

Mobility of mothers with disabled children – a matter of gender-disability intersectionality?

Emma Landby^{a*}

^aDepartment of Geography, Umeå University, Umeå, Sweden

Emma Landby, PhD candidate

Dept. of Geography, Umeå University

SE 901 87 Umeå, Sweden

+46907866027

Emma.landby@umu.se

orcid.org/0000-0003-4642-2711

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Having mobility constraints in everyday life can negatively affect people's quality of life and entail social and geographical exclusion. Previous research has shown that women and people with disabilities in general encounter more travel constraints compared to men and non-disabled people, respectively. However, little is known about constraints experienced by women who have disabled children. By using interviews with mothers of wheelchair-using children with cerebral palsy living in Sweden, this paper explores if these mothers' daily mobilities are affected by gender-disability intersectionality. The paper uses a time-geographical framework, focusing on the competition between different projects in everyday life. The results suggest that these mothers are affected by gendered norms and travel constraints related to their children's disabilities, which limit their options of transport modes and entail many chauffeuring responsibilities which they experience exceed 'normal' transport provision for (non-disabled) children, increasing both the number of trips and distance. Concerning time-geographical projects, these mothers prioritise their children's mobilities and everyday projects before their own.

Keywords: gender; disabled children; intersectionality; mobility; time-geography

Introduction

Everyone has constraints that can affect their mobility patterns in time and space (Hägerstrand 1970), but some groups of people have more travel constraints than others do (Lucas 2012). In general, women tend to have more limited mobility opportunities compared to men (Kwan 2000), especially if having young children (Gil Solá 2013). Moreover, people with severe disabilities usually have limited travel possibilities (Velho et al. 2016), and when it is a child who has the disability, the whole family's mobility patterns are likely to be affected (Nyman, Westin, and Carson 2018). Children with physical disabilities, such as wheelchair users, also tend to need parental transport provision up to a higher age than their non-disabled peers do (Pyer et al. 2010). Research has also shown that children with severe disabilities travel more frequently with their mothers than fathers (Falkmer and Gregersen 2002), perhaps because traditional gender roles tend to be strengthened in households with a disabled child (Di Giulio, Philipov, and Jaschinski 2014). Mothers of disabled children might therefore be more affected than fathers are, due to the combination of transport disadvantages that comes from being a woman and having a child with a disability.

Not having the same travel opportunities as others is problematic as it can negatively affect people's quality of life (Lucas and Musso 2014). Travel constraints could also contribute to social and geographical exclusion (Delbosc and Currie 2011), both for the child (Pyer et al. 2010) and the caregiver (Wiles 2003). In Sweden, the government has a general policy objective of providing equal opportunities to transport mobility for everyone, regardless of gender and disability (Swedish Government 2008). However, differences in travel opportunities still exist (Hallgrimsdottir et al. 2016; Transport Analysis 2019). While research on gender inequality regarding mobility has increased (e.g. Hanson 2010; Gil Solá 2013), there is still a lack of research exploring mobility for mothers with disabled children. That is where this paper takes its departure.

This paper exemplifies experiences of everyday mobility among mothers to children with disabilities. The paper departs from an interview study with 18 parents whereof four interviews with mothers who have wheelchair-using children with cerebral palsy (CP) are selected to provide illustrative examples. The aim is to explore if these mothers' everyday mobility patterns are subject to intersectionality between travel constraints of (1) being a woman and (2) having a disabled wheelchair-using child. This is studied from a feminist geography perspective and a time-geographical framework is used for analysis, focusing in particular on the concept of *projects* and how these women's projects can be affected by gender-disability intersectionality.

In this paper, 'travel' refers to everyday mobility such as trips to schools and leisure activities. Moreover, 'disability' is seen from a relational perspective, meaning that disability is the result of a person's impairment in combination with an inaccessible environment (Ytterhus et al. 2015). Throughout the paper 'disabled people' and 'people with disabilities' are used interchangeably. The former risks placing the weight on the disability and the latter, which uses a person-first format, presumes that disability is something that a person *has* but not necessarily *is*. However, 'people with disabilities' focuses on the medical aspects of the impairment, while 'disabled people' indicates that people are disabled due to external factors (Schur, Kruse and Blanck 2013). The choice to use the terms interchangeably is thus because they both carry both positive and negative aspects.

The paper is outlined as follows. The next section provides a background consisting of previous research on mobility, focusing on mobility constraints for women, children and wheelchair-users. The background section also introduces gender-disability intersectionality and the time-geographical framework respectively.

