers and influences a range of possibilities different at each moment. A tendency in affordance theory to tie affordance to specific functions, or, to regard specific environmental spots as offering specific affordances, is put in another perspective when regarded from the point of view of fluctuating needs and identities.

In addition, the autoethnographic observations at the two deviation spots showed that to be orientated is more than just knowing where to go. It is about how we are able, or influenced, or tending in the moment, to interpret the material setting. And this sense of orientation, beyond mere visual perception and understanding of

<sup>128</sup> This was mainly shown in the standard deviation measure at the site in Lorensborg regarding the statements: "I immediately understand how I can continue to walk from this place."

how to follow an intended direction, contributes to the meaning we give to the design of e.g. greenery, buildings, fences, paths, i.e. how the materials are understood, what connotations they generate, and how stories emerge from them. This extended notion of orientatedness addresses what it means to arrive as historical and intersubjective beings, and how we manage to adjust to the situations. The exact points in time when attention to my own orientatedness provided additions—sensed as relevant to the knowledge I have of walking in urban environments—could not have been predicted beforehand, which points to the difficulty in getting data that is rich or relevant enough from structured analyses made at specific points in time, even if the statistical significance of the material (population, design for maximum objectivity etc.) lives up to standard requirements.

#### *Dis-/Orientation*

The concepts of orientation and disorientation—as understood in Ahmed's (2006) queer phenomenological sense—have in this dissertation been proven to work as adequate spatial analysis tools, especially in regard to corporeal matters. However, they need—as pointed out—to be combined with a performativity perspective of identity formation that stresses the fluctuating, dynamic and historical aspects of walking itself. These presets for walking have the potential of changing from moment to moment—as does the pedestrian's power to act—just as our notion of walking itself changes through history.

By attending to dis-/orientation in my walk cases I found that the sense of proximity is important in experiencing orientation. I have also observed that physical proximity and a sense of closeness to physical matters is not necessarily the same, in e.g. the Fågelbacksgatan case a sense of proximity could also be evoked by more distant matters, and vice versa; an intimate sense of close material could give a renewed view of more distant building structures.

The notion of dis-/orientation has also been shown to be applicable on more than just the direct encounter between body and space. In section 2c. *Contrasting Opportunities*, the concept also worked on the scale of how two neighborhoods can be analyzed in terms of how they are located and positioned towards each other. Moreover, in terms of how that relationship affects the possibility for movement and usage. This evokes questions regarding how the placement of a city's functions and parts—their directions towards one another—can be analyzed in order to address the norms their placement might produce. In the long run this analysis, emanating



from walking between the city parts Hyllievång and Holma, shows possibilities for how urban design can offer a heterogenic, but also connective range of orientation possibilities in regard to usage and movement.

*Darkness: a material matter and a form element*

As already mentioned, keeping a walk diary over a longer period of time has been useful for mapping out and discovering areas of interests, where darkness, as an area not researched enough, has been an important finding. Walking a lot and, through that, giving myself the opportunity of *going astray* made certain features of darkness visible.

The identification of walking in darkness as a recurrent topic in my *walk diary* has situated my knowledge perspectives—it reveals my standpoint and attention towards the matter for the reader to keep in mind while reading my elaboration on it. I have also utilized this interest of mine and let it form an extended discussion about the material and spatial qualities of darkness. However, darkness can also be a strong restricting force on movement in a city. I have noticed that the speed for moving in darkness influences my experience of, and attitude towards, it. Running in darkness has often seemed to be ok to do on my own, whereas walking has mostly been done in someone else's company. These experiences of darkness, and its substantial presence—when living in a Nordic country—demands for design solutions facing the challenges that darkness produces.

Looking at darkness through a performativity perspective has brought forth its situational and temporal qualities: its meaning appears to be alterable. Through this perspective darkness has been understood as reproduced from moment to moment, in contrast to a fixed notion of it, as when perceived through a dichotomic thinking, as an opposite to light. Addressing the sensational consequences of interacting with darkness would be one way of paying attention to the dynamics of its situational and temporal qualities. I have also noted qualities such as: differing shades and transparency; a directness in evoking strong emotions or tactile sensations; appearance modalities such as solid, opaque or fluffy; providing a state for rest in an urban landscape; and changing the experience of distance. All these aspects point to the richness in the dynamic character of darkness as a form element and material matter.

This exploration of darkness has made it clear that darkness is a matter that shows its own shifting materiality, especially apparent during walks, which is temporally and spatially conditioned. Darkness has qualities that can be utilized and give purpose

to form and space, which raises questions regarding how a city can incorporate these qualities:

How can relational aspects of darkness be utilized and implemented in the design of the urban landscape?

How can the desire to walk in darkness and the almost obligatory resistance to darkness be further explored?

In order to open up for new walk habits: in what ways can pedestrians and darkness interact?

### ***Insights from a Methodological shift***

Within the frame of the *walk diary* technique I have produced both texts and illustrations. And, the representation of sites, situations and personal reflections in the illustrations and collages shown in this thesis are a consequence of applying autoethnography, in the sense that I have let my interest in graphic novels influence the manner applied in combining text, photos and drawings, but also in the sense of how the visual representations reflect my personal impression of the sites I have walked at.

A critical reflection of the findings of the initial observational study—consisting of a vista observation analysis, and a questionnaire used for a structured walk study<sup>129</sup>—along with a shift I made between research disciplines, from *Environmental Psychology* to *Architecture*—taking on an autoethnographical approach—opened up new methodological possibilities. From this point on, I could combine a disparate set of methods, and include perspectives of feminist and queer theory. This was not possible to do in the initial part of my PhD work, partly due to the character of the research discipline, which was mainly based in a positivist and hypothesis driven research tradition.<sup>130</sup> The methodological shift made it possible for me to accommodate that which I had found limiting in the beginning of my research, such as my own conflicting experiences of walking while considering spatiality, and thoughts regarding certain principles of research methodology. The experiences acquired through autoethnography could have been lost if I had continued to position myself as someone

<sup>129</sup> When I refer to the structured walk study, it is to be understood, if nothing else is pointed out, as the parts of the larger study where I designed items that concerned the material and spatial support of walking. See *Appendix I: Additional notes on Methods* for items.

<sup>130</sup> By positivist I mean a research with a well-defined methodology not open for methods conflicting with the established work frame or ruling norms of the discipline.

looking at the world of walking as an outside observer, or analyzing with objective intentions, in terms of parameters derivable from third person behavior, instead of directly participating in the world of pedestrians.

Even if certain findings concerning visibility were possible, I regard the possibilities of evaluating my results from the initial observational study (the VOA), and the structured walk study, as limited. They did not result in originality in the sense of providing new radical perspectives on walking as a broad-ranged, sociological, material and psychological phenomenon. Nor could I find deep enough, or complex enough, conclusions regarding the role of pedestrians in urban planning and in design practice. I think it partly has to do with the strict character of the application procedure; evaluation according to a finite set of perception possibilities and limited (mainly sight-line-oriented) perspectives along predefined routes. This offered few opportunities for personal reflections and associations, which a method where you allow yourself to stay open to new and unexpected impressions would. E.g., my initial *Vista Observation Analysis* (Körner et al., 2012) called for a focused and consistent response from me when observing the built form. In retrospect, I think this eliminated nuances instead of highlighting them. I have learned—over time—that the nuances are what we have to deal with in order to understand the complexity of walking in relation to partly unexpected experiences of space and materiality. Otherwise, the premises for walking might be reduced to limiting categories of how pedestrians are expected to behave.

The crystallization of methods, i.e. applying several methods at the same sites, has been important to me. However, this would have been difficult to proceed with, without having a main method—autoethnography—and a theoretical framework open to differences and controversies. The fruitfulness of a crystallization of methods—in order to cover a wide spectrum of knowledge (compare e.g. Ellingson (2005))—is, in itself, nothing new. In this dissertation it refers to a minor use of statistical method and observation of vistas, put in relation to a broader application of autoethnography. In chapter 3, *Reflections on Methods and Situatedness*, I outlined a method for this type of crystallization and how this process can be accurately supported by feminist science theory concepts such as situated knowledges and partial perspectives. I found that this crystallization process demands that the researcher has a wide but also a quite disparate knowledge of methods, in order to be able to comprise the different epistemologies produced by the different methods.

In addition, coming from the field of *Architecture*—an explorative discipline that applies quite open, while also tradition-bound, investigation approaches in various ways through the design process—made it difficult for me to adapt to the more strictly defined research designs tied to a psychological research tradition. Being new in research as a profession, I felt that the research discipline of *Environmental Psychology* limited my already gained observational capacities, as educated in *Architecture*, *Philosophy* and *Gender studies*, for comprehending the circumstance I was in. I did not sense that I could ask questions initiated enough at the time. On the other hand, being part of two quite different modes of doing research has provided me with a solid methodological experience, and a good understanding of how these two separate fields organize research and value knowledge. This experience would have been difficult to gain by other means than actually having been part of two different research disciplines.

The methodological shift I have gone through during my time as a PhD student, and the process of writing this thesis, have in themselves worked as a stepping-stone in order to develop the methodological questions in this dissertation, along with the concept of *critical normativity*. *Critical normativity* is therefore, in this dissertation, a methodological result in itself, as well as a perspective applicable for architects and planners devoted to walking. In the following discussion the application of *critical normativity* in the analytical phase of research and design will be further discussed.

### **Towards a Critical Normativity Framework**

The purpose of introducing a *critical normativity* has been to address the variations of pedestrian relations that can appear in relation to a spatial situation. This in order to point out how norms are established, and consequently, what desires are met, or neglected, as here, in walk situations. A power analysis in regard to *critical normativity* would only work if the framework made visible some of the mechanisms at stake when needs, desires, and preferences are expressed. However, it is not so much who it is that states something, but rather the reason why it is said, and which kinds of desires that are expressed, that is of most importance. A focus on *who* the person making the statement is, might stress an identification based on preconceptions of power relations, as well as on categories of e.g. sex, skin color, class, ethnicity—all of them categorizations implying generalizations in regard to assumed group identities. A focus on *why* something is said instead directs our attention to the structural circumstances, the norms, from where something is spoken. It thus becomes a descriptive

problematization of identity and desires rather than a prescriptive one. Compared to my initial theoretical framework, based in a panoptical power perspective, where I elaborated on a differentiation of power materialized as either disciplining or directing a walking body (Körner et al., 2012), my *critical normativity* approach suggests a more dynamic perspective on power. It considers the encounter between space and human beings as moments of interaction rather than as projections of power through material impositions on bodies. *Critical normativity* has emerged here from feminist and queer theories, which have an embedded emancipatory aspect through their questioning of the mechanisms at work in ruling power, norms, and normativity.

In the discussion of my walk experiences, various expressions of power and lack of power have been addressed, in regard to urban materiality, and having agency to act out desires or needs. Having the agency to act out power or not, has in this dissertation been understood in a normative sense—that certain actions are more or less prescribed to us, and our possibilities to choose them are limited, but nevertheless changeable due to the impact of time. Power can, in this sense, be regarded as how and why needs, desires or even persons might be included or excluded from a situation. This is a background to why *critical normativity* emerged as a mode of attention, and as a theoretical framework for making power visible in the knowledge production regarding the relation between walking and architectural matters.

