

## **Tjänsteresor i människors vardag**

– om rörlighet, närvaro och frånvaro

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## Abstract

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In this thesis, current debates on mobile lifestyles and the work-life interface are woven together and studied from the perspective of frequent business travellers. The overarching aim is to investigate the significance of travel at work in people's everyday lives. More specifically, the main objective is to shed some light upon emotional and practical consequences of travel-related absence from home for friendship and family relations.

The thesis consists of four papers based on two different empirical studies: one qualitative study comprised by two sets of observations and 15 interviews, and one quantitative study based on survey data. The analysis of the qualitative data resulted in two papers written in Swedish (papers I and II). The results from the quantitative study are presented in two papers written in English (papers III and IV).

Paper I is an exploratory study with the purpose of discovering focal dimensions of the work-life interface from a business travellers perspective. The second paper further explores gendered experiences of overnight work travel revealed in the first paper. Whereas the women's experiences are characterized by feelings of loneliness, guilt and a sense of vulnerability, the men's experiences are less negative and they also call attention to some positive sides of being cut off from the everyday life at home. The gendered experiences have practical implications for how the respondents organize their mobile life. In prioritizing being at home, the female strategy aims at reducing the amount of nights away and, consequently, leads to comparatively many hours on the road. In contrast, the male strategy is more focused on minimizing the hours on the road with the purpose of actively "being there" for the family while at home.

Questions about implications of overnight work travel in terms of the travellers' ability to keep in touch with locally based as well as long-distance friends, and the opportunities that the travel might offer as a source of geographically extended social networks, are elaborated through analysis of the survey data (paper III). The benefits of mobility in terms of extended social networks represent the main social consequences of work travel as established in the analysis. Staying away from home due to work travel is also seen as potentially facilitating the coordination with friends living elsewhere. Some downsides are reported as well. The most frequent travellers feel negatively affected by mobility, reporting problems hampering coordination with friends close to home.

Following up one thread noticed in the qualitative study, one issue explored by the quantitative data is the significance of work-related travel for the gendered division of domestic responsibility (paper IV). The analysis reveals a clear pattern in two key respects. When the traveller is a woman, the allocation of home-based responsibility seems to remain unaffected. By contrast, the effect of the business trips when the travellers are men is a reduction in their relative share of responsibility for the home and the family.

Keywords: travel at work/business travel, work-life interface, gender, mobility, family, social networks.