P60- Time-sensitive governance and timescapes

SOCIAL SECURITY AND CONSTRAINTS IN POCKETS OF LOCAL ORDER

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Abstract Sweden has been presented as an archetype of a welfare state, with a high level of universal ambitions (Esping-Andersen, 1990). At the same time the municipalities are assuming greater responsibility for labour market policies. The aim of this article is to understand its impacts on a local level. In an interview case, we study social workers and young unemployed using a time-geographical approach. The social worker and the young unemployed contribute to the construction of a pocket of local order in the social service office, a social order with explicit power relations, expectations and rules. This is linked to resources and restrictions that influence the possibilities to achieve social security and other goals in certain projects in everyday life. Results also show local variations between the municipalities in handling social security for young unemployed.

Keywords: *Time geography; social assistance; welfare policy; unemployment, constraints*

Introduction

Youth unemployment, especially among young people with multiple barriers to establishing themselves on the labour market, is a question that has attracted considerable attention among policy makers and researchers (Angelin, 2009; Ulmestig and Marston, 2014). This is very obvious in Sweden due to the high youth unemployment rate in comparison to unemployment in other age categories (see SCB, 2014). A process of decentralization of issues concerning labour market policy has sorted out many of the young unemployed with multiple barriers to become the responsibility of the municipalities and the social assistance system (Köhler et al. 2008; Thorén, 2008). In the municipalities they get a different labour market policy from other unemployed youth who are covered by unemployment insurance.

The Swedish welfare state is an archetype of an advanced and mature welfare state known for its high universal ambitions to include all citizens (Harsløf and Ulmestig, 2013; Kvist et al. 2012). Traditionally this is made possible by a strong state, generous benefits and strong legal rights to social security. However, the social assistance system is driven by mean tests and by the municipalities' strong local self-government (Köhler et al. 2008; Minas, 2005).

Time-geography is a contextual theory about time, place and other resources. The context is a matter of geographical location, cultural and individual settings. Hägerstrand (1991) points out that the time-geographical approach shows how we use resources to perform activities in everyday life. These resources are linked to constraints (or restrictions) "that evolve from earlier decisions, social obligations and organizational structures" (Ellegård, 2000, p. 167). When applying for social

assistance, the young unemployed meet a social worker. Together, they contribute to the construction of a Pocket of Local Order (Hägerstrand, 1970: 1985; Ellegård and Vilhelmson, 2004). Using this theoretical framework gives us the opportunity to study young unemployed within the social assistance system in the municipalities as pockets of local orders. We want to study local structural time-geographical barriers and how these are perceived by the unemployed youth and the social workers that work with them. We will interview young unemployed social assistance recipients about how they understand their situation. We will also interview street-level social workers because they are crucial in understanding how policy is performed for these young unemployed (Lipsky, 2010; Thorén, 2008) within local structural time-geographical barriers.

The aim is to understand local variations in social security practices by using Hägerstrand's time-geographical approach (1970, 1985, 1991, 2002). The research question is: How are young unemployed in need of social assistance dealt with in local settings?

The Swedish welfare state
Social security is the idea of ensuring all citizens a set of basic resources, a way to equalize life chances and provide possibilities to reach full individual potential as human beings (Panican, 2007). The tools include our basic social services and social insurance systems that make it possible to support people who cannot obtain enough resources to support themselves. This support can have a universal character – guaranteed access to a specific set of primary goods and services. Classic socio-political studies suggest that the Nordic countries, or the social democratic welfare state model, are characterized by a high security standard (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Even if there are other definitions (Hall and Soskice, 2001; Amable, 2003), they end up being typified models very much like that of Esping-Andersen (Muffels and Luijkx, 2008). The overall context of this study is the universal Swedish welfare state – according to Esping-Andersen portrayed as the archetype of universalism.

The Swedish labour market policies are a part of that universal welfare system. The unemployment insurance, first solely financed by its members, received state funding in the mid-1930s. During this time, however, the need for a central government labour market policy was emphasized, by both the Unemployment Commission of 1935 (SOU, 1935:6) and the Rationalization Committee of 1939 (SOU, 1939:13). Other factors that were emphasized were the geographical mobility of the workforce; the Committees questioned the municipalities' reasons for facilitating taxpayers to move, even if unemployed. Furthermore, the Committees questioned *the varying conditions in the municipalities*, mainly because of economic differences between municipalities and the effect this has on the possibilities to act in keeping with the goals of the labour market policy. That was described as a problem, along with the state-formed systems that were made to bridge the differences between municipalities. Means-tested systems were replaced, from the late 1940s and in the 1950s, by basic pensions, general child allowances and health insurance (Olsson, 1993). Sweden had an active labour market policy already in the 1940s (van Berkel and Hornemann Möller, 2002; Cochrane et al. 2001). A strong welfare state was seen as a guarantee of security and equal rights between different groups and geographical areas. This was a reaction, especially for the social democratic party and the labour movement, against a local and arbitrary way of organizing of support systems in the municipalities. Until the early 1990s the universal state systems

expanded and included more people in the security of the welfare state, for example through more generous benefits. In this welfare expansion, the keyword for the organization and administration was centralization through a strong welfare state with the emphasis on "state".

