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## **Making Everyday Mobility**

*A qualitative study of family mobility in Copenhagen*

Wind, Simon

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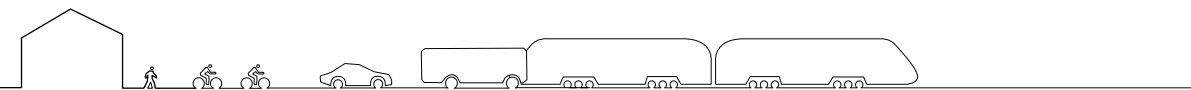
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SIMON WIND MAKING EVERYDAY MOBILITY

# MAKING EVERYDAY MOBILITY

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF FAMILY MOBILITY IN COPENHAGEN

PHD THESIS BY SIMON WIND  
AALBORG UNIVERSITY



# **MAKING EVERYDAY MOBILITY**

**A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF FAMILY MOBILITY IN COPENHAGEN**

**BY  
SIMON WIND**



**AALBORG UNIVERSITY**  
DENMARK

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This thesis has been submitted for assessment in partial fulfillment of the PhD degree. The thesis is based on the submitted or published scientific papers which are listed above. Parts of the papers are used directly or indirectly in the extended summary of the thesis. As part of the assessment, co-author statements have been made available to the assessment committee and are also available at the Faculty. The thesis is not in its present form acceptable for open publication but only in limited and closed circulation as copyright may not be ensured.

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# ABSTRACT

This PhD thesis concerns the everyday mobility of 11 families with children living in the Greater Copenhagen Area. The study is empirically based on a series of qualitative family interviews and GPS tracking, complemented by field studies of everyday family mobility. The main focus of this qualitative study is to explore how everyday mobility is associated with the family's processes of coping with busy everyday family life. The PhD thesis is part of the project Analysis of activity-based travel chains and sustainable mobility (ACTUM), hosted by the Department of Transport at the Technical University of Denmark, in a strategic research alliance with the Department of Architecture, Design & Media Technology at Aalborg University.

People in contemporary Danish society, and in particular families with children, lead busy lives. Experiences of feeling harried, time squeezed and stressed are becoming increasingly a normal part of everyday family life. Family life is characterised by balancing complex schedules of geographically dispersed activities and tending to the social and emotional needs and wishes of the family by carving out time for quality family time and togetherness. This study's primary research aim is to produce knowledge and understanding of the role mobility plays in coping with practical, social and emotional conditions of everyday family life. Secondly, the thesis aims to discuss how such qualitative knowledge of everyday family mobility can contribute to the ACTUM project and provide decision support for transport policy making.

Through the analysis of the 11 families and their everyday mobility, the thesis elucidates the how the family members through their mundane quotidian mobility performances, such as commuting to work, escorting children to the kindergarten, going on the weekly visit to the grandparents, driving children to after-school activities, etc., are not only instrumentally moving family members around, efficiently and safely getting them from A to B, but also transforming travel time into small pockets of togetherness, experiences, care, play, relaxation, reading, work, planning and coordination. Furthermore, the thesis addresses the extensive labour, mobility skills and practical knowledge used by the family members in crafting and sustaining their usages of everyday family mobility. Consequently, the thesis offers understanding of the family's everyday mobility through a toolbox consisting of a theoretical model, the elasticity model, and a theoretical vocabulary of instrumental movement, mobile care, mobile togetherness, mobile in-betweens and mobile atmospheres.

# RESUMÉ

Denne ph.d. afhandling handler om 11 børnefamiliers hverdagsmobilitet i Storkøbenhavn. Studiet er empirisk funderet på kvalitative familieinterviews og GPS tracking samt feltstudier af familiens hverdagsmobilitet. Hovedfokus i dette kvalitative studie er at undersøge sammenhængen mellem hverdagsmobilitet og families mestring af den ofte travle hverdag som børnefamilie. Afhandlingen er en del af forskningsprojektet Analysis of activity-based travel chains and sustainable mobility (ACTUM). Dette projekt er administreret og afviklet af DTU Transport ved det Danske Tekniske Universitet i samarbejde med Institut for Arkitektur & Medieteknologi ved Aalborg Universitet.

I vor tids samfund lever folk, særlig børnefamilier, travle liv. Oplevelsen af at have travlt, være tidspresset og føle sig stresset er en stadig stigende men normal del af børnefamiliens hverdagsliv. Hverdagslivet er karakteriseret ved komplekse dagligdagsplanlægning af geografisk spredte aktiviteter samtidig med at der skal tages hensyn til familiemedlemmernes sociale og emotionelle behov for og ønsker om kvalitetstid og samvær. Afhandlingens primære mål er at producere viden om og forståelse af den rolle som hverdagsmobiliteten spiller i mestring af praktisk, sociale og emotionelle forhold i børnefamiliens hverdagsliv. Derudover er målet at diskutere hvordan sådan kvalitative viden om børnefamiliens hverdagsmobilitet kan bidrage til ACTUM projektet samt virke som beslutningsstøtte for politiske beslutninger indenfor transportområdet.

Gennem analysen af de 11 børnefamilier og deres hverdagsmobilitet belyser afhandlingen hvordan familiemedlemmerne gennem deres mobilitetsarbejde ikke kun handler om instrumental flytning af familiemedlemmer sikkert og effektivt fra A til B, men også handler om det at være sammen, have fælles oplevelser, drage omsorg, slappe af, oplade mentalt og bruge kroppen fysisk. Derfor tager dagligdagens familiemobilitet som pendling til arbejde, eskortering af børn til institutioner, togturen til det ugentlige besøg hos bedsteforældre, kørsel til fritidsaktiviteter, form som en aktiviteter i sig selv, som har både praktisk, sociale og emotionelle betydning og konsekvenser for familiemedlemmerne og deres hverdag. Derudover adresserer afhandlingen det store og ofte upåagtede mobilitetsarbejde, de mobilitetsfærdigheder og den praktisk mobilitetsviden som familiens medlemmer bruger i skabelsen og vedligeholdelsen af hverdagens mobilitet. Afhandlingen bygger og tilbyder forståelse af families hverdagsmobilitet gennem et teoretisk værktøjssæt bestående af en teoretisk model, elasticitetsmodellen, samt et tilhørende vokabular af instrumental bevægelse, mobil omsorg, mobil samvær, mobil mellemrum og mobil atmosfære.

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# PREFACE

Doing a PhD study resembles an everyday journey. You move from one place to another. However, this study has taught me that, although the destination is crucial (in terms of turning the thesis in on time), what goes on during the journey is the most important. This journey has taught me a great deal about the craft of conducting research, and it has opened a new world of exciting theory and ways of thinking about and exploring the world. Concurrently with this PhD study, I have also been on a personal journey that has been intertwined with my studies. Just prior to beginning the study in early 2011, my first son Aron was born, and in the summer of 2013, my second son Anton was born. In addition to prolonging my PhD for some months because of paternity leave, these changes in my family life have had a tremendous impact on my research. Becoming a family of small children and two working parents during the course of this research has been a great motivator and inspiration for my study of the lives and mobility of the 11 participant families in Copenhagen. My personal life has undoubtedly contributed to the decisions I made in terms of focus and direction of the study. It has also coloured my interpretation and understanding of everyday family mobility. Foremost, it has sparked my curiosity and interest in how families (besides my own) cope with the many practical, social and emotional conditions that populate everyday life as a family.

On this journey many people have greatly assisted me and without their help this PhD study would not have been possible. Firstly, I want to thank my main supervisor Ole B. Jensen and my co-supervisor Claus Lassen for all their advice and comments, and for the effort they have put into guiding me on this journey. Being part of the ACTUM project has provided a great backdrop for this study. I want to thank the people at WP1, especially Henrik Harder and Kristian Reinau, for exceptional collaboration and technical assistance with GPS tracking and GIS. I want to thank the ACTUM team at the Technical University of Denmark, Christian Hansen Overgaard, Sigal Kaplan, Carlo Prato, Goran Vuk and all the others who have participated in the ACTUM workshops. The ACTUM project also provided the opportunity to bring Mimi Sheller into the project. I want to thank Mimi for all the comments and valuable insights and for making the stay at the Centre at Drexel University possible. I particularly want to thank Philip Vannini, who conducted a fantastic PhD workshop at Aalborg University on how to perform and convey research; Mette Jensen for support and guidance in the beginning of my study; Aslak Kjærulff for the insightful discussions in Montreal and Philadelphia and my sister Laura Wind for helping out with translation and transcription.

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Simon Wind  
Aalborg, June 2014



# PART I

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1-1: EVERYDAY FAMILY MOBILITY IN COPENHAGEN

This PhD study is concerned with the role that the mundane mobility such as commuting to work, escorting children to after-school activities, travelling to visit grandparents, biking to the grocery store play in everyday family life. In the thesis it is argued that making and performing everyday family mobility is an active coping process adjusted accordingly to the practical conditions of getting from one place to another while dealing with travel time, contingencies and disruptions in everyday life and the social and emotional conditions of spending together, providing care and fostering intimacy, and thereby enacting a sense of family and familial community. Hence it is argued that family mobility practices produce certain stabilising effects, in the thesis termed *elasticity*, that contribute to coping with practical, social and emotional conditions in the successful accomplishment of everyday family life.

This PhD study on everyday family mobility is part of a work package under the project ACTUM, “Analysis of activity-based travel chains and sustainable mobility”, administrated by the Danish Technical University in a strategic collaboration with Aalborg University and funded by the Danish Strategic Research Council<sup>1</sup>. The primary objective of the ACTUM project is to develop a prototype transportation model for the metropolitan area of Denmark. However, the work package within the ACTUM project hosting this PhD study has been specifically tasked with inquiring into the qualitative dimensions of everyday mobility. For this PhD study a specific, in-depth focus on the dual-earner family and its everyday mobility has been chosen. The family, understood as any number of adults with one or more children living under the same roof, comprise only approximately 25% of all households in Denmark, yet almost half of the Danish population lives in these family households<sup>2</sup> (DS 2014a). In addition to its statistical prevalence, the family and its everyday mobility also represents a particularly interesting case because everyday life in the family is often strongly shaped by a series of conditional circumstances such as the intertwinement and alignment of family members’ busy activity schedules, individual needs and wishes, varying mobility capacities, and work and social obligations. Consequently, the family juggles everyday life by devising complex coping strategies (Lassen and Jensen 2004, Jarvis 1999, 2005). Because of this, the family can be understood as a

<sup>1</sup> *The project is funded by the Danish Strategic Research Council (project no. 10-094597).*

<sup>2</sup> *It should be noted Statistics Denmark, the central authority on Danish statistics, counts as many as 37 different types of family constellations. However, the type of family that is in focus in this study is the traditional nuclear family comprising of two adults and one or more children living under same roof.*

*worst-case scenario* in terms of complexity that serves as an ideal subject for studying how everyday family mobility is made and performed. Although there are studies of family mobility (see i.e. Hjorthol, Hovland Jakobsen and Ling (2006), Fotel (2007), Schwanen (2008), Holdsworth (2013)), the family as a mobility unit is an understudied phenomenon that deserves more attention.

One way of approaching the significance of everyday family mobility is by considering the social context, the family's everyday life, in which it is situated. Everyday family life is characterised by a multitude of daily activities, encompassing work, day care, kindergarten, school, after-school activities, leisure activities, shopping, social activities and familial activities, housekeeping, childcare etc. Although family members typically live under the same roof, many everyday activities are both temporally and spatially dispersed and de-centralised from the residence (on average, Danes travel 39.4 km per day, see TU (2014)). Consequently the number of daily activities, their length and geographical dispersion often manifest in the family's everyday life as time pressure and even, in some cases, as stress. This "harriedness" (Southerton 2003, Hjorthol, Hovland Jakobsen and Ling 2006) in everyday family life is exacerbated by the fact that most parents most Danish parents, whether male or female, are employed, and that their average work time is slightly higher than that of adults in households without children (Arbejdslivskommissionen 2007: 35). Successfully accomplishing everyday life in the family is therefore tied to coping with time pressure and juggling the relationality and complexity and the temporal and spatial dispersion of family members' activity schedules. Consequently, families manage to hold everything together by configuring and organising their everyday lives as complex interwoven and interlocking *taskscape*s (Ingold 2000: 194-200) held together and maintained through continuous planning, negotiation and coordination efforts (see Jarvis (1999, 2005) for more on this).

In these everyday *taskscape*s, reflecting the family's coping strategies, the family's mobility plays a crucial and indispensable role as it instrumentally facilitates getting family members back and forth to their respective activities. Daily mobility takes up a substantial amount of time, as each individual in Denmark spends, on average, 53.1 minutes per day on transport, commuting to work and school, escorting younger children to day care and kindergarten, not to mention after-school activities and play dates, running errands and doing the grocery shopping, visiting friends and extended family, etc. (TU 2014). Much of this everyday mobility is performed in "mobile withs" (Jensen 2013: 81) in which family members form joint constellations travelling together. In fact, in families with three members or more, 76% of all daily excursions from home are fully or partially performed together, and, not surprisingly, the number of trips performed together increases with the number of family members, i.e. 23% of the four-person family has three or more daily escorting trips (Thorhauge, Vuk and Kaplan 2012: 13,15).

Hence a likely reading of these data is that juggling busy everyday family life often

results in complex and relationally interlocking configurations of mobility practices. But how is this mobility actually done? How does it feel, and what are its social and emotional outcomes? And how is everyday family mobility made and performed in order to accommodate the conditions of everyday family life? These questions point to the author's curiosity and fascination with the skilful and creative orchestration of mobility in a busy everyday family life and highlight the study's research ambition of understanding how family mobility contributes to the creative coping processes of everyday life.

### MORE THAN A TO B

Although statistics can provide a sense of the amount and magnitude of family's mobility in everyday life, they often succeed in rendering only a rather one-dimensional conception of it. In order to initiate a qualitative and in-depth inquiry, everyday family mobility needs to be considered as more than the instrumental shuffling of bodies across space. The emerging academic field of mobilities studies (Hannam, Sheller and Urry 2006, Cresswell 2006, Urry 2007, Adey 2010, Jensen 2013, Sheller 2014) provides an approach to the study of mobility which is in particular attentive to the social and societal aspects of. Going beyond a reductionist reading is to acknowledge that mobility, moving around in everyday life, matters, or as Tim Cresswell argues, that mobility "is rarely just about getting from A to B" (2006: 9). In so doing, this approach invites a plurality of readings and meanings of everyday mobility.

Furthermore, this mobilities approach advocates for a relational conceptualisation of family mobility (see i.e. Holdsworth 2013). In everyday life, family members seldom stand still; they move back and forth, in and out, together and apart. However, they rarely do so without considering other family members (and significant others), paying attention to and caring about their needs and wishes and the welfare of the family. This often entails family members moving together in mobile withs, as when escorting children to school, commuting to work together or going on holiday. Even family members' individual mobility, such as doing the shopping or going for a run, is still affected by and shaped in relation to its social context. Hence, as a basic condition of everyday life, family members are intricately connected to each other through their mobility. Indeed, family mobility gains its meanings through this *embeddedness* in the social context of the family. Part of understanding this complexity is seeing family mobility as "multidirectional" (Holdsworth 2013: 33), as a social phenomenon with both "socio-petal" and "socio-fugal" (Jensen 2013) efficacy, at times gathering family members and engendering co-presence and at other times moving family members away from each other. Everyday mobility "underscores the everyday practices of relationships" (Holdsworth 2013: 30); it may sustain and reaffirm family life by

facilitating *quality time*<sup>3</sup> and intimacy between family members, but it may also reduce opportunities for individual mobility and create challenges for family harmony. It may provoke frustrations and heated discussions, which sometimes may even lead to moving apart (Holdsworth 2013: 65). The mobilities perspective, importantly, allows us to grasp social and emotional meanings, such as the formation of care and togetherness in family life, as intertwining with the instrumental and practical meanings of everyday family mobility.

Unpacking the multiple meanings of everyday family mobility effectively means conceptualising mobility as an activity in its own right, not just insignificant, dead time between one point and another, pushing and pulling people together and apart, but an activity that facilitates meaningful and important social encounters and sensorial and emotional experiences (Watts 2008, Vannini 2012, Jensen 2012). The mobilities perspective highlights the embodied experiences of mobility. When travelling in everyday life, family members interact with the social and material environment in which mobility takes place (Jensen 2013). Although they often go unnoticed, in the performances of everyday mobility family members move in and through “affective atmospheres”, affording sensorial and emotional experiences, that affect, in particular, how mobility is felt and perceived and shape how travel time might be put to use (Bissell 2010). It is argued in this thesis that under the right circumstances, everyday mobility practices can transform everyday journeys into social encounters of family togetherness or recreational and productive mobile in-betweens (see chapter 7). Hence everyday mobility in the family does not only incite emotional reactions but often also involves what family scholar David Morgan (2011: 113) terms “emotional work” as family members, through the active making and performing of everyday mobility, manage their own and others’ emotions and thereby contribute to everyday emotional coping. Finally, regarding everyday mobility as an *activity*, at least in the original sense of the term, emphasises that everyday mobility is not something that simply happens but is a “state of being active” (Etymology Dictionary 2014). As Jensen notes, “mobilities do not ‘just happen’ or simply ‘take place’”; instead, everyday family mobility is “carefully and meticulously designed, planned ... acted out, performed and lived” (Jensen 2013: 4). Therefore, looking at everyday family mobility through a mobilities perspective also necessitates paying special attention to family members’ intensive and extensive labour associated with successfully preparing and performing everyday mobility as a collective accomplishment.

Analytically allowing for multiple readings of everyday family mobility, acknowledging it as a practical, social and emotional phenomenon, re-orientates it from a peripheral to a central position in the family’s everyday life. In fact family mobility should not be perceived as an activity apart from family life but an integral part of it, and therefore also as important to the active and continual formation of family or to “doing” family

---

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted when the term “quality time” is used in this thesis, it denotes the time spent with family and/or significant others which they themselves find in some way important or special.

(Morgan 2011). From this position, everyday mobility is not just a consequence or outcome of family, as if it were a fixed category; instead family is continuously forged and sustained in and through everyday mobility (Holdsworth 2013: 3). This is not to say that family mobility is the *only* constituent in doing family, but it certainly plays an important role as a co-constituent. Consequently, everyday family mobility does not play a backstage role; through making and performing everyday mobility family members are both practically engaged in engendering physical movement to match complex taskscapes and in actively enacting family and reaffirming social and emotional relationships amongst family members. In doing so they are pursuing *the good life* in ways that make sense for themselves and their family. With this context, the principal hypothesis that will be argued throughout the thesis is that the active production of *elasticity* is a crucial co-constituent in coping with the practical, social and emotional conditions of everyday family life.

## 1-2: STUDYING EVERYDAY FAMILY MOBILITY AND COPING PROCESSES IN EVERYDAY LIFE

The main objective of this study is to produce knowledge that contributes to the understanding of everyday mobility in relation to coping in family life. To do this, the

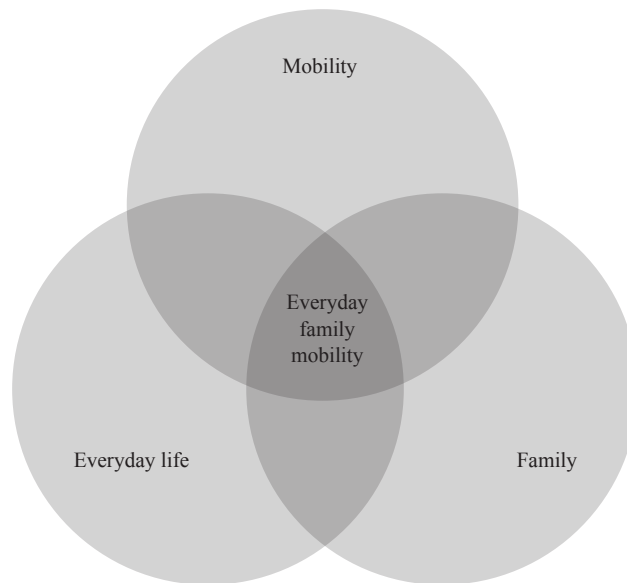


Figure 1: Three theoretical themes of mobility, everyday life and family in the study



family's *everyday mobility practices* are positioned centre stage as the prime object of study. Without getting into a precise definition of what a mobility practice is, as this will be presented shortly (see section 4-9), it is sufficient to state at this point that a mobility practice in this thesis is understood as a relational configuration, a social assemblage and a tenuous accomplishment. In order to do this, as illustrated in figure 1, the study draws theoretical inspiration from mobilities theory, as mentioned above, as well as family theory and everyday life theory.

While family mobility is at the heart of this study, it should not be separated from the context, the everyday, in which it is performed. Although this mundane scope may seem boring, the ambition of this thesis is to, in the words of Philip Vannini, "make the ordinary exotic, and then to make the exotic seem common sense" (2012: 37). Therefore, while it may be tempting to perceive the quotidian and family mobility as mindless and prosaic, the empirical material to be unfolded in this study suggests otherwise, namely that everyday family mobility is complex, imaginative, poetic, creative and dramatic, and therefore "eminently worthy of our attention" (Hastrup 2005: 147).

Although this thesis also draws inspiration from non-representational theory, its main theoretical anchor and point of departure is in what has been termed the "mobilities turn" or "new mobilities paradigm" (Urry 2000, Kaufmann 2002, Hannam, Sheller and Urry 2006, Sheller and Urry 2006, Cresswell 2006, Urry 2007, Adey 2010, Jensen 2013, Adey et al. 2014, Sheller 2014). This interdisciplinary analytical *turn* is presently taking place in the fields of sociology, human geography, communication studies, cultural studies, urban studies and tourism studies, amongst others. Social life and society are, in the mobilities turn, radically regarded as emerging in complex relational socio-material processes of (im)mobilities, encompassing what Peter Adey terms the "little mobilities" of materials flows and bodily movements on a micro and even nano scale as well as the "big mobilities" of complex systems moving people, things and data on the national and global scales (2010: 7-12). Between these two overarching strands of mobilities research, this thesis is primarily inclined towards the *little mobilities*, as the focus is on the family's mobility, its meanings, the actual embodied performances of everyday mobility and the sensorial and emotional mobile experiences afforded in socio-material mobility practices. Nonetheless, in focusing on this, the study also calls attention to everyday family mobility as part of the socio-temporal ordering of family members and practices in everyday life, which includes technological and material preconditions ranging from mobile phones and electronic travel cards to bikes, busses and cars to the infrastructure and large-scale transport systems that underpin daily movement.

This focus on everyday family mobility also links to the third theoretical source, sociological family theory (Smart 2007, Morgan 2011, Holdsworth 2013), as family mobility is not only a way of accomplishing practicalities in everyday life but also a social and emotional (and gendered) space in which family and family life are

enacted and familial relationships can evolve. It would arguably be difficult to focus on everyday family mobility without considering its social context. Indeed, understanding family mobility as an isolated phenomenon would make little sense, as it is through the relational intersections of various forms of mobility with other everyday practices and the *doing* of family that meanings are ascribed to family mobility. Moreover, approaching everyday family mobility in a nuanced and holistic sense also means emphasising the material and physical context as part of the object of study. Thus an additional source of theoretical inspiration that deserves mention, though it plays only an implicit role in the study, is actor-network theory (Latour 2005, Blok and Jensen 2012). Recognising this not only foregrounds the physical and material dimension of everyday family mobility, but also accentuates how the physicality of everyday transportation infrastructures and technologies are powerful *actants* both shaped by and shaping everyday family mobility.

Finally, as emphasised earlier, everyday family mobility is conceived of as a relational entity. Importantly, Ben Anderson and Paul Harrison argue that it is not enough to “simply assert that phenomena are ‘relationally constituted’ or invoke the form of the network”; instead it is necessary to elucidate and understand the “specificity and performative efficacy of particular relations and different relational configurations” (2010: 15-6). Heeding this injunction, this thesis does not simply evoke the general idea of everyday family mobility as relationally constituted but directs its inquiries towards the specificities and performative efficacy of the particular relations and socio-material configurations of the family’s mobility practices.

In its empirical approach to this, the thesis is inspired by what has in the mobilities turn been termed “mobile methods” (Sheller and Urry 2006, Mobilities 6:2 2006, Urry 2007, Watts and Urry 2008, Fincham, McGuinness and Murrey 2010, D’Andrea, Ciolfi and Gray 2011, Büscher, Urry and Witchger 2011). The study relies on a methodological framework combining qualitative family interviews with supporting methods of GPS tracking, drawing mental maps and small-scale ethnographic mobile field studies. Empirically, the study is based upon 11 purposively sampled families living in the Greater Copenhagen Area. The families were chosen in order to ensure significant variation on the variables of geographical distribution, size and constellation, ages of children, income and transport mode usage. Finally, qualitative *coding* and *categorising* were used to analyse the empirical material and develop the theoretical concepts that aid in knowledge production in this study (Saldaña 2009). (For a much more elaborate discussion and description of the notion of mobile methods, the sample, analysis strategy and the research design in the study see chapter 5.)

The research design of the thesis is epistemologically and methodologically underpinned by the philosophical position of pragmatism (Brinkmann 2006, Bacon 2012, Gimmler 2014). In pragmatism, theories, method and analytical approaches are regarded as heuristic and sensitising tools to be used in performing inquiry in research (Gimmler 2014). Hence the theoretical positioning and approaches used to craft the

object of study and the theories and methods used to engage with this object, briefly presented earlier in this chapter, are to be viewed as adequate tools for the task at hand. This meta-theoretical pragmatist framework is complemented with hermeneutics (Højberg 2004, Kinsella 2006, Brinkmann 2012). By doing so, the study wishes to use hermeneutics as a tool for describing and reflecting upon the process of interpreting and understanding everyday family mobility.

Furthermore, in pragmatism knowledge and inquiry intertwine, as knowledge is not the propositional mirroring of a reality *out there*, but instead it is the local and situated product of the purposive act of inquiry (Bacon 2012: 53-4). Hence the thesis does not seek to uncover universal laws governing everyday family mobility or to find causal connection between mobility and coping; in fact, a pragmatist position doubts that such claims can entirely be made. Instead, the ambition of this study is to produce local and contextual knowledge about the multitude of meanings the 11 families in Copenhagen ascribe to their mobility and coping in everyday life.

Thereby the study aims to contribute to the growing body of mobilities literature and expand the understanding of multiplicity and complexity in everyday family mobility. Beyond adding to the general knowledge production of mobilities studies, the aspiration of this study is also to tentatively fold this qualitative knowledge of everyday family mobility into discussions of how qualitative and situated knowledge can be used in relation to and in combination with quantitative approaches to studies of transportation as well as informing policy decision support. Hence, the knowledge of everyday family mobility produced in the thesis is also discussed in relation to the notion of hurriedness and the tendency towards stress in contemporary everyday family life.

### 1-3: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on this introduction to the subject matter, the analytical approach and research ambition of the study are formulated in a series of research questions. The overall research question guiding the study is:

***How are selected families in the Greater Copenhagen Area coping with practical, social and emotional conditions in everyday life through the making and performance of mobility practices?***

Additionally, to further explicate the detailed focus of the overall research question, a series of sub-research questions are formulated:

- (i) *How can the family's mobility practices and the coping processes in everyday life be theoretically conceptualised?*
- (ii) *How can qualitative family interviewing, GPS tracking, mental map making and ethnographic field studies be used to gain insight into how family members make and perform everyday mobility, the meanings ascribe to mobility and the sensorial and emotional experiences it affords?*

Finally, the thesis also wishes to discuss the knowledge produced in this study beyond the scope of the above mentioned research questions:

- (iii) *How can qualitative knowledge of everyday family mobility contribute to quantitative approaches to and knowledge of everyday family mobility as produced in academic fields such as transport geography and transport and traffic planning, as well as provide insights for policy decision support in the areas of hurriedness and stress as a tendency in contemporary everyday family life?*

This final sub-research question will be addressed in the final chapter 10 after the conclusion.

## **1-4: ROAD MAP TO THE THESIS**

The remainder of the thesis is structured in nine chapters divided into three overall parts. **Part one** presents the thesis' philosophical positioning in theory of science, the research design, the theoretical framework and analytical model. This part specifically deals with sub-research questions (i) and (ii). **Part two** presents the 11 families in the sample and the context of Copenhagen before turning to the analysis of the families' everyday mobility. This part specifically deals with main research questions. Finally, **part three** concludes the study and discusses the knowledge produced in the thesis in relation to quantitative approaches in transport research and policy decision support as well as hurriedness and stress as a trend in everyday family life. This part specifically deals with sub-research question (iii).

As illustrated in figure 2, the overall intention with the structure of the thesis is to guide the reader from the abstract philosophical positioning assumed in thesis towards the more concrete aspects of the study's research design, theoretical framework and proposed analytical model. With this organisation, the wish is to the decrease in level of abstraction as the thesis progresses towards the analysis of the empirical material the study.

Hence, the nine remaining chapters of the thesis are structured as follows: **Chapter 2** introduces the study's philosophical anchor in the positions of pragmatism and

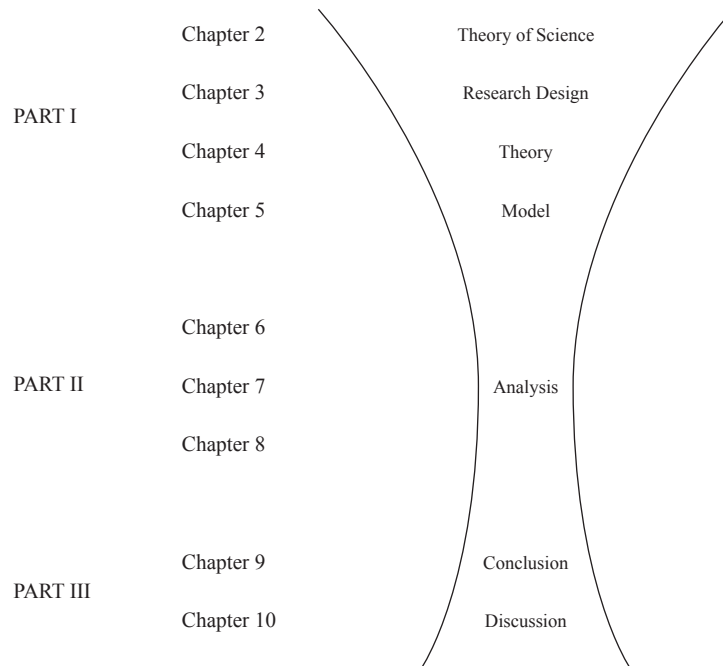


Figure 2: Structure of the thesis

hermeneutics. With these epistemological and methodological underpinnings, **chapter 3** addresses the research design of the study. With inspiration from mobile methods, the chapter argues for and presents a mixed-method setup based on qualitative interviewing and ethnographic field study for data collection. With strong ties to the abduction methodological approach presented in chapter 2, this chapter argues for an analysis strategy based upon a pragmatic-interpretive qualitative approach through the methods of coding and categorisation. **Chapter 4** introduces the three theoretical themes of everyday life, family and mobility. Drawing on non-representational theory and family theory, the chapter argues for a processual and relational-material reading of everyday life and family. Moreover, with the use of mobilities theory, the chapter provides a detailed understanding to the concept of mobility practice. Based on this theoretical framework it is argued that family mobility plays an instrumental role in coping in everyday life. To analytically engage with this theoretical claim, **chapter 5** proposes the model of elasticity. It is argued that this is a fruitful analytical model for engaging with the study of everyday family mobility, which serves as the structural platform for the analysis performed in chapters 7 and 8.

In **chapter 6**, the empirical material—the 11 families, the Greater Copenhagen Area and family life in Danish society—are presented to provide a sense of the contextual and

infrastructural reality in which families lead their everyday lives. From this, the thesis turns to the two densest chapters, 7 and 8, which contain the analysis of the family's everyday mobility. Linking back to the analytical model of elasticity introduced in chapter 5, each of these chapters inquires into everyday family mobility from a specific analytical perspective. Thus **chapter 7** approaches the family's mobility practices as assemblages, heterogeneous configurations of subjects and objects. Through the empirical material and theory, it is shown that family members accommodate practical, social and emotional conditions in everyday life by configuring everyday mobility practices to facilitate the practical and safe transport of family members, mobile care, mobile togetherness, mobile in-betweens and mobile atmospheres in everyday life. It is through these configurations and the performative and stabilising effects of mobility practices that family members produce elasticity. **Chapter 8** approaches the family's mobility practices as performances. This perspective emphasises the immediacy of doing mobility, and it is argued in the chapter that family mobility and its associated performative effects need to be carefully and skilfully prepared, coordinated, sequenced and performed in intimate interplay with the socio-material environments in which mobility takes place in order to be successfully enacted. Hence the chapter illustrates the extensive and relational labour, skills and knowledge family members actively utilise in performing mobility to actualise and sustain the production of elasticity and ultimately coping in everyday life.

In **chapter 9**, the study is concluded by returning to the research questions and summarising the findings of the study. Taking its point of departure in the outcome of the analysis, **chapter 10** engages in a discussion of how qualitative knowledge of everyday mobility (as produced in this study) is positioned in relation to quantitative knowledge of and approaches to transport studies, and how these might benefit each other in dialogue. Furthermore, chapter 10 returns to the notion of coping with time squeeze, stress and hurriedness in everyday life as general conditions many Danish families experience in contemporary society. It is argued that the notion of high and low elasticity can be analytically helpful in elucidating and discussing when family mobility becomes hyper mobility, a burden, and when it is, in fact, an instrument for coping in everyday life. As an outcome of this discussion, seven tentative recommendations for action are proposed for future transport policy and planning. Finally, the chapter ends by giving directions for additional research themes based on the knowledge and insights produced in the thesis.



# CHAPTER 2: THEORY OF SCIENCE

## 2-1: INTRODUCTION

As noted in the introduction chapter, this thesis takes its point of departure in a qualitative stance relying first and foremost on pragmatism<sup>4</sup>, and is especially inspired by John Dewey's *instrumental pragmatism* (Brinkmann 2006, Bacon 2012, Gimmler 2014), complemented by insights from Hans-Georg Gadamer's *philosophical hermeneutics* (Højberg 2004, Kinsella 2006, Brinkmann 2012). This chapter will address the philosophical positioning of the thesis within the theory of science and put forward the meta-theoretical foundation of the study and its influence on the epistemological and methodological orientation.

The chapter begins by positioning the study in relation to pragmatism and hermeneutics and presents the implications of these philosophical positions as tools for studying everyday family mobility. From this point, drawing mainly on pragmatism, the chapter addresses the epistemological question of what knowledge is and how knowledge is produced. Pragmatism offers an alternative to conventional representationalist epistemology in which knowledge is always local and situated in social practices. Knowledge is not something passively "given", but is actively "taken" in an interactive relation with others and the world (Brinkmann 2012:39). Hence knowledge does not correspond to the world; knowledge is what enables us to act controlled and purposive in the world.

The pragmatist understanding of knowledge is complemented by a hermeneutic approach to the conditions of understanding. Hence, while pragmatism serves as an overall meta-theoretical framework for the study, hermeneutics is brought into this framework as an epistemological tool for conceptualising the process of interpretation and understanding used in producing knowledge of the families' everyday mobility.<sup>5</sup> In hermeneutics, understanding and knowing emerge through the process of interpretation. Interpretation is inter-subjective, meaning it occurs in dialogue with others and the physical and material world. Consequently it is always performed from a certain point of view, shaped by pre-understandings and prejudices, and situated in a specific historical and cultural context. Hence, in hermeneutics (as well

<sup>4</sup> It is recognised that pragmatism covers a wide range of thinkers going back to the late 19th century. Hence it is not a unified philosophical position but has many positions within.

<sup>5</sup> Hence, in this thesis hermeneutics is used for its epistemological insights and thereby equips the study with tools for reflecting upon and discussing how knowledge is produced. Therefore hermeneutics in this study serves a epistemological purpose rather than an ontological one.



as pragmatism), both the researcher and the object of study are firmly located in the process of understanding and knowing, and therefore both are actively engaged in co-producing meanings and knowledge.

From this epistemological basis the chapter turns to considering methodology. With inspiration from Dewey's pragmatic inquiry and Charles Sander Peirce's concept of abduction, a methodology for the production of knowledge through the cyclical-iterative process of inquiry is outlined. This methodology serves as a foundation for the research design of this thesis, which is presented in chapter 3.

## 2-2: PRAGMATISM AND STUDYING EVERYDAY MOBILITY

Pragmatism has a special interest in everyday life. One of Dewey's ambitions was to reconstruct philosophy in order to bring it closer to and make it more socially relevant to everyday life (Bacon 2012: 47). Dewey did not discriminate between the scientific endeavour of "developing knowledge of the world" and mundane everyday "acting in the world [which] were all part of the same process of learning and discovery through experience" (Healey 2009: 280). Hence, pragmatism is in no way estranged from the everyday and the social practices people engage in. This makes pragmatism, as Brinkmann states, "particularly interesting for everyday life researchers because it blurs any hard-and-fast distinctions between scientific knowing and human knowing in general" (2012: 38).

This thesis is concerned with the everyday mobile lives of families. The objective is to understand and produce knowledge of how families use mobility as a mode of coping in everyday life. Pragmatism provides an approach to the world and knowing that can be used to engage with the families and their mobility from an "agent point of view" (Bacon 2012: 108), taking their situational practices in everyday life as the point of departure. Furthermore, pragmatism offers a pluralistic perspective on the world as it insists "on the validity of different ways of viewing and reporting the world as a function of our different contexts and purposes in dealing with it" (Barnes 2008: 1547). Neither everyday life nor mobility exists as a single and complete whole; depending on the situation, they are understood and performed in multiple ways. By focusing on *knowledge how*, pragmatism rejects the search for universal and everlasting laws in favour of recognising and emphasising the local and practical knowledge that emerges from practical situations. Hence pragmatism supports qualitative inquiry into everyday mobility practices as particular and contextual situations in which tacit knowledge is used in coping with uncertainty and contingency in everyday life.

Moreover, pragmatism offers an interesting instrumentalist approach to research practice. As Louis Menand writes, "ideas are not 'out there' waiting to be discovered, but are tools—like forks and knives and microchips—that people devise to cope with the world in which they find themselves" (2002: ix, quoted in Brinkmann and

Tanggaard 2010: 243). This should be understood in the broadest possible sense: not only ideas/knowledge, but also theories, methods, models, concepts and analytical approaches are all thinking heuristics and sensitising tools supporting the inquiry at hand rather than transcendental Truths (Brinkmann 2012: 56).

Similar to pragmatism, hermeneutic thought is interested in interpretation and understanding as ways of knowing. Kinsella (2006) argues that due to their emphasis on understanding and interpretation, as opposed to explanation and verification, there is a profound linkage between qualitative inquiry and hermeneutic thought, although this often goes unnoticed. Historically, hermeneutics was used mainly as a methodology for finding what were regarded as the true meanings of ancient biblical texts (Kinsella 2006). However, in *philosophical*, also termed *ontological*, hermeneutics, hermeneutics is not a method for gaining true knowledge but rather a way of being in the world, in which human life is “conceived as an ongoing process of interpretation” (Brinkmann 2012: 40). Hans-Georg Gadamer, one of the main proponents of philosophical hermeneutics, argued that humans are interpreting beings. In everyday life, we are continually, often subconsciously concerned with interpreting and thereby seeking to understand and make sense of the environments we traverse, the actions and statements of other people, the texts we read, the scenes and signs we see and so on. Both Dewey’s pragmatism and philosophical hermeneutics regard knowing and interpreting not merely as something researchers do, a scientific practice or methodological set of rules and procedures, but instead as a way of being, something all humans are engaged in when performing everyday life. Hence interpreting and understanding is not only a “methodological process or condition but also an essential feature of all knowledge and understanding, therefore every interpretation relies on other interpretations” (Kinsella 2006).

From this understanding, hermeneutic thought offers a conceptualisation of knowing in research as an iterative process of interpretation of a world that is already interpreted and imbued with meaning. This “double hermeneutic” highlights the process of knowing as a two-way relation, a reciprocal interaction between the subject and the object, in which both parties holds transformative efficacy (Højberg 2004: 320). Unlike pragmatism, philosophical hermeneutics does not provide any specific methodological schemes; rather it is concerned with the conditions of understanding and knowing. Hence these insights from hermeneutic thought will be used in a pragmatic manner in the following sections, in combination with a pragmatist approach, as tools supporting reflection on the process of knowing and knowledge production.

## 2-3: EPISTEMOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Pragmatism argues for an anti-representational approach to understanding what knowledge is and how it can be obtained (Gimmler 2012). It rejects the representational ideal of obtaining propositional or corresponding knowledge that simply mirrors

phenomena in the world. Despite this stance, pragmatist epistemology takes its point of departure in the empiricist idea that reality is and can be experienced through our senses. However, Dewey was critical of what he called the “spectators theory of knowledge” (Bacon 2012: 50) of the British empiricists, who claimed that through phenomenal experience knowledge, as an accurate representation of the world, could be obtained. He argued that perceiving phenomenal experience as a neutral and pure perception of reality is erroneous. Instead, human experience of the world, and hence knowing, always involves primary reflection “influenced and prefigured by theory, traditions and habits” (Gimmler 2005: 17). Thus, knowledge is never universal or fixed, but always local, contextual and contingent. Through the use of hermeneutics, the consequences of the active knower will be further investigated shortly.

In addition to being a non-representationalist philosophical position, pragmatism is anti-foundational, as it holds that “knowledge has and requires no foundation” (Bacon 2012: viii) neither in a privileged metaphysical sphere nor in a transcending logic or structure in the world. As the quest for certainty and universal truths is abandoned and knowledge is understood as always being local and limited, and emerging in empirical situations of social practice, knowledge no longer requires absolute justifications (Gimmler 2012: 47). Hence pragmatist knowledge never amounts to *Truth*, in the conventional sense of the word, as knowing can never be endowed with complete certainty. Instead knowledge is empirical, grounded *beliefs* that are “robust and stable enough to rely upon but always open to revision, not least because they have to adapt themselves to other changes in the environment” (Bacon 2012: 49). Hence pragmatism does not reject the claim that knowledge is based upon other knowledge and indeed should be. “[K]nowledge is a web of beliefs”, but those beliefs are never “permanent, Cartesian, foundations”; instead knowledge and belief are always provisional, as they may be proven wrong in other or later instances (Bacon 2012: 54).

Turning away from a representationalist ideal also shifts the focus of the scientific enterprise from uncovering and representing universal facts or truths in propositional *knowledge that*, to producing local and contingent knowledge claims of *knowledge how*. As this thesis subscribes to this stance, its aim is not to uncover universal laws or causal connections governing everyday mobility in the family; rather it is interested in knowing how families are coping with specific contingent situations and conditions in everyday life through making and performing mobility practices. In a pragmatic approach (and a hermeneutic approach, as we shall see shortly), the family’s everyday mobility cannot be isolated from the social and historical contexts within which it is embedded. Family members’ doings in everyday life are not observable, causal processes that can be easily traced; rather they are incited by reasons, motives and beliefs, and therefore are only recognisable as meaningful when situated (Brinkmann 2012: 20-1). Hence the study’s research design (presented in chapter 3) emphasises how family members live their lives, their everyday practices (especially mobility practices) and how family members form meaningful practical, social and emotional relationships through these everyday practices.

## KNOWLEDGE EMERGES FROM PRACTICE

In its rejection of representationalism, foundationalism and the Platonic lineage of epistemology that clearly separates object and subject and promotes the theoretical “observation” of the object (Gimmler 2012: 48), pragmatism offers a radically different and non-contemplative epistemology in which “we are not spectators looking at the world from outside but rather agents operating within it” (Bacon 2012: 108). Dewey holds that knowing is not a passive process of perception and representation, but rather knowledge emerges in “the engagement of the active subject with the world” (Gimmler 2005: 17). Thus to Dewey, “the act of knowing something is part of interacting” (Gimmler 2005: 18), and knowledge emerges from the human experience of the world in practices, not from theory. Thus in pragmatism, practice has primacy over theory. This also means that all knowledge is fragile, fallible, situated and bound “to social practices and cannot be maintained within a privileged sphere of absolute certainty” (Gimmler 2005:18). Hence Dewey favours an understanding of knowledge that is interactive with the world and locally and empirically grounded in cultural, historical and social practices.

Therefore knowledge should not be understood as “fixed and complete in itself, in isolation from an act of inquiry” (Neubert 2001: 2); rather the understanding of knowledge Dewey tries to develop is a practical one that transcends the dualities of subject and object, theory and practice, relativism and absolutism (Thayer-Bacon 2002: 97). Although knowledge emerges in practice, or the act of inquiry, thinking is still crucial, as “knowledge comes neither by thinking about something abstractly nor by acting uncritically, but rather by integrating thinking and doing, by getting the mind to reflect on the act” (Gordon 2009: 49). Knowing is a process that begins with the act of inquiry in a particular situation, but is tested and evaluated through reflection before being folded back into the world, trying to control the situation (Jones 2008: 1605). Hence knowledge, as Richard Rorty writes, is not a “matter of getting reality right, but rather a matter of acquiring habits of actions for coping with reality” (Jones 2008: 1607).

## NORMATIVITY AND CONDITIONS FOR KNOWING

Both pragmatism and hermeneutics place the researcher in an active role, by which subjectivity is brought into the research situation. Indeed, when engaging in qualitative inquiry, we do not do so with a “virginal mind, but always with ‘certain acquired habitual modes of understanding, with a certain store of previously evolved meanings (Dewey, 1910 p. 106)” (Brinkmann 2012: 39). Consequently, when experiencing and thinking in a situation, the researcher is already and unavoidably engaged in primary reflection, evaluating and judging the situation “from some particular, concrete and value-laden perspective” (Hildebrand 2008: 225) against the background of individual norms and an existing web of beliefs. In pragmatism normativity is a profound and

integral part of qualitative inquiry and knowledge production. Through experience, normativity infiltrates the process of inquiry (Gimmler 2005: 19). Having departed from a spectator's theory of knowledge, the ideal in the pragmatist research process is not to produce *objective* knowledge in the conventional sense of the word. In the act of inquiry the researcher is actively experiencing the world, interacting with it and transforming the situation that is being studied (Bacon 2012: 52).

Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics provides further tools for reflecting on the researcher's active role in the creative process of interpretation and understanding that is essential to knowledge production. In line with a pragmatist approach to knowledge, the ambition of hermeneutics is "not objective explanation or neutral description"; rather the purpose of hermeneutics is "sympathetic engagement with the author of a text, utterance or action and the wider socio-cultural context within which these phenomena occur" (Gardiner 1999: 63). As already mentioned, knowing, engaging in interpretation and eventually understanding are in hermeneutics regarded as always located in a specific historical and cultural context (Højberg 2004: 321). Hence the knower is never situated in a god position, being able to see everything, but is always granted only a partial view, framed by what in hermeneutics is termed a *horizon*. This metaphor describes what the knower is able to understand as being within the horizon, and, conversely, what the knower is unable to understand as being beyond the horizon. The horizon is shaped by *pre-understandings* and *prejudices* and constitutes how we see and understand phenomena, how we orient ourselves, act and respond to the world (Højberg 2004: 322-3). Pre-understandings are the web of beliefs and knowledge that precedes any knowing, whereas prejudices are the set of normative orientations and meanings that is brought into the process of understanding.

In this light, the researcher is never separate from the object of study, but rather is actively shaping and demarcating the object based upon a knowledge ambition and is intimately involved in the production of knowledge. Hence the object being studied is "considered through the historically and culturally situated lens of the researcher's perception and experience" (Kinsella 2006). Thus the produced knowledge always depends on a web of prior experiences, the choice of theoretical approach, the academic field, personal meanings, knowledge, beliefs and so on. Therefore the researcher must, as Brinkman argues, "take her own biography (and prejudices) into account" (2012: 43). As briefly outlined in the foreword of this thesis, during the course of this study I have come to form a family and had my first and second child. The subject of the study, everyday family mobility, is therefore something that plays a highly relevant and significant role in my personal life. Hence my pre-understandings and prejudices affect the inquiry process, as it is experienced and interpreted through the historical and social context of my biography, tacit knowledge, values and normative beliefs. Therefore, to some degree, my experience and interpretation of the 11 families in the study and their everyday lives and mobility is unavoidably set against the backdrop of my personal life. The fact that I was raised in a middle-class nuclear family, on the outskirts of one of the larger provincial cities in Denmark, has certain implications for

the horizon from which I perceive and interpret the families' everyday urban mobility situated in the Greater Copenhagen Area. Some of the families' mobility choices, tactics and coping strategies are familiar to me, as I have personal experience with them from my own life, while others struck me, when I first encountered them, as strange and alien. As Hastrup argues, normativity and value are basic conditions of research and knowledge production that cannot and should not be avoided (Hastrup 1999: 130). However, through purposive reflection, "each has the ability (however imperfect) to acknowledge and compensate for the influence our perspective may exercise on our analysis" (Hildebrand 2008: 225). Disclosing pre-understandings and prejudices does not eliminate one's standpoint; rather transparency qualifies the knowledge being produced (Brinkmann 2012: 42).

Returning briefly to Gadamer's concept of horizon: our horizon is what enables us to make sense of experiences and encounters in everyday life. It is a frame that encapsulates the knower's personal and unique way of understanding and engaging with the world, which is shaped by personal experiences, the communities in which the knower is invested and the historical and cultural contexts in which the knower lives (Højberg 2004: 234). Hence to understand how and why families make and perform mobility practices the way they do and the meanings they ascribe to their mobility, it is necessary to consider a fuller picture of their lives by addressing the historical, social and emotional contexts of their mobility, or what is in phenomenology termed the *lifeworld*.

Moreover, as we are constantly subjected to experiences and encounters in both everyday life and in research that may confound our understanding and prejudices, the horizon never coagulates. Instead the horizon is, as Gadamer writes, "continually in the process of being formed because we are continually having to test all our prejudices" (Gadamer 1996: 306, quoted in Kinsella 2006). This formation of the knower's horizon is termed *fusion of horizons*. This process is the outcome of the on-flow of interpretations of objects, be they texts, practices, statements, people, places and so on, that happen more or less reflexively in everyday life as well as in the research process. The object of study, as Kinsella (2006) writes, "merges with the interpreter's own questions in the dialectical play, which constitutes the fusion of horizons". It is in this reciprocal process of interpretation that meaning and understanding emerge. The knowledge produced in the fusion of horizons is forged in the relational encounter of the subject and object, and is therefore not one-way (i.e. only affected by the subject's pre-understandings and prejudices); rather the encountered object also holds transformative efficacy (Højberg 2004: 324). Consequently, in such a dialogue the researcher's prejudices are "brought into play by being put into risk" (Højberg 2004: 325). This means that when confronted with empirical material on everyday family mobility, for purposes of both production and analysis, the researcher's own pre-understandings and prejudices are tested and changed, which enables the researcher's horizon to move and expand. Indeed, what separates the knower in everyday life from the knower in performing research is conscious and purposive attempts to become



aware of his or her own prejudices in order to challenge them by exposing them to the object of study. In hermeneutic thought, this enables the process of developing new understanding. However, a break or rupture of understanding is also what in pragmatism amounts to the surprise fact, the puzzling and indeterminate situation of doubt that arrests action and provokes inquiry and knowledge production (Brinkmann 2012: 44).

Qualitative inquiry is an active process of interaction in which understanding and knowledge are created in the relations between researcher, respondents and the world. In this sense, pragmatist and hermeneutic inquiry do create “objective” knowledge, but not in the sense of the subject/object dichotomy. Rather they create the type of knowledge in which the object of study, paraphrasing Latour (2000), is allowed to *object* thereby emphasising that knowledge is co-constructed in interaction as a collective enterprise (Tanggaard 2008: 17). Knowledge is inter-subjective and inter-objective; it is created in dialogue with others and the physical and material world, and as a consequence the object of study, others and the world always have the opportunity to influence and infiltrate the process of knowledge production by raising objections or fighting back. Hence, as Brinkmann states, “Objectivity is attained when objects reveal themselves through acts that frustrate the researcher’s preconceived ideas” (2012: 48).

The respondents are therefore not merely spectators, standing outside and looking in at family mobility, its motivations, purposes, effects, experiences and meanings, but they are very much situated within the process of interpretation and understanding (Højberg 2004: 339). Hence their interpretations, based upon their horizons of prejudices, normative values and pre-understandings of family life and mobility, are part of the inquiry and knowledge production in this study. The respondents do not share a uniform and coherent view of mobility in everyday life; rather they represent a multitude of understandings of and meanings ascribed to everyday mobility. The family members’ understandings of and meanings found in everyday family mobility potentially frustrate, amaze and challenge the researcher’s pre-understandings and prejudices. Hence a basic condition in both hermeneutics and pragmatism is that there is no universal reading of everyday family mobility or of how mobility practices are experienced, used, formed and performed in everyday life; instead the process of understanding and knowing is characterised by ambiguity, as it is always performed from an uniquely situated position contingent upon both the researcher’s and the subject’s constantly changing horizons (Kinsella 2006).

Yet this profound openness and ambiguity in the process of knowing does not entail extreme relativism. Although they are sometimes accused of this (see Højberg 2004: 332-3), proponents of philosophical hermeneutics, particularly Gadamer, claim that understanding, though contingent upon the horizon, is characterised by an openness to the world proven by our willingness and ability to change and expand our horizons through dialogue. To Gadamer, language, as a tool used in dialogue, is only functional when “we are with others in a common and commonly known objective

world” (Ramberg and Gjesdal 2005). Hastrup (2011) argues, using the work of the pragmatist scholar Donald Davidson, that when engaged in dialogue, the world is always interwoven as a third point of view that both grants common ground and shared understanding and retains the dialogue in a relational hold with the world, one that cannot easily be deviated from. Davidson claims knowledge is not based solely on the subjectivity of those engaged in dialogue, but draws upon what he terms “triangulation”, a “three-way relation between speaker, interpreter and their shared environment” (Bacon 2012: 87). Hence, in producing knowledge through dialogue, when, for instance, interviewing respondents or reading a text, the presence of the world as the factual and objective reality that we have in common ensures the pitfall of extreme relativism is avoided, as the world cannot be departed from without voiding and violating the process of interpretation and, in turn, understanding.

## 2-4: METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Having presented the epistemological approach to knowing and understanding based on Dewey’s pragmatism and Gadamer’s hermeneutics, the chapter will now address the thesis’s methodological considerations for performing qualitative inquiry. These primarily draw on Dewey’s active and practical engagement of inquiry, which can be understood as a “general abductive attitude” (Strübing 2007: 566). The process of inquiry can be separated into several stages, as illustrated in figure 3. To gain a sense of this methodological approach, each step will be briefly elaborated and related to this study.

In pragmatism, the production of knowledge always starts with an *indeterminate situation* (step a, see figure 3), a situation in which something is fishy or puzzling and does not fit, or simply arrests, the researcher’s general understanding (Gimmler 2012: 20, Brinkmann 2012: 39). This critical moment is equivalent to when the knower’s prejudices are challenged in the process of interpretation. To remove doubt and thereby overcome the *problem*, inquiry is undertaken. Inquiry is understood as a profound and integral part of both social and research practices, and is “prompted when we confront a situation in which there is some issue or problem that must be resolved” (Bacon 2012: 53). Hence the fusion of horizons is the potential outcome of inquiry. An indeterminate situation arises when the researcher enters a new field of empirical research and is confounded by the empirical reality at first (Strübing 2007: 564). In this thesis, being confronted with and having to make sense of the multitude of ways families lead their everyday lives and the complexity and meanings they ascribe to making and performing mobility practices amounts to an indeterminate situation. As Strübing explains it, the “researcher’s ‘arrest of action’ lies in not having an answer to a certain empirical research problem. Doubt results from not properly understanding the empirical phenomena dealt” (Strübing 2007: 568).

However, the first step in the process of inquiry is the formulation of a problem or a question to guide or determine the scope of the inquiry (step b). What arrests action is



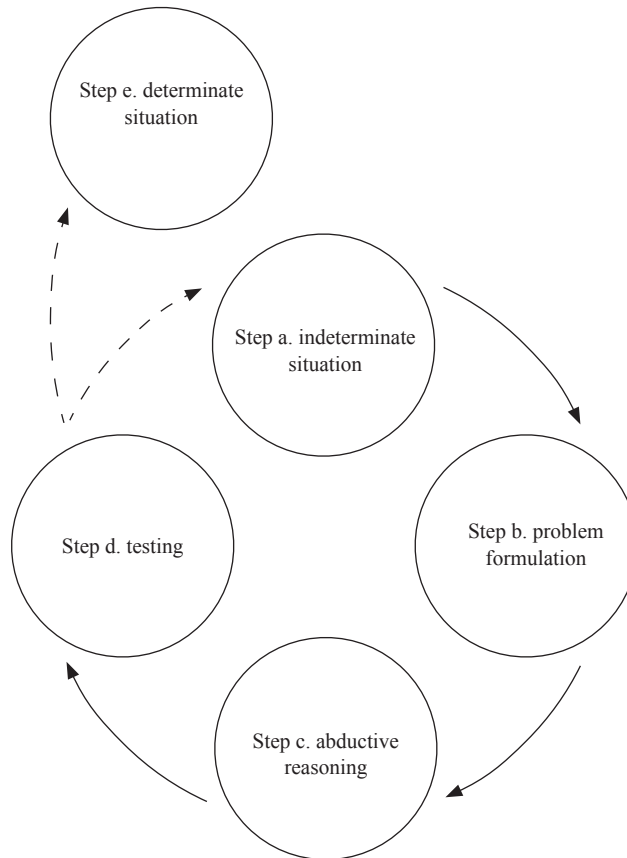


Figure 3: Pragmatist process of inquiry (problem-solving), adopted from Strübing (2007:563)

not always clear, and “[i]n order to evoke inquiry, the situation needs to be designated as a specific situation of uncertainty ‘about’ something” (Strübing 2007: 563). Only when the situation has a clearly defined problem can the inquiry proceed to propose a solution (Brinkmann 2006: 71). Drawing on hermeneutics, we might say this means becoming aware of and clarifying which prejudices are violated. However, as Gimmler (2005: 21) points out, defining the problem can often be challenging. Defining the problem is an open and on-going process in the inquiry. As Bacon writes, “as we strive to secure our ends, we find that we revise our view of what we want” (Bacon 2012: 53). For instance, theories and methods brought into the study are sensitising tools that foreground certain aspects of the data, shaping both the inquiry and the knowledge that is produced. In pragmatism “there is no such thing as the ultimate formulation of the problem – the definition of the problem ought to be functionally fit in relation to its possible solution” (Gimmler 2005: 21). What the problem is and how we will try to solve it depends on our perspective, exactly as hermeneutic thought advocates for.

Clarifying and defining the uncertainty of the situation is achieved through the scope of research and the formulation of research questions. In the study, primary attention is given to the uncertainty of how the families are coping with everyday life through the use of mobility. However, as Brinkmann (2012: 180) also points out, in many research projects the problem, or at least the scope of the research, is given. In the case of this study, the specific focus on the family is chosen exactly because the complexity and ambiguity of family mobility constitute an indeterminate situation of wonder and puzzlement. However, the ACTUM project, as explained earlier, did, of course, direct the study towards a qualitative inquiry of everyday mobility in the first place.

### THE ABDUCTIVE ATTITUDE

Through the process of inquiry, “We try to transform an indeterminate situation into one which is determinate by examining possible solutions, tentatively adopting a hypothesis which we then investigate to see whether it answers our needs” (Bacon 2012: 53). In pragmatism, this suggestion of understanding or hypothesis generation comes about through *abductive reasoning* (step c). This type of inference differs from the traditional models of reasoning of *induction* and *deduction* (Brinkmann 2012: 45). Whereas inductive reasoning is the process of formulating a *probable* statement from a limited number of observations, and deductive reasoning is the process of reaching a logical and *certain* conclusion from the premise of a general statement, abductive reasoning seeks to infer a *possible* statement based on an observation (see figure 4). Peirce formulated abductive reasoning as:

The surprising fact, C, is observed; But if A were true, C would be a matter of course; hence, there is reason to suspect that A is true.  
(Peirce, quoted in Gimmler 2005: 10)

When confronted with a problem, neither induction nor deduction inference is helpful, as neither can produce new ideas to overcome the indeterminate situation (Strübing 2007: 565). In abductive reasoning, however, the intent is to provide a workable explanation that can stabilise the situation (Brinkmann 2012: 46). Based on the context of the indeterminate situation, a provisional hypothesis is *suggested* to bring understanding or explanation of a given phenomenon. This “creative moment” of suggesting ideas in the abductive process can be described, as Peirce himself has admitted, as a kind of “guesswork” (Gimmler 2005: 11). However, in pragmatic inquiry, the abductive process of “correlating the observed facts of the situation with suggestions” (Strübing 2007: 565) is not unsupported but relies on a web of knowledge, theories, methods, models etc. that are instrumentally applied as tools and heuristics, aiding in the formulation of hypothesis and knowledge claims that can transform the situation into a determinate one.

In this study, through the process of inquiring into family mobility in everyday life,

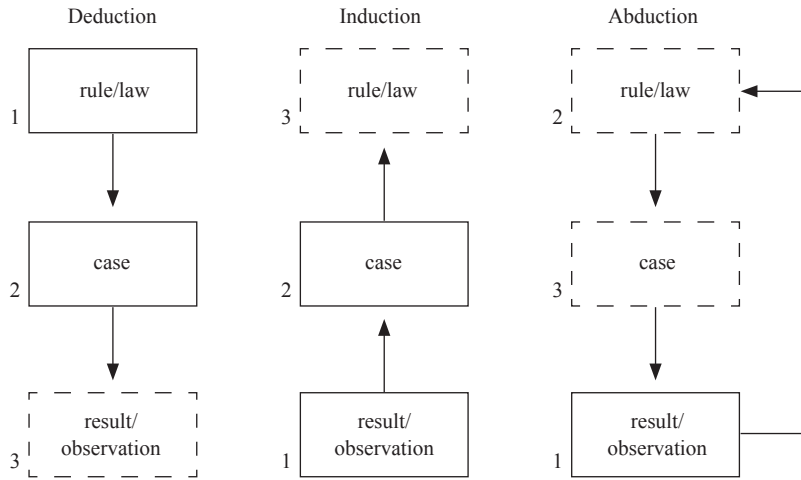


Figure 4: Forms of inference. Solid boxes contain premises that are presupposed as true; dashed boxes contain premises that are inferred, adopted from Fisher (2001: 367)

a series of theories (see chapter 4) and methods (see chapter 3) is utilised as tools aiding the production of knowledge presented in this thesis. For instance, in chapter 5, the study pragmatically proposes the heuristic of *elasticity* as an instrumental way of understanding the role and importance of mobility in everyday family life (and as a model of how families cope with everyday life through their mobility). In this model of elasticity, the family's mobility is approached both as if it were an *assemblage* and as if it were a *performance*. Hence these analytical approaches are interpretive tools that facilitate the creative moment in the abductive process of generating interpretations and producing knowledge. (This will be addressed in further detail in the description of the analysis strategy given in section 3-6).

Having formulated an *ad hoc* hypothesis, the next step in the inquiry process is to experiment and test its validity against the empirical material (step d). In Peirce's abductive method, this is where deduction and induction inference are applied. Frederik Stjernfelt describes this step in the process as moving from the empirical world from which the hypothesis is formulated to an ideal world where it is possible to "trace certain ideal consequences of the model so proposed" (2007: 333) by applying deduction. Finally, using induction, the process returns to the empirical world to determine whether these consequences can be collaborated in the empirical material. If so, this is taken as an indication of the possibility that the hypothesis is working (Stjernfelt 2007: 337). In this iterative, cyclical process, commuting between the data, analysis and hypothesis building, the soundness and substance of the hypothesis grows (Strübing 2007: 566). (The usage of abductive, inductive and deductive inference in the study will be further presented in section 3-6) Thus,

relating this to the process of interpretation, abduction is a possible description for what is at work methodologically in the event of fusion of horizons. When engaged in interpretation, the knower, based upon his or her horizon, constantly suggests, tests and approves hypotheses of the perceived phenomenon, allowing the knower's horizon to move. Alternately, a hypothesis may fail testing and be rejected, in which case a new hypothesis is formulated (Stjernfelt 2007: 333). When the hypothesis succeeds in solving or engendering a satisfying understanding of the problem, the hypothesis successfully transforms the situation into a determinate one (step e). In the words of Dewey, "If inquiry begins in doubt, it terminates in the institution of conditions which remove the need for doubt. The latter state of affairs may be designated by the words of belief and knowledge ... I prefer the words 'warranted assertibility'" (Bacon 2012: 53). Hence, based on "fallible yet self-corrective operations taking into account past failures and successes" (Healey 2009: 280), inquiry is the method involved in producing knowledge claims in pragmatism—not universal laws, but local and provisional knowledge functionally fit to the situation at hand.