The differentiation and exposure of power within the framework of *critical normativity* has been performed through the openness of *going astray*, the analytical perspectives of a *critical terminology*, and the acknowledgment of subjectivity in the empirical material of the *walk diary*. It is in combination with *going astray* and the *critical terminology* that the *walk diary* has developed into a technique for informing the research process, and thereby become more than just a database of walk experiences. This way specific matters—such as, for instance, variations of darkness, proximities of body and matter, and culturally defined urban spaces—have been possible to address with an open attitude. However, the subjectivity of the observation technique in the *walk diary* also brings an important aspect into the framework of *critical normativity*: engagement in and empathy for a research topic. This attitude could also be transferred and applied to other topics of interest in order to develop an engaged and experiential knowledge-base of a research matter.

By combining and applying norm-critical perspectives, drawn from established queer and feminist theories, on my walk studies—primarily dis-/

orientation and background/foreground (Ahmed, 2006), performativity, deviation and difference (Butler, 1988, 2004, 2009, 2011a, 2011b), differences (Scott, 1988), and situated knowledges and partial perspective (Haraway, 1988, 1991)—I have been able to merge reflections and theories on spatial presence with theories that address power differentials through emphasizing partial perspectives and the formation of subjectivity. In this way I have been able to formulate novel and critical combinations of views on corporeality in space. Moreover, these concepts and these theoretical combinations have been applied in a new context here: an architecturally understood walk context. The norm-critical perspectives have been operationalized in relation to spatial and corporeal matters, where aspects concerning identity formation and how difference is perceived have stood out as crucial in order to capture a heterogeneity of needs and desires in regard to walking. This way *critical normativity* takes into account the temporal changeability of this context, as well as its diversity with regard to desires and positions.

The obvious spatial connotations of Ahmed's (2006) queer phenomenological concepts—dis-/orientation and background/foreground—made them easy to transfer to a spatial analysis. The partial observing perspective (Haraway, 1988, 1991) has proven beneficial for capturing the differing reflections and judgments I have expressed in my investigations, and thus served to situate the knowledges of a fluctuating encounter with architectural space. In this way, the application of a *critical normativity* approach stands for a position taken by the individual or group itself, where you acknowledge the norm from within which you are looking critically at a phenomenon. However, as discussed in several aspects above, in relation to the conditions that, for a pedestrian, might change from step to step and from moment to moment, these critical perspectives need to be complemented with Butler's (2011a) theory of identity formation and performativity. This theory stresses the variation in time and historical change of matters, which is a view partially grounded in Scott's (1988) perspective on differences in plurals. As shown in chapter 2.a. *Orientations*, Butler's (2011a) perspective addresses the power that is at work in the formation of identity, and how it is distributed amongst individuals, saying that it might be more or less unavoidable to escape norms as an individual. But she also points out the mechanisms of alteration and change—that nothing is constant—and that by accepting a performativity analysis of the formation of e.g. gender and sex we can also see the general emancipatory potential that our actions can contain. Scott's (1988:

176) perspective on difference as differences—which should neither be ignored nor regarded as “normatively constituted”—emancipates us from a dichotomic, as well as excluding, thinking of human needs and desires.

Through the development and application of *critical normativity* the variation in power has been addressed and described in terms of: degrees of possibility for negotiation, e.g. me, avoiding the shouting man in Folkets Park; emancipation as in my interaction with darkness, or my encounter with the stray dogs of Greensboro; a privilege of avoidance, e.g. when I did not meet the wish of the begging woman; intrusion, e.g. the shouting man in Folkets park expressing his desires, the boys occupying the entrance of Emporia for ball games. This way the framework of *critical normativity* has worked to stress and address the process of shifts in, and variations of, these action possibilities, attitudes toward, and experiences of space. I have rarely completely lacked options for action, however, I have still experienced resistance and limitations. Is this a consequence of me being in possession of more proximate privileges than non-privileges? Are my identities that appear in urban space more associated with what is considered desirable than with what is considered undesirable? The emergence of questions like these simply points to the presence of normativity in pedestrian urban life: that it is always present and needs constant attention.

#### **Future research questions in regard to Walking and Critical Normativity**

Which aspects of *critical normativity* should be stressed in a future development?

A development of the critical framework should focus on expanding the terminology regarding spatial and place concepts in relation to the understanding of differences and identity formation. This in order to more specifically address walking, corporeal matters and architecture, and thereby facilitate the utilization in architectural practice. Such a future development should continue to apply the performativity perspective on identity formation, and the ways in which it forces a re-evaluation of concepts in regard to time—historical as well as temporal.

How can additional perspectives be included?

When analyzing the empirical material of my *walk diary*, an obvious reflection appeared: the privilege of being able to walk, both in regard to what that story in itself told, and in particular what stories I represented. In some of the walks accounted for in this dissertation, I represented the needs of one body. However, I do not consider

myself representing one coherent story, and design must be able to meet the needs of a variety of bodies. The experiences of others than the involved professionals need to be included in the method in order to produce a versatile knowledge of pedestrian relations and walking. In a future research step the approach should be developed in order to make use of a lay/wo/men and their experiences of walking. The format could be several auto-ethnographies.

Intersubjectivity is to some extent present in the study, but how can it be more present and utilized?

Is the “auto” of autoethnography necessarily removed if several perspectives are to be actively involved? How can an analysis of other peoples’ perspectives be pursued, if they for instance, like here, are based in *walk diaries*? Can, or should, the analysis itself be made in an intersubjective spirit, or still be mostly in the control of one subject? Would it be possible in subject-driven qualitative research approaches, as presented here, to work in novel ways with quantitative methodologies that include others’ voices?

How can a *critical normativity* approach work in future applications adapted to design processes in order to gain transparency, and to make clear whose perspectives, apart from what type of perspectives, support design work and the visualization of proposals?

Are there ways of including the components of a *critical normativity* to be developed and implemented with quantitative design tools, such as for instance parametric design? How can *critical normativity*, including attention to orientation, identity formation, allowance to *go astray*, and declaration of partial perspectives, be adapted to architectural practice without being too time consuming?

### **Epilogue**

I have in this dissertation, precisely through an applied mode of research, pursued as reflections on walking in the city, been able to compare and discuss norm-critical perspectives in their capacity to cover the situational and temporal relations in urban space. This way, the result of this dissertation presents architectural perspectives on walking applicable on urban design and planning, but is also a response to the overall theoretical question: how to contribute to architectural as well as gender theory, by merging spatial aspects with norm-criticism.



The purpose to develop a method and implement theories for investigating embodied walk experiences is thus fulfilled through the development of *critical normativity* and its three components: the *going astray*, the *walk diary* and the *critical terminology*. However, further development of the framework and research needs to be done, to describe how materiality of space can be organized and designed in order to balance individuals' power to act freely and the possibility for them to inhabit urban space on equal terms.



## Summary in Swedish/Populärvetenskaplig sammanfattning: Gående som mellanmänsklig handling

Traska, spatsera, flanera, power-gå, ila, dra fötterna efter sig, ta en stärkande promenad eller bara vandra bort i tankarna för en kort stund. Att gå är en komplex handling som omfattar allt från upplevelsen av marken som vi går på till människorna vi möter. Både när vi är ute och går själva eller tillsammans med andra så förhåller vi oss till andra människor och händelser, material och rumsliga former, men även samhälleliga normer. Förväntningar, fördomar och önskningar om platser och människor påverkar hur vi rör oss i staden. På vissa platser kan vi röra oss friare än på andra. Såväl årstid som tid på dygnet påverkar upplevelsen av att gå. Att gå är en situationsberoende upplevelse.

I den här avhandlingen undersöker jag gåendet och dess förutsättningar i relation till subjektiva upplevelser av arkitektur. Avhandlingens teman omfattar både fysiska och sociala upplevelseaspekter av arkitektur, rum, form, plats och materialitet. Resultatet visar att forskare behöver engagera sig aktivt i den praktiska verklighet som fotgängare rör sig i för att kunna leva sig in i och förstå gåendets förutsättningar och på så sätt kunna bidra med relevant kunskap till gåendeforskningen. För att kunna designa gånliga miljöer behöver även arkitekter och planerare ha en erfarenhetsbaserad förståelse för fotgängares vardag och gåendets utmaningar.

Avhandlingens resultat innefattar även utvecklingen av en analysstrategi, *kritisk normativitet* (critical normativity). *Kritisk normativitet* är ett förhållningssätt till forskning som i mitt fall är baserat i tre undersökande komponenter: en *gådag-bok* (walk diary) för insamlande av empiri, en *gå vilse-attityd* (going astray) som fungerar som en associativ fas, samt en *kritisk terminologi* (critical terminology) som problematiserar subjektivitet och normativitet.

I avhandlingen diskuteras svårigheter och problem med att gruppera människor utifrån önsknings, behov eller identiteter som exempelvis kön. I syfte att undvika kliché-mässiga eller förenklade grupperingar av individer tillämpar jag den ovan beskrivna *kritisk normativitets*-strategin som tar tillvara och uppmärksammar skillnader hos individer. *Kritisk normativitet* kan i framtiden utvecklas för att användas som analysverktyg i utformningen av stadsmiljöer avsedda för fotgängare med olika behov och önsknings.

De analytiska begrepp och förhållningssätt som jag förespråkar fokuserar på att fånga variationer i upplevelser av att gå. Begreppen är främst hämtade från feministisk och queer teori, som tex Sara Ahmed (2006), Judith Butler (2011a) och Donna J. Haraway (1991). Ahmed (2006) visar på hur människors möjlighet att röra och orientera sig i ett rum är beroende av hur vi kommer till platsen; varifrån vi anländer. Lika lite som att en plats kan vara neutral, är vår ankomst till den det. Allt beror på vilka vi är som individer och omgivningens förväntningar på oss, men även vem platsen är gjord för. På detta sätt lyfts relationen mellan tid och identitet fram i avhandlingen och att dessa faktorer påverkar våra upplevelser av platser och rum, men även våra förutsättningar för att röra oss som gående. Identiteters föränderlighet och instabilitet har även betydelse för hur vi forskar om gående. En dagboksanteckning kan fånga både tidsaspekter, och gående som en mellanmänsklig handling.

*Hej Tjejen! skriker en man åt mig.  
Ropa inte "Hej tjejen!" till mig. Jag vill vara i fred. Jag vill gå här i mina fina sommarkläder utan att du skriker på mig. Jag vill inte vara osynlig. Jag vill inte att du stirrar på mig. Jag vill inte ha några kommentarer. Precis som alla andra vill jag få plats. Låt mig gå utan att tveka. Låt mig gå utan att skynda på stegen.  
En timme senare får ditt ropande mig att överväga alternativa vägar hem. Men istället för att gå längs en ödslig gata väljer jag motvilligt eventuella kommentarer från dig. Det är en kompromiss och en markering. Det irriterar mig. Jag vill inte att du ska bestämma var jag ska gå. För att undvika din blick stryker jag längs med kanten av gångvägen. För det är du som tittar på mig. Jag tittar bort. Jag är van att titta bort. Låtsas att jag inte ser dig. Inte vända mig nyfiket om. Stålsätta mig och gå raskt. Men just nu finns det inget att gömma sig bakom mer än avståndet till där du sitter. (140806)*

Jag har i huvudsak använt mig av en autoetnografisk metod i mitt avhandlingsarbete, dvs utgått ifrån mina egna betraktelser och upplevelser av arkitektur och att gå. Även om jag använt en metod som fokuserar på det självupplevda hos forskaren så visar dagboksanteckningen ovan att jag har varit tvungen att relatera till och ta hänsyn till andra mellanmänskliga relationer som uppstått när jag varit ute och gått. Dagboksanteckningarna blir också ett led i positioneringen av mig själv som forskare. Haraways (1991) vetenskapsteoretiska begrepp om situerad kunskap och partiella perspektiv pekar ut vikten av att forskare beskriver från vilken subjektiv position de betraktar ett fenomen istället för att hävda en slentrianmässig objektivitet.