Following the background section is a method section describing the study procedure.

The result section then presents how everyday mobility is experienced by the interviewed mothers. Lastly, the results are discussed in a concluding discussion, which also include some policy implications and suggestions for future research.

Background

Transport mobility

Some groups of people have a more restricted mobility than others do. In today's western society, there is a presumption that people should be increasingly mobile, which risks making people with less mobility opportunities increasingly socially and geographically excluded. The more mobile society becomes, the more certain groups are excluded and/or disproportionately negatively affected as it widens the gap between the mobile and immobile (Delbosc and Currie 2011; Lucas 2012). Many within-group differences can exist regarding mobility possibilities, but in general, some groups of people tend to experience more transport disadvantage than others. Among transport-disadvantaged groups, studies have for instance explored mobility constraints for people on low incomes (McQuoid and Dijst 2012), ethnic minorities (Khan 2016) and people in life stages other than the average employee in the workforce, for whom the transport system usually is adapted. These include retired people, who might feel excluded from using certain transport modes, travel certain routes or in other ways experience travel constraints (Berg 2016; Hallgrimsdottir et al. 2016), but also children (Brown et al. 2008; Fyhri et al. 2011). Children's daily mobilities are usually dependent on the parents (Fyhri et al. 2011) and parents are increasingly driving children to school and activities while active and independent forms of travel are decreasing (Waygood et al. 2017). It is usually the mothers who are chauffeuring their children (Schwanen 2007).

Several studies, many within the field of feminist geography (Kwan 2000; Hjorthol 2001; Scholten, Friberg, and Sandén 2012), have focused on how women in general have less mobility opportunities than men do. In Sweden, women have increased their mobility during the past decades, but gender differences still exist. Women tend to travel for shorter distances (for instance when commuting to work) and use public transport to a larger extent than men, while men instead have a higher share of car use (Transport Analysis 2019). Moreover, women, and especially mothers, usually have more complex trips as they to a larger extent than men combine many activities in one trip (for instance grocery shopping and collecting children on the way home from work). In general, mothers have more child-related trips than fathers do (Schwanen 2007; Hjorthol 2008). In addition to studies on mobility for women, feminist literature on gendered mobility is an increasing field of study, showing for instance how mobility is shaped by gender and vice versa. Gendered norms in society, such as transport mode use, affect transport planning, often favouring the male's car travel to work (Hanson 2010).

People with disabilities have also received increased attention in mobility research lately. Studies have shown how people with disabilities generally travel less than non-disabled people do (e.g. Taylor and Józefowicz 2012) and experience many travel-related constraints in everyday life, for instance regarding public transport. Research on daily mobility for children (Author 2019), teenagers (Pyer and Tucker 2017) and adults (Bromley, Matthews, and Thomas 2007) has shown that wheelchair-users generally tend to be car dependent due to inaccessibility problems with public transport. One main problem is physical barriers in relation to public transport, which can relate to both the vehicle (Velho et al. 2016), platforms and stations (Ferrari et al. 2014).

Research about mobility for disabled children shows that public transport becomes more difficult, the more severe motorial limitations a child has (Wheeler, Yang, and Xiang 2009). Wheelchair-using children might need adapted cars, which further increase the need for parents to chauffeur them, as it is difficult to travel with others. Parents of wheelchair-using children usually have chauffeuring responsibilities that exceeds those of non-disabled children, as these children have few opportunities for independent travel (Pyer and Tucker 2017). Moreover, while children in general tend to travel more independently the older they get (Fyhri and Hjorthol 2009), wheelchair-using children tend to be reliant on the parents to a higher age than their non-disabled peers are (Pyer and Tucker 2017).

As both women, children in general, and children with disabilities in particular, can face various travel constraints that limit their geographical reach and mobility freedom, mothers of disabled children might be affected both by constraints related to gender and to disability due to intersectionality, to which we now turn.

Gender-Disability intersectionality

Feminist social scientists have for a few decades been interested in studying ‘women’, but there has been a lack of acknowledgement to how women can be affected by connecting attributes and identities, thereby missing a lot of the complexity in everyday life. Women are usually affected by gendered norms and simultaneously other social categories such as ethnicity, sexuality and disability (Valentine 2007). A research field called ‘feminist disability studies’ has emerged, which partly concerns gender-disability intersectionality among individuals, but also uncover similarities between feminist studies and disability studies. Research similarities concerns mainly oppression and discrimination that arise from differing from the societal norm (whether it be men or

able-bodied persons) for whom societies (not least public environments) often are planned.