## 2-5: CONCLUSION

In this chapter the study's philosophical positioning within the theory of science has been presented. In doing so, the chapter has focused on some of the key epistemological and methodological implications of bringing a pragmatist and hermeneutic perspective to the study. Firstly, Dewey's pragmatism offers a useful way of thinking about the research process as instrumental, in the sense that theories and methods are to be understood as tools measured by their utility in aiding the production of knowledge. Thus the philosophical underpinning presented in this chapter is in itself to be understood as no more than an instrument with the purpose of facilitating the study at hand.

Secondly, both pragmatism and hermeneutics regard knowing and understanding as a profound process in everyday life as well as in performing research. In this worldview, knowledge is not lying somewhere to be stumbled upon; rather knowledge is produced in the researcher's active (and transformative) engagement with world. Therefore, knowledge is not static, corresponding to some piece of the world, but dynamic, provisional and situational relative to the researcher's horizon, the subject of study and the material, historical and social environment in which they are emplaced.

Hence, thirdly, this qualitative stance elucidates the active role of the researcher as an unavoidable fact, and allows for consideration of his or her influence in the production of knowledge. Thus a pragmatist-hermeneutic positioning offers sensitivity to the contextual conditions of both the researcher and the object of study, especially through the notion of pre-understanding and prejudices. Through inquiry into everyday family mobility, we discover a world already interpreted by family members and filled with meanings based upon their historically and socially constituted horizons; this has

implications for the choice and design of methods in the study.

Fourthly, this philosophical underpinning offers a way of embracing the ambiguity and complexity that confront the analysis of everyday family mobility. Pragmatism and hermeneutics are particularly directed towards the creativity and multiplicity of everyday life: the unfamiliar, that which disrupts understanding and arrests knowing. Linking back to the second point, both pragmatism and hermeneutics resist any idea of a universal reading or singular knowledge, and instead facilitate inquiry into plurality in the families' particular lifeworlds. However, they do so without falling into extreme relativism, as the inquiry is at all times empirically grounded.

Finally, through the abductive scheme of inquiry, pragmatism offers a methodological approach that combines the above-mentioned points and supports understanding, knowing and production of knowledge as results of the creative potential in research practice (as well as everyday life practice). This abductive approach influences the qualitative inquiry performed in the study and, in particular, shapes how the empirical material is interpreted and analysed. This philosophical underpinning serves as a springboard for the qualitative inquiry and research design of the thesis, which are presented in the following chapter.

# CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN

## 3-1: INTRODUCTION

According to the pragmatist and hermeneutic understanding of knowledge and knowing adopted in this thesis, as argued in the previous chapter, the aim of qualitative inquiry is not to identify universal laws or uncover causal relationships, but rather to produce local and situated knowledge. However, from a pragmatist standpoint, research must still present convincing arguments that the knowledge it produces is well-reasoned and relevant. A vital element of such justification is ensuring methodological transparency in the research practice. The previous chapter concluded by proposing a pragmatist-hermeneutic methodological scheme for the inquiry process. This chapter will address how this is actualised in the research design of the thesis. Hence the aim of the chapter is to communicate and elucidate the research design underlying the knowledge production in the thesis. By presenting the choices and compositions of methods in data generation and data analysis, the chapter argues for a specific methodological setup as capable of creating knowledge about the families' production of elasticity in their everyday making and performance of mobility practices.

The chapter begins with a short overview and discussion of the methodological framework of this study in relation to the pragmatist approach and what has been termed "mobile methods" (Fincham, McGuinness and Murrey 2010, Büscher, Urry and Witchger 2011) within the mobilities turn. Section 3-3 describes how the 11 respondent families participating in the study were chosen based upon a purposive sampling strategy. In sections 3-4 and 3-5, the study's two-method setups for empirical data production are presented. The first and primary method entails qualitative family interviews coupled with GPS tracking and mental map drawing. These in-depth interviews were especially interested in gaining insight into the families' lifeworlds, what meanings the families associate with their everyday mobility and what role mobility plays in coping in everyday life. The second method involves an ethnographic field study in which the families' everyday mobility practices were performed by the researcher in order for him to become more attuned to their everyday embodied and sensorial experiences of mobility. The empirical data and insight produced using these methods forms the basis for the analysis, which is described in section 3-6. Drawing on the pragmatist abductive mode of inquiry and the grounded theory approach, the analysis strategy of the study revolves around an iterative-cyclical process of coding and categorisation. Finally, section 3-7 presents reflections on research design, knowledge production and representation in the study.

### 3-2: CONSTRUCTING A RESEARCH DESIGN

As reviewed in the previous chapter, the epistemological approach to knowledge rejects the idea of uncovering universal laws and seeking Truths. Due to its processual and experiential approach to the world and research, pragmatism regards everlasting knowledge claims as impossible. Likewise, hermeneutic thought considers the process of interpretation and understanding to be positioned and contextual. Hence in this study the aim of constructing a research design is to create a platform for qualitative inquiry with the ability to produce local and situated knowledge with its point of departure in the experiences of the 11 families and their everyday mobility. As Brinkmann notes, recalling C. Wright Mills, building a research design cannot be reduced to mechanically following a prescribed set of procedures or methods:

Be a good craftsman: Avoid any rigid set of procedures. Above all, seek to develop and use the sociological imagination. Avoid fetishism of method and technique. Urge the rehabilitation of the unpretentious intellectual craftsman, and try to become such a craftsman yourself. Let every man be his own methodologist; let every man be his own theorist; let theory and method again become part of the practice of a craft.  
(2012: 49)

Following this instrumental approach, this thesis takes its point of departure not in the methods but rather in the research ambition, the goal or objective of the study, and the empirical material, and from this the adequate and relevant methods or tools for inquiry are chosen. Hence the methods applied in the process of inquiry are chosen for their ability to enhance the production of knowledge aligned with the research ambition and scope of the study as formulated in the research questions and thereby, in pragmatist terms, facilitate the transformation of the study from an indeterminate situation into a determinate one.

Hence, in this thesis, developing a sound research design relies on picking “the right tools for the job” (Patton 2002) and thereby assembling methods for data production and analysis in a combination that enriches our understanding of mundane mobility as a crucial aspect of coping with the practical, social and emotional dimensions of the family’s everyday life. Thus the ambition of the research design is to facilitate a qualitative inquiry process capable of unpacking a small and demarcated section of the complexity in the family’s everyday mobility, which is, (as will be theoretically argued for in chapter 4), more than instrumental movement from A to B, and elucidating family members’ own meanings, emotions and experiences in their everyday mobility. The research design and the methods incorporated in the study are therefore especially attuned to the social, material, embodied and affective dimensions of everyday mobility and the relational context of the family in which mobility is made and performed.

## DISCUSSION OF MOBILE METHODS

A major source of inspiration for the research design in this study is the heightened interest in and discussions of methods within the mobilities turn under the umbrella term “mobile methods” (see D'Andrea, Ciolfi and Gray (2011), Büscher, Urry and Witchger (2010), Fincham, McGuinness and Murrey (2010), Urry (2007), Watts and Urry (2008), Sheller and Urry (2006), Mobilities (2011), Sheller (2014) for extensive reviews). Researchers in studies of mobilities are tinkering and experimenting with mobile methods attuned to the exploration and investigation of the multi-faceted aspects of mobility. While the relevance, novelty and capabilities of these new mobile methods are debatable, their newness should, according to D'Andrea, Ciolfi and Gray, rather be understood in relation to the “concern with the singularity of mobility as a sui generis node of phenomena requiring particular methodological and conceptual work” (2011: 155).

As also briefly touched upon in the introduction chapter (and will be much further elaborated in sections 4-8 and 4-9), the mobilities turn has enabled an analytical gaze that elucidates aspects of movement, potential movement and blocked movement as well as social, kinaesthetic, embodied and affective dimensions of mobility, amongst others (Urry 2007, Adey 2010, Sheller 2011). Corroborating this, Büscher, Urry and Witchger argue that:

[T]he mobilities turn folds analysis into the empirical in ways that open up different ways of understanding the relationship between theory, observation and engagement. It engenders new kinds of researchable entities, a new or rediscovered realm of the empirical and new avenues for critique.  
(2010: 2)

This shift in focus has opened a new arena of study that has driven mobilities researchers to find new ways of investigating and representing their objects of study. The existing methods of transport studies<sup>6</sup> (and to some extent the conventional methods toolkit of social science) have to some degree proved inadequate to accessing this new realm of mobilities studies (Laurier 2010). This situation calls for new methods, or at least for modification and creative combinations of existing methods, specifically configured and attuned to match the analytical focus of mobilities studies (Sheller and Urry 2006). Larsen, Urry and Axhausen (2005: 6-8) consider mobile methods to encompass two types of methods, which can be described as

- *Stationary* methods, such as interviewing, mapping and observing, in which the researcher, from a stationary position, captures the mobile.

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<sup>6</sup> In this thesis, the term “transport studies” is used as an umbrella term comprising several disciplines including transport geography, transport planning and traffic planning.



- *Mobile* methods, such as multi-sited studies, which follow along and move with the researcher as he or she moves along with the people, images, or objects that are moving and being studied.

To address not only the instrumental aspects of everyday family mobility but also the less visible social and emotional dimensions, this study is particularly interested in the opposition to *off the shelf* understandings of methods and the call for social scientists to creatively “re-jig, re-figure and re-calibrate their means of recording and describing the world” (Laurier 2010: xiv). On the other hand, as Peter Merriman rightly states, “The push to promote innovative ‘mobile methods’ is in danger of encouraging researchers to abandon methods labelled ‘conventional’ – such as interviews, questionnaires, discourse analysis or archival research – rather than rethinking and reworking these methods, or expanding and diversifying their repertoire of approaches” (2013: 2). Similarly, Shaw and Hesse critically call into question the novelty of mobile methods, reminding us that the point is not to disavow or dismiss ‘conventional’ methods, but “what is at stake is only the tweaking of particular methods capable of harnessing the power of existing methodologies in mobile situations” (2010: 5). Hence the novelty of mobile methods lies not in the invention of new methods, but rather in mobilities scholars’ creative efforts to find “new ways of combining ideas and approaches” (Jensen 2013: 39).

This study aims for a balanced research design, fully acknowledging the need to align and attune methods towards everyday mobility as a multi-faceted phenomenon but at the same time recognising that this goal may be best accomplished through the use of conventional methods. However, this stated ambition should not be understood as an endorsement of the idea that all aspects of everyday mobility can be fully grasped. Indeed, no mobile method can magically capture the full complexity of everyday mobility; instead various methods are specially attuned to particular aspects of mobility, leaving other aspects in the background. In particular, there are some ephemeral aspects of mobility, such as the sensorial and affective dimensions involved in the embodied performance of mobility, that evade both capture and representation (see Spinney (2011), Merriman (2013) and Pink (2012) for a more elaborate discussion). In this thesis, the research design takes as its point of departure the qualitative interview as the primary method in the production of empirical data. However, the interview as a stand-alone method has limited reach. Combining several methods for producing empirical data serves as a foundation enabling different perspectives from which the object of study can be elucidated, or as Spinney writes, “different methods enable us to ask different questions” (2011: 163). By combining various methods, the intention in this study is to achieve a broader and more nuanced rendering of the interrelated practical, social and emotional aspects of everyday family mobility. This is effected through a rethinking and reworking of the conventional interview method and by proposing a research design in which the qualitative interview is coupled with GPS tracking and other techniques, and with ethnographic field studies of performing everyday mobility practices as methods for empirical data production.

## RENDERING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE

As the above discussion on mobile methods hints, fleeting and less visible *non-representational* experiences of being mobile evade conscious registers in everyday life, and even the purposive attention of the researcher towards such sensorial and emotional mobile phenomena does not ensure full access. This might be considered one of the many mundane aspects of people's everyday lives and performances of mobility that go unnoticed as they are gradually ingrained in habits and routines (this will be further theoretically elaborated in chapter 4). This unheededness, induced by repetition and familiarity, envelopes many of the practical, sensorial and emotional aspects of everyday performances of mobility, rendering them less visible and therefore less susceptible to examination by introspection (see in particular section 4-2). People are never consciously attuned to all facets of experiences in their everyday lives, and are often unable to verbally relay such encounters. Billy Ehn and Orvar Löfgren frame this phenomenon through a familiar everyday exchange:

- So what did you do today?

- Nothing, just the usual things ...

... If you ask people to narrate what they have done during the day, they might answer like this or just mention something that happened out of the ordinary. It is rare that people start listing all the minor routines that carried them from the bed to work.  
(2009: 99)

The sensorial and emotional dimensions of everyday life are easily overlooked or disregarded in hindsight, and often are not appreciated for their affective qualities (indeed they may be disparaged) but rather tend to blend unheeded into quotidian performances. Only through disruption or breakdown is reflection produced (Highmore 2010). Not only do ephemeral characteristics of the everyday such as affects, emotions, feelings, atmospheres and sensations seldom emerge in retrospective reflections, but also such things as the performance of mundane mobility practices, the practical details of decisions, what happened when and where often feel unimportant and get blurry when articulated. Likewise, people's vast repertoires of practical and tacit knowledge and know-how, the everyday tactics and heuristics that are employed in everyday doings, are often shrouded from conscious reflection.

This invisibility and unheededness of the quotidian is one of the major methodological challenges of studying everyday life; however, as will be argued, it is not insurmountable (Brinkmann 2012: 21). In constructing a research design we should start from the fact, paraphrasing Polanyi (1966: 4), that people know more than they can tell. Russell Hitchings points to the general concern that the interview method in studies of everyday life falls short of dealing with these less visible aspects; as he writes, "Sometimes

hidden in the subtext and sometimes stated up front, there is now the suggestion that everyday practices are either so habitually done that potential respondents are probably unable to comment or matters we should just study differently in view of a contemporary reticence about representation and an eagerness to experiment” (2012: 61). However, Hinchings defends the interview method, arguing it is a valid, relevant and even effective method for gaining insight into everyday routines and practices. People’s experiences and understandings of their own everyday social practices, including mobility, may not be regularly reflected on in everyday life, but they are not deeply buried and beyond reach. Rather, just as disruptions and breakdowns might provoke reflection in everyday life, in this study different *evocation techniques*, techniques chosen to evoke the less visible and unheeded aspects in everyday family mobility, are employed in combination with the qualitative interview method to render everyday experiences and understandings visible for reflection and articulation (these will be outlined further in section 3-4).

Interviewing and talking to people about their everyday lives and mobility is not the only way of accessing and gaining insight into the less visible aspects of everyday mobility. One of the key interests of the study is to gain insight into the visceral, sensorial and emotional dimensions of embodied everyday mobility performances, as it is believed these hold importance for understanding the role of mobility in the family’s everyday life. Although the interview method can provide a way of opening up the fleeting sensorial experiences of being in motion in Copenhagen, and the vast repertoire of habitual and embodied dispositions, skills and knowledge deployed in performing everyday mobility practices, the interviews are, naturally, conducted at a remove from the actual bodily performances. While the qualitative interview can be a tool for approaching and providing some insights into the less visible dimensions of everyday mobility, other methods specially attuned to this are more powerful.

Drawing inspiration from participatory and performance-oriented approaches, such as mobile methods like *shadowing* (Jirón 2011), *follow the thing* (Hui 2013) and *moving along* (Lee and Ingold 2006, Vannini 2012), a phenomenological ethnographic method in which the researcher is involved in observation of and participation in the mobility practices is brought into the research design to supplement the qualitative interviews. This creates opportunities to explore and gain deeper insight into the embodied performances of mobility the family members report during the interviews. Obviously, these methods cannot provide access to the respondent’s subjective and personal meanings, experiences and sensations of moving; rather they are about the researcher using his body and sensory ability to experience what it is like to be mobile in various transport systems in Copenhagen. As Pink writes:

[T]he phenomenological ethnographer uses both body and intellect as research instruments and might understand personal experiences of cultural concepts that are otherwise untranslatable, through her or his own embodied experiences. (2006: 43)

Hence, ethnography takes its point of departure in the inter-subjective coupling of and relationship between the “the researcher and the researched, insider and outsider, self and other, body and environment” (Watson and Till 2010: 121) in a manner not unlike the hermeneutic process of interpretation (described in section 2-3). Following these precepts, what is envisioned in this method is for the researcher to become an analytical instrument to investigate and contextualise the ephemeral aspects of everyday mobility and the tacit and practical knowledge the respondents themselves have brought up during the interviews through physical immersion into the actual performance of mobility practices. Further, Justin Spinney advocates for “attuning” of the researcher:

I would further suggest that the researcher needs to attune themselves to the practice in question in as many registers of meaning as possible to minimise the danger of misinterpretation.... It is important to reiterate therefore that as the researcher I would also ride the same routes as participants in an attempt to bridge the gap between ‘seeing there’ and being there and to ‘soak up’ some of the feelings of riding these routes. Csordas (1999), for example, asks ‘... whether it is sufficient to attend to the body or whether one must in addition attend with the body, now understood as a tool for research’ (p. 149). (2011: 173)

Spinney argues that researcher participation and attuning to the practice have great potential for providing a deeper understanding of the practice and its performance. It may even be reasonable to argue that active and bodily participation is a prerequisite for even comprehending the family members’ experiences, feelings and meanings associated with performing mobility.

Based upon insights from mobile methods, the research design in this study does not choose between *conventional* methods and novel mobile methods (if such a distinction can be made), but instead, in a pragmatist manner, instrumentally combines (and modifies) methods as analytical tools to be used in the process of inquiry for the production of empirical data. Consequently, in the research design two interrelated mobile methods for empirical data production have been developed:

- A *stationary* approach to everyday family mobility:  
Qualitative interviewing with family members coupled with various evocation techniques to spark the reflective capacity of family members and evoke memories of past events of mobility performances, thereby inciting them to talk about the mundane and trivial in their everyday lives. (The details of this method are outlined in section 3-4.)
- A *mobile* approach to everyday family mobility:  
Active participation in and performance of selected family members’ everyday mobility practices. The aim is to gain first-hand embodied and in-depth

experience and understanding of performing everyday mobility in Copenhagen. (The details of this method are outlined in section 3-5.)

Hence the methods are chosen in accordance with the ambition of the inquiry, namely for their ability to engage with the practical, social and emotional dimensions of everyday family mobility and in doing so render the invisible, the infra-ordinariness of the quotidian and the sensorial and affective dimensions of embodied mobility, (at least partially) visible. Figure 5 below illustrates the combination, sequencing and extent of the two methods deployed in the research design.

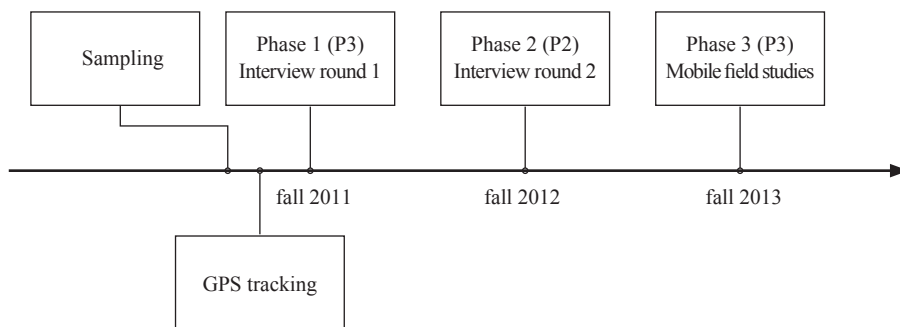


Figure 5: Audit trail

Furthermore, as part of the ACTUM project, this study has had access to data gathered by other work packages and has used them to gain a contextual understanding of the 11 families interviewed. Foremost among these data sets is a quantitative questionnaire conducted through the ACTUM project with a large population of 760 households (see Thorhauge, Vuk, Kaplan (2012) for a report on this data set). In table 1, an overview of the different empirical data used as a basis for the analysis in the study is provided.

type	amount	producer
Interview P1	11 interviews (approx. 1.5 hour per interview)	ACTUM WP2 (own)
Interview P2	7 interviews (approx. 1.5 hour per interview)	ACTUM WP2 (own)
Mobile Field Studies P3	13 individual mobility practices (some performed twice)	ACTUM WP2 (own)
GPS tracking	GPS tracking for approx. One week of all family members in each of the 11 families	ACTUM WP1
Questionnaires	data from questionnaires (see Thorhauge, Vuk and Kaplan (2012))	ACTUM WP3

Table 1: Table of empirical data used in the study

### 3-3: SAMPLING STRATEGY

The sample in this study is comprised of 45 respondents in 11 families geographically distributed in the Greater Copenhagen Area. (For more information on the 11 families and their everyday context see chapter 6.) The sampling relied on a *purposive* sampling method (Ritchie, Lewis 2003: chapter 4, Bryman 2004: chapter 4) in which respondents were chosen specifically according to six variables:

- (i) First, only households with one or two parents living together with children were sampled (which is also the definition used for the term *family* in this study).
- (ii) Second, an attempt was made to recruit families from different types of neighbourhoods and geographical locations in the Greater Copenhagen Area (though always in an urban context) differing in distance to the city centre. Other studies have shown that geographical location and the urban context of a residence have a great influence on everyday mobility (see Næss and Jensen (2005)).
- (iii) Third, only families with access to public transportation were recruited, ensuring that all households in the sample had access to multiple modes of transportation. Accessibility was defined as no more than 500 meters from the family residence to the nearest public transport hub for bus, train and/or metro.
- (iv) Fourth, the number of cars was considered, and both families with and without cars were recruited. With 9 of the 11 families having access to a car (at the time of the interview), the sample reflects the national average. In 2013 89% of all

Family	Urban Structure	Geographical location (district)	Distance to CPH city centre (in km)	Access to public transport (within 500 meters)	No of cars	No of children	Age of parents	Age of children	Income (in 1000 d.kr)
Lindborg	Urban	Frederiksberg	3	metro/bus/train	1	3	53, 47	15, 13, 10	800-900k
Petersen	Urban	Frederiksberg	3,8	metro/bus/train	1	3	44, 45	18, 14, 9	1000k +
Bach	Suburban	Valby	4,7	bus/train	1	2	36, 36	6, 3	800-900k
Møller	Suburban	Brønshøj	5	bus	2	2	53, 47	14, 10	900-1000k
Jensen	Urban	Christianhavn	1,8	bus/metro	1	1	40, 42	8, 5	900-1000k
Sørensen	Urban	Vesterbro	2,6	metro/bus/train	1	2	51, 50	18, 14	1000k +
Vangsgaard	Urban	Frederiksberg	3,6	metro/bus/train	1	1	41, 37	7, 2	800-900k
Hartmann	Suburban	Hvidovre	9,9	bus/train	2	1	39, 43	16, 2	800-900k
Halkær	Suburban	Herlev	11,8	bus	0	1	38, 43	16, 13	400-500k
Nielsen	Urban	Amager	2,1	bus/metro	1	1	47, 46	18	700-800k
Juhl	Urban	Østerbro	2,5	bus/train	0	2	44, 37	9, 6	600-700k

Table 2: Sample variables

families with two adults and one or more child had access to at least one car (DS 2013a) .

- (v) Fifth, families were sampled according to family size and composition, with a special focus on achieving variety in the ages and number of children in a family in the sample.
- (vi) Sixth, an attempt was made to recruit families at different income levels. The average income in 2013 for families living in the Greater Copenhagen Area was approximately 700.000 D.kr. per year (approximately 93.700 euros) (DS 2014b).

The final sample size was based on a compromise between coverage of the variables and the available resources for empirical data production in the study. With reference to Brinkmann and Kvale's (2009) notion of *diminishing returns* (own translation of 'loven om faldende udbytte')—that the amount of new insight into a certain theme will decrease as a function of the number of interviews—the sample size was defined by the number of families needed to theoretically saturate the predefined themes to a satisfactory level (within the bounds of what was practically possible in terms of resources). Consequently, the sample size was determined during the process of data production and 11 families took part in the study. Table 2 illustrates the 11 families in the sample and their coverage of the six variables. Within this sample an attempt was made to achieve *maximum variation* across the variables (Ritchie and Lewis 2003: chapter 4).

As table 2 suggests, the sample is slightly biased towards middle and upper middle class families in terms of income level. Also, the sample does not reflect the rising trend towards new family constellations, as the majority of the sample families were traditional nuclear families and only two families were blended families with children from prior relationships. Throughout the process of the two rounds of interviewing, in the time span of approximately one year (see figure 5 in section 3-2 for an overview), two couples in the sample separated and did not wish to continue participating in the study. A third family left without giving a reason and a fourth failed to respond to requests for a second round of interviews. Consequently, the number of families participating in the first round of interviews (P1) was 11, but was reduced to 7 in the second round (P2). All 11 families will be presented in greater detail in chapter 6.

### 3-4: QUALITATIVE FAMILY INTERVIEWS

The majority of the empirical data was produced in the P1 and P2 phases in the study (see table 1) and comprises of a series of qualitative family interviews coupled with a assortment of evocation techniques. After elaboration of the family interviewing method, each of these techniques will be briefly presented and their role within the greater framework of data production explained.



## FAMILY INTERVIEWS

The primary method for data production within the study is the in-depth, semi-structured qualitative interview (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). In the study, 18 interviews were conducted with the 11 families in the sample. All 11 families participated in the first round (P1) of family interviewing while 7 of the families participated in a second round (P2). All interviews lasted approximately 1.5 hours, were recorded and were transcribed afterwards. The research process surrounding the family interviews was loosely modelled after Brinkmann and Kvale's seven-step approach (2009: 122-3).

All interviews took place at the families' residences and all family members were invited to participate. As the scope of the study is family life and everyday mobility, the chief concern was getting first-hand mobility accounts from both adults and children in the families. The interview sessions also proved valuable in gaining insights into the group dynamics, especially the intergenerational relationships, in the families. Therefore during the interview sessions observations of communication, negotiation, coordination, identity making and storytelling in the families were made; these have also supported the analysis in the study.

In each of the interview sessions, at least two and sometimes all family members participated. Hence the interviews varied in form, from what could be termed *dyad* to *triad* to group interviews, where two, three or more family members participated. This made individual-level depth during the interviewing possible, but also enabled family members to reflect on and compare each other's statements (Ritchie and Lewis 2003: 37). As a result, some of the family interviews with multiple members became more like group conversations or discussions than formal interviews.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, from a hermeneutic point of view understanding everyday family mobility requires going beyond the phenomenon of family mobility itself and involves social, historical and cultural contextual focuses. Consequently, the interviews were primarily based on Brinkmann and Kvale's (2009: 46-50) phenomenological, *empathic lifeworld interview*, in which insights into the family member's everyday life were sought. Additionally, techniques from *active interviewing* were employed, especially in relation to gaining a deeper sense of the families' values and opinions on everyday mobility (Holstein and Gubrium 1995). Hence the aim of the interviews was not only to achieve rich or thick descriptions of the family members' everyday lives and mobility, but also to elucidate meanings and normative positions through discussion and confrontation. This required the interviewer to actively take part in the interview rather than playing a passive role. In addition to actively listening to the families' stories and accounts of everyday life, the researcher also offered and discussed with family members initial interpretations, other normative positions and alternative approaches to mobility.

The two rounds of interviewing had different objectives; hence the interviewer



employed different strategies. Taking place in the initial phase of the study, the first round of interviews (P1) was explorative and horizontally directed for broad insight into the families' everyday lives and mobility. Through the first four interviews the interview guide and scope were developed for the remaining seven interviews in the first round. In addition to the family's everyday mobility practices, the scope of these interviews encompassed the family's background, home location, neighbourhood, social network, values and opinions on mobility.

The second round of interviews (P2) had a narrower scope. The aim was to produce more in-depth knowledge of the family members' mobility practices, especially focusing on relational making processes and performances of everyday mobility. However, the second round of interviews was also used to test concepts and hypotheses built from first round of interviews. Hence the initial analysis across the sample, interpretations and understandings were presented and discussed with the respondents. This feedback loop, as an integral part of the inquiry, served both as a form of ethical validation process and as a way of further developing the theoretical constructs in the study (see also section 3-7).

As mentioned above, one of the barriers to performing interviews on everyday life and mundane phenomena such as everyday mobility is infra-ordinariness and the family members' level of reflection. Drawing inspiration from the method of *Urban Songlines* (Marling 2003), evocation techniques were used to facilitate inquiry into the family members' understandings, experiences and knowledge that would otherwise be hard to access. Furthermore, this design also supported the observational aim of internal interaction, negotiation and reflection in the familial context *in situ*. These techniques will be outlined in the following paragraphs.

## EVOCATION TECHNIQUES

### GPS Tracking and Mapping<sup>7</sup>

Each family member in each of the 11 families in the sample was instructed to carry a small portable GPS tracking unit to all his or her activities for a duration of approximately one week (between five and seven days<sup>8</sup>). From the substantial tracking data (series of time-space coordinates), individual mappings were visualised on maps illustrating each of the family members' movements and whereabouts (see figure 6 for an example).

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<sup>7</sup> *The GPS maps, mental maps and timeline drawings can all be found in the appendix (see Folder A and B).*

<sup>8</sup> *This GPS tracking process was part of the ACTUM project Work Package 1 (conducted by Henrik Harder and Kristian Reinau, Aalborg University) in which 70 households (not only families but several kinds of household types) were tracked.*

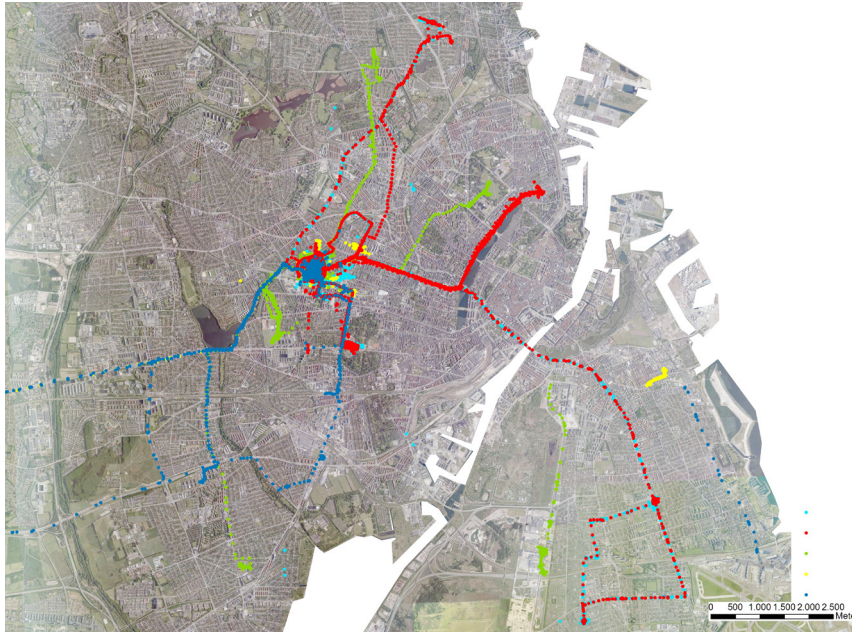


Figure 6: GPS tracking visualisation example (source: ACTUM WPI)

During the first round of interviewing, some of the families were shown their GPS visualisations as part of the interview session. The family members were asked to identify the tracks and encouraged to talk about their everyday mobility and activities. This evoked memories of previous events and doings and thereby facilitated talk about the specificities of their individual and collective mobility practices on a very detailed level, with reference to actual events and mobility practices. Watching their everyday mobility and activities in relation to each other's also opened up for deeper reflection the relational nature of their mobility performance in everyday life.

#### Mental Maps

Other families were tasked with drawing their everyday mobility and activities during their interview sessions. With inspiration from Kevin Lynch (1960), these “mental maps” involved transport modes, routes and activities but also urban features and landmarks; in this way they became mental representations of the family members' urban everyday life environments (see figure 7 for an example). Like the GPS visualisations, the mental mapping technique was also used to facilitate the discussion during the interviews, but whereas the GPS visualisation sterilely illustrated the family members' tracks, mobility practices and activities on maps, the mental mapping offered a more embodied and sensorial approach, elucidating factors the family members themselves found characteristic of and important to their everyday mobility practices. For some of the children in the sample, especially, this allowed them to visually convey aspects of their everyday lives that would be difficult to articulate, which could then be brought into the discussion.

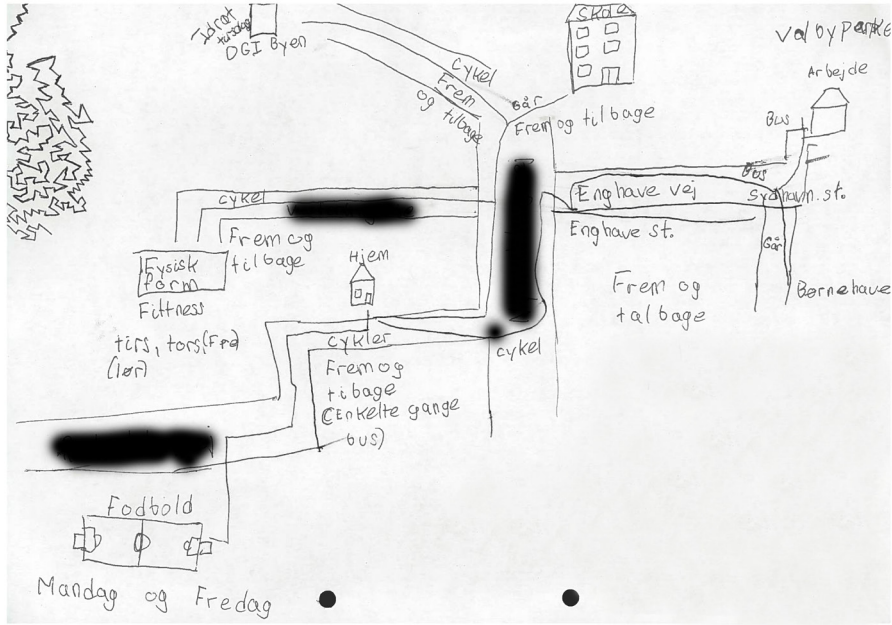


Figure 7: Mental map example

**Timeline Mapping**

Finally, the families in the second round of interviews were asked to visually construct a family timeline with important milestones in their lives (see figure 8). The goal of this technique was to obtain an overview of the biography of the family and the events and happenings in their lives, which in the first round of interviews had been introduced sporadically and in a fragmented way.

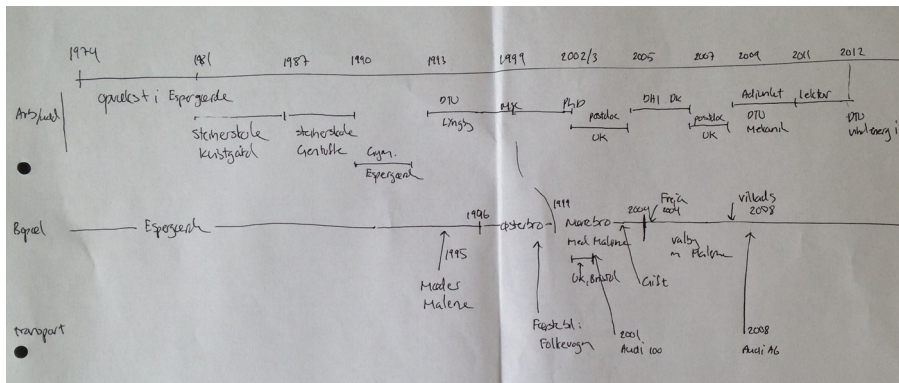


Figure 8: Timeline mapping example

In addition to being a collaborative task with lots of inter-family negotiation of the timing, spacing and reasons of past events, the timeline exercise was also useful in that it served as a historical contextualisation, rendering the processual aspect of everyday life and mobility visible. This facilitated discussion of not only present but also past (and future) configurations of the socio-temporal orderings of activities and mobility in the family taskscape in relation to the family's conditions, needs, wishes, obligations etc. in everyday life.

### 3-5: MOBILE FIELD STUDIES

The mobile field studies were conducted after the family interviews (see figure 6) over the course of three periods (of one to two days each). Through a phenomenological ethnographic approach, drawing inspiration from mobile methods such as *follow-along/with/follow-the-thing* (Lee and Ingold 2006, Spinney 2011, Vannini 2012) and *shadowing* (Jiron 2011), the mobile field study method took its point of departure in active immersion in and the sensorial experience of everyday mobility performances in Copenhagen. The aim of this method was to gain a deeper understanding of the families' everyday mobility through the researcher's body and senses. Hence the method is concerned with what was *seen, heard, smelled* and *touched*. These sensorial experiences were sampled mainly through the researcher's body, but were also documented through video and sound recordings, photos and field notes.

#### FOLLOWING THE TRACKS

The method is an ethnography that follows the daily itineraries of selected respondents' mobility practices in Copenhagen. From GPS tracking and qualitative interviews, it was possible to extrapolate most of the family members' precise itineraries in their daily lives. The field study took its point of departure in a selection of these itineraries. The itineraries were assembled from several elements: various routes and transport modes, intersecting at particular places and at specific times. The intent was to *mimic* these itineraries and perform them as the respondents would do in their everyday lives, taking the same paths and roads, making use of the same types of vehicles and modes of moving, shifting modes in the same places and performing the mobility at the same time of day.

The field study wishes to examine the family members' mobility practices performed on a regular and routine basis and related to their most frequent activities, such as work, school, shopping, leisure activities, and socialising. These everyday mobility practices denote the ordinary, habitual and organised movements of people as they travel back and forth to daily activities. By prioritising four variables—type of mode, route, time of day and duration—the selection of everyday mobility tracks was narrowed down. The intent was not to incorporate mobility practices with all possible combinations

of variable configurations in the field study. Rather, the intent was to openly explore the diversity of mobility practices to gain insight into the families' everyday lives. (see appendix (Folder C) for overview of the selected mobility practices performed in the field study.)

## PERFORMING THE MOBILITY PRACTICES

As argued above (see section 3-2), the method works on the premise that it is possible to create knowledge of being mobile in Copenhagen through the researcher's subjective, sensorial and embodied experience of performing mobility practices. Hence, in this ethnographic method, the researcher is immersed in the respondent's everyday mobility practices *in situ* in order to feel, at least momentarily, what it is like to move and briefly become part of the mobile situation in Copenhagen. Each of the tracks represents a respondent's mobility practice, a coherent and relatively stable set of organised actions. However, this description does not encapsulate the full notion of what a *mobility practice* is. As will be further outlined in chapter 4 (see section 4-9), drawing on Vannini (2012: 14), a mobility practice can be conceptualised as being an assemblage of human subjects and material objects performing the practice through the use of knowledge, procedures and skills. This method takes its shape by the particular respondents, their daily performance of mobility practices and their choice of transport modes, and tries to engage in the techniques—such as how to bike in Copenhagen or how to handle rush hour traffic—that the respondents have skilfully mastered in their everyday lives. The researcher's performance of these mobility practices will not be a perfect replica of the original, as the family members are individuals with personal motility, practical capacities, and normative and affective dispositions and orientations towards their mobility practices that greatly influence the performance. Also, the objects utilised may differ substantially; i.e. the specific type of vehicle or the personal artefacts respondents might bring into the practice are outside the scope of the method. Finally, the researcher's performance of the techniques will be nothing like the original performances in that the researcher will be a novice compared to the experienced respondents, who have mastered their own practices to such a degree that they have become habitual and embodied. Indeed, mirroring the respondent's mobility practices is hardly possible and is not the intent of the method; rather the mobility practices act as structuring elements in the method, negotiating a balance between, on the one hand, a fixed and organised scope and focus, and on the other hand, an openness to exploration and experiencing.

Using detailed mappings and descriptions of the itineraries, each individual mobility practice was performed for the most part in one continuous flow, following the track, after which notes on observations and reflections were taken. Just as in the respondents' everyday lives, incidents and disruptions occurred and interfered. (Also, the fact that the researcher is an inexperienced mobile practitioner in the Copenhagen context may cause difficulties in accomplishing the mobility practices as the respondents do.)



Hence, in the performance, the researcher was allowed to make provisional changes and deviate from the original script in attempting to adapt to any such disruptions.



Figure 9: Photo of setup

Empirical material was produced primarily through the researcher's own sensorial observations and field notes, but also at times through video and sound recording. Some of the mobility performances were video recorded from a first-person perspective, capturing the researcher's field of vision (see figure 9 for details of the setup). Also, the audio perceptible to the moving researcher was recorded, and field notes were recorded on a Dictaphone whenever possible. These notes were guided by a set of questions or *attention points* that addressed different aspects of the performance (see appendix Folder C). Although the mobile experience is by definition embodied and sensorial, this method tried, however imperfectly and incompletely, to capture some of these experiences through video and audio recordings and field notes, which proved valuable in later stages of the analysis in the study.

Throughout the mobility performance, the researcher was involved both as a participant in the mobility practice and as an observer of the mobility practice. Observation should be understood in a double sense: as the researcher was an active participant in the mobility practice, observation was both directed at the mobile other's performances

of the practice and reflective of the researcher's own performance of the mobility practice. Hence, using his own pre-understandings, prejudices and inexperience as tools for reflection, the researcher becomes a sensory and sensitising instrument emphasising and elucidating some of the embodied skills and practical knowledge that are required in making and performing everyday mobility. Naturally, performing the family members' everyday mobility practices does not grant access their personal experiences of being mobile, but it does enable some level of understanding of what the mobility feels like and what the sensorial experience of moving along a certain route, at a certain time, in a certain mode might evoke. Recalling hermeneutic thought (see section 2-3), what was attempted with this method can best be compared to seeking to facilitate a *fusion of horizons* between the respondents and the researcher. Hence the mobile field study was used as a backdrop supporting and contextualising the process of interpretation within the analysis of the qualitative family interviews.

### 3-6: ANALYSIS STRATEGY

From a pragmatist-inspired approach, performing the analysis is equivalent to asking the question "What makes this phenomenon possible?" and seeking to produce an answer by offering a hypothesis. In this study this means seeking answers in how families cope in everyday life through the use of mobility. The process of analysis in this study is an adaptation of Kvale and Brinkmann's (2009: 217-8) overall model for analysis. As such, the analysis actually begins during the interview, in which both the respondents and the interviewer engage in initial understanding and meaning condensation *in situ*. Hence the interview method applied in this study aims for a "self-correcting" approach in which the interviewer actively seeks to formulate and test initial interpretations of the respondents' statements during the interview (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009: 217-8). This was followed by a more formal *ex post* analysis and interpretation of the interviews, which was eventually fed back and presented to the families for validation and further elaboration and comment (in the second round of interviews, P2). This section will elaborate on the *ex post* analysis that was performed after both interview sessions (P1 and P2).

As Kvale and Brinkmann (2009: 214) point out, there are no standard techniques for qualitative text analysis. Instead we should think of techniques for analysis as tools with different capabilities that may be useful and relevant in certain situations and contexts. Drawing inspiration from both the pragmatist abductive attitude, presented in the previous chapter, and grounded theory (Charmaz 2006, Strübing 2007), the analysis in this thesis is based upon the analysis techniques of *coding* and *categorisation* (Saldaña 2009, Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). With its use of systematic coding and categorisation for making sense of and creating meanings in the empirical interview material, the analysis can be seen as an iterative-cyclical process in which the analysis addresses the concrete empirical material descriptively and gradually moves towards the formation of more abstract concepts and understandings (Kvale and Brinkmann

2009: 260). The aim of this process, illustrated in figure 10, is to construct concepts that might eventually aid formation of new theory. This does, however, not mean, the process is or should be a-theoretical. Despite finding inspiration in grounded theory, the analysis performed in this thesis is pragmatically utilising existing theory as tools facilitating the coding and categorisation in the process of analysis.

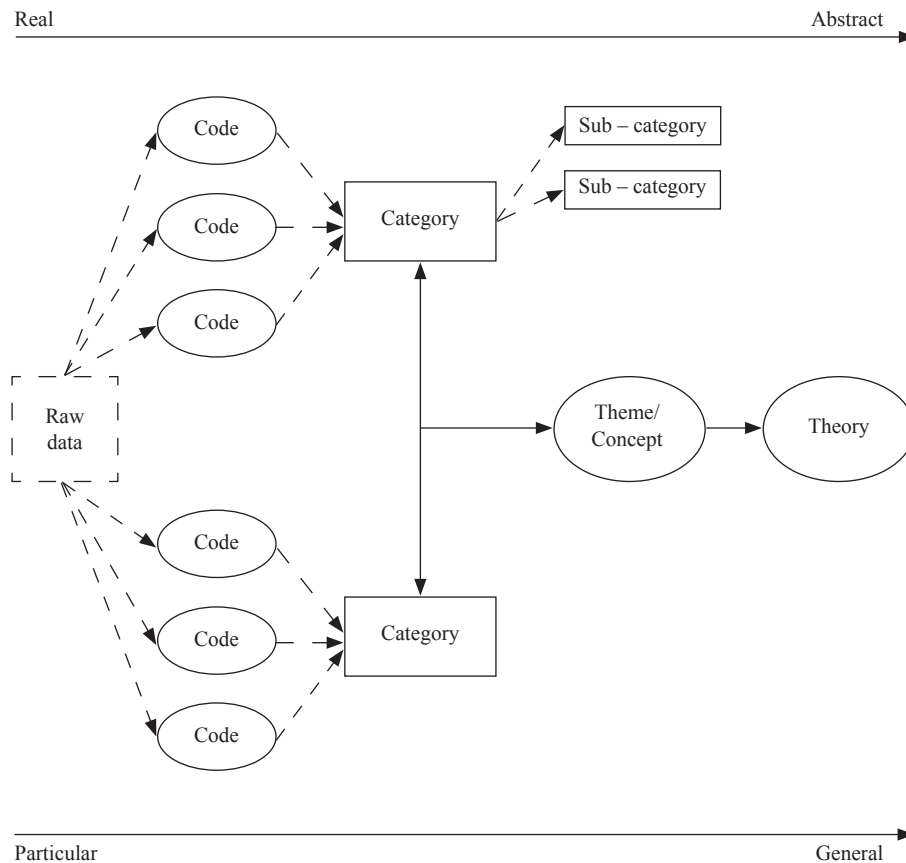


Figure 10: Formal model of code-to-theory in qualitative inquiry, adopted from Saldaña (2009: 12)

## CODING

As the first step in processing the raw material, the interviews were listened to, transcribed and re-read several times. In this way the researcher gained familiarity with the empirical material. Through this intensive process, initial ideas about and interpretations of the empirical material started to emerge. From this open explorative process, the analysis turned to the more systematic technique of coding. Coding is a decontextualising analytical procedure that is a first step in organising and making sense



of data; or, as Amanda Coffey and Paul Atkinson put it, coding enables “us rigorously to review what our data are saying” (1996: 27). The material is coded by creating a series of codes or labels, often single words or short phrases, which is used to sort and organise the material. Coding, however, is more than instrumental labelling—coding is analysis. Johnny Saldaña writes that coding is “a heuristic (from the Greek, meaning ‘to discover’)—an exploratory problem-solving technique without specific formulas to follow” and that “[coding] leads you from the data to the idea, and from the idea to all the data pertaining to that idea” (2009: 8).

In this study the transcripts were systematically processed through several iterations of coding cycles in which multiple codes were created, refined and sometimes removed. Codes were developed from the research ambition and scope of the study, inductively from the material itself and the respondents’ statements, and equally through theoretical readings in which the empirical material was approached through the use of various theoretical perspectives (see chapters 4 and 5 for elaboration of the theory as well as the analytical perspectives that have guided the analysis and coding process). Thus the coding process was performed using several “coding filters” (Saldaña 2009: 6), each one representing an analytical lens foregrounding certain factors of particular interest and guiding the interpretation of the empirical material towards them. Hence this systematic coding process allows for the same text to be multi-coded, embracing the complexity of the empirical material by facilitating multiple readings simultaneously.

In considering this process, it is important to stress that “since we bring ‘our subjectivities, our personalities, our predispositions, [and] our quirks’ to the process”, all coding is based on the researcher’s judgement (Saldaña 2009: 7). This illustrates the pervasiveness of normativity, pre-understandings and prejudices that were discussed in the previous chapter (see section 2-3 and 2-4) as a profound condition of the research practice that greatly impacts and shapes the analysis process. For instance, developing a code, choosing what qualifies as belonging to that code and establishing how codes are related to each other are all decided entirely by the researcher.

The majority of the coding process was performed in the computer software program NVIVO (see nvivo file in the appendix, Folder D). The use of NVIVO should be understood not as analysis but, as Coffey and Atkinson (1996: 172) state, as “analytical support”, a tool for preparing and organising data for analysis. Hence in the use of computer-assisted analysis it should be stressed that the computer is not auto-performing the analysis. It is still the researcher who makes decisions on what codes to establish, what to put in them, which leads to follow and so on, and NVIVO is merely a useful tool for doing this.

## CATEGORISATION

Through the use of coding, the analysis seeks to find patterns or associations in the

empirical material. By juxtaposing, comparing and associating individual codes, the researcher searches for patterns or clusters of codes that help to make sense of the data. Saldaña offers this explanation:

I advocate that qualitative codes are essence-capturing and essential elements of the research story that, when clustered together according to similarity and regularity—a pattern—they actively facilitate the development of categories and thus analysis of their connections.  
(2009: 8)

Hence *codifying*, the systematic arrangement and ordering of elements in a hierarchy or a system, is a powerful and flexible heuristic sensitising tool in which elements can be brought together in different combinations and compositions. Andrew Abbott describes this meticulous process through the metaphor of decorating: “decorating a room; you try it, step back, move a few things, step back again, try a serious reorganization, and so on” (2004: 215). In the analysis multiple iterations of cutting and pasting codes, grouping and regrouping them into categories based upon shared characteristics or *family resemblances* (decided upon by the researcher), were done in the initial search for patterns in the data and the formation of tentative understandings and interpretations. (An overview of the initial state of codes and categories in the analysis can be seen in Wind (2012), appendix Folder A) As Saldaña notes, this categorisation process is facilitated through the researcher’s “tacit and intuitive sense” (2009: 9) of what data make sense together in which the researcher is also drawing on theoretical resources and knowledge. This decision process can be approached in many ways, but was in this study performed by looking for patterns of:

- *Similarities*: Looking for things that happen in the same way., For instance, in the empirical material, one of the parents in each of the families in the study save one has reduced his or her working hours while the children are young as a way of making everyday life function.
- *Differences*: Looking for things that happen in different ways. For instance, the families use very different combinations of transport modes to get around even though they live in comparable neighbourhoods.
- *Frequency*: Looking for recurrences, things that happen often or seldom. For instance, the frequency of family activities, activities for which family members are together, varies across the weekdays, often peaking at the weekends.
- *Sequence*: Looking for specific orders or sequences of how things happen. For instance, many of the family members perform very particular and scripted mobility practices in which the sequence of actions often serves both a ritualistic as well as a practical purpose.
- *Correspondence*: Looking for how events are interrelated and affect each other. For instance, in the empirical material the family’s everyday mobility is closely configured in relation to the events of bringing and picking up young children to and from day care and/or kindergarten.

These search *heuristics* were primarily deployed in the interview material, but other empirical material, such as observations of group dynamics and interactions during the interviews, the socio-economic characteristics of the families, ACTUM data and the experiences and observations from the mobile field studies, were used to support and qualify the presumed associations and patterns in the analysis. For instance, as will be argued in the analysis (chapters 7 and 8), the association between the family members’ mobility practices and the affective atmospheres of moving and emotional coping in everyday life was suggested in the interview material but further supported by the mobile field studies. Hence categorising is an abductive process in which the researcher creatively *guesses* at or *suggests* associations and patterns, which are then measured by their ability to make sense of the data. This guessing is of course not entirely unqualified as the researcher formulates hypothesis based upon other theories and an existing web of knowledge. In this study, through several iterations of re-coding and re-categorising, the two main categories of *making everyday mobility* and *performing everyday mobility* were established, each consisting of several sub-categories based on several codes (see figure 11 for an example from the category of making everyday mobility).

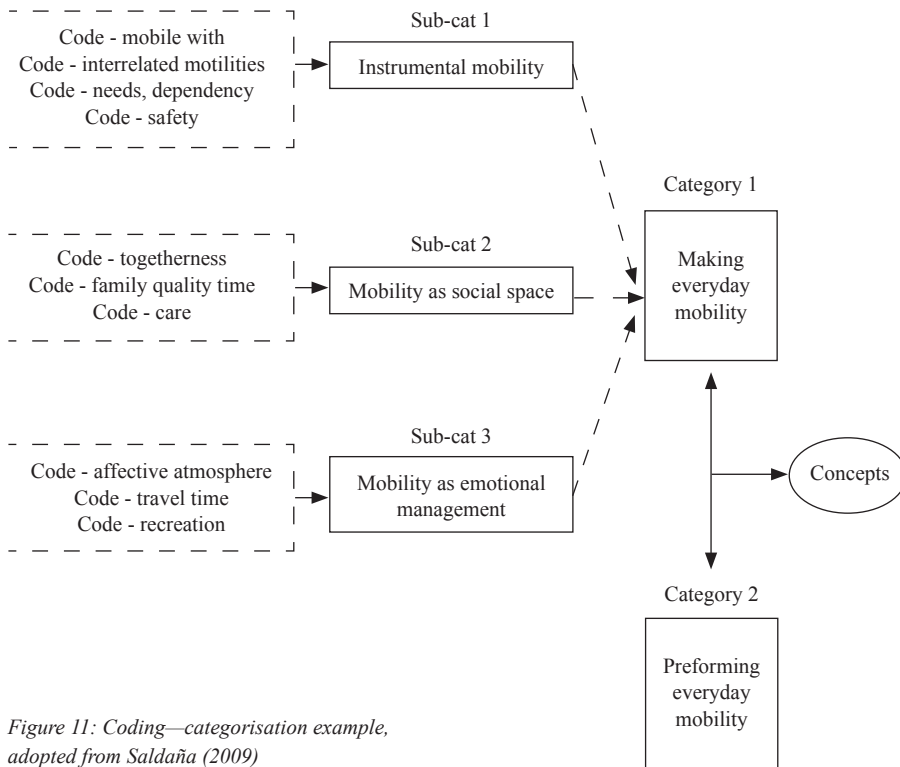


Figure 11: Coding—categorisation example, adopted from Saldaña (2009)

The de-contextualised codes are re-contextualised by condensing clusters of codes that are perceived as belonging together into sub-categories. In this study, as illustrated in the figure above, the sub-categories were formed from the clusters of codes. *Themes* and *concepts* are “outcome[s] of coding, categorization, and analytic reflection” (Saldaña 2009: 13) and can be understood as tools aiding the analysis process in moving away from the concrete and particular of the empirical material and towards the more abstract and general. The three sub-categories illustrated in the figure above were used to formulate three key themes of *instrumental mobility*, *mobility as social spaces* and *mobility as emotional management*. Interrelated with these themes, higher-level concepts such as *mobile care*, *mobile togetherness* and *mobile in-between* were constructed (see chapters 7 and 8 for elaboration of these concepts). It should be noted that the generative analysis is not a linear but an iterative-cyclical process in which concepts are gradually developed, refined and sometimes dismissed through iterations of abductive generation, deductive testing and inductive verification with reference to the empirical data (Stjernfelt 2007: 333, Strübing 2007: 565). This process is illustrated in figure 12.

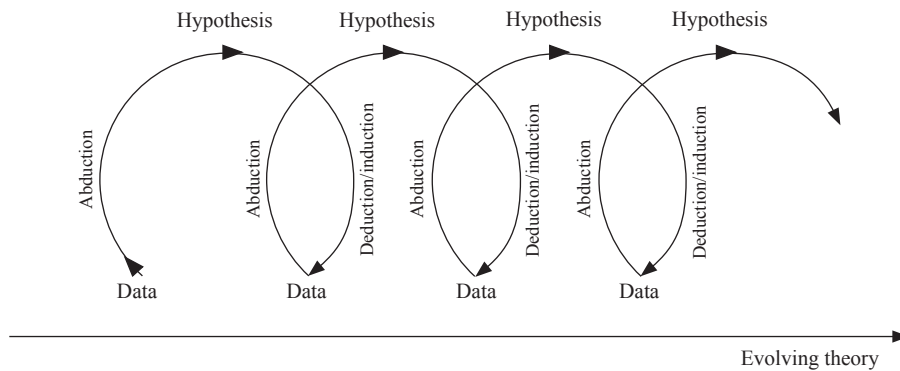


Figure 12: Iterative-cyclical analysis process, adopted from Strübing (2007:567)

The concepts, condensations of codes and categories produced in this analysis process are to be understood as tools which can be used for interpreting and understanding patterns or associations not only in the empirical data but also on a more generally. By “inferring transfer” (Saldaña 2009: 13), by which it is meant that what is observed in a limited number of instances at particular times or sites might also be observed in comparable instances at other times or sites, however without implying determinism. For instance, in the empirical material family members state that they often utilise everyday mobility for the recreational purposes of relaxation or listening to music. It seems reasonable to believe that this is a general phenomenon occurring in much of everyday mobility, including outside of the 11 families in the sample. Therefore in the study the concept of *mobile in-between* is proposed as a way of understanding this phenomenon, and by inferring transfer this concept is lifted from the particular

occurrence towards a more general level. This does not in any way imply that the theoretical concepts produced in the analysis are universal laws applicable to all situations. On the contrary, we can easily dismiss the notion that all everyday mobility practices are enjoyable and have recreational elements; even the same mobility practice might one day be a recreational in-between and the next a tedious necessity. Nonetheless, it is still reasonable to presume that other mobility practices may share this recreational element, even based on such a small sample as the one used in this study.

### **3-7: VALIDITY OF KNOWLEDGE AND ETHICAL REPRESENTATIONS**

As seen in figure 3, illustrating the pragmatist inquiry process (see section 2-4), the iterative-cyclical process of inquiry is successfully terminated when the indeterminacy of the situation is eradicated. As was argued in the previous chapter, validity is not achieved through correspondence and representation, but rather when the analysis allows us to understand and cope with the problem in the research situation (Brinkmann 2012: 47-8). Hence in this study termination of inquiry is achieved when a satisfying understanding of how families cope in everyday life through the use of mobility is provided by the analysis. The knowledge claims that are produced are valid and believable, in a pragmatist sense, because they enable a productive understanding that facilitates solving the problem, i.e. answering the research questions asked in the study, and thereby transform the situation into a determinate one. Hence, from the successful inquiry process, provisional, local and situated knowledge or beliefs emerge.

Through the process of inquiry knowledge is produced in dialogue with others and the world. As argued in the previous chapter (see sections 2-3 and 2-4) knowledge both springs from and is held accountable to the empirical reality (Hastrup 2011: 12, Bacon 2012: 87-8). In this thesis the inquiry is initiated, problematized, analysed and tested in close dialogue with the empirical reality, between the researcher and the family member respondents, and even in solitary moments when the act of inquiry is indirectly in dialogue with other theoretical sources, the academic field of research and the researcher's personal experience and relationship with everyday life and mobility. Hence the knowledge produced in the study is valid, not by exact correspondence to the world, but exactly because of its close and dialogical relationship and commitment to the empirical world of the study (Brinkmann 2012: 76). The pragmatist and hermeneutic approach in this study should therefore not be considered to lead to knowledge claims of extreme relativism. Rather, subjectivity is a profound condition that cannot be put aside even in research practice, and therefore subjectivity is *the only way in*, so to speak. It is a tool through which knowledge is achieved, though it is always in relation to and affected by the existing web of understandings of and

beliefs about the world (Hastrup 2011).

How is knowledge or belief reliably secured? It is not enough for the researcher to personally feel convinced. On the contrary, Dewey thought knowledge should be tested and confirmed by others: “the method of science locates normative authority within communities of inquiry” (Bacon 2012: 55). In this study this goal has been pursued by building “member checking” (Saldaña 2009: 28) into the research design, in which initial findings from the analysis can be fed back to the respondents and thereby tested and further developed. Just as the knowledge claims in this study have been produced in concert with family members, the theoretical concepts have been developed and refined through interaction with the academic community, literature, theories and other researchers. This refinement process cannot be completed without commitment and responsibility to the world. The empirical reality enters the inter-subjective process of inquiry, as Hastrup argues, as a “third point” (2011: 14) between the researcher and others that cannot be avoided or disregarded without compromising the validity of the knowledge production.

In this study this anchoring to the empirical reality in the production of knowledge also arises in the obligation of representing the families, their mobility and their everyday lives respectfully and ethically. Denzin and Lincoln (2011: 3) state that qualitative methods are situated activities that transform the world into representations of many sorts. In line with hermeneutic thought, the researcher is not separate from this transformation, as research ambitions, pre-understandings, values and dispositions are an integral part of the inquiry process. However, recognising this normative baggage in the research process does not relieve the researcher of the ethical obligation to represent the empirical reality with the greatest respect, and in accordance with the family members’ views of the world, to the best of his or her ability. That being said, performing inquiry is always concerned with reducing the complexity of the small section of the world under investigation. Throughout the process, choices about the research design ultimately entails make compromise as something is always foregrounded at the cost of something else.

One of the concrete and central ways in which the everyday family mobility being studied in the thesis is represented is through the making of narratives, or what is referred to as scenes (for an example see chapters 7 and 8). Owing much to John van Maanen’s (2011) *confessionalist* and *impressionalist* styles and Vannini’s (2012) *evocative* and *performative* writing, short condensed ethnographic scenes have been produced with the goal of bringing the empirical material into the thesis while explicitly foregrounding certain aspects of everyday family mobility. The intent of this study is not to *deaden* the empirical reality, but instead to try to respectfully represent it in all its liveliness and thereby potentially evoke empathic recognition and resonance in those who read it (Vannini 2012: 28). Bringing together the empirical material—the family members’ interview accounts and the experiences of the mobile field studies—with the research ambition and the researcher’s normative baggage,

these ethnographic scenes are not supposed to accurately mirror the world, but rather to “evoke encounters, animate experiences, enact mundane performances” (Vannini 2012: 28) without departing from the ethical responsibility of respectfully representing the families and their views on everyday life and mobility.

Furthermore, other empirical excerpts and quotes from the family interviews used in the thesis are deliberately kept short and precise to save space and to maintain focus. The conversations that occurred during the family interviews were often complex and lengthy due to the participation of multiple family members. Hence conversations from the interviews are not presented in full. The downside of this limitation of the empirical interview material within the thesis is the inability of the reader to challenge the interpretations made in the analysis or to gain a greater sense of the conversational contexts of the selected quotes. However, to remedy this, full transcripts of all interviews (only in Danish) as well as two extensive analysis reports on the interview material from both rounds of interviews are found in the appendix (see Folder A and B).

### **3-8: CONCLUSION**

The intent of this chapter was to present, reflect upon and discuss the study’s research design, which underpins the inquiry into everyday family mobility. The chapter has reported how 11 families were chosen based upon a purposive sampling and maximum variance on 6 variables. With its point of departure in the philosophical underpinnings of pragmatism and hermeneutics, and through a discussion of mobile methods, the chapter has argued for a two-piece, mobile-methods-inspired approach to empirical data production. The qualitative interviews, coupled with GPS tracking, mental maps and timeline drawings, have been the primary sources of insight into the family’s everyday mobility. Secondly to this, mobile field studies have been used to triangulate and gain an embodied and sensorial understanding of performing everyday mobility in Copenhagen. Furthermore, leaning on grounded theory, along with epistemological insights from pragmatism and hermeneutics, the chapter has described the methods of coding and categorisation that underpin the analysis that has produced the findings presented in chapters 7 and 8.