Användandet av autoetnografi har även gjort att jag kunnat uppmärksamma teman och aspekter som jag inte på förhand kunnat peka ut som viktiga för gåendets förutsättningar. Upplevelsen av mörker är ett sådant tema, där jag bland annat tar upp hur upplevelsen av mörker påverkar hur vi förhåller oss till människor vi möter, ser eller tror vi kan konfronteras med när vi är ute och går. Detta i sin tur relaterar till Butlers (2011a) performativitetsteori om skapande och vidmakthållande av identitet som kopplad till kön och sexualitet. Uppmärksammandet av mörker har även bidragit till en diskussion bortom upplevelsen av det som något enbart skrämmande

eller riskfyllt. Här har jag snarare pekat på dess kvaliteter: formmässiga, materiella såväl som stämningsskapande, vilket är kunskap som kan användas i utformningen av stadsmiljöer.

Genom observationer som dessa och genom införandet av ett *kritiskt normativitets*-perspektiv i planering och design av stadsmiljöer kan vi ifrågasätta normer och stereotyper föreställningar om arkitekturens och rummets påverkan på människors upplevelser av att gå. Vi kan också föra en kritisk diskussion om hur normativitet manifesteras i det offentliga rummet, och därmed lyfta frågor om tillgänglighet och makt: Vilka behov tillskrivs fotgängare vid utformning av stadsrummet? Vilka aktiviteter och handlingar anses önskvärda?

## Appendix I: Additional notes on Methods

### **Data collection procedures of Walk diary**

The *walk diary* notes were collected over a period of time of two years, 2013-2015, and comprises my own subjective walk experiences. All *walk diary* notes were initially written in Swedish. After selecting which parts should be included in the dissertation, those sections were translated.

In the beginning of my data collection phase I brought my computer and started writing as soon as the walk was finished. I would also bring a camera in case there was something interesting I wanted to document. After a while I bought a smart phone, which made the data collection easier and more causal. I did not want my impressions of walking to be disturbed by writing during walking, therefore the walk notes were done after I finished a walk.

I revisited the site Fågelbacksgatan/Kronprinsen on two days in September 2013. The second time, I quickly felt that I would not be able to extract much more knowledge there. The place was familiar to me and I wanted to explore my experiences of a place that was part of a daily routine. I wrote down a set of questions—inspired by Ahmed's concept of bodily orientation (2006) and arrivals (2010)—before starting the observation:

What is affecting my angle of arrival?

What is my angle of arrival?

How do I orientate myself?

Towards what do I orientate myself?

How do I arrive? From where?

I continuously made notes during the entire observation. However, when doing the observation I noticed there were too many questions, and not all of them suited the purpose. Instead, I noticed how some body parts related to specific form elements, and I started to make notes about which body parts related to certain form elements. After walking around the place once, I did an additional walk and took some photos in connection to my notes. Afterwards, I sat down to type out my notes, and made further notes on body parts in relation to form elements. These notes were organized as footnotes in the text. My observations were not always written down following the order of appearance at the site. Instead, I partly let associations guide me. E.g. an observation might lead to a reflection of what I had previously seen. I kept this order in the text. Then, the text was put aside for a couple of months due to other work I had to do. When I reread it 3-4 months later, I added more footnotes. I organized the text, photos and footnotes in order to get an overview of the material, and then went back to the site in order to take additional photos. I continued my analysis by combining text, photos, and drawings in order to illustrate the information I gathered.

The autoethnographic observation of the deviation spots in Lorensborg and Dammfri took place on two separate occasions in January 2014. The weather showed no mercy: ice-cold and more or less stormy. For the autoethnographic observation I began to walk from the starting point to spot c in each case (see figure 2 and 3). At spot c I stopped to make notes about the place. I focused on how spatial elements could cause the different opinions and how they could be experienced differently. I stayed about 15 min at each spot and wrote down my impressions of and thoughts on the spatiality. I took some photos, and finished by walking to the end of the predefined path. Afterwards, I typed up my notes, and they were later translated into English. The notes were then analyzed and reflected upon using footnotes in combination with the photos, and I created a collage of text, photos, and drawings.

### ***Structured Walk Study***

The three routes examined in an initial observational study—the VOA (Körner et al., 2012)—were also used as experiment situations for a structured walk study. A questionnaire was designed in order to address issues regarding perceptions of the



environment along the predefined routes.<sup>131</sup> The questionnaire consisted of 34-35 questions with several sub-questions. Of these, I constructed three pairs of sub-questions addressing perception of space in regard to physical features along the walk routes:

I perceive the environment as hindering me from moving along.
I perceive the environment as making it easier for me to move along
I perceive it as difficult to understand how I can continue to move along from this place.
I immediately understand how I can continue to walk from this place.
I perceive it as easy to orientate myself at this place.
I perceive it as difficult to orientate myself at this place.

Figure I.1. The six statements I designed for the questionnaire.

The answers to each statement were made in a five-step scale ranging from 1 (low agreement with statement) to 5 (high agreement with statement).

The data collection took place in September, 2012.<sup>132</sup> 106 participants—54 women and 50 men—were asked to walk the predefined route in the neighborhood they lived in, and evaluate it by answering the questionnaire.<sup>133</sup> The participants' age ranged between 18-84, and the median age was 57.<sup>134</sup> The sample size was distributed between the neighborhoods as follows: Lorensborg (28 residents), Dammfri (40 residents), and Rönneholm (38 residents). Participants evaluated one walk route in their own neighborhood. The participants were asked to stop at three different points along the route, answering the same set of questions. The spots along the path were chosen in order to provide a set of different situations along the three routes. These different situations were partly identified through the VOA (Körner et al., 2012), but also in on-site discussion within the project team of *The Urban Walking Project*. The same questions were asked at each stop. Afterwards there was a joint discussion where

<sup>131</sup> The questions were supposed to address issues regarding perception of both space, in response to physical features, and psychological aspects. The questionnaire was designed by myself, Maria Johansson and Catharina Sternudd as part of the Urban Walking project.

<sup>132</sup> Maria Johansson, Catharina Sternudd and Marianne Küller collected the data.

<sup>133</sup> The participants were recruited from a previous study—within the project of Urban Walking—on walking habits “What limits the pedestrian? Exploring perceptions of walking in the built environment and in the context of every-day life.” (Lindelöw et al., 2014)

<sup>134</sup> Two values regarding sex were missing.

the participants could add comments. I have only had access to the data concerning the three sets of questions that I constructed (figure I.1).

**Questionnaire result**

In Lorensborg the standard deviations of the statements varied between 0.98-1.43. Spot C had the highest standard deviation values in regard to the statement “I perceive it as difficult to orientate myself at this place” (SD 1.43), and “I immediately understand how I can continue to walk from this place” (SD 1.41).

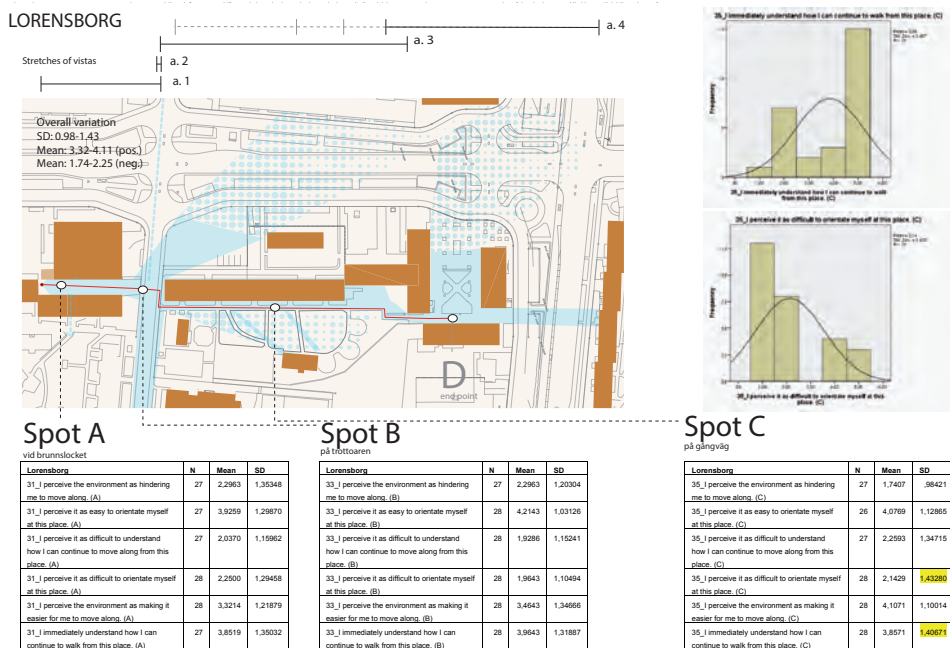


Figure I.2. Lorensborg: plan of VOA (Körner et al., 2012), histogram, and standard Deviation (SD).

In Dammfri the standard deviations of the statements varied between 0.6-1.43. Spot C had the highest standard deviation values in regard to the statement “I perceive it as easy to orientate myself at this place” (SD 1.43).

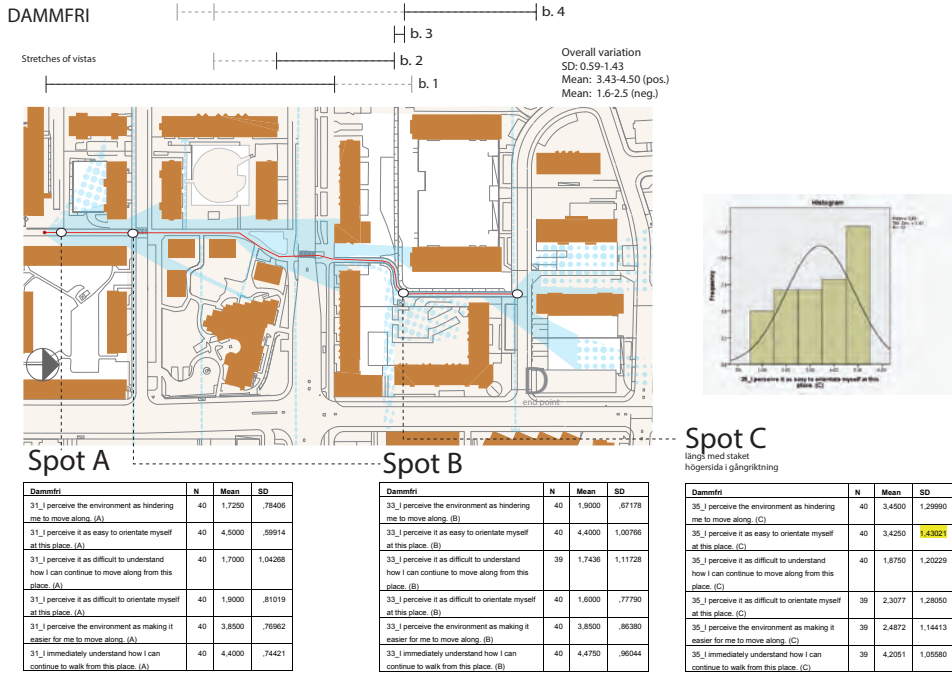
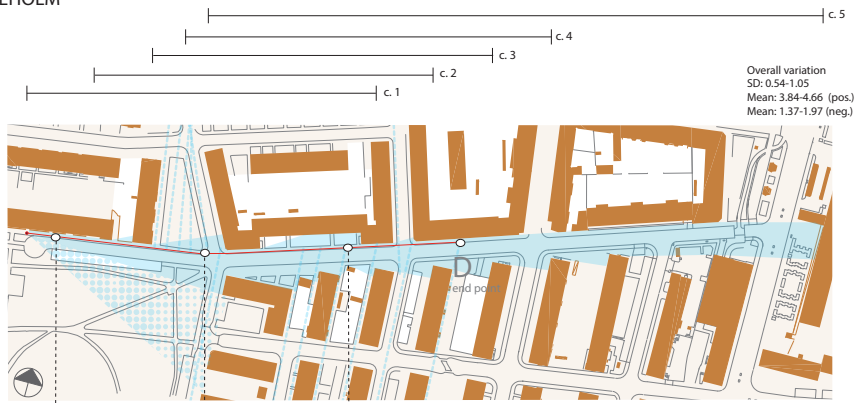


Figure I.3. Dammfri: plan of VOA (Körner et al., 2012), histogram, and standard Deviation (SD).