Research in feminist disability studies has also dealt with gender-disability intersectionality. Studies have, for instance, showed how disabled women generally are more disadvantaged than disabled men are (Thomas 2006; Moodley and Graham 2015). However, disability and gender should not be seen as single axes of difference from the norm that can simply be added to each other. Rather, disability and gender interacts to form complex inequalities and power relations (Hopkins 2017), affected by the interconnections and interdependence between those social categories (Valentine 2007), leading to what Thomas (2006, 179) calls 'webs of disadvantage and exclusion'. One social identity can affect how another social identity is experienced (Shields 2008). Intersectionality includes many different connections between different aspects in life, which sometimes interacts, but not necessarily always, depending on context and situation (Hirschmann 2012). How different aspects of life (such as gender and disability) can intersect to become either advantageous or disadvantageous was exemplified by Valentine (2007) who also argues that geographical space is important in how intersectionality is formed and experienced, for instance due to the built environment and power relations at different places.

Intersectionality can be difficult to study, as it is so complex and context dependent. For instance, Valentine (2007) showed that belonging to different social categories can sometimes be a disadvantage, but not necessarily always, as intersectionality occurs in interactions. Moreover, social categories are dependent on other categories and social norms, as disadvantage often is experienced in relation to the norm (where the norm often is considered to be a white, heterosexual, able-bodied man) (Valentine 2007). Furthermore, it is difficult to cover all aspects of intersectionality,

resulting in research that focuses on a few aspects or identities, rather than the whole complexity affecting people's lives (Valentine 2007). That applies to this paper as well, where the focus is on gender-disability intersectionality, while also realising that other important aspects affecting these women's everyday lives might be missed. Moreover, in this paper, gender-disability intersectionality is limited to focus on everyday mobility, especially the interconnections between gendered mobility, gendered parental norms and mobility constraints related to their children's disability, while excluding other parts of everyday life.

The time-geographical framework

The study is based on a time-geographical framework. According to time-geography, everyone has resources and constraints that affect what they can manage to do. One resource that can be considered equally distributed is time, as everyone has 24 hours to spend every day (Hägerstrand 1970). Early time-geographical studies had a lack of a gender perspective and most studies concerned public space, while women generally have been more connected to the private space of the home (Rose 1993). Since then, it has become more common to include a gender perspective in time-geographical studies (Kwan 2000; Scholten, Friberg, and Sandén 2012), and to use qualitative methods such as interviews (e.g. Berg 2016), which this paper also adds to. A gender perspective can be useful not least when studying what resources and constraints people have, and how that can affect their everyday life.

In time-geography, people are having various activities and projects that they allocate their resources to. Since projects take time and space and people are characterised by indivisibility, meaning that they cannot physically be at more than one place at the same time (Ellegård and Svedin 2012), people have limited possibilities to undertake several projects simultaneously (Lenntorp 2004). Projects can be divided

into *individual* and *organisational* projects. Individual projects are projects that individuals undertake for their own sake, to reach individual goals. Organisational projects are on a higher level and include more people who need to cooperate in an organisation, which could be, for instance, a workplace or a family. Family members have different individual projects and these have to be steered, managed and negotiated to fit the other family members' individual projects as well as the family unit's organisational projects. Due to competition for time and other resources, some projects might have to step back in order for other projects to be realised. Gender can affect what projects that are being undertaken. It is usually the mother who steer the family's projects and takes the main responsibility for realising the children's individual projects, and has thereby less time for their own individual projects than fathers do (Ellegård 2001).

Some projects, such as work, tend to be fixed in time and space, meaning that other projects need to be planned in relation to those projects. People who have many fixed projects have limited time to perform other projects, but also limited geographical reach since they have to be able to spatially move between different projects within given time-frames (Kwan 2000). Kwan (1999) found that women often have more fixed projects than men in everyday life as they tend to be more involved in non-employment activities related to the household, such as childcare responsibilities. Women with children can be affected by the children's fixed activities, limiting the possibilities to undertake other activities and projects simultaneously. Children tend to have many fixed projects, such as school, but also leisure activities to which they might need parental accompany (Schwanen 2007). Research suggests that children have increasingly scheduled leisure activities instead of just playing outside at the playground, which can increase the need for parental transport provision (Hjorthol

2008). If having children who lack available options for independent mobility, for instance wheelchair-using children, parents might have to prioritize the children's projects before their own. While reducing work hours is common among mothers in general in order to manage childcare responsibilities, it is even more common among mothers of disabled children. Having a child with a disability can contribute to families adopting more traditional gender roles (Di Giulio, Philipov, and Jaschinski 2014).