The aim of the analysis process is to produce theoretical concepts which might aid the research ambition of the thesis by making sense of the empirical data. However, the analysis process in this thesis is greatly influenced by existing theory. The thesis will now, in the next chapter, turn towards the theoretical framework that have informed the analysis process. Finally, before turning to the analysis itself in chapter 7 and 8, in chapter 5, the thesis will address the analytical model of elasticity that have guided the analysis in the study.



# CHAPTER 4: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

## 4-1: INTRODUCTION

As stated in chapter 2, this study draws on a pragmatist attitude towards theory. Theories are to be understood as a “creative set of tools” (Vannini 2012: 14) and are therefore brought into the theoretical framework of the study because of what they are able to do—their analytical capabilities in opening the empirical material in the analysis and ultimately answering the research questions of the study. Hence the study does not faithfully adhere to a single theory or a well-organised, coherent set of theories; rather, as noted in the introduction chapter, the study draws eclectically on multiple theoretical bits and pieces from mobilities theory, non-representational theory, actor-network theory and family sociology. The aim of this chapter is to introduce a theoretical toolbox or *thinking* tools that further the research ambition of understanding how family mobility is implicated in coping with everyday life. Through theoretical unfolding of the three distinct themes of *everyday life*, *family* and *mobility*, this chapter argues for a relational-material and processual theoretical approach to and delineation of the object of study, the family’s everyday mobility.

The chapter is structured in three parts reflecting the three themes of everyday life, family and mobility. The first part comprises sections 4-2, 4-3 and 4-4, which presents the study’s theoretical approach to the notion of everyday life. In these sections everyday life is conceptualised as a processual and changing backdrop in which everyday mobility and family life are performed. In section 4-4 Tim Ingold’s (2000: 194-200) concept of *taskscape* is utilised as theoretical shorthand for conceptualising the socio-temporal organisation and relationality among practices in everyday life. The second theme of family is unfolded in sections 4-5, 4-6 and 4-7. Drawing on the family sociology of Morgan (2011), Smart (2007) and Holdsworth (2013), the sections argue for a theoretical conceptualisation of the family as a relational phenomenon continually recreated through performance of *family practices*. In section 4-7, the concept of *family taskscape* is proposed as a fruitful way of thinking about how the family’s normative “coping strategies” (Lassen and Jensen 2006) are actualised in relational organisations of everyday practices. The third part, sections 4-8 and 4-9, unfolds the theme of mobility. After addressing a conceptualisation of mobility based upon the mobilities turn, it is argued that family mobility is characterised and shaped by differentiation of motility (Kaufmann 2002) amongst the family members



and that studying family mobility therefore needs to pay special attention to its embeddedness in the social context of the family. Finally, drawing on mobilities theory, non-representational theory and actor-network theory, chapter concludes with the theoretical unpacking of the concept of *mobility practice* as a tool for grasping the relational, processual, material and embodied dimensions of everyday family mobility.

## 4-2: EVERYDAY LIFE

There are many approaches to studying the quotidian, as is evident in the variety of academic disciplines that show an interest in the everyday due to its close proximity to many aspects of human life. However, everyday life is particularly central to fields such as sociology, anthropology, ethnology, human geography and psychology, where it usually serves as a theoretical backdrop for the subject of research. Sarah Pink writes, “for many contemporary sociologists and anthropologists, everyday life is a given” (2012: 7-9). Hence, given this broad interest in and attention to the everyday found in many fields of research, there are many approaches to studying everyday life, and there is no unambiguously precise definition of it, although the term is used extensively in both public and academic discourse (Sandywell 2004: 172).

However, this study draws upon an understanding in which everyday life can be described as the “host of routine activities, private and public, carried out on a regular, if not actually daily, basis; such as eating, sleeping, working, commuting, shopping and so on” in which “occasional, incidental and unusual events also take place” (Ferguson 2009: 164). Coupling this understanding with inspiration from recent non-representational ways of thinking in human geography (see Thrift (2008), Anderson and Harrison (2010), Lorimer (2005) and Vannini (forthcoming) for introductions to non-representational theory), the study will approach the everyday and ordinary life by taking as its point of departure human doings, actions and practices. Thereby this approach argues for investigating and understanding the quotidian based on what we do in everyday life rather than explicitly focusing on “discourses, symbols, cultural codes, or representations” (Vannini 2012: 13).

### TOWARDS A NUANCED UNDERSTANDING OF EVERYDAY LIFE

The notion of everyday life is often associated with the ordinary (Highmore 2010: 5); the tedious, uneventful, banal and mundane (Binnie et al. 2007: 515); and the hidden and unnoticed (Pink 2012: 4). This image carries over to the habits and routines that populate everyday life. Everyday routines have, as Tom O’Dell writes:

... long been characterized as the epitome of that which is grey, bland and stifling. These are the black holes of joy, spontaneity and inspiration from which scholars have all too often presumed we need to escape (Cohen and

Taylor 1992)—simple, mindless activities which we do over and over again. (2009: 85-6)

However, as O’Dell also argues, this is a far too myopic and one-sided conception, and it fails to apprehend the full scope and nuances of everyday life. The quotidian, habits, and routines are often characterised by ambiguity and ambivalence. Sometimes a dystopian image is justified and everyday life feels dreadful, just as at other times it can be meaningful and pleasurable. Binnie et al. (2007: 515) point out that it is often the diverse spatialities we travel in, such as the streets and roads, the bus shelter, the commuter train compartment, the suburbs, and other distinct parts of the urban environment that everyday life is part of and takes place in, that are associated with the banal and mundane. As in the quotidian, many of the spatialities in everyday life can be perceived as instrumental, sterile and boring, although the opposite can also be true.

For example, Peter Merriman investigates how landscapes and environments in everyday life are sometimes explicitly designed or “choreographed to generate particular movements, sensations, aesthetic experiences and emotions” (2011: 133). We may think of many of the spatialities and places of everyday life that we traverse as being designed to hold practical and instrumental functions, but at the same time they afford experiences, sensations and affect that can undoubtedly be perceived as both pleasant and unpleasant. Indeed everyday spatialities in the transportation modes we employ day in and day out are marked by ambivalence, as they carry and evoke both positive and negative experiences and feelings. Mimi Sheller (2004) write about how mundane car driving produces feelings of both exhilaration and pleasure and frustration and fear, while Philip Vannini (2012) explores how everyday ferry journeys entail and elicit a broad spectrum of sensorial and social experiences, everything from play, and recreation to sightseeing, seasickness and boredom. Hanne Louise Jensen (2012) unfolds how everyday commuter train journeys produce recreational, therapeutic and meaningful encounters with social and emotional content in everyday life. Jensen, Sheller and Wind (2014) explore the affective ambiances in everyday family mobility and show how the quotidian is not only responsible for producing positive and negative experiences but also affects how people engage in “emotional management” through their mobility in everyday life.

This is just a tiny subset of recent research, part of the flurry of academic literature on mobilities that seeks to transcend an instrumentalist and one-sided reading of the mundane spaces and mobility in the everyday. Put more simply, the argument here is that everyday life, populated as it is with routines and habits, should not as a rule be categorised as *grey* or *boring* and be regarded as an indifferent part of life; rather it should be approached with greater sensitivity towards its fluidity, ambivalence and nuances (Edensor 2003: 155). One-sided conceptions tend to miss out on seeing everyday life as inherently open, labile and teeming with potentialities.

Much of what we do in everyday life goes unnoticed by us, as it has, through countless

repetitions performed in familiarised spatialities and temporalities, been naturalised and inscribed into the body. Everyday life seems to become, as Joe Moran (2010: 3) puts it, “infra-ordinary”, as it falls outside the conscious realm of thought, just as infrared light falls outside the visible spectrum. For instance, simply trying to recall the exact doings of last week, even yesterday, can be hard. As one respondent said, “You simply don’t notice it; it slips your mind”, as these activities are done without much contemplation. Hence this also means that we do not question the normative dispositions of the habits or routines of everyday life, but perform them relatively unreflectively. Through the many repetitions of everyday experiences the spatialities and temporalities that interweave with the performance of habits and routines are gradually familiarised. At first, before cementing a routine and prior to performance, we might start by acquiring theoretical knowledge of rules and regulations and plan how to proceed. However, over time, through practice, we accumulate practical knowledge, know-how, what Polanyi (1966) regards as “tacit knowledge” of the appropriate conduct and social conventions, and slowly we learn the skills of performing everyday life, eventually becoming seasoned experts. One might think of learning to ride a bike: no easy feat at first, demanding all the mental and physical resources available. However, over time, repetition and practice we learn *how-to*, and eventually bike riding becomes a mundane and embodied everyday activity.

Paul Harrison claims it is from the “embodiment of habit a consistency is given to the self which allows of the end of doubt” (2000: 503). In effect, this relieves us of the necessity of being endlessly be reflective and of being forced to make conscious decisions about every little detail we stumble upon in everyday life. The everyday as routines can relieve one of burden and boredom; as Ben Highmore elegantly puts it, “Repetitive rhythms can lull us into calmness or drag us into machinic compliance [and] release us from the metronome of clock time but connect us as willing (or reluctant) supplicants to the time of labour” (2010: 110). Moreover, as Tim Edensor points out, embodied routines and habits have a tendency to “accumulate over time to consolidate a ‘common sense’, which is usually shared by those around you, so that these habits become further ingrained through interactions with others” (2007: 211). This self-reinforcing process is particularly evident in how family members construct collective habits and routines in the family, such as afternoon routines of shopping together; family commuting to kindergarten, school and work; or walking the same paths to the local playground, which over time become familiar, and the common-sense way everyday life is practically performed. Furthermore, as Edensor also states, such familiarised routines often resonate with those around us. When performed in social groups, such as families, they simultaneously strengthen and reaffirm the emotional bonds among family members and the collective sense of community. This notion of how family is produced through practice will be further explored shortly (see section 4-6). Therefore, everyday life as mundane and habitual repetitions and routines offers a sense of security and certainty (Binnie et al. 2007). Crafting everyday doings into habitual practices bestows predictability and offers a temporal ordering that “provide[s] the basic intelligibility” (Thrft 2008: 8) of our

lifeworld, thereby stabilising it, if only momentarily.

However, if all our doings and actions in everyday life were nestled within completely stabilised and perfectly formed routines and habits, each day would look very much the same; or, as Edensor puts it, “if this static scenario was the totality of the quotidian, there would be no social and cultural change” (2007: 211). Hence, focusing overly much on the cyclical aspects of everyday life, the repetition of its doings, routines and habits, has the downside of potentially deflecting attention from the dynamic side of everyday life and thereby clouding the constant motion and continual evolution and mutation of routines and habits. Hence to evoke a nuanced perspective on the everyday arguably entails understanding it not only as endless cycles of routines but concurrently as “the inclusive arena in which occasional, incidental, and unusual events also take place” (Ferguson 2009: 164).

### 4-3: CHANGE IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Highmore writes, “like fissures in a stream of constancy the everyday is also punctuated by interruptions and irruptions: a knock on the door, a stubbed toe, an argument, an unexpected present, a broken glass, a tear, a desperate embrace” (2010: 1). As Highmore argues, interruptions and change are just as much a part of the everyday as routine and repetition. Change in everyday life can be instigated from many sources. As Edensor points out, interruptions and disruptions of the mundane performances of everyday life can also be initiated by collision with others’ “less predictable” routines or caused by “bodily discomfort” (2007: 212). Having a severe headache, a sprained ankle from training or a sick child who cannot go to kindergarten are all familiar disruptions that potentially instigate changes to our routines and habits in everyday life. Others around us, such as other family members, friends, colleagues, people on the bus, and their doings and routines, even their mere presence, can be a major source of interruption and change. When everyday practices intersect, they sometimes collide, and change is bound to happen as we try the best we can to *course correct* and keep on going. As Highmore states, as small a thing as the breaking of a glass when trying to get out the door with the kids in the morning can upset the morning commuting routine to such a degree that it can only be mended by reconfiguring from biking to taking the car in order to arrive on time.

However, change can also emerge from less tangible aspects of everyday life. The everyday and its routines and practices might, for instance, be contested by others or ourselves, especially then they grow too “rigid” and “prescriptive” (Edensor 2007: 211) or simply “too much” (Ehn and Löfgren 2009). Paradoxically, the everyday is, as Edensor writes:

... the realm suffused with habit, routine, unreflexive forms of common sense  
 ... also contains the seeds of resistance and escape from uniformity. For not

only is the quotidian the sphere of a conservative reiteration of “the way things are,” but it is also susceptible to the intrusions of dreams, involuntary memories, peculiar events, and uncanny sentiments.  
(2003: 154-5)

Indeed the desire to escape from uniformity can motivate change; for instance, trying another seat on the bus to work or driving a different route to the weekly family dinner are trivial ways of evoking change in uniform routines. As Edensor points out, the source of change is not always rational, predictable and identifiable; it might be a sudden change of heart or a sudden urge that seemingly comes out of nowhere. Sometimes this can be brought about simply by being with others or watching their doings, and sometimes emotional intrusions in the everyday are afforded by the affective atmospheres in the environments we traverse. Whether the spatialities of everyday life provide for negative or positive sensorial experiences, they constitute a backdrop for the unfolding of everyday life in which interruptions and disruptions emerge and “constantly threatens to undermine the structure laid down by habit” (Edensor 2007: 212).

However, in a slightly more violent fashion than the minor disruptions of the breaking of a glass or a sudden urge, change in everyday life is also often brought about by failures and breakdowns in massive technical systems beyond our individual control. For most people, everyday life is performed in societies facilitated by all kinds of technical systems (Graham 2014). Some systems move people, such as infrastructural transport systems; some move objects and goods, such as the shipping industry; some move energy, such as oil and gas pipelines and massive electrical underground cables; and some move information and communication, such as the internet and wireless cell phone networks. John Urry (2007: 59) invites us to think about the complexity and dependencies of these massive socio-technical systems as integrated parts of everyday life. These systems empower people in their everyday lives (and disenfranchise those left outside). In our daily use of and interconnection with these systems, ranging from driving the car to work through infrastructural systems and pumping gas at a gas station linked up to a vast network of oil; to buying all sorts of fresh fruit year-round or purchasing inexpensive mass-produced clothes shipped through networks of goods transportation; to baking a cake in an electric oven powered by energy networks, and so on, we accomplish our everyday lives. The everyday is deeply entangled in these massive and powerful systems; we rely on and trust in them even though they always carry risk and uncertainty. Failure and breakdown in such systems are always imminent; as Hannam, Sheller and Urry write, “complex systems have become especially vulnerable to what Perrow terms ‘normal accidents’ that are almost built in, almost certain to occur from time to time” (2006: 8). Pursuing this line of thought, the close interrelatedness of our everyday doings, routines and habits with these complex systems highlights the vulnerability of everyday life. Disruptions and “[b]reakdowns are a systemic part of everyday life” (Trentmann 2009: 80) that constantly require adaptation. Hence another major source of change is on-going adaptation to these

quasi-stable systems that we take part in and depend on in everyday life.

Non-representational thinking prompts us to understand this interrelation of mundane repetition and change in everyday life as a constant on-flow in dynamic world in motion (Anderson and Harrison 2010). Therefore, thinking about everyday life in processual terms undoes the image of quotidian doings, routines and practices as static and fixed orderings relatively indifferent to the dynamic world they are part of, and instead it favours a view in which the “quotidian practice is open-ended, fluid and generative” (Edensor 2007: 212). Sometimes everyday doings change only very slowly and in small steps, making the change noticeable only in retrospect, while sometimes change happens fast and violently, creating ruptures in everyday routines. However, most of the changes in everyday life fall somewhere between these extremes, and most of the time we are able to absorb such disruptions and breakdowns and adapt through creative coordination and reordering of everyday routines and practice.

### ADAPTING IN EVERYDAY LIFE

As Trentmann rightly notes, “Disruptions reveal the flexible side of habits and routines so often imagined as stable and stubborn” (2009: 68). He reminds us that change is a fundamental part of everyday life and that doings perceived as stable and relatively fixed are also flexible. Consequently performing mundane everyday practices in a constantly changing world necessarily involves flexibility, the ability and skill to adapt and conform to circumstances as they arise, whether they manifest as disruptions and breakdown or chances and potentials (Binnie et al. 2007: 517).

Adapting in everyday life is therefore not an exotic or alien ability; it is something everyone does, sometimes very purposely, as when faced with a breakdown on the Metro on the way to school and the necessity of figuring out how to get there in time. Sometimes, however, adapting is done in the background of our consciousness, as when we sense the road ahead being clogged up by heavy traffic and instinctively reroute. However, figuring out what to do or how to proceed when confronted with disruption is not merely a cognitive process. The performance of everyday life is a skilled and creative process that actively involves “a mobilization of the mind/body within an environment of ‘objects’, which ‘afford’ different possibilities for human use” (Pink 2012: 52). Drawing parallels between the performance of everyday life and the skilled craftsmanship that goes into *making* something, Tim Ingold (2000: 346) terms the performance of practices in everyday life “weaving”, a practical and coordinated engagement in the world wherein the performer skilfully employs a creative coordination of perception and action within the environment.

Taking another perspective, Harrison illustrates how the on-going process of weaving in the performance of the everyday is emergent and generative:

Here is the sequence: relaxed readiness, a breakdown, a gap opens up, and then an emergent order takes place. There has been a move from the singular to the multiple, from the actual to potential and then back again. ... What is going to happen has yet to be determined and, further, the manner in which this moving on will occur "is neither externally decided nor simply [internally] planned" (page 329). The interval is thus charged with potential, it is a "swarming of possible and emergent modes of existence" (Goodchild, 1996, page 60; see also Massumi, 1996), from which an emergent order, a consistency (of a sort) will occur.

(2000: 503)

Adapting is *opportunism*, a sensibility towards the "swarm" of potentialities that is dynamically present at any moment in the performance of everyday life. Creatively improvising to actualise these affordances as they unfold is crucial to weaving. Think about walking down the street: at any moment we are presented with an almost infinite abundance of potentialities for how to proceed; how to move; how to act in relation to the environment, other people, traffic, the physicality of space, the weather, talk, sounds, the atmosphere and ambience of the street. All these elements and more that we do not necessarily consciously pay attention to (although we sometimes do, as when someone bumps into us or when children playfully try to avoid walking on the lines between slabs of pavement are part of the *weaving* going on when we walk down the street. Hence weaving is the active and practical engagement with and coordination between oneself and the environment as it unfolds in everyday life. Although one may have a vague plan for or a theoretical image of walking down the street, the successful performance of walking down the street is not contingent upon mental representations or knowledge of walking; rather it is something that emerges in the act of doing, or as Ingold writes, "we know as we go" (2000: 230).

Though this may sound extraordinary, Ingold argues that it is simply an integral part of performing embodied doings in everyday life. We are constantly, almost instinctively, attending to stimuli and the situation as it unfolds, to the physical environment, people, things, atmospheres, past experience, and what is currently going on; in so doing, we are anticipating what might happen next. All of this goes into formulating an embodied response. Hence the mundane performance of everyday life is an active and on-going weaving of "complex topographies of apprehension and association ... that does not merely involve linear passage through undifferentiated space in an allotted space of time when 'nothing happens' but always implicates other connections" (Edensor 2003: 152).

#### 4-4: TASKSCAPES OF EVERYDAY LIFE

As we venture a bit further into Ingold's theoretical universe, he offers the concept of "taskscape" (2000: 194-200), which provides a useful theoretical tool for understanding



everyday life. A taskscape, in its most basic understanding, denotes a gathering of tasks carried out by “a skilled agent” or agents, “in an environment, as part of his or her normal business of life” (2000: 195). Tasks in this case should be understood broadly as all kinds of doings, actions, practices and routines practically engaged with in the course of everyday life. However, as Ingold continues, none of these tasks is isolated from another; they are always interrelating and interwoven. He writes:

Every task takes its meaning from its position within an ensemble of tasks, performed in series or in parallel, and usually by many people working together.... It is to the entire ensemble of tasks, in their mutual interlocking, that I refer by the concept of taskscape.  
(Ingold 2000: 195)

If the notion of taskscape is deployed in relation to everyday life, it enables a conceptualisation of how the performances of everyday life, often involving several individuals (as in the family), are relationally configured by their tasks, taking shape as dynamic threads interrelating and interweaving, each responsive to the others. The things we do in everyday life are performed with and in relation to others; naturally our doings in everyday life affect others, just as others’ doings affect us. Hence, in the terminology of Ingold, everyday life can be understood as “an array of related activities” (2000: 195).

## THE SPATIALITY OF TASKSCAPES

However, just as tasks in the taskscape do not exist in a vacuum, neither does the taskscape itself. Rather the taskscape is part and parcel of the way the world is formed. Through practical engagement with the world the taskscape has transformative power, and in performing tasks in everyday life we socially, culturally and materially affect the environment, thereby making it and changing it at the same time. Hence the space in which taskscapes are performed is not indifferent, nor is it simply a blank slate or backdrop on which everyday life occurs. It is affected and formed by the tasks and activities taking place not on, but in, space. Space is therefore to be understood as in continual process and development, being changed by our everyday involvement with it, as Ingold explains:

When the same paths are repeatedly trodden, especially by heavy boots, the consequences may be dramatic, amounting in places to severe erosion. Surfaces are indeed transformed. But these are surfaces in the world, not the surface of the world. Human beings live in, not on, the world, and the historical transformations they bring about are ... part and parcel of the world’s transformation of itself.  
(2011: 47)



To Ingold the world is therefore not static and neutral, but processual and socialised through our practical and embodied engagement with it. However, the relationship between taskscapes, comprised of the doings of everyday life, and the world is not a one-way street. Indeed everyday taskscapes engage in and with space. Yet space is not inert, but acts back and affects our everyday tasks. We might think of different taskscapes being enacted in different locations, such as at home, work, school, the grocery store, the train station, in a public square, and so on. For each of these locations there are different tasks, different ways of acting and configuring practices. For instance, walking around in nightclothes may be appropriate at home, but hardly in the grocery store; yelling at others in the car is a normal emotional response, but if done on public transport it violates all codes of conduct. Taskscapes are to Ingold performances, the weaving of our way through everyday life wherein the world is always active and present. Hence through the concept of taskscape it can be argued that our doings in everyday life are constantly shaping the world as a social, cultural and material space, and simultaneously our doings are shaped by the world as it re-imposes those very same social, cultural and material codes for how we should act and move in the environment.

### THE TEMPORALITY OF TASKSCAPES

The organisation of taskscapes, the temporal and spatial ordering and configuration of tasks in everyday life, should not be understood as solely defined by universal clock time, but instead by *social* time. By insisting on this terminology Ingold emphasises the profound relationality of the taskscape: “people, in the performance of their tasks, also attend to one another” (2011: 196). He stresses that everyday tasks are not carried out by individuals “in hermetical isolation” but rather “[b]y watching, listening, perhaps even touching, we continually feel each other’s presence in the social environment, at every moment adjusting our movements in response to this ongoing perceptual monitoring” (2011: 196). Based on this relational conception, Ingold argues that the cycles and repetitions of everyday doings in taskscapes are not predicated on a chronological time understanding. By using music as a metaphor he tells us that rather than thinking of temporality in taskscapes as being structured by the metronome, like a clock, imposing a universal and strict “artificial division [of time] into equal segments”, we should instead think of the constant on-going negotiation of multiple “rhythms” as defining the temporal ordering of the taskscape (2011: 197).

Hence, in understanding everyday life as taskscapes of many interrelated and interwoven tasks, activities, routines and practices performed by agents, each carrying his or her own intrinsic rhythm, there is no “one-dimensional strand of time”. Instead “the temporality of the taskscape, while it is intrinsic rather than externally imposed (metronomic), lies not in any particular rhythm, but in the network of interrelationships between the multiple rhythms of which the taskscape is itself constituted” (Ingold 2011: 196). Thus the concept of taskscape points our attention towards both the

labouring tasks of everyday life and how these are interrelated and interwoven, and the labour and skilful effort of achieving resonance through the creative management and orchestration of multiple tasks and rhythms.

Understanding everyday life through Ingold's concept of taskscape evokes a quite compelling, though complex, relational-material and processual way of thinking about how everyday life is configured and performed, which will be pursued throughout this study.

## 4-5: FAMILY

Many people are in their everyday life involved in family mobility either as family members themselves or as those significant others that often are implicated in the family's everyday mobility. As mentioned in the introduction this coupling of family and mobility, however, has not received much attention in mobilities studies. Hence, in order to make this connection, this study draws on family sociology (see Morgan (2011), Smart (2007), Holdsworth (2013)). Within this field of family sociology there has been in recent years a move away from a static and normative reading of the family and the "‘cornflakes packet’ image of the family ... [consisting] of a mother, a father and two children, one boy and one girl" (Morgan 2011: 3) towards the more relational and active conceptualising of family, focusing on the maintaining, sustaining and dissolving of relationships and the doing of family in everyday family practices. Drawing inspiration from these developments, this section argues for a relational conception of the family in which family members are understood as embedded in each other's lives, affecting each other practically, socially and emotionally. The reason for promoting such a conception of the family is because of its ability to provide vital insights, both into the conditions and challenges the family experiences in everyday life in terms of needs, wishes and welfare, and into how the family attempts to cope with this complexity in accomplishing everyday family life.

### THE RELATIONAL FAMILY

Family members do not act or live their everyday lives in a social vacuum but are at all times relationally implicated in and affected by the lives of others (Smart 2007: 71). However, advocating for a nuanced approach to understanding family, Clare Holdsworth (2013: 9) argues it is equally wrong to assume that individual family members are entirely restricted by their intertwinement with other family members and bound by the obligations and dependencies that follow from it. Instead, when conceptualising the relational family we should resist the urge for a dualistic understanding opposing the individual against the social, and instead think of family members as neither completely free of the family collective they are part of nor completely tied up in the family collective. Proposing a fruitful way of thinking about

the nuances of relationality in the family, Jennifer Mason (2004) suggests relations as situated somewhere on a continuum running from more *individualised* to more *social* forms of relationality. The point of this is to move beyond focusing on the family as either individual family members or a relational collective, and instead become attuned to how family members and their everyday practices are relationally embedded in the social context of the family, and to what effect.

Carol Smart (2007) uses the term “embeddedness<sup>9</sup>” to emphasise the relationality in the family and family life. With this term Smart elucidates family members’ lives as emerging from reciprocal interactions and relationships with others, especially other family members, but also with kin, friends, neighbours and so on. Importantly, drawing on Mason (2004), Smart reminds us that relational thinking is not only about love and affection—it can also be negative, and relations can drive and keep family members apart. Moreover, relational ties, when first established, can be very strong and hard to undo. As Smart writes, “Where lives have become interwoven and embedded ... it becomes impossible for relationships to simply end” and thus “relationships are very ‘sticky’; it is hard to shake free from them at an emotional level and their existence can continue to influence our practices and not just our thoughts” (Smart 2007: 106-7). For instance, the parents in a family may divorce, divide their children and go live in different places, leading physically separated lives, but this does not mean their ties are broken. Rather they change, as the family members will most likely continue to be in each other’s lives via texting, emailing, phoning, Skyping etc.; the children will visit their other parent or meet through mutual friends. Families naturally go through life phases as children grow up, and as they become more independent, relationships in the family also change. When children leave home and are no longer co-present with other family members on a daily basis, they continue to “exist in our imaginations and memories, since these are just as real” and, in effect, they continue to influence everyday practices (Smart 2007: 4).

The effects of relations in the family can be strong and visible: when, for example, families plan and negotiate how to make their weekly activity schedules work, it is easy to trace how they affect each other (see section 8-2). However, relational effects are often vague and almost invisible. For instance, relationships in the family might indirectly affect the individual family member; for instance, when a mother and son perform a shared leisure activity it may obligate or force the father to take care of another child’s needs at the same time (see section 7-2). Indeed it can often be difficult to trace such less-visible relational ties in the family without considering the “complex and intricate meshing of family life that involves both other family members (for example, parents/grandparents) and significant others (for example, friends, including children’s social networks)” (Holdsworth 2013: 83) . Hence family members are embedded in social contexts that may be carefully maintained, but are sometimes

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9 Smart’s usage of the term *embeddedness* has some affinity to Mark Granovetter (1985) of the terms *although she does not explicitly makes this connection*.

allowed to wither away, deliberately or as a result of people drifting apart (Smart 2007: 114). Hence as Janet Finch (2007) shows, acknowledging that relationships exist is not enough; relationships need to be affirmed and reaffirmed. This necessity highlights the fact that family members' relations are never stable and given, but are constantly (re)made, changed and adapted in reciprocal and relational family practice.

David Morgan (2011) proposes approaching the notion of family through family members' everyday actions and doings, nested within what he terms "family practices". This, he states, means using family as a verb rather than a noun or an adjective, transforming family from a fixed state of *being* to an open way of *doing*. Hence family is not something that exists as a fixed category or a fact out there, but instead is something continuously enacted in the process of the (re)production of family practices. Through the performance of family practices, such as the enactment of social obligations when visiting grandparents, intergenerational caregiving when escorting children to school or emotional bonding when taking a Sunday drive with the family, the family simultaneously identifies who is recognised as a family member and creates and sustains a sense of family. Or, as Morgan puts it, "in enacting these practices, we are affirming or reaffirming particular sets of family ties" (2011: 126). This sensitising of family resonates with Edensor's understanding, touched upon earlier (see section 4-2), of how common sense and belonging in a community such as the family are established and consolidated over time through the repeated performance of practices in everyday life. This also means the relationships among family members and the sense of family they have are processual and evolving, constantly being made and remade through the everyday performance of family practices (Morgan 2011: 8). It is important to take notice of the *everyday*, as family practices are not always holidays and weekend family trips, but are also the unremarkable and recurring performances such as commuting and shopping that families engage in in the quotidian. Morgan (2011) goes to some lengths to maintain an acute analytical openness in the interpretation of family practices. For instance, the everyday practice of picking children up on the way home can concurrently be read as a commuting practice, a gender practice, an intergenerational practice and a type of family practice. Hence in working with family practices one should respect the complexity and ambiguity of practices. Rarely are everyday practices identifiable as just *one* thing; depending on the perspective they are fuzzy, merging and emerging in many different ways.

#### **4-6: RELATIONALITY IN EVERYDAY FAMILY LIFE**

A way of understanding how relationships and their reciprocal effects manifest in the family is by focusing on the family's everyday practices. As Morgan writes, "Action is conducted in relation to 'others' and these actors cluster together in some mutually understandable set of relationships to which the word 'family' (or whatever else we are interested in) might be attached" (2011: 24). Therefore, the family's doings and activities, nested within everyday practice, as Holdsworth points out,

“can never be reduced to a set of individual acts: we might be considering the habit or behaviour of an individual but these dispositions are unconsciously reproduced as well as shared and known by others” (2013: 14). Pursuing this line of thinking, all of the family’s recurring everyday practices involving *mandatory* activities (including work, educational activities such as school, high school, college and so on, as well as childcare institutions such as day care, nursery and kindergarten), activities of *family maintenance* (including different kinds of shopping, i.e. for groceries, clothing as well as errands such as going to the dentist, the doctor, the car repair shop and so on), *leisure* and *extra-curricular* activities (such as after-school activities, leisure and sports activities), *social obligations* (including visiting and socialising with friends and kin and attending special events such as weddings, seasonal holidays and so on) as well as mundane family activities and housekeeping (such as cooking, eating dinner, doing homework, cleaning, house repair, gardening and so on) are relationally constituted and coordinated.

While this list is far from exhaustive, the point is merely to convey an image of everyday family life as filled with different practices, some of which, such as work and education, are carried out by family members individually, while others, such as family dinner and visiting extended family, are mostly performed either in smaller groups of family members or by the entire family. Nonetheless, all of the family members’ practices and activities in everyday life, whether solitary or sociable, are subject to some level of relational coordination and configuration in the family. For instance, the family’s mobility, getting family members from A to B, involves a practical and collaborative coordination effort that takes various aspects into consideration: each family member; his or her personal mobility capacities, needs, wishes and preferences; the destinations; the available mobility resources; timing, time frames and time schedules; fitting everything together in a relational configuration, a *taskscape*, that renders everyday life accomplishable (this coordinative labour will be explored in much further detail in chapter 8). Thus everyday life in the family can be considered to be accomplished with each other and in relation to each other. In line with this, Larsen, Urry and Axhausen (2006) show that family life is increasingly being networked as social relationships and everyday practices are constituted, coordinated and configured in relation to social networks. Hence accomplishing family practices, such as the family’s everyday mobility, is, as Tim Schwanen (2008: 1004) also notes, a “network enterprise”.

The family’s everyday practices are not hermetically isolated from each other, but are interrelated, both affecting and being affected by each other. For instance, when parents coordinate, communicate about and negotiate the dropping off and picking up of younger children at kindergarten, it results in consequences for each of their personal mobility practices, no matter the outcome. A child’s attendance at an after-school activity is timed and spaced in relation to the parents’ working hours, the activity’s location, the child’s own mobility capability and car availability. When a family travels to visit grandparents, individual mobility practices are coordinated

and conjoined. Further, as Jensen, Sheller and Wind illustrate through an example of everyday mobility, mundane practices in everyday life are not only interrelated but also interlocking:

One person's mobility patterns may have a direct impact on another's capacity to be mobile, so, we must consider mobile subjects as clusters of interacting agents, not simply singular and individuated actors. Even within households, if one member changes his or her means of mobility, for example by deciding to ride a bicycle to work one day or to take the only car available another day, then the other household members must adjust to this choice. A new mode of travel may necessitate not only new forms of equipment, clothing, and storage space, but also different temporal patterns which must be meshed with those of others in the household.

(2014: 4)

Hence the family's everyday practices are not only purposely shaped and configured in relation to each other; often the embeddedness also carries (unintended) consequences for others. To emphasise this profound relationality and how things are interrelated and affect each other in both minuscule and immense ways, Adey (2010: 19) uses the metaphorical scene of sticking a foot into water and producing soft ripples or violent splashes. Every time we move, ripples occur and change can potentially emerge. The orchestration of family members' practices in everyday life is often tied to "circumstances not completely of their own making" (Larsen, Urry and Axhausen 2006: 51), and therefore they are often forced to maintain, and thereby sustain, temporally fixed and stable configurations.

## FAMILY EMOTIONS AND RELATIONALITY

Attention to the family as a collective means embracing the complexity of the family and being attentive to all family members and how their lives and practices are relationally coordinated through their everyday engagement with each other and significant others. Holdsworth (2013) argues that by decentring focus on the individual family member we need to keep in mind that other family members' emotions and personal needs, wishes and dreams are likewise taking an active part in shaping the family's everyday practices and mobility. Hence, when approaching the family relationally, what is brought into focus is not just the obvious, practical ways in which family members affect each other and how this shapes everyday family practices, but also the less tangible, emotional, intimate and social dimension of relations among family members, and how these affect and shape their everyday lives and the family's mobilities in various ways.

Indeed, as Morgan states, emotions are an integral part of family life, and family practices and are "at the heart" of the family's on-going (re)creation of a sense of

family (2011: 111). Perhaps family members' emotions towards each other are most obvious and visible in the eruption of emotions in heated discussions and fights or in romantic candlelight dinners and family reunions, but Morgan reminds us that emotions are also an essential part of the less spectacular mundane performances of everyday practices and routines in the family. From a relational perspective, family emotions are not confined to the individual family member, but create ripple effects that affect other family members (and significant others). Hence family members' everyday doings, the family's practices, can potentially be understood as "emotionally charged" (Morgan 2011: 119). Morgan writes:

In principle, almost any family practices, because they are carried out by and between people who are and have been related to each other, may be emotionally charged. We may think especially of feeding and providing and caring and protecting but also of everyday excursions, watching television or planning holidays. Feeling comfortable or uncomfortable in another's presence is as much to do with emotions as explosions of anger or strong affection. (2011: 122)

Hence emotions are relational in a double sense, as they are produced or evoked by someone or something and also have direction, informing and intertwining with the family practices shaping them in different ways and with different intensities. The family practice of dining, for instance, certainly has an instrumental purpose, as eating is a biological need; however, in many families dining is also *emotionally charged*, as it is often also regarded as a ritual, a symbol and the very definition of what it means to be a family. Hence many families prioritise dinner as a social reference point in everyday life and protect dinnertime from being colonised by other everyday practices. This is an example of an activity in which the family's emotions intertwine with the practice and become a co-constituent in shaping it. However, there are family practices that are even more saturated with emotion. In the empirical material this often surfaces in the form of *cosiness*. Usually when family members ascribe "cosy" or "cosiness" to a family practice it signifies intimacy and co-presence, often intergenerational, spending *quality time* together or sharing joyful experiences together. For instance, eating Friday-night candy in front of the television together can be a form of familial and emotional bonding, as can taking a family drive with sole purpose of engendering the maintenance and building of relationships through sharing experiences. Hence such family practices become manifestations of the family members' emotions and affection towards each other. In contrast, negative emotions can also greatly affect family practices. Anger, jealousy, disagreements and fights between family members can altogether disrupt or forcefully shape family practices, for instance when an angry teenager in the family refuses to go to an imminent family event because of a disagreement with parents.

However, the actualisation of emotions in the family is not always as direct and purposeful as portrayed in the examples above; often emotions emerge and influence



family practices in less visible and less noticeable ways, such as friendly gestures, uplifting and loving comments, the use of irony, body language, rudeness, silence, ignoring. Moreover, family members' emotions towards each other can also affect everyday practices indirectly; in the case of gathering family members for dinner, there may be a series of other practices attached. For instance, this might not only require exact spacing and timing of other family members' mobility practices, but also the practices the family members leave when heading for dinner such as a child's play date or a parent's work might be similarly structured by the emotionally charged dining family practice. Hence the actualisation of such emotions may be relayed to other everyday practices in less visible ways. This is expedited through the embeddedness and reciprocity of everyday practices in the family. Conversely, being late to dinner or not showing up at all may incite irritation, frustration and disappointment and ruin the dinner.

Consequently, the emotional dimension in family life and practices is not a separate layer; rather it is intricately intertwined with practical, economic and moral aspects of everyday life. A way to approach emotions and their enactment in the context of everyday family life is through the notion of "emotional work" (Morgan 2011: 113). Morgan writes:

It is clearly emotional in that it brings forth emotions in those performing the activities and that it frequently involves managing the emotions of oneself and others. At the same time it has some characteristics associated with work in that it involves the expenditure of effort in directions which are, or seem to be, necessarily required.  
(2011: 115)

This may be illustrated in the ways in which family members handle their own emotions in trying to manage a situation or a practice in which the emotions of others are involved. For example, driving a specific scenic route to work, listening to one's favourite music while biking or barricading oneself behind familiar and private things at the table in the train are different ways to invoke or subdue emotions in everyday life. Family members also put quite a lot of work and effort into managing emotions other than their own. For instance, with regard to safety, parents may themselves be scared to be in heavy traffic or move in certain places after dark, but will suppress such emotions so as not to distress their children. Also, parents often go to great lengths to do things in highly specific ways merely to please their children and avoid anger or confrontation, for instance when shopping or trying to get out the door in the morning. Such routine effort can be "emotionally draining", and underscores the point that the emotional and the practical are often intertwined (Morgan 2011: 115). As Sophie Bowlby (2011: 606) shows, performing care manifests both as practical tasks and as emotional investment in others. Hence emotional work is an integral part of everyday life; it is, and as Morgan argues, "built into everyday family practices" (2011: 114). Therefore, this often less visible and emotional dimension to relationality



is not to be understood as secondary or inferior to the instrumental perspective on the family's relationality; rather it should be put on equal footing and sometimes even be regarded as more potent.

#### 4-7: COPING STRATEGIES IN EVERYDAY FAMILY LIFE

To conceptualise and theoretically address the complex and interrelated doings and activities nested within practices in the family's everyday life, applying the concept of taskscape, presented earlier (see section 4-4), can be beneficial. Doing so provides a theoretical shorthand for framing family members' lives and the ensemble of everyday practices as profoundly interrelated, interwoven and interlocking in what is termed a *family taskscape*. Hence the family taskscape designates the relationally organised and coordinated "socio-temporal order[ing]" of practices in the family's everyday life (Shove 2002: 5). The family taskscape is at any moment a frozen snapshot of the family's socio-temporal ordering of practices in everyday life as a function of the constant labour and skilful effort performed by family members in achieving resonance amongst "the multiple rhythms of which the taskscape is itself constituted" (Ingold 2000: 196). In this light, the family taskscape should be understood as an analytical holdall for family members' continual practical engagements with each other and the world in *weaving* everyday family practices together, and as fundamental to the successful accomplishment of their everyday life.

Thus the family taskscape is the outcome of the family members' collective attempt to interweave and make everyday practices fit a specific socio-temporal ordering that successfully makes possible the accomplishment of everyday life in accordance with the image they have of being a family and the practical, social and emotional conditions of family members. Yet this does not mean the family is always able to make or maintain a family taskscape exactly to their liking<sup>10</sup>. Indeed there is a difference between the ideal family on one side and actual family life on the other, or as John Gillis (1996) has put it, "the families we live by" versus "the families we live with". This means the family has a normative sense of family, everyday life and how they should be enacted, but does so within the particular conditions present in family members' lives. The family has, as Claus Lassen and Ole B. Jensen (2006) state, an idealised and normative understanding of *the good life* and how it might be organised and realised.

Helen Jarvis uses the term "coping strategy" as a link between the family's normative understanding of the good life and family members' actual way of living (1999: 227-8). Hence the term coping strategy "convey[s] the combined operation of both

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*10 Indeed there is often a gap between the family actual way of doing family and their idealised view on doing family. As will be explored in chapter 8 the family is constantly in the performance of everyday life negotiating the family organisation and course correcting how their sense of family is actualised.*

purposeful and unconscious action” family members engage in when “confronted with changing events and circumstances throughout their life-course and in daily ways of living” (1999: 228). Furthermore, Lassen, in his use of the term, describes coping strategy as family members’ “meaningful and manageable handling of external demands and internal intentions” (2009: 178). Thus the family’s everyday practices are more or less reflexively organised and configured relative to *external* demands, such as the obligation to sustain social networks (Larsen, Urry and Axhausen 2006: 52) and the expectation to performing as an effective co-worker, a law-abiding citizen, a caring parent, a good neighbour and so on. There is reason to believe external demands and expectations contribute to what has been termed “time squeeze” or “harriedness” as a condition in contemporary everyday family life (Southerton 2003, Jarvis 2005). Studies show that families in western societies experience stress to such a degree that it has become the normal phenomenon in everyday life (Southerton, Shove and Warde 2001, Shove 2002, Southerton 2003, Hjorthol, Hovland Jakobsen and Ling 2006, Deding, Lausten and Andersen 2006, Arbejdslivskommissionen 2007). Eric Darier (1998) even suggests that a busy and harried everyday life has become symbolic of a “full” or “valued” life. Despite technological advances that have eased much of our quotidian manual labour and enabled us to travel faster and farther more comfortably and reliably, and despite having more time (outside of work), in a quantitative sense, than we did 50 years ago, families are experiencing time pressure and feeling rushed (Shove 2002, Southerton 2003).

Importantly, following Lassen’s approach to coping strategy, everyday practices are concurrently shaped by *internal* intentions comprised of needs, wishes, dreams, desires and preferences in the family. There is always tension between the individual and the collective in the family. Personal needs, wishes, dreams and ideas of the good life are continuously being negotiated against the welfare of the family. Yet as Holdsworth (2013: 9) points out, such tensions or conflicts are usually overcome by negotiating a consensus or compromise that makes sense to both the individual family member and the family as a collective. For instance, a father may be able to have a career and lead a work life that involves travel, working late and being free of obligations at home, as long as there is a consensus within the family legitimising this as the way the family has agreed to organise its everyday life. Furthermore, negotiating a balance between work and family life also entails handling social and emotional needs for quality time, togetherness, care and intimacy that manifests in what Southerton (2003) terms “cold spots” in the family’s everyday life. Cold spots are “time devoted to interaction with significant others” necessary to “maintain caring interpersonal relationships” in the family (2003: 22). In contrast, “hot spots” contain multiple everyday practices such as work, shopping, and are organised in order to make room for cold spots. Hence negotiating a consensus on the family’s internal needs and wishes is not only achieved by balancing workload and working hours and negotiating who has the lead career, but also entails finding a balance that enables the sense of being a family through the making of cold and hot spots in everyday life, carving out time for being together and having shared experiences. The result of such coping strategies, in which the family

juggles external expectations and demands and internal compromises of needs and wishes, is the family's actual way of living, a "co-ordinated set of practices" (Jarvis 1999: 228), which in this thesis will be referred to as the *family taskscape*.

#### 4-8: MOBILITIES

What is everyday family mobility? Based upon the previous sections on everyday life and family, everyday family mobility can be understood as the common and regular occurrences of movement family members engage in when going back and forth to activities and doings in the quotidian. Turning to family theory, everyday family mobility can be understood as a type of family practice (Morgan 2011). While everyday life and family provide necessary context for acquiring an understanding of everyday family mobility, they convey little of the phenomenon of mobility itself. Turning to this, the two remaining sections in the chapter will focus on conceptualising mobility and, in particular, how this can be done through the concept of *mobility practice*.

As already touched upon in the introduction, one of the key claims in the mobilities turn is that mobility and mobility practices are much more than a utilitarian phenomenon. Mobilities research acknowledges the purely rational and economic approach to conceptualising mobility and its ability to provide some insight into understanding everyday mobility, but at the same time mobilities scholars advocate moving beyond such limited and reductive understandings and approaching mobility as a much more complex and multi-faceted object of study (Hannam, Sheller and Urry 2006, Cresswell 2006, Urry 2007, Adey 2010, Jensen 2013, Adey et al. 2014, Sheller 2014). Hence a common trait of the mobilities turn is the heightened analytical focus on the material, affective, emotional, social and embodied dimensions of mobility, which in turn elucidate mobility not only as an instrumental but also as a social, spatial and emotional phenomenon. Indeed the mobilities turn has opened and broadened the understanding of mobility, and in doing so engendered both a new multi-faceted object of study and a theoretical frame of inquiry (Büscher and Urry 2009). The research agenda of mobilities studies ranges from investigating the genesis, experiences and implications of the "big mobilities" of large-scale movements of people, objects and goods across the globe to investigating the "little mobilities" of local movements in everyday life (Adey 2010: 7-12).

John Urry, one of the key academics in the mobilities turn, conceptualises mobilities (always plural) as corporeal movement intertwined with physical movement of objects, imaginary travel, virtual travel and communicative travel in complex socio-technical processes (Urry 2007: 59). According to this conception, the family's everyday life encompasses a meshing of the modes of mobilities that take part in the shaping of everyday life (Larsen, Urry and Axhausen 2006). Prior to any corporeal movement, family members "imagine" (Watts 2008) their destinations and journeys.

Everyday family mobility is performed in transport modes, and often objects such as bags, money, mobile phones and so on travel alongside (Hui 2012, 2013). Indeed objects such as mobile phones are frequently used both inside and outside mobility performances to communicate and socialise with others (Ling 2004), coordinate and organise everyday life (Larsen, Urry and Axhausen 2006, Schwanen 2008) and to virtually access social networks, information, wayfinding, timetables and other online resources at almost any moment. However, as Kellerman (2012: 17) notes, differentiation among imaginative, virtual and communicative modes of mobilities has lost some of its practical meaning in the increased technological convergence of high-speed wireless Internet access, smart phones, the laptop and television. Nonetheless, this image resonates with Adey as he reminds us that “mobility is never singular but always plural ... never one but necessarily many” (2010: 18). Although there are great divides in how families in everyday life assemble these modes of mobilities and in inequality in ease of accessibility and appropriation, all five modes of mobilities are usually present in the family’s life (Ohnmacht, Maksim and Bergman 2009: chapter 1). Furthermore, as will be further elaborated shortly, such mobilities in everyday life are facilitated and shaped by material environments and technical systems of (complex) physical infrastructures of roads, parking lots, sidewalks, railway tracks, stations, terminals, landing paths, harbours, cables, satellites, transmitters etc. (Hannam, Sheller and Urry 2006, Sheller and Urry 2006, Urry 2007).

### MOTILITY AND UNSEEN MOBILITY IN THE FAMILY

Focusing on everyday life in the family, everyday mobility is not only materially organised and enabled by physical infrastructures and transport systems, but is also socially organised and facilitated (and sometimes restricted) by family members’ differentiated mobility potentials. The variations among family members’ mobility capacities can be conceptualised through what Vincent Kaufmann (2002: 37) terms “motility”. Motility is the individual’s complete potential within a field of mobility, taking into consideration both objective conditions in terms of *access* and personal capabilities in terms of *competencies* and *skills*, and the person’s subjective attitude towards the available mobility options in terms of *appropriation*. In the words of Kaufmann, motility is “comprised of all the factors that define a person’s capacity to be mobile<sup>11</sup>” (2002: 38). Hence the concept of motility holds some interest in relation to the research ambition of this study, especially the notion of skill as a key aspect in the creation of elasticity (see chapter 8). Additionally, the concept of motility can be a framework for understanding the prerequisites for family mobility and the unequal distribution of mobility capacity in the family. However, while acknowledging the importance of taking into consideration the potential or capacity of being mobile when studying everyday family mobility, this study emphasises the actualised mobility, the family members embodied performances of mobility and what effects they produce.

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<sup>11</sup> See Kellermann (2012: 57-8) for an overview of the multiple definitions of motility.

Nonetheless, in the family, motility is often unevenly distributed amongst family members, as they hold varying levels of mobility knowledge, skills and competencies and have unequal access to the family's mobility resources, which are both limited and shared. As Katharina Manderscheid argues, “mobilities and social inequalities are complexly interwoven” (2009: 27), and therefore, in order to understand everyday family mobility and family members' relational mobility practices, it is important to consider the individual family member's mobility in relation to the *potential* mobility or motility amongst other family members. The differentiated levels of motility in the family are both a basic condition that family members are forced to cope with and a resource for coping. Consequently, for individual family members, especially children, everyday mobility is often interwoven in mobile constellations with family members or significant others to compensate for uneven levels of motility.

The accomplishment of everyday life in the family entails helping each other and making sacrifices for the welfare of the family, which often manifests as various shows of forced mobility and immobility. Through this interrelatedness, everyday family mobility holds ambivalence, as it may at times be felt as a burden and at other times evoke a sense of family (Fotel 2007). Hence, as Malene Freudendal-Pedersen (2007, 2009) shows, immobility and mobility are closely intertwined, and mobility is always related to the “tension between freedom and unfreedom” (2009: 6). To understand this complex relationality characterising family mobility, Holdsworth (2013) advocates approaching everyday family mobility not only by paying attention to the social relations of the singular moving subjects, but by remaining sensitive to multi-relationality in the plurality of family members (and significant others) who are implicated and affected in the performance of family mobility. Moreover, this approach accentuates the asymmetrical power hierarchies and inequalities among family members, and consequently also considers how family members' mobility and immobility are profoundly intertwined (Mikkelsen and Christensen 2009, Holdsworth 2013: 28). Indeed there is a lot of *unseen* mobility in the family. One family member being mobile in a specific time and space may in less visible ways force other family members or significant others to be mobile or immobile. Hanne Louise Jensen (2013) terms them “mobility helpers”. Family mobility, whether incited by obligations, expectations, sense of duty, care or affection, is not always an “act of choice, and the degree to which the mobile subject is autonomous will vary greatly” (Holdsworth 2013: 29). Recalling the theories of the relational family (in section 4-5), it will be argued throughout the thesis (in particular in chapter 8) that we cannot understand everyday family mobility without simultaneously paying attention to its embeddedness in the social context of the family.

#### **4-9: MOBILITY PRACTICES**

Having tentatively approached the notion of mobility, particularly family mobility, the chapter will now turn to a further detailing and delineating of everyday family

mobility through the concept of *mobility practice*. Of course, there is no single use or understanding of the term *practice*<sup>12</sup>, as it is used differently in various academic fields. Morgan points to multiple “shades of meanings” (2011: 17-18) ascribed to the term practice. Two of these will be unfolded in the following paragraphs, as they corroborate the understanding of practice used in this thesis.

The first meaning of practice as a form of *action* or *doing* is what Morgan terms “the action of doing something, method of action or working” (2011: 23). As has been explored thoroughly in the sections above, one of the implications in understanding practices as *social* actions is relationality, as actions are performed in relation to others, which often means that social actions can to some degree be understood as “coordinated actions” (Schatzki 2010: 68). The second meaning of practice is *habit*. This refers to a routine action, or as Morgan writes, “the habitual doing or carrying on of something usual, habitual action or pattern of behaviour, established procedures” (2011: 24-25). Importantly, habits are plastic and may change over time without losing their familiarity or recognisability (Morgan 2011: 27). Commuting to school, for instance, is repeated on a daily basis in everyday life, but over time this activity may change its configuration substantially. It may develop from being escorted by parents in the car to walking and eventually biking, but still be recognised and considered as the commute to school. In this light, mobility practices are understood as changing processes; this will shortly be further elaborated. Furthermore, habits are built up over time, “something that ‘comes naturally’, that is done ‘as a matter of course’” (Morgan 2011: 27). This also speaks to another meaning ascribed to practice, the notion of practice as *training*. Training refers to when something is done intensively or repeatedly, such as performing everyday mobility; one increases proficiency and skill and eventually gains tacit and embodied knowledge of what is being practiced, which can benefit future performances (Morgan 2011: 28).

In addition to these common-sense meanings of practice, this study leans on Nigel Thrift and his seminal work on non-representational theory, in which practices are conceptualised as:

... material bodies of work or styles that have gained enough stability over time, through, for example, the establishment of corporeal routines and specialized devices, to reproduce themselves (Vendler 1995). In particular, these bodies’ stability is a result of schooling in these practices, of each actor holding the others to them, and of the brute ‘natural’ fact that the default is to continue on in most situations. These material bodies are continually being rewritten as unusual circumstances arise, and new bodies are continually making an entrance but, if we are looking for something that approximates to a stable

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<sup>12</sup> This term has received considerable attention in the social sciences. In particular scholars of practice theory are concerned with defining and theoretical developing the notion of practice (see i.e. Schatzki (2002), Reckwitz (2002), Warde (2005), Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012) for reviews of practice theory).



feature of a world that is continually in meltdown, that is continually bringing forth new hybrids, then I take the practice to be it. Practices are productive concatenations that have been constructed out of all manner of resources and which provide the basic intelligibility of the world.  
(2008: 8)

Using these meanings ascribed to practice, *mobility* practice, a subset of practice, can be conceptualised as a social and coordinated relational-material assemblage in continual process. With these theoretical resources as the point of departure, mobility practice as a conjunctive phenomenon will be elucidated in the following sections through four main themes: *relationality*, *process*, *materiality* and *embodiedness*.

### RELATIONAL MOBILITY PRACTICES

Drawing on actor-network theory (Latour 2005), a mobility practice can be conceptualised as a type of *assemblage*<sup>13</sup> that relationally coordinates or orchestrates human subjects and non-human objects into a functioning and stabilised configuration that renders movement from one location to another possible. Said more plainly, a mobility practice is the repetitious work of moving back and forth, to and from the activities in daily life. Urry incorporates this understanding of mobility (practices) as he writes, “There are thus various assemblages of humans, objects, technologies and scripts that contingently produce durability and stability of mobility” (2007: 48). Hence mobility practices are continual and mutual collaborations of family members; their bodies, capacities and skills; transport modes; infrastructural systems; traffic and safety rules and regulations; customs, conventions and norms; sayings and communication and more, which are held together in stable configurations.

Although the individual mobility practice may appear to be a solid whole, it is a temporally relational configuration of heterogeneous elements that are all essential and necessary to the successful performance of the mobility practice. Jensen underscores the relationality in mobility as he writes, “mobilities meet and mingle with systems and designs as well as with other mobile consociates complicating and at times even compromising the notion of the autonomous subject” (2013: 48). Being mobile, making and performing mobility practices in everyday life, is therefore a socio-material and relational accomplishment. The elements gathered in mobility practices are not randomly or accidently brought together; rather they are, in line with Morgan’s

*13 Indeed use of the concept of "assemblage" has in the social sciences gained popularity. It has roots in writings of Deleuze and Guattari, DeLanda, actor-network theory and Donna Haraway (McFarlane and Anderson 2011). However, this study will lean on the words of John Allen who states that using the term assemblage is not so much about "pinning down the 'correct' definition of assemblage or simply declaring a certain fidelity to Deleuze's vocabulary, as it is one of exploring what avenues of enquiry are opened up and what questions are made possible by thinking through social and material formations as assemblages" (2011: 154).*

emphasis on the active, carefully coordinated into sequences of purposive actions. Hence mobility practices are, as Vannini writes, “assemblages or ecologies which link together different actions” (2012: 14).

Moreover, as has been explored in the preceding sections on everyday life and the family, mobility practices “almost never happen in isolation” (Adey et al. 2014: 14); they are at any given moment embedded in socio-relational ensembles of other tasks, doings, actions and practices in the family taskscape in everyday life. Consequently, everyday mobility “involve[s] how we form relations with others” (Adey 2010: 19) and must therefore always be understood relationally, as part of the social context (like the family) in which it is performed. Because of this profound interweaving of practices in daily life, the family’s mobility practices gain their shape from dynamic and complex enmeshing with other everyday practices of going to work, school, kindergarten or the dentist; doing the shopping; visiting friends, grandparents or family and so on.

On a micro level the orchestration and active maintenance of mobility practices is facilitated through on-going interaction with the social and material environment. Using Jensen’s theoretical vocabulary of “negotiations in motion” (2013: 83), “mobile with” (2013: 81) and “mobile other” (2013: 14), in particular, emphasises the social interaction of mobility practices. As people perform mobility practices, they “move in time–space interacting with co-present consociates as well as possibly interacting with others at a distance” (2013: 14). Hence negotiation in motion is the dynamic interaction among people performed while being on the move, and often concerns the negotiation of the specificities of the unfolding journey. Indeed negotiation in motion is often performed in what Jensen terms a “mobile with”, understood as “a group of two or more either co-presently moving together or in mediated contact ‘stretched’ across time and space facilitated by networked technologies” (2013: 81). Furthermore, with reference to the inspirational source of the “mobile with” term, Goffmann’s “team”, the mobile with also implicitly carries the understanding of “a set of persons who cooperate in practising a simple routine” (2013: 83). Surely, as will be argued extensive in the following chapters (see chapters 7 and 8), orchestrating and performing mobile-with constellations, whether emerging spontaneously or thoroughly planned, play a major role in coping in everyday family life. Yet in performing everyday mobility practices, negotiation in motion does also frequently occur with other people who happen to cross one’s path—the fellow pedestrian coming towards you, the person sitting next to you on the train or the car overtaking you on the motorway, are all examples of others potentially affecting one’s mobility performance. Jensen uses the term “mobile other” to analytically signify persons whose mobile presence “may modify our actions and behaviour” (2013: 14). These concepts do indeed elucidate the relational nature of performing mobility practices, but simultaneously they also implicitly recognise everyday mobility as dynamic practices continually being recreated and changed through interaction.



## MOBILITY PRACTICES AS PROCESSES

Drawing inspiration from a pragmatist understanding, the relational gaze disavows a static view of the world. It facilitates a process-oriented understanding in which the world is not *a priori* neatly ordered and categorised but inherently “messy”, “contingent” (Jones 2008: 1606, Bacon 2012: 45) and “in constant meltdown” (Thrift 2008: 8). As discussed in the sections on change in everyday life (see sections 4-2 and 4-3), if everything in the world were stable and complete there would be no interaction, no change and no development, and the world would seem unreal (Brinkmann 2010: 54). Hence understanding the world as consisting of relational events in constant reciprocal interaction with each other requires a processual reading in which “relationality is always temporal, i.e. ongoing and cannot be captured as static relationships” (Jones 2008: 1606) and change is a fundamental metaphysical condition of the world (Brinkmann 2010: 53-54). The world is not ready-made, finished and lying “out there”; instead it is continuously *in the making* through the complex and relational processes of events (Brinkmann 2006: 54, Anderson and Harrison 2010: 14). Consequently, mobility practices are not isolated performances in the world; they are interrelating bodies that in the process of interaction are mutually affected and “constantly evolving organically” (Vannini 2012: 39).

Mobility practices are therefore neither static nor mechanical unfoldings of pre-scripted behaviour. The same mobility practice never unfolds in the exact same way; there are always variations and change. Indeed, mobility practices are, as Urry and Sheller write, “always being in motion, being assembled and reassembled in changing configurations” (2006: 216). Hence mobility practices are both highly responsive and easily affected by the environment in which they take place. However, at the same time, they also hold performative efficacy that actively engages in shaping the environment around them. Ingold (2011: chapter 4) refers to this process of adaptation as the intelligent, skilful and embodied coupling of perception and action. Whether this process is slow-creep and subtle or fast and abrupt, this means mobility practices are constantly moving and becoming. It is through this practical engagement with the environment that the immanent messiness, contingency and instability of the world is temporally and locally stabilised and rendered sensible and manageable (Brinkmann 2006: 53-54). Or as Thrift puts it, “if we are looking for something that approximates to a stable feature of a world ... then I take the practice to be it. Practices provide the basic intelligibility of the world” (2008: 8).

## MATERIAL MOBILITY PRACTICES

As mentioned above, mobility practices are conceptualised as comprising both human subjects and non-human entities. Drawing on actor-network theory and *the principle of generalised symmetry* (Callon 1986, Latour 2005: 76), both mobilities theory and non-representational theory advocate for heterogeneity and openness in conceptualising the

world (see i.e. Urry (2007) and Anderson and Harrison (2010: 15-6) for elaboration of this theoretical antecedent). Following this line of thought, mobility practices are relational assemblages that “involve heterogeneous ‘hybrid geographies’ of humans-and-machines that contingently enables people and materials to move and to hold their shape as they move across various networks” (Urry 2007: 35). Indeed, in being mobile, the mobile subject cannot be separated from materialities such as infrastructures, places and routes; technologies such as transportation modes, GPS systems, mobile phones and iPads and things such as bags, tickets, newspapers, and coffee to go that are brought along (Vannini et al. 2012, Jensen 2013). Everyday mobility practices are configured and facilitated by what Hannam, Sheller and Urry (2006) term “moorings”, fixed transport systems and infrastructures working as “enablers” (Adey 2010: 21) in place allowing those with the sufficient motility to travel. Indeed Kauffmann’s (2002) concept of motility highlights the importance of materialities in everyday mobility as it deals with the ability to access mobilities through the skilful handling of transport systems.

Tim Schwanen (2007) argues that trivial artefacts are instrumental in the juggling of everyday tasks, especially in dual-earner families with busy schedules. Hence mundane materialities are not separate from or external to our doings in everyday life, but take part in mobility practices and travel alongside human subjects in everyday journeys (Hui 2012). Therefore, addressing any understanding of human mobility as implicated in coping in everyday life is, as Schwanen puts it, severely abbreviated if “the material everyday practices are left outside of our consideration” (2007: 16). Becoming increasingly attuned to the material dimension of the family’s mobility means starting to take notice of the vast array of interrelated and interwoven materialities. Pursuing this idea, mobile subjects not only interact with other mobile subjects while moving, but also engage in “mobile sense making” (Jensen 2013: 138), interaction with the physical and material environment of objects, buildings, signs and so on, while negotiating their way from A to B. For instance, consider the mobility practice of biking to work in the morning. This might include a range of materialities such as a bike, the right clothing, a helmet and lights, not to mention work-related items, i.e. a bag, laptop, papers. It also involves a set of interlocking infrastructures of bike paths, streets, traffic junctions and places coming together as a route. When such materialities are carefully brought into relation with the mobile subject in his or her everyday mobile performance, they become tools in the practical accomplishment of successfully facilitating moving about in the quotidian. Hence, as Alison Hui notices, being mobile cannot solely be attributed to one subject or object in particular; rather it is a “network phenomenon”, a collective effort, as “objects and people are temporarily linked in a mobile coalition”, acting together in concert enabling movement (2012: 206).