In Rönneholm the standard deviation of the statements varied between 0.54-1.05. (This route was later left out in my autoethnographic study, due to the rather low standard deviations.)

RÖNNEHOLM



Spot A

Rönneholm	N	Mean	SD
31_1 perceive the environment as hindering me to move along. (A)	37	1,9459	1,05267
31_1 perceive it as easy to orientate myself at this place. (A)	37	4,2703	,90212
31_1 perceive it as difficult to understand how I can continue to move along from this place. (A)	37	1,4595	,69100
31_1 perceive it as difficult to orientate myself at this place. (A)	37	1,7297	,80445
31_1 perceive the environment as making it easier for me to move along. (A)	38	3,8847	,89411
31_1 immediately understand how I can continue to walk from this place. (A)	38	4,5789	,72154

Spot B

Rönneholm	N	Mean	SD
33_1 perceive the environment as hindering me to move along. (B)	38	1,9737	1,02632
33_1 perceive it as easy to orientate myself at this place. (B)	38	4,6316	,67468
33_1 perceive it as difficult to understand how I can continue to move along from this place. (B)	38	1,4737	,72548
33_1 perceive it as difficult to orientate myself at this place. (B)	38	1,4474	,60168
33_1 perceive the environment as making it easier for me to move along. (B)	38	3,8421	1,00071
33_1 immediately understand how I can continue to walk from this place. (B)	38	4,6316	,68914

Spot C

Rönneholm	N	Mean	SD
35_1 perceive the environment as hindering me to move along. (C)	38	1,6579	,78072
35_1 perceive it as easy to orientate myself at this place. (C)	38	4,6579	,98248
35_1 perceive it as difficult to understand how I can continue to move along from this place. (C)	38	1,3684	,54132
35_1 perceive it as difficult to orientate myself at this place. (C)	37	1,5676	,72803
35_1 perceive the environment as making it easier for me to move along. (C)	37	4,0811	,89370
35_1 immediately understand how I can continue to walk from this place. (C)	37	4,5946	,72493

Figure I.4. Plan of VOA, Histogram, and Standard Deviation (SD).







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A pedestrian-oriented view of the built  
environment: A Vista Observation Analysis (VOA)  
of urban form

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Architecture

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## A pedestrian-oriented view of the built environment: A Vista Observation Analysis (VOA) of urban form

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Architecture

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Environmental Psychology

Gunnar Sandin  
Theoretical and Applied Aesthetics



## PREFACE

In recent years the walkable city has been strongly promoted to reduce car trips in urban areas and to support a healthy lifestyle among urban residents. Walking is a mode of transport in itself, but also the basis of intermodal transports, and a foundation for accessibility in the transport system. In this context the design of the built environment could be regarded as an action to increase the modal share of walking, and an urban setting that supports walking is an indispensable prerequisite for a sustainable city.

“Urban Walking” is a multidisciplinary research project drawing upon architecture, traffic planning and environmental psychology. The objective of the research is to identify physical features, transport system characteristics and urban design qualities that encourage or hinder walking as a whole trip or as a part of a trip chain in the Swedish context. A second objective is to develop new urban design strategies for promoting walking as a mode of transport in itself and as a prerequisite for travel with public transport and intermodality. This report presents a new approach, the pedestrian-oriented view of the built environment, and proposes the Vista Observation Analysis (VOA) of urban form as a method to understand the role of the built environment in urban residents’ choice to walk.

The research was funded within the call “Samordnad stadsutveckling” by grant dnr 250-2010-370 from the Swedish Research Council Formas, the Swedish Transport Administration, and the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency. The authors gratefully acknowledge Christer Malmström and Catharina Sternudd for valuable comments on the method and the empirical work.

Lund, November 2012

Maria Johansson

Project leader



## SUMMARY

This report presents and tests a theoretical framework for describing the influence of the built environment on transport walking in urban settings. Walking is an important mode of transportation due to its environmental friendly, health improving, psychological enhancing and socializing outcomes. Previous research on walking and built environment does not acknowledge the 3D aspects of spatiality or governing aspects within the urban planning process and their effect on walking conditions. The presented method, the Vista Observation Analysis (VOA), takes its theoretical framework from a combination of Foucault's theory of discipline and Gibson's spatial vista concept. VOA provides a contextual and situated perspective on physical features, through the determination of vistas as they appear in the walking process and in plans of the areas of study. It also shows ideological implications, here in an interpretation of the disciplining mechanisms of directing or dictating. "Directing" mechanisms afford a spatial possibility, while dictating mechanisms present a material obstacle of some kind. Both types appear along a walking route. Hence the situated and visually determined materiality of urban form is seen as influencing transport walking. The VOA of the outdoor built urban form was here conducted along three walking routes in Malmö, Sweden, and the data was qualitatively analysed. The VOA showed for instance the importance of detecting how different routes varied in the successive coupling of vistas, thus implying a measure of how well they support transport walking. The result of the VOA is discussed in relation to the outcome of the application of a quantitative environmental audit tool, the Irvine-Minnesota-Inventory (IMI), along the three walking routes. The IMI did not capture the basic differences in the traffic structures and is hence insufficient for the Swedish context. The result of VOA shows the need to integrate visibility aspects when studying pedestrian conditions. It also shows the need for a refinement of the directing/dictating scale in order to capture the diversity of the basic urban structure and the specific needs of various types of walking. Further development of VOA could include theories of environmental psychology and incorporate digitalized tools commonly used by urban planners to rationalize its application.



## SAMMANFATTNING

Denna rapport presenterar och testar en teoretisk utgångspunkt för att beskriva den byggda miljöns inflytande på transportgående i stadsmiljöer. Gående är av flera skäl ett betydande transportmedel, som främjar miljö, hälsa, psykologisk utveckling och social samvaro. Tidigare forskning om gående och byggd miljö beaktar inte tillräckligt hur tredimensionella och materiella egenskaper hos arkitekturen samspelar med upplevelsen, och hur detta ingår i planeringen av stadsmiljöer. Den metod som presenteras här – VOA (Vista Observation Analysis) – tar sin teoretiska utgångspunkt i en kombination av Foucault's teori om rumslig disciplinering och Gibsons idé om rumsliga vyer (vistas). VOA ger ett kontextualiserat och platsspecifikt perspektiv på de fysiska rumsliga egenskaperna. VOA redovisar i plandokument vistas längs en gångsträcka så som de uppträder när en person går sträckan. Analysen visar också rummets ideologiska implikationer, här genom de disciplinerande mekanismerna "ledande" och "dikterande". Ledande mekanismer erbjuder rumsliga möjligheter, medan dikterande mekanismer visar på materiella hinder. Båda mekanismerna är verksamma längs en gångsträcka, och således förutsätts att transportgående påverkas av en situationsbestämd och visuellt betingad materialitet. VOA tillämpades i en empirisk studie längs tre gångsträckor i Malmö. Informationen redovisades kvalitativt och visar betydelsen av att notera hur olika sträckor varierar vad gäller hur vistas successivt kopplas till varandra, vilket ger information om hur väl en sträcka kan förväntas stödja transportgående. Beskrivningen av gångsträckorna baserad på VOA diskuteras i relation till resultatet från en kvantitativ expertchecklista, Irvine-Minnesota-Inventory (IMI), applicerad längs samma sträckor. IMI diskriminerade inte mellan de grundläggande skillnaderna i trafikstrukturer och var därför otillräcklig för en svensk kontext. Beskrivningen med VOA visar på betydelsen av att integrera visuella aspekter då man studerar stadsmiljöns förutsättningar för gående. Beskrivningen visar även att en förfining behövs av ledande/dikterande-skalan, för att den skall fånga skillnaderna i den fysiska miljön, samt särskilda behov för olika varianter och syften i gåendet. En vidareutveckling av VOA kan inkludera t ex miljöpsykologisk teori samt införliva stadsplaneringens och den arkitektoniska designens digitala instrument.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The design of the built environment, the urban form, is one aspect that sets the physical framework to walking, but how? A growing body of research shows a connection between physical activity, such as walking, and the design of the urban form and layout (Frank et al., 2005, Cerin et al., 2006, De Nazelle et al., 2011). Ecological models suggest that health behaviour is influenced by the physical environment, psychological and social factors, and policy decisions (Stokols, 1992, Sallis et al., Glanz et al., 2008) such as urban design strategies. A pedestrian-friendly built environment not only promotes a healthier and sustainable lifestyle, offering opportunities for psychological development (Mackett et al., 2007) and well-being (Foster and Giles-Corti, 2008, Middleton, 2011), but also assures a large group of people access to the city regardless of their socio-economic status (Southworth, 2005). Public space is a “part of our everyday social reality”, where space and our spatial behaviour affect and define each other (Madanipour 2003), and so the ability to walk also influences the sense of belonging in an urban community. Middleton (2011) points out the lack of studies differentiating types of walking, e.g. walking as a means of transport, recreation or exercise, and the specific needs of the different types of walking. The focus in transportation research has been on motorised transport, and there is a lack of knowledge about how walking differs from other means of transport (Foltête and Piombini, 2010). Complex models are needed to understand the influence of combinations of design elements on walking (Alfonzo et al., 2008, Foltête and Piombini, 2010), as well as the “Hierarchy of Walking Needs within a Socio-Ecological Framework” (Alfonzo, 2005).

The aim of this study is to develop and test a theoretical framework and a methodology for analysing urban form in relation to transport walking: the Vista Observation Analysis. The method is applied along walking routes in order to capture spatial aspects and power aspects, and the way these influence access to urban public space in the built environment. The present research contributes to the existing body of assessment instruments in this field by adding theoretical concepts that capture the basic concepts of urban form specific to transport walking, while introducing a method applicable for architects and urban planners. The suggested method, VOA, is one of many ways to analyse the built environment. In this study, the Irvine-

Minnesota Inventory (IMI) instrument (Day et al., 2006) is applied in parallel to the VOA in order to provide an additional quantitative description of each route. Another aim is to test the IMI in a Nordic setting. IMI was selected from several assessment tools for walking because it captures an extensive range of aspects, can be applied to parts of routes, and is designed for use on-site by professionals.