As seen in previous research (e.g. Author 2019), the combination of the child's disability and an inaccessible environment often lead to coupling constraints between the child and the main caregiver (usually the mother). The mothers could therefore find themselves participating in the projects related to the children. These projects could, however, also be part of the mothers' *family projects*, including the individual project of 'raising children' (Ellegård and Wihlborg 2001) and the organisational project of managing the 'life puzzle' within the family. In this paper, mobility provision is seen as one of the projects that the four interviewed mothers perform as family projects, to fulfil the activities needed to perform the children's individual projects. The mothers' own mobility and projects such as work are considered their own individual projects.

Method

This paper is based on interviews with four women – Hanna, Kristin, Linda, and Sara¹ - who all have wheelchair-using children with cerebral palsy (CP). The decision to use interviews was based on the aim to elucidate these women's experiences of everyday mobility, which can be complex and not easily captured if using quantitative methods. With quantitative methods, different social identities can be added to each other, for

¹ The names are fictional due to confidentiality

instance to show statistically if mothers of disabled children experience more travel constraints than other mothers do. However, such methods can not show the interdependence between the different social categories, and intersectionality can thus easily be overlooked (Shields 2008). Interview studies are also considered appropriate for topics relating to disability issues (Kitchin 2000). The interview questions were open-ended and formulated so that the women could freely share their experiences while I as a researcher could take on the role as an active listener (Edwards and Holland 2013).

The interview questions were tested in a pilot interview and approved by an ethical board before the respondents were recruited. The parents were recruited through Facebook groups. I posted an information letter detailing the aim, method and result distribution of the study in Facebook groups where parents of children with disabilities were likely to be members, and the parents who wanted to participate contacted me. It was also clarified that participation was voluntary and that the data would be handled confidentially. The initial sample consisted of 18 parents, whereof 15 were mothers and three were fathers. The interviews were conducted during the autumn of 2017 and results have been published in a previous paper (i.e. Author 2019).

When conducting the interviews, gender was not a planned topic. However, when analysing the interviews through thematic analysis (see Braun and Clarke 2006), gender emerged as an important theme. As gender could not be elaborated further on in the scope of the previous paper, the interviews have been re-analysed with another round of thematic analysis, with a specific focus on gender. The four interviews with Hanna, Kristin, Linda and Sara were selected to provide illustrative examples of how gender and disability might interact in everyday mobility. The aim is not to provide

generalizable results about mothers with wheelchair-using children, but to raise an understanding of their mobility.

Hanna lives in an suburban area together with her spouse and six children, ranging from 2,5 to 18 years old. It is the youngest child, a boy, who has a disability. Kristin has two children, one 1,5-year old and one 9-year old, and a spouse and lives in a suburban area. The 9-year old boy has a disability. Hanna and Kristin thus have in common that they have wheelchair-using sons with CP and they both live in suburban areas, but they differ in other aspects, such as family size. Linda and Sara both live in a metropolitan area. Linda has a 5-year old wheelchair-using child, while Sara's son is 6 years old. Both one of them have spouses, and none has other children. All four women's spouses are men.

Results

The result section is divided to first present the everyday life and mobilities of Hanna, followed by Kristin, Linda and Sara. The result section then ends with a short summary of the four mothers' mobilities, including some comparisons.

Hanna – a mum who deals with many family members' needs

Hanna is a mother to a 2.5-year old wheelchair-using boy, but there are also five older children in the family. She is therefore a mother who deals with many family members' needs, whereof chauffeuring responsibilities are a big part of her everyday life. She is currently not working and has been at home since they got the child with the disability, as he has too extensive care needs to go to preschool and they do not have any external assistance. She is planning to return to work when her son reaches school age, but is already struggling with thoughts on how to structure everyday life then. She plans to

decrease her work hours to be able to take care of her son in the afternoons, and consider changing workplace as it takes her 45 minutes to commute to her previous workplace, and she wants to be closer to home in case her disabled child needs her. The father, on the other hand, works more than full-time at a workplace about half-an-hour from home. There is no mentioning of him considering decreasing work hours to enable her to work. Hanna said that he had more difficulties accepting their child's disability, while she was more accepting and took on the role as a caretaker.