Hence this socio-material approach parts with the anthropocentric human agency as the sole capacity shaping everyday mobility (Jensen 2013: 46). Agency is not something that can be possessed; rather it emerges in enactment. It is through the

doing of things, the performance of practices, that humans and non-humans alike exert agency (Gimmler 2012: 46, Vannini forthcoming). Hence mobility practices as relational assemblages of subjects and objects should be defined by what they do and how they affect their surroundings rather than on what they are (Houborg 2006: 156, Brinkmann 2010: 53). This material understanding allows the study, through a heterogenic analytical sensitivity, to inquire into the temporal stabilised relational concatenations of subjects and objects and their effects on the family's mobility. Hence, in the language of Latour, things, artefacts and objects are not only "intermediaries" supporting the family's mobility in everyday life; they are "mediators" actively taking part in, shaping and affecting everyday life, intentions and goals (Latour 2005: 37-42). With this understanding, it is argued throughout the thesis that materialities actively interrelate and interweave with family members in formations of mobility practices (see in particular section 7-5). In doing so, they are not merely inert objects, but hold transformative capacities that can contribute to (or hinder and disrupt) accomplishment of everyday mobility and everyday life.

### MOBILITY PRACTICES AS EMBODIED PERFORMANCES

Finally, drawing inspiration from phenomenology, the mobilities turn reorients focus onto the human body "as an affective vehicle through which we sense place and movement, and construct emotional geographies" (Hannam, Sheller and Urry 2006: 14). Human subjects, their minds and bodies, are not separate from the world, but are enmeshed with each other; or as Maurice Merleau-Ponty states, always "caught up in the fabric of the world" (Anderson and Harrison 2010: 8). Hence this reciprocal relationship and intricate interaction between the body and the world is primordial. Through embodied practical engagement, the world is reproduced and transformed. As mentioned earlier, based on Ingold's view (in section 4-4), we live *in*, and not *on*, the world, and as we "enact and make and re-make the world through the performance of our daily movements, we transform the world" (Vannini 2012: 39).

Consequently, as Cresswell argues, everyday "mobility is practiced, it is experienced, it is embodied" (2006: 3). It is through the very same profound relationship that the world is sensed and felt in the embodied performance. Hence, as Cresswell continues, "It is through the body mobility is experienced" (2006: 58). This philosophical understanding turns the focus towards the lived experience and the emotional and sensorial dimensions of family mobility. Performing mobility and being in motion are kinaesthetically perceived, not only through the conscious mind, but also through affective tuned registers of the body (Büscher, Urry and Witchger 2011: 6). Hence mobility practices hold affective and emotional experiences and "contain their own sensual capacities" (Edensor 2003: 153). This addresses an ephemeral and visceral realm of sensations, affects, atmospheres and emotions that not only influence how the mobility performance is felt and experienced, but also impact what mobile subjects can do while being in motion (Bissell 2010: 271).

The profound linkage between the body, its affective sensitivities and capacities, and the socio-material environment in mobility performances offers an opportunity to inquire into the visceral dimensions of the family's mobility performance (Vannini forthcoming). Through the embodied performance of mobility, family members form emotional relationships not only with each other but also with material things, routes and places (Sheller 2004, Jensen, Sheller and Wind 2014). Different assemblages of subjects and objects in mobility practices, such as mobile-with constellations and specific modes of transport, afford different affective experiences and embodied sensations, which in turn evoke different feelings and emotions. Through this intertwining of motion and emotion in mobility practices, Sheller shows how mobile subjects organically develop embodied dispositions and strong associations between feelings and mobility:

Combining the 'feeling' of the world through the senses with the 'feelings' that arise from those encounters, this approach suggests the co-constitution of motion and emotion. Emotions, in this view, are a way of sorting the sensations of the non-cognitive realm, which occur through the conduct and movement of the body.  
(2004: 226)

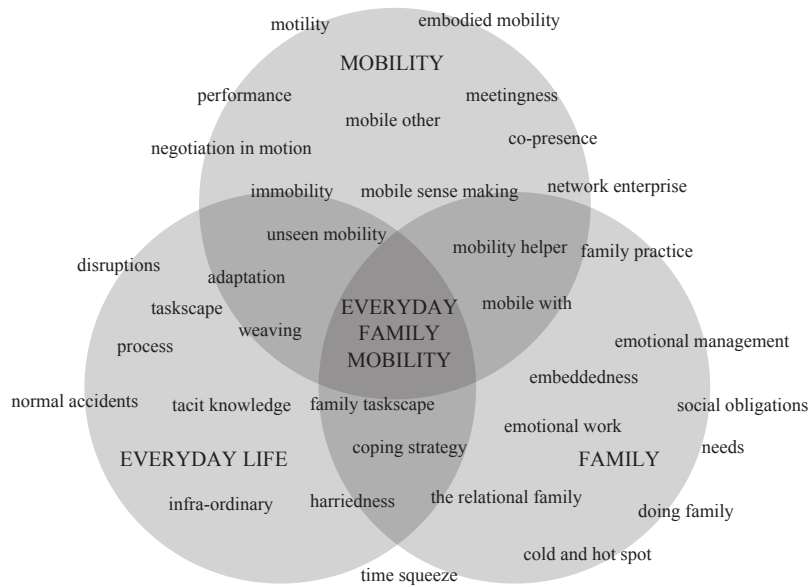
Despite Sheller's focus on the visceral and emotional dimensions of driving the car, her view on emotions in mobility can be expanded to other modes of transport. The embodied experience of performing mobility and its affective and emotional consequences greatly shape the family's mobility; and, as will be argued in the thesis, this is linked to the stabilising capacity of everyday mobility, and ultimately to how mobility is used as a *tool* in coping with everyday life.

#### **4-10: CONCLUSION**

This chapter set out to describe the theoretical framework from which the object of study, the family's everyday mobility, is approached and delineated. In so doing, the theoretical framework has also included the adjoining themes of everyday life and the family in order to more broadly consider the phenomenon of mobility and its emplacement within the social-material context of family and everyday life. Hence the chapter has argued for a processual reading of everyday life. It was argued that although the routines and practices performed in the quotidian are actualised in circular patterns, they are in constant motion and undergoing continual change as they are adapted through interaction with the on-flow of disruptions and contingency in everyday life. Through Ingold's concept of taskscape the processual and profound interrelating and interweaving relationships between everyday practices and the socio-material environment were further highlighted.

Turning to the theme of family, the chapter has argued for a relational reading. The relational family as an analytical tool enables us to become theoretically attuned to the

Figure 13: Theoretical toolbox



complex ways in which the family is interrelated and to what effect. Importantly, it was argued that family members are embedded in each other's lives, relationally affecting each other in practical, social and emotional ways. Pursuing this line of thinking, the emotional dimension interweaves with all parts of everyday family life, and the family's practices become both emotionally charged and shaped through *emotional work*. It was argued that families, based on their practical, social and emotional conditions, devise coping strategies that forcefully organise and co-ordinate the socio-temporal order of their routines and practices in everyday life. As theoretical shorthand for encapsulating this on-going process of actualisation of normative strategies, the concept of *family taskscape* was proposed.

To be able to analytically approach the family's everyday mobility as an essential element in the family taskscape, the chapter introduced the concept of *mobility practice*. Drawing on actor-network theory, the chapter has proposed understanding mobility practice as a heterogeneous assemblage. The analytical payoff of this conceptualisation is the analytical ability to elucidate how mobility practices, as a relational phenomenon, on the one hand are constituted by heterogeneous elements of human subjects and non-human objects, and on the other hand shape and are shaped by their relational contexts with other social actors, materialities, sequences of actions, situations, practices etc.

In the following chapters, the theoretical framework presented in this chapter will both serve as the point of departure the analytical framework of elasticity that will be proposed in the following chapter as well as functioning as a theoretical toolbox for the analysis of the family's everyday mobility in chapters 7 and 8.

# CHAPTER 5: THE ANALYTICAL MODEL OF ELASTICITY

## 5-1: INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter it was suggested that family members are relationally embedded in each other's lives and therefore affect each other and the family's everyday practices in practical, social and emotional ways. Additionally, the concept of *family taskscape* was proposed to encapsulate the outcome of family members' collective attempt to interweave everyday practices and make them fit a specific socio-temporal ordering that renders everyday life accomplishable by managing its practical, social and emotional conditions. Furthermore, it was argued that family mobility practices can be understood theoretically as heterogeneous assemblages shaped by their interrelating and interweaving with other practices in the family taskscape as well as by the socio-material context of the family and everyday life in which they are performed.

The aim of this chapter is to make a bridge between the theoretical framework presented in the previous chapter and the forthcoming analysis of the family's everyday mobility. To achieve this, the chapter proposes an analytical model that on one hand provides a way of thinking about the association between the family's everyday mobility practices and coping in everyday family life, and on the other hand serves as a springboard for practically guiding the inquiry and analysis in the forthcoming chapters.

Hence, in accordance with the research ambition outlined in the introduction, the chapter begins by arguing that a fruitful way of thinking about the relationship between coping and mobility in the family is through the metaphor of elasticity. From this, the chapter develops the model of elasticity as a way of conceptualising the process of coping. It is argued that family members' making and performances of everyday mobility practices produce elasticity, metaphorically speaking, endowing the family with the ability to stretch and adapt to changing conditions, disruptions and challenges in their everyday life. To facilitate inquiry into the family's mobility coping process, the chapter proposes to approach the object of study, everyday family mobility, from two analytical perspectives. Hence, based on the proposed analytical model of elasticity, these perspectives on the family's everyday mobility—first as relational socio-material assemblages, and second as skilful and creative performances—are guiding the analysis of the study in the chapters 7 and 8.

## 5-2: PROPOSING A MODEL FOR THE PRODUCTION OF ELASTICITY

Following the relational and performative reading of practice presented in the previous chapter (see sections 4-4, 4-6, 4-7 and 4-9), mobility practices are regarded as relationally shaped by the socio-material environments in which they are performed. By this it is meant that the family's mobility practices both interact with the temporal ordering of practices in the family taskscape and are sensitive to the material and social immediacy of the mobile situations in which they take place. Importantly, mobility practices are themselves active, as they possess transformative and potentially stabilising capacities that affect the surroundings in which they take place. Through performance, the social and physical and material environments of mobility practices are affected and potentially changed. With this multi-faceted understanding, the family's mobility practices are considered dynamic *devices* that enable the family to stretch and adapt to and accommodate specific and situational conditions in the unfolding of everyday life. Hence, drawing on the conceptualisation of mobility proposed in the previous chapter, in making and performing everyday family mobility, performative effects are produced that influence their socio-material surroundings. These effects may be stabilising and contribute to coping in everyday life, for instance, the practical effect of the mobility practice in commuting is physically getting from home to work. But effects may also be destabilising and complicate coping, when, for instance, the car used in commuting breaks down or becomes stuck in traffic. To analytically engage with elucidating and understanding these effects, the metaphor of *elasticity*<sup>14</sup> is proposed as a particularly fruitful way of thinking about the interrelation of the family's mobility practices and the coping processes in everyday life.

A common-sense understanding of the term elasticity points to something, typically some material or entity, and its ability to stretch, deform, conform and adapt within certain limits without breaking. The Oxford Dictionaries (2013) offer this definition:

- 1 the ability of an object or material to resume its normal shape after being stretched or compressed; stretchiness
- 2 the ability of something to change and adapt; adaptability

Given these meanings, conjoining the metaphor of elasticity with the concept of mobility practice entails analytically highlighting and emphasising the family's mobility practices as active coping processes. These have the ability to change shape, *stretch* and *adapt* in accordance with changing conditions, or what were in the previous chapter described as "external demands and internal intentions" (Lassen 2009: 178)

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<sup>14</sup> It should be noted this usage of the term *elasticity* is not related to the concept of *elasticity* used in economics and transport literature that denotes how responsive an economic variable is to change.



in the family's everyday life (see section 4-7). Pursuing this metaphorical image, through the making and performing of everyday mobility, the family members' mobility practices can be said to be producing elasticity. Following this understanding, elasticity is therefore in this study defined as:

*the performative and potentially stabilising effects of the family members' making and performances of socio-material mobility practices that allows for stretching and adapting to the practical, social and emotional conditions in accomplishing their everyday life.*

In this definition, the *practical* conditions refer to the family's basic needs and wishes for moving to and from activities and practices in everyday life. The *social* and *emotional* conditions refer to the family's needs and wishes for familial socialising, togetherness, care and intimacy, as well as individual family members' needs for emotional transitioning from different domains in everyday life, personal time-outs, recreational in-betweens. These conditions are shaped by what was in the previous chapter termed the family's *coping strategy*, understood as the family's normative conviction of what it means to be a family and what the good life looks like (see section 4-7). The *making* and *performing* of mobility practices therefore refers to family members' relational labour of pre-travel planning, organising and preparing, as well as to the dynamic micro-coordination, negotiation in motion and manifestation of mobility skills that is required to enable stretching and adapting in everyday family life.

Through this extensive labour, family members address three aspects of coping in their mobility. First, their labour is directed towards accommodating the practical, social and emotional conditions of everyday life. Second, it deals with the continual weaving and consolidating of the socio-temporal order within the family taskscape. And third, it is aimed at stabilising the elusiveness of mobility, the internal and external disruptions and contingencies as they emerge in the on-flow of the family's everyday life. This cyclical process of coping, making and performing mobility practices—or the production of elasticity—relative to conditions in everyday life is illustrated in figure 14.

Although families put in substantial efforts to accommodating the conditions in everyday life through mobility, the resultant elasticity is neither stable nor evenly produced. The production of elasticity is contingent upon family members' individual ability to accommodate conditions in their everyday mobility performances; hence the degree to which elasticity is produced fluctuates over time in accordance with the fluidity of the contextual conditions and with changes in family members' levels of motility. For instance, families who live in neighbourhoods that afford safe mobility for children as easy access to public transport impacts the opportunity for elasticity production. In some of the families in the study, the opening of the metro system in Copenhagen has substantially changed their everyday mobility (and elasticity



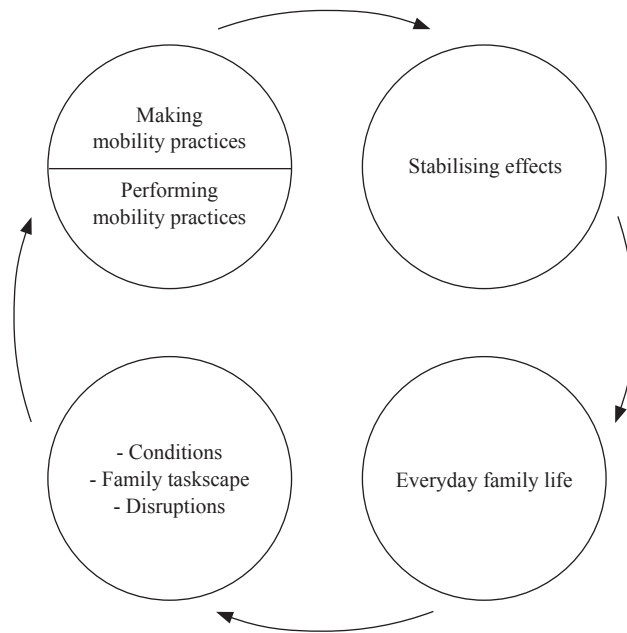


Figure 14: Conceptual model of the production of elasticity

production). Thus the production of elasticity may vary substantially between families as well as between different mobility practices within the family.

Hence, it is useful to think about different levels of elasticity, ranging in a continuum from *high* elasticity to *low* elasticity. In this scheme, high elasticity is seen in those families that are capable of making and performing their mobility practices in a manner that enables them to cope with the practical, social and emotional conditions of their everyday life. For them, everyday mobility produces stabilising effects and is a valuable asset for coping. Conversely, low elasticity is seen in families that struggle to find ways of adjusting to practical, social and emotional conditions when making and performing their everyday mobility practices. For them, everyday mobility produces destabilising effects and easily become a burden, an activity that itself needs to be coped with.

Equipped with this understanding of the production of elasticity, the chapter will now turn to addressing how this model of elasticity might serve not only as a hypothesis of how the everyday mobility contributes to coping in family life, but also as a guide for the inquiry into the elasticity production of families' everyday mobility in the empirical material.

### 5-3: USING THE MODEL OF ELASTICITY FOR INQUIRY

To elucidate how the family's making and performances of everyday mobility practices contribute to coping with practical, social and emotional needs and wishes while simultaneously being responsive to change, capriciousness and contingency in the socio-material environment of the family's everyday life, the proposed model of elasticity is used as an analytical tool guiding the inquiry and analysis. Taking point of departure in the underlying theoretical framework, the inquiry is directed towards the production of elasticity through the two analytically perspectives of *making* and *performing* mobility practices (see figure 15). The first perspective engages with the family members' making of mobility practices, regarding them as socio-material assemblages. The second perspective addresses the family members' performance of mobility practices, regarding them as skilful, creative and highly coordinated acts of

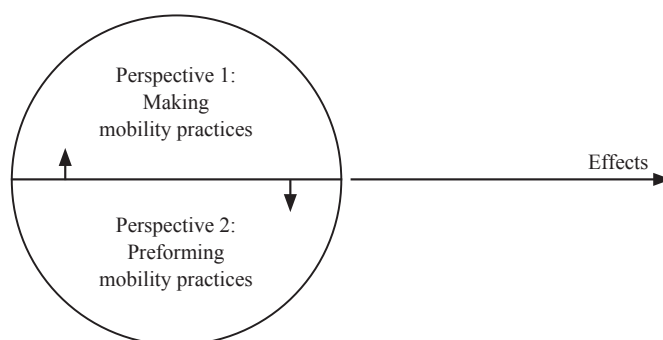


Figure 15: The two analytical perspective of the elasticity production guiding the inquiry

labour. Both of these perspectives have, in accordance with the research ambition of the study, specific analytical objectives that will be explored below.

#### PERSPECTIVE 1: MOBILITY AS ASSEMBLAGE

This analytical approach to the family's mobility draws on the theoretical stance proposed in the previous chapter, in which a mobility practice is conceptualised as a conjunction of coordinated elements, a relational assemblage of subjects and objects temporally stabilised (see section 4-9). Hence mobility practices never fully coagulate but can be arranged into a multitude of different configurations conforming to different conditions, purposes and situations in everyday life. Consequently, viewing mobility practices as assemblages entails analytically attending to the effects they produce, their outcomes, their performative efficacy. Depending on its specific configuration,

a mobility practice might facilitate family members geographically moving together and apart to engage in dispersed everyday practices such as work and school. Other configurations might allow for co-presence of family members, visiting grandparents or escorting children to after-school activities. Hence mobility practice assemblages can be stretched and adapted to accommodate the practicalities of getting family members to and from everyday practices as a way of coping in everyday life, but often, as will be argued extensively in the following chapters (see chapters 7 and 8), they are also configured to address emotional and social needs and wishes through the orchestration of familial care and togetherness in everyday life.

The objective of the first analytical perspective is therefore twofold. It is concerned with understanding:

- What the family's mobility practices are composed of and how they are configured.
- What practical, social and emotional effects the family's mobility practices produce.

## PERSPECTIVE 2: MOBILITY AS PERFORMANCE

In the second analytical perspective, mobility practices are approached as performances. It is through performance that mobility practices as assemblages come to life, are enacted and reproduced, and are sustained and changed over time. Hence this perspective emphasises the immediacy of *doing* mobility and relies on the notion that mobility practices do not simply happen, nor do they randomly or accidentally occur. They may be affected by unpredictable incidents and accidents, but family mobility is foremost a purposive activity that must be carefully and skilfully prepared, coordinated, sequenced and performed in intimate interplay with the socio-material environments in which mobility takes place in order to be successfully accomplished. Through this extensive and relational labour, family members creatively adjust and alter their mobility practices, stretching and adapting to contingencies that occur both as *external* disruptions in everyday life (such as congestion, delayed service, a flat tire and so on) and as *internal* disruptions relationally relayed from other family members and their everyday practices (see section 4-6). Hence family members' acute attentiveness to the immediacy of the mobile situation as it unfolds, and simultaneously to sustaining and consolidating the socio-temporal order in the family taskscape, is therefore intricately woven into the performance of mobility practices.

Subsequently, the objectives of the analytical perspective on mobility practices as performances are to understand:

- How family members perform and accomplish their mobility practices in everyday life together and in relation to each other.

- How family members conform and adapt mobility practices to the disruptions and contingencies of everyday life.
- How mobility practices are used to manage and sustain family taskscapes.

As the diagrammatic illustration shows (see figure 3), the two analytical perspectives on the family's everyday mobility practices are understood as interrelated. The conjunction between the two perspectives is best understood as a dialogical relationship in which the mobility practice (the socio-material assemblage) is orchestrated, maintained and potentially changed through performance, and, conversely, the performance of mobility practice is framed and shaped by the particular relational configuration of the mobility practice as an assemblage.

It should be stressed that the purpose of this model is twofold. First the model offers a way of theoretically understanding how the family's mobility practices, through the making of complex relational assemblage configurations and laborious performances, produce elasticity that contributes to coping with everyday family life. And second, the model also functions as a heuristic tool that facilitates the inquiry into and analysis of the family's coping process in the study. Naturally, in real life this is a far more complex phenomenon, which this model hardly can do justice to. Indeed in proposing such a simple scheme as the elasticity model the analytical approach of this study "fall[s] prey to the scientific urge to build simplifying, diagrammatic models of social life" (Schatzki 2002: xii). Following an instrumental pragmatist approach, as presented in chapter 2, however, the purpose of an analytical model is not to produce an accurate universal representation corresponding to reality, but rather to create an analytical instrument capable of engaging with the analysis of the empirical material and opening it to certain fruitful perspectives. In this light, the model provides two analytical perspectives that are capable of elucidating different aspects in the production of elasticity.

## 5-4: CONCLUSION

This chapter has argued for the metaphor of elasticity as a useful way of thinking about how the family's mobility practices and coping processes interact and interrelate. The model of elasticity was introduced to theoretically encapsulate the stabilising performative effects produced in the making and performing of everyday mobility practices that contribute to coping with the practical, social and emotional conditions in the family's everyday life. Additionally, the chapter has proposed to use the model of elasticity for guiding the forthcoming analysis through the two distinct analytical perspectives of making mobility assemblages and performing mobility. These analytical approaches will be applied, respectively, in chapter 7, which addresses the configuration and effects of the family's mobility practices, and chapter 8, which focuses on the skilful and creative labour of preparation, coordination and performance that is needed to produce and sustain elasticity. However, before turning to the analysis, the next chapter will provide further contextual background knowledge and insight

into the 11 families in the sample and the urban context of the Greater Copenhagen Area, as well as outlining what characterises families with children and their everyday lives in Danish society.



## **PART II**

# CHAPTER 6: FAMILY LIFE IN COPENHAGEN

## 6-1: INTRODUCTION

Having constructed the theoretical and philosophical foundations, as well as the research design, of the study, the thesis will now turn its focus towards the empirical material and introduce the 11 families participating in the study. The main objective of this chapter is to convey a sense of the 11 families' everyday lives within the context of the Greater Copenhagen Area and family life in Denmark. Hence the purpose of the chapter is to function as a primer for the reader to become familiar with the basic characteristics of the physical context of and infrastructure in Copenhagen and with Danish society before turning to the analysis in chapters 7 and 8. For the sake of anonymity, the precise locations of the respondents' residences are not disclosed. Likewise, all names have been changed. It should also be noted that the marital status of the couples in the families differs; some are married while others only live together. The family surnames are therefore not indicative of marriage but are given in the study simply to make the family recognisable.

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	female	22	49
	male	23	51
Number of children	1 child	1	9
	2 children	8	72
	3 children	2	19
Age of children	0-5 years	4	17
	6-10 years	8	34
	11-15 years	6	26
	16- years	5	23
Residential location	Inner Copenhagen (dense urban neighbourhood)	4	44
	Frederiksberg (dense urban neighbourhood)	3	28
	Suburban neighbourhood	4	36
Car access (no. of families)	no car	1	9
	car sharing scheme	1	9
	1 car	7	63
	2 cars	2	19
Daily car users (no. of families)	yes	6	54
	no	5	46

Table 3: Basic characteristics of respondents, scheme adopted from Schwanen (2008)



The chapter will begin by presenting the 11 families through a series of mini biographies. Following this, the chapter will explore the families' locations of residence to elucidate contextual implications and the effects of the urban structure in Copenhagen on the families' mobility. To provide further understanding of family life in Denmark, and in particular of the families in the study, the chapter draws on a series of recent statistical surveys on time usage in work and family life, housekeeping and leisure, and the experiences of stress in Danish society.

## 6-2: THE ELEVEN FAMILIES

Forty-five respondents in total, distributed among the 11 families, were in the study. Table 3 illustrates the basic characteristics of the family members and figure 16 shows the residence location of the 11 families. In the following paragraphs a short biography of each of the 11 families will be presented.

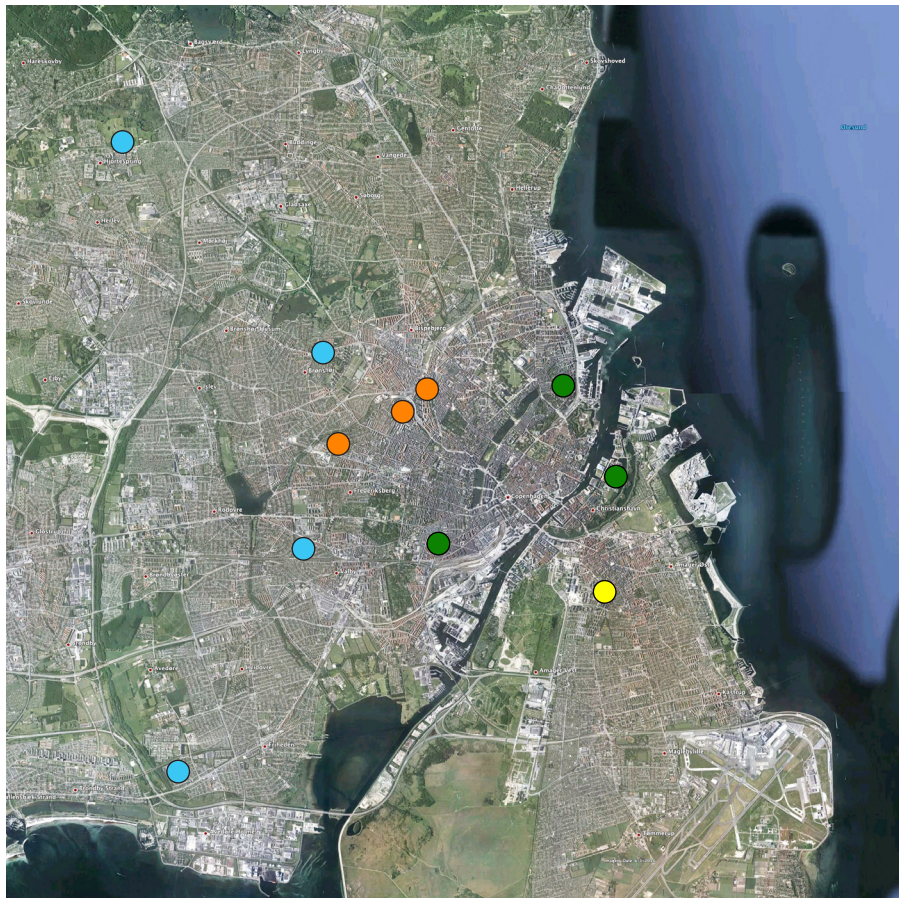


Figure 16: Location of the 11 families' residence (image source: Google Maps)

2 km

## THE LINDBORG FAMILY



Figure 17-18: Neighbourhood of the Lindborg family (image source: Google Streetview)

The Lindborg family consists of the father, Bent (aged 53); the mother, Margrethe (47); and their three children, Birgit (15), Janus (13) and Ida (10). Both parents hold advanced degrees. Bent has been employed in the same position for many years, whereas Margrethe has had many different jobs and was during the period of the study both dismissed from a managerial position in the education sector and hired in another position. They live in a quiet neighbourhood in Frederiksberg. They consider themselves “city people” and love the multitudes of people and the culture in the city. They frequently use public transport but are also dependent on their car in their daily travel. The children are mostly autonomous in their daily travel, relying primarily on biking and walking. The family members do not like to do too much planning of daily activities or scheduling and consider themselves “rather impulsive”. However, both parents have very specific roles with regard to housekeeping and childcare. They live by the saying “responsibility is not something you get; it’s something you take”. The father is the main car driver of the family. He is the only one who uses the car and he enjoys the sense of freedom he feels both when driving and when riding his motorcycle. The family leads a busy daily life with many activities. Birgit and Janus, especially, have fully booked schedules with school, sports, social and work activities. On the other hand, the family has a strong focus on “quality time” and prioritises “the well-being of the family”. They use daily meals and weekends as breathing space for familial activity in their busy daily lives.



## THE PETERSEN FAMILY



Figure 19-20: Neighbourhood of the Petersen family (image source: Google Streetview)

The Petersen family consists of the father, Uffe (44); the mother, Dorte (45); and their three boys, Søren (18), Alex (14) and Samuel (9). The parents have long educations in the medical sector. They are both “career people”, although it is presently the father’s career that is the focus. The family home is located in Frederiksberg, which they characterise as “a village in the city”. It is the mother’s childhood neighbourhood. The family uses public transportation extensively and relies almost exclusively on green modes of transport, including biking and walking. They own a car but rarely use it. In fact, using the car in the city is seen as a stress factor. Søren and Alex are very independent, capable of planning and performing all of their own daily mobility and activities themselves. Søren is often occupied at sport activities and often skips dinner with the family. Only Samuel is still partially dependent on his parents, mainly Dorte. The parents have clearly divided housekeeping tasks and roles between them. For now they are focusing on the father’s career, while the mother takes the greater share of the workload at home. Therefore, the family uses the weekends, when Uffe is at home, for family time, often spending it on their favourite activity, relaxing in their pyjamas in front of the television with a good movie. Their daily schedules follow stable patterns, without much fluctuation in working hours. Combined with a relatively high threshold of tolerance for change in their individual daily doings and activities, the Petersens do not need a lot of daily planning, which suits them perfectly.

## THE BACH FAMILY



Figure 21-22: Neighbourhood of the Bach family (image source: Google Streetview)

The Bach family consists of the father, Sven (36); the mother, Mille (36); and their two children, Emma (6) and Christian (3). Both parents hold advanced degrees. Mille works part-time as a consultant and Sven is employed full time in the education sector. Sven's job takes up a bit more time than Mille's, so she is often the one who drops off and picks up the children. They live in a neighbourhood with lots of other families with children in Valby. To them, this place is the ideal compromise between distance to work (and new job opportunities if necessary), distance to central Copenhagen and its selection of activities and the right house and neighbourhood. They like the neighbourhood's calm, almost rural atmosphere. Another important factor is the great connectedness of the neighbourhood with the city via public transportation. They are fond of both biking and public transport, but often have to rely on the car. As they say, "the car is the kit" to make everyday life work. Emma and Christian have a great influence on the family's mobility choices, and it is often their needs that result in car usage. The parents' daily travel to and from work is handled via bike, public transport and car. Their daily activity schedule is tightly packed with both work and leisure activities. They feel they have "a packed daily schedule, but not above average". Planning is therefore necessary, and the parents like to have the weekly activities clearly scheduled and under control. One of the main goals of this planning is to carve out more "quality time" with the children and catch up on things. Therefore, they prioritise minimising travel time to work and have set a threshold of 30 minutes. Meals are considered prime family time, and holidays are often used to catch up on social obligations with friends and family to compensate for their busy everyday life.

## THE MØLLER FAMILY



Figure 23-24: Neighbourhood of the Møller family (image source: Google Streetview)

The Møller family consists of the father, Knud (53); the mother, Britt (47); and their children, Sophie (14) and Aske (10). Both parents have long educations and work in the research industry. They live in a suburb in Brønshøj. They like to be close to the city, and Knud, who is from the city centre of Copenhagen, feels Brønshøj is almost too provincial. The family has been living there for 10 years. One of the main reasons they moved there was to have a house and garden. Another was being part of a diverse neighbourhood, something they feel is important. Their neighbourhood has many green places, which they all use a lot. While both parents are frequent car users, the children primarily walk or bike. The family has mixed feelings towards the car: Britt is a passionate driver, whereas Knud feels that it is not really necessary to have a car in the city. Nevertheless, their primary mode of transport is their two cars. Their work hours are fairly flexible, something they prioritise and enjoy because they feel it gives them great freedom in their daily lives. It is also one of the reasons the family doesn't feel the need to have a tightly planned schedule. They have a relaxed attitude towards planning and agree that it is important sometimes to take time, stop and enjoy the moment. Sophie and Aske's activities outside of school are highly prioritised in the family. The parents make a great effort to take part in them and they take up a large share of the family's spare time. They see it as an investment in the family and their relationship with the children. The point, as they say, is "to have something in common with them; they won't want to be with us in a few years". The car is a necessary tool for participating in these activities. Like most families with children, the parents have very defined routines. They believe 80% of what they do in everyday life is routine and the rest is variation. Their leisure time is relatively unplanned, but often includes taking the family's caravan abroad at the holidays.



## THE JENSEN FAMILY



Figure 25-26: Neighbourhood of the Jensen family (image source: Google Streetview)

The Jensen family consists of the father, Torben (40); the mother, Bodil (43); Frida (8) and Anders (5). Both of the parents holds advanced degrees and holds jobs in the service industry. Both, but especially the mother, have good flexibility in their jobs. Long work hours and business trips are part of both their jobs. The father, especially, often has to work late on short notice. The family lives in a cohousing flat at Christianshavn. They have lived there for nine years, since the entire neighbourhood was converted from industry to residences and offices. They describe it as an “enclave of highly educated people”, many being architects and other creative people. Although it is a young neighbourhood, they feel it is a great community, with lots of identity and coherence among the people living there. There are lots of other families, with whom they often meet and socialise. They love the rural and “village-like” character of the neighbourhood, placed as it is between the green areas of Amager, the water and the city centre. The family owns an old Toyota but seldom uses it. As they say, “driving in Copenhagen is stupid”. Both parents are intensive bike users, especially the father, for whom the bike means freedom. Both Frida and Anders are very dependent on their parent in their transport due to heavy and unsafe traffic in the city centre. This puts strain on the parents as they deal with escorting the children, their demanding jobs, housekeeping and their social lives. The family prioritises both individual activities and spending “quality time” together, although this seldom happens in daily life. For half of the year they spend most weekends at their allotment garden. The parents bike together to work as a substitute for quality time. They often feel they have a rushed life. Frida and Anders only participate in a few after-school activities because, as the mother says, it simply gets too stressful with everything in their daily life. Planning and organising in the family happens ad hoc and on the move. Due to the parents’ rapidly changing work hours, they use their mobile phones to do last-minute micro-coordination, especially in relation to their children.

## THE SØRENSEN FAMILY



Figure 27-28: Neighbourhood of the Sørensen family (image source: Google Streetview)

The Sørensen family consists of the father, Mads (51); the mother, Sigrid (50); and their three children, Isabel (18), Sander (15) and Ditte, who has left for college. The father works in a bank and the mother is in a management position at a nearby school. Isabel attends a high school in Nørreport, while Sander is in school nearby. The parents are originally from Jutland, but have lived in Copenhagen for the past 16 years. They live in a quiet neighbourhood in Vesterbro, where they own a semidetached house set amongst 235 similar ones. They describe it as a child-friendly, somewhat rural neighbourhood with slow traffic. They have close relationships with their neighbours. Although the area is relatively expensive, Mads feels there are many types of people living there. Isabel says it is “mainly for hip young Copenhageners who like to have kids”. All of the family members are dedicated users of public transport and their bikes. They own a car, but it is used very little. Transport for them is mainly instrumental, and they choose transport modes accordingly. All of their daily activities are achieved without the car. Both Isabel and Sander are highly capable of performing their own transport and activities. In general, the family members lead relatively separate lives during the week. However, as Sigrid says, they prioritise meals as a common activity for all family members; this is a space for them to catch up and connect. Both parents work close to home and cannot imagine having longer commutes. Sometimes long work hours can be stressful. Sigrid is the coordinator and planner in the family, but as she says, there is no real need for planning because most days are the same. They occasionally use mobile phones for coordinating, but since the children can handle their own transport, it is less important to plan. The family compensates for its individualised lifestyle during vacations going skiing and spending the summer holiday together. The car is used during vacations, for instance on their quarterly trips to visit relatives in Jutland.

## THE VANGSGAARD FAMILY



Figure 29-30: Neighbourhood of the Vangsgaard family (image source: Google Streetview)

The Vangsgaard family consists of the father, Casper (41); the mother, Rachel (37); and their two children, Johannes (8) and Josefine (2). Both parents have university educations. Of the two, Casper is working a bit more, and often has to drive to get to meetings and client visits. Both parents are from Jutland, but have lived in Copenhagen the last 11 years. The last nine years they have lived in a small apartment in Frederiksberg, which they feel they are rapidly outgrowing with their two children. They see themselves as living in the “other part of Frederiksberg”, not the cosy and expensive village-like neighbourhood that Frederiksberg is known for, but “on the other side of the street”. They do, however, like the high standard of municipality services in Frederiksberg. They also like the great transport options; as they say, “transport is a big issue in Copenhagen”, and it is important to have access. It is mainly Casper who uses the car, whereas Sigrd combines bike, train and bus to get to work. This is not an issue for her—even though her commute takes 40 minutes, as she says, “where I come from there is only one bus per hour”. Casper and Sigrd have discussed getting a second car, but Sigrd dislikes driving and prefers other modes. Their car is mainly used for commuting and escorting the kids to school and after-school activities. Getting to other activities is mainly done by public transport or bike. Most of the parents’ daily lives revolve around Johannes and Josefine, their needs and their activities. Daily activities are often limited by the opening hours of day care. To handle this, much of their life is routinized into fixed patterns; as Sigrd says, “the five days of the week look pretty much the same”. This also means that the parents need to coordinate and plan mostly for the long term. Their prioritisation of daily activities is straightforward: as the father puts it, “at the moment everything is about the kids but in one year we will see”. Each of the parents has one leisure activity per week, and this is a deliberate choice made to keep stress at bay.



## THE HARTMANN FAMILY



Figure 31-32: Neighbourhood of the Hartmann family (image source: Google Streetview)

The Hartmann family consists of the father, Mikkel (39); the mother, Lone (43); and their two children, Sandra (16) and Lise (2). Sandra is Lone's biological daughter from a prior relationship and Lise is the biological child of Mikkel and Lone. Mikkel is working in transport logistics and Lone are in the service industry. Due to having Lise, Lone has one day off every second week, while Mikkel works full time. Sandra attends the nearby high school. They own a semidetached house in a quiet suburban neighbourhood in Hvidovre. They have close relationships with their neighbours, and Mikkel is a board member in the homeowner's association. They feel well connected to Copenhagen's city centre and have many shopping options. It is "a quiet neighbourhood close to the city", as Mikkel says. Both parents have their own cars, and most transport is done by car. The family bought their second car after Lise was born to enable Lone to get to and from work more quickly. Sandra is completely capable of handling her own transport all over Copenhagen. She uses train, bus and her bike, for local activities. The parents would not mind using public transport more if it were better connected to their work destinations and the travel time were the same. The family prioritises being together, and they spend most of their spare time together or socialising with friends and neighbours. Since Lise's birth they have become more restricted by her sleep schedule, which means visiting relatives farther away is more difficult. Both parents like to be on top of things and planning is an essential part of their daily life.

## THE HALKÆR FAMILY



Figure 33-34: Neighbourhood of the Halkær family (image source: Google Streetview)

The Halkær family consists of the father, Thomas (38); the mother, Jane (43); and her two children from a previous relationship, Caroline (16) and Ruben (13). Thomas has finished primary school and Jane has finished high school. Both are employed full time, but Jane is on long-term sick leave. They rent an apartment in Birkeparken, “Herlev’s slum”, as the mother jokingly calls it. Even though they do not have much contact with their immediate neighbours, they generally think people are polite and they feel safe living there. Prior to moving there the mother had lots of prejudices against the area, but this has changed and they are quite happy living there. Most transport is done by bus or by bike. They have a car, but it was broken down at the time of the interview. They usually used the car for getting to work and visiting friends and family. Now this is done by public transport, which is not a problem; as the mother says, “you learn to adapt”. Nevertheless, public transport can be troublesome when visiting family farther away. Both Caroline and Ruben lead quite independent lives and handle their own daily transport. In the past their needs and activities dictated their mother’s daily schedule, but this has changed dramatically over the last couple of years. Their biological father lives within biking distance, and Caroline and Ruben travel back and forth as they like. Closeness to friends and family is something the family prioritises, and the weekends are mostly spent socialising. Jane is the planner in the family, but they mostly deal with planning on an ad hoc basis. They see themselves as quite relaxed and do not mind friends dropping by unannounced for coffee.

## THE NIELSEN FAMILY



Figure 35-38: Neighbourhood of the Nielsen family (image source: Google Streetview)

The Nielsen family consists of the father, Karsten (48); the mother, Anne-Mette (46); and their daughter, Trine (18). They also have an older son, Jens, who is not living at home. Anne-Mette is working only at a flex job because of an injured back. Karsten works a normal full-time job. In the past he had “career dreams”, but felt this caused too much trouble in their family life. They rent an apartment in Hørgården on Amager, where they have lived for the last 15 years. The mother was born on Amager and will, she says, always stay there. Her life and the family’s life have changed dramatically since she injured her back, making it difficult for her to move around. This has also had implications for the whole family, as they have had to adjust to her situation. The family’s daily routine is quite fixed; for instance, they have a daily shopping routine. When Karsten gets home from work they nearly always go shopping by car. Due to her back, Anne-Mette can only move around by car or train, and these shopping trips get her to go outside. Trine attends a school almost an hour away, but manages all of her transport herself, mostly using public transport and sometimes bike. Karsten is a dedicated car driver. Although he seldom uses it he does not dislike public transport. The family has a strong aversion to planning. For them planning is an obstacle to their freedom and ability to be spontaneous. As Anne-Mette says, “planning is choking people”. The family prioritises spending time together. The last seven summer holidays the family has taken a road-trip vacation to the Czech Republic.



## THE JUHL FAMILY



Figure 37-38: Neighbourhood of the Lindborg family (image source: Google Streetview)

The Juhl family consists of the father, Marino (44); the mother, Cecilie (37); and their two sons, Daniel (10) and Rasmus (6). Cecilie has a university degree and Marino is a trained nurse. They both work full time at jobs located within a 10-minute bike ride from home. Their daily transport is predominantly done by bike. Although both were raised in car-based communities, they feel that driving in Copenhagen is silly. As Marino says, “if I live in a city with good public transportation, then I don’t want a car”. They don’t own a car, but subscribe to a car-sharing scheme that they use on rare occasions. They live in a cohousing flat on a quiet but central street in Østerbro. There are lots of families with children in their neighbourhood, and they are particularly involved in their housing cooperative, where they feel they have a good community of neighbours. Sometimes they use neighbours or relatives who live nearby to cover the kids’ care. The family prioritises the children’s after-school and sports activities, which take up a great deal of time. The father is soccer coach for the local boys’ team. Since everything in their life is very local, transport time is not really a big issue. Nevertheless, they sometimes feel they have a very busy daily life, but are usually capable of handling it through planning. For them, being a family with young children necessitates planning and structure. As Cecilie says, “we tend to know who is doing what, when and where”.

### 6-3: URBAN STRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT

As illustrated on the map, the families' residences are located across the Greater Copenhagen Area: three in the inner city (green dots), three in the municipality of Frederiksberg (orange dots), one on Amager (yellow dot) and four in suburbs of Copenhagen (blue dots) (see figure 39). Two of these are located in the vicinity of what is called *Ring 3* (the outer motorway ring encircling Copenhagen) in the adjacent municipalities of Hvidovre and Herlev.

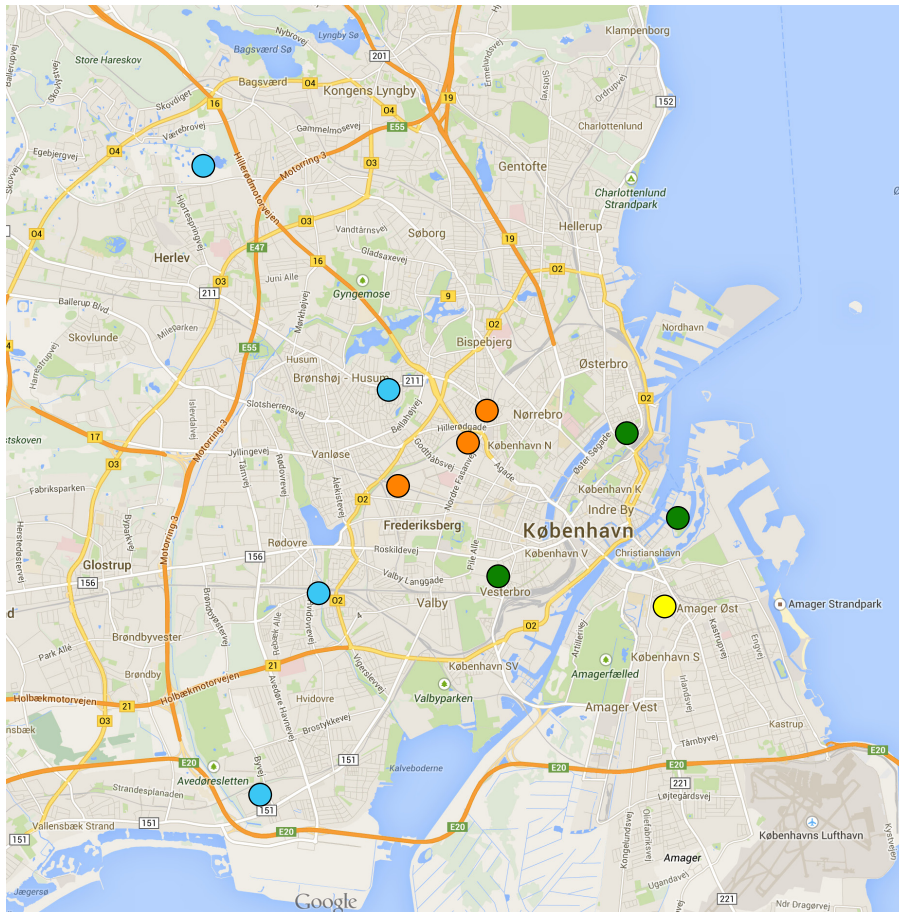


Figure 39: Road network in the Greater Copenhagen Area (dark orange roads denotes the motorway system) (image source: Google Maps)

As mentioned in the previous chapter (see section 5-3), the families have been chosen amongst several other variables to achieve geographical variance in residence location, including both urban and suburban areas, while having easy access to public transportation options (within 500 meters of either train, bus or metro). Because of

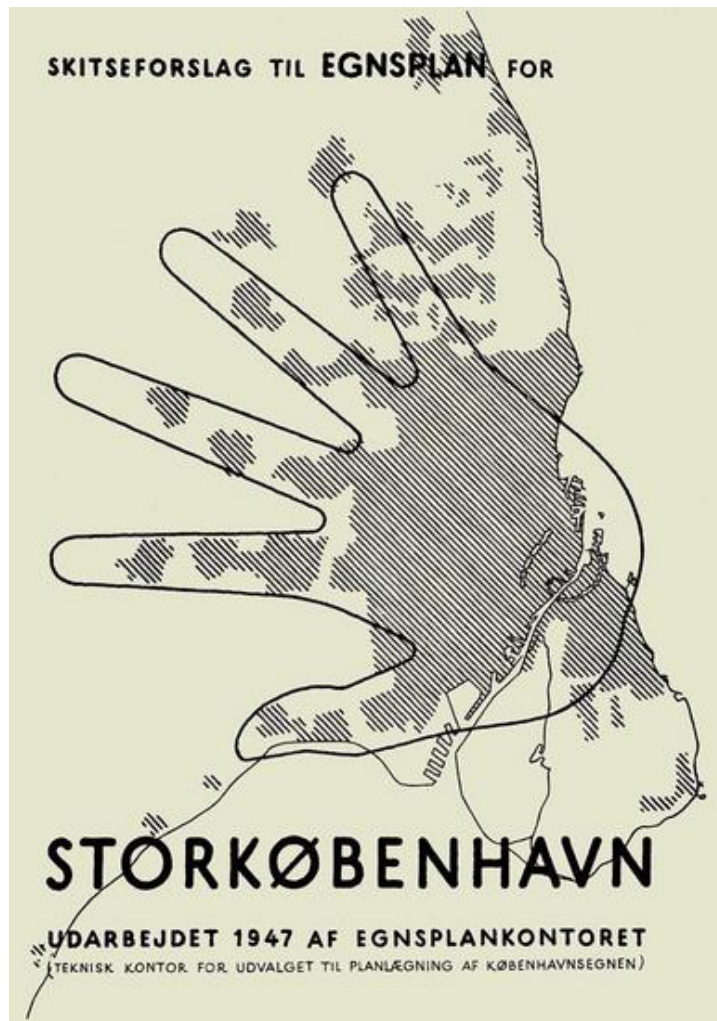


Figure 40: Original frontpage of the Finger Plan report from 1947 (source: Gyldendal)

this, most of the families in the study live near the local train lines, the S-trains, which together with the network of main roads form the backbone of the urban development strategy for the Greater Copenhagen Area called *the Finger Plan*, (see figure 40) which dates back to the late 1940s. Although never formally passed, this plan has had considerable influence on urban and transport-related development in the Greater Copenhagen Area (Jørgensen 2013). With inspiration from Lewis Mumford and Ebenezer Howard, the finger plan was a modernistic vision for a decentralised city divided into smaller self-sufficient units and interconnected by highly efficient infrastructure and transport systems. Howard’s vision of the Garden City, especially, advocated separating the functions of work and living through the creation of *satellite towns* or suburban areas decentralised from regional centres such as Copenhagen

(Jørgensen 2013). In the Greater Copenhagen Area this idea has been manifested in a dense urban city structure along the *fingers*, and although the areas between the fingers have (in more recent years) been brought into use and become somewhat developed, they are still greener and have lower population density in comparison.



Figure 41: Public transport system in Copenhagen. Existing S-train lines (red and green lines), Metro system (blue lines, dotted lines are under construction) and proposed light rail system (yellow dotted line) (source: DSB)

The organisation of the urban structure has implications for the families in the study living in the suburbs along the fingers (blue dots in figure 16 and 39). While they have easy access to efficient public transport going into and out of Copenhagen via the S-train lines, access across the fingers is far more troublesome. Although there are several bus lines operating in a relatively fine-grained network running with high frequency, three of the four families in the sample living outside the municipality of Frederiksberg and Copenhagen, on the fingers, report that they rely primarily on car-based travel in their everyday lives. The fourth family (the Halkørs), did not have a car at the time of the interview, which created significant challenges in getting around in their everyday life. This increased modal share of car-based transport reflects the



general tendency found in many larger cities and urban regions of a higher level of car ownership according to distance from the urban centre (Næss and Jensen 2005, Næss 2006).

The other families in the sample (orange, green and yellow dots in figure 16 and 39), living in the more densely populated municipalities of Frederiksberg and Copenhagen, have far better access to even more fine-grained and high-frequency parts of the bus and S-train systems. Four of the families, especially, also have close access to and use the two Metro lines running across the city in their daily mobility. Although all of these families have cars, most of them rely primarily on public modes of transport and biking or walking in their daily mobility practices. Their cars are mostly used in extraordinary activities, bad weather conditions, trips at the weekends outside the city, holidays etc. Compared to the Danish national average, citizens in Copenhagen have a much lower share of car-based transport in everyday life (see table 4). On average, Copenhageners drive only 16.9 km per day, compared with 37.8 km for people living in small rural towns<sup>15</sup> (2014b). At the same time, Copenhagen has the highest national average of bike usage at 2.9 km per day, compared to only 0.7 km in smaller rural towns (2014a).

mode	(procentage)	
	Copenhagen	national average
car	26	57
bike	32	17
walk	26	17
bus/train	14	6
other	2	3

Table 4: Modal split in 2011, national average versus Copenhagen, adopted from CPH (2012:12)

The families in the study living the municipalities of Frederiksberg and Copenhagen report a similar picture. Corroborating this, Petter Næss (2006) finds that “living in a dense area close to central Copenhagen contributes to less travel, a lower share of car driving and more trips by bike or on foot” (Næss 2006: 219).

The urban structure also has implications for the children’s mobility. The families living in the city centre and those living in the suburbs deal with different challenges in terms of children’s mobility in daily life. In the last 50 years, in the Western world, there has been a general tendency towards children being increasingly escorted and supervised by parents or significant others in their daily mobility. On average children are now older before they are allowed to travel alone due to changed perceptions of the dangers of traffic and crime (Hillman, Adams and Whitelegg 1990, Fotel and Thomsen 2004, Kaufmann and Widmer 2006). This fact is reflected in the experiences

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<sup>15</sup> Understood as towns with less than 1000 inhabitants.



of the families in the study. Most of the parents report concern about their children's mobility in terms of safety and most of the pre-teens in the sample are restricted in their individual daily mobility and are escorted to many of their activities. Most of the families report that around the ages of nine to eleven their children are allowed to start travelling on their own to some activities, depending on the time of day and location. Teenagers in the sample can travel more freely but are often escorted when going somewhere after dark. As will be explored further in the following chapters, the mobile phone also has implications for the children's geographies and mobility, negating some of the safety issues that constrict their movement in daily life (Fotel & Thomsen 2004). Moreover, there is also a gender aspect to the children's mobility. Mikkelsen



Figure 42: Super bike path network (orange realised routes, yellow planned and gray proposed), source: CPH (2014b).

and Christensen (2009) find that girls feel more vulnerable in suburban areas and are therefore less prone to travel alone. That being said, Fotel (2007) finds, in a comparative study of 10- to 12-year-old children's mobility in urban and suburban areas of Copenhagen, that both types of urban structure hold problems, challenges and opportunities for children's mobility<sup>16</sup>. Fotel finds that parents living in urban areas work to achieve more and better traffic safety through legislation and lower traffic speeds often with success, whereas the physical structure of the suburban areas, although often criticised for its separation of functions and activities, offers a higher degree of traffic safety in the widely distributed path systems built into the suburban neighbourhoods (2007: 182-4).

Most of the Greater Copenhagen Area, in both urban and suburban areas, is accessible through a 359-km-long, fine-grained and well-developed network of bike paths (CPH

<sup>16</sup> The 10- to 11-year old age group of children is especially interesting as it is in this age that children are allowed to become more independent in their mobility and starting to travel more on their own. Younger children typically escorted for most out of the house activities and older are typically travelling on their own. Children in this age group begin to have their own experiences with travelling in the city alone (i.e. the school commute), and this impacts the whole family's daily mobility organisation.

2014a). In the metropolitan region, 28 *super bike paths* with extra-wide lanes, better lighting and visibility and green traffic light waves have been planned to promote biking as a serious modal choice (CPH 2014b).

During rush hour in the central parts of Copenhagen accessibility is often much better and faster by bike than by any other mode. However, a major difference between biking in urban and suburban areas is the amount of bike traffic, especially during rush hour. Most of the parents in the study living in urban parts of Copenhagen voiced concern about letting their children ride alone in heavy bike traffic and emphasised the importance of teaching their children to handle the bike traffic as a part of their upbringing.

#### **6-4: FAMILY LIFE**

In Denmark, the couple family is the most predominant family constellation, comprising almost 71% of all the families with children (Petersen and Nielsen 2008: 29). Furthermore, 73% of all Danish children were living with both biological parents in 2007 (Petersen and Nielsen 2008: 7). During the last 25 years, the percentages of types of families with children living at home (i.e. single parents, married couples, other couples etc.) have stayed roughly the same, without any significant changes (DS 2011: 21). In the sample, all of the 11 families consist of two parents and one or more children. Only two of the families include parents who are not the children's biological parents. However, as mentioned earlier, during the course of this study, two of the couples in the sample split up. Moreover, in only two of the families are children brought together from prior relationships. In Denmark, each family has an average of 1.79 (DS 2013b). For the families in the sample this number is 2.09 children per family, ranging from one to three children.

Denmark has the fifth-highest frequency of employment in the EU amongst 30- to 49-year-olds (DS 2011: 51). In most nuclear families both parents work, and in 2004, in 80% of families with two children under the age of 13, both parents were employed (Nielsen and Rasmussen 2005: 6, Arbejdslivskommissionen 2007: 33). In the sample, all 22 parents but one were employed at the time of the interviews, but several worked only part time. Interestingly most of the families made it clear during the interviews that they do now, or did at some point when the children were young, manage their everyday lives through explicit career strategies in which one of the parent's careers is prioritised at the expense of the others; typically it is the woman who reduces working hours. This is in line with the fact that the average daily working hours of women with pre-school age children are on average 37 minutes shorter than those of women without children (Bonke 2012: 128-9). Moreover, this reflects the gap between men and women's average number of work hours per day, respectively 5.22 vs. 4.16 hours in 2012 (Bonke 2012: 63-4).

In 2010 72.4% of Danish women were working, which is considerably higher than the EU average of approximately 65% (DS 2011: 49). During the last 45 years Danish women's daily average work hours have increased by 8 minutes per decade, while men, in the same period, have decreased theirs by 26 minutes, resulting in a more equal gender split in the Danish labour market, though it is still in favour of the men (Bonke 2012: 32). Consequently, as the parents in the study also state, in most families with younger children (under the age of 10) both parents contribute to shouldering the workload of housekeeping and other obligations related to the children and their activities (Deding, Lausten and Andersen 2006: 126-7).

Another consequence of the high level of employment for both genders is that almost all Danish children are professionally cared for outside the home in nurseries, day care, kindergartens and after-school centres during the day. In 2013, 91% of 1- to 2-year-olds attended either nursery or day care and 97% of 3- to 5-year-olds were in kindergartens and 87% of the 6- to 9-year olds some type of after school care (DS 2014a). These facts are reflected in the families in the study. All of the children are attending or have attended some sort of care facility outside the home. Furthermore, Deding, Lausten and Andersen, in a study of families with children under the age of 10, find that most families have a social network of either other family members, friends, neighbours or significant others who are able to help with informal care of their children if a sudden need arises (Deding, Lausten and Andersen 2006: 23-4). Most families rely predominantly on grandparents for support in daily life (see Christensen (2000) only in Danish). Still, 6% of families have no network support. In this study, most of the families report that they have a social network capable of taking care of the children if needed. However, in three of the families both parents originate from outside the Greater Copenhagen Area, and their parents are unable to help in daily life.

## WORK TIME

In 2006 the average workweek in families with children under the age of 10 was 42.5 hours for men and 35 hours for women (Deding, Lausten and Andersen 2006: 28). Furthermore, 45% of women and only 6% of men worked less than 37 hours per week. This trend is also reflected in the study; as mentioned above, nearly all of the women

	(percentage)	
	women	men
less than 37 hours per week	45	6
37 hours per week	32	32
more than 37 per week	23	62

*Table 5: Percentage of women and men in families with children under the age of 7 working part time, full time and more than full time, adopted from Deding, Lausten and Andersen (2006:28). 37 hours per week is the Danish work week norm.*

have at some point been or still are working reduced hours. At the other end of the spectrum, 62% of the men and only 23% of the women work more than 37 hours per week in Danish families.

Of the eleven families in the study, only one couple clearly stated that they focused particularly on the woman's career, while five explicitly stated that they focused on the man's, and in the remaining five it was unclear or equal.

The same study showed that 17-19% of parents do not have fixed working hours (Deding, Lausten and Andersen 2006: 32). 70% of men and 49% of women have the opportunity to work *flex hours* (defined as being able to choose an arrival time at work and a departure time with to up 2 hours of variation). Also, 48% of the men and 37% of the women are able to work fully or partially from home (Deding, Lausten and Andersen 2006: 35-6). In the study most of the parents work away from home, although a few report they are able to perform some work-related tasks from home. Furthermore, most of the parents have relatively fixed working hours. However, although none of the parents explicitly stated that they have flex hours during the interviews, based on their accounts of their daily lives there is reason to believe that most of them have some flexibility and autonomy in when they arrive at and leave work. Only a few of the parents have significantly varying work schedules

Family	commute time (minutes)			Location of residence	transport mode(s)	
	mother	father	total		mother	father
Lindborg	unemployed	60	60	Urban neighbourhood	-	car
Petersen	40	60	100	Urban neighbourhood	bike	bike-train
Bach	50	90	140	Suburban neighbourhood	car	bike/train
Møller	60	60	120	Suburban neighbourhood	car	car
Jensen	30	30	60	Urban neighbourhood	bike	bike
Sorensen	10	60	70	Urban neighbourhood	walk	train
Vangsgaard	80	40	120	Urban neighbourhood	bike-train-bus	car
Hartmann	80	40	90	Suburban neighbourhood	car	car
Halkær	sick leave	80	80	Suburban neighbourhood	-	bike/bus
Nielsen	80	30	110	Suburban neighbourhood	metro-train	car
Juhl	20	20	40	Urban neighbourhood	bike	bike

Table 6: Commuting time, location of residence and modal choice in the families

and occasionally have work shifts during evenings and nights. Furthermore, most of the nine teenage children in the study have an after-school job, such as working in a shop or delivering newspapers. Of them, one works nearly full time, and the rest have part-time jobs at which they work only once or a few times per week.

In Denmark, the average commute to and from work was 45.2 minutes in 2009 (Bonke 2012: 61). Over the last 100 years the daily commuting time has increased only slightly: based on a 1911 study in Copenhagen, the approximate commute time was 38 minutes in 1911 (Pilegaard and Nielsen 2013: 147). However, the commute distance has increased significantly, from 1.5 km in 1911 in the municipality of Copenhagen to an average distance in Denmark as a whole of 11.8 km in 1982 (Pilegaard and Nielsen 2013: 147) to 20.1 km in 2013 (DS 2014). Deding, Lausten and Andersen (2006: 31) also find that in families with children under the age of 10, the parents spend between 20 and 25 minutes (not counting time for dropping off or picking up children) commuting to work. The parents in this study spend on average 24.5 minutes commuting. The longest commute is 1.5 hours per day and the shortest is only 10 minutes per day. As table 6 shows, in line with the discussion of urban structure above, the predominant modal choice for commuting is the car for those families living in suburban areas, while it is a mix of public transport and biking in urban areas.

## HOUSEKEEPING

The near-equality of the genders in the labour market in Denmark is also found in the division of chores and tasks related to housekeeping, although there is still some difference between men and women. Men spend, on average, approximately 2.5 hours per day on tasks related to the household and housekeeping (not counting child care and dropping off and picking up children from activities), while women spend 3.5 hours (Bonke 2012: 72). Still, this difference is much smaller than it is in many other countries in the EU (see comparison Bonke 2012: 131). When looking specifically at

	mother	father
1 child	61	38
2 children	89	60
3 children	112	64

Table 7: Minutes used per day on primary childcare, adopted from Bonte (2009: 44)

tasks related to child care, transport related to the escorting of children and family care in general, there is almost an even split between men and women in Denmark (Bonke 2012: 77). It is still, however, the mother who performs the most *direct* childcare<sup>17</sup>, i.e., activities in which parents and children are co-present and that accommodate the

<sup>17</sup> Bonke (2009:43) states childcare, according to Eurostat, can be divided into primary-, secondary- and tertiary-childcare. Primary childcare denotes activities performed to accommodate the child's needs or interests. Secondary childcare denotes activities in which the child's needs or interests are accommodated to some degree but not the sole purpose of the activity. Tertiary childcare denotes activities where the child is present, but the activity is not directly related to the child's needs or interests. Direct childcare is a shorthand for primary- and secondary childcare.

child's needs and/or interests (Bonke 2009: 43-4). However this division of labour differs depending on the number of children (see table 7).