## 1.1 Previous research on walking

In previous studies, walking has usually been considered in terms of a quantified outcome. The term 'walkability' has been applied as a measure for assessing how urban settings support and encourage walking. The walkability index is derived from a range of parameters, e.g. the extent to which the built form is "... providing for pedestrian comfort and safety, connecting people with varied destinations within a reasonable amount of time and effort, and offering visual interest in journeys throughout the network" (Southworth, 2005). Several methods, based on archive data (e.g. Geographic Information Systems, GIS), environmental audits (e.g. the Irvine Minnesota Inventory, IMI) or self-reported data (e.g. The Neighbourhood Environmental Walkability Scale, NEWS), have been applied to analyse measured and perceived characteristics of the built environment and their influence on physical activity (Brownson et al., 2009), and to derive walkability indices or scales. Examples of the more common methods developed and applied in previous walking studies within various academic fields are described below, in order to provide a general overview of studies of walking in urban areas.

### 1.1.1. Walking as a quantified outcome

*Measured and observed assessments.* GIS approaches utilise existing data and so may be relatively labour- and time- efficient (Brownson et al., 2009). Several studies have applied various GIS-based models to generate a walkability measure of the built form at neighbourhood level, analysing connectivity and proximity (Owen et al., 2007, Frank et al., 2005, Leslie et al., 2007), street connectivity, dwelling density and land-use mix (Leslie et al., 2005), route choices (Borst et al., 2009, Foltête and Piombini, 2010) and, in combination with other methods, measuring perceived walkability, NEWS/NEWS-A (Leslie et al., 2005, Cerin et al., 2007a, Arvidsson et al., 2011). Objectively measured physical activity or frequency of walking are positively associated with objectively measured walkability (Frank et al., 2005, Owen et al., 2007), and the application of GIS by using data on dwellings, land use, connectivity,



and net retail area provides accurate information on walkability (Leslie et al., 2007). Studies applying GIS to analyse route choices – deviation analysis (Foltête and Piombini, 2010) and resistance factors (Borst et al., 2009) – use models based on the effort needed to reach a specific destination, as well as time and distance minimisation. These studies suggest further development of the categorisation of environmental features.

Environmental audit tools are applied to collect data on characteristics that are best assessed by direct observation (Brownson et al., 2009). The IMI developed in the USA is an extensive questionnaire designed to measure the link between the built environment and physical activity. IMI is designed for use by trained raters on a segment level, defined as the space between two buildings, and the IMI assesses 162 environmental items in four categories: accessibility, pleasurability, perceived safety from traffic and perceived safety from crime. The IMI can be combined with GIS (Day et al., 2006). Only those items that discriminate between segments are included in the final analyses, and inter-rater consistency was high and statistically reliable (Boarnet et al., 2006). Werner et al. (2010) reported inter-rater agreement for most items to be in the range 60-100%, but suggested further refinement of the categories. Various studies involving IMI have successfully distinguished between environments with different degrees of walkability (Gallimore et al., 2011, Werner et al., 2010, Brown et al., 2007).

Ewing and Handy (2009) proposed a method for use by designers, planners, and researchers that would enable them to objectively assess subjective qualities of the urban street environment. Urban design qualities – imageability, enclosure, human scale, transparency and complexity – are linked to specific physical features to articulate the complex relationship between walking behaviour and the urban environment. The authors stress the importance of understanding the relationship between environmental features, and the individual's perception of the environment is understood as a possible combination of physical features, urban design qualities and individual reactions. The expert panel's hypothesis on the relationship between different characteristics and perception was only partly confirmed (Ewing and Handy, 2009). A combination of GIS and Ewing and Handy's method showed high correlation between transparency and complexity and the equivalent GIS measures (Purciel et al., 2009).

*Perceived assessments.* Most evidence on the relationship between the built environment and walking is based on self-reported data, and the most widely used tool is the NEWS questionnaire (Brownson et al., 2009). The NEWS questionnaire is

designed to evaluate the perceived influence of environmental aspects on walking within a neighbourhood. A walkability index is generated according to environmental variables – residential density, land use mix, street connectivity, infrastructure and safety for walking/cycling, aesthetics, traffic hazards and crime – and compared with reports on individual walking frequency and/or health status (Saelens et al., 2003). Cross-validations of NEWS/NEWS-A show a higher concordance on individual level than on block group level, and a difference on separate levels for the influence of perceived environmental factors on walking (Cerin et al., 2009, Cerin et al., 2006). Further NEWS/NEWS-A studies have been implemented in various settings outside the USA (Cerin et al., 2007ba, Leslie et al., 2005, Arvidsson et al., 2011, Cerin et al., 2009, Cerin et al., 2007ab, Cerin et al., 2006).

#### 1.1.2. Walking as a qualitative experience, research method, act of resistance and enunciation

Middleton (2010, 2011) draws attention to the need for qualitative studies on walking, and an acknowledgement of the importance of habits and routines in individual walking decisions when developing and implementing policy strategies. Kelly et al. (2010) stress the importance of incorporating the actual activity of walking, and present a study comparing three methods aimed at capturing the pedestrian perspective on the environment. A stated preference survey, an on-street survey concerning attitudes to environmental attributes, and an on-the-move survey were used (Kelly et al., 2010). The result of the study showed that the three methods can complement each other to extend the concept of walkability to some extent (Kelly et al., 2010). The result of the study also showed a need for designing special 'pedestrian maps' that highlight important pedestrian attributes. These attributes often do not appear on conventional maps that are designed for motorised transport (Kelly et al., 2010). In this study, walking is both the outcome and part of the survey method. This could be compared with the *dérive* of the situationists and the psychogeographic map. Psychogeography is defined as

*"The study of the specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals."* (cited from <http://library.nothingness.org/articles/S1/en/display/7> retrieved 12.12.11.)

In the Kelly et al. (2010) study, the researchers defined the specific route, questions, etc., whereas in a *dérive* (Knabb, 2006) the pedestrian is responsible for all decisions and observations. In the field of architecture, there are few specific methods for



exploring the link between walking and the built form, and walking is mostly considered in terms of the flâneur, or an act of resistance, and not as an effective means of transport. The flâneur first appeared in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and Benjamin (1999) characterises the flâneur as an urban observer. In its original form it was considered to be a largely male activity, while the situationists presented a new type of flâneur with their method of *dérive* (Sadler, 1998) for exploring and experiencing the city.

*“One of the basic situationist practices is the dérive, (1) a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiances. Dérives involve playful-constructive behavior and awareness of psychogeographical effects, and are thus quite different from the classic notions of journey or stroll.”* (Debord, 1957 cited from <http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/2.derive.htm> retrieved 12.12.11.).<sup>i</sup>

Central to the *dérive* is the act of resistance to established urban design and the individual’s experience of the city; the journey itself is part of the outcome. The *dérive* not only offered a new way of experiencing space, but also called for new ways to depict these experiences. The result of a *dérive* could be a psychogeographic map (see Debord and Jorn, *The Naked City*, 1957 in Sadler, 1998), where the experience of the walk is depicted using a collage technique. De Certeau (2002) outlines a modified version of the *dérive*, where walking is considered as a fundamental way to experience a city due to its possible enunciation functions.

## 1.2 Gaps in previous research on walking

Existing research on walking has great potential but the development and evaluation of measurement methods are still in their infancy (Brownson et al., 2009). In the literature on environmental audits (neighbourhood observations), data from observation methods, tools, and analysis are inconsistently reported, making comparisons difficult (Schaefer-McDaniel et al., 2010). The quantitative studies need to be complemented with descriptions of the built environment; this would provide information about how the relationships between urban form features influence pedestrians, the social implications of the built environment, and type of walking that takes place. Methods used in architecture need to be given more structure if they are to be made applicable for professionals outside and inside the field, and if they are to be applicable in this type of research setting (Kärholm et al., 2012). The present article therefore specifically addresses three gaps in the existing literature on urban form and walking. These are described below.

*The spatial configuration.* Walking has to be studied in relation to the physical 3-D settings and their combinations of design elements. Ewing and Handy (2009) confirm the importance of considering the built environment as a compound of urban design qualities and physical features, and examining the individual's response.

*The power perspective.* Historical transformations and consequences of ideological, political or social intentions behind urban design are seldom or never examined in studies of walking. In contrast, research in urban morphology examines built form and variations in the urban landscape in the light of historical and social processes. Very simplified, urban morphology could be described as dealing with four main themes within geography: 1) analysis of street patterns; 2) a critical understanding of typology classification systems by mapping the transformation and formation of the urban landscape over time; 3) explanation of the changes and identification of initiators of change, as well as the extent of the changes; and 4) symbolism and meaning expressed in the urban landscape by its designers (Lilley, 2009).

*The specific needs of transport walking.* The built form must be considered from the perspective of the specific needs of an activity, so the definition of walking has to be divided into categories of different types of walking. In this study, walking as a means of transport is defined as a journey where the pedestrian has a specific destination, i.e. the walking is not for exercise or recreation, and the pedestrian wishes to minimise journey time and maximise efficiency (Middleton, 2011). Foltête and Piombini (2010) argue that the shortest route is a stronger influence on pedestrian route choice than environmental features. Middleton (2011, 2010) emphasises that studies of transport walking should consider individuals' habits and routines. In this study, participants reported the importance of maintaining momentum, perseverance, awareness of traffic, etc. but also "enjoyment". The preliminary work for this research project included a focus group discussion that considered factors important to transport walking – these included short cuts, avoidance of road traffic, the possibility to walk in the sun but sheltered from the wind, variety of building types on the journey, other pedestrian activity, and separate paths for cyclists and pedestrians.

In this article the conditions for detecting walking options within the built environment will be studied from a visual perspective – the visibility of urban form features, and the type of impact and consequences they might have on efficient navigation for a pedestrian.



## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework is based on the theory of vista (Gibson, 1986) and serial vision/sequence of revelation (Cullen, 1976), but also on a spatial discourse on discipline (Foucault 1995). The first part considers visual perception and descriptions of spatial configurations, and then Foucault's notion of discipline will be applied as a way of capturing power aspects of built form.

### 2.1 The spatial configuration

Gibson uses vista to describe how the environment is perceived in relation to pedestrian locomotion.

*"An alley in a maze, a room in a house, a street in a town, and a valley in a countryside each constitutes a place, and a place often constitutes a vista (Gibson, 1966b, p.206), a semienclosure, a set of unhidden surfaces. A vista is what is seen from here, with the proviso that "here" is not a point but an extended region. Vistas are serially connected since at the end of an alley the next alley opens up; at the edge of the doorway the next room opens up; at the corner of the street the next street opens up; at the brow of the hill the next valley opens up. To go from one place to another involves the opening up of the vista ahead and closing in of the vista behind. A maze or a cluttered environment provides a choice of vistas. And thus, to find the way to a hidden place, one needs to see which vista has to be opened up next, or which occluding edge hides the goal. One vista leads to another in a continuous set of reversible transitions."* (Gibson, 1986, p. 198)

Pedestrian mobility is afforded by a series of vistas, which are linked to the occurrence of obstacles and barriers.

*"A cliff face, a wall, a chasm, and a stream are barriers; they do not afford pedestrian locomotion unless there is a door, a gate or a bridge. A tree or a rock is an obstacle. Ordinarily, there are paths between obstacles, and these openings are visible. The progress of locomotion is guided by the perception of barriers and obstacles, that is, by the act of steering into the openings and away from the surfaces that afford injury."* (Gibson, 1986, p. 132)

As a spatial concept, vista explains the process of the visual perception of the relationships between physical features when walking in any kind of environment, natural or artificial (Gibson, 1986). Vista can be compared with serial vision and a sequence of revelations that address the relationships between architectural design and walking (Cullen, 1976). Cullen's study presents a typology of urban situations that emphasise the effects of different plan layouts – design elements in relation to plan location (Cullen, 1976), and both theories provide a framework capturing the 3-D aspects of the spatial settings.