Still today, however, the municipalities are in charge of the social assistance system. The application for social assistance is handled by social workers who are well trained, most with at least a bachelor's degree in social work, and they have very considerable discretionary powers. These powers are also manifested in the construction of the Social Services Act that guides the work. The law is constructed as a "framework law" that gives few details and specifics, other than the minimum economic level, for how the municipalities handle the social assistance system (Thorén, 2008). Looking at the history, we see that there is still a struggle between the state and the municipalities (Ulmestig, 2007). The state stands for the universal rights but also rigid rules, and the municipalities stand for weak rights but flexible and individualized service delivery.

A time-geographical approach
The idea in using time-geography as a theoretical starting point is that its conceptual tools are suitable for examining the individual's need for strategies in a context of structural barriers. It pays attention to the geographic limits, to movements in space/time between home, workplace and leisure activities and to the restrictions on what we as human beings can accomplish (Enokson 2013). Besides the importance of our spatial capacities depending on bodily capabilities and access to transportation, other restrictions can occur depending on social position and access to resources. Social structural conditions do not always harmonize with individual activities in space/time. This draws attention to the question of how various constraints affect patterns of behaviour and how they are distributed between individuals. Access to locations (stations), such as a workplace, depends on the accessibility of various parts of the welfare landscape (Hägerstrand, 1970). For instance, young unemployed people have limited access to income and social security due to marginalization from the labour market. This leads to a lack of resources for transportation due to high fares or no accessible car.

Hägerstrand integrates two systems: (1) the population of the individual life situation in space/time with its constraints and (2) different activities in which the individual carries out projects in various locations (Hägerstrand, 1970: 1991: 2002; Åquist, 1992). The projects occur in concrete situations inside and outside the workplace. Projects co-exist and can be likened to "bundles" of activities made up of habit or institutional settings. There are also spontaneous projects, but most activities are institutionalized at various venues in the home with the family, in paid work, at the gym or in a study circle. Paid labour is an example of a dominant project that in most cases has priority in the competition with other activities during the working week. It is sanctioned by society and has a large impact on people's life patterns, giving access to both financial resources and social networks.

Within this framework, several different living patterns emerge that allow more or less access to important resources and networks. That creates different kinds of constraints within and between households. Having a low income restricts movement and room for manoeuvre, even though living conditions can contain much "free" time. For example, a car is needed to get to a specific location and money is required for

entry or participation. It can thus be excluded from social activities, which erects barriers to the coordination of social activities. For lack of resources to manage basic needs, as for the young people in our study, social assistance can be necessary.

Time-geographical settings can be seen as pockets of local order (Hägerstrand, 1985). For instance, obligations and demands are negotiated between representatives of the municipality (the social worker) and the young unemployed within the social welfare office. The social rights are imbedded in institutional norms about how to live and what to do in a certain age, and the social worker is a gatekeeper to the resources needed. To be able to coordinate meetings and negotiations, procedures are established to manage the spatial and temporal frameworks to organize everyday realities of life. In the longer term, the young unemployed are trying to plan their life courses in order to realize specific goals. In Sweden, these pockets of local order have a universal ambition, which means that you have a certain right to social security regardless of where in Sweden you live.

In order to organize the future, we are involved in different projects. "A project can be of any scale, from writing a letter to organizing a general election" (Hägerstrand, 1985). Sometimes projects can fit in and fall into place rather smoothly in the larger environment. Frequently, however, projects are delayed, cease to exist or are pushed aside in the struggle for supremacy. The possibility to carry through a project depends on the complicity in the task and the resources at hand. Every project is, therefore, subject to a number of constraints. The constraints occur when we do not have enough resources to interact in important fields of life. There are three different types of constraints (Hägerstrand, 1991): (1) capability constraints that limit the individual because of the biological construction or insufficient access to transportation; (2) coupling constraints which represent a lack of opportunities to carry out projects with others – this may depend on working times, opening hours or other things that restrict our individual freedom of action; (3) authority constraints, which concern power relations in the control of resources – individuals, organizations and institutions restrict access, ranging from a nation's control over a territory or house owner's control over their land.