This overall picture is also found among the families in the study. Although the study has not sought to track the exact time spent on housekeeping in the families, from the interviews it is clear that most of the parents to a large extent share the workload, although it is often distributed in specific *gendered* tasks such as men mowing lawns and women shopping. In fact in only one of the families was it explicitly stated the man was in charge of most of the housekeeping tasks in their daily life. In terms of childcare, the general impression from the families in the study is that, although the fathers are actively involved in the children's everyday lives, it is still the mothers who are the *primary* caretakers of pre-school children, though this picture is much blurrier for older children. In general over the last 20 years (in the period from 1987 to 2008), parents' time usage for primary childcare has increased from approximately 1.5 to 2.5 hours per day for 0- to 2-year-olds and from 1 to 1.5 hours per day for 3- to 5-year-olds (Bonke 2009: 46-51). Internationally, compared to studies in Canada, England and the USA, Danish parents spend the most time on childcare of any of the four (Bonke 2009: 118-9)<sup>18</sup>.

## LEISURE TIME

In 2009 Danish men had an average of 8.5 hours and women 8.75 hours of leisure time during the week, and an average of 11.25 and 10.75 hours<sup>19</sup> at weekends (Bonke 2012: 87-8). However, only approximately 1.25 hours of the leisure time is spent on *active* leisure activities (defined as hobbies, sport activities, culture and entertainment activities such as the cinema and museums) while the rest is spent on *passive* activities (defined as reading, socialising, TV, radio, music and computer) (Bonke 2012: 90). In two out of three families one of the parents actively participates in one recurring leisure or sport activity (Bonke 2012: 91). However, in only 27% of the families are both parents actively involved in a recurring leisure or sport activity, compared to 37% of couples without children (Bonk 2012: 91). These facts are reflected in the overall impression of the families in the sample. Most of the parents in the sample have only one or no personal regular leisure or sport activity outside the home. However, in only one of the four families with young children (under the age of 10), do both parents pursue personal leisure or sport activities. In fact, in the three remaining families with young children, the parents explicitly state that they have completely deselected their own activities due to the time pressure of having young children. However, in the families with older children, most of the parents have one or more personal activities, but still it is the children's after-school activities that are prioritised and dictate time usage.

<sup>18</sup> See Bonke (2009: 118-9) for a in-depth review of all the reservations in this comparison.

<sup>19</sup> Not counting time used for eating, sleeping and hygiene.

Half of Danish families have the opportunity of spending four or more evenings together without any leisure or sports activities interfering, and only a third have fewer than three *free* evenings per week (Bonke 2012: 91). The general picture in this study is that the families, to a quite large extent, prioritise spending time together during the evenings, but it is often difficult to unite all family members due to late and unsynchronised working hours, after-school activities, socialising with friends, homework etc. Three families with older children, in particular, stated that they seldom were together during the evening and were often unable to eat dinner together. Being unable to spend time together with all family members present during the evening is therefore not caused by the parents' activities, but rather by the children's after-school, sports and social activities. However, as also touched upon in chapter 2 (see section 2-7), in terms of organising cold spots and hot spots, some of the families in the study explicitly state that they try to compensate for a lack of cold spots by planning family activities at the weekends or in smaller groups.

### FEELINGS OF STRESS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

As described in chapter 4 (see section 4-7), the literature on everyday family life highlights what is termed as “time squeeze” or “harriedness” as a condition in contemporary everyday family life (Southerton 2003; Jarvis 2005). In the period from 1987 to 2005 in Denmark the share of people feeling stress in everyday life rose from 6% to 9%. In the period from 1991 to 2005 the share of people experiencing a fast-paced work life increased from 18% to 36% (Arbejdslivskommissionen 2007: 22-6). Furthermore, the number of individuals working more than 37 hours per week almost doubled in the period from 2001 to 2009, from 18% to 36% (Bonke 2012: 105). In fact, in addition to spending considerable time on childcare, families with two employed parents work slightly more than couples in households without children (Arbejdslivskommissionen 2007: 35).

Interestingly, Bonke and Gerstorft (2007) show there is no direct statistical correlation between length of work hours and the feeling of being stressed. Instead they point to the level of intensity of “rush hours”, in which families transition from different activities and domains, such as work and family life, as a significant source of stress in everyday life (Bonke 2012: 106). Hence it is not so much the number of work hours that contributes to stress as it is how they are timed, situated and managed in hot spots in relation to the family's other activities of housekeeping, childcare and family life in general. These findings are especially pertinent to this study. As will be argued in the following chapters, it is often in everyday mobility practices that family members actively seek to handle transitions between domains in everyday life. (This will be further explored throughout chapters 7 and 8 and will be brought up in the discussion that follows in chapter 10).



The statistics on everyday family life presented above convey an image of everyday life in Denmark in which families juggle work, housekeeping, childcare, leisure and social activities on a daily basis. For many families this results in time pressure and sometimes feeling stressed. Although the number of work hours may not be the largest factor contributing to this, many parents report conflict between their work and family life.

Although both men and women in families in general are satisfied with work life, family life and the balance between the two, the study on work/life balance in Denmark show nearly half of families with children under age 7 experience conflicts between their work and family life from time to time (Arbejdslivskommissionen 2007: 33). Deding, Lausten and Andersen (2006: 75) show that 44% of the women and 39% of men in families find it stressful to hold everything together in everyday family life. This should be considered in relation to the general satisfaction with the balance between work and family life. In 6% of families, both parents feel very stressed and at the same time very unsatisfied with their work/life balance, while 28% experience little stress and are predominantly satisfied with their work/life balance (Deding, Lausten and Andersen 2006: 76-7). Hence, while only a small percentage of Danish families have a very stressful everyday life, most deal with some level of stress without allowing it to negatively impact their balance between work life and family life significantly.

In the study, nearly all of the families report a busy family life with a fast pace in both work and family life. Only one family with teenage children explicitly stated that they do not feel they have a busy and rushed everyday life. Conversely, only one family openly expressed that they often feel stressed and are barely able to cope with everything in everyday life. Another of the families told how they had collectively decided to rearrange their life: the father quit his job (which required extensive work hours and a long commute) because the family felt they had too little time in their everyday life to keep things together, resulting in stress. The rest, especially the families with young children, stated that they sometimes or often feel harried in everyday life but without it becoming too much. Several parents expressed that they feel they have a high stress threshold as long as they know the stress will only last a limited period of time, or as long as they feel in control and able to *pull the plug* or slow down if needed. However, although time pressure and general feelings of stress are not breaking the families, some of the parents in the study expressed that they are sometimes dissatisfied with their work/life balance and relate this to being unable to spend more time with their children, neglecting social and familial obligations or suppressing personal interests and activities.

## 6-5: CONCLUSION

This chapter set out to provide insight into the families in the study as well as to provide a basic understanding of work and family life in families with children in the

### Greater Copenhagen Area and Danish society in general.

Although the 11 families all live in Copenhagen and have children, the general impression from the brief introductions is that they lead different lives with different challenges and conditions and develop different mobility strategies and ways of coping with their everyday lives. Amongst the families a wide range of different transport modes is used in everyday life, which also reflects the differences in access and availability of transport systems in the different parts of the Greater Copenhagen Area. Generally, those living in the suburban districts are more inclined to car-based daily travel, whereas those living in the urban and central parts of Copenhagen use the bike and public transport far more.

Most of the parents, both men and women, are employed full time, and only a few of the mothers with younger children are working part time, which is common when compared to the Danish norm. Although there are still gender differences in work frequency, compared to many countries in the EU, Denmark is a very egalitarian society, which is also reflected in the families' division of tasks in housekeeping and childcare. Most of the families spend quite a lot of their spare time together; especially those with younger children spend a substantial amount of time on their after-school and sport activities. Nearly all of the families state they have relatively busy and fast-paced lives, with many daily activities. Those with younger children, in particular, spend a lot of time on escorting children and on childcare, which is also found in the general statistics on Danish parents. Despite their busy lives, almost none of the families in the study believe their everyday life is too rushed or harried, although they feel stressed occasionally. This picture resonates with other Danish families: feeling stress is something most families experience once in a while, especially those with pre-school children, but it rarely if ever becomes too much. Stress is often related to the art of balancing work and life, but as Bonke and Gerstorft (2007) point out, it is not the extent of work that is necessarily problematic, but rather the family's ability or inability to manage work and life in relation to other activities, such as housekeeping, childcare and family life in general, that is crucial to fending off stress.

As will be explored and argued in the following two chapters, the family's daily mobility plays a significant role in enabling family members to handle the work/life balancing act and cope with the complexity and many conditions in their everyday lives. In chapter 10, the thesis will return to the topic of stress and harriedness in a discussion of contemporary Danish family life in relation to the findings of this study.

# CHAPTER 7: (DE)ASSEMBLING FAMILY MOBILITY PRACTICES

## 7-1: INTRODUCTION

From the basis of having presented the context of the Greater Copenhagen Area as well as described the 11 families partaking in the study, the thesis will turn to inquiring into the families' making and performing of mobility. This chapter contains the first part of the analysis on everyday mobility in these 11 families. Structured by the model of elasticity presented in chapter 5, the overall focus of the chapter is to unpack the *making* aspect of everyday family mobility. Hence, the chapter argues that assembling heterogeneous socio-material configurations of subjects and objects in mobility practices produce stabilising effects that contribute to the successful accomplishment of everyday family life.

By drawing on the practice understanding presented in chapter 4 (see section 4-9) derived from mobilities studies (Vannini 2012, Jensen 2013) and non-representational thinking (Ingold 2000, Thrift 2008), mobility practices are conceptualised as open and mutual collaborations and configurations of subjects and objects, or as Adey et al. put it, "mobilities often happen amongst collectives of people and things" (2014: 14). Thus, this chapter will explore mobility practices as gatherings of subjects and objects, specifically, relational "material bodies" (Thrift 2008: 8), that produce *elasticity* that aids family members in coping with the practical, social and emotional conditions, surfacing as needs and wishes, in their everyday lives.

Naturally, there is no single way in which families make or configure their everyday mobility practices to achieve such accomplishments. Depending on the family's situation and context, human and non-human entities are gathered in reciprocal arrangements forming different mobility practices that are meaningful and make sense in each particular family. Furthermore, as argued in chapter 4 (see section 4-7), the mobility practices are part of the *family taskscapes* and they interrelate and interweave with many other tasks, activities and practices in the family's everyday life. Yet, as mentioned in the introduction, Anderson and Harrison stress that when studying the world from a relational-material point of view, it is not enough to simply "assert that [the families' everyday mobilities] are 'relationally constituted' or evoke the form of the network, rather it becomes necessary to think through the specificity and performative efficacy of different relations and different relational configurations" (2010: 15-6). This means a move in focus from what mobility practices consist of to what they do. Hence, this chapter intends to show how mobility practices are never

inert or passive; rather, they are performative and take part in the production of order, stability, community, sociality, affect and emotions in the families' everyday lives (Vannini 2012).

The chapter is divided into two perspectives. The first perspective, explained in the sections 7-2, 7-3 and 7-4, considers how mobile subjects, such as family members and significant others, are conjoined and configured in everyday mobility practices and how such mobile with constellations carry certain performative and stabilising effects. Conversely, the second perspective, explained in the sections 7-5, 7-6 and 7-7, focuses on the non-human entities and how things, transport modes and places are installed in material coalitions as vital elements in the family's mobility practices. By taking the family members' mobility practices apart and investigating them as heterogenic material bodies, the chapter shows that everyday mobility is a crucial element in coping with the practical, social and emotional conditions in a family's everyday life. Therefore, as will be argued in this chapter, everyday mobility must also be understood as a vital co-constituent in the production of care, togetherness, affective atmospheres and in-betweens, in addition to its role in allowing family members to move around in everyday life.

## **7-2: MOVING TOGETHER**

Human subjects, family members and significant others, are positioned in a central role in the configuration of everyday mobility practices in the family. First, the family's mobility practices emanate from family members; they are responsible for taking action and gathering and performing mobility practices, and there would be no mobility without them. With this in mind, family members' involvement in mobility practices can be thought of in various ways. While they are sometimes the ones being mobile, sometimes they are also "mobility helpers" (Jensen 2012: 148) whose immobility enables others in the family to be mobile. It may be that only one family member is involved in a mobility practice while multiple family members are taking part in mobile with constellations in mobility practices (Jensen 2013). Getting to and from the weekly family visit to grandparents might involve all family members throughout the performance of the mobility practices, but mobility practices might also morph in shape and size as members weave in and out.

Also, it is important to understand that the interweaving of human subjects in mobility practices is not an inert or passive process, but rather one that actually shapes and changes the mobility. As family members are aware and attuned to each other's practical and emotional capacities, needs and wishes, they affect each other's mobility. In the following, the chapter will explore different ways in which the family members in the empirical material form mobile with moving together with others in their mobility practices, as well as the implications thereof. As a starting point, the analysis will begin with a scene from the everyday life of the Hartmann family:

SCENE 1<sup>20</sup>:

*It's a late autumn Monday afternoon and it's already getting starting to get dark. Cecilie, the mother in a family of four, is racing home from work on her bike. She's in a hurry because a meeting ran long, and Rasmus, the Hartmanns' youngest son, needs to be at football practice on the other side of town no later than 4.30 p.m. Not far from there, the father, Marino, is also leaving work. Mondays are always a bit stressful because he has to pick up Daniel, their oldest son, and get him to bass practice. If he hurries and the pick-up goes smoothly, they can be there a few minutes before 4 p.m. This season, for reasons beyond their control, Mondays are particularly troublesome. Both parents are working late and both their sons' after-school activities are short-circuiting their normal strategy of taking turns being in charge of picking up and bringing the boys to their respective sports and after-school activities. Unfortunately, this season has bass practice and football practice being almost on top of each other, which means Mondays have become a logistical and coordinative challenge.*

*Cecilie arrives at the after-school centre and picks up Rasmus, who is waiting impatiently and is already dressed in his outdoor clothes because she is late. This Monday, additionally, the parents have switched children because of Cecilie's late meeting; normally, it would be the other way around and she would take Daniel to bass practice. They have known of this late meeting since Cecilie got her schedule at work, but although they tried to coordinate and plan their way out of it, that doesn't change the fact that they're late.*

*Marino picks up Daniel and they ride together through the historical centre of Copenhagen. The boys are ages 9 and 6 and still quite dependent on their parents to get around. It's completely dark now, and the road is wet due to rain; this, coupled with the afternoon rush hour traffic, makes for a biking experience that is not pleasant. Right now, a car would have been useful, but the family doesn't have one because they bike to most things in their everyday routines. They will occasionally rent a car if it is really needed. Sometimes, if the weather is really poor, they take the metro to bass practice. However, this rarely happens as the parents feel it's important to teach their children to bike in the city. A bit out of breath at having biked as fast as they could, but only a few minutes past 4.30 p.m., Rasmus and Cecilie park their bikes at football practice.*

This image of family members moving together to make ends meet in everyday life is normal in the empirical material. As shown earlier (see chapter 1), the share of joint mobility practices in the family related to the family members' daily practices increases along with the number of members in the family, and in families with four or more members, nearly two out of three mobility practices in everyday life are performed either partially or fully together (Thorhaug, Vuk and Kaplan 2012). While moving together to joint activities such as visiting family or friends, going to the

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<sup>20</sup> Based upon the P1 interviews with the Hartmann family, own interpretation.



Figure 43: Biking in inner Copenhagen, source: P3 field study

cinema or shopping is practical, this image of joint mobility persists even when family members attend individual activities. Hence, the family's everyday mobility often functions as a "mobile sociofugal" (Jensen 2013: 152), shuffling family members to their respective activities in everyday life as quickly and efficiently as possible. Often, the most convenient and practical way of doing this entails forming conjoined mobility practices of family members moving together in mobile with constellations.

Consequently, for the sake of simply fitting the many geographically and socially dispersed activities together in everyday life, most of the families in the empirical material are practically forced to optimise and seize every opportunity to make mobility practices capable of accommodating multiple purposes, activities or family members at a time. Therefore the interweaving of moving family members in everyday life is crucial to the practical accomplishment of the family's complex everyday life. As the mother in the Bach family puts it:

*Everything is completely coordinated. I mean, the individual activities are only possible if they are coordinated or if someone else is in charge of bringing [the children] there. Our individual elasticity is extremely low because our lives depend on other's needs and not our own. It's very rare we go out, right? I get to go out a bit more than you do [talking to the father], but I mean choir practice [one of the father's past leisure activities]; we couldn't get that to work, now could we?*  
(Bach Family P2)

For the Bach's to practically accomplish their everyday life, the mobility practices of adults and children alike become highly interrelated and interwoven. In addition to this interrelatedness and interweaving of everyday mobility practices in their family



taskscape as an outcome of optimising and coping with numerous activities, time pressure and resource scarcity, the mobility practices are also, as a consequence of multiple family members, interlocked with other activities and practices in the everyday. While this highly complex way of coordinating and assembling the family taskscape in everyday life engenders a platform for practically accomplishing the quotidian, it also induces fragility into the family taskscape as it concurrently develops tangled webs of dependencies where it is essential to continue reproducing and sustaining these interrelated and interwoven mobility practices (Jarvis 1999).

As a result, for many families, moving together is not only a practical way of leaning on each other's mobility capacities, skills and competencies, but it quickly becomes a practical necessity as taskscapes evolve. Therefore, while co-mobility in the family engenders possibilities for coping and collective accomplishments, it also produces boundaries and restrictions for changeover and flexibility in the family's everyday mobility practices. For instance, in the case of Cecilie and Marino, their individual mobility practice setup is interrelated and locked in, as these mobile with constellations are instrumental in accomplishing their activities. Therefore, their configuration of mobility practices cannot easily be changed without substantial re-negotiation and coordination.

### MOBILE WITHS IN FAMILY MOBILITY

Most of the families with younger children in the empirical material, like in the mobile situation portrayed in the scene above, are prone to forming and performing intergenerational mobile with constellations in their everyday mobility. As Cresswell points out, "mobility is a resource that is differentially accessed" (2010: 21), which is very evident in families with younger children. Typically there are significant differences in "motility", the capacity for being mobile, between parents and children (Kaufmann 2002). As a consequence, this often leads to parents and children moving together in everyday life, forming interrelated mobile with constellations to cope with the differences in capacities and needs of the younger family members (Fisker 2012).

While children are young, this interrelatedness of mobility practices is often tied to the differentiating levels of motility (Mikkelsen and Christensen 2009). However, in most families with older children in the empirical material, the intergenerational mobility practices often persist. Older children are physiologically capable of moving around by themselves, but the parents' normative assessments of their children's mobility skills and competencies, such as the ability to handle themselves safely in traffic, finding their way, and knowledge of public transport systems, hinder them from travelling alone. The Jensen's explain how their children's commute to school is tied to the notion of safety:

*Mother: Yes. They [their children] really want to, at least.*



*Father: Yes, we're slowly getting to where Frida [their oldest daughter] can start walking to and from school.*

*Mother: Next year! It's a school branch for only the lower grades, first and second grade, and it's a bit further away than the branch for the higher grades [and she will start in the higher grades]. But we have a challenge with Christiania [peninsula in Copenhagen where this family lives] and all of Princessegade [a main street on Christiania]. The traffic is really quite bad. [...] They really need to be... well, Frida is really sensible, but she can freeze a bit in the traffic.*

*Father: Yes, and then Princessegade is a concern. It's quite a stretch Frida has to walk to get from school to our home. And Christiania is... most people are completely harmless, but there can be drunks milling around in the traffic and dope users and dope guards [dealers and thugs running the dope business].*

*Mother: The cars go very fast and the taxies often park on the sidewalks. It's very chaotic, but there's a lot of talk of doing something about it. There're a lot of institutions and schools nearby.  
(Jensen Family P1)*

This short conversation epitomises the concern of most parents with younger children in the empirical material. The notion of safety includes both crime and traffic in relation to their children's wellbeing. As a consequence, the Jensen's cope with this risk scenario by escorting their children in all their everyday mobilities in which the children are not already forming mobile companionships with others (Mikkelsen and Christensen 2009). Thus, parents tend to bring and pick up their children to and from a myriad of daily activities such as institutions, school, leisure and sports activities, to counter the perceived safety issues, but also as a show of emotion and care for their children (Fotel and Thomsen 2004, Fotel 2007). In turn, this has implications for the children and their mobility as well as that of the parents, as safety is a major factor when configuring their personal mobility. Following these relational implications, the parents' work and working hours may be affected, and their practical activities of shopping and running errands or social activities may be constrained in terms of timing and spacing.

Although many of the mobile with constellations in the family's everyday mobility are based on intergenerational relationships, the mobility is not reducible to it. Escorting is not limited exclusively to intergenerational constellations of parents and children. Also, kin and significant others, such as grandparents, friends, neighbours or colleagues are often invited into the family's mobility. The mother in the Bach family outlines one of their everyday mobility practices:

*The “swimming deal” is, for instance, taken care of by Mathilde’s father, who picks them [their children] up every Monday and then takes them to swimming practice or home to play and then swimming. But still, all the time is a negotiation, right. Because it’s like, when you take someone [another’s child] home, then there is some expectation they’ll take Emma [their daughter] with them another day. Or you’ve [talking to the father] been driving them to gymnastics practice quite a lot and always drop off Jonathan [another kid] at his house. But then they have invited Christian [their son] to dinner Friday night and so on [...] It’s very nice that we’re able to take each other’s children home, it really is. It really relieves a lot of pressure... I think I will start going to something! But I have tried, and it didn’t really work out [she laughs]... (Bach Family P2)*

This type of non-familial mobile with constellation in the family member’s mobility practices is normal in the empirical material. Often, significant others outside the particular mobility practice aid the accomplishment. Similar to the merger of mobility within the family when the alignment of daily activities allows for it, the families often make *mobility deals* or *arrangements* with other families or significant others from their social networks when sharing destinations. Indeed, as Tim Schwanen states, parents are “highly expert in tailoring networked assistance to the specificities of their own and their children’s space - time rhythms” (2008: 1010). Often, such arrangements are formally agreed upon and occur on a regular basis, as in the case of the “swimming deal” mentioned above. However, such mobility arrangements might also be less frequent and impulsive if a need should arise (for instance, disruptions in everyday life might cause such needs; this will be explored in further detail in section 8-2). While some families use significant others, grandparents are typically preferred for most families in the study. Those families without immediate access to grandparents draw on other near-dwellers in their social network, such as friends, colleagues, children’s friends, neighbours and other acquaintances. The father explains how they often rely on neighbour families in their everyday mobility:

*When it comes to our everyday life we have to plan as we go. Sometimes we also have to bring the neighbour’s boy home with us. He attends the same afterschool program as ours and they play together. Because we live in an area where a lot of classmates and kindergarten peers also live, it’s very common to pick up and bring each other’s children home. (Jensen Family P1)*

This illustrates how significant others sometimes become mobility helpers, part of everyday mobility when dealing with contingencies and practicalities of making ends meet in the family’s busy schedules. Occasionally, some families turn to professional and formal assistance in the form of baby-sitters, au pairs and taxi drivers. Yet, among the families in this study, informal caretaking and mobility assistance aided by the

social network is the most widespread way of practically accomplishing mobility if it cannot be dealt with in the family. If not included on a regular and recurrent basis, as in the “swimming deal” example, the social network often provides a safety net in everyday life for the family. Hence, creating such safety nets is a relational effort that requires trust, which often is acquired through intimate relationships over time (Schwanen 2008: 1000). This resonates with Helen Jarvis, who argues that families cope in everyday life through the “weaving of tangled webs of networks” (Jarvis 1999), highlighting the fact that family taskscape and coping strategies in everyday life are often shaped by and firmly embedded in the family’s social networks. Hence, the family’s everyday coping strategy is not only based on configuring family members in various mobile with constellations, but also relies on the possibility and capability of interweaving significant others and near-dwellers from their social network into mobility practices in everyday life. Yet, mobile subjects in the family’s mobility practices might also be what Jensen terms “mobile others” (Jensen 2013: 14). The parents in the Sørensen family explain how their children’s school commute was configured to rely on mobile others:

*Father: School, they only had to walk right around the corner and through a traffic junction with school patrols [older uniformed school children safeguarding the younger children and regulating the traffic]. We let them do that [walk on their own].*

*Mother: Actually, I picked them [the children] up from after school care right until they started third grade, when they were 9 years old. Well, in the end they walked home by themselves, but otherwise I picked them up [...] and then in the mornings when you walk to school there are really a lot of children going together. So there’s a lot of attention [from the other road users] on the droves of children walking to school at precisely the same time, but it’s of course different when they go home... (Sørensen Family P2)*

As the mother explains, they took advantage of their particular situation and route to school and composed a mobility practice where their children could move together with other children, knowing they would be part of a “temporary congregation” of mobile others affording safe transit from home to school (Jensen 2013: 14). Returning to the notion of safety, this exemplifies how the parents’ perception of what counts as dangerous traffic confines and shapes the children’s mobility practices and not only the child’s motility. It further illustrates the performativity of mobile others as they might be interwoven into the family’s mobility practices based upon what they do and if they are identified as safe opportunities for optimising or overcoming practicalities. Indeed, the opposite is often the case, with mobility practices being purposively configured to avoid mobile others who are perceived as a threat or a nuisance. This might happen spontaneously as “negotiation in motion” as the mobile situation unveils (Jensen 2013: 83). For instance, when traversing the crowded sidewalk, one might intuitively follow

the flow of people in one's direction, or know when and how to avoid becoming stuck in a crowd of mobile others at rush hour. This creative weaving of people in and out of mobility practices, forming and deforming mobile withs and temporary congregations on the move is an integral part of everyday mobility and something of which the family members have great practical knowledge (Vannini 2012: 162-6). Moreover, as will be further argued in the following section, the extensive making of mobility practices with others also points to thinking of the nuclear family relationally and as a network phenomenon rather than a tight and introvert unit.

### 7-3: MOBILE CARE

While the practicalities of moving together represent a strong incentive to orchestrate joint mobility practices in the family, this reading neglects the social and emotional aspects of everyday co-mobility. Drawing on the theoretical understanding of emotions and intimacy proposed by Morgan (2011) and Holdsworth (2012), the family's mobility practices from an emotional perspective may not only hold instrumental efficacy, but can also be recognised as being emotionally charged. In other words, the involvement of human subjects, family members and significant others in the configuration of everyday family mobility as portrayed here should also be considered a form of "emotional work" taking part in establishing and sustaining the emotional and social relations in the family (Morgan 2011: 113). In order to elucidate this emotional dimension of mobility, we turn to a scene of the Jensen family's everyday morning commute:



Figure 44: Scene from the Jensen parents morning commute route through the historical core of Copenhagen, source: P3 field study

*SCENE 2<sup>21</sup>:*

*It is 7:40 a.m. The Jensen family, father, mother, son and daughter, is crowding the narrow hallway of the apartment. Their bags are packed and stand ready. They are hurrying to get dressed; it's late autumn, so it's cold and still a bit dark outside, which means warm clothes, woolly hats, gloves and lights for the bike and helmets are mandatory. They need to be out the door before 7.45 to be on time; they all know this, as they have done it a hundred times over.*

*The leave the apartment and rush down the stairway. Their bikes are parked just outside. They each have their own bike, with the exception of the son who sits in a bike chair on the back of his father's bike. As they ride from the apartment complex to the street, the scenery changes into busy morning traffic. Although this is hectic, they are used to it. They are ready to go, waiting for an opening in the traffic flow. They ride in formation, in a line, because there is very little space on the bike path; they are only separated from the traffic by a painted white line. Within moments they arrive at their first stop: the kindergarten. It is crowded with bikes and parents delivering their children. The Jensen's drop off their son and continue a bit further to the daughter's school. There are children, parents, bikes and cars all trying to negotiate their way through the chaos. It is almost 8 now and school is starting. They park the daughter's bike where they can securely lock it against the bars of a fence. After quick goodbyes and exchanging information of when and who will pick her up later during the day, the parents continue on their bikes.*

*They ride faster now; without their children, it is far easier to move fluidly and fast in the traffic. They continue until they reach the central and historical part of the city. From here, they have put together their own route through the historical core of the city. They slow down due to cobblestone pavement and pedestrian traffic, but also to be able to talk together. This is a break in their daily life, a time together without children, work and other stuff. As they zigzag through the small streets, avoiding parked cars, delivery trucks, pedestrians and other bikes, they can talk and have a chance to catch up... Finally, having ridden through most of the historical core of the city together, they depart and leave in opposite directions for their workplaces, where they arrive at approximately 8:15 a.m.*

The Jensen's mobility practice of morning commuting involves both the accomplishment of fulfilling practical and emotional needs. The way they have organised their mobility practice hints that it is not only about practically getting from point A to point B. Rather, while ensuring they get to their various places at the right time, it also allows them to spend time together, help each other out and simply be in each other's presence. Practical and emotional aspects in the family members' mobility practices are often related, and the involvement of additional family members or significant others in mobile withs, as seen above, is as much about ironing out

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*21 Based upon P1 and P2 interviews with the Jensen family, own interpretation.*

practicalities as it is about enacting sociality and a sense of family. To investigate this double role of family mobility, these practical and emotional relations between family members might be understood through the notion of *care*.

Sophie Bowlby writes that informal care in social relationships, such as the family, involves both “caring for”—that is, tasks of care— as well as ‘caring about’, which refers to emotional investment in another person’s problems and concerns” (2011: 606). She further underlines that caring “can involve both practical and emotional care, often simultaneously” (2011: 606). Caring, then, might be used to capture the instrumental and emotional roles characterising many of the family’s everyday mobility practices. However, to understand how care is performed and directed, the notion of *needs* is helpful (see Fisker (2011) for extensive account of needs in relation to mobility). Family members care for each other, help each other, give advice and often go to great lengths in everyday life to do what is best for the welfare of other family members. To put it differently, caring is tending to others’ practical and emotional needs. Laurier and Lorimer (2014: 2) argue that care might be understood as directional and relational, as it is given and received by subjects, and hence can “emerge in those social spaces in-between”. Furthermore, they suggest care might be examined by investigating the “actual practices meeting needs” (Laurier and Lorimer 2014: 2). Thus, the family’s mobility practices might be understood as a venue for family members to express and perform a mobile form of care between family members by addressing and trying to meet the needs of other family members.

By forming a mobile with constellation of all family members within their morning commuting practice, the Jensen family addresses both the practical needs of getting everyone to their respective destination at specific times, while also tending to more social and emotional needs of being together and acting as a family. Also, as their commuting practice gradually downsizes to the parents after having dropped off both children, they continue biking together, engage in casual conversation, where they exchange thoughts, listen to each other and share a moment. They explain:

*Mother: Often, we go together because we work right next to each other, so it’s “together time”. I would never take the route we take if I went alone, but it’s a route with few road users. It’s really bumpy going right through the medieval core of the city [...] I suppose it’s because we don’t have that much time together alone otherwise. Our family is like- like our also daughter said, a bit extreme [very busy] [...]*

*Father: It’s a very nice time we have together going to work in the mornings. Just reviewing the situation of the world.  
(Jensen Family P1)*

Through this specific configuration of physical co-presence, the parents are performing care, caring about each other. By tending to a mutual emotional need of being



together, spending time as a couple, they are nurturing their relationship (the theme of togetherness in mobility will be further explored in section 7-4). Their commute narrative also indicates that providing mobile care in the family is a relational accomplishment often involving several co-present family members. This mobile care might be extended even further by including significant others in the family's social networks to take part in the everyday mobility (as explored in section 7-2). Performing mobile care is not restricted to any *standard* model of the family, but it is, as Schwanen argues, "a network enterprise" where mobile subjects, family members and others, take part in "developing, extending, and maintaining a collective that caters to [the family's] specific needs and space-time context" (2008: 1004).

Hence, the mobile care family members engage in through their mobility practices in everyday life is simultaneously about exhibiting emphatic "attentiveness and responsiveness" to both the practical and emotional needs and wishes of individual family members without losing sight of the greater welfare of the entire family (Laurier and Lorimer 2014: 20). We then might think of mobile care not as some discrete and abstract element in the family's everyday life, but rather "practised as a relation happening whilst people are themselves are on the move" (Laurier and Lorimer 2014: 20), and therefore firmly situated in the family's mobility practices. To recall Jarvis, these practices are often embedded in the family's tangled webs of social networks.

### NEEDS AND WISHES IN MOBILE CARE

Care is performed in the family in many ways but caring through the family's everyday mobility is particularly visible in the intergenerational relations between parents and children. Surely, this is partly to do with the high level of physiological and practical needs that young children have, but it also relates to their social and emotional attachments to their parents. For instance, escorting (as shown in section 7-3) mobile withs of children and adults is a way of performing mobile care in the family. Children might not be able to get to everyday activities by themselves, as illustrated in the scene above, and getting them there in time is a way of providing mobile care. Underscoring the performativity of mobility, getting to and from at the right time and in the right manner can also be about "displaying" care (Finch 2007). The mother in the Hartmann family explains how picking up her child from institutions was related to her mobility practice:

*... if I had to take the public [transportation] or bike I'd have 35 minutes in transport time, where as if I take the car, then it's between 10 to 25 minutes. That time really meant something when she [their daughter] was in day care, and if she was number one or two of the last ones being picked up. If I took the car, she would be the sixth or seventh last. And in kindergarten it was kind of the same. You really don't want her to be one of the last ones being picked up or even among the last ones. Those*



*20 minutes makes a huge difference compared to how many children are left. [...] And if something unexpected should arise on the way you don't get too stressed out about it.*  
(Hartmann Family P2)

Here, the configuration of the mother's mobility practice is central in administering the right form of care at the right time; not only must she reach her daughter before the kindergarten closing, but she must reach her in time so that she is not among the last children to be picked up. This example bears resemblance to *the school run*, where displaying care and good parenting is associated with driving children to school in the car. Trine Fotel, however, finds care in intergenerational relationships of parents and children not to be as much about tending to fear, risk and safety as it is about generating welfare for the family members through practical and cosy family mobility in what she terms "mobility care" (2007: 112, translated from Danish 'mobilitetsomsorg'). Indeed as Sheller argues, "cars become members of families, repositories for treasured offspring, and devices for demonstrating love, practicing care" (2004: 232). In the cultural context of this study, this might also extend to other modes of transport. For instance, biking with children, especially on Christiania bikes (a specific type of lorry bike with room for passengers), can be a way of displaying care.



Figure 45: Christiania bike, source: P3 field study

In fact, everyday family mobility in general, especially in families with young children, is highly contingent upon and shaped in an effort to accommodate the children's needs and wishes. This is not confined to travelling to schools or similar institutions in the morning and afternoon commutes, but is highly evident in the family members' mobility associated with social activities, such as play dates, visiting of other family and friends and attendance of leisure and after-school activities. The father in the Vangsgaard family outlines their interrelatedness in everyday life:

*The fact that we have two children pretty much plans our way of transport. We can never, practically speaking, be without a car. We could if we didn't have enough money, but we also have a car because we want to make use of the activities we find fitting for our children. We can pick them up earlier and deliver them later. The children's activities are essential to how we use transport.*  
(Vangsgaard Family P1)

To accommodate their children's needs, they tend to form car-based mobile with constellations in their everyday life. Hence, taking care and caring for each other in everyday life in the family is not confined to infrequent and unrelated mobility practices, but at least in families with younger children, it often saturates the family taskscape.

There is a tight and complex coupling in mobile care between the configuration of the mobility practice, in terms of inclusion of others, transport mode and route, and providing safe, reliable and comfortable passage for the family's children. As mentioned above, safety is a major factor shaping a family's everyday mobility. Caring in relation to safety can influence a family's mobility practice in many ways. Indeed, merely being together in mobility might increase the level of safety. It might involve specific geographies or materialities in the specific choice of *safer* transport modes, or it might be a specific way of performing the mobility, as with the Jensen's choosing to *ride in formation* to shield their children from harm.

However, the family members' needs are not static and universal. Indeed as Fisker (2011) has shown, needs change over course of everyday life, with some fluctuating in intensity, new ones emerging and others diminishing or disappearing altogether. The physiological need of co-presence in aiding mobility is obvious in pre-crawling and pre-walking stages of a child's life. However, this need gradually diminishes as the child becomes more mobile. While some needs might entirely disappear at some point, other needs, such as spending time together, might instead vary greatly throughout life. For instance, the mother in the Hartmann family expressed that as their daughter and her friends had turned 18 there had been an increase in the need for picking her up from birthday parties in the middle of the night (Hartmann Family P2). Further adding to the ambiguity of needs, there is *no right way* of interpreting and tending to needs. What it means to be a child can determine the needs a child has at a certain age and the appropriate way of accommodating them, and this is constructed through cultural discourses of childhood (Buliung, Faulkner and Sultana 2012). Hence, needs are fluid and negotiable, shaped in the family but also widely informed and influenced through social networks and institutional and legal discourses (Jarvis 1999). Hence, the family's mobility practices are configured to providing mobile care and welfare for the children in the way the parents feel is appropriate.

So far, the analysis has, through the notion of mobile care, been primarily attentive to the practical needs of children and how these are accommodated through the making of

mobile with constellations in the family's mobility. Quite often, however, the receivers of mobile care are not only the children but also the parents, who naturally, also have needs and wishes of their own. These also affect the family's mobility. The distinct focus on children in this section reflects its massive presence in the empirical material when dealing with practical needs of safety and capability of autonomous mobility. However, mobile care is not always motivated by practical issues, but is also driven by family members' emotional needs or wishes for togetherness, being co-present and spending quality time together. As the mother in the Lindborg family explains:

*It's not because she isn't able [to go by herself]; it's because it's so cosy to go with her. And then at 5:30 p.m., when she has to go home, it's quite dark now, so it's nice to be picked up. But all of them [their three children] like to call and tell us when they get home and if it's really late, they like just talking with us while they drive or walk home. (Lindborg Family P2)*

This family practice of father and daughter attending an after-school activity and the accompanying mobility together exemplifies how the emotional wish of spending time together can incite mobile with constellations in the family's mobility without it solely having to do with practicalities. Hence, this is not escorting, but rather spending quality time together. Moving alone in the dark can be fear-provoking, and as the mother states, co-presence in mobility, even if it is invoked remotely over the mobile phone, is a show of care and emphatic response to their children's after-dark anxieties of moving alone. This also resonates with Jensen's notion of "stretched mobile interaction", which states that the mobile situation stretches beyond the physical proximity through virtual and communicative relations (2013: 14). Moreover, the moving to and from becomes not only about *mobile caring for*, the practical task of aiding other family members' mobility, but also *mobile caring about*, an emotional investment in other family members' feelings and concerns through spending time in mobility. For them, moving together becomes a way of building emotional relationships through having a shared experience of their own, while also affirming and reaffirming the relational bonds. These types of mobile care, tending to and instigated by emotional needs and wishes of spending time and building relationships, often materialise in the family's everyday as *mobile togetherness*. This concept will be explored further in the next section.

#### **7-4: MOBILE TOGETHERNESS**

Until now, the analysis has, through the concept of mobile care, proposed a very broad understanding of how the family attends to and accommodates practical and emotional needs and wishes through mobile with constellations in the family's mobility. Through the concept of mobile togetherness, this section seeks to approach a specialised and very emotional form of mobile care investigating how familial social relations and intimacy also emerge on the move. Holdsworth writes that "it is through movement

that spaces for intimacy, belonging and togetherness are created” (2013: 114). Hence, mobile togetherness should be understood as one of ways in which mobile care might manifest in the family’s mobility. Specifically, it covers the attention family members’ show towards the emotional needs or wishes of togetherness, being co-present and spending quality time together. Mobile togetherness might manifest as an intentional and pre-planned social family activity in its own right, therefore becoming another way in which family members enact a sense of family. For instance, when a family goes on a Sunday drive or a walk in the forest, the mobility practice itself is the activity of being together. However, mobile togetherness is at other times less planned and occurs as an effect of moving together to shared destinations or family activities where family members are conjoined in mobile with constellations. Moving together to all kinds of activities in everyday life, even the mundane commute, might produce moments of togetherness, such as the walk home from the kindergarten with the kids or commuting together to work. However, moving beyond this, when family members are travelling together to a social activity, such as visiting grandparents, going to the summer cottage, weekend trips, and family dinner, part of attending the family activity begins in transit. Often, it is difficult to clearly make out whether it is the journey or destination that takes precedence as the social activity. Sometimes, it is both, as in the case of the Nielsen family:

*SCENE 3*<sup>22</sup>:

*The time is almost 5 p.m. The father, Karsten, walks in the door to the family’s 3rd floor apartment at Amager. He’s breaking a sweat because there is no elevator, and since his wife, Anne-Mette, had a back injury, he has been the one bringing all the groceries up the stairs. Two hours earlier, when he had just arrived from work, he, his wife and their daughter, Trine, went shopping together. The pain caused by mother’s back injury has immobilised her and many daily activities have become difficult. She can’t manage any physical hard labour, ride a bike or take the bus, meaning that getting to work has become troublesome as she has to take both the metro and a train, which involves a substantial detour. The family even traded in their sedan for a large SUV that would be more comfortable for her to get into. For a long time after her injury, she didn’t leave the apartment for much other than visits to the hospital. However, after a year, Karsten started to take her on shopping trips, not only to get the shopping done, but also simply “to get her out of the apartment” as he says with a grin. Since then, the shopping trip after work has become a joyful daily routine in their everyday life. This is one of them. Anne-Mette gets into the front seat with a sigh; clearly, getting into the car is painful. She slams the car door. “Where to?” Karsten asks, looking at her. “Let’s go to Fields today,” she replies.*

This scene is illustrative of how a mobility practice might share characteristics with a social family activity. The mobility practice is not organised towards the practical accomplishment of the shopping, which in their case would have been easier without

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<sup>22</sup> Based upon P2 interview with the Nielsen Family, own interpretation.

the mother and at the nearby grocery store, and would probably have a much lower frequency. Instead, the mobility practice itself becomes a “mobile sociopetal” (Jensen 2013: 152) activity gathering family members in shared experiences of shopping destinations. Hence, the family shopping drive is configured towards producing a cosy, comfortable and relatively painless shared temporality in their everyday life while getting the shopping done at the same time. Also, in the Jensen family’s morning commute to work explored above (see section 7-3), the parents share a brief moment of mobile togetherness. Similarly, their mobility practice de-centres focus from the destination to the production of temporalities and spatialities of social togetherness through the choice of route and places. By travelling directly through the medieval city core rather than going around it on the main roads on busy bike lanes, their travel shifts into a *slow ride* on cobblestones without much traffic, almost like a stroll through the narrow streets of the historical city, facilitating the togetherness.

### EVERYDAY MOBILITY AS A SOCIAL SPACE

To address how mobile togetherness is produced in the family’s mobility, the mobility should be understood as a social space. Not only does the everyday mobility often bring family members together, but the defined duration and close proximity of the family members serves as an excellent frame for the unfolding of mobile togetherness. Indeed, the physical confinement and spatial arrangement of the travel is central in affording mobile togetherness. For instance, the physical and spatial arrangement of the car is pivotal in the Nielsen’s shopping trip as it acts as “a bubble in time and space where the family can be together” (Fotel 2007: 104-10, translated from Danish).

Often, such mobile togetherness produced in the mundane and everyday family mobility is unplanned and seldom the (only) purpose of moving together. It might emerge only as a way of filling waiting time, as in this father and son’s shared mobility:

*We’ve been to gymnastics; our daughter takes gymnastic lessons and our son has just started in another group and he finishes a bit earlier. While we wait, we go for a drive and see the windmills. There is this long road down there where you drive back and forth...*  
(Bach Family P1)

As they wait for the daughter to finish, they spend the time together in the car, watching the windmills. Such recurring and rhythmic trips in everyday life, whether it is commuting or regularly attending other activities, have the potential to become the kind of “ritual interaction” that, as Vannini writes, “might lead to formation of meaningful interpersonal bonds” (2012: 54). Mobile togetherness is a way of taking advantage of the mobile situation, transforming it into a potential site of intimacy and affection where the family member’s emotional work of building and maintaining relationships can occur. Just as the car often serves as an ideal spatial framing for



mobile togetherness, so do the temporalities of the trivial and informal timespans of waiting and commuting in everyday life.



Figure 46: Mobile togetherness, source: P3 field study

Laurier and Lorimer (2014) argue that in these insignificant and mundane trips, such as the daily commute, where the mobile subjects, family members or significant others are gathered as a means of getting from one point to another often serve as excellent social spaces of care where closeness and emotional relations might thrive and develop. This is not only related to the familiar and rhythmic qualities of routinely moving together, having time for “slow reception of information, and for considered response”, but also the spatial arrangement of the car affording informal physical proximity, shoulder-to-shoulder, without forcing eye-contact because of the directional seating arrangement and having to pay attention to the road (Laurier and Lorimer 2014: 3). The Hartmann father points to the car as a mobile site of togetherness in their everyday life:

*And it's also great if we're driving down to my mother-in-law. It takes around three quarters of an hour, so everyone just sits there and relaxes, having a good time, and talks a bit. Especially, if you've had a Saturday where there have been 117 practical things to do, then you have time to sit and talk in the car.  
(Hartmann Family P1)*

Being caught up together in a 45 minute mobile with constellation engenders a situation with sufficient time for an informal conversation to unfold and evokes a sense of togetherness. There is no pressure of having to do something (besides uncomfortable silence, though that is often neutralised in the car via listening to the radio or music or commenting on the passing scenery) and no forced pace as everyone

in the car is conjoined in time and space and implicated in moving together. At such moments of mobile togetherness, the family members have ample opportunity for letting conversations grow organically through the “pause-fullness, and slowness, of car conversation” (Laurier et al. 2008: 17). For families, this offers a space for cosy and trivial small talk, joking and storytelling, but also an opportunity for raising concerns and voicing feelings, or as Laurier et al. put it, “it can be a good place for some of our most serious conversations on matters of life, love and death” (Laurier et al. 2008: 20). However, mobile togetherness is not always pleasant, cosy or even therapeutic; it can also be a hostile space in which heated arguments or fights take place, a stressful space with screaming and kicking children on the back seat of a car, and sometimes even a tiresome and boring space, where the conversation has run out of steam or everyone just wants to get to wherever they are going (see Sarah Redshaw (2008) for discussion of pleasurable and boring everyday mobility).

Although this mostly touches upon car-based journeys, there is no reason to think mobile togetherness cannot be facilitated by other modes of transport. Family members accomplish similar informal settings of care and togetherness in other modes. While the car’s exterior can be said to provide a glassy and shielding bubble of privacy (Sheller 2004), family members might achieve privacy in other more public modes of transport by *negotiating* and *occupying* space with their things and taking advantage of the spatial arrangement of the vehicle. The point is that the transformability of everyday mobility into a social family space is not only a matter of human subjects and their conduct but is highly contingent upon the physical and material framing. The transport vehicles and the urban setting in which the family mobility takes place have great importance in invoking and shaping this social space (further explored in section 7-6 and 7-7).

Shared experiences inhabiting the mobile togetherness range from insignificant and uneventful, such as the mundane drive to the shopping centre, to noticeable and memorable, such as watching the windmills, to even thrilling or frightening (depending on the eye of the beholder), such as biking in formation through a very busy street in the morning (see McIlvenny (2013) for an excellent account on the joy of shared bike riding experiences). Such joint experiences or events tend to reproduce, affirm and strengthen the mobile with as a unit of the mobile subjects moving together. Indeed, as Holdsworth writes, “[t]hrough movement spaces of intimacy, belonging and togetherness are created” (2013: 114). Hence, sharing and experiencing mobility together can further the formation and development of friendships and social communities such as the family (Vannini 2012: 37-38). Even strangers, or mobile others, might gradually transform into familiar mobile with constellations through sharing experiences, though this usually occurs over a prolonged time (Jensen 2013). Similarly, family relationships and a sense of family can grow over time through mobile togetherness, not transforming family members from mobile others as they are already known to each other, but instead gradually strengthening and deepening their relationships with each other. The Møller father explains his view on togetherness:



*... just to have something in common with them. In a couple of years they won't bother joining us. So it's not a long period. We try to say to people that want to send them away: 'dear lord, it's only a couple of years, then it's over'... I do, at least prioritise spending time with my children, and so finishing the house or repairing the motorcycle has to wait.  
(Møller Family P1)*

As this father sees it, it is important to seize the opportunity to build and strengthen the affectionate relationships with his children when it is possible. In most families with children, time is a scarce resource and is often felt as insufficient to meet the needs and wishes of socialising and being intimate together (see section 6-4). Having shared experiences and building relationships are not confined to unrelated and isolated events of family togetherness such as dining or going to the zoo at the weekends. Instead, togetherness spills over and colonises other mundane and trivial activities and practices in the quotidian. As such, the family's everyday mobility functions as one of these informal social spaces for the family and often creates, as Sheller puts it, an "important settings for clawing back 'quality time' in busy family schedules" (2004: 234).

However, mobile togetherness is not restricted to family members or intergenerational mobile with constellations closed off to others. Indeed, the family's everyday mobility is permeated with significant others as colleagues, neighbours, kin and especially friends often join in on moving together. One of the sons in the Lindborg family explains how his mobility is highly interwoven with that of his friends:

*Son (middle): Yes I take the bus, but I start with the Metro, just one stop, and then take the bus afterwards.*

*Son (oldest): Do you take the Metro one stop, where to...?*

*Son (middle): Well... only if I'm going with some of the others [friends], it's because Alexander doesn't have a bike...*

*Son (oldest): So you go to Flintholm?*

*Son (middle): Yes it's nice [to ride with friends]! And I have my travel card so I don't have to pay, so I use it as much as I can.  
(Lindborg Family P1)*

For him, and many other children, their everyday mobility becomes a social activity in itself, providing an important "lived-space" (Fusco et al. 2012) to meet friends, socialise, play and have fun (Vannini 2012). Some mobility practices, as in the example above, are particularly dedicated to such socialising; for instance, children

sometimes simply meet up in transport systems and *hang out*.

To sum up, through the physical orchestration of family members and significant others in mobile with constellations, the family's mobility often produces, whether intentional or not, social family spaces for drivers and passengers to become familiar with each other in mobile togetherness. Often this is, as Laurier et al. argue, "an unexpectedly significant place for parents to learn about and dialogue with their children, and for children to learn from their parents" (Laurier et al. 2008: 20). However, as explored in this section, mobile togetherness is more than intergenerational, as the family members use their everyday mobility to build, repair and sustain all kinds of social relationships. Hence, mundane and everyday mobility does not only instrumentally ensure family members arrive to daily activities. Family mobility is also a way for the family members to perform emotional work, trying to manage both needs for intimacy, cosiness, community, as well as negative emotional events such as arguing, time pressure and stress, and thereby cope with the emotional and social conditions in their everyday lives.

## 7-5: MOVING WITH MATERIALITIES

Over the course of the three last sections, this chapter has explored different ways in which mobile subjects, family members and significant others are involved in the everyday mobility practices, helping them to cope with both practical, social and emotional needs and wishes and to aid the accomplishment of everyday life in the family. The chapter will now focus on the material and physical dimensions of mobility and explore how non-human entities are involved in the family's mobility practices alongside their human counterparts. Indeed as Highmore states, "As human beings we attach ourselves to the thingly world: our ordinary lives are lived out in the midst of things" (2010: 58).

The analytical organisation of separating the human from the non-human in this chapter might seem somewhat misleading as it creates an imaginary barrier between the human world of subjects, and the material world of objects, the things, the transport vehicles and the places in which we move, as if they were separate spheres. The intent of these next three sections is, however, not to argue for a strict analytical division but rather to show the stabilising effects of non-human materialities alongside human subjects gathered in relational-material family mobility practices in everyday life. Therefore, the organisation of the chapter should be understood to be no more than a convenient, analytical way of inquiring into the family's everyday mobility.

Things aid us in forming and performing mobility practices, with hybrid coalitions of human and non-human entities empowering us and extending our reach in everyday life (Thrift 2008: 10). Similar to the practical knowledge that goes into moving in everyday life, these materialities are often, as Urry notices, "taken-for-granted ... in

the background and only partially articulated ... The technologies that are components of that life on the move can be ‘ready-to-hand’” (2007: 38). Indeed “the non-human forces and artefacts”, as Urry writes, “tend to become backgrounded into routines and skill sets of the everyday” (2007: 168). Hence, in all everyday mobility practices, materiality and technology are involved, and even the most basic form of embodied mobility, such as walking, usually involves shoes and clothes as well as a physical and material infrastructure is necessary. However, the family’s everyday mobility practices are typically a bit more complex and involve materialities coordinated into specific, stable concatenations. For instance, this can be seen in the morning mobility practice of the Jensen family dropping off their children at the kindergarten:

*SCENE 5<sup>23</sup>:*

*A bike with a red bike trailer pulls up in front of the kindergarten. The father dismounts and the kids jump out of the trailer. They throw their helmets back into the trailer. The father quickly releases the trailer from the bike by moving a metal clamp holding the tow bar safely in place on the bike’s chain stay. He pulls out a large chain lock from the back of the trailer and secures it next to a bike rack. Six hours later, the mother pulls up on her bike. She quickly scans the area and spots the red trailer. She unlocks it from the rack by pushing the code combination on the lock. After having attached the tow bar to her bike and flicked the clamp in place, she walks towards the kindergarten to pick up the children.*

This micro scene from the Jensen family’s *kindergarten run* exemplifies how the materialities in this case, the bikes, the helmets, the bike trailer, the tow bar system and the chain lock, become interwoven into what might be termed as a “coalition” of materialities within the mobility practices of both the father and mother (Hui 2012: 432). As the mother in the Jensen family reveals in the interview, this is not coincidental:

*We have had many speculations, like if we were to purchase a Christania Bike, but then we would have to ride to work on it after dropping off the kids and that’s a bit of a hassle. And it differs based on who picks up the children, and if you have to bring both children home or just one. Especially, now when it’s two different places. For us, a typical morning is that we all leave together, drop our daughter off at school and then we go on to work. Sometimes I have to deliver both, so I go from school on to the kindergarten and then on to work.*  
(Jensen Family P1)

The configuration and coordination of each of their mobility practices is based upon careful deliberation of which material setup would best fit them and their children’s needs and everyday schedules. The Jensen family has made a conscious choice of

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<sup>23</sup> Based on P1 interview with the Jensen family (speaking of how their escorting mobility were while their children were younger), own interpretation.

basing a majority of their everyday mobility biking. With both parents as full-time earners, often working overtime, and with busy and changing schedules, they need creative and flexible solutions to make ends meet in the everyday, especially with regard to their mobility. Since they live in the centre of Copenhagen and within a relatively short distance of their prime daily activities of work, childcare and shopping as well as public transport alternatives, they are capable of constructing a family taskscape that circumvents the car. Still, in accomplishing their complex daily schedules, the family needs mobility practices that are able to absorb the indeterminacy and deal with the contingencies that might emerge due to the fluidity of their working schedules. In this particular case, this is met through the material coalition of bikes, helmets, bike trailer, tow bar, and code combination chain lock that successfully form an alliance of things interwoven with their mobility practices to produce the needed flexibility.

This resonates with Schwanen's (2007) accounts of children bike seats in Dutch dual-earner families, where the parent dropping off the child unmounts and leaves the seat at the kindergarten for various practical reasons. As Schwanen describes, materiality in mobility practice, such as dismountable child seats, "play an important part in enabling mothers and father to combine work and caring responsibilities" (2007: 16). Through interrelatedness, such highly specific socio-technical arrangements of mobility practices are part of the family taskscape and therefore, interlock with other everyday practices. The relationality in the family taskscape is a conduit for distributing the effects of change, disruption and breakdown from one practice to another. And as disruptions or breakdowns are often beyond the control of the family members, even small disturbances might potentially become destructive for the practical accomplishment of everyday life. Most of the families in the empirical material report their everyday life as to be tightly packed and often without much buffer for operating differently than planned.

Hence, the practical purpose of interweaving materialities into the family's mobility practices is to create buffers that can safeguard against a complete breakdown in the event of a flat tire, a missed bus or other disruptive happenings in everyday life (this will be further discussed in section 8-3 as a way of fortifying family mobility). We might think of the materiality in terms very similar to those of the human subjects that aid the management of uncertainties in family's everyday life through mobile with constellations (Schwanen 2008). Hence, by gathering human subjects and materialities in specific and specialised stable configurations, the families strive for making mobility practices with the resilience and flexibility to cope with uncertainty and contingency in everyday life.

Along with flexibility, such factors as speed, reliability and safety are vital qualities that material coalitions in mobility practices might engender in the family's everyday mobility. The car is most commonly associated with these qualities. As several family members in the empirical material articulate, having young children means that their mobility practices have become increasingly car-based to grant flexible, efficient,

comfortable and safe journeys (mobile care). Although the metropolitan area of Copenhagen has the lowest level of car ownership amongst the regions in Denmark (only 46% of all household own a car compared to the national average of 59%, see DS (2013a)), there are still many families in urban areas whose everyday activity patterns are fully or partially manageable only via car-based transportation. The combination of geographical dispersion of activities and lack of *fine-grained* public transport coverage produce a mobile situation where the car is often associated with being the most flexible, most efficient and fastest transportation alternative for the family (Næss and Jensen 2005, Freudendal-Pedersen 2009). Hence, the car often holds a central position in the family's everyday mobility. As the Bach parents express:

*Father: Both of us can manage one way or the other without the car. That means it is the needs of the children that decide who has the car. I can just as well take the train if Mille needs to use the car, and sometimes when we both need the car, we call our moms or dads.*

*Mother: The car is the kit! But we use it primarily to fit things together, not as the main transport.  
(Bach Family P1)*

The Bach family, as most in the empirical material, uses of the car on a daily basis but does not use it exclusively. Instead, the family has a series of possible transport alternatives they can draw upon if necessary. Hence, the family members actively weave materiality in and out of the mobility practices as they see fit in order to accommodate their practical needs and wishes as well as situational conditions. As shown earlier (see section 7-2), other mobile subjects, parents, older siblings or significant others might travel alongside younger children for escorting or chauffeuring purposes. Likewise, certain material coalitions might follow the children's trajectories in everyday life, plugging in and out of mobile helpers' mobility practices and forming *material* mobile with constellations, as in the case of using the bike trailer and leaving it at the kindergarten.

Furthermore, the practical capabilities and qualities of mobility practices cannot be ascribed to any single material component as if it was an immanent property. For instance, a car cannot simply be infused into any mobility practice and immediately produce effective and flexible transport. Rather, practical capabilities and qualities are situated, produced and maintained in the specific relational contexts and materialities coalitions in the mobility practices. For instance, the Jensen's are dedicated bike riders and perform a majority of their everyday mobility by bike. In general, they are reluctant to engage in daily usage of the family car. In their case, the car is not seen as an enhancement to their mobility practices, but is perceived as inflexible, slow and troublesome. Instead, they find the bike to be fast, reliable and convenient, as well as speaking to moral dimensions of everyday mobility. However, these qualities are only achievable as long as the bike riding is linked to activities with manageable biking

geographies and bike friendly infrastructure forming a material coalition.

Not only does this show that the material dimension of the family's mobility practices is situational, being highly contingent upon and responsive to the physical context in the family's everyday life, but it also speaks to how the physical context of buildings, parks, plazas, bus stops, train stations and car parks, as well as the routes, paths, streets, sidewalks and motorways on which travelling occur, can be thought of as non-human entities taking part in the family's mobility practices. Like the bike trailer or the car, the physicality and materiality of the routes and places are deliberately and purposively brought into the configuration in the mobility practices. In doing this, the family members are forming and performing mobile scripts. However, such mobile scripts are continuously rewritten as the family members respond to unfolding situations through improvisations, variations and deviations. This means that when travelling, the family members are also actively weaving places and routes in and out of their everyday mobility practices. The Hartmann father points to the openness of his mobility:

*If I think there might be traffic problems when I drive to the day-care, I listen to the radio. [If there is traffic] Instead of driving up Roskildevej and to Ballerup, then I can go the opposite direction, you could say, towards Roskilde and to Ballerupgrenden over there... Or if I'm on the highway and I can see it's blocked, then I sometimes go another way. I always drive the same way on the way home because there's rarely much traffic. It's the same route, but the traffic jams are more likely in the mornings because of accidents. The route home is usually the same because it's the fastest. I usually try to get home as fast as possible.  
(Hartmann Family P1)*

Similar to the bike trailer coalition explored previously, it is the father's material combination of the car, the radio and a network of motorways that make his mobility practice fast, efficient and reliable. The inclusion of a particular route in his mobility practice, the careful orchestration of stretches of motorway, on-ramps and exits, illustrate how the father is not stiffly performing the mobile script, but actively weaving the journey as he goes, crafting a reliable, practical and speedy route to work (this skilled form of adaptability in the performance of everyday mobility will be explored further in chapter 8).

## PERFORMATIVITY OF MATERIALITIES

At this point, the analysis broadens to address how materialities' performativity actively affects and shapes the family's everyday mobility. Sometimes the materialities that we employ in our everyday mobility shape our mobility in very obvious and intentional ways, but mobility is also often shaped and affected in unseen and unintentional ways. Drawing on an actor-network theory infused approach, Schwanen shows how

the materialities within a family's mobility practices, such as the child bike seat, are not inert "intermediaries" but function as "mediators" (2007: 17). Alongside human agency, this emphasises the activeness and performativity of non-human entities and indicates their capacity in shaping and altering the trajectories of the family's mobility practices

New transport modes, infrastructure and systems might create new ways of configuring the family mobility practices, with new possibilities that were not present before. Materialities thus affect how the family's mobility practices might accommodate practical needs of getting around and the social and emotional needs of co-presence and togetherness. Indeed, the bike trailer coalition produces new ways of moving together for the Jensen family. However, the inclusion of this material coalition is not passive, as it also forcefully shapes the trajectory of the parent's mobility practices by structuring specific timing and spacing of other family members and non-human entities. Bruno Latour states that interweaving of artefacts and technology in our everyday lives unavoidably entails "translations" of intentions and plans (Latour 2002: 252). For instance, as several families in the empirical material report, a car calls for being used when it is first acquired, or as some respondents put it, "we might as well use it when we have it". However, mostly, the car is bought to accommodate a specific and often practical need. When the Hartmann family had a second child, this also made them consider buying a second car:

*Father: You also get comfortable [when you get a car], there's no doubt about that. That was also one of the things we discussed when talking about getting the 2nd car. And Lone [his wife] would say, "but it's nice to have a car when you have to shop on the way home". Okay, then Lone could drive two or three times a week when we had to shop on the way home. That was how it started...*

*Mother: Yes, and then all of the sudden, she used it when it rained or if it was too windy...*

*Father: Yes all of the sudden, as Lone says, if it rains or there's wind. Maybe it started if the wind was blowing 20 meter per second, then 15 and then maybe it was only 2. I mean, it's not because it was a bad excuse, I think we're all that way, we simply get comfortable.  
(Hartmann Family P2)*

As the mother, the primary user of the second car, got used to driving, the car gradually colonised her mobility and slowly transformed her mobility practices from being bike-based to being car-based. This transformation has entirely reshaped the family taskscape in different ways. For instance, the timing of everyday tasks has intensified and the geographical spacing has expanded since the car allows for traversing far greater distances. Also, the car is changing the way the family plans and imagines



future organisations in everyday life; as the mother states, for the first time in her life she is able to consider taking jobs outside her biking range. This exemplifies how materiality, such as the car, can *translate* the mobility practices it becomes part of while also rearranging the timing and spacing of other family members' tasks and mobility practices in the family taskscape.