## 2.2 The power perspective

Foucault's discipline concept (1995) provides a theoretical model for how an immaterial property, power, can be translated into a material property, built form. The material becomes the mechanism to exercise power over the individual body and its movement (Foucault 1995), and it depicts how a society can implement its ideas on power and control in the architectural design of its institutions. Bentham's *Panopticon* is applied as an architectural reference to explain how discipline can be translated into a physical form, but it is not to be comprehended as a 'model' building for exercising power. Instead:

*"...the diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form; its functioning, abstracted from any obstacle, resistance or friction, must be represented as a pure architectural and optical system: it is in fact a figure of political technology that may and must be detached from any specific use."* (Foucault 1995, p. 205)

According to Foucault (1995), the disciplinary society constitutes vertical partitions of time and space. This is a consequence of society's constant battle to overcome any kind of opposition, revolt or resistance, and the disciplinary techniques use different modalities of partition to destroy "anything that may establish horizontal conjunctions". The constant "procedures of partition and verticality" are manifested in separation of time, space and movement, and ensure that no horizontal relations can be established (Foucault 1995). The human body is manipulated in what Foucault (1995) calls "a machinery of power", which implements its techniques on the human body to reconstruct a new and more obedient body. Discipline is defined as "a type of power" that could be implemented in an institution or in the everyday routines of people's lives. The disciplinary schemes are not only applied in extreme or temporary situations, but can also be regarded as permanent institutions (Foucault 1995), represented by buildings manifesting the disciplinary scheme through their



plans, sections, built form and materials. The built form becomes a mechanism to control bodily movement.

### 2.3 A Vista Observation Analysis, VOA, of urban form features related to transport walking

The focus here will be on how plan and material features might obstruct or facilitate visibility by providing different degrees of transparency. Visibility is considered a variable of the urban form important for facilitating efficient navigation, due to its ability to create connection between vistas. The discipline concept will be applied in order to analyse these connections in terms of their effect on the pedestrian's walking options.

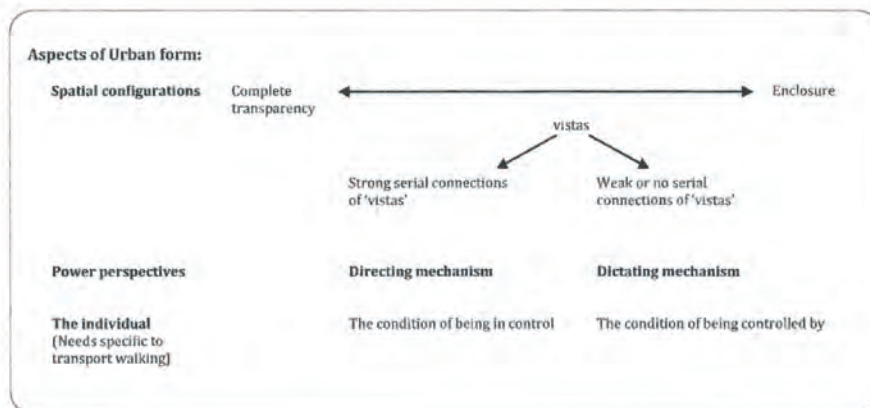
Here, the pedestrian situation is regarded as the physical site, the activity and its needs. Walking is defined as a sequential event, where the pedestrian moves through vistas within the existing built environment. A vista is defined as the accessible walkable physical space, and it can be blocked by various permanent or temporary elements, e.g. buildings, fences, greenery, cars. The link between two vistas enables the acknowledgement of the "extended region" of a vista, which is not to be interpreted as a fixed space, and obstacles and barriers are regarded as strictly material objects (Gibson, 1986). A continuous series of vistas provides coherent information on pedestrian permeability, while disconnected vistas will fragmentise the information. Pedestrian permeability is any passage suitable for pedestrians, and the occurrence of viewed motion can serve as an indicator of permeability. Cullen (1976) refers to motion as a part of "the Existing" and "the Revealed" view of the environment while walking. Here, the visibility of the built form and its pedestrian permeability will be limited to the field of vision in the direction of walking and observed on-site, in contrast to technical plan analysis, i.e. isovist analysis, of the overall visibility and permeability (Hillier, 1993, Benedikt, 1979) that does not distinguish between degrees of visibility.

Foucault's concept of discipline (1995) provides an understanding of the governing and constraining aspects of urban form and, here, specifically on the mobility of pedestrians. The notion of discipline will be applied to analyse material aspects from a power perspective: how the material form affects the possibility of actions, in this study the activity of walking. Specific needs of transport walking (see 1.2) include being able to navigate efficiently and to some extent anticipate what will happen further along the route. All buildings exert some discipline through their verticality

but the type of power exercised, and the degree of discipline, are described more precisely through the terms 'dictation' and 'direction'. Here, 'dictating' mechanisms imply restriction on movement while 'directing' mechanisms facilitate navigation and efficient pedestrian mobility. The crucial point is the link between vistas, and whether or not a continuous series of vistas are produced. Short overlaps between vistas, or completely disconnected islands of vistas, will dictate mobility, while well-connected vistas are supposed to direct the pedestrian. Dictating mechanisms not only impair, obstruct or limit the visual horizontal communication and hinder physical movement; they may also attract a homogeneous group of users by only allowing one type of mobility. Spatial situations facilitating interaction allow "horizontal conjunctions" between individuals and the environment (Foucault 1995), and in this study directing mechanisms are seen as important for transport walking because they provide information on walking options. A continuous series of vistas can act as a dictating mechanism if obstacles other than the built form obstruct the visibility of the pedestrian permeability, e.g. compact greenery, temporary objects. Compared to Space Syntax, the VOA captures social mechanisms of the physical and material environment, whereas the quantitative analysis in Space Syntax (Hillier and Hanson, 1984) focuses on structural hierarchies.

The model below attempts to address identified research gaps by extending the description of urban form to include spatial configurations and power perspectives. This will enable us to address the specific needs of an activity, in this case transport walking.





**Figure 1.** The model describes the proposed method, VOA, for analysing aspects of urban form relating to transport walking. The model corresponds to the identified gaps in previous research. (Authors' elaboration)

*Example of spatial situations constituted by dictating and directing mechanisms*

In an enclosed staircase with a lift, doors to each floor and no windows, the visibility of walking options will be obstructed by the opaque walls. For the person walking up or down the stairs, the vistas will be separated by doors, and information about how to move around will be scarce. The doors both obstruct the view of the user and are barriers to mobility. The built form can be described as containing dictating mechanisms, making it difficult to acknowledge information on mobility options. A more open staircase with a lift, windows and no doors to each floor will offer overlaps between vistas: links. Only vertical movement is possible, yet the user can gather information about the outdoor and indoor environment. The spatial situation of the open staircase contains directing mechanisms.

### 2.3 Research questions

The aim of the empirical study was to test the method, VOA, and to study the visibility of pedestrian permeability along three route segments that illustrate how different urban architectural settings may vary in terms of the walking options they offer. The IMI assessments were used as a quantitative reference. The specific research questions were:

**RQ1:** To what extent does the built form obstruct or facilitate the visibility of pedestrian permeability along each segment, i.e. how does it influence the degree of transparency?

**RQ2:** To what extent does each segment contain directing mechanisms (continuous sequence of vistas) or dictating mechanisms (disconnected vistas)?

## 3. METHOD

### 3.1 Case settings

Three segments of walking routes in Malmö, Sweden, were chosen for the study. The segments were located in the Lorensborg, Dammfri, and Rönneholm neighbourhoods. The neighbourhood are socio-demographically similar, but represent a variety of spatial situations offering different types of walking environment due to different traffic and urban planning strategies (Table 1). Lorensborg has a modernistic pattern of traffic separation. Part of the district comprises high-density buildings while another part has groups of more neighbourhood-oriented residential blocks. Dammfri only has groups of neighbourhood-oriented blocks, with some traffic separation. Rönneholm is a combination of grid blocks and more individual block structures. All three districts have pedestrian footpaths and are located within walking distance of Malmö city centre. The length of each segment was 300 m.

Table 1. Neighbourhood data. (Sources: [www.malmo.se](http://www.malmo.se); Tykesson, 2001, 2002; site observations)

Neighbourhood	Segment A: Lorensborg		Segment B: Dammfri		Segment C: Rönneholm		
Inhabitants	3,952		3,686		6,996		
Area (ha)	37		31		48		
Car ownership Cars per 100 inhabitants	27		29		28		
Income SEK/inhabitant	132,165		148,209		154,840		
Age and gender	Age	%	Age	%	Age	%	%
	0-18	13	0-18	11	0-18	12	
	19-	87	19-	89	19-	88	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	
	Women	54	Women	57	Women	55	
Neighbourhood structure (Building year)	Modernistic/ Neighbourhood-oriented block structure (1956-69)		Neighbourhood-oriented block structure (1945-55)		Mix of grid block and individual block structures (1900-80)		



*Segment A: Lorensborg*

Segment A comprises a pedestrian-only path with a south-north orientation. The residential buildings along the route are individual housing blocks in pairs, partly connected. The segment extends between a car park and the local square. The segment starts at the car park, crosses a pedestrian space located between a small shopping centre and a pair of residential blocks (9-16 storeys) with an outdoor passage at ground level, crosses a road before continuing along a pedestrian path situated between a courtyard (green space, playground, laundry facility) and a long second pair of residential blocks, (9-16 storeys), and ends at the square, which is surrounded by a commercial building (1 storey), and a mixed residential and commercial block (9 storeys).

*Segment B: Dammfri*

Segment B is a combined pedestrian/cycle path, traffic separated by a painted line, with a south-north orientation. The route crosses two roads via pedestrian crossings. The adjacent residential buildings are individual housing blocks. On the west side of the segment, the route passes two private courtyards, the end elevation of three residential blocks (3-4 storeys), the end elevation of a higher residential block (5 storeys), and along the front elevation of a residential block (6 storeys) with an adjacent fenced courtyard/green space. On the east side are the front elevations of four residential blocks (3 storeys), the end elevation of one residential building (5 storeys), and a fenced courtyard.

*Segment C: Rönneholm*

Segment C is a combined road and cycle path with an adjoining pavement and adjacent parking, with a west-east orientation. The segment starts on a pavement adjacent to a cycle path and a cul-de-sac for cars. The route crosses two roads and on the north side runs past a 4-storey residential block, the end elevation of another block (4 storeys), an open green space, followed by the front elevation of another residential block (4 storeys), fronted by a strip of grass. On the south side, the segment passes a park with an adjacent single row of car parking, an L-shaped block of residential and commercial properties (4 storeys) with parking in front of the building, and the end elevations of three residential and commercial blocks (4 storeys). For further information on plan layout see Figures 2-4.

### 3.2 Quantified descriptions of case settings

The segments were further characterised using the IMI (Boarnet et al., 2006), which allowed assessment of the walkability index of the selected segments. This environmental audit tool was chosen because it provides a comprehensive expert assessment based on on-site observation that can be used as a frame of reference for the VOA. After a training session, including a discussion of how the examples provided by Alfonzo et al. (2005) could be applied in a Swedish context, and on-site ratings along a test segment, five independent trained raters assessed the three segments on-site during daylight hours in November 2011. The greenery still had foliage and there was no precipitation. Firstly, the full distance was walked in the direction towards the city centre and back again to get an overall impression. This was followed by the actual assessment, in accordance with the instructions provided for the instrument, while walking along the segment. Each assessment took approximately 45 minutes per segment.