Both parents have access to cars and both are using the cars to provide transport to the children. The father takes the disabled child's older siblings to (pre)school in the mornings, on his way to work. Hanna uses her car to take the disabled child to various disability-related support activities, such as appointments with doctors and physiotherapists. She says everyday travel has increased considerably due to these appointments, and especially car travel. Public transport is available where they live, but considered too inaccessible:

Hanna: We rather take the car... [At public transport] there are always so much people, people don't show respect, and people are standing where there should be room for pushchairs and wheelchairs and it's always crowded. /.../ There's no one who can bring along both his standing and walking equipment... bring all these stuff, so [public transport] is not an option for us.

In addition to the disabled child's own appointments, Hanna brings him to collect the other children from (pre)school and to chauffeur them to their leisure activities. As the children get off (pre)school at different times during the afternoon, there is often a need for several car trips. This is time-consuming - it usually takes about 20 minutes to get the wheelchair-using child ready to go, meaning that she spends quite a large share of her days on chauffeuring-related activities.

Interviewer: How does it work with combination trips? If you have trips with several different stops along the way?

Hanna: I do those kind of trips almost every day. I go to pick up children at school and then collect a parcel, go grocery shopping or something, and then I always try to pick up one of the kids first, one of the older kids, who can sit in the car when I hurry with grocery shopping so that I don't have to.. it sounds awful, but so I don't have to bring (disabled son) into the supermarket, because it's a whole project, you know. /.../ When you have to get him in and out of the car three-four times within an hour... it takes time and it's heavy.

Hanna was also asked about how she believed she would travel in the future, if she was going back to work as the children grew older. She said she would probably continue to travel by car, because it is quicker and more flexible than public transport, which was important for her as she felt the need to be on stand-by if her disabled son needed her.

Hanna's everyday mobility is thus characterised by car travel. However, the car does not seem to improve her own freedom, but is necessary to provide transport for her children, especially the wheelchair-using child. With regard to time-geographical projects, this seems like a clear case where the wheelchair-using child's projects (such as different appointments) as well as the other children's mobilities are prioritised, while her own mobility and the project of work have to step aside.

Kristin – a stay-at-home mum with chauffeuring responsibilities

Kristin has a 9-year old wheelchair-using son and a sibling who is 1.5 year old. They live in a suburban area and her son goes to school in the city centre, about 15 kilometres from home, since the schools in their place of residence are not sufficiently adapted for his disability. He has personal assistance and is eligible to go with an adapted taxi back and forth to school. There is also public transport available to the city centre. The

sibling goes to preschool in the area where they live. Yet, Kristin has no time to work outside home. Instead, she is partly working as a personal assistant to her child (in Sweden, parents can work as paid assistants to their children, if the child is eligible for personal assistance), which is mainly because they had troubles finding external assistance and she as a mother feel obligated to step in:

Kristin: I'm stuck in this 'assistant life'. We find it difficult to find assistants, which means I can't apply for other jobs since I have to be with (disabled son). It's not supposed to be that way, but... that's the way it is. You could say that I'm working involuntarily as his personal assistant.

The father, however, works full-time. Moreover, even when her son has other assistants, Kristin often has to chauffeur him. Sometimes the school taxi is late or does not show up, which makes it unreliable. Kristin prefers to drive him by her own car instead. She was working when her son was younger and she describes how she drove a detour of 40 minutes every morning on her way to work, and the same thing on the way back because he could not go to preschool in their area of living, and the jobs in her field of education were located in another city. She thinks that will be unbearable in the future, and consider looking for other jobs in the city where her son goes to school. Now, however, she only has to drive the 15 kilometres to collect him from school, drive him to after-school activities, or take him to appointments with doctors and physiotherapists in the city centre. She was asked if she thought her everyday mobility would be different if her son did not have a disability:

Kristin: Yes, I'm sure. Partly because... well, he would have gone to school here, where we live. Then we wouldn't have to take the car, instead taking the bike. That we would do... and maybe not yet, since he's nine, but soon he would have been able to take the bike to school by himself. And also, he wouldn't have all these hospital visits... and he would probably have other leisure activities. Maybe he

would practice soccer here instead of having to go to the city for adapted horseback riding.