Another key example of performativity of non-human entities that characterises many of the families' mobility practices in the empirical material is the immediate access to communicative technologies, i.e., mobile phones, smart phones, laptops, tablets and access to wireless broadband internet, while being on the move. These technologies have transformed how everyday mobility is used, coordinated and performed (Ling 2004). Especially children's mobility is greatly affected by the constant availability of the "remote co-present" notion afforded by mobile phones (Fotel and Thomsen 2004, Hjorthol, Hovland Jakobsen and Ling 2006). When children reach an age where they are allowed to move more autonomously, the mobile phone is often mentioned in the empirical material as an alternate way of upholding some level of parental "remote control" and safety (and surveillance) (Fotel and Thomsen 2004: 543). The Vangsgaard parents talk of their oldest starting to use a mobile phone:

*Father: But Johannes [their older son] has just been equipped with a mobile phone so we can start practicing calling and texting and he can start telling us where he is and what he is doing and stuff like that.*

*Mother: 'I'm walking home now', and then we know it shouldn't take more than 7 minutes before he's home.  
(Vangsgaard Family P2)*

For them and most of other families with younger children in the empirical material, this particular material configuration of the children's mobility with a mobile phone is reshaping the boundaries of where they are allowed to move, and by doing so, also has a transformative effect on their mobility and everyday geographies. In addition to calming the parents' safety concerns and wishes for surveillance, mobile phones in mobility practices also afford communication in motion. Indeed, for all family members, as a mobile phone has become a common, everyday item, it has greatly transformed mobility. It allows for a much more fine-grained micro-coordination, dynamic and responsive interweaving of mobility practices in the family taskscape (Ling 2004, Hjorthol et al. 2005). For instance, being able to negotiate the exact timing and location of meetings while still in motion has reshaped how families are able to coordinate and arrange co-presence while moving (Schwanen 2008: 1009, Peters, Kloppenburg and Wyatt 2010: 363-4). Indeed, as Larsen, Urry and Axhausen describes, the mobile phone technology has changed the "pre-fixed clock-time coordination" to much more "fluid coordination" (2006: 119). Hence, the mobile phone as part of a family's mobility practices is a way of attending to both instrumental needs, such as wayfinding or spontaneous activity scheduling, as well as socio-emotional needs, such

as keeping in touch, keeping tabs or simply always being within reach (section 8-6 will explore this topic further).

However, like other materialities deployed in the family's mobility practices, it should also be noticed how using a mobile phone can generate responsibilities and dependencies that can be the source of unnecessary concerns and feelings. For instance, mobile phones need regular charging, which necessitates carrying cords and adaptors. Also, running low on battery can affect the use of a phone, potentially leading family members to ration calling, texting and other uses of their phone impairing their coordinative or communicative efforts in order to preserve energy. However, a phone being misplaced, out of power or out of signal range inhibits the family members' connectivity entirely and such disconnectivity can have dire consequences for the active interweaving of practices, i.e. meeting at the right place at the right time, as they rely on phone-based coordination and negotiation in motion. Mette Jensen (2011) shows in a Danish context how ICT is an integral part of everyday life (in some cases almost to the point of being an addiction) and being involuntarily disconnected by something like forgetting or losing one's phone is a dreadful experience (that can also affect the trajectory of mobility, as many are inclined to go back to retrieve the missing phone). Likewise, this might also incite unwanted feelings of annoyance, distress and fear, as parents might start to worry if a child's phone becomes unreachable. Hence, as materialities, things, modes, places and routes are interwoven in the family's mobility practices, they also interlock practically and emotionally with other entities, practices and members in the family taskscape, often making extraction, loss or breakdown problematic. According to Thrift (2008: 8), we might think of mobility practices as "specialized devices ... which provide the basic intelligibility of" the family's everyday life finely tuned to accomplishing the practical task of getting family members to the right place at the right time. If one part in the material coalitions of the mobility practices fails or is simply removed, there is always the risk of collapsing the family's mobility. However, as will be studied in depth in the next chapter, family members are experts in adapting and conforming to such disruptions and breakdowns.

It is also important to emphasise that non-human entities in the family's mobility practices have agency which cannot be fully controlled or predicted by the human subjects. They are what Donna Haraway (1991) terms *witty agents*. The materialities might align perfectly with the intent of the mobility practice, but they might also work against it by causing trouble. For instance, the tow bar on the bike trailer might break, just as the mobile phone might be misplaced or the car might not start, all of which are potential events with negative consequences for the functionality of their mobility practices. Transport modes and systems often have unintended consequences, such as a lack of car parking or delayed trains. Even places might easily shift in appearance and affordability, as some places get frightening after dark, or specific routes get completely backed up with traffic during rush hours. The weaving of materialities empowers mobility practices and greatly aids accomplishing practical tasks in everyday life. However, materialities do not align with mobility practices

without cost and there is continual upkeep involved in making material coalitions run smoothly (the labour associated with this will be further addressed in chapter 8). Also, it is important to take notice of the materialities' transformative capacities and the unseen and little-noticed ways in which family members' mobility practices, attitudes and preferences can gradually be reshaped.

## 7-6: MOBILE IN-BETWEENS

Transport modes and transport systems facilitate instrumental movement from A to B in everyday life, and while some respondents only recognise everyday travelling for practical purposes and would altogether minimise their travel time expenditure if possible, most of the family members in the empirical material have a more ambivalent attitude towards the time they spend in everyday travel. The predominant attitude is one that considers travel as either wasted time or meaningful time depending on the context. Often, everyday travelling is experienced and felt very differently depending on the type of journey, as well as the frequency, destination, duration and physical and social context. The travel experience is situated and particular, and even for the same person, the same route might appear different depending on the circumstances. For instance, going to school in the morning might be felt as tedious and a waste of time that should be minimised, whereas going home in the afternoon is a joyful time of play and socialising with friends. It is often the trivial and repeated journeys, which become mundane parts of the quotidian and are deemed insignificant and dead time that travellers wish to minimise. These journeys are only endured because of the necessity of moving from place to place. Conversely, it is sometimes these trivial journeys that are reported as important and meaningful parts of family members' everyday lives. For instance, the daily shopping trip, as in the Nielsen family, is a favourite moment of mobile togetherness (see section 7-3). Hence, to infer that everyday travel time in the family is only felt and experienced as wasted time is a far too uniform and simplistic conclusion (Urry 2007, Jain and Lyons 2008, Watts and Lyons 2011). It can be either wasted instrumental time or a "gift of travel time" (Jain and Lyon 2008: 85), proving to be valuable and meaningful as in the case of Mikkel:

### SCENE 6<sup>24</sup>:

*"If a car salesman asks me if I want new wheel rims I look at him as if he were stupid and tell him that it doesn't make the car any better. For me, the car isn't a status symbol; it's important that it starts. You can't have a car that won't start every morning because you are dependent upon it!" says Mikkel, the father in a family of four. The car is an instrumental tool for getting back and forth to work. He spends 40 minutes driving every day. On a normal day, he and their youngest daughter will leave early in the morning and he will drive her to day care, although it's only a half*

<sup>24</sup> Based on P1 interview with Hartmann family, own interpretation.

*kilometre from their home. Getting around is mostly about time optimisation, spending as little as possible travelling. The time in the car also includes listening to the radio to see if there are traffic disruptions or roadwork in an effort to make the commute as smooth and fast as possible. Approximately 20 minutes later, depending on traffic and if re-routing is necessary, he arrives at work. Driving home is, however, another story.*

*Mikkel pulls out the parking lot of work. It's 4 p.m. and he is heading home. He switches back and forth between two channels on the radio trying to figure out if he wants to listen to music or the news. He has texted his wife to ask if she wants him to pick up any groceries on the way home. He knows the traffic this time of the day and chooses to go "the long way"; this route is a bit longer in length but has more capacity and therefore you feel you are constantly moving forward. He turns the music up a bit as he gets onto the highway. This is a nice song, so he leans back into the seat and enjoys the moment. This liminal space between work and home is a joyful pause in his busy life that he doesn't want to optimise away. This is a chance to mentally change modes between work and home, to be ready to be "on" again when he gets home. "Beep beep!", his mobile phone rouses him from his thoughts. It's his wife—no shopping today. "Okay", Mikkel says to himself. He pushes the phone again, speed-dialling his grandmother. When he isn't running errands on the way home, he likes calling his grandparents to catch up, because between making dinner and helping with homework there's no time to do so when he gets home. They chat for the remainder of the commute, 15 minutes, before he arrives home.*



Figure 47: Scene from Mikkel's work-home commute route, source: P3 field study

To Mikkel, the travel time in his daily commuting to and from work is both instrumental, as he is moving from place to place in the fastest and most efficient manner available to him, and also recreational, as he uses it as a welcomed break

from the busy schedule in his everyday life. As a recreation, he uses it as a way of unwinding and switching between modes of home and work<sup>25</sup>. This resonates with what Malene Freudendal-Pedersen calls “in-betweens of mobility”, in which family members are “able to summon energy and prepare for the transition from one stage of everyday life to another” (2009: 107). Installing in-betweens in everyday mobility is a way of coping with the complex activity schedules, or what is termed “harriedness” (Southerton, Shove and Warde 2001, Southerton 2003, Jarvis 2005), and the family ideal of rushing around that characterises everyday life in contemporary Western societies (Shove 2002b, Hjorthol, Hovland Jakobsen and Ling 2006). By making “cocoon, where [family members] get their own time” (Freudendal-Pedersen 2009: 106), the in-betweens are a way of pausing or slowing down. As Juliet Jain and Glenn Lyons argue, travel can “protect” the traveller and, to some degree, “legitimises ‘time out’” in a busy everyday life (2008: 86). Hence, mobile in-betweens become a personal and private way of “clawing back” otherwise wasted instrumental travel time, transforming it by forcefully infusing it with recreational, social and emotional content (Jain 2009).

As argued in relation to mobile togetherness (see section 7-4), the experience of everyday, mundane travel is highly embedded in the material and physical setting in which it is performed. This experience is, to some degree, *crafted* or modulated by the non-human entities in the mobility practices, the transport modes in which the travel takes place as well as the things and artefacts the family members bring into their mobile in-betweens. Indeed, as Watts and Lyons state, “passengers are always bodies plus their belongings [...] equipped for waiting” (2011: 111), and what is of special interest to this section is how family members bring along and configure material mobility practices to craft and facilitate these mobile in-betweens in their otherwise rather instrumental transport.

Mikkel has made his daily drive to and from work a space where he is in control, not of the traffic outside of the car which he continuously negotiates to the best of his ability, but rather of the interior of the car. He decides how he wants to spend the time: listening to the radio or music, catching up with the grandparents on the phone or simply enjoying a moment of quietness. By crafting these mobile in-betweens, the family members seek to control their mobile situation, and not let it become *wasted time* but rather fills it with activities of their choosing (Jain and Lyons 2008: 85). This mobile in-between is a private space. In this case, it is Mikkel’s own space, in which the spatial and technological arrangement of the car serves as a “private bubble” in public space, thus affording a space of intimacy and privacy (Sheller 2004). Yet, as Jensen (2013: 111-2) reminds us, such emotional experiences are not confined to the car, but could be broadened to all modes of transport.

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25 Interestingly Watts & Lyons (2011:109) find most people prefer at least 10-20 minutes of travel time. This resonates with Mikkel that in the interview states he does not wish to undo his commute and prefer a bit of travel time.

The possibility of establishing mobile in-betweens is mediated by the physical and material setting as well as experiential and affective affordances. Different transport modes afford different opportunities for mobile in-betweens with different experiences, production of different affects and feelings (Jensen, Sheller and Wind 2014). However, the experiences and affordances they produce are not uniform and universal. Rather the experience of travel time is a subjective experience, felt differently and varied according to the bodies that inhabit the mobility practices (Vannini 2012: 54). Laura Watts argues “we craft our travel time differently using different artefacts, different practices, different methods” (2008: 719), things which affects how travel time is felt and experienced. Thus, family members in their everyday mobility are also *crafting* their mobile in-betweens differently as they customise the material configuration of their mobility practices to create or facilitate certain activities, experiences, emotional states and geographies.

However, while Watts focuses on the production of travel time in general, the intent of a mobile in-between is to address how family members craft highly specific and meaningful travel time as a way of coping in everyday life. Drawing on both Fruedendal-Pedersen’s coping through in-betweens and Watts’ crafting of travel time, *mobile in-betweens* constitute the specific and meaningful travel time that is crafted through the family members’ socio-material arrangements in their everyday mobility. As the mother in the Vangsgaard family explains:

*When you are in transit can you get anything good out of it? Yes! [...] I listen to audio books or music. I always carry my iPod with me so I have the book I’m listening to, or a podcasted radio programme or something else. One trick is never to think: ‘ahh I feel so bad for myself, I have such a long way to work’. I try to define it as my time. I can listen to this book, and then it’s no longer a waste of time. It’s my time!*  
(Vangsgaard Family P1)

This illustrates how crafting of mobile in-betweens is not always solely contingent upon the physical and material setup of the mobility practice. Including an iPod or a car in the mobility practice is merely creating a foundation or an unresolved opportunity for crafting a mobile in-between. As the mother states, the transformation of travel time can only be achieved through a conditioning of one’s attitude towards the travel time. Hence, by configuring her mobility in the way she does, she is effectively transforming travel time into a meaningful mobile in-between of *her* time. Furthermore, this also illustrates that mobile in-betweens do not accidentally appear, but purposive labour is needed in crafting and sustaining them.

## RECREATIONAL IN-BETWEENS

Regardless of the mode of transport, the mobile in-between often marks the passage



between domains in family members' everyday lives. The mobile in-between is not focused upon the physical transition and displacement from one place to another, but rather upon assisting the adjustment in attitude and becoming physically and emotionally prepared for entering another domain in everyday life (Jain and Lyons 2008: 86). Hence, everyday travel becomes a gateway between, for instance, home and school, shaping the experience of the mobile in-between.

For Mikkel, his liminal transition might be facilitated through a number of different activities in the car, such as listening to the radio, socialising over the phone or simply relaxing a bit. It is important to note that relaxing or recharging in transit is also a way of being "active" when moving (Watts 2008). Crafting recreational mobile in-betweens is often about facilitating opportunities for "non-activities", such as sleeping, daydreaming, zoning out or looking out the window (Lyons and Chatterjee 2008a, Löfgren 2008, Ehn and Löfgren 2009). Indeed, looking at landscape features and surroundings in which the journey takes place and watching mobile others are often pleasurable and recreational ways of spending travel time, and may trigger memories, ideas and emotions (Edensor 2003). However, transition rituals in mobile in-betweens might also be more scripted, as the parents in the Lindborg family explain:

*Mother: I read! When I'm in the train or bus I read. [...] I have three newspapers with me, and I get through three newspapers! Always three newspapers...*

*Father: I have a good time with P1 [Danish "talk" radio channel]. I always listen to P1 in the car.  
(Lindborg Family P1)*

These statements are in no way extraordinary. Nearly all respondents speak of highly scripted and ritualised activities in their everyday journeys. The mobile in-betweens are adaptation of mobile performances crafted over time and repetition into habitual scripts that organise the transition. Family members gradually craft mobile in-betweens within their mobility practices, creating mobile routines that have become so familiar that they become trivial and mundane. Specific feelings and emotions are associated with these familiar mobility practices. They become common orderings in everyday life that prepare the family members for transition and physically and emotionally carry them from one domain to another.

For instance, reading three newspapers is not simply reading three newspapers; the experience extends beyond the actual reading. It begins with an anticipation of the mobile in-between as a space of relaxation and contemplation. The three papers actually make the travel noticeable and provide something to look forward to, but they also become something she associates with the journey and readying herself. By reading the three papers, she crafts her own travel time and transforms the mobility practice into a mobile in-between (Watts 2008: 719). In this space, the mother is in



control of the travel time, she decides how it is spent, what articles to read and which to skip (Jain and Lyons 2008: 85). Going through the newspapers gives a sense of progression of the journey, and like any story, creates a start, middle and an end. Afterwards, she might feel informed of the current news, but the reading also creates a sense of having filled the travel time with a meaningful activity and even having passed the time more quickly (Watt and Lyons 2011: 112).

The materialities involved in the mobile in-between play important roles. Both Mikkel's journey in the car and Margrethe's (the mother in the Lindborg family) reading of the three newspapers becomes what Ferguson calls "transitional objects" (2009: 286). These are objects that one becomes particularly attached to, thereby aiding the formation of environments that physically and emotionally facilitate transition. Although Ferguson uses this concept in the context of social work and raising troubled children, it can also help elucidate how the material and physical setting of the family's mobility, the modes of transport, things and artefacts, take part in crafting mobile in-betweens.

The materialities that are brought into the mobile in-betweens transform into transitional objects through their repeated use and slow-creep development of relationship with the mobile subjects. Hence, transitional objects are, over time and practice, ingrained into the family's mobility, and the family members gradually become more and more accustomed to them and their use. Steering the car, riding the bike or finding a way becomes firmly embedded in their mobile scripts. This creates some level of recognisability, familiarity and certainty, which serve as an excellent platform for crafting mobile in-betweens (Freudental-Pedersen 2009: 107).



Figure 48: Killing time in the Metro, scouce: P3 field study

## PRODUCTIVE IN-BETWEENS

The recreational mobile in-between provides insights into understanding how family members cope with everyday life through crafting ritualised transition and time out in mobility. However, family members do not exclusively use mobile in-betweens for recreational purposes. Often, family members engage in a wide range of practical and productive activities in their mobility, crafting *productive mobile in-betweens* in everyday life.

Prior to the prevalence of ICT equipment and the seamless access to wireless internet and mobile phone services, most of the family's travel time and spaces were protected in the sense they legitimised mobile in-betweens as spaces of time out in the everyday (Ling 2004). However, as mobile phones, smart phones, tablets and laptops have made their way into family's everyday mobility practices and infrastructure systems, the opportunities for making mobile in-betweens into productive spaces in everyday life has increased immensely (Jain and Lyons 2008). According to Urry, new social routines based upon the technological advances in ICT are shaping the "interspaces" (2007: 176, 224) of everyday mobility through constant interaction and overlap between surrounding domains such as home and work. Interspaces, such as the family's mobile in-betweens, are no longer isolated time stretches and spaces but are highly affected by the both activities and practices in everyday life. For instance, on his way home, Mikkel communicates to his wife his imminent arrival and coordinates practical chores of grocery shopping. This coordinative work manifests inside the mobile in-between as a folding of the physical and communicative types of mobility in the family's everyday life. This aspect will be explored further in section 8-6).

The productive mobile in-between becomes a moving space of coordination, negotiation and interaction across the family, providing an arena for the performance of "meetingness", which is the communicative labour of phoning, texting, emailing etc. Meetingness sustains social networks and (re)arranges face-to-face meetings, events and activities (Larsen, Urry and Axhausen 2006, Urry 2007). Hence, the productive mobile in-between blends together with various domains in a family's everyday life.

In addition to the coordinative work that often goes on while moving, the productive mobile in-between also emerges in the empirical material as a space to work or get things done. It is often work life that colonises the mobile in-between transforming everyday mobility into a "moving office" where mobile subjects multi-task, plan the day, make calls, answer emails and write reports while being on the move (Laurier 2004, Gripsrud and Hjorthol 2012). Domains other than work might also overlap, an example being school work. In this case, mobile in-betweens can become a productive space for homework and studying. Hence, as activities from other domains in everyday life seep into the family members' mobility practices, the productive in-betweens start to become equally or even more important than the events and activities to which they connect. The Møller couple outlines what they do in transit:

*Mother: ... I also think about what I have to do during the day, plan the day while I'm in the car. That's what's so great about a car—you can sit and collect your thoughts. That's what I do.*

*Father: I listen to the radio, P4 [Danish “easy listening” radio channel], or I take care of some phone calls; you have to do that anyway, so you might as well get in touch with people in the car ...*

*Daughter: He has one of those ear-thingy [sic]. And then he speaks “bla bla bla bla...”*  
(Møller Family P1)

Similar to their recreational counterparts, the productive in-betweens are only made possible through elaborate involvement of materialities. Things and transport modes form material coalitions that facilitate the various productive activities within the mobility practices. Chief among them is the mobile phone, which is highly involved in a wide range of practical and productive activities such as working, making personal calls and texting, as well as coordinating and scheduling activities within family and social networks. For instance, the father makes business calls using a hand-free setup with an “ear-thingy”. In other modes of transport, such as the train, a small table often invites passengers to equip the mobile office with laptops, phones, tablets, books, paperwork, glasses, pens and so on, all things that help facilitate the productivity of mobile in-betweens (Jain and Lyon 2008: 87).

Productive in-betweens present an alternate way for the family to cope in the everyday. It might not accommodate the emotional need for time out or facilitate experiencing a transition from one activity to another as the recreational in-between does, but it does indirectly assist in removing pressure from other parts of a family's everyday life by getting things done, finishing work, doing homework, making socially obligated phone calls and so on. Working on these activities may give family members a sense of closure and relief that will help them concentrate more fully on the activities they will do at their destination. For instance, Mikkel states making the phone call to his grandparents in the car is preferable to doing it at home with the kids where cooking and homework must be done. By calling during a moving in-between, he can fully devote himself to being on at home without feeling haunted by the social obligations of talking to his grandparents. Hence, the recreational and productive use of mundane travel time might benefit others beyond the ones being mobile. As Jain and Lyon argue, the crafting of mobile in-betweens by an individual “may have a direct impact on his/her social interactions at home or at a business meeting, or by managing the pressures of work<sup>26</sup>. Thus, the positive journey experience can enhance the gift of time to the network, as well benefiting the traveller” (2008: 88).

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*26 In this analysis the focus of the recreational and productive mobile in-between have been chosen due to its significance in the empirical material. These should, however, not in any way be understood as exhaustive as many other types of mobile in-betweens could surely be produced. Also although the two types of mobile in-betweens presented in this chapter are strictly defined, in reality, their borders are far more fluid and often everyday mobility might shift rapidly.*

## 7-7: MOBILE ATMOSPHERES

Atmospheres are everywhere. They fill the spaces we move in and between. Sometimes atmospheres are very distinct, almost screaming, demanding attention and forcefully affecting how we conduct ourselves and occupy space; think of entering a bus full of loud and screaming kindergarten kids. Conversely, sometimes atmospheres are very subtle, almost unnoticeable when slipping through our consciousness, even though they still shaping our conduct in space. Think of entering the same bus but with elderly passengers orderly performing passengering. However, atmospheres are always there, forming “part of the ubiquitous backdrop of everyday life” (Bissell 2010: 272). The concept of atmosphere engages with an ephemeral phenomenon; while we cannot see or measure it, we know it is there because we emotionally experience and feel it (Böhme 1998: 112-5).

Not unlike the concepts of mobile togetherness and mobile in-betweens (discussed in sections 7-4 and 7-6), the concept of mobile atmosphere proposed in this section is used to explore how sensorial and emotional experiences are facilitated through the family members’ everyday mobility practices. Mobile togetherness shows how mobility practices facilitate social spaces of togetherness and mobile in-betweens attend to how mobility practices facilitate recreational and productive activities in in-between spaces. However, the scope of this section explores how family members orchestrate mobile atmospheres through the arrangement of human and non-human bodies in mobility as a way of dealing with emotional states and coping with emotional needs in the quotidian. As a starting point for this discussion, the experience of the bike ride from work of a mother named Dorte is indicative:

*SCENE 7<sup>27</sup>:*

*Dorte quickly crosses the street, timing her movement with the cars driving by. She lifts up the front wheel to avoid hitting the steep curb too hard and rides down a small path. It’s actually a pedestrian-only path, but everyone bikes there anyway. She carefully goes around a couple of metal gates put up to slow down the bikes. On the other side, a narrow, two-lane bike path unfolds. This part of the ride home is her favourite. The city and the water frame the bike path alongside a line of very old oak trees. On the right side is a series of beautiful, century-old four and five story apartment blocks and on the left is the water. She faintly hears the heavy traffic from the other shore, but on this side, there are no exhaust fumes or motorised traffic to notice. Dorte always bikes this way, twice a day, five times a week, alongside the Lakes in the central Copenhagen. It is an artificial system of five interconnected lakes built for defensive purposes in the Middle Ages. Now, the lakes function as a public, park-like recreational area and are a favourite place to stroll, run, and bike for many Copenhageners.*

*Often, she reminds herself of how lucky she is to have such a nice biking route to work.*

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*27 Based upon P1 and P2 interviews with the Petersen family, own interpretation.*

*She wouldn't go this way if it wasn't the fastest route home, but bike riding along the Lakes is often faster because the path uses tunnels to bypasses several major traffic junctions. For her, even though this green stretch only makes up about a third of the way, it's a nice break from the motorised and stressful traffic situation in central Copenhagen.*

*Some meters in front of her, a couple of children are playing with a dog, and she rings her bell twice to get their attention. They look up and take a step back. Even though there are no trucks, cars or mopeds, there are lots of pedestrians, runners and bikes on this side of the Lakes. Right now, the crowd isn't that bad, as she got off early today and it's only 2 p.m., but in the mornings and late afternoons, this path is swarming with people, and riding here requires as much attention as elsewhere in the city. It takes Dorte around five minutes to go the length of the five lakes. She isn't in a hurry today because there are no children at home waiting for her yet, so she slows down a bit to enjoy the ride. Although it can be a cold and windy ride, especially this time of the year, Dorte enjoys the peaceful intermezzo of biking to work.*



*Figure 49: Riding along the Lakes in inner Copenhagen, source: P3 field study*

What Dorte experiences while riding along the Lakes in Copenhagen can be described as a specific atmosphere, one that emotionally affects her and her experience of the journey. The atmosphere is closely related to the material and physical setting, the animals and the people's performances there including Dorte's own ride. However, neither of these elements alone can take credit for the specific atmosphere that Dorte experiences at the Lakes. Instead, it is in the relations and specific constellations of these elements that the atmosphere arises. Gernot Böhme describes atmospheres as a-objective and a-subjective, meaning they reside neither solely in the subjects, Dorte or others at the Lakes, nor in the objects, the trees, lawns, water, lights, dogs, ducks, benches, tunnels or paths at the Lakes. Rather atmospheres emerge in the reciprocal relationships between these elements (1993: 122, 2006: 16). Hence, an atmosphere



cannot be reduced to properties or qualities of human or non-human bodies, but are instead “manifestations of the co-presence of subject and object” (Böhme 1998: 114).

Ben Anderson illustrates how the notion of atmosphere might be understood through the related notion of affect, something which has recently gained academic attention, especially in human geography<sup>28</sup>. Both atmosphere and affect might be described as “the transpersonal or prepersonal intensities that emerge as bodies affect one another” (2009: 78). This coupling of affect and atmosphere draws attention to the dynamic and fluid characteristics of atmosphere. For instance, as Dorte moves alongside the Lakes, her presence affects her surroundings just as she is affected by them in turn, forming and breaking uncountable relations as she rides. Hence, the atmospheres that emerge in these relations are themselves on the move, “perpetually forming and deforming, appearing and disappearing, as bodies enter into relation with one another. They are never finished, static or at rest” (Anderson 2009: 79).

When Dorte rides, her senses perceive and read the atmosphere of the materiality, taking in the people, their facial expressions, the interactions, the things, the quietness, the temperature, the wind and the composition of these elements. We get a sense of the atmosphere by comparing our own sensorial impressions with expectations and pre-understandings. Therefore, the lack of things or missing persons or unspoken words might also be co-constituents in the atmosphere. Yet, we cannot see, touch, smell, hear or taste the atmosphere, and we only know it is there as we are emotionally affected by it (Böhme 1998).

The kinaesthetic feeling of biking by the water, moving underneath the trees on the narrow bike path as people walk dogs and stroll baby carriages, seeing children playing and feeding ducks and swans on the shore, feeling the cold wind in her hair and hearing the distant noise from motorised traffic reminding her of its present absence, the composition of all these elements come together in producing an atmosphere which shapes Dorte’s subjective emotional experience of moving there. For her, it puts her in a joyful and peaceful emotional state, but atmospheres might easily be felt as negative experiences. For instance, bike riding the same stretch along the Lakes in the night might arouse completely different atmospheres of uneasiness or fear. Often, we are not consciously attuned to the atmosphere in the places we move in or we might even disregard it, but still it affects our emotional state, our conduct and how we inhabit space. In spite of this, atmosphere is not deterministic, but rather, as Bissell writes, we might think of atmosphere “as a propensity: a pull or a charge that might emerge in a particular space which might (or might not) generate particular events and actions, feelings and emotions” (Bissell 2010: 273). However, atmospheres are not only something we simply run into, that lie out there, outside our control, just waiting to be stepped into so that they may forcefully affect and direct our conduct

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28 See i.e. Anderson and Harrison (2006), Thrift (2008), Pile (2010) for reviews of conceptualisation of affect and emotion.

and emotional experiences. They can, in fact, be intentionally orchestrated to evoke specific moods, feelings and emotional experiences.

## ORCHESTRATION OF MOBILE ATMOSPHERES

Böhme writes that “Atmospheres can be produced consciously through objective arrangements” (1998: 114). Although Böhme speaks of the conscious production of atmospheres in the context of aesthetic fields such as design, advertising, music, architecture, it is also applicable to the trivial and mundane atmospheres family members engage in through their everyday mobility practices. The claim is that in making everyday family mobility, the family members are concurrently managing and negotiating the sensorial feel and emotional experience of their mobility through the orchestration of affective atmospheres. By arranging materialities in specific constellations in mobility practices, they seek to produce mobile atmospheres through the circulation of *positive* atmospheres and circumvention of *negative* atmospheres. Indeed, as a way of managing emotional needs, family members try to shape the mobile experience and manage how it feels to move in everyday life, making it as positive, pleasant and joyful as possible while avoiding or intervening against negative and unwanted experiences. Hence, in making family mobility practices, “atmospheres are ‘enhanced’, ‘transformed’, ‘intensified’, ‘shaped’, and otherwise intervened on (Böhme, 2006)” (Anderson 2009: 80), as well as being orchestrated into new mobile atmospheres to accommodate the particular needs and desires of the family members.

This process, however, is not something the family members always pay conscious attention to, and in fact, much of this emotional work goes unheeded. Similar to aesthetic workers, such as artists, architects and designers who have “an extraordinary rich wealth of knowledge of atmospheres” and professionally make a living of producing them, ordinary people and family members also possess a great deal of practical knowledge of producing atmospheres in their everyday life and mobility (Böhme 1993: 123). For instance, Dorte might configure her mobility practice to intensify the atmosphere of going along the Lakes by choosing to bike instead of taking the bus. The openness and kinaesthetic experience of biking makes her feel *closer* to or even a part of the atmosphere. Furthermore, the use of a mobile phone might produce a perception of safety and thereby intervene against the unpleasant atmosphere filling dark paths and places when moving at night.

The mobility practice produces a specific mobile atmosphere by transforming and manipulating the different atmospheres in which the movement takes place as they unfold. Hence, mobile atmospheres are “meta-atmospheres” characterised by “the high paced switching from one atmospheric constellation to another” (Albertsen 1999: 19, translated from Danish). The mobile atmosphere orchestrated in everyday family mobility is a process of circumventing and circulating through sensory experiences, avoiding and blending many different atmospheres as places, routes, modes, things



and people interweave in the mobility practices.

Thus, places in which everyday mobility is performed, the various material and physical sites in the city such as bike paths, streets and motorways, as well as the interior of a car or a bus and train compartment, and the resultant mobile atmospheres of these locations play a very important role in the production of emotional experiences in mobility practices. Such places are constantly shaped by and reproduced through everyday movements and flows, but also act back and affect the very movements and flows they proceed from, as they are co-producers of the sensorial and emotional experiences (Sheller and Urry 2004). Hence, not only do atmospheres involve embodiment as they are felt with the body, but they also allow for a kind of “emplacement” as “[e]motions are ‘done’ with our surroundings” (McIlvenny 2013: 2, referring to Pink 2011). As family members move through the quotidian, they orchestrate mobile atmospheres and emotional experiences in concert with the multiple atmospheres of their surroundings (Jensen, Sheller and Wind 2014: 17).

The Lakes in Copenhagen are an interesting example of how a specific atmosphere is interwoven into family members’ mobility practices. The subjective emotional experience this engender is not reducible to their material and physical infrastructure, the discourse of representation they carry, or the embodied performance of biking (Hannam, Sheller and Urry 2006: 14). Instead it is from the spatial arrangement and in the co-presence of these elements, the water, the paths, the trees, the ducks, the people and their activities, the pre-understandings and collective stories of the Lakes and Dorte’s biking, that produce this particular mobile atmosphere and her subjective emotional experience.

Orchestration of mobile atmospheres in a family’s everyday mobility is often a way of performing emotional work. This may be manifested through the invocation of pleasant and cosy atmospheres facilitating settings for sociality, mobile care and mobile togetherness. This is exemplified in the train travel of the mother Cecilie and her two boys Daniel and Rasmus:

*SCENE 8<sup>29</sup>:*

*Cecilie hurries Daniel and Rasmus through the door into the train compartment. It is sparsely filled and very quiet. The few passengers there are travelling alone, tending to their own business, reading or looking at their phones. They find some seats. The train hasn’t even started before Rasmus cries out “I want the Nintendo!” Other passengers glance at them briefly and quickly go back to their windows and phones to avoid eye contact when Cecilie looks up, but she got the message: “keep it down”. “It’s in your bag”, Cecilie replies in a low voice. The train is set in motion with a slight jolt; they are going to visit their grandparents in the northern part of Zealand. The beeping noises from the Nintendo start to fill the compartment and Cecilie quickly reaches for the slider to adjust the volume. The chairs in the train are two and two, facing each*

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29 Based on P1 interview with the Juhl family, own interpretation.

*other in front of a window subdividing the compartment into more intimate spaces. Daniel, the other son, is sitting on the other side, facing them. "Wanna read?", he asks his mother. She does. Normally, when they are travelling outside Copenhagen, they take the train because they haven't got a car, so they spend the time reading, playing games or Nintendo. She moves over onto his side of the compartment and they start reading. A few minutes later, Rasmus notices them, leaves his Nintendo and squeezes himself into the seat on the other side of his mother.*

This scene illustrates how the performance and configuration of the family's mobility practice, in this case a train ride to the grandparents, is highly involved in the production of a certain mobile atmosphere facilitating mobile togetherness. The compartment changes from being quiet as the family unintentionally, but unmistakably, fills it with talk and laughter. The moment they enter in the train compartment, they become a catalyst that starts the transformation of the atmosphere. However, this is not only instigated by their mere presence and conduct. Additionally, the material composition of their mobility practice, the spatial arrangement of the train compartment, the orientation of the seating and tables as well as the things they have brought with them, their bags, Nintendo and books, are all co-constituents in reshaping the atmosphere in the compartment.

This specific spatial arrangement of seating facing each other around tables certainly demarcates a sub division of the compartment. These smaller spaces are ideal for forming semi-private zones that invite occupation by smaller groups or families. Further, the placing of bags in the vacant seats and the reading aloud of books and sounds from the Nintendo are ways of materially occupying and appropriating the compartment, which "also help to 'warm' (cf. Ger 2005) public space ... and make it more hospitable to the needs and wants" of family members" (O'Dell 2009: 93). Hence, their mobility practice does not only appropriate the space in the train compartment, it also gradually transforms the atmosphere into their mobile atmosphere. For them, it is a warm and cosy atmosphere, which creates a hospitable environment that accommodates and supports their mobile togetherness and spending quality time together as a family. However, drawing on the idea that atmospheres are subjectively felt and might produce different emotional experiences, other passengers in the train compartment might not share the family's positive attitude towards this transformed atmosphere. Just as the family, through their conduct and use of things, occupies space, other passengers might try to counter-act and illustrate their discontent by glancing or sighing in various displays of "civil inattention", such as screening themselves behind newspaper or demonstratively looking at their phones or out the window (Urry 2007: 106). This also speaks to the fact that the production of atmospheres is, as Böhme states, "at every moment also the exercise of power" (1998: 115).

Aware of this rising tension, the mother continuously adjusts their conduct and the volume level of the Nintendo, thereby recognising the other passengers' presence as well as the fragility of the mobile situation and atmosphere. Not only do Cecilie and

her children have transformative capacity, but the other passengers also hold sway over the atmosphere in the compartment. Indeed, as Bissell (2010) explores, there is a fine line between conflict and cohesion in such a place as a train car. Hence, mobile atmospheres in the family member's mobility practices, such as the one in the train compartment or at the Lakes, are indeed meta-atmospheres, which never fully coagulate but are always in motion. The relationship between atmospheres and family members is reciprocal but not exclusive. Neither atmosphere nor family member is in complete control over one another. Similar to the propensities atmospheres engender, the family members are not in full control of the mobile atmospheres within their mobility practices, nor can they shape them as they please. They can attempt to affect the atmospheres as they unfold, but as in the case of Cecilie and her children, it is often a matter of negotiation and interaction with mobile others as well as the material and physical settings in which the mobility takes place.

As seen here, the management and production of mobile atmospheres is not only a way of facilitating pleasurable emotional experiences while moving, but is also a way of managing or coping with the boring, annoying, feared or unwanted atmospheres and negative emotional experiences which are part of everyday mobility. Many respondents report how their mobility practices are configured to avoid dangers of traffic and crime, especially in the case of children. Moving through the city alone at night is an experience completely different from travelling during the day and such journeys are often contingent upon the affective atmospheres of routes, places and modes. Indeed, things such as a mobile phone are often brought into the mobility practice to circumvent, suppress or intervene in unwanted atmospheres. Because of this, the orchestration of mobile atmospheres might be thought of as emotional work tending to emotional needs of the family member(s) in transit. Likewise, Jensen, Sheller and Wind (2014) state that mobility practices might evoke certain positive feelings and emotional atmospheres as a way of managing and coping with personal emotions. As the Bach father reports:

*If I feel stressed and the weather is good, then I might take the bicycle to work because it's relaxing to bike, but if I'm grumpy and tired, then it's also nice to relax on the train.*  
(Bach Family P1)

The material composition and makeup of his mobile in-betweens are not static but versatile and dynamically shifting to his mood and tending to his emotional needs. Hence, the family's mobility is not only something that can enforce a certain emotional experience "viscerally felt through the emotional state it produces". Rather, as an intricate part of making everyday mobility, the family members' actively orchestrate mobile atmospheres as "a way of 'routing' emotions in order to help one cope, or feel better" (Jensen, Sheller and Wind 2014: 11).

## 7-8: CONCLUSION

This chapter set out to examine the socio-material configurations of the family's mobility practices and the resultant stabilising production of elasticity. It was shown that family members, in making everyday mobility, are actively seeking multiple ways to accommodate practical, social and emotional conditions in their lives. Thereby family mobility becomes a venue through which the family attempts to cope with everyday demands. Furthermore, the chapter argued that the performative effects of heterogeneous configurations in the family's mobility practices can be conceptualised as mobile care, togetherness, in-betweens and atmospheres. Hence, the configurations of the family's mobility practices mesh practical, social and emotional dimensions of the family's life as they cope with:

- *practical* needs and wishes by physically displacing family members to and from their daily destinations and activities through assembling stable mobile with constellations and material coalitions.
- *social* needs and wishes by enacting and maintaining a sense of family and social relationships through mobile care and mobile togetherness.
- *emotional* needs and wishes through the production of mobile in-between and the orchestration of affective atmosphere, creating sensorial and emotional experiences that aid emotional management.

Mobility practices instrumentally enable family members to move and perform everyday practices and activities in the quotidian. As shown in this chapter, mobility practices are also viscerally felt and sensorially experienced, and are spaces where family life is socially and emotionally lived. Family mobility might be both granting movement and, at other times, inducing slowness and restricting access and even immobility. Family mobility might be fun, recreational and productive, but it may also be felt as boring and taxing. Family members may congregate in mobility practices and spend quality time together, but such travel time might also be filled with uncomfortable silence, heated arguments and back seat fighting, testing and straining familial bonds. Ultimately, mobility practices are more than instrumental platforms; they are social and emotional platforms in which family members seek to socialise, enact care and perform emotional management of themselves and others.

This chapter has focused on understanding the production of elasticity in family mobility by dissecting the family's mobility practices. However, it is important to recognise that none of the performative effects of family mobility can solely be ascribed to any singular element within the family's mobility practices. Likewise, these effects do not emerge simply by bringing the parts together. Rather, these effects, which aid the family's coping in everyday life, are made possible and actualised in the family members' creative and skilful performances of everyday mobility. These will be considered in the next chapter.

# CHAPTER 8: PERFORMING EVERYDAY FAMILY MOBILITY

## 8-1: INTRODUCTION

As shown in the previous chapter, the configuration of the family's mobility practices is crucial to the family members' production of elasticity. The analytical dissection of the family's mobility practices in the previous chapter was approached by v mobile scenes from the empirical material and analysing them as if they were in a static and controlled environment. Although Thrift emphasises mobility practices as being "stable features of the world" (2008: 8), developed over time and repetition, it is important to recognise they are never completely fixed (Peters, Kloppenborg and Wyatt 2010: 355). Rather, in real life the family's mobility practices, dynamic assemblages of human and non-human entities, are seldom static and solid but constantly changing and evolving in tandem with the dynamic socio-material context of the everyday life. From this perspective, this chapter turns to the second part of the analytical approach outlined in Chapter 3 and directs focus towards the everyday *performances* of the family's everyday mobility. This chapter argues that performances of mobility practices are active and dynamic *coping* processes where family members actively seek to produce stability and order and thereby temporarily render everyday family life accomplishable.

As presented in chapter 4, the performance of mobility practices is an open and "adaptive process in which living beings and their milieu are mutually shaped" that thereby "folds body and environment" (Bissell 2013: 122,126). Vannini (2012) makes us think of everyday mobility as performances and as O'Dell rightly points to, such mobility performances "do not just unfold in a simple predetermined and mechanical fashion; they have tempos and rhythms of their own that make them susceptible to change, but that even help people adapt to the ever-changing context of everyday life" (2009: 86). Family members draw on skills, resources and knowledge when adapting to contingencies and seizing opportunities as they arise in the on-flow of everyday life. This theoretical approach rests upon the notion that travelling is something that requires an effort being made, an achievement. This is echoed in the very word *travel*, which dates back to ancient Roman times and originates from "tripalium", a torture device, as at the time travelling was often torturous labour (Winchester 2004). Moreover, Urry points to a relationship to the Old French term "travail", meaning to work or labour (Urry 2007: 85). While these connotations are mostly forgotten today, the laborious effort of travelling still persists, although it is greatly diminished by modern technological advances. Indeed, performing everyday mobility and sustaining

production of elasticity takes work and skill and “[does] not just happen” (Jensen 2013: 5). Furthermore it is also important to notice that the labour of travelling in the family is not performed in isolation or by only some of the family members. Consequently, the successful performance of family mobility cannot solely be contributed to any one individual family member in particular. Rather, it is a collective effort, in which several family members often become involved in the “travail”. With inspiration from Vannini writings on everyday ferry mobilities, performing mobility in the family is a relational and collective achievement that requires on-going labour, “skill and careful handling of complex taskscapes” (2012: 182). Hence, the primary focus of this chapter is to explore and scrutinise the crucial but mostly unheeded labour family members put into preparing, coordinating, sustaining and doing their everyday mobility.

From this theoretical basis, the analysis of performing family mobility is realised in five sections. In sections 8-2 and 8-3 it is argued that performances of family mobility begin before the actual embodied moving in the planning, coordination and the preparatory labour that occur prior to setting out. By elucidating this, the analysis shows how the family’s *pre-travel* labour plays an integral role in the successfully interweaving of family mobility in the family taskscapes. Hence, through this labour, family members make everyday life work in everyday life and ensure the family’s needs for sociality, care and togetherness are managed by organising everyday life into “cold spots” and “hot spots” (Southerton 2003). In sections 8-4 and 8-5, the analysis explores the skilful labour family members engage in when embarking on everyday journeys and in particular how they excel at handling disruptions and contingencies through the dynamic weaving of transport systems, traffic flows and time. Finally, section 8-6 argues that production of elasticity is related to family members’ coordinative skills when performing everyday mobility. Hence the family’s extensive and on-going coordinative labour is not only necessary for successfully achieving and sustaining resonance within the family taskscapes, making everyday life in the family practically possible; their mobile micro-coordination is also used for maintaining social and emotional activities of care and togetherness.

## 8-2: PRE-TRAVEL PLANNING AND COORDINATION

The relational labour tied up in performing everyday mobility in the family is not only confined to the actual embodied performance of moving (Peters, Kloppenburg and Wyatt 2010, Jensen 2011). Rather it extends well beyond the embodied act of movement itself and involves various related tasks that enable successful coordinated movement of family members in their everyday lives. For instance, family members spend quite a lot of time planning and coordinating their everyday mobility and activity schedules prior to moving. Furthermore, there is a wide range of preparatory tasks distributed well before any actual bodily performance of mobility occurs, such as mentally preparing, gathering things for the journey, bag-packing, recharging mobile phones, checking timetables and itineraries, putting on suitable clothing, buying a coffee to go, saying



goodbyes and so on. The labour of planning and preparing are necessary elements coordinating the family's mobility and enabling it to interweave with other everyday practices and activities in the family taskscape. Hence the performance of mobility practices involves not only the actual embodied performance of physically moving, but also entails "preparing, scripting, regulating, recruiting, organizing, rehearsing, anticipating, strategizing, plotting backstage, boarding" (Vannini 2009: 245). This is what Peters, Kloppenburg and Wyatt term "pre-travelling" (2010: 361). To illustrate the planning and coordinative labour the family performs in pre-travelling, we might turn to the Bach family:

*SCENE 10*<sup>30</sup>:

*It is almost 9 pm on a Sunday night. Mille and Henrik's two children, Emma and Christian, are sleeping at last. "Wanna go over next week?", Henrik asks while sipping tea. He and Mille sit down at the dinner table in the kitchen with their family activity planner, each opening his or her calendar. Nearly every Sunday after the kids have been tucked in, they look over their own and the children's activities in the week to come and plan the week ahead. Their activity schedule usually stays the same every week and they know roughly who is picking up, what their activities are and when and where they are going. However, more detailed coordination needs to be worked out every week, as there may be changes in their work schedules or unusual activities.*

*Mille looks up from the calendar on her phone. "I'm going to Jutland this weekend", she says, "I won't be home until Sunday evening; the train arrives at 8 pm. You're to eat without me". Henrik nods. "It's gonna be a packed one next week", he declares, and continues, "I think we have to move or cancel dinner club on Thursday or you have to begin without me if I have to go to that parent-teacher thing". On top of the two unusual activities, they have the normal weekly activity schedule of swimming lesson Monday, gymnastics Tuesday and Friday, play date Wednesday, dinner club Thursday and (usually) shopping Saturday. While this pattern is fairly consistent, who escorts the kids is more fluid, as it also depends on the parents' work schedules. "So can you pick up Emma and drive her to swimming tomorrow?" Henrik asks. "You can take the car; I'll bike if it isn't raining". Mille looks at her calendar again. "Is it at 4? I might have a meeting; I'm not sure I can make it. I'll see if mom or dad can take Emma to swimming". "Sure...I think I have to work late Wednesday", Henrik states. "No problem, as long as I've got the car", Mille replies with a grin. Both of the parents can make due without the car, but when it comes to the children, their after-school activities and ad-hoc play dates are far easier with the car. Thus usually the car follows the children, except when Mille's parents, who have two cars, help out. "Is Mathilde's father driving them to gymnastics Tuesday?" Henrik inquires. "Yeah, I think so; I'll call him tomorrow". Henrik sighs, "It's gonna be a busy week..." as he gets up and hangs the family activity planner back on the fridge.*

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<sup>30</sup> Based on P1 and P2 interviews with the Bach family, own interpretation.

This picture of planning and coordination in the family is far from exceptional. Across the empirical material the families report tightly packed everyday activity schedules that necessitate negotiation and coordination. All of the families in the empirical study tend to do some level of planning for the ordering of family members and their activities. The extent and level of detail of this planning and coordinative labour, however, differ widely amongst the families. Most of them have a set of fixed activities that are repeated in weekly patterns. Usually this relatively stable socio-temporal order greatly aids the family in coordinating their weekly activities and making their spacing and timing achievable (Shove 2002: 5). In the Bach family this socio-temporal order is quite strong and prescribes most of the activities, their location and sequencing in the days of the week. This order often becomes, as Shove points to, a “‘social fact’ that exists beyond the [individual family member]” (2002: 5). If everything were to be re-negotiated from scratch week to week, the labour required in planning and coordinating everyday life in the family would indeed be insurmountable. Relying on experience, existing patterns and past ordering of activities is way of coping that reduces the “resources and energy required to coordinate even the simplest social encounter” (Shove 2002: 5).

Hence, with point of departure in this socio-temporal order, the family can be said to have a *base* organisation of the family taskscape from which negotiation and planning of the specificities of weaving in unusual activities (i.e. weekend trips or parent-teacher conferences) or changing existing activities (i.e. working late or cancellation of family activities) take place. This means intricate negotiation and coordination of both the spatial and temporal order of everyday practices and activities. The scope of this negotiation is not only the family’s activity schedule; it is also, as Peters, Kloppenburg and Wyatt stress, directly tied to the coordination of the “geographies of network members”, such as family members and significant others, “but also of their temporalities” (2009: 353). Hence the planning and coordination of a family taskscape requires taking into account the spatial distribution and synchronisation of family members in relation to others and their respective practices and activities. Crafting an achievable family taskscape entails ordering the family members’ daily geographies across the family in certain constellations that align with the spacing of their activities. However, being at the right place is not enough; obviously, this also needs to be temporally coordinated. Here it is fitting to recall Ingold’s remark, “the temporality of the taskscape, while it is intrinsic rather than externally imposed (metronomic), lies not in any particular rhythm, but in the network of interrelationships between the multiple rhythms of which the taskscape is itself constituted” (2000: 196). Resonance occurs in the coordinated and balanced spatial and temporal sequencing of family members and their daily tasks. Achieving this resonance is pivotal in creating an accomplishable socio-temporal order in the family’s everyday life.

Therefore, when planning and coordinating, the Bachs are attempting to weave a *virtual* family taskscape by matching geographies, sequencing and aligning the rhythms of family members and their practices and activities in everyday life, to be

actualised in the week to come. This also includes paying attention to rhythms that structure everyday activities. For instance, Mille's working hours: her late meeting is irreconcilable with Emma's after-school swimming lesson, which means another constellation is necessary. Hence juggling and achieving resonance among the multiple rhythms of working hours, opening hours, bus schedules, rush hour, naptimes, dinnertime and so on is a central part of planning and coordinating in the family. Moreover, the socio-temporal order in the family also includes detailed planning and coordination of a wealth of non-human materialities (see sections 7-5, 7-6 and 7-7). Hence the particular spacing and timing of the family's transport modes, bikes, cars, travel equipment, auto chairs, bike trailers, helmets, season tickets, bags, tablets, laptops, etc. is likewise negotiated and coordinated, as these are integral and essential elements in making everyday journeys possible and, ultimately, in the successful performance of everyday life (see Hui (2012) for an interesting account of objects on the move). Indeed, many of these materialities are scarce resources that often involve careful negotiation and strategic planning. The Bach parents explain how the car is a vital element in their everyday planning:

*Father: Often it's them [the children] who decide it, I think. It's the one who picks up who has the car. That's the classic way of deciding.*

*Mother: I think it's all about what you have to do. Who you have to pick up and what it is, how many children you have to bring home, it's always related to that.*

*Father: And if you have to drive them somewhere afterwards, right. If you are doing the 'gymnastics-round' [an arrangement with other parents to bring and pick up all the children to and from gymnastics practice].*

...

*Mother: I actually think it is a very deliberate choice every morning what transport mode each of us chooses.*

*Father: Often it's also ... well it's a negotiation, 'I drive there' or you agree on something.*

*Mother: But it relies very much upon what is going to happen during the day. In reality, the number one argument is really logistics. Family logistics of how we are going to transport ourselves during the day.  
(Bach Family P2)*

Depending on the specificities of the particular day—time schedules, activities, practicalities and obligations—they plan and coordinate the particular configuration

of the accompanying mobility practices to suit these conditions. As this couple states, modal choice is a deliberate and relational decision, which needs to fit into the “logistics” of the entire family. Although all of the families in the empirical material are engaged in some level of planning and coordination labour, the extent and level of detail at which this occurs differ substantially. Kerry Daly (2002) suggests that this may be understood as a continuum ranging from “formal” and highly structured to “informal”, minimal planning and negotiation style.

### FORMAL PLANNING STYLE

Some families pride themselves on having a thoroughly planned everyday life in which formal long-term, weekly and day-to-day planning are all essential tools in accomplishing and dealing with the complexity of everyday family life. The Bachs represent one such family in the empirical material. Each family has its own particular *planning style*, an explicit system of planning and coordination that is grounded in different combinations of planning tools and activities. For the Bachs, and other families in the empirical material with a formal approach to planning, this typically manifests in a “formalized negotiation process” of activities specifically aimed at planning and coordination (Daly 2002: 334). This includes activities such as the weekly planning meetings on Sunday evenings, day-to-day planning sessions over breakfast and evening debriefings and preparatory detail planning for the next day. At day-to-day planning sessions the specificities of spacing and timing of upcoming activities; intersections of family members; distribution of chores, obligations and pickups; sequencing of actions and alignment and synchronisation of family members, their activities and materialities, are discussed, planned and coordinated in advance. The family members also try to take into consideration potential scheduling conflicts, resource scarcity, double bookings and so on.

At this planning level, these highly structured families seek to create and maintain a relatively smooth and problem-free daily life without too many disruptive surprises by anticipating and managing risk and uncertainty and providing children with “continuous coverage” (Daly 2002: 335). As Daly points out, the formal approach to planning tends to involve a high level of cooperation between family members to maintain “the near-constant demand for planning and on-going ‘trade-offs’” (2002: 335). The Fisker family represents this *formal* type of planning:

*Daughter: We plan a lot, don't we?*

*Father: Let's say it this way, we're properly good at planning! We have a family calendar hanging out there; otherwise it's difficult to keep track of all the appointments, meetings, parent-teach meetings, board meetings ...*

*Daughter: I don't think it's too much, but I feel things are under control*

...

*Father: We're on top of things; we don't get surprised.  
(Fisker Family P1)*

Besides the formal planning and coordination sessions, this approach is also manifested in the use of physical and digital tools supporting a high level of control and information in the family's everyday life (see Southerton 2003). For long-term coordination, many of the families use visual yearly calendars, often in combination with monthly and weekly planners hung in strategic positions in their homes to keep track of upcoming events and arrangements. Others use, or complement this with, digital shared diaries. Such tools both serve the purpose of sharing information, coordination and negotiation and function as the family's collective memory of future events.

### INFORMAL PLANNING STYLE

At the other end of the scale are the families who refrain from strict and formal structures. These families rely on a much more fluid type of planning and manage daily life on a day-to-day basis, which often entails on-the-fly negotiation and coordination as disruptions and opportunities arise. In contrast to the formal approach, this represents an ad hoc strategy to planning and coordination. The families who adopt this informal approach have an increased tolerance for variance and uncertainty in day-to-day life. Some see planning as a waste of time to be minimised. The Lindborg parents, who represent this informal type of planning, discuss how they (do not) plan:

*Mother: We don't plan!*

*Father: No, that's true ...*

*Mother: Well...we don't.*

*Father: If we get an invitation, we say yes if we can go, and we invite if we feel like it.*

*Mother: We're rather impulsive.*

*Father: We shop for groceries the same day we eat. We never shop for tomorrow.*

*Mother: Well, I have tried it sometimes. But what if you don't feel like eating what you bought the day before? We don't have schedules or schemes; you and I aren't wired that way.  
(Lindborg Family P1)*

Even though planning is a contested activity some families would rather do without, none of them can completely avoid it. The families' own sense of how much they plan, whether they see themselves as structured formal planners or more spontaneous informal planners, is subjectively understood. Compared to their structured counterparts, the informal families have fewer fixed planning or coordination activities. This does not mean that families relying on informal planning are immersed in chaos and uncertainty in their everyday life, but rather that they often rely on a strong socio-temporal order that needs little coordinative and communicative labour to be maintained (Daly 2002: 334). Only when the explicit need for planning and coordination arises, for instance when they are confronted with a disruptive event, does informal planning materialise as on-the-fly micro-coordination, often performed at a distance facilitated by mobile communication, to compensate (Ling and Yttri 2002, Ling 2004). (See 8-6 for more on family micro-coordination in mobility performances.)

This touches upon the core difference between the two styles of planning and coordination, as formal planners proactively seek to anticipate, control and manage disruptions, events and practices in highly scripted plans, whereas informal planners reactively seek to contain, repair and readjust to disruptions as they occur. This does not mean, however, that families relying on formal planning refrain from ad hoc communication and micro-coordination. Disruptive events threatening to derail the socio-temporal order do, as Daly writes, “wash out different degrees of formality and [challenge] most [families] to consider a variety of situational conditions to work out an immediate solution” (2002: 335).

If planning and negotiation in the family is essentially about the sequencing, spacing and timing of everyday activities, then the instrumental dimension of the family's everyday mobility is not just an important aspect in the family's life, but is pivotal to the accomplishment of everyday life. The alignment of spatialities and resonance of temporalities amongst family members, activities and materialities in everyday life is mainly facilitated and actualised through the family's everyday mobility. Hence any accommodation of instrumental, social and emotional conditions (and the welfare of the family) in everyday family life is generally tied to the specific planning and coordination of family mobility. Although we might think of family members' mobility as activities in their own right, it is important not to lose sight of mobility's relationality and embeddedness in the family taskscape. This interrelatedness of the family's mobility with other practices plays a central role in understanding the emergent need for planning and coordination in the family. Family mobility is often performed collectively, but even solo mobility practices are always performed in relational concert with other family members. It is this embeddedness that requires on-going maintenance to run smoothly. For instance, the scene with the bike trailer is illustrative of the manifestation of this relationality in everyday practices and activities in the family (see section 7-5). There is always an emergent need for planning and coordinating the parents' mobility associated with escorting, picking up and dropping off children. The material coalition of the bike trailer assemblage is a sophisticated



way of aiding this relational coordination and easing the linking of parents' and children's mobility practices with activities such as kindergarten.

As explored in Chapter 7, the family's everyday mobility serves not only instrumental but also social and emotional purposes. Consequently, planning and coordination of everyday mobility is not reducible to the mere orchestration of the physical displacement of family members from one location to another. Often in planning and coordination, the social and emotional needs and wishes of family members are equally considered. Hence, in planning mobility, family members are engaged in the emotional work of managing needs, desires and wishes through the coordination and orchestration of mobile care, togetherness, in-betweens and affective atmospheres. Think for instance of the Nielsen family, who almost on a daily basis go on family shopping trips (see section 7-4). In the preceding planning and coordination of these daily shopping journeys, instrumental, social and emotional needs and wishes are enfolded; the performance comprises not only the instrumental movement of family members, but also a social and emotional encounter of mobile togetherness and mobile care. Hence, in addition to making everyday life function, the purpose of planning is often to ensure the physical co-presence of family members and carve out quality time in family everyday life. The mother in the Bach family agrees that their planning involves this quest for time:

*Yes, I find it a race against time to be able to have as much time together as possible. ... To be able to pick them [their two children] up before dinner and then they need showering and are going to bed. Just to get a bit more substance in it ... That takes up a lot of time.*  
(Bach Family P1)

Through the planning and coordination, family members are tasked with managing series of practical and instrumental tasks, converging them in *hot spots* to make time and space for socialising and family togetherness in *cold spots* (see section 4-7 for elaboration on Southerton's (2003) hot and cold spots). Therefore, the planning and coordination effort in the family is also emotional work, tied to the constant management of emotional needs and wishes for togetherness and intimacy, but also at times distance and freedom. Hence, through the maintenance of cold spots of familial activities, planning and coordination is vital in actualising a sense of family. Interestingly, as explored in the previous chapter, cold spots are not only organised at home around the dinner table or in front of the television, the settings Southerton (2003) mainly focuses on. Instead, the spatialities and temporalities in the family's mobility performances, such as in the car, performing the daily shopping trip as a family activity, or on the train, using the ride as quality time with the children (see sections 7-4 and 7-7), are often mobile socio-petal cold spots where family members (and sometimes significant others such as friends, kin, neighbours, colleagues, etc.) congregate and spend time together.

This analytical way of dissecting the planning and coordinative processes in the family may seem alien. Analytically representing (and reducing) the families' strategies for planning and coordination in the empirical material to just two opposing positions surely runs the risk of oversimplifying matters. None of the families in the empirical material can be clearly and distinctly positioned at either of the extremes; all fall somewhere in between on Daly's (2002) continuum from formal to informal, often mixing traits from both positions. Also, the empirical material suggests a level of fluidity in the family's approach to planning and coordination, as family members pragmatically adjust their level of detail in planning and coordination in response to their particular life situation. In some time periods families may experience more activities. For instance, more pressure at work or additional after-school activities might challenge the family's daily schedule, as new routines and practices need to be stitched into the family taskscape and require increased planning and coordination efforts. Indeed, getting a new job, adding extra hours in school or organising a "swimming deal" or a "gymnastics round" with other families (see sections 7-2 and 8-2), may increase or reduce the perceived need for planning and coordination to make everything run smoothly. Although for some families their style of planning and coordination seems to be a matter of preference, for most families specific and challenging conditions in their lives push them towards one style or the other. Such conditions could be due to unpredictable working hours that preclude advance planning and coordination efforts or to the social obligations involved in having young children.

### 8-3: SETTING OUT

Having explored how families plan and coordinate in everyday life, the significance of pre-travel labour in the making and performing of everyday mobility in the family emerges. Still, this only touches on a portion of the pre-travel efforts family members deal with in performing mobility. As departure closes in on carefully spaced and timed mobility practices, family members are tasked with further preparatory labour to ensure successful journeys.

Whether the journey is biking to work, driving to the local grocery store or having dinner with another family, one usually has a good sense of the interrelating mobility practices that are going to be performed. Rarely does one simply step out of the door completely unprepared, unsure of where to go, how to get there or why one is going. A journey always starts with an idea, or, as Watts writes, the "imaginary work of creating the destination" (2008: 713). Working backwards from this potential destination, one usually formulates an "'umbrella plan', an idiosyncratic constellation ... of stylistic, functional, procedural and economic considerations" (Ingold 2011: 54). The umbrella plan is the local and situational guidance of the yet-to-come performance of mobility. It is often routinized to such a degree that little thought is necessary. Nonetheless, there may be deviations from or alterations to the trivial performance of mobility that need to be accounted for and incorporated into the umbrella plan. Often there

may be local and temporal specificities in known potential disruptions to a mobility practice. For instance, scheduled roadwork, a postponed meeting or having to run an errand on the way might influence the umbrella plan. However, leaving the realm of the imagination, the labour that goes into making an umbrella plan is also, as Ingold states, a “mundane practical activity ... rather than a purely intellectual, ‘inside-the-head’ exercise” (2011: 54). To illustrate this labour we will turn to the case of the mother, Sigrid, from the Sørensen family:

*SCENE 11<sup>31</sup>:*

*It is early morning. Sigrid is running around the house. The others are still sleeping. She is gathering her things and packing a large handbag—the usual: phone, money, bus season ticket, makeup, hairbrush, work-related papers and laptop. With some room still left, she crams a lightweight paperback novel into the bag for killing time. She glances at the departure time on the printed train ticket and carefully folds it and puts it in the side pocket for easy access. She goes over the plan in her head: catch a bus, then track 5, carriage 72, window seat 12 in the quiet zone. She more or less knows the timetables of the bus, but double checks online anyway, just to be sure. She just needs her keys. They’re not on their usual spot; she searches some other bags and coats in the hallway. She tries to mentally backtrack to the whereabouts of her keys, without luck. Sigrid is going to Jutland for work, back and forth in one day. Her train departs from the central train station in Copenhagen in approximately 40 minutes. There is still time for finding the damn keys. Getting there by bus at this time of day takes only 15 minutes. Sigrid hates to be late and in a hurry, especially when it comes to taking the train. Usually she likes to have 15-20 minutes as a buffer, just to be able to switch and take a taxi or bike if the bus doesn’t show up or if something extraordinary happens. As she walks into the kitchen to grab some fruit, her eyes catches the keys sticking out from underneath a magazine. If the bus is on time it will be there in a couple of minutes. She quickly scans the hallway, hoping she remembered everything as she locks the door and strides down the stairs and into the street.*

Sigrid’s pre-travelling scene exemplifies some of the key moments of the umbrella planning and preparatory labour family members may engage in prior to departure. As Jain puts it, “Crossing the threshold of home, work, place of study or other point of departure, travellers are equipped for the journey (albeit in varying states)” (2009: 96). Usually family members perform a sequence of (often ritualised) acts and a gathering of things important and indispensable to the mobility practice and/or the destination. For instance, as Sigrid is leaving home she packs a bag with essentials such as her wallet, phone, keys, season ticket for the train, a novel and make-up; she also brings necessary things related to work. Often packing also involves bringing transitional objects, things that one may be emotionally attached to and that may ease the transition of travelling (see section 7-6). For children this may be a favourite toy, while for adults it may be a specific album of music on the iPod, a special coffee mug, or, as in

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*31 Based upon P1 interview with Sørensen family, own interpretation.*

Sigrid's case, a good novel. Prior to departure, various practical acts, such as putting on suitable clothes, checking oneself in the mirror, saying goodbye, double checking that everything is locked, turning off lights and (for many, like Sigrid) running around looking for misplaced items, are a normal part of getting out the door. There are often many such small acts associated with leaving home that in themselves form small-scale taskscapes that need to be accomplished to ensure a successful journey. Other places of departure have different sets of particular acts related to them. At work, these might be shutting down the computer, punching out and remembering personal items; at kindergarten these might be retrieving the empty lunchbox and finding a staff member to say goodbye to and on the bench in the park these might be reduced to looking around for dropped things before leaving. These are acts that serve a practical purpose, as they ensure everything is in order and prepared for departure. Often, however, situated acts associated with departures also take shape as rituals ingrained into family members' mobility performances, not only practically but also mentally and emotionally preparing themselves and others for the imminent transition. Hence pre-travel labour is also a way of emotionally coping with the anxieties of "anticipation" or "suspense", not knowing entirely what the future may bring or how a journey may unfold, that sometimes emerge ahead of setting out (Vannini 2012: 186).