Table 2. Result of IMI audit

Dimension	Accessibility	Pleasurability	Safety	Traffic
Number of items in IMI	58	57	14	47
Number of items relevant for the context	33 (56%)	32 (56%)	7 (50%)	39 (83%)
Segment A, Lorensborg	64.5 %	61.2%	97%	15%
Segment B, Dammfri	47.5%	55.9%	80%	39%
Segment C, Rönneholm	70.5%	65%	100%	28%

Inter-rater agreement was 60% or more for all items except three. In accordance with Werner et al. (2010), it was decided to retain these few items in the analysis. The items were coded into the four overarching dimensions of accessibility, pleasurability, safety and traffic and, as suggested by Werner et al. (2010), only items relevant for the investigated context are included (a list of applied items can be obtained from the authors). Table 2 shows the total number of items in each dimension, the number of items relevant for the present context, and the percentage of the total possible score for each dimension and walking route. This approach gives comparable figures for how well the walking segments score on each dimension.



### 3.3 The VOA: Instrument, procedure of observation and analysis

Pedestrian permeability, visibility, and vistas were marked on plan drawings of each segment. A flexible design was applied to develop a structured observation method (Robson, 2002).

From the point of view of being trained as an architect and in order to capture the experience of a pedestrian the tool for obtaining information was a structured on-site observation of each segment in order to capture the experience of a pedestrian. One observer collected the data in January 2012, on foot and in daylight. The following variables were observed and marked on a map:

1. **Pedestrian permeability:** Pedestrian permeability was interpreted as a public space accessible 24 hours a day, and comprised paths and passages where pedestrians could walk along and that were connected to the segment. Before the observation, the pedestrian permeability according to the map was highlighted and was later compared and supplemented with the observed permeability. The visibility and vistas along each segment were continuously observed and mapped while walking towards the city centre. The studied area was limited in terms of the distance visible from the segment.
2. **Visibility:** a) The field of vision in the walking direction was recorded, as were the objects/material features, e.g. buildings, greenery, and parked cars that obstructed or facilitated the view of the pedestrian permeability. Occurrence of viewed motion was noted as an indicator of possible permeability. b) Potential sightlines along adjacent and connecting paths and streets.
3. **Vistas:** The beginning and end of the physically accessible spaces of vistas along the segment were recorded.

After the observation, brief notes were made about observed material and form features. Each segment was observed three times for 30-45 minutes. During each walk a few stops were made to mark the observations on a map. The result of the mapping was digitalized and analysed once, then each segment was observed a second time to double-check the variables. The original plan drawings were revised using additional information from photos, and Google and Eniro maps.

The visual data was qualitatively analysed using the VOA (see 2.3) in order to describe the following: the extent to which the segment connects to the adjacent pedestrian permeability; the extent to which the visibility of the segment was linked to its pedestrian permeability and the adjacent pedestrian permeability; and the extent

to which each segment provides a continuous sequence of vistas (directing mechanisms), or disconnected vistas (dictating mechanisms).

An experienced practicing architect was invited to carry out a structured review of the analysis's result, the interpretation of which corresponded to that of the observer.

## 4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

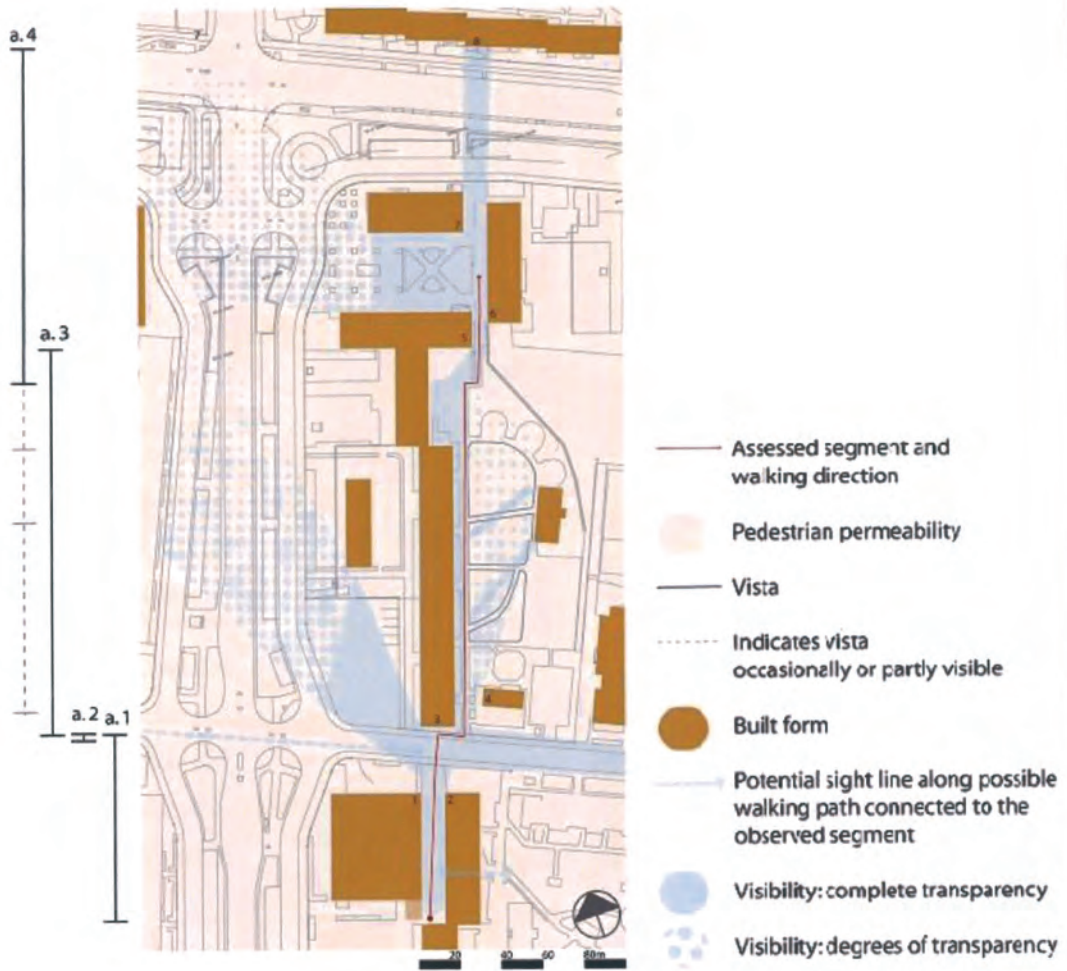
The mapping of permeability, visibility, and vistas and field notes from the on-site observations formed the basis for the analysis. The mapping is illustrated in Figure 2-4.

### 4.1 Analysis

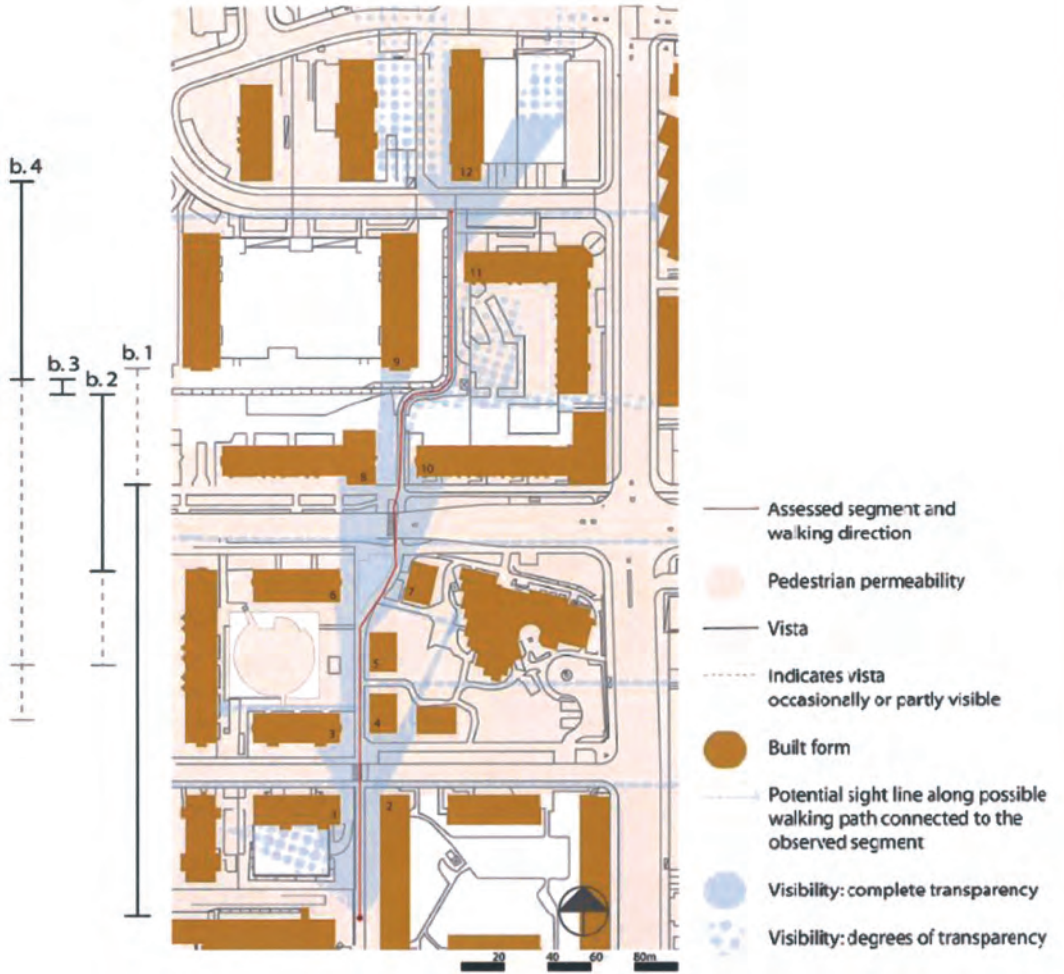
#### *Segment A*

There are only three points of connection (Figure 2: starting point, link a.1-3, and end point) to the adjacent pedestrian permeability, and the visibility of the path and its continuation is generally low. Visibility of the surroundings is only high when crossing the road, and adjacent walking options are hard to detect because of the openness with no guiding elements (Figure 2, end of vista a.1). Disconnected islands of vistas and short overlaps reduce visibility of the pedestrian permeability and of the surroundings. This is a consequence of the situation of the buildings in relation to each other. The great difference between semi-enclosure and openness could explain the weak links between vista a.1-4, although the a.3-4 have instances of and a longer coherent overlap than the former two, but nevertheless offered few possibilities to detect motion beyond the passage between corner 5 and 6. The dictating mechanisms of the urban form seem to be strong along the segment because of the short visual and physical overlaps, combined with the isolated paths of the courtyard. The dictating mechanisms are intensified in the semi-enclosures created by the solid walls blocking the view in the walking direction, and on some occasion by compact greenery. The visual view of the first vista, a.1, is blocked by an end elevation (building 3). Cullen (1976) refers to this kind of spatial situation as a "closed vista". The long solid wall (3) of vista a.3 is a strong dictating mechanism due to the impossibility of passage through it at any point. The greenery affords different degrees of transparency within the vista a.3, and partly prevents the pedestrian from detecting corner 6, which could otherwise give a hint of vista a.4, (cf. Cullen (1976) "screened vista").