The everyday space of the family has thus increased due to the needs that come with her son's disability, such as adapted school, leisure activities and hospital and health care appointments, which affects both the length of their daily trips, the transport options that are available, and the need for parental support. Kristin drives several times back and forth to the city centre, meaning that she can drive around for two hours in different errands. A reason behind that is that she usually avoids combination trips. Instead, Kristin prefers to go collect the disabled child from school separately from picking up the sibling at preschool, because it takes too much time and energy to take the disabled child in and out of the car.

While public transport could be an option for others with the same commute, Kristin find it difficult to use due to crowdedness at buses, lots of equipment to carry, and because it is difficult to be on time to the bus as her son's disability makes the routines when getting ready more unpredictable. Concerning public transport, Kristin speculates how it could be used if her son did not have a disability:

Kristin: Now when (disabled son) is getting older... *he* would have travelled more by bus. I think he would travel more alone when he can start doing things alone and travel to the city centre alone.

It thus seems like Kristin believes her son would have more possibilities for independent travel if he did not have a disability, both by biking to school and taking the bus by himself to leisure activities, something that is not possible with his disability.

In terms of time-geographical projects then, Kristin seems to set aside her own work project and instead focus on the care needs of her child. She is involuntarily working as a personal assistant to him, meaning that the project of supporting his needs

is prioritised. She also spends a lot of time outside the hours she are working as an assistant to provide transport support for her child, meaning that there is little room for own activities, including, as she mentioned, looking for other jobs.

Linda – an urban mum who became car dependent

Linda is living in a metropolitan area with her spouse and her 5-year-old son. Her son has personal assistance, but Linda works as his assistant during mornings and whatever leftover hours. Her son goes to preschool and Linda says the time when he is at preschool is the time she is on her own, unless he has appointments with doctors, physiotherapists, etc., which she is involved in once or twice a week. Linda still has her ordinary work, but has decreased work hours because of the needs of her son. She used to travel a lot for work before, something that is rarely possible now. Her daily geography has become more constrained to the city and her son would also have travelled more if he did not have a disability, at least when he is in preschool age.

Linda: I work for a conference company so I travel a lot. So that's the reason I don't work as much, because I need to stay home with my son. If life would have been normal, he would come with me to workplaces, where I'm travelling.

Moreover, Linda's daily mode of transport has also changed. She describe how they live really close to several public transport stops, but they still, as a family of three, need two cars. Her husband has a car from work, which he uses for his commute and Linda has to drive a mini-van as they need a big car for her son's aids and equipment. She explained how she would not need a car if he did not have a disability:

Linda: I wouldn't need a car, because I live right in the middle of the city. Everything is accessible to us with public transportation and... car would not have been an option. I mean now it's a must for us. If my son didn't have a disability I

wouldn't even have to drive /.../, then public transportation would be what I would depend on.

Linda's son is eligible special transport service (STS), which in combination with personal assistance could decrease the need for her to chauffeur him. Yet, she prefers to drive him as that is experienced easier than STS, so she makes herself available when her son needs to go someplace with his assistant. However, even if Linda drives him a lot in everyday life, it is not without constraints. She experiences car travel as heavy as she has to lift her son into the car – something that the assistants do not feel comfortable doing – and it can be very difficult finding suitable parking places in the city centre. Therefore, Linda avoids bringing him on everyday trips if it is not his appointment. She said:

Linda: Sometimes kids just follow their mums, even if they don't need to go and I... I can't do that.

For Linda, it was probably the combination of having some free time when her child was at preschool and having support both of a partner and a personal assistant that made it possible for her not to bring her son when running errands.

Linda's time-geographical projects have changed as an adaptation to her son's disability. She decreased work hours and make herself available for her son whenever he needs transport, meaning that his projects are given priority over her own project of work. Her projects are also more constrained in time and space – she has a smaller mobility range than before, when she was travelling a lot for work.

Sara – a mum whose leisure travel is constrained

Sara lives in a metropolitan area with her 6-year old son and her husband. Her husband

is temporarily commuting on a weekly basis to another city for university studies, meaning that Sara is alone with her son during weekdays. Sara was previously working as a personal assistant to him, but is now back at her ordinary workplace. She works full-time and studies part-time for one semester. While her son is eligible external personal assistance, they had troubles finding suitable candidates, so Sara takes care of him by herself when he is off school.