Vannini (2012) writes that alongside anticipation and suspense, "tension" is a profound dimension in the performance of everyday mobility. Tension emerges from the "resistances to free movement" the traveller experiences when encountering disruptions on the move (Vannini 2012: 186-87). However, for travellers who are well aware of many such events and know their disruptive potential, a major part of the pre-travel labour revolves around anticipating disturbances and pre-emptively accommodating looming tensions in the journey to come. By doing so, the family member attempts to *fortify* his or her mobility practices by making them as resilient and flexible as possible. Some of the prime tactics family members in the empirical material rely on in fortifying their mobility practice configurations are installation of reserve time buffers, crafting specialised material coalitions and gathering knowledge and codified information. In the following paragraphs, each of these will be unpacked. Sigrid explains how, depending on the destination, family members incorporate time buffers into their pending mobility performances:

*It has to do with the fact that I hate being late. If I have to do something work-related then I plan it thoroughly. I like to be at the train station at least 20 minutes before the train departs in case something unexpected should happen. ... Typically I'd check the bus schedule, choosing a departure that would allow me to have time for taking the bike, a taxi or something else [and still make it in time]. I think a lot about making things fit together. Also, we have to be at the school [dropping off the children] at 8 in the mornings, and then it's important to get out of the door, but everything else can be loosely planned, unless you have something work-related early in the morning...*  
(Jensen Family P1)

In inserting extra time, family members are able to “exchange” (Peters, Kloppenburg and Wyatt 2010: 363) reserve time in the event of unforeseen disruptions and delays, and negotiate their journey without compromising their destination. Depending on the activity—school, the departure of a train, etc.—time buffers are configured differently. “[T]he length of these safety margins”, as Schwanen notes, “is traded against the expected travel time and penalty of late arrival” (2008: 997).

Besides utilising time as a protective resource, family members fortify their mobility performances through the inclusion of materialities. As illustrated in the previous chapter, the family constructs various material coalitions, as in the bike trailer scene (see section 7-5), capable of dealing with contingencies and disruptions. However, equipping children with artefacts such as season travel tickets, money and mobile phones may also be understood as an effective measure for averting disruptions to mobility performances. Modes of transport are also material resources for exchange. Depending on the particular conditions in the family’s life and the sequence, timing and geography of activities, different modes of transport hold varying capacities for absorbing contingencies. Some family members prefer the car as *the kit* in everyday life, while others prefer the bike (see section 7-5). However, fortification of mobility in the family is not an individual endeavour, but a relational achievement, as resources are negotiated and shared across the family. Sometimes, allowing for more liability in one mobility performance can be part of fortifying other higher prioritised and more vulnerable mobility performances, and therefore be beneficial to the welfare of the entire family:

*Both of us can manage one way or the other without the car. That means it's the needs of the children that decide who has the car. I can just as well take the train if Mille needs to use the car.  
(Bach Family P2)*

This underscores that the pre-travel labour of planning and coordination is a collective achievement in which it is not “atomised individuals that manage uncertainty about the duration of activities and trips, but rather, assemblages of agents” (Schwanen 2008: 999). Family members are not only thinking of themselves and their individual activities. Rather, family members, especially parents, often work hard to ensure relatively safe and unhindered passage for all family members, which typically only becomes possible through making compromises and accepting sometimes less-than-optimal conditions for the individual.

Finally, the preparatory labour of fortifying mobility performances often includes gathering knowledge and information prior to departure. This entails checking calendars, plans, itineraries, timetables, connections, schedules and appointments. To the experienced traveller, such as Sigrid, such details are mostly common knowledge, but are often double-checked, as mistakes or misreading could easily jeopardise the entire performance of the mobility practice. This is done by consulting

or confirming with others, or, as Sigrid does, by retrieving “codified information” from transportation timetables, travel scheduling websites, route planner and wayfinding apps and so on (Peters, Kloppenburg and Wyatt 2010: 361). Although this labour prior to departure is often miniscule, as most travellers have extensive knowledge and experience of their mobility practices, it should not be diminished, as it is essential in both preparing and fortifying everyday journeys. Hence the pre-travelling phase is of the utmost importance for the successful accomplishment of family mobility. Drawing on past experiences, the family members’ preparatory efforts at fortification effectively make room for manoeuvring that in the event of disruption or breakdown can be utilised as a resource to reconfigure and redirect the trajectory of the mobility performance (Peters, Kloppenburg and Wyatt 2010: 363). However, the measuring of time buffers, instalment of material coalitions and retrieval of information rests on more than rational economic calculations; often, fortifying tactics also have emotional importance, as they are comfortable reassurances that emotionally shape the journey and aid family members in coping with tensions and anxieties while travelling.

### THE PERFORMANCE OF SETTING OUT

As Sigrid walks out the door of the family’s apartment, a new stage in her mobility performance begins. Setting out is a crucial moment in any journey. This is when all the preparatory labour of umbrella planning, gathering of stuff, last-minute configuration, coordination and retrieving of information is put in motion and actualised in the performance of mobility. Ingold points to this transition as a critical one, “at which rehearsal ends and performance begins” (2011: 54). The departure is a liminal stage in the performance of mobility in which the body is both physically and mentally set into motion, “marked by a switch of perspective, from the encompassing view of the umbrella plan to a narrow focus [on the journey unfolding]” (Ingold 2011: 54).

Often setting out into everyday mobility practices marks a *point of no return*. The plan has been set in motion and mobility performance has begun; the mobile subject quickly becomes practically *locked in* and has to proceed at least to the next train station, bus stop or traffic junction, where one can get off or turn around. A turnaround, however, does not come without cost, as everyday mobility performances are normally tightly interrelated and interwoven and interlocking with other activities and practices, and cannot easily be untangled. Altering the trajectory and reconfiguring mobility practices after setting out is often troublesome and may mean missing a train or a connection, being late for an activity or cancelling one altogether, depending on the installed safety margins. Yet, when reversal and reconfiguration of a mobility performance happen, they are usually negotiated through the exchange of resources implanted through umbrella planning into the mobility practice (see Schwanen 2008). Hence, as family members set off on their everyday journeys and their preparatory labour is set into motion, as one father tellingly states, the plan often starts to “liquefy” (Jensen Family P1). The moment one step out the door, all the planning and coordination changes from



a coherent and theoretical construct into an open and practical engagement with the world. Although the umbrella plan is highly attentive to the family's actual situation and usually takes all kinds of circumstances, needs and wishes into consideration, mobility practices seldom play out completely as expected. No matter how complex it may be, an umbrella plan is at best only tentative. As Peters, Kloppenburg and Wyatt state, "planned passages and projects will differ from the situated practices" (2010: 362), and without diminishing the importance of the pre-travelling labour, it is through the embodied performance of mobility that family members are continuously responsive to disruptions, contingencies and circumstances as they emerge. Disruptions threaten not only to destabilise the family's mobility as instrumental movement, but also impair its ability to function as a social and emotional space of mobile togetherness and/or mobile in-betweens. The chapter will now progress through the liminal experience of setting out and adjust its focus towards the skilled and creative embodied performances necessary to the successful accomplishment of everyday family mobility.

#### **8-4: DISRUPTIONS AND SKILFUL MOBILITY PERFORMANCE**

To this point the chapter has reviewed the family's laborious planning, coordinating, negotiating and preparing efforts, which effectively and forcefully arrange most of the family's everyday mobility in terms of when, where, how and by whom. Although the socio-temporal order in the family is closely related to and strongly shapes the family's mobility practices, it is often organised at a distance, prior to the actual performance of the mobility practices. While the pre-travel labour is a crucial aspect in the successful accomplishment of both the family members' everyday mobility and their practices and activities in everyday life, any pre-conceived script can only anticipate and accommodate some of the disruptions, instability, uncertainty and openness in the everyday. Hence, as a family member embarks on an everyday journey, she may have some idea of what it will look like, how it should be performed and what disruptions and resistances to expect, but she never quite knows what may occur as the journey unfolds. There is always uncertainty in how things play out, or as Vannini puts it, "No event can ever unfold the same way twice; no series of actions—no matter how routinized—can be reassembled in identical combinations. Differing situations, differing relationships, different permutations of action give rise to different potentialities and different actualizations, leaving a space and a time for something else, something unplanned or unexpected, to happen" (2012: 183). Consequently, every time family members engage in performances of everyday mobility practices, such as commuting to work or picking up children, they are faced with a swarm of potentialities that may or may not be actualised (Harrison 2000). Thus we may think of these alternatives as continuously creating "a space and a time for something else ... to happen" that may be called into existence or may stay in the virtual, depending on how practices are performed (Vannini 2012: 183). This open-endedness, the inability to entirely anticipate or predict what exactly is going to happen, and the consequent latent risk of failure, endows the performance of mobility with "elusiveness" (Vannini 2012: 183).

So, thinking of the performance of mobility practices as the meticulous playing out of pre-conceived, stable scripts and umbrella plans sometimes impeded by contingencies or disruptions wrongly leaves the impression that mobility performance is mostly static and solid. Instead, it is fruitful to think of the performance as a skilful, organic and on-going dynamic adaptation that interacts with the nexus of openings and possibilities, contingencies and disruptions in the in the flow of everyday life. Therefore, everyday mobility performances can be understood as open-ended and *living* processes rather than static, *dead* repetitions (Edensor 2007, Binnie et al. 2007, Trentmann 2009, Bissell 2013). Thus as family members perform mobility they are not mindlessly enacting pre-conceived scripts, but are continuously responding to possibilities and contingencies as they arise on their journeys, ready to adapt and conform their mobility performance to the dynamic everyday world they are part of. Such practical engagement in moving requires family members to exert great effort, and therefore mobility performances should not be trivialised, as they are “hard-wrought accomplishments requiring skill and careful handling of complex tasksapes” (Vannini 2012: 182).

Without this labour of constantly adapting to changing conditions and situations throughout everyday mobility, there would be little chance of holding mobility practices together, and there would soon be a breakdown. When sudden and abrupt disruptions emerge somewhere in a mobility practice assemblage, they generate the instant need for adaptation in order to keep moving. Hence performing everyday mobility in the family, whether it is driving the kids to soccer practice or going to work, is always a *making* process, “whereby ‘making’ refers to successful performance of one’s task” (Vannini 2012: 163). In the following paragraphs it will be argued that performances of mobility require creativity, skill and knowledge. This will be illustrated through the everyday journey to school of Trine, the 18-year-old daughter in the Nielsen family:

*SCENE 12*<sup>32</sup>:

*People are starting to look at each other. The metro has been at a standstill at Islandsbrygge station for 5 minutes now. Trine pauses her audiobook and glances at her watch; it’s only 7.30 am. No stress yet, plenty of time to get to school. If only the metro would get moving! Trine lives at Amager with her parents, but attends a school across Copenhagen at Østerport twice a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Today is Thursday, and usually Trine would take the metro three stops and then change to the 1A express bus, which takes her to Østerport.*

*Trine starts going over alternatives in her head. Although the metro rarely breaks down, she knows how to get around. People are starting to get off the metro. Trine gets up and walks out the door onto the concourse of the metro station. No service announcement yet, but she can hear others talking about technical failure. Service personnel are almost absent from the Copenhagen Metro, as the trains are driverless and conductors only periodically check for tickets. Hence there are no personnel in*

<sup>32</sup> Based on P1 interview with the Nielsen family, own interpretation.

*sight. She gets on the metro in the other direction; maybe if she goes back to another station she can get on another train in the right direction.*

*She gets off at the station she originally departed from and looks around. The announcement board has been updated now, stating that the northbound line is “temporarily out of service”. Luckily she got out the door early this morning. It’s 07:40 now, no time to waste. She quickly makes up her mind and sets off to the nearby bus stop. As she gets there the 33 arrives. She smiles; she is quite lucky in not having to wait. She gets on board without any hesitation. Trine knows most of the bus lines, where the bus stops are, their itineraries and schedules. She gets off at Tivoli and crosses the street to catch a 1A, as she was supposed to do in the first place. No need to stress about the 1A, it runs all the time with busses only a few minutes apart at this time of day. With a couple of minutes to spare, Trine gets off at Østerport and starts walking towards her school.*

This scene is what Vannini refers to as a “drama” (2012: 38) unfolding in the mobility performance. What Trine experiences in the midst of listening to an audiobook on her way to school is a technical breakdown in the metro system that is part of her mobility practice, causing disruption to her journey. In her case, however, this does not equal a breakdown in her mobility practice. Although Trine is momentarily forced to a standstill by the metro, she adapts to the situation by actively reconfiguring her mobility practice, making it to school in time. Thus this scene is illustrative of thinking about mobility as a series of convergences of “crossing points, bifurcations, irretrievable events ... and choices along a movement path” (Vannini 2012: 186) prompting action. The breakdown forces Trine to make decisions to ensure her continued movement, and thereby she weaves her way through the unfolding drama. Although a breakdown in the Copenhagen Metro<sup>33</sup> is not an everyday event, travelling in the city’s transport systems is seldom completely smooth and without disruptions or breakdowns. In fact, though it may sound overly exotic and dramatic, the families in the empirical material are constantly exposed to and dealing with convergences of disruptive events, intersection of rhythms, irretrievable breakdowns and sudden temptations that can cause family members to swerve, change trajectory or halt in their mobility performances.

Trine’s travel scene illustrates how complex and sophisticated mobility practices, as amalgamations of multiple elements taking part in the accomplishment of everyday life, are inherently open, and are often quite fragile and susceptible to disruption. While moving, one is not separate from these elements, which are purposively brought together and specifically configured to render practical, social and emotional spaces of mobility possible. As Peters, Kloppenburg and Wyatt write, “all elements have a role in accomplishing [the mobility performance], but this also means that each element

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<sup>33</sup> In 2013 the 54 million travellers using the Copenhagen Metro experienced 98 % of all departures on time (METRO 2014).

can potentially disturb the order” (2010: 355). Therefore, the very elements that facilitate and engender family mobility, whether they be a family member, the metro, a specific route or an electronic travel card, can also inhibit, delay or disrupt mobility should family members be incapacitated by illness, the metro malfunction, the route close for roadwork or the travel card run out of credits. These are indeed tricksters that can never be fully controlled (see section 7-5). Mobility and immobility are, as Cresswell tells us, “a product of a multitude of human/environment interfaces” (2006: 167). Hence the social and material environment in which everyday life takes place continuously takes part in family members’ performance of mobility. Disruptions are therefore not something external to the mobility performance that can easily be avoided or bypassed; instead they are always internal and intricate to the envelope of the mobility performance, requiring skilful and creative attention to process (Bissell 2013).

Reiterating briefly from chapter 4, disruptions and breakdowns are a normal part of quotidian life (see Graham (2014) for more on everyday disruptions). Many of these do indeed originate from the many technical systems, such as the metro, that are interwoven into and empower the family’s everyday mobility practices. Mishaps, accidents and breakdowns in these complex technical transport systems, such as congestion in the morning car commute, delays in bus services and cancellations of trains, are what Perrow terms “normal accidents” (in Hannam et al. 2006: 8). Or, as Trentmann argues, we should neither romanticise nor belittle breakdowns as only being “temporary”, “external” and “irritating”, since they are a “systemic part of everyday life” (Trentmann 2009: 80). Complex systems are especially vulnerable to such *normal accidents* and breakdowns, which often have unpredictable results and consequences (Urry 2007: 59). As these everyday transport systems are deeply ingrained in ordinary everyday mobility, one such consequence is naturally the disruption of personal mobility practices, such as the stalling of passengers like Trine in the metro. However, disruptions cannot simply be reduced to technical and system failures. Adopting a broader and more profound understanding elucidates how disruptions occur at every level in the performance of mobility. (This was further explained in section 4-3.) It encompasses the miniscule and trivial disruptions that constantly occur, for instance, when negotiating a passage as one is confronted with people and other physical obstacles in walking down the street. (See Jensen (2013: chapter 7) for a detailed account of “walking negotiation techniques”.) Bodily disruptions such as sickness, discomfort, shortness of breath or simply tiredness may also disrupt mobility (Edensor 2007: 212). As part of the body, the mind may also disrupt mobility through mental states such as stress, boredom or succumbing to “burnout effects” as habits become too much (Ehn and Löfgren 2009, Bissell 2013: 126). There are several accounts in the empirical material of family members suddenly and impulsively reconfiguring mobility practices on the move in aversion to stagnating habits. The Lindborg parents spoke of variations in their everyday mobility:

*Father: Yes, I vary it [his mobility practices], I like to vary it ...*

...

*Mother: You take different routes when you drive to the city. When you drive me, we don't always go the same way. For instance, when we drive to your work you don't always drive the same way.*

*Father: That's right. I have different options. I have different options that I alternate between, mostly for the sake of variation, I guess. And maybe it's also intuition; I sense the traffic is more advantageous.*

*Mother: Like another taxi driver ...*

*Father: Yeah! Over time you come to know your city, but also simply for the sake of variation ...  
(Lindborg Family P1)*

This disruption of the father's mobility practice is triggered by an urge to escape uniformity. Also, the father suggests these variations are an attempt to adapt to the mobile situation as it unfolds by anticipating and orientating his movement towards the traffic.

As disruptions are *normal* they become "infra-ordinary" (Moran 2007: 3) aspects that entangle with everyday practices. Many disruptions in everyday life are skilfully dealt with reflexively, in the background of the consciousness, when performing mobility. Like the father's handling and negotiation in motion of traffic, "we are rarely aware of our mobilities ... we seldom cognatize our everyday mobility" (Adey 2010: 136). Only when confronted with disruptions that push beyond a certain threshold and severely inhibit the performance of the mobility practice does the demand for conscious attention emerge, as in the case of Trine and the metro breakdown. However, everyday mobility is mostly run on "autopilot" (Middleton 2011), which "sets the mind or body free for other parallel activities" (Ehn and Löfgren 2009: 99) such as socialising in mobile togetherness or relaxing or working in mobile in-betweens. Moreover, the father's account also challenges the assumption that all disruptions are negative. Trentmann importantly argues, "disruptions and breakdowns are relative and experienced subjectively" (2009: 70). Different people may perceive disruptions, i.e. traffic congestion, very differently. Such incidents may trigger *road rage* (see Jack Katz (1999) or Keith Sharp (2009) for accounts on road rage) in some while they may be regarded by others as holding the potential of welcomed pause, a mobile in-between, in a busy life (see section 7-6). Indeed, the father's creative weaving in and out of alternate routes in his mobility performance, avoiding immobility and congestion, seems to create a playful and recreational in-between, providing a sense of satisfaction at being able to skilfully handle his mobile situation. Surely for others driving around

in rush hour traffic is not only stressful, but also an aggravating experience. Hence disruptions not only stop, suppress and restrict but can also sometimes present openings, possibilities or potentials.

### SKILLS INVOLVED IN PERFORMING EVERYDAY MOBILITY

The successful performance of mobility requires the skill to sense disruptions before or as they occur and to respond accordingly. Thus the performance of mobility is a making process in which the mobility practice is constantly being crafted. When Trine told her story in the interview, she conveyed no sign of finding any of the adaptations she made in her mobility practice extraordinary or unfamiliar. The incident itself, the breakdown of the metro, was surely an unaccustomed event, but the steps she then took to consolidate her mobility performance came naturally to Trine. In fact, during the interview she almost skipped over the details of her alternative mobility practice simply because handling interruptions and disruptions in mobility is a commonplace challenge, something Trine constantly and almost reflexively deals with in her daily mobility and pays no special heed to.

Nonetheless, the art of identifying and steering clear of trouble (as with identifying and actualising opportunities) is a profound part of performing everyday mobility in an emergent environment where potential possibilities and disruptions loom everywhere. Hence the successful making of everyday mobility lies not only in gathering or constructing mobility practices, but also in bringing them to life in skilful and creative performances. Or, as Vannini puts it, “Passages are thus not forms generated by passengers’ mental activities and exhaustive rational planning, but rather the outcome of adaptive practice of travellers and their emergent problem-solving” (2012: 174). Furthermore, Vannini suggests that the performance of mobility may be analytically approached as three profound “manifestations of skill” (2012: 163).

First, the orientation skill denotes the ability to negotiate the surrounding environment where the mobility is taking place, interacting with time and space. The *orientation skill* is a way of handling dynamic and ever-changing situational circumstances as they occur. An example of this is Trine’s journey. She negotiates her way by interacting with her surroundings, orienting herself to different sources of information: what mobile others are doing, how they react to the breakdown and the information displays. She navigates with ease to the nearest bus stop that can connect her and get her back on track.

Second, *the reflexive movement skill* covers the “care, judgement, and dexterity” that goes into reading and revising the “lines of action as the journeys ... unfold” (Vannini 2012: 163). This skill underscores the uncertainty, contingency and disruptions inherent in moving in the world and the elusiveness of mobility practices. No matter how well planned and thought out a journey may be, sticking blindly to the plan



is seldom an option. Based on orientation and information, Trine reads the mobile situation and is able to act swiftly, making fast, almost reflex decisions, not wasting time, and altering the trajectory of her mobility performance.

Third, *the adaptive skill* illustrates the dynamic and organic relational hold of the embodied performance and the socio-material environment. It emphasises the gradual accumulation and sedimentation of knowledge and experience in the performance of everyday mobility. Hence “memories of countless journeys past inform” the family’s constantly evolving mobility practices, in addition to the on-going coordination with and response to the surrounding environment (Vannini 2012: 186). In the re-ordering of her journey, Trine taps into her prior experience of using the metro and the bus system. Over time spent using public transportation, through the events such as this breakdown, Trine has gained experience in anticipating, reading and handling disruptions like this.

These three *mobility skills* aid family members in handling the open and volatile nature of performing mobility because they enhance attentiveness and responsiveness to potentials and possibilities and to contingencies and disruptions as they occur along the way. Through these skills family members show *opportunism*, making needed improvisations and revisions in their mobility performances by creatively actualising and weaving in possibilities while circumventing and weaving out unwanted disruptions as they unfold (Anderson and Harrison 2010: 8).

Becoming a skilled and expert mobility performer does not happen over night. Acquiring and honing mobility skills is a slow-creep process that takes time and practice. For Trine, the bus system is her preferred way of getting around in Copenhagen. As she explains, “Gradually I’ve learned the different stops on a lot of bus routes—sometimes it’s just the timetables I have to check” (Nielsen Family P1). Over time, local knowledge and mobility skills gradually are gradually deposited in the body as a “kinaesthetic intelligence” (Adey 2010: 144) that can be brought into play without conscious thought if necessary. When performing mundane mobility such as crossing the street, moving through a crowded train car or driving on the highway in rush hour traffic, the seasoned mobile subject is sensitive to subtle aspects, like moods and tensions, signs of change in the traffic, while crafting skilled and fluid mobility. The ability to manage micro-movements and gestures through negotiations in motion (Jensen 2012: 138-53), kinaesthetically sensing physical orientation, position and movements (Adey 2010: 140-45) and being able to anticipate movement and the unfolding journey (Vannini 2012: 186-87) are examples of sensitivities in everyday mobility that the experienced mobile subject’s sensory registers are attuned to. Through repeated enactments of the mobility, these micro sensitivities are trained and gradually improved. Hence the performance of mobility can be understood as an on-going learning process that eventually “leads to more ‘successful’ future journeys where flow is more confident and seamless” (Jain 2009: 96).

Throughout the rest of the chapter the analysis will be devoted to arguing that these mobility skills and their manifestations in the performance of family mobility practices are essential in coping with everyday life. This means addressing the family members' everyday methods, their *ways of doing* mobility performances.

## 8-5: WEAVING TRANSPORT SYSTEMS, TRAFFIC FLOWS AND TIME

During a mobility performance, through use of the movement skills outlined above, family members actively anticipate, adjust and make decisions by reading the mobile situation as it unfolds. This “mobile sense making” (Jensen 2013: 138) process is continuous and permeates the mobility performance and the mobile situation. In this process multiple bodies, human and non-human, are arranged and rearranged in interaction with each other and the environment, negotiating movements and dynamically orientating and aligning bodies and trajectories in the accomplishment of mobility practices. Hence, as mentioned earlier, the performance of everyday mobility does not simply happen, nor it is in any way separate from the technologies, systems and environments in which it takes place. As Watts and Lyon write, travellers “are inseparable from its bus stops, stations, waiting rooms, paths, doorways, cafes, tickets, online booking systems, and so on” (2008: 15). Journeys never happen in a frictionless vacuum; rather they are performed in a socio-material world that constantly *pushes back*. Therefore, a great deal of effort in terms of skill, knowledge and equipment goes into handling the physical environments and flows of mobile others in which the use of transport technologies and travel take place (Watts and Lyon 2008: 15). Regardless of what transport mode and transport system are brought into the family members' mobility practices, particular and specialised competencies and local knowledge are required for crafting successful journeys.

One of the main challenges of performing mobility in urban areas such as Copenhagen is handling the flows of traffic and mobile others within transport systems. O'Dell argues that mobility performances “are embedded in a wealth of ritualized activities that we normally take for granted (concerning such practices as boarding buses, finding seats, maintaining social distance, etc.) that need to be maintained even in shifting conditions, such as those caused by overcrowding” (2009: 88). Dealing with this reality means being able to handle oneself in the flow of mobile others, which requires theoretical knowledge of formal rules and regulations. However, without coupling this theoretical knowledge with local knowledge of cultural specificities and norms of a particular situated mobility in what Jensen terms “mobility knowledge” (Jensen 2013: 90)—examples include the informal codes and social conventions of boarding and seating a bus (see Jain 2009), train commuting (see O'Dell 2009), gathering for a ferry (see Vannini 2011) and rush hour car driving in Copenhagen—any mobility performance would quickly degenerate into chaos.

For instance, as illustrated in the scene with Cecilie and her two boys riding the train to their grandparents' (see section 7-7), performing mobility is concurrently a public, social and cultural encounter that requires the utmost attentiveness to the situation, the social conduct of mobile others, awareness of codes and conventions and what is perceived as *good* or at least *acceptable* behaviour. Through their mobility performance Cecilie and her children co-orchestrate a specific affective atmosphere, transforming their train ride into a recreational in-between of mobile togetherness. However, to maintain this, Cecilie and her children have to skilfully weave their performance in relation to the (mobile) others in the train, their own entertainment equipment and the physical makeup of the train car. In doing so they reflexively adapt to the social and mobile situation as it unfolds, not overstepping the social conventions of the train ride in this particular context.

Hence, throughout the mobility performance, the orchestration of the mobile atmosphere is constantly subject to negotiation among the mobile subjects in the train compartment. Therefore, as O'Dell points out, we can also think of such mobility performances as "a jungle of micro-mobilities in which the social order and the sanctity of one's own identity are ever threatened, and on the brink of oblivion, as bodies are jammed together, jarred around, intermixed and hurled forward along the trajectory of the tracks" (O'Dell 2009: 89). While such an image is a bit extreme, it stresses the point that mobility performances, especially in public modes of transportation, always are social encounters charged with power struggles and performances to be negotiated in motion. Although rupture of the mobile atmosphere would not impair the instrumental displacement of getting Cecilie and their boys to their destination, it could be devastating for maintaining the train ride as a recreational in-between of mobile togetherness. As Bissell(2009) shows, there is a fine line between sociality of cohesion and conflict in performances of public mobility with close proximity to mobile others, such as in a train compartment. And consequently, "these forms of sociality that emerge whilst on the move [are] important because they influence the particular type of atmosphere that is produced ... [and] impacts on what travel time can be put to use for" (Bissell 2009: 66).

Furthermore, local knowledge of social conventions and the active formation of sociality are not the only factors that go into crafting a successful mobility performance. Most of the family members in the empirical material who move within the urban context on a regular basis also display sensitivity to the rhythms of traffic flows in and around their mobility performances. Those who use the car regularly in their mobility performances, especially, exhibit practical knowledge of temporalities and spatialities of traffic rhythms. Take for instance the scene of Mikkel commuting to and from work in the car (see section 7-6). Mikkel's journey, both as an instrumental way of getting back and forth and as a mobile and recreational in-between in his busy schedule, is made possible through his skilful performance of himself and the car in relation to the extensive automobility transport system he takes part in. To emphasise this, Mikkel's statement from the previous chapter is reiterated (see section 7-5):

*If I know there might be some traffic problems when I drive to the day care, I listen to the radio. Instead of driving up Roskildevej and to Ballerup, then I can go the opposite direction, you could say, towards Roskilde and to Ballerupgrenden and that way ... Or if I'm on the motorway and I can see it's blocked, then I sometimes go another way. I always drive the same way on the way home because there's rarely much traffic. It's the same route, but the traffic jams are more likely in the mornings because of accidents. The route home is usually the same because it's the fastest.*

*(Hartmann Family P1)*

While the traffic itself is outside Mikkel's control, he can dynamically adjust and accommodate his trajectory to make his journey as smooth and fast as possible. However, this requires a honed reflexive movement skill in order to read or sense the situation and act in response. Over time and repeated car journeys Mikkel has developed a high level of expertise in driving in the area; he has gotten to know the infrastructure, the main routes, the back roads and the short cuts. Every time Mikkel gets into the car for his commute, he is actively tapping into and adding to his constantly evolving local system knowledge of driving.

Recall the father, Bent, from the Lindborg family (see section 8-4) and how he enjoys driving in the city. He actively weaves variations into the routes of his ordinary mobility practices. As he explains, "I have different options. I have different options that I alternate between, mostly for the sake of variation I guess. And maybe it's also intuition, I sense the traffic is more advantageous" (Lindborg Family P1). To him, even slowdowns, disruptions and accidents in the flow of traffic have become a normal and mundane aspect of his performance, something he expertly senses and reflexively handles by rerouting his drive. This also emphasises the aspect of *playfulness* in performing mobility. Such skilful and playful mobility performances as the father's drive through the city towards his destination "subvert the seriousness of mundane travel, lighten the emotional load of responsibility, and deny the consequentiality of strategic planning" (Vannini 2012: 185). When performing his car-based mobility practice, he is effectively weaving in and out elements as he senses resistances and opportunities emerge, almost instinctively negotiating his way with relative ease. Hence the skills and competencies associated with mobility are not binary values. Rather they can be mastered at many levels, for some resulting in playful and "relatively free-spirited" (Vannini 2012: 185) approaches to mobility performance that alleviate the boredom of the mundane, while for the novice the same mobility might become hectic and stressful. Hence, echoing an earlier claim, mobile subjects always perceive disruptions and contingencies subjectively, at varying levels of experience and through the practice of a particular transport system, thus the visceral and affective feel of a journey can be experienced completely differently.

## TIMING MOBILITY

The skilful negotiation of traffic that goes into performing everyday mobility cannot be reduced to local knowledge of the infrastructural system. Indeed, this knowledge lies in the actualisation of the reflexive movement skill coupled with both the awareness of clock time and a sense of the rhythms of traffic flows. The mother of the Møller family explains how this affects one of her daily mobility practices:

*Mother: I always drive this way when it's early in the morning. I leave the house at a quarter past seven; then there isn't much traffic.*

*Father: If she drives 15 minutes later, she takes another route ...*

*Mother: Then I take another route. But in the mornings, there isn't very much traffic so I'm able to drive this way. When I drive home I can drive two different routes. If I leave work at 4 pm then there's usually heavy traffic and I'll continue all the way down here by the lake [pointing on a map].*

*(Møller Family P1)*

The mother is keenly aware of the rhythms of traffic flows, how they fluctuate during the day and the week, and on what routes and where to expect congestion. Extensive local knowledge of the layouts of infrastructural systems, the density and locality of traffic flows and their modulation in relation to clock time, day of the week and season greatly amplify the efficacy of the reflexive movement skill. With this knowledge, the mother is able to fine-tune her mobility practice at a detailed level. Most drivers in the empirical material state that they rely on the car radio to continuously update them with the current traffic situation. The sharing of local knowledge is also a widespread phenomenon in most of the family members' social and professional networks. People informally exchange details of their commuting practices, knowledge of roadwork and displacement of traffic flows as they share tips and tricks over lunch at work, while picking up the kids at kindergarten or over the dinner table (Jarvis 1999). Hence the adaptive skill, the slow-creep accumulation of local knowledge, is sharpened not only through mobility performance alone, but also through social networks and codified information sources. Consequently, through the orientation and reflexive movement skills, family members are able to use their mobility knowledge of informal codes and conventions, the spatialities of the urban infrastructure and the temporalities and rhythms of traffic flows in creatively crafting successful passages.

This practical and local knowledge is naturally not limited only to car drivers. All modes of travel—biking, walking, running, train and bus riding etc.—have associated detailed theoretical and practical knowledge. However, whereas car-based mobility practices are loosely shaped by the rhythms of traffic at particular times of day, public-transport-based mobility practices are often strictly temporal and spatial, structured

by timetables and the geographies of lines of service. Obviously, users of public transport have less influence on time of departure and arrival than drivers, and need to rely on and comply with the fixity of timetables in making and performing mobility. Thus, the family members who use public transport modes do pay particular attention to punctuality as imposed by universal clock time by learning the timetables and rhythms of their transport system or combinations of transport systems as “scheduled departures are always haunted by the possibility of mishap and the emergence of unpredictability” (Vannini 2012: 187).

One of the ways in which family members in the empirical material handle punctuality is through the timing of the mobility performance. To successfully perform mobility one needs to be able to negotiate the sequencing and timing of one’s physical locality. For instance, catching a bus or connecting between two trains entails being at the right place, a bus stop or a train station, at the right time, at least a few moments before departure, which makes mobility performance just as much about spacing and timing as it is about getting there (Shove 2002). The seasoned bike-riding father in the Jensen family explains:

*I just take the bike. Also when I’m going from work to the station [train]. I know it takes exactly ten minutes. I just need to be there a couple of minutes before to get the train and get seated. I know I can wait until there is 15 minutes left and then I can run out of work and bring the last documents with me. Then I don’t need to take the S-train from Nørreport, worrying about how long time it takes or if it’s stuck ... That’s freedom.  
(Jensen Family P1)*

Thus through the father’s engagement with everyday mobility he has acquired an acute sense of timing and instinctively knows not only how to get back and forth from the family’s daily activities but also exactly how long it takes. Indeed, as he also states, being able to master the art of timing mobility, knowing the exact durations of journeys in everyday life, is liberating. Unlike the novice, who either must endure stressful journeys hoping to arrive on time or install substantial time buffers, the experienced mobile subject enjoys more freedom.

Nonetheless, mastering a transport system requires attentiveness not only to social codes and conventions, infrastructural layouts, clock time, rhythms and flows of traffic, timetables and timings, but also to how the transport system behaves, how, when and where it (normally) disrupts or breaks down. Successfully weaving a transport system into a mobility performance is like a close family relationship: one comes to know (and mostly accept) the other family members’ good and bad sides alike, their peculiarities, deviations and quirks. For instance, knowing the objective facts of the bus system—the timetables, routes and stopping places—is one thing, but the practical feel and familiarity that can only be gained through repeated use is another. A mother



and father discuss their experiences with their bus route:

*Mother: Time, but also the frequency of departures [matter in a good transport mode]. The metro is about time, because you never wait. The bus is always a hell because it always, when you need it, skips you. Sometimes I have waited 20 minutes, and I don't know why. ... I have experienced just standing there with both the kids without having the strength to walk home. And then the bus with all the stuff and things. Then I have sometimes taken a taxi.*

*Father: It's an unstable line. It goes almost all the way through Nørrebrogade; there can be massive delays depending how the traffic is, especially in the late afternoon traffic. Sometimes they can't get a driver, and once in a while the departures are cancelled. I have a hunch it's because it waits for line 66 but you have the feeling, pretty often, there're missing departures.  
(Jensen Family P1)*

As argued earlier (see section 8-4), disruptions and breakdowns in systems are normal and part of everyday life, but accurately anticipating or forecasting “the outcome of travel involves having practical knowledge of the types of disturbances possible in transportation networks, which requires true expertise” (Flamm and Kaufmann 2006: 176).

The orientation skill in performing everyday mobility also manifests itself in less consequential ways. As travellers become familiar with the environments in which they move, the particularities and specificities of transport systems, infrastructures and transport modes, they gradually accumulate local knowledge of how best to use them, and identify and actualise little ways in which travelling can be made more pleasant or convenient. Becoming intimate with the details of everyday travelling, the mobile subject learns things like what parking spaces to avoid because of bird droppings, the best and fastest coffee to go, where to find a smoke-free waiting spot at the train station in the sun (or indeed a spot where smoking is allowed), the location of high-heel-friendly routes, or how to get a seat on the bus that is neither in the draught nor fried against the radiator. Travelling with children foregrounds other things. For instance, all parents know the trials of using public transport with a baby carriage in rush hour traffic, but only those who have practised it extensively know how to do it with the least effort: how to position oneself for optimal boarding and disembarking, what assistance one can expect from mobile others and the carriage-friendly geographies of infrastructures and transport modes.

Most seasoned travellers also become experts in *killing* time. Knowing how to pass time in transit, especially waiting time, is just as important to the emotional and affective experience of travelling as being able to read a timetable or knowing where

to catch the bus is to its instrumental execution (see section 7-6). Waiting is seldom presented as something desirable, and, when asked, “No one says they enjoy waiting, but it is accepted as the mode of operation” (Jain 2009: 98). Whether they are for the bus, in the queue for the ticket machine or behind the wheel in rush-hour gridlock, waits are unwanted disruptions forcibly imposed into everyday journeys (Bissell 2007: 277). While the wait itself seldom impairs propulsion and physical displacement of the journey for long, the real annoyance of waiting is the negative affective experiences it fosters: boredom and irritation, a sense of wasted time, making travel time unwanted and at times unbearable. Hence knowing where to get a free newspaper, where to find a quiet seat in the train for a power nap or how and where to catch free WiFi on the go may become part of the local knowledge of overcoming travel (and waiting) time, making it more pleasurable (see sections 7-5 and 7-6). (See Bissell (2007) for an account on waiting in mobility)

The value and importance of seemingly insignificant details or local knowledge, such as the peculiarities and disturbances of a bus line, where to buy coffee or how pass time, can indeed emotionally make or break a mobility practice, and cannot be negated. This is evident in the energy expenditure and stress that often accompany travelling in uncharted and unknown environments, for instance, when going on holiday and using foreign transport systems, or simply having to take the bus because the car is in the shop. Such small insights, tricks and know-how ease the effort involved in performing mobility and become part of family members’ “travel repertoire ... tailored to personal desires and distinctly connected the immediate locale” (Jain 2009: 96). The learning and accumulation of such local knowledge relieves the physical and mental effort involved in performing mobility and gradually enables it to become an ingrained part of the families’ everyday lives.

These fragmented pieces of information and local knowledge are synthesised in the family members’ everyday mobility performances, becoming part of the “embodied, ritualized and habitualized” (Jain 2009: 96) knowledge the family members rely on when making decisions on the move. Hence negotiating and mastering the flows of traffic and mobile others in everyday mobility cannot be separated from the performance; rather it requires the skill of reflexive movement, dexterity and swiftness in dynamic judgements as the mobile situation unfolds. Family members adapt their mobility performances in the dynamic enfolding of past experiences, the present situation and anticipation of what comes next (Vannini 2012: 170).

Finally, to sum up how transport systems, traffic and time are handled in the making of successful mobility performances, we revisit the Jensen family and their joint morning bike commute to kindergarten, school and work (see section 7-3). In their mobility performance, they exhibit a sense of timing, rhythms and travel durations coupled with a detailed local knowledge of the transport systems and material and physical settings they move in. They expertly time their performance, knowing exactly when to leave home to execute the itinerary of their ride while juggling the rhythms of traffic,

the chaos of the *kindergarten*- and *school-run* and their individual schedules. Their situated knowledge of performing bike mobility becomes actualised as they form a mobile-with and negotiate their way in the urban streetscape, knowing when to ride in formation, how to achieve safer passage and how to weave their ride through a tortuous route to escape heavy motorised traffic and invoke a quiet moment of mobile togetherness.

As everyday mobility performances and destinations are interrelated achievements, interwoven and interlocking within the family taskscape, revising them is often troublesome and requires relational effort. Family members are mostly interested and invested in achieving passage and keeping to the pre-conceived plan without renegotiating the spacing and timing of schedules, activities and intersections with others. Hence, through the utilisation of resources, family members seek to contain disruptions and contingencies threatening to displace socio-temporal intersections of the mobility performances and destinations. As mentioned above, resources of time, knowledge, money, transportation, technologies, information and more serve as exchange in negotiating and overcoming disruptions and contingencies in specific situations. For instance, reserve time buffers built into the mobility practice can be used for exchange, as in the case of Trine and the metro breakdown. Because she left home early with time to spare, she was able to exchange time and make her journey without foregoing her timely arrival. Local knowledge of transport systems and traffic flows, as explored above, is often used as exchange when, for instance, negotiating the ordinary disruption of rush hour congestion. Money can also be used as exchange, as in the case of the mother waiting for the bus, paying for a taxi or other alternate means of transportation. As shown earlier (see sections 8-2 and 8-3), drawing on past experience, family members already anticipate and take disruptions and contingencies into consideration when planning and preparing mobility, weaving in resources to be actualised for exchange if necessary.

## 8-6: THE SKILL OF MOBILE COORDINATION

Having unfolded some of the skilful labour the individual family members conduct in their everyday mobility performances, this section will elaborate on the *relational* labour family members engage in through their mobility performances as part of micro-coordinating and managing everyday life. Accomplishing everyday life in the family is no easy feat. Making schedules work, paying attention to individual needs and wishes and organising complex activity scheduling in hot spots and cold spots does not happen accidently. Rather producing resonance in the family taskscape is always an open process and something family members constantly have to work to achieve. Analysing the relational and coordinative labour in family mobility elucidates the “skills and [relational] knowledge involved in making” everyday mobility in the family (Vannini 2012: 163). Consequently, this extensive labour can be regarded as a fourth manifestation of skill, a *coordinative skill*, in addition to the three fundamental

movement skills of *orientation*, *reflexive movement* and *adaptation* reviewed above<sup>34</sup>. Whereas the three movement skills are focused upon facilitating movement in the local unfolding of the journey, the scope of the coordinative skill is relational, as it stretches beyond the local mobility performance and focuses on family members' and significant others' micro-coordination of timing and spacing of tasks. Hence the coordinative skill is particularly vital to the families, as it is through the realisation of this skill that they are able to continuously create and maintain stability in the family taskscape. Therefore the coordinative skill is just as important as the other mobility skills in successfully accomplishing everyday mobility in the family. Obviously, the significance of wielding coordinative abilities in everyday mobility is not limited to families, but mobile subjects in general rely on the ability to coordinate and manage their mobility performances in relation to significant others in everyday life. However, the family offers a special and complex case, as family life with children is characterised by a high level of interrelation, interweaving and interlocking of family members and activities that often necessitates high levels of both formal and informal planning and coordination.

In light of this, in this section the analysis shifts focus from the three movement skills of orientation, reflexive movement and adaptation and their role in negotiating passage in the local performance of the journey to the coordinative skill and the ways in which it is manifested as relational labour bound up in the family's mobility performance.

### BUSY LIVES AND RELATIONAL CONSEQUENCES

As a way of coping with and responding to the many spatially and temporally dispersed activities and busy schedules in everyday life, most of the families in the empirical material plan and coordinate complex socio-temporal orderings tightly weaving them into the family taskscape. While it can be analytically convenient to think of family members' activities and practices as discrete elements, in reality it is most difficult to delineate and clearly separate them from each other. In daily life, the boundaries of activities and practices blur into each other as they overlap, conjoin and mingle. Mobility, especially, is deeply relational in the context of the family, as family members are relationally embedded in each other's lives. Everyday doings, activities and time schedules tend to intersect and superimpose on each other in mobility performances (Holdsworth 2013: 26). Think of the Hartmanns (see section 7-2) and their afternoon escorting mobility practices to their children's after-school activities of soccer and bass practice. Each of these might easily be thought of as a separate daily activity; however, it is quite evident that these activities are in fact not separately performed but conjoined and mutually affecting each other. The timing of

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34 The family members' coordinative skill bears affinity to Larsen, Urry and Axhausen's (2006, 2008: 656) notion of "network capital" as well as the second element in Kaufmann's (2002) concept of motility, skill and competencies.

their mobility practices is negotiated according to when the parents get off work and the children's separate practices. Hence whether the family's mobility materialises in mobile-with constellations or as individual performances, it is a collective and relational enterprise suspended in a "network of movements" (Ingold 2011: 60) in the family taskscape. This relationality acts as a conduit for distributing effects of change and disruption from one practice in the family's everyday life to another. Even small changes or disruptions can engender ripple effects that have relational consequences for other family members and significant others in their everyday life, and if not taken into consideration and managed properly, even small waves can threaten the stability of the socio-temporal order in the family.

In the empirical material there are two major sources of relational implications. First, contingencies, disruptions and breakdowns in everyday life can carry relational consequences (as explored in section 8-4). Systems may break down; faulty signals may delay trains; meetings may drag on; getting out the door in the morning takes extra time with screaming kids; a sudden urge to get ice cream may extend commuting time from work and so on. There are always a swarm of potential disruptive events that might derail a tightly run mobility performance if actualised. Seldom do mobility performances play out entirely as planned. As shown in the previous section, family members put a great deal of effort and skill into coping with disruptions in their mobility performances. They exchange resources, apply skills and local knowledge and weave together their route as they go in an environment that cannot always easily be controlled or predicted. However, sometimes disruptions occur that refuse to be contained and solved within the confines of the mobility performance. Such disruptive events have relational consequences as they can produce delays, alterations, standstills and cancellations in other family members' mobility performances and activities.

Second, uncertainty and elusiveness in mobility performances have a tendency to unsettle pre-conceived planning efforts as "[h]appenstance, unpredictability, poor or careless planning, faulty execution, fate, and less-than-perfectly-rational playfulness" open the door to the chance "for things to 'unfold otherwise'" (Vannini 2012: 182). In coping with this openness and equivocality, as mentioned earlier (see section 8-2), most of the families in the empirical material rely on some level of informal, ad hoc and fluid planning and coordinative effort where the details of mobility practices are coordinated and configured on the fly. As the father in the Jensen family puts it, "We try to do long-term planning; nevertheless, there are always some things that need to be adjusted" (Jensen Family P1). The detailed spacing and timing especially of smaller, more variable (non-fixed) and uncertain activities in daily life, such as running errands or shopping, are often negotiated in motion. As family members coordinate and negotiate their mobility, activities and co-presence in everyday life during mobility performances, the effects of these changes and adjustments are relationally distributed across the family taskscape, forcing responses from other family members and significant others in their daily schedules. Hence ripple effects that carry relational consequences for the stability of the socio-temporal order are a

normal part of performing mobility in the family. To deal with this, family members usually engage in communication, negotiation and coordination of the specificities of intersecting activities and meetings, tending to the relational consequences before potential escalation.

### SKILFUL FAMILY MICRO-COORDINATION

In family mobility, skilful coordinative efforts manifest in multiple ways. To facilitate further exploration two short scenes are outlined:

#### SCENE 13<sup>35</sup>:

*The door opens slightly and a woman's face appears in the chink; she looks vaguely confused. As I formally announce myself and my business, the family interview, her expression changes, as if realising something. 'Oh my god, was that today?' Laughing, the mother apologises and jokingly says it's because they are so busy at the moment. While finding her phone, she reassures me that the father is just on the way; he should be here any minute now. He is picking up their daughter from kindergarten on the way home from work. She knows his schedule by heart, but calls him anyway, just to confirm. Minutes and a cup of coffee later, the father and daughter arrive and the interview begins. As we sit around their dinner table in the kitchen drinking coffee and discussing their daily life, the mother's phone rings. It's the son calling to say he is at soccer practice. I can only hear the mother's side of the conversation. With instrumental precision she takes charge of the conversation, quickly passing and gathering information: "We're in the middle of a family interview and we miss you! ... Where are you? ... When can you be home? ... Do you need to be picked up?" He doesn't; he has his bike. The mother ends the call with a "Love you and drive safe". Twenty minutes later, as he arrives and joins in, the entire family is all gathered, synchronised in time and space.*

#### SCENE 14<sup>36</sup>:

*It's quarter to 3 in the afternoon. Bodil is walking towards her bike. She gets out her phone and calls her husband, Torben. Torben is still in his office as the mobile phone rings. "Hi, I'm on my way now to pick up Anders; I'll take him to choir practice", the mother says. "That's great, I think I'll stay a bit longer and get some more work done", the father replies, a bit relieved. For them this on-the-fly coordination happens frequently; as they explain, "When it comes to our everyday life we have to plan as we go", making everything run smoothly. "I'll pick Frida up on the way home, see you around 5!" the father replies, ending the call. Moments later his phone rings again. It's Frida calling from the after-school centre. "Hi dad, can I go home with Alma?" He quickly tries to recall if they have any other after-school activities, appointments*

35 Based on P1 and P2 interview with the Bach family, own interpretation.

36 Based on P1 interview with Jensen family, own interpretation.



*or activities that might be compromised by this but ends by saying, “Of course, but put Alma’s mother on the phone so we can arrange when to pick you up at Alma’s”. He talks to Alma’s mother, coordinating when he will pick Frida up. Although going home with or bringing friends home is normal, as there are lots of kids in the neighbourhood, it still requires communication and coordination with other parents.*

These scenes illustrate how surprises and disruptive events, such as a researcher coming for an interview or Frida wanting to go home with Alma, might require coordinative efforts among family members and others to adjust, accommodate, re-stabilise or merely manage the situation, depending on the type and severity of the disruption and the potential relational implications it carries. As disruptions occur or the openness of fluid planning closes in, as in the case of who picks up Anders, family members quickly assess the situation, weigh possible remedies and potential outcomes, and negotiate a measured response in coordination with other implicated family members. While this may sound very deliberate and strategic, it is often unheeded, regarded as simply a trivial and inherent part of performing everyday life in the family. Hence the mother’s phoning to check up on the father and son’s progress, or ensuring their immediate presence, or coordinating who picks up Anders, and deciding whether Frida can go home with Alma are not extraordinary events or dramatic gestures, but are simply part of the mundane coordinative labour that goes into weaving everyday family life. Whether dealing with disruptive events or ad hoc planning, the coordinative labour of communicating and micro-coordinating with other family members on the fly is a key part of the creative, provisional and emergent problem-solving that goes into performing mobility in the socio-relational context of the family. Hence, this is vital in locally getting family members from one place to another or congregating for family togetherness while relationally, achieving and sustaining resonance within the family taskscape. As Vannini states, “Passages are thus not forms generated [solely] by passengers’ mental activities and exhaustive rational planning, but rather the outcome of adaptive practice of travellers and their emergent problem-solving” (Vannini 2012: 174).

To explore the family’s coordinative labour performed on the move, we return to Richard Ling (2004) and his use of the term “micro-coordination” (see also sections 7-5 and 8-2). Ling describes mobile coordination as “the nuanced management of social interaction”:

*Micro-coordination can be seen in the redirection of trips that have already started, it can be seen in the iterative agreement as to when and where we can meet friends, and it can be seen, for example, in the ability to call ahead when we are late to an appointment.*  
(2004: 70)

Micro-coordination covers the communicative work people perform in everyday life, micro-managing and coordinating imminent co-presence, meetings and activities.

Hence micro-coordination is, as Larsen, Urry and Axhausen write, “primarily a mobile practice” (2008: 644). By specifically addressing labour in the performance of family mobility, the intent is to emphasise a particular type of family micro-coordination. Hence family micro-coordination should be understood as the flexible and coordinative labour conducted by family members in their mobility performance when handling the relational consequences of disruptive events and managing the relational effects of fluid planning. As the mother in the Møller family states, planning is part of being on the move:

*“I think about what I have to do during the day. I plan the day when I sit in the car. This is what’s so great about a car: you can sit and collect your thoughts”*  
(Møller Family P1)

For her, and for many other family members in the empirical material, the mobility transition becomes a productive in-between in which micro-coordination, checking up on other family members and adjusting, reconfiguring and rescheduling activities, meetings, trajectories and intersections of family members may take place (see section 7-6). At times, as O’Dell elegantly puts it, everyday mobility might start to look like “the equivalent of an airport control tower as [family members] endeavour to locate children and spouses, plan the evening meal, delegate chores and coordinate the shuttle schedule between hockey practice and riding school” (2009: 92). Although this section focuses on family micro-coordination in mobility performances, the coordinative labour often spills over and spreads to other activities. For instance, in scene 14, although Bodil instigates family micro-coordination with Torben while she is moving, Torben is firmly located at the desk in his office at work. The same goes for the interview scene where the mother is stationary at home, while the father and son are the ones who are micro-coordinating on the move. Thus family micro-coordination cannot be pinned down, but fluidly seeps into all parts of everyday life.

The two scenes outlined above exemplify both the relationality of family micro-coordination and the necessity of using ICT, as the coordination is performed at a distance. As Ling (2004) shows, the spread of mobile phone ownership has opened new possibilities for flexible micro-coordination of the spacing and timing of persons and meetings through on-the-move communication (see also Urry (2007), Schwanen (2008: 1005), Peters, Kloppenburg and Wyatt (2010: 363-64) and Mondada (2011)). Family micro-coordination is in large part made possible by ICT advances, not only by the ability to make inexpensive phone calls on the move, but also through seamless texting, emailing, instant messaging, facebooking, tweeting and hordes of specialised location-based apps for GPS wayfinding, travel assistance, online timetables and ticket purchasing, all made possible via high-speed wireless internet service (Larsen, Urry and Axhausen 2006: 57). Thus, “transport *and* communication technologies are travel partners” (Larsen, Urry and Axhausen 2006: 124) that facilitate negotiation in motion and “flexible punctuality” (Larsen, Urry and Axhausen 2008: 643) of

activities, meetings and co-presence. Although the use and extent of family micro-coordination manifests differently across the families in the empirical material, the coupling of mobile communication and micro-coordination has become a fundamental and necessary part of everyday life and performing mobility that none of the families in the empirical material can do without (Larsen, Urry and Axhausen 2008).

## PERFORMING FAMILY MICRO-COORDINATION

Having argued for the need for and presence of coordination in family mobility performances, the section will now turn to unfolding some of the many ways in which family micro-coordination manifests in the empirical material. Through the use of ICT, family members relay information, engage in negotiation and coordination and make collective decisions. First, family micro-coordination may be instigated at the event of disruption, delay or breakdown, as in the case of the interview scene outlined above. When disruption cannot be contained, or the cost is considered too high, family members usually reach out to those who might be affected by calling or texting. In doing so they engage in re-negotiation and re-coordination of co-presence and activities, often drawing on pre-conceived *recovery plans* that have been previously tried and proven to work. Such recovery plans are *backup* umbrella plans based on anticipation of contingencies and disruptions, often explicitly formulated and coordinated over social gatherings such as breakfast (or at other (in)formal planning activities). The Jensen father explains how his family can alternate between different set of solutions in their everyday life as needed:

*We use the metro a lot. If our bikes are broken, if there is a problem with delivering the children or we have to hurry, we take the bus or our bikes to the market and from there we take the metro. It's a good solution if I have to work on Nørrebro. ... Then there is my mother. She still lives in Vanløse, and if in the morning I need to leave the children with her it's actually faster to take the metro in the heavy morning traffic than to go by car. Travelling by car to Vanløse takes 40-60 minutes and by metro it takes ... 15 minutes, so that's a lot of time saved. If you are in a hurry you can take the metro directly from Vanløse, where my mother lives, to Nørrebro to work in 10 minutes.*  
(Jensen Family P1)

Most of the families in the empirical material speak of more-or-less sophisticated pre-defined recovery plans that can be initiated through family micro-coordination if the need should arise. As the father of the Jensen family also states, typically these recovery plans are based on the interweaving of alternate transport modes, the activation of social networks or the reorganisation of the socio-temporal ordering of family members and activities in everyday life (see also sections 7-2 and 7-5). Similarly to how timetables, traffic rhythms and the specificities of transport systems

become familiarised over time and experience, recovery plans become ingrained in family members' travel repertoire and can be set in motion with ease, requiring little coordinative effort. As Vannini (2009: 227-9) shows in an account of (not) making a ferry departure, one static umbrella plan is seldom sufficient. Often one or more additional recovery plans are brought into play as the mobility performance unfolds, and often families have several recovery plans lying dormant that can be activated depending on the particularities of the disruption they encounter.

Second, family micro-coordination is a way of attending to the practical and instrumental needs of regaining stability in the event of disruption, but in doing this, it also becomes emotionally charged. Indeed, family micro-coordination can take the shape of emotional work and management, tending to emotional needs and wishes. Conversely, family micro-coordination or lack thereof may also invoke negatively charged emotional states and tensions. As mentioned earlier, although the mobile phone greatly empowers the coordinative capacity in everyday life, it also obligates and coerces family members in "perpetual coordination" (Larsen, Urry and Axhausen 2008: 650) and unnecessary levels of hyper communication (Jensen 2011). Indeed, refraining from tending to the relational effects of disruptions, such as being delayed and leaving others hanging, can both be inconvenient and evoke emotional responses of fear, anger, anxiety, disappointment, confusion and so on. For instance, the Juhl couple points to how failing to honour an agreement has consequences:

*Mother: Especially Daniel likes to know when we pick them up. He asks, "What time will you come and get us?"*

*Father: They don't know the time yet ... but that's not what it's about.*

*Mother: But they know when you are 15 minutes late.*

*Father: Yes, you get informed of that ...  
(Juhl Family P1)*

As the parents note, their children are highly aware of what is going on and are inclined to hold their parents responsible for punctuality in the mobility practices and activities that intersect with their daily schedules. Furthermore, this illustrates that micro-coordination can have emotionally charged consequences and carry affective costs. While a parent is hurrying through town to pick up on time, the child (or whoever is waiting), may also be suspended in the elusiveness of the parent's mobility performance, provoking uncomfortable uncertainty and the accumulation of affective tension (often to be discharged upon arrival). This also speaks to the fact that family life is not always a smooth-running, well oiled machine. In fact, the opposite image is just as common: one in which things spin out of control, people miss appointments, forget or deliberately disregard agreements and miscommunicate or even refrain from communicating and coordinating due to anger and fighting. At times things are

allowed to run amok because of disagreements; sometimes family members even oppose or disobey each other in their mobility performances, by, for instance, taking the car when they are not supposed to or not allowing a child to go somewhere simply to get back at others or make a point.

Hence family micro-coordination as part of the everyday mobility performance is not a neutral effort, but at any time may be an emotionally charged exercise of power (Holdsworth 2013). Family micro-coordination is not always a pleasant democracy where all have an equal voice; at times it is actualised as the issuing of orders. Although children are mostly heard and their wishes taken into consideration, it is often in the intergenerational relations, with their asymmetrical power relations, that parents forcefully micro-coordinate their children's mobility, forcing (im)mobility and demanding compliance (Buliung, Faulkner and Sultana 2012). This is illustrated in the interview scene in which the mother is taking charge and micro-coordinating her son's mobility. Especially in the event of disruption or breakdown, there is often a brief window of opportunity, and decisions have to be made swiftly to reinstate or sustain order. This often means that there is no time to debate or fully negotiate every detail, which brings us back to the image of everyday micro-coordination as a fight for control in which one family member (quite often the mother) is in charge and has the final say in coordination decisions. Further, this also highlights an inflexible aspect of the mobile phone, as it only facilitates one-to-one communication (Larsen, Urry and Axhausen 2008: 645). As mobile-phone-based micro-coordination flows through a central hub, i.e. one family member, negotiation and coordination among several family members quickly become time-consuming and impractical. To avoid this, family members often micro-coordinate on a *need-to-know* basis, trying to minimise the coordinative effort by only involving necessary parties (which may indeed be the reason family members, especially children, are sometimes left out of the loop). One factor that eases the micro-coordinative process significantly is the relational knowledge family members have of each other. This will be considered next.

Third, family micro-coordination is also the brief and seemingly insignificant communication of calling, texting, emailing and so on that goes on in everyday life. Rather than being prompted by disruptions, this communicative labour that family members do to keep in touch during the day is often essential to performing everyday mobility. As Mikkel, the father in the commuting scene (see section 7-6), explains, speaking of the family's mobility routines:

*It's always me who brings in the mornings and always Lone who picks up. It's because of work and that we're different people in the mornings. That's the way it is. Lone sometimes shops on the way home and when I drive from work I usually send a text saying I'm going and if I have to bring something.*  
(Hartmann Family P1)

Sending a text has become embedded into his mobility performance of going home from work. The intent of this communicative act is not necessarily to request or engage in micro-coordination, as in the event of a breakdown; rather it is to offer information and invite optimisation of or alterations to his mobility performance in relation to other family members (in this case the mother), and can even be considered an act of care. It is a normal coordinative practice in the empirical material to communicate one's departure when setting out, regardless of punctuality. This also illustrates the openness of mobility performances and how there is often a little room to manoeuvre to unfold otherwise through ad hoc and on-the-fly planning. Although not all families have the same level of *real-time* information about each other in everyday life, all families have some relational knowledge and awareness of each other's everyday life. Indeed, in living and performing everyday life together, the family members develop such knowledge. As one father puts it, "You learn about each other, and then you also come to know each other's main competencies and you use that" (Hartmann Family P2). Real-time information about daily schedules, what other family members are doing, where they are going and how and when they will arrive, coupled with relational knowledge of personal needs, capacities and preferences, forms a practical knowledge backdrop for the family micro-coordination process that equips family members to negotiate, assess possibilities and make informed decisions while on the move (without the hassle of having to call everyone and ask where they are and so on). The Petersen family outlines how a breakdown was averted:

*Older Son: We had two punctured bikes this morning. I discovered it when I had to leave this morning. Then I had to take the car otherwise I would have been late.*

*Mother: I think Alex [the middle son] ran to school.*

*Older Son: Yes, he walked.*

*Youngest son: Yes, he went 5 minutes to ...*

*Father: But it's the car that's the buffer, you use the car as a buffer and I use it as a buffer!*

*Older Son: If your bike also had punctured last week, then we would have had a problem.*

*Mother: Yes, if you [the father] had taken the car because you had a meeting ...*

*(Petersen Family P2)*

Relational knowledge of each other's everyday lives is important when having to reconfigure and regain stability in the socio-temporal order after disruption or to



avoid disruption. When becoming aware of the punctured bikes while setting out on their individual mobility commutes to school, the sons quickly micro-coordinated and reconfigured their mobility, initiating recovery plans. Leaning on their relational knowledge, they knew whether the car was already allocated to other family members (later in the day), but they also considered if their punctured bikes and the reconfiguring of their mobility performances would have relational consequences. Only then were they able to weave the family car into the mobility performance and switch from the punctured bike to a hasty walk to school. This shows an explicit use of the orientation, reflexive movement and adaptive skills in concert with the coordinative skill.