**Figure 2.** Segment A Lorensborg. Plan drawing of observed route showing the visibility of the surroundings while walking, and the stretch of each vista.



**Figure 3.** Segment B Dammfri. Plan drawing of observed route showing the visibility of the surroundings while walking, and the stretch of each vista.

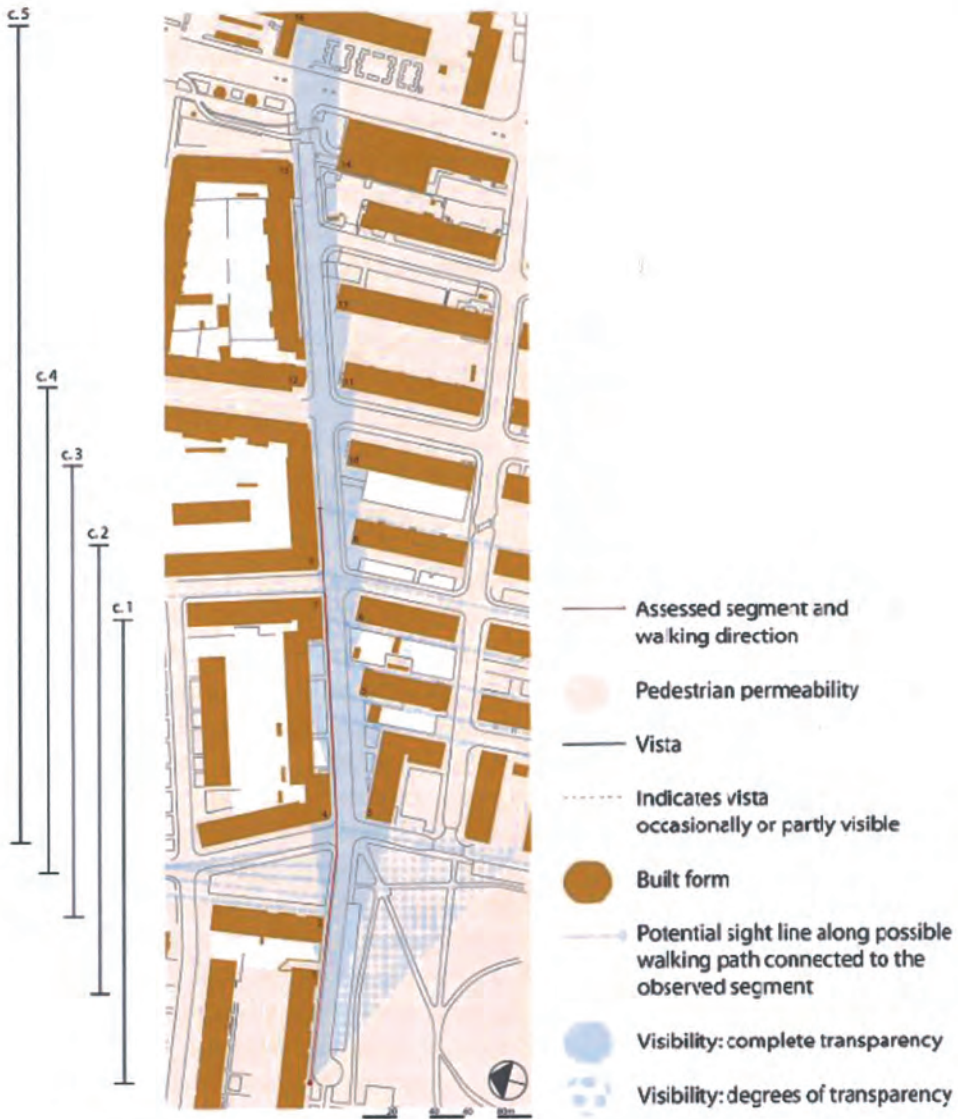


Figure 4. Segment C Rönneholm Plan drawing of observed route showing the visibility of the surroundings while walking, and the stretch of each vista.



*Segment B*

The segment is well connected to adjacent pedestrian permeability, but there are few opportunities to acknowledge it and the visibility is mostly restricted to the actual segment. The low visibility of adjacent pedestrian permeability is a dictating mechanism, while the intersecting streets (Figure 3, vista b.1) occasionally provide opportunities of directing elements for horizontal communication. Vista b.1 has a more obvious connection between built form and the path, while the other vistas are disconnected from the built form and blocked by fences and opaque greenery. The latter act as an obvious dictating mechanism for mobility and reduces the visibility of the continuation of the path. The b.1 and b.2 vistas have a spatial overlap, and b.1 and b.4 have points of visual overlap, but this dictates rather than directs the mobility due to the lack of continuity in the visibility. The appearance of low buildings and visually accessible courtyards might be deceptive when looking on the plan, because this might give an impression of high visibility of pedestrian permeability. Segment b has a mix of dictating and directing mechanisms, where the latter interrupt the former.

*Segment C*

The segment is well connected to the overall pedestrian permeability. At the starting point the visibility, direction south, is partly obscured by greenery, reducing somewhat the transparency of adjacent walking options. Vista c.1 is blocked by corner 3, but vista c.2 begins to be revealed immediately near the start of the walk and, further along the segment, several vistas simultaneously overlap (Figure 4). The continuous revealing of vistas is similar to "punctuation": a building concealing the next vista which offers a pause but does not interrupt the mobility (Cullen, 1976). The segment contains several directing mechanisms. Several occasions of high visibility of connecting pedestrian permeability occur through variations in size of the openings, the intersecting streets that are not perpendicular, and the mix of end elevations and front elevations facing the street connecting to the path. This enables a series of continuous vistas (Figure 4, c.1-c.5) with long overlaps. The built form affords visibility of pedestrian permeability on account of its layout, and at one point transparency through a shop window at a corner location. Location of parking along the pavement obstructs the view when walking right next to a parked car, but does not interfere with the field of vision in the distance, and the dictating mechanism of cars seems to vary according to the distance from the pedestrian's location. The smooth transitions between the vistas, coordinated with the direction of the segment, constitute directing mechanisms, which compensate for the dictating mechanism of the long solid wall running along the north side of the segment.



## 5. DISCUSSION

The VOA is developed as a structured method to observe urban form and transport walking. It allows analysis of walking according to a theoretical framework that includes spatial configurations, vistas, as well as a power perspective in terms of directing/dictating mechanisms. It thereby addresses some of the gaps in the existing literature on urban form and walkability.

The layouts of each neighbourhood are explicit or implicit consequences of different traffic and urban planning strategies, providing three different pedestrian permeability networks where the network is the fundamental basis for any type of walking. The observation of the visibility in relation to the permeability of each segment captures one urban form variable related to transport walking and the pedestrian's need for efficient navigation.

The three segments differ in visibility pattern. Segment C has several visual links to the adjacent pedestrian permeability on a neighbourhood level, a longer sightline in the walking direction, a continuous visibility pattern, and a part where more than two vistas simultaneously overlap. The layout of the urban form of segment C offers opportunities to 'see' around corners (Gibson, 1986), and is suggested to have the highest qualities for transport walking due to the range of visibility offered by the spatial configuration providing a variety of directing mechanisms. Segment B has one vista, b.1, offering a mix of directing and dictating mechanisms, followed by a disrupted series of vistas strongly dictating the mobility, where sudden twists of the path cut off the field of vision, as in segment A. Locomotion is still possible, but the visibility is reduced both within and into the vistas. This must be distinguished from situations where physical objects obstruct walking (Gibson 1977), as in the example of the long impermeable building in vista a.3. The dictating mechanism of the building is not only its vertical partition (Foucault 1995), but also its horizontal extent.

In terms of directing and dictating mechanisms, coupled with the vista concept, the VOA provides a power-related perspective in terms of the extent to which the pedestrian can be in control of their transport walking options. This study was limited to public space accessible 24/7, but nevertheless shows the importance of

access to public space “at a time when the welfare state has come under threat of restructuring, and social fragmentation has intensified.” (Cuthbert, 2003).

The IMI analysis yielded a quantitative description of the suitability of the three segments for walking, and this can serve as a frame of reference for the VOA results. The IMI analysis rated segment C highest on accessibility, pleasurability and safety. Consequently both methods agreed on segment C as the most supportive of transport walking, but IMI was not able to accurately differentiate the traffic situations of the segments. This problem also illustrates the importance of analysing urban form at a fundamental level when defining walkability criteria, by adding categories regarding visibility (Southworth, 2005, Cullen, 1976) and directing/dictating mechanisms to existing quantitative instruments. The present IMI result confirms the findings of Werner et al. (2010) that the instrument must be improved to increase sensitivity. The underlying theoretical concept of the categories of the walkability scale has to be diversified into subcategories to produce more specific knowledge of the basic urban structure, and to allow its application in any type of urban context. The experience of applying the IMI also showed that the imbedded cultural dimensions (e.g. “strip malls”, pawn shops) in the items make it difficult to apply as a single analysis tool in a Nordic context.

Like isovist analysis, VOA is applicable in any context, natural or artificial, due to its focus on the fundamental spatial conditions of form. It differs from isovist analysis of the overall visibility (Benedikt, 1979), and GIS-based objective measures of built form through its direct dependence on a pedestrian and the walking direction. The visibility of space tends to be overestimated in 2-D analysis of plan compared to 3-D observation on-site. In the VOA the visibility is limited to the subjective field of vision of the observer, but extended to the on-site observer’s ability to acknowledge the three-dimensional aspects of urban form, temporal (e.g. cars) and seasonal elements (e.g. greenery). The subjectivity of the observations could be considered a weakness, but could also be recognised as a source of information linked to individual features, e.g. gender, ethnicity, class, height, which could be balanced by using more than one observer.

The connectivity of the pedestrian permeability of each segment to the overall pedestrian permeability of Malmö city centre was not assessed. Directing mechanisms can exist in one direction and along a segment of a walking path, but do not necessarily exist in the opposite direction or on a larger scale. The next step would be to explore whether paths function equally well in both directions, and to examine links to the bigger network. The simultaneous coexistence of both mechanisms (Figure 3, b.1), a great variation in the size of passages, and several simultaneous overlaps (Figure 4, segment C) demand a differentiation of the directing/dictating



scale to give an accurate description in relation to transport walking. The application of the method and its variables has to be re-evaluated and adjusted, depending on the specific needs of the type of walking being studied. The invited practicing architect pointed out that the application of the VOA and the graphical representation of vistas (Figure 2, 3, and 4) were useful analytical tools, due to its potential to transform the 3-D information of the spatial settings into visually comparable data. However, in order to be suitable for the working conditions of architects and planners, the observation process and graphical representation have to be refined and possibly integrated with applied digital tools, such as parametric design software. The overlaps between vistas could be technically quantified, and time and space available to the pedestrian could be given numerical values and applied as a planning instrument.

In order to capture the relationship between the built environment and frequency of transport walking, both VOA and IMI must be complemented with knowledge on individuals' experience of environmental qualities within the urban form, as in present methods such as NEWS (Saelens et al., 2003) and Ewing and Handy (2009), but could also be further developed by applying perspectives from environmental psychology.

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## Walking Along Wandering Off and Going Astray

Kajsa Lawaczeck Körner is an architect and this is her doctoral thesis. Her research concerns walking, identity, corporeal matters, space and materiality.



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