Sara takes her son to school by car. His school is located 2,5 kilometres from their home. There are schools located even closer, but those are not suitable or accessible enough for him. While the school he goes to could be considered to be at a walking distance, her son needs lots of aids and equipment every day, which makes it difficult for one person to carry everything while at the same time push his wheelchair. Moreover, the school is located on the way to Sara's work, which makes it convenient to drive him there. However, she finds it very difficult to find parking places by the school (even if they do have disability parking permit) and says several times during the interview that she would rather travel by public transport:

Sara: There is a lot of driving everywhere in an area where lots and lots of people live and there are lots and lots of cars. Sometimes I would prefer to go by public transport just to get away from this... these tailbacks. Big city problems. But I always feel forced to take the car, regardless of where we are going.

While the family lives quite close to an adapted school, other activities are often located further away. Even in this metropolitan area, leisure activities for children with disabilities are centralised to certain places and require car travel. Sara compares this to activities for non-disabled children, which is available almost everywhere in the city. Moreover, Sara would like to take more advantage of the different activities that the big city offers, such as going to an amusement park, visit museums and different events, etc., but travel-related constraints inhibit her from doing so. As the need lots of

equipment, she feel forced to take the car, but difficulties with finding parking can make them avoid such trips. She gives an example from when they were about to visit an amusement park:

Sara: What would I do with [the car] and will it cost me a fortune? Parking costs 90 SEK an hour and that causes me stomach-ache until we get there. /.../ When I feel that I need to have the car but doesn't know what to do with it... it becomes stressful. And then I feel that it's not worth the stress, so we stay at home.

Thus, Sara does chauffeur her son when he has to go to places, such as school, but generally avoids leisure travel due to the need to drive a car in a big city where parking is difficult. When asked about how she handles other activities in everyday life, such as grocery shopping, when she is alone with her son during weekdays. She said she wished he could follow her as she used to follow her parents running errands when she was a child and bringing her child seemed like a natural thing to do, and she would have brought him if he did not have a disability. However, it was considered too heavy and energy demanding. Sara explained that she has a flexible job, where not all her time is scheduled, meaning that she could run errands while her son was at school.

Regarding time-geographical projects, Sara differs from the other interviewed mothers in being the only one who has a full-time job. In addition, she studies part-time. She thus have two individual projects that she manage to do at the same time as she is alone with her son during weekdays and not having a personal assistant for him. One potential reason this could be possible is that his school is located close to the home and on the way to her workplace, meaning that chauffeuring responsibilities do not take as much time as for those with children who have to commute to school. However, it seems like her own leisure time is very limited.

Summary

All interviewed mothers experience travel constraints in everyday life, such as the lack of feasible alternatives to the private car. This was especially experienced problematic for Linda and Sara who lived in metropolitan areas with many public transport options available and lots of heavy traffic which actually could make it easier to travel by public transport if they did not have wheelchair-using children. With car travel comes other constraints for all these mothers, such as the heavy and time-consuming activity of lifting their children, wheelchairs and other equipment in and out of the car, which they handled in different ways. Hanna preferred to leave her son in the car with an older sibling when running quick errands, while Kristin left her son at home with his personal assistant. Linda and Sara also avoid bringing their sons when running errands, for instance by doing it themselves when the children were at (pre)school.

The mothers' experiences of constraints also seemed to differ depending on where they lived. For Linda and Sara, parking was a main problem. Especially Sara avoided some trips due to parking problems – something that affected the family's leisure activities negatively. Parking was not explicitly mentioned by Hanna and Kristin who lived in suburbs, even if they had a lot of activities in a city. However, living in a suburb can imply other constraints, such as the centralisation of adapted schools and leisure activities. This was especially found in the interview with Kristin, whose son had all his activities in the city centre and Kristin had to drive the 15 kilometres back and forth several times a day. For Hanna, whose child was still very young, this was not (yet) a problem as he did not go to preschool. The child's age could also affect the mothers' perceptions of the child's own travel. While mothers of younger children might not consider independent travel for their children yet, this was something that Kristin, whose son is 9 years old, mentioned.

Hanna and Kristin explain how they travel more now, as there are several appointments with doctors, physiotherapists and so forth every week. Linda and Sara seem to travel less – for Linda it was about constrained work travel and for Sara about leisure travel. The mothers' mobilities are also more complex, due to difficulties they experience with the children's disabilities, such as the tiresome process of getting the child in and out of the car.