Fourth, family micro-coordination is not only used reactively, as when disruptions occur; it is also used proactively to sustain or maintain a pre-conceived socio-temporal order in everyday life. Through calling and texting, family members are actively checking, confirming, reminding of and ensuring the family's daily plan. The agreed-upon compromise of spacing and timing of activities, synchronisations of family members and arranged co-presences is intact and proceeding as intended. For instance, just as it is often a common practice to notify when setting out, family members often call or text each other prior to imminent arrival. Take for instance the Nielsen family (see section 7-4), whose members regularly go shopping together:

*Dad calls on the way home and says: I'm on my way home, are you coming down so we can go shopping, or ... ?  
(Nielsen Family P2)*

Besides passing on the information of his imminent arrival, enabling the mother to get ready and time her departure, the father is also implicitly checking up on their daily schedule, ensuring it is still in place. Whether or not families are formal or informal planners, they also prioritise spending quality time together (most of the time) in addition to fulfilling obligations, carrying out tasks of maintenance and pursuing individual career goals. As argued earlier, families in the empirical material not only construct a family taskscape to practically and instrumentally make schedules work; they also do it to carve out cold spots for being with each other, make time for family activities and protect mobile in-betweens, accommodating social and emotional needs (see section 8-2). Although not all families have the same needs or conditions for making cold spots and family togetherness, all families in the empirical material find it important to have social and familial activities, be they commuting together, making and eating dinner together, attending after-school activities together, visiting relatives together or something else. Hence performing family micro-coordination is not only about managing hot spots in everyday life, coping with disruptions and the indecisiveness of ad hoc planning. The communicative labour is also ensuring that the pre-defined time allocations for cold spots of co-presence and togetherness are respected and achieved. The father, as he calls the mother on the way home, is confirming and ensuring that one of their cold spots in everyday life, the routine mobile togetherness and family activity of going shopping, is proceeding as planned.

In sum, as shown in this section, dynamic family micro-coordination is a powerful tool for handling elusiveness and volatility in family members' everyday lives. Hence the coordinative skill, alongside the three skills of movement, plays an active part in coping in everyday life, as it not only aids in accomplishing the practicalities of getting from one place to another but is also a crucial and integral aspect of sustaining of mobile care, togetherness and in-betweens in family everyday life.

## 8-7: CONCLUSION

This chapter analysed the family members' labour of performing and maintaining their everyday mobility practices. The chapter set out to explore how this extensive labour in the family's mobility performances is closely tied to ensuring the production of elasticity and, in turn, contributing to the family's coping processes. It was shown that family members' practical engagement in the planning, negotiation, coordination and preparation of everyday mobility preceding departure is a vital constituent in the successful production of elasticity. Family members install practical movement, mobile-with constellations, mobile care, mobile togetherness and mobile in-betweens in cold spots and hot spots, to be actualised in their everyday mobility performances. This is done through the spatio-temporal ordering of family members and significant others, equipment and mobility resources, activities and practices in family taskscapes and practical preparations of pre-scripted umbrella plans.

It was further shown in the chapter that families consider the necessity and relevance of such pre-travel labour differently; the manner in which families approach everyday planning and coordination vary from formal to informal. Regardless of how the organisation of the family taskscape is approached, however, families use substantial effort in actualising umbrella plans of projected mobility practices. Drawing on the relational reading of mobility, the family's mobility performances were shown to be continually and dynamically interacting with transport technologies, infrastructural systems, routes and places. These mobility performances were closely interrelated, interwoven and interlocked with other family members, significant others, their mobility and other everyday practices in the family taskscape. Much of the family members' mobility labour is attuned to stabilising the elusive socio-material environments in which everyday mobility is performed. Consequently, the chapter has extensively illustrated that the family's performances of everyday mobility practices, and the resultant production of elasticity, are constituted in a series of consecutive moves in which family members utilise their mental and physical capacity and apply mobility skills, knowledge and micro-coordination to dynamically weave transport systems, traffic flows, timetables, routes, technologies, equipment, family members and mobile others.

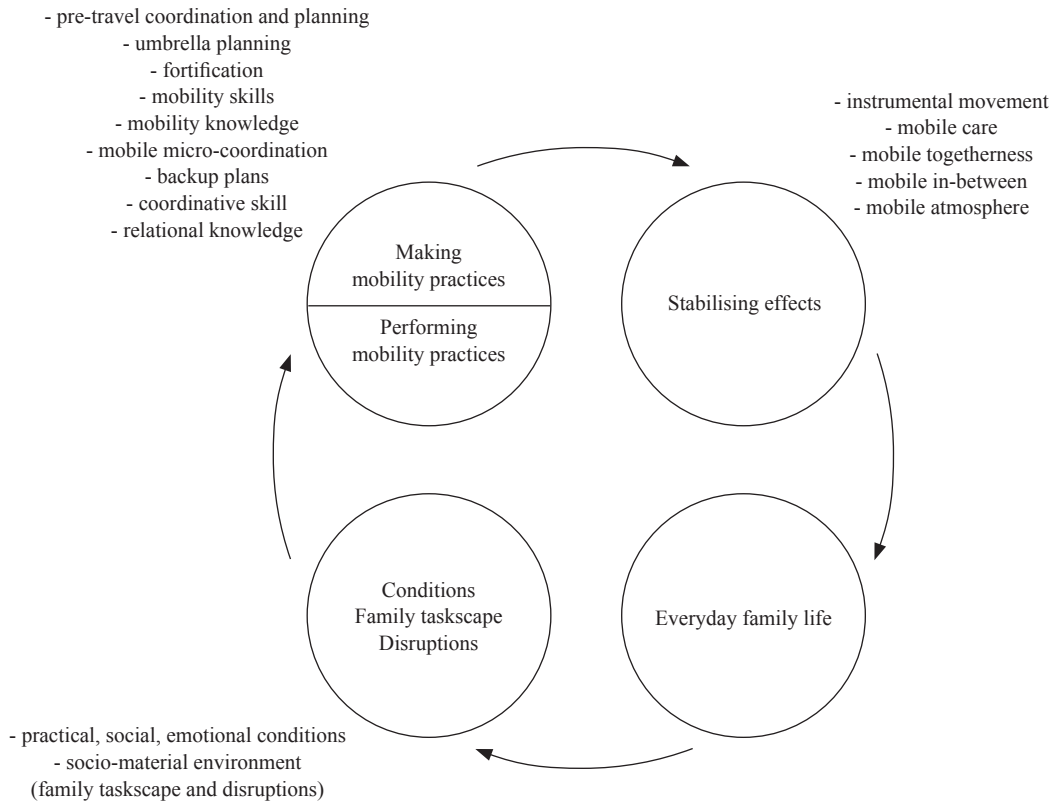


Figure 50: Elasticity-coping model

In combination, the two parts of the analysis approached in chapters 7 and 8 provide a fuller understanding of the production of elasticity in family mobility. Returning to the model of elasticity presented in chapter 5, these insights can be added to figure (see figure 43). The elasticity production is cyclical. As shown in the model, the family members' making and performances of everyday mobility practices are responsive to the family's practical, social and emotional conditions as well as the dynamic socio-material environment. Following this the performative and stabilising effects emerging in the performances of family mobility manifest not only as instrumental movement but also as emotional management of mobile care, constellations of mobile togetherness, recreational and productive mobile in-betweens and orchestration of mobile atmospheres. Finally, through these effects the family members' everyday mobility contribute to the family's coping process in everyday life.





## **PART III**

# CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION

## 9-1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter will summarise and offer conclusions from the knowledge and findings presented in this thesis. The chapter begins by returning to the research ambition of this study and the research questions posed in the introduction. To provide answers to these research questions, the chapter will summarise the findings in six points, each outlined briefly below. The next and final chapter will discuss the knowledge contributions and possible applications of these findings as well as pointing towards future research areas that might be explored based upon this thesis.

## 9-2: REVISITING RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The initial brief of this PhD thesis was to study the qualitative dimension of everyday mobility. As described in the introduction, in order to narrow the scope of the study, everyday mobility in the family was chosen, due to its complexity and statistical prevalence. As family life itself is changing, with more and more families in Denmark leading busy and at times harried lives in which time pressure and stress frequently arise, the family poses an interesting and relevant object of study worthy of attention. Indeed, after having conducted only the first series of family interviews, it was clear that everyday mobility means more to the family members than simply instrumental movement in their everyday lives. Applying a theoretical framework informed by mobilities theory coupled with theoretical perspectives from family and everyday life studies (see chapter 4) allowed the study to analytically engage with the complexity of the family's everyday mobility as not only a practical but also a social and emotional phenomenon. Hence the empirical material was approached with a profound curiosity about the meanings family members ascribe to everyday mobility and the role it plays in the complex, yet mundane, accomplishment of everyday family life.

Based on this, in the introduction chapter (see section 1-3), the research ambition was formulated into a main research question and four sub-research questions:

***How are selected families in the Greater Copenhagen Area coping with practical, social and emotional conditions in everyday life through the making and performance of mobility practices?***



Sub-research questions:

- (i) *How can the family's mobility practices and the coping processes in everyday life be theoretically conceptualised?*
- (ii) *How can qualitative family interviewing, GPS tracking, mental map making and ethnographic field studies be used to gain insight into how family members make and perform everyday mobility, the meanings ascribe to mobility and the sensorial and emotional experiences it affords?*
- (iii) *How can qualitative knowledge of everyday family mobility contribute to quantitative approaches to and knowledge of everyday family mobility as produced in academic fields such as transport geography and transport and traffic planning, as well as provide insights for policy decision support in the areas of hurriedness and stress as a tendency in contemporary everyday family life?*

These research questions reflect the focus, intentions and goals that have guided the knowledge production in this study and have led to the findings that will be addressed momentarily. In particular, chapters 2 and 3, concerning the philosophical underpinnings of the study and the research design, dealt with sub-research question ii, addressing how to compose a methodological setup facilitating empirical data production and qualitative analysis for the main research question. Chapters 4 and 5, concerning the theoretical framework of the study, provided theoretical toolbox for conceptualising how everyday family mobility, and in particular how mobility practices, can be theoretically approached, as an answer to sub-research question i. Furthermore, chapter 5 proposed the model of elasticity as a foundation for engaging with the main research question. Part two of the study, chapters 6, 7 and 8, concerning the empirical material, the analysis and findings of the study, provided answers to the main research question by analysing how the family's mobility practices are associated with their coping processes in everyday life. The final sub-research question (iii) will be addressed in the final chapter 10 after the conclusion.

## **9-2: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

Instead of trying to synthesise everything brought up in this study into one neat conclusion, the various findings, insights and realisations produced in the study will be summarised in six points. By doing this, the conclusion aims to provide concise answers to all of the research questions except the last, sub-research question iii, which will be addressed separately in the following and final chapter of the thesis.

## POINT 1: EVERYDAY MOBILITY IN THE FAMILY SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD AS EMBEDDED IN A SOCIO-RELATIONAL CONTEXT

To understand the complexity that characterises the family's everyday mobility patterns, as argued in chapter 4, family mobility must be approached as embedded in social contexts. Family members do not act and live their lives in a social vacuum but are relationally implicated in and affected by the lives of others—not only other family members, but also neighbours, co-workers, friends and mobile others. Hence, thinking about mobility in the relational family means becoming analytically attuned to the multi-relational web of ties that affects and shapes, empowers and restrains, incites and coerces family members to be mobile and immobile in everyday life. This relational understanding of the family also means that the family's everyday practices, including its mobility practices, are shaped in interaction with other family members and their practices in everyday life.

As argued in chapter 4, any approach to learning about how family members make and use mobility of any kind, whether it is performed in solitude or together, must regard the family's mobility as subject to some level of relational coordination and configuration. The potential efficacy of the social bonds that shape the family's everyday mobility is not only generated by the practicalities in family members' lives but is also derived from family members' emotions and personal needs, wishes, dreams and desires. Hence, by approaching the family from a relational perspective, the intention is not only to bring into focus the instrumental and obvious ways in which family members affect each other, but also to elucidate the less tangible emotional, intimate and social bonds among family members and how these affect and shape their everyday lives and the family's mobility in less visible but still powerful ways.

In chapter 4, to support this relational approach, the theoretical concept of family taskscape was proposed as a tool for engaging with the profoundly interrelated, interwoven and interlocking ensemble of everyday practices in family members' lives. This shows how family members, in successfully performing practices in everyday life, are constantly responsive to their social context, making decisions about and changes to how to proceed in accordance with other family members and their activities, maintaining some level of resonance and stability in the family taskscape. Applying this relational approach to the family's everyday mobility in the empirical material was a vital tool for elucidating how individual family members' needs, wishes, dependencies, obligations, disruptions, aspirations and intentions spread like ripples in the water to forcefully shape everyday mobility in the family.

Hence, drawing on relational approaches to studying everyday mobility, such as those found in Holdsworth (2013), Larsen, Urry and Axhausen (2006) and Schwanen (2008), the study has contributed to the field of mobilities studies by theoretically and empirically showing how a profound relational reading of the family can illuminate

the intricate web of relations that shapes the family's everyday mobility and mobility decisions.

## POINT 2: EVERYDAY MOBILITY PRACTICES SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD AS SOCIO-MATERIAL ASSEMBLAGES THAT PRODUCE ELASTICITY

As argued in chapter 4, quotidian mobility is a multi-faceted phenomenon that permeates most endeavours, activities and tasks in everyday family life. Hence, to demarcate and guide the investigation of family mobility, chapter 5 argued for the model of elasticity. The elasticity model conceptualises family members' making and performing of everyday mobility as a process that on the one hand is highly sensitive to the family's practical, social and emotional conditions, and on the other generates certain stabilising effects that contribute to coping with these very conditions in everyday family life. This process of generating stabilising effects, and the interaction between the family's mobility practices and the coping processes they support, are termed *production of elasticity* in the elasticity model. To comprehend this elasticity production, the model takes its point of departure in the underlying theoretical framework presented in chapter 4.

As empirically and theoretically shown in chapters 7 and 8, the production of elasticity needs to be understood through a multi-faceted reading of everyday family mobility. In being mobile in everyday life, a vast array of materialities, such as infrastructures, places, routes, transportation modes, mobile phones, iPads, bags, tickets, newspapers, coffee to go and so on interrelate and interweave with family members, forming hybrid mobility practices. Together, these assemblages of mobile subjects and materialities both shape and enable the family's mobility performances. Yet performances of mobility and being physically in motion are experiences that are perceived not only through the conscious mind, but also kinaesthetically, through affectively tuned registers of the body. Consequently, family mobility is also an embodied and experienced sensorial performance. Hence to understand the association between mobility practices and coping processes, the model of elasticity conceptualises the family's mobility both as heterogeneous configurations of subjects and objects assembled into temporal stabilised practices and as embodied performances.

Based on this, two analytical perspectives, which guided the empirical data production and analysis in the study, were designed to probe into different aspects of the family's mobility and bring different insights to the production of elasticity. The first perspective approached the family's mobility as heterogeneous assemblages while the second perspective approached the family's mobility as skilful performances. Consequently, by applying these two perspectives in chapters 7 and 8, the study has shown how the family copes in everyday life through its mobility.

These chapters elucidate how instrumental movements of family members, mobile care, mobile togetherness, mobile in-betweens and mobile atmospheres are performative and stabilising effects produced in the family's everyday performances of mobility practices. Extensive and skilful labour is required in assembling and performing mobility practices that are at once able to accommodate practical, social and emotional conditions and deal with the elusiveness in the family's everyday life,

Hence, by proposing the theoretical model of elasticity for conceptualising and analytically approaching how families cope through their everyday mobility, the study theoretically modifies and extends Lassen and Jensen's (2005) framework of mobility coping strategies and provides an analytical tool that is capable of contributing to the general knowledge of everyday mobility and family life.

### POINT 3: EVERYDAY FAMILY MOBILITY SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD AS MOVING FAMILY MEMBERS FROM A TO B

The most obvious way family members' mobility practices produce elasticity and thereby contribute to coping in everyday family life is by supporting family members in moving around to and from activities and destinations. However, movement does not simply happen—far from it. As argued in chapter 8, everyday family mobility is an accomplishment that requires substantial labour of family members both before and during travel.

Due to the relationality that characterises everyday family mobility, highlighted in the first point above, enabling physical movement of family members in a manner that does not violate the family taskscape, require family members to pre-travel, negotiate the distribution of tasks and mobility resources as well as plan and coordinate the timing and spacing of their interrelated mobility. Chapter 8 shows that families approach pre-travel labour differently, with styles ranging from formal to informal, and that the approach to pre-travel labour influences the style of the family's performance of mobility.

Pre-travel labour also highlights the effort family members put into imagining their journeys and destinations, and how this contributes to choosing which items to bring and to completing the other preparations needed to ensure a successful journey. The study argues that family members use past experience and knowledge of previous iterations of their upcoming journeys to anticipate likely disruptions or contingencies that might occur and fortify their mobility practices against them. Sigrid's setting out provides an example of this in section 8-3. She makes substantial preparations, including double-checking the departure time of her train, factoring in buffer time for unforeseen events and packing needed artefacts, all with the aim of crafting her journey as imagined and ensuring production of elasticity. Hence, as argued in chapter

8, the instrumental movement of getting family members to the right place at the right time and in the right manner is secured well before setting out.

When setting out, family members draw on a completely different set of skills and knowledge when handling the transport modes and systems they use and the routes and places they travel through. As illustrated in section 8-4 in Trine's school commute, as everyday journeys unfold, family members are confronted with both opportunities and disruptions they have to deal with to keep moving. However, as many of the family's mobility practices are interlocking, at times coping with such elusiveness is not only important to the individual family member, but is also imperative to the integrity of the family taskscape. To sustain resonance in the family taskscape in the event of disruptions and changes in the family's mobility practices, family members engage in mobile micro-coordination. Section 8-6 demonstrates how family members, by interweaving physical mobility and communicative mobility, negotiate and coordinate while moving, performing fluid planning that enables them to cope with the elusiveness in everyday journeys.

Hence the thesis contributes to the study of mundane and everyday mobilities in family life and, in particular, it adds to the work of Vannini (2012) and Peters, Kloppenburg and Wyatt (2010). It provides a detailed analysis of how families make and perform their everyday mobility in order to meet the practical needs of creating and sustaining physical movement, as well as how they constantly synchronise and align this movement with other family members and their activities and practices within the family taskscape.

#### POINT 4: EVERYDAY FAMILY MOBILITY SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD AS SOCIAL SPACE PRODUCING AND SUSTAINING FAMILY

In chapter 7 it was argued that as a vital aspect in the production of elasticity, the everyday family mobility is tending to the family's need for socialising and family togetherness. By employing a theoretical framework informed by mobilities and family theory, the study elucidated a social dimension of the family's everyday mobility. It was argued that the family's mobility practices are also family practices that contribute to reaffirming a sense of family and enacting belonging and community amongst family members. Besides simply enabling family members to synchronise and congregate at specific destinations for familial activities, the family's mobility affords opportunities for informal co-presence and allows family members (and others) to congregate in mobile with situations while travelling. In chapter 7 (see section 7-4) it is argued that quotidian journeys, such as joint commutes to and from home and work, journeys escorting children to school or after-school activities and trips to visit family, creates important social spaces for family members and others to spend time together. In their busy and complex everyday lives, many of the families

cope with time pressures and their need for social interaction by seizing such small opportunities for togetherness, intimacy and conversation in their mobility. This shows how the value of social and emotional content in the journey itself can rival, and in some cases even surpass, the value of the destination.

However, travel time in mobile togetherness is not always exclusively pleasant and joyful; it may also be filled with uncomfortable silence, heated arguments or backseat fighting. Nonetheless, establishing frequent recurring mobile social spaces in family life is something most families pursue, and in most cases this creates familiarity and ritual interactions amongst family members in which relationships grow and develop. This alternative and social use of informal travel time demonstrates one of the key ways family members can use their everyday mobility to accommodate needs and wishes for familial socialising and togetherness.

As discussed in chapter 7 (see section 7-4), the car, with its physical arrangement, serves as a suitable backdrop for intimacy and socialising in mobile togetherness. However, as the study shows, through examples like the Jensen parents' joint bike commute to work (see section 7-3) or the Juhl family's train trip to visit grandparents (see section 7-7), familial socialising and mobile togetherness can be facilitated in the specific socio-material configurations of the family's mobility practices. This suggests that the material and physical configuration of the family's mobility practices is of great importance to how travel time can be put to use. Hence, just as substantial skilful and creative effort goes into moving family members around in everyday life, family members work hard at assembling and sustaining material configurations of specific routes, places, modes and artefacts that support the generation of social spaces suitable for activities of togetherness within family mobility.

Hence the study contributes to the field of mobilities and family sociology by addressing how the family's mundane everyday mobility is associated with coping with social needs and wishes for togetherness in the family. In doing so, the study adds specifically to the work of Holdsworth (2013) and Morgan (2011) with empirically informed insights into how everyday family mobility contributes to the doing of family and the continual effort of reaffirming a sense of family and belonging amongst family members.

#### POINT 5: EVERYDAY FAMILY MOBILITY SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD AS EMOTIONAL MANAGEMENT

Through the concepts of mobile care, mobile togetherness, mobile in-betweens and mobile atmosphere, the study provides a theoretical vocabulary that is capable of addressing the emotional dimension of elasticity production. In chapter 7 it was argued that by making and performing mobility practices family members are tending to the

emotional management of themselves and others.

As shown in sections 7-6 and 7-7, everyday mobility affords specific sensorial and emotional experiences, and family members attempt to control the sensorial and emotional nature of their travel time by orchestrating and sustaining mobile atmospheres through their making of everyday mobility practices. The study argues that this requires substantial work, as mobile atmospheres are meta-stable outcomes of on-going negotiation and interaction with the socio-material environment of the journey. However, this means the effort of orchestrating mobile atmospheres is an essential aspect in creating hospitable and functioning mobile situations for formation of mobile in-betweens, mobile togetherness and mobile care in the family's everyday mobility. Chapter 7 showed how family members do this by gathering elements like cars, bike trailers, seating arrangements on the train, music or radio, specific routes, places, phones, newspapers, significant others, friends etc. in material coalitions and mobile with constellations in the process of making and performing everyday family mobility. The effort that goes into sustaining a mobile atmosphere saturates most aspects of performing mobility. It is tied to the family's ability to skilfully weave through traffic; the practical knowledge of how to use technical transport systems, ticket systems and timetables; the formal as well as social codes of conduct and acceptable mobility behaviour and much more. Hence it is argued in the study that specific mobile atmospheres can enable or enhance the transformation of travel time through the invocation of specific emotional sensations and feelings. This suggests that in making their mobility performances, actively weaving specific places, routes, modes and artefacts together, family members are crafting emotional geographies capable of managing emotional states.

Furthermore, in orchestrating mobile atmospheres and crafting travel time, family members are not only accommodating their own emotional needs. In section 7-3 it is argued that emotional management also emerges as a function of care for others in and through everyday mobility. The highly interrelated and interwoven state that characterises the family's mobility practices is the result of family members' practical concern with caring for each other and the emotional investment of caring about each other's lives. As shown in chapter 8, the disruptions, uncertainties and anxieties that accompany everyday family mobility can also produce negative emotional consequences that create unwelcome tensions and dreaded affective experiences in quotidian travel. This also demonstrates that the extensive mobile micro-coordination and negotiation in motion performed in everyday family mobility are also a form of emotional management.

Hence, drawing on Sheller (2004), Vannini (2012), Lyons and Watts (2008), Freudendal-Pedersen (2009) and Holdsworth (2013), the study supports and substantiates a multi-faceted reading of family mobility, not only as practical efforts ensuring movement, but simultaneously as emotionally charged practices with emotional efficacy. Furthermore, in making and performing mobility practices, family



members are engaged in the emotional work of managing the emotional states of themselves and others. The study contributes to the field by providing qualitative insight into the emotional motivations and conditions that influence certain mobility choices and configurations in everyday family life.

#### POINT 6: STUDYING THE FAMILY'S MUNDANE EVERYDAY MOBILITY CAN BE DONE WITH MOBILE METHODS

Chapter 3 described the research design that was utilised in the study. It was argued that to elicit understanding of the practical, social and emotional dimensions of mundane family mobility it is necessary that the chosen methods are specifically attuned to facilitating inquiry into the multi-faceted and non-representational aspects of everyday family mobility. Mobility is a deeply integrated and often unheeded mundane element in people's everyday lives. The practical and embodied performance of mobility often goes un-reflected-upon. This ordinariness, created by repetition and familiarity, ingrain the practical, sensorial and emotional aspects in the family's everyday mobility practices and habits to such a degree that it make them less visible and susceptible to inquiry. Hence family members know more about the practical and affective dimensions of their mobility than they can tell.

In this study, by conducting qualitative family interviews coupled with GPS tracking, mental map drawing exercises and ethnographic field studies of everyday mobility, the family's ordinary and often un-reflected-upon everyday mobility was approached using multiple techniques and from multiple perspectives. Hence, by applying this framework of methods and techniques to elucidate the mundane details of everyday mobility, the study sought to jog memories and reflections and thereby to provoke the respondents as well as the researcher to express and understand the ephemeral aspects, meanings and organisations of their own and other families' everyday mobility.

Drawing on pragmatist and hermeneutic epistemology, it was argued in chapters 2 and 5 that knowledge is never value-neutral or objective, but always positioned and subjective. However, by reflecting upon the researcher's own active influence on the knowledge production in this study, this subjectivity can be turned to good use. Hence, in this study, the researcher and his subjectivity, his embodied experiences, pre-understandings and prejudices of and about everyday mobility, are not excluded or ignored, but foregrounded, and used as a tool for analytically exploring the respondents' everyday mobility in the production and analysis of the empirical data.

The lively debate on mobile methods in general (Büscher, Urry and Witchger 2011, Fincham, McGuinness and Murrey 2010) and the methodological developments of Marling(2003), Spinney (2011), Vannini (2012), Jiron (2011) and Neuhaus (2010), in particular, has provided major sources of methodological inspiration for the study.

Hence, by experimenting with qualitative interviewing, the evocation techniques of GPS tracking and mental map making, and ethnographic field studies, the study also offers a small contribution to the on-going exploration and development of empirical mobile methods in mobilities studies.

# CHAPTER 10: DISCUSSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH AREAS

## 10-1: INTRODUCTION

As this thesis, throughout the preceding chapters, has theoretically and empirically illustrated how family members cope with everyday life through making and performing mobility practices, the objective of this final chapter is to open a discussion of how this qualitative knowledge of everyday family mobility can be more generally applied. In keeping with the pragmatist attitude that has guided this study, it is the researcher's firm belief that knowledge should not be produced solely for its own sake, but that it should also be measured against some standard of application and usefulness in practice. In this light, the chapter will focus on the question, "So what?" (Shaw and Hesse 2010: 309), which can be asked of all research, thereby bringing into focus the relevance and utility of the qualitative knowledge of everyday family mobility produced in this study. Hence the aim of this final chapter is twofold: it will both address the application of qualitative knowledge in the ACTUM project and contribute to a larger discussion of the increasing harriedness and stress in Danish society.

Firstly, the chapter will provide an overall discussion of the roles and opportunities of mobilities research in relation to the conventional and often positivist research being conducted in transport studies in fields such as transport geography and transport planning. This discussion will serve as a springboard for tentatively proposing shared contact points in the qualitative knowledge produced in this study, facilitating dialogue with the ACTUM project. Secondly, the chapter pushes beyond the demarcation of the research ambition of this study and, by proposing seven focus areas, takes the liberty of speculating on how the produced knowledge might be used for informing policy and decision-making processes related to the societal issues of harriedness and stress in everyday life. Finally, the chapter concludes by tentatively outlining future areas of research based upon the knowledge and insights on everyday family mobility gained in this study.

## 10-2: THE STUDY OF TRANSPORT

Cresswell (2010: 555) reminds us to be careful not to overstate the "newness" of mobilities research. The world and people were, as he says, already on the move well before the twenty-first century, and the field of transport geography was already conducting research on people's everyday travel prior to the mobilities turn. To engage in a discussion of the potential of the knowledge of quotidian mobility produced in

this study, it is helpful to examine the differences and similarities between research originating in transport geography and research coming out of the emerging field of mobilities. Indeed, in recent years, there has been some debate within these disciplines over whether any such hard and fast distinction can be made (see Cresswell (2010), Shaw and Hesse (2010), Shaw and Sidaway (2011), Keeling (2008), Goetz, Vowles and Tierney (2009) for discussion on this point). The two fields share a common interest in human movement, though it is approached from different perspectives with regard to focus, method and epistemology. These differences can largely be ascribed to the fields' historical development and the traditions of the academic disciplines that spawned them.

Coming out of what has been termed the “quantitative revolution” in geography in the 1950s and 1960s, the sub-field of transport geography as a spatial science was founded in a strong empiricist and positivist philosophical tradition (Shaw and Hesse 2010: 306). While the rest of human geography was infused during the 1970s and 1980s with a much broader range of approaches and embraced theoretical pluralism, transport geography has, to a large extent, stayed the same, though it has undergone some change and diversification. Goetz, Vowles and Tierney (2009) statistically show that transport geography is not as insulated from qualitative approaches as its reputation would have it, but acknowledge that transport geography has a “mainstream” that is still predominantly characterised by its positivist approach and quantitative methods. Based on this, they call for more interaction between transport geography and other fields, such as human geography, and for the inclusion of alternative research approaches and methods. A subtle sign that transport geography is changing can be seen, as Adey points out, in Knowles, Shaw and Docherty's (2008) textbook on transport geography, which suggests a “more holistic and integrated approach towards transport that sees mobility issues addressed by complimentary quantitative and statistical approaches alongside qualitative analysis” (Adey 2010: 179). That being said, mainstream transport geography is still, according to Cresswell, “overwhelmingly the child of a positivist spatial science” (2010: 554), which is evidenced in the predominantly quantitative approaches and output published in research journals (see Goetz, Vowles and Tierney (2009: 327-30) for a nuanced account of this).

In contrast to the long history of transport geography, during the last one-and-a-half decades or so the mobilities turn has gained in popularity and increased in prominence across the social sciences. The reason for bringing the mobilities turn into this discussion is that according to some scholars (see i.e. Cresswell (2010), Merriman and Cresswell (2011), Shaw and Hesse (2010), Keeling (2008)) the mobilities turn, with its plurality and open-mindedness in epistemological and ontological approaches, theories and methods, provides a welcome opportunity for conventional and mainstream transport geography and a reinvigoration of the study of movement in general. Shaw and Hesse, in particular, advocate for a mutually beneficial relationship between mobilities and transport research:

*Thus mobilities fills a major research gap in the geographical study of travel and transport by setting out to (dis)cover a range of topics behind and beyond “traditional” transport geography: it elucidates the framework conditions underpinning the generation of movement, the experience of movement and the implications thereof. (2010:306)*

However, despite the obvious shared interest in human movement and the seemingly complementary fit Shaw and Hesse hint at, few attempts to cross the boundary between transport geography and mobilities studies have been made. Indeed, rather than seeing similarities and points of contact between the two, many mobilities scholars, especially, have questioned the positivist-leaning assumptions and the positivist-leaning ways in which mainstream transport geography has been and to some extent still is approaching the study of transport and mobility.

Two assumptions about travel and travellers that characterise much of the research coming out of transport geography have been especially contested by mobilities scholars (see Merriman and Cresswell (2011), Spinney(2009), Watts and Lyons (2011), Vannini (2012), Jain and Lyons (2008), Larsen, Urry and Axhausen (2006), Jiron (2012) amongst others). Firstly, travel is regarded as a derived demand, something that merely occurs as a consequence of something else, undercutting the idea that it is something in its own right. As Watts and Lyons write, “For the economically modelled passenger (travelling in the course of work) nothing happens en route, everything happens before and after” (2011: 106). Travel is seen through this lens as something only to be minimised, and therefore time spent in travel is understood as wasted time. Secondly, following this line of thinking, the traveller is regarded as a “rational-mobile-person” (Merriman and Cresswell 2011: 2) following the predictable law-like behaviour of optimising travel by minimising wasted travel time. In much mobilities literature this is contrasted with a more nuanced and multi-faceted view of travel time in which it is seen not necessarily as wasted, but as productive (Laurier 2004, Lyons and Urry 2005), fun, dramatic (Vannini 2012), affective, emotional (Spinney 2009), social (Sheller 2004, Laurier et al. 2008), recreational and relaxing (Bissell 2007, Lyons and Chatterjee 2008b, Löfgren 2008), affectionate and therapeutic (Jensen 2012, Laurier and Lorimer 2014). By bringing these multi-faceted and often visceral qualities into the study of travel, mobilities researchers seek to evoke an image of a “‘non-instrumental’ and even at times ‘irrational mobile subject’” (Jensen forthcoming). Importantly, the point painting this picture is not to deny the correctness of the rational mobile subject, as moving is often “done with a very instrumental set of goals like getting from A to B or using the least effort”, but rather it is to add to this imagery the notion that “our bodily engagement with the world in motion also sustains an emotional relation that unfolds affects as much as reasons” (Jensen 2013: 99).

Many mobility scholars stress that one of the consequences of these assumptions is that the complexity and multiplicity of the transport phenomenon being studied is reduced

to such a degree that much valuable knowledge and insight on “the local realities of where, how, and why people move” are ignored or lost (Jiron 2012: 265). This is certainly not always as black and white as it is portrayed to be, and it is difficult to make any sharp demarcations or generalisations (see Goetz, Vowles and Tierney (2009) for an analysis of research in transport geography). Indeed within the “mainstream” of transport geography the rational-mobile-person has become considerably *smarter* and more realistic. With insights from psychology and behavioural economics being introduced into the field of transport studies, the modelled decision-making process of transport alternatives has been opened up and made sensitive to a range of irrational and social factors, such as norms, moods, emotions etc. (Cherchi 2009, Metcalfe and Dolan 2012). Hence stating that transport geographers are ignoring the when, how and why of people’s mobility is not wholly fair, as social theory and factors such as attitude, lifestyle, habit, mobility style, and rhythm also hold some interest for transport geographers, although they approach these factors differently than do mobilities scholars.

### **10-3: BRINGING TRANSPORT AND MOBILITIES INTO DIALOGUE**

Despite the often contrasting scopes of their interests, epistemologies, methodologies and theoretical frameworks, both transport geographers and planners and mobilities researchers are interested in movement of almost any kind (especially that of people), and can learn more from each other’s approaches if these are embraced and discussed rather than being simply ignored or dismissed as “too traditional” or “too cultural” (Shaw and Hess 2010: 307). Hence Shaw and Hess (2010) invite us to move beyond the stereotyped and caricatured images of each other’s approaches and focus on areas of compatibility. Although differences exist, they should not be seen as barriers but as “a strength in that they bring more to the study of movement overall” (Shaw and Hesse 2010: 310).

With this in mind, one way of bridging the gap is bringing those studying movement—transport geographers, transport and traffic planners, mobilities researchers and others—into dialogue with each other. Doing so is of course risky; as Bissell, Adey and Laurier (2011) rightly state, there are no guarantees that such dialogue will be positive or succeed in producing mutual benefit. From a pragmatist perspective, attempting this is an experiment in the sense that it necessarily carries a risk of failure. Hence bridging the gap is not a requirement or demand, but rather an option or opportunity that may shed new light on the subject of study from multiple perspectives and thereby contribute to the growing knowledge base on everyday mobility. However, to lay the foundation for success it is important to recognise, as Bissell, Adey and Laurier continue, that creating “positive dialogue, is about being susceptible to other approaches and therefore becomes a more vulnerable or humbling experience. ... A willingness to be transformed, seduced and infected by approaches that might be

initially baffling, confusing and uncomfortable” (2011: 1007).

Such dialogue could take its point of departure in “contact points” (Cresswell 2012: 645) in which transport geography and mobilities research approach “shared themes” (Shaw and Hesse 2010: 310), albeit from widely diverging perspectives. It is in these potential intersections that interaction may emerge and the two sides may learn something from each other. Bissell, Adey and Laurier (2011) suggest three such shared themes: *travel time*, *socio-material transport systems* and *the passenger*. With this inspiration, the knowledge produced in this study can be broken down into three corresponding potential points of engagement:

- *Family travel time*  
The study has provided a way of thinking about how everyday travel and travel time are experienced and put to use in the family. Although families often seek to minimise travel time, the time family members spend travelling is filled with meaningful activities. The study has shown how family members endow travel time with social and emotional content through the making and performing of mobile care, mobile togetherness and mobile in-betweens (see chapter 7). Hence travel time in everyday life is not simply wasted time; for family members moving together in mobile with constellations, travel time is a space in which everyday family life unfolds through conversations, intimacy and shared experiences, but also through arguments, disagreements and uncomfortable silences. Furthermore, many family members spend their time in transit mentally recuperating and preparing for their destinations through non-activities like relaxing, sleeping, reading or listening to music, while others make the most of the time by working, doing homework, making phone calls, writing emails or planning and coordinating everyday life.
- *Socio-material family mobility practices*  
The study has explored how materialities, things, transport modes, infrastructures and places are interwoven, together with family members, into the family’s mobility practices. Family members craft material coalitions in their mobility practices that enable and empower them to accomplish complex family taskscapes without being caught up in disruptions and contingencies. The study has shown how performing and maintaining everyday mobility practices are associated with skilful labour (see chapter 8). However, materialities are not passive but active mediators, translating and shaping the practical, social and emotional effects the family’s mobility practices produce. When assembled in specific configurations, materialities contribute to the orchestration of mobile atmospheres that in turn support the performance of mobile togetherness or in-betweens. Hence, when interweaving specific places, infrastructures and transport modes into routes, family members are both ensuring practical movement and managing and making emotional states and geographies.
- *The mobile family member*



The study offers a relational approach to understanding family mobility in which family members and their mobility practices are regarded as embedded in social contexts. Everyday mobility practices in the family are always made and performed relative to others and other mobility practices in a relational hold. Indeed moving around in everyday life while maintaining resonance in the family taskscape is a relational exercise in which family members respond, conform and adapt to each other's trajectories through mobile micro-coordination and relational knowledge. Hence family members do not freely choose the configurations of transport modes, routes and destinations in their mobility practices, but make decisions that take into consideration others and their practical, social and emotional needs and wishes, negotiating compromises where necessary. The study has shown in particular that family members often form mobile with constellations moving together, sometimes for chauffeuring purposes, meeting practical needs, and sometimes for the sake of togetherness, meeting social and emotional needs.

It is proposed that the insights from these three themes could serve as the point of departure for dialogue with other transport researchers within the ACTUM project (as well as others). In addition to providing in-depth understanding of how family members use their everyday mobility in coping in everyday life, these themes also offer insights into the transport decision-making processes of modal and route choice in the socio-relational context of the family.

The ACTUM project, by bringing together researchers from both transport geography and mobilities, is facilitating an opportunity for cross-disciplinary dialogue and discussion. Up to this point two papers have been produced with roots in the research undertaken and empirical material produced in work package 2 of the ACTUM project (see Wind et al. (2012) and Jensen, Sheller and Wind (2014); both can be found in the appendix, Folder E). Furthermore, as the ACTUM project is set for completion in 2015, there is still time for further dialogue and collaboration; it is too early to conclusively state how exactly the qualitative knowledge produced in this thesis will contribute to the rest of the ACTUM project and its overall ambition.

Moreover, the ACTUM project, as a cross-disciplinary framework, can also be used as an opportunity to endorse a more pragmatist approach to transport and mobility research, one that is less defined by the boundaries of disciplines and more by the problem at hand or the scope of the research ambition. With such a pragmatist perspective (recall Dewey's instrumental pragmatism in chapter 2), approaches, methods and theories are tools to be selected and applied for their analytical abilities to solve specific problems, explain specific situations or answer questions. Such an approach demands no allegiance to one particular epistemological or ontological anchorage, but is simply concerned with picking adequate tools that get the job done, so to speak. Hence there is no ideal or optimal equilibrium between qualitative and quantitative approaches; rather the balance needs to be based on the situation and the

nature of the research ambition.

Although this may sound a bit naïve, such an approach also argues for the peaceful co-existence of qualitative and quantitative approaches in mixed-method research design in both transport geography and mobilities studies. However, whereas transport geography has a history of positivistic inclination and is still dominated by quantitative perspectives, the situation is *reversed* in the case of mobilities studies, which emerged from an interpretive and qualitative tradition, and in which most of the research undertaken is qualitative in nature. Indeed Urry and Sheller (2006) (see also Sheller (2011)) advocate for interdisciplinary studies in the mobilities paradigm; hence the literatures of the two fields should not be understood, as Shaw and Hesse (2010: 307) also argue, as incommensurable opposites, but rather as constituting a continuum that encompasses all approaches and perspectives to studying movement. Indeed, the work of Larsen, Urry and Axhausen (2006), Schwanen (2008), Lyons and Jain (2008), Peters, Kloppenburg and Wyatt (2010) and Manderscheid (2014) springs to mind as excellent examples of such cross-disciplinary research in transport and mobility studies and “is just as much ‘transport geography’ as it is mobilities research” (Cresswell 2010: 555).

#### **10-4: INFORMING POLICY THROUGH MOBILITIES RESEARCH**

The remainder of this chapter focuses on the discrete research ambition of this thesis (ignoring the ACTUM project’s overall research objective of creating a prototype transport model for the metropolitan area) and tentatively discusses the potential reach of the findings produced in this study in terms of informing policy. This discussion is of course informed by the above treatment of transport and mobilities research, as transport research is, as Keeling (2009: 522) states, directed towards policy-making, probably more so than is mobilities research.

Arguably, as mobilities research is moving beyond the early stage of being a “turn” and “solidifying into an interdisciplinary field” (Bissell, Adey and Laurier 2011), and in light of the huge societal and environmental challenges related to everyday human mobility, such as inequality, safety, stress, pollution, congestion etc., mobilities research should respond to Shaw and Hesse’s (2010) provocative question, “So what?”, and strive to become more involved in decision support and policy-making. Although most mobilities researchers already take this responsibility seriously, new opportunities for the application of mobilities research could emerge from dialogue with research coming out of transport geography, which has always had a strong tradition of policy-driven work (Keeling 2009: 522). Shaw and Hesse (2010: 309) rightly point out that “mobilities [researchers] not engaging with policy debates will diminish the likelihood of their work having an impact beyond immediate academic circles”.

Lyons (2004: 490) tells us that transport planning and transport policy are in the

process of moving away from a paradigm in which the role of transport was merely to manage demand and serve the needs of society. It is increasingly recognised that transport and society are reciprocally interlinked, in such a way that transport is shaping society, for better or worse, and vice versa. Similarly, Keeling (2008) notes this increased focus on the transport-society nexus and that mobilities research presents an opportunity for bridging the gap between the social and natural sciences in transport research. By doing this, mobilities researchers could address the need not only for the more conventional quantitative knowledge coming out of mainstream transport geography, but also for rich, qualitative, in-depth knowledge of “what factors influence choice and behavior so that in turn decision-makers can be (more) effectively advised on appropriate formulation and implementation of policy” (Lyons 2004: 499). This means that “questions about why, when, and how people travel within a societal context [are] as important to broader policy development as modeling basic transport flows and mapping networks” (Keeling 2008: 276). Not only does this realisation open up an opportunity for mobilities research to play a more prominent role in decision support, it also morally obligates mobility researchers to orient their work towards potential implementation in policy-making and decision-making processes. This entails recognising that qualitative knowledge and in-depth understanding of mobility, as Lyons argues, “must be made accessible to decision-makers and conveyed in such a way that enables them to act upon it” (Lyons 2004: 507).

That being said, although transport planners and policymakers have recognised the need for “integrative approaches to transport to extend beyond integration within transport and transport systems”, as Lyons (2004: 490) also states, there is still a need for increased and wider acceptance of qualitatively produced knowledge supporting these decision-making processes. Importantly, this entails moving past the “if you can’t count it, it doesn’t count” attitude and “evidence-based” policies in the strict positivistic sense (2004: 490). This returns us to the discussion above on transport geography, new approaches and the need for more types of mobilities and transport studies spanning the continuum from positivist transport geography approaches to mobilities research on affect and emotions, which all must be regarded as relevant and applicable to decision support in the policy-making process. This imperative resonates with Watts and Urry’s (2011) call for an “affective transport appraisal” in transport planning and policy-making. They emphasise the importance and potential of taking into consideration the social and affective aspects of the facts that travel time is not wasted time and experiences in travel can be beneficial to the traveller. However, importantly, they propose this affective appraisal not as an exclusive approach but as complementary to the conventional and widespread *economic* transport appraisal. Hence the intention is to holistically broaden “the established ‘logical’ framework of transport analysis” (Lyon 2004: 492-3) and the *evidence* that guides policymakers and politicians with a wider range of both qualitative and quantitative knowledge of factors influencing mobility.

## 10-4: HARRIEDNESS AND STRESS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Returning to the themes of harriedness and time squeeze in everyday family life explored earlier (see sections 1-1, 4-7 and 6-4), the chapter will discuss how knowledge of everyday family mobility might be used to shed further light on this topic and to take a first tentative step in conforming some of this knowledge to a shape that is suitable for a discussion about action and future policy initiatives.

The relevance of the phenomenon of harriedness in contemporary Danish society and in many people's, not just families', everyday lives has been addressed in earlier chapters (see section 6-4). When a busy, rushed everyday life gets out of hand and induces stress, it can have severe personal consequences. According to the Danish NGO *Stressforeningen* (Stressforeningen 2009), which works to provide information on stress, stress not only has consequences for the physical and mental health of many citizens, but also has economic implications for society. A study conducted in 2009 showed that 35.000 people are off work sick in Denmark every day due to stress, and that 10-12% of all Danes (approximately 430.000 people) show severe symptoms of stress (Stressforeningen 2009). In total, stress results in 1.5 million extra sick days, 30.000 cases of hospitalisation and 500.000 doctor appointments per year. It is estimated that the total cost of stress and stress-related sickness is as much as 14 billion D.kr., or approximately 1.88 billion euros per year (Stressforeningen 2009). Moreover, stress is not just a problem for adults; studies indicate stress is also growing problem for many school children in Denmark, and one in four Danish teenagers feels stressed (Nielsen et al. 2007). Thus it is hardly controversial to state that stress is a real and even major issue for many Danes, one that often entails severe consequences for work, family, health and quality of life. As argued earlier, families with children are particularly at risk for stress, as they typically experience pressure for high performance in both work and family life (Arbejdslivskommissionen 2007).

Almost all of the families participating in this study reported a busy and sometimes harried lifestyle, but only a few reported that stress was a recurring and critical issue in their everyday life. Nonetheless, from the interviews conducted in this study, it remains clear that for most of these families, managing everyday life is a balancing act with ups and downs and more- and less-stressful periods, especially when the children are young. Moreover, this theme of harriedness and stress in everyday family life is not just a constructed academic perspective imposed upon their lives. Indeed this is also very discussed topic in the Danish public debate. Recently, through a series of features and articles in one of the major Danish newspapers, the question of whether harried families with children should be entitled to more support from the state has been debated (Jespersen 2014, Albæk 2014, Løkkegaard 2014, Pedersen 2014, Rasmussen 2014, Brand 2014). Even the Danish Minister for Children, Gender Equality, Integration and Social Affairs, Manu Sareen (2014), has taken part in the debate stating while the government should focus on improving conditions for children and work to prolong opening hours of childcare institutions, achieving balance in

the family's everyday life is still mainly the family's own responsibility. As other commentators' notice, even though harriedness and stress is a huge issue for many citizens and it has received much attention in the public debate, as a political issue this has not received much attention from the Danish politicians yet.

One of the factors that has not received much attention in this debate and in the reviewed reports of stress conducted in Denmark is the family's everyday mobility. It is seldom mentioned as one of the factors that contributes to and/or relieves stress, and if mentioned it is typically dwarfed by the influence of work life. The family's commuting time is briefly referenced as a possible factor co-contributing to stress in some reports (Deding, Lausten and Andersen 2006, Arbejdslivskommissionen 2007). Yet the findings of this study suggest that everyday family mobility can both be a source contributing to harriedness and stress in the family's daily life as well as a perhaps unrecognised source of relief that contributes to managing and coping with harriedness and time pressure caused by the practical, social and emotional obligations and conditions of the family's daily life. Hence it seems relevant to establish knowledge and understanding of how family mobility is associated with harriedness and stress in everyday life.

Drawing on the work in this study, there is potential in using the concept of elasticity as an overall framework for highlighting some of the key factors that separate mobility practices that contribute to coping with harriedness and stress in everyday family life from those that are burdensome sources of harriedness and stress. Within this framework, the concepts developed in the study (see chapters 7 and 8 for detailed descriptions) comprise a theoretical vocabulary that can be utilised for investigating the relationships among family members' making and performance of everyday mobility, their coping in everyday life and their feelings of harriedness and stress:

- *instrumental movement* denotes the effort of physically getting family members to and from the wide range of spatially and temporally distributed activities in the family's life, which is imperative for successfully accomplishing everyday life. To enable all family members to get to their daily activities, most of the families in the study spend a substantial amount of time on the *pre-travel* tasks of planning, negotiating and thereby maintaining resonance in the family taskscape, the socio-temporal ordering of activities and family members in everyday life. The study shows how family members handle disruptions and contingencies in everyday life by engaging in *umbrella planning*, *fortification* of mobility practices, *mobility skills* and *mobile micro-coordination*. Moreover, successfully performing mobility practices is also contingent upon family members' ability to form and handle material coalitions of transport modes, systems, things and artefacts.
- *mobile care* highlights the practical and emotional work of making and performing mobility practices, ensuring all family members, especially

children, get safely to and from their destinations in everyday life. Often (though not exclusively) this occurs in mobile with constellations of family members travelling together, such as when parents escort children. In performing mobile care, family members are attentive to other family members' practical and emotional needs and wishes; therefore mobile care can be seen as contributing to the effort of maintaining emotional and social relations in the family. The study highlights that performing mobile care is a *network enterprise* that often draws on significant others in combination with family members. Also, mobile care often creates *unseen* and *forced* mobility, as family members often engage in mobility for the benefit of others without others participating (i.e. doing the shopping before picking up the children, taking the bus to allow others to use the car etc.).

- *mobile togetherness* elucidates how family members use travel and travel time for social purposes. In the study it was found that for most of the families mobile togetherness served as a way of spending *quality time* together and thereby optimising the little time family members often have together in a busy and sometimes rushed everyday life. For some, this is a way of actualising a sense of family, and is sometimes regarded as equally important as family dinner or other familial activities. The study shows that performances of mobile togetherness rely on planning and coordination for synchronising family members in mobile withs. Importantly, it is emphasised that the physical and material setup of the mobility practice influences the successful facilitation of mobile togetherness, as orchestration of specific *mobile atmospheres* affords more hospitable environments for family members to spend time in together.
- *mobile in-betweens* emphasises the ways in which family members craft travel time into meaningful, pleasant and useful time. This practical and emotional management of travel time can function as a safeguard against *wasted* travel time and legitimise *time-outs* that offer mental transitions between domains and activities in everyday life, such as work and home. The study explores two types of mobile in-betweens. *Recreational in-betweens* allow family members to turn travel time into a private space in which recreational (non-) activities, such as relaxation, sleep, window gazing, reading etc., fill travel time. In the productive in-between family members utilise their travel time for activities like work and mobile micro-coordination of the family taskscape. The crafting of mobile in-betweens is highly contingent upon the material and physical configuration of the family member's mobility practices. The physical arrangement of transport modes and things and artefacts brought along in combination with the family member's practical *mobility knowledge* of social code and conduct, produce opportunities for easing or optimising travel, such as how to get a comfortable place on the train or where to get a coffee to go. This may contribute to orchestrating and sustaining *mobile atmospheres* that support recreational and/or productive travel time.



Although this list is hardly exhaustive, the elasticity framework and concepts used in the study demonstrate some of key ways in which family members cope with the practical, social and emotional conditions of an often busy and rushed everyday family life. These findings can also be used as a basis for planners and policy makers to search for new opportunities to optimise conditions and production of elasticity in the family's mobility in order to cope with harriedness in everyday life before it escalates to stress.

In line with Watts and Urry's (2011) "affective transport appraisal", this involves focusing on everyday journeys and the experiences they afford through the eyes of the people who inhabit transport spaces—roads, train compartments and bus stations—and not just through the lens of the economic incentives of cost, passenger numbers, congestion, speed, efficiency etc. The major concerns of travel in family life are of course such practicalities as whether the grocery bags will fit, whether the bus goes past the kindergarten, whether biking is the fastest way to move through the city, but equally important are concerns about whether transportation modes and spaces of transport offer hospitable environments for families and children, whether they are perceived as safe and reliable, whether they afford sociable, recreational and productive travel time etc. Addressing how systems, spaces and modes of family mobility can be shaped to facilitate high elasticity offers an opportunity for turning mobility into a valuable asset rather than yet another burden in a complex and busy everyday family life.

However, the theme of harriedness and stress in Danish society cannot be addressed by focusing only on everyday mobility. As outlined above, it also derives work life, opening hours of business, childcare centres etc. Although improving conditions for the production of elasticity might enable family members (and others) to better handle stress and harriedness in their everyday lives, there is a good chance that such government initiatives would have a limited impact if not combined with initiatives in other policy areas outside of transport. Ensuring the success and impact of transport policies directed towards stress and harriedness necessitates coordination with policy areas such as urban planning, labour policies and childcare policies. Therefore, it is imperative to think in terms of "policy packages" (Banister 2008: 79) spanning across policy silos to create effective and realistic action (Lyons 2004: 490). Hence in addition to the economic factors of travel time, cost, speed and capacity, future transport policy and planning could optimise conditions for elasticity production in family mobility by attending to the following points of action:

1. *Opportunities for mobile in-betweens and mobile togetherness*  
Public transport and transport systems should focus on creating more hospitable physical environments for family travel. Seating on public transport should be expanded and improved, and steps should be taken to reduce crowding during rush hour and prevent it from impeding passengers who wish to rest or work while travelling. Additionally, public transport modes and systems



should provide easy, accessible and free high-speed Internet infrastructure to travellers. This would both make public transport more attractive for families and increase opportunity for filling travel time with social, recreational and productive content.

2. *Accessibility to public transport*  
 Access to public transport alternatives should be greatly enhanced. Cost, frequency and coverage should be improved, especially in suburban areas where the car is the predominant and, for many, the only realistic mode of transport. Together with improving conditions for mobile togetherness, viable transport alternatives would expand the family's mobility repertoire, giving them more alternatives to rely on in coping with everyday life.
3. *Car-pooling schemes*  
 Car-pooling and car-sharing schemes should be subsidised by the state, especially in suburban residential areas. Not only would this be beneficial to the policy imperative of promoting sustainable mobility, but it would also benefit the family by expanding its mobility repertoire through the availability of more mobility alternatives. Furthermore, such frameworks could widen the family's social network and facilitate more cross-family mobility practices for commuting to work, escorting children to school and after-school activities, shopping etc. in everyday life.
4. *Intelligent traffic control and information systems*  
 Abundant, easily accessible, real-time information on conditions for traffic and transport systems, such as accidents, roadwork, congestion, delays, cancellations etc., would enable family members to get to and from activities more smoothly and optimise travel time by minimising the time buffers included in travel time while providing a greater sense of control in everyday mobility.
5. *Fight traffic congestion*  
 Twenty-nine per cent of travel time in Copenhagen is taken up by congestion and delays (CPH 2004). Car traffic should be further restrained in urban and suburban areas by imposing initiatives like road taxing and charging schemes, car-free zones, fewer parking opportunities, etc. However, doing so is only feasible in combination with massive improvements to the infrastructure for public transport, biking and walking. Reducing congestion would cut travel time, ameliorate the anxieties and negative experiences caused by being stuck in traffic and lower the overall stress level of travelling in the city.
6. *Escorting schemes for children*  
 More effort should be spent on developing and testing strategies and initiatives for public transport schemes for taking children to kindergarten, school and

after-school activities. Such opportunities for alternative transport options for children could reduce the overall strain on families and the complexity of their mobility practices.

7. *Mobility learning*

Children should be given more knowledge of mobility systems and be taught mobility skills as an integral part of kindergarten and school education. In addition to learning about being mobile in their families, this would help prepare children to become mobile in various transport modes and increase their motility by expanding their mobility repertoire.

Such initiatives targeting the family's everyday mobility could be beneficially combined with recommendations from a Danish commission, the Family and Work commission, appointed in 2007 to review and assess work/life balance and stress among Danes (Arbejdslivskommissionen 2007). The recommendations with particular relevance to and influence on the family's everyday mobility are summed up below:

8. *Flexible childcare*

Childcare institutions, nurseries, day cares and kindergartens should not be closed on weekdays. Their opening hours should be more flexible, and childcare should be available at weekends. The commission also recommends making childcare available for sick children. Additionally, municipalities should prioritise placing siblings in the same childcare institutions, making it easier for parents to coordinate escorting their children. This would contribute to easing the load of complicated logistics that many families cope with when making everyday mobility practices.

9. *Flexible work*

Employees should have greater flexibility in work hours and more opportunities for part-time work for limited periods of time, for example while having young children. This would give families more flexibility in their everyday lives outside of work and allow them more room to compose mobility practices on their own terms and handle the conditions and contingencies, such as sickness, delays, extraordinary activities, running errands, etc., that arise in everyday life.

10. *Flexible services*

Health care, public service facilities, banks, pharmacies, etc. should have more flexible opening hours. Opening hours could be extended into the mornings or evenings on some weekdays and/or into the weekends. This would enable families to more easily weave these services into the family taskscape by fitting them into the family's existing mobility practices.

11. *Active information*

The commission also recommends that an internet portal offering professional

counselling on balancing work and life be provided. This portal should also provide information on transport alternatives and promotion of their benefits (such as opportunities for mobile togetherness, mobile in-betweens, flexible services, etc.) through information campaigns aimed at families. Increasing awareness of alternative options for organising everyday family life and mobility will not by itself change habits, but it is an important step in facilitating change. In addition to information, sharing and offering counselling on best practices in making and performing everyday family mobility and how to take advantage of some of the above-mentioned opportunities could also be provided online.

These are of course very general and unfinished recommendations, proposed primarily with the ambition of improving conditions for elasticity production. Neither how they should be realised nor what their ramifications might be in other areas of everyday life are taken into consideration. It is naïve to think such extensive and controversial actions could receive the necessary support to survive the political system (see Banister (2008) and Lyons (2004) for a discussion of some of the political and policy-related challenges and opportunities in implementing critical societal changes, such as the transition to sustainable transport). Therefore, these recommendations need further investigation and more detailed description to demonstrate their feasibility. However, that being said, the intention in proposing these recommendations in their present state is not to argue for their implementation, but rather to create awareness of and debate on how we might improve quality of life for families through changes in their everyday mobility practices.

## **10-5: FURTHER RESEARCH AREAS**

Finally, on the basis of the analysis, findings and discussion in this thesis, four future research areas will be briefly outlined in the following paragraphs.

### **RESEARCH AREA 1: FAMILY MOBILITY AND MOBILITIES DESIGN**

Based on the above discussion of the application of qualitative knowledge to everyday family mobility in relation to the trend towards harried and stressful lifestyles for families with children in Danish society, there is an opportunity to engage in further investigation of how the family's everyday mobility can contribute positively to coping with harriedness and stress. The recommendation number 1 in section 10-4, "opportunities for mobile in-betweens and mobile togetherness", could serve as a point of departure for both additional analysis of how families (and other travellers) inhabit, appropriate and use transport modes, infrastructures, places and systems in their everyday life, and for concrete design proposals affording better and more opportunities for mobile in-betweens and mobile togetherness (and elasticity

production in general) in everyday life. Such a research area could take its point of departure in the notion of mobile atmosphere (see section 7-7) as an outcome not only of human interaction, but also of the physical and material mobile environments in which mobility takes place. In doing so, the research would respond to the call for what Jensen (2013; 2014) terms “mobilities design”, which seeks to facilitate the interaction and integration of the analytic disciplines of the social sciences and the interventionist disciplines of design and architecture.

## RESEARCH AREA 2: FAMILY MOBILITY AND LIFE PHASES

Based on initial analysis of the family’s mobility patterns in relation to their children’s ages and motility, this study has shown that children both directly and indirectly influence the mobility of the entire family as well as the family taskscape. More research could be conducted to understand how children with varying levels of motility contribute to and suppress the production of elasticity. Such a research area could contribute valuable knowledge to the existing research on family life with children as well as to the growing interest in children’s mobilities within the field of mobilities. In doing this, the elasticity model could be used and further developed as an analytical tool, providing a processual perspective on how families cope through their mobility in different life phases and with children in different age constellations. This could lead to a better understanding of the specific challenges, factors and choices that support specific mobility configurations in families. Such knowledge could, depending on the scope of the research, be used to inform future policy on improving overall conditions and quality of life, changing mobility patterns and facilitating sustainable transition.

## RESEARCH AREA 3: GENDERED FAMILY MOBILITY

It is evident from studying the families and their mobility practices, as described in the empirical material, that everyday family mobility is a gendered phenomenon. Although Danish society is egalitarian and there is near equality between the genders, especially in work and family life, compared to many other nations (as shown in chapter 6), there are still clear differences and inequalities. Some studies point out that different modes of transport and physical design of transport systems have different gendered affordances, often neglecting or ignoring the needs and preferences not only of women but also of children (see e.g. Ohnmacht, Maksim and Bergmen (2009) for an overview). Further research should focus not only on the dark side of the transport modes and transport systems available to family members, but also on how family mobility practices are made and performed within gendered power geometries in the family and on how gendered dispositions, conditions and uneven distributions of mobility resources in the family also generate forced mobility, restricted mobility and immobility.

#### RESEARCH AREA 4: INTERDISCIPLINARY DIALOGUE

The final proposal for a future research area can be understood as a direct continuation of the discussion at the beginning of this chapter of dialogue between so-called mobilities researchers and transport researchers (see sections 10-1 and 10-2). As outlined in this discussion, these two approaches, although they employ different philosophical underpinnings, methods and theories, have the empirical phenomenon of mobility and transport in common. Hence there is a potential to bring together insights and knowledge in order to gain a broader and deeper understanding of everyday mobility that in turn could be used to inform planners, politicians and other policymakers. Within the ACTUM project, as mentioned above, a number of cross-disciplinary activities have already been conducted with the intent of creating dialogue and more collaboration. As an outcome of this PhD study, based on the qualitative knowledge of everyday family mobility produced in it, another workshop will yet be held that could potentially yield further interdisciplinary collaboration within the ACTUM project.



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## REFERENCES

## APPENDIX

The appendix is found on the USB stick located in the back of the thesis. The material is organised in folders according to the phases, P1, P2 and P3 of the study (see figure 5, section 3-2). The appendix contains the following:

- Folder A – Material from Phase 1
  - Analysis report (initial analysis of the P1 data)
  - Empirical material report (interview guide, full transcripts (in Danish), GPS maps, mental maps)
- Folder B – Material from Phase 2
  - Analysis report (initial analysis of both P1 and P2 data)
  - Empirical material report (interview guide, full transcripts (in Danish), timelines, activity schedules)
- Folder C – Material from Phase 3
  - Video material from field studies
  - Field notes and observations (in Danish)
  - Reflection questions used in field studies
  - Overview sampled mobility practices
  - Initial description of method (working paper)
- Folder D – Nvivo
  - Nvivo analysis source file
  - Example of coding nodes in the analysis process (in Danish)
- Folder E – Joint publications in ACTUM
  - Joint conference paper with other ACTUM researchers (title: “Paving the road”)
  - Joint paper with Ole B. Jensen and Mimi Sheller (title: “Together and Apart”)
- Folder F – Contracts and permissions
  - Contract sent to 11 families participating in the study (in Danish)
  - Permission for filming during field studies from Danish Railways (in Danish)
  - Permission for filming during field studies from the Metro company (in Danish)

Most of the empirical material used in the study has attached in the appendix. The reports are in English, but some of the content is only in Danish (i.e. the written transcripts of interviews, interview guides).