Moreover, these women experience limitations regarding work – both in terms of managing to work at all due to the time-consuming care needs of their children, and when talking about work they find commuting/work travel difficult. Both Hanna and Kristin find it necessary to work closer to their disabled children and decrease their previous commuting distance. Especially for Hanna, this seems to be directly related to the needs of her disabled son, as she commuted before they got him even though they have five other children. Sara managed both work and studies, which could be because of the short geographical distances she had to travel in everyday life, but also because she does not mention the weekly appointments with doctors, physiotherapists, etc., which seem to be a constraining factor for the other mothers' work possibilities. This could be seen as a reminder that not all wheelchair-using children with cerebral palsy have the same needs.

Concluding discussion

While public transport in general is more common among women than among men, it was not an option in these women's everyday lives. All these women had access to cars, which was considered a necessity when having a wheelchair-using child. However, the car access seems to help them provide transport for others, and not increase their own mobility. It rather seems like their own mobilities are very limited.

With regards to time-geography, the results thus suggest that the mothers' individual projects, including their own mobility and paid employment, have to step aside due to the competition with projects related to the child (family-related organisational projects). The child's disability leads to projects related to health care (child's individual project) and everyday activities (including both school and leisure activities) located further away from home due to centralisation of resources provided for children with special needs (organisational projects). As the results indicate that it is the mothers' individual projects that have to step aside for family projects related to their disabled children, traditional gendered norms and gendered expectations on parenting might have an impact on these mothers' everyday lives. Sara is an exception when it comes to work, but gendered norms can be found in her family as well, as her husband is commuting on a weekly basis while she is left alone with their child during weekdays.

Even if this paper only has four examples of mothers of wheelchair-using children, it seems clear that they have mobilities that are affected by intersectionality between gender and disability. However, their mobilities are gendered because of gendered expectations on parenting, rather than traditional gender mobility patterns. As mothers, they are expected to prioritise childcare activities, resulting in that they are the ones chauffeuring children. Gender-disability intersectionality comes into effect as their mobilities also are affected by disability-related constraints when travelling with their children. The children's needs for transport provision exceeds what the mothers perceive 'normal' due to trips related to the children's disability (e.g. doctor's appointments), increasing both the number of trips and distance, and they have limited options of transport modes. When travelling with the children, the mothers are thus affected by barriers for wheelchair-users, such as inaccessible public transport.

The concept of intersectionality adds to this paper by highlighting that these mothers' mobilities are not only affected by travel constraints related to women and wheelchair-users in general. Their mobilities are more complex than just adding those constraints due to the gendered expectations on them (which can be higher than in families with non-disabled children, see Di Giulio, Philipov, and Jaschinski [2014]), making them let their own mobility projects step aside in favour for their children's mobilities. The fathers do not seem to be as affected as the mothers, since they still work/study full-time and do not have the same chauffeuring responsibilities in daily life. However, as this study is from the mothers' perspective, future research could study mobilities of fathers of wheelchair-using children to explore how they experience mobility and related constraints when travelling with a wheelchair-using child. Moreover, fathers might have other child care responsibilities than the daily mobility provision that are not coming to the fore in this paper, suggesting that there is a need to study everyday life with a broader perspective in order to capture family dynamics and gender roles.

There is also a need for future research to study gender-disability intersectionality of mother to disabled children with a larger sample of women who lives in different areas (this paper lacks a rural/peripheral perspective). This study suggest that place of residence can affect everyday mobility, for instance in terms of distances travelled to reach adapted schools and leisure activities, but there can also be other factors impacting everyday life which have not been covered in this paper. Depending of place of residence, there might be different support systems – both in terms of governmental support and peer support. It can be assumed to matter whether a family is the only one with a wheelchair-using child in an area or if there are many families in similar situations, regarding both how the disability is perceived and how it

is adapted to by society. Future studies could explore this further. This current study can be seen as a starting point for an important field of study.

Even if this is an explorative study with a small number of respondents, some suggestions can be given based on the results. The results indicate that gendered norms play an important role in gender-disability intersectionality in relation to transport among these women. This is somewhat surprising in a country like Sweden, often considered to be at the forefront with gender equality. A suggestion is then to continue working with improving gender equality and to especially recognise families with disabled children. When parental leave exceeds the usual months for parents with non-disabled children, and staying home with disabled children eventually can entail unpaid leave for the parent, economic support could be an option enabling more families to share the leave more equally without losing income (as fathers often have a higher income than mothers). Moreover, support system such as personal assistance and special transport service (e.g. adapted taxis) can decrease the need for parental support and transport provision in everyday life. If the families are eligible this support, the mothers could get opportunities to focus more on their own projects in everyday life, including transport mobility and working.

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