Method
This chapter is based on structured interviews with the youth and interviews based on vignettes in eight municipalities in Kronoberg County in southern Sweden. The combination of methods provides a deeper analysis in which empirical materials can be checked against each other (Berg, 2004; Scandura and Williams, 2000). It is ethically problematic to research people who are in a vulnerable situation, for example, because the research itself is liable to maintain negative descriptions (Swärd, 1999). At the same time, we need to identify the structural and organizational circumstances that affect their life situation.

A random selection was made of 68 among a total of 226 young people who had received social assistance for at least the preceding three months. The attrition was significant and the sample was expanded to reach the goal of 30 per cent of the population. There were no systematic differences between the sample and the whole population. The social workers were interviewed in groups of 2–5 participants in each of the eight municipalities. The vignettes include three fictitious cases of young unemployed clients. These cases are constructed as realistically as possible and based on careful theoretical groundwork (Jergeby, 1999). This method makes it

possible to understand similarities and variations in how the social workers describe decisions in the local context.

The analysis has been carried out through a reflective dialogue between the researcher, available research, the theory and the empirical evidence, as suggested by Alvesson and Kärreman, (2007). The empirical data is a resource for the development of theoretical ideas and thereby becomes a critical dialogue partner when looking for the unanticipated and the unexpected. The analysis was based on a reflective dialogue between the researchers and the theory of time geography, which has been used to meet the complexities of the interview material by different understandings, meanings and categories appearing in the material (Alvesson, Hardy and Harley, 2008; Alvesson, 2003). The analysis was based on the first themes that were outlined when the material was collected but was further developed at the next level of analysis. The interpretations have been supplemented, with the goal not being to find flaws in the former interpretation, but rather to reinterpret the empirical data. Partly new theoretical themes were thus made visible. These were then examined in relation to the interview material. Reflexivity, in Alvesson's conceptualization, stands for "conscious and consistent efforts to view the subject matter from different angles and avoid or strongly a priori privilege a single favored angle and vocabulary" (Alvesson, 2003, p. 25).

Locations and settings
Hägerstrand (1991) points out that the time-geographical perspective is a contextual theory about time and resources. The context is a matter of *geographical location, cultural and individual settings*, which show how we use resources to perform activities in everyday life. These resources are linked to constraints (or restrictions) "that evolve from earlier decisions, social obligations and organizational structures" (Ellegård, 2000, p. 167). In the following section we present the locations and setting of our study.

Geographical location: The municipalities
There are similarities and differences in the geographical locations between the municipalities. Kronoberg County has a population of approximately 184,000. The county has been characterized by forestry and manufacturing industries but is now more dependent on work in the service industry, research and health. There are eight municipalities: Älmhult, Alvesta, Lessebo, Ljungby, Markaryd, Tingsryd, Uppvidinge, and Växjö. When the data were collected, the youth unemployment was 5.7 per cent and 4.9 per cent were in national active labour market programmes (AF, 2014). At the time this was just above the national figures. Kronoberg County is characterized by the growth of the county town of Växjö with, for example, an expansive university and a county hospital. Other parts of the county have a less expansive development, with population decline and high unemployment. The structural similarities and differences in geographical location between Kronoberg and other counties and between different municipalities do not affect the results in any systematic way. This result is well in line with the only study that has systematically measured the impact of geographical location. In a survey of how the municipalities in Sweden handled unemployed social assistance recipients, Salonen and Ulmestig, (2004) found no clear results to show how the geographical location affected how these people were handled.

Cultural settings: The social assistance system in Kronoberg County
The cultural setting is characterized by a lack of rights and vague laws in the social assistance system. This setting gives the possibility to the municipalities to use different ways of organizing social assistance and handling young unemployed people. In Sweden, categories of unemployed that have not yet established themselves in the labour market, mainly young people and newly arrived immigrants, have a hard time accessing the unemployment insurance and are forced to apply for social assistance (Köhler et al. 2008; Ulmestig, 2007). There are more wide-ranging possibilities for sanctions and there is a greater sense of exposure because it is the last safety net. If an application for social assistance is refused because a person is not perceived, for example, to meet the obligations of actively seeking work, then the Swedish welfare state has no more solutions to offer. This can be understood from a historical perspective. There is a basic poor relief logic that derives its origin from the struggle against poverty in the middle Ages, the most distinct feature of which is that assistance never becomes a right (Gerimek, 1991). This logic has been totally dominant through history in the formation of services that have been provided for social assistance recipients (Ulmestig, 2007). Poor relief and social services have always had local interests at heart, with local finance as the driving force (Ulmestig, 2007; Johansson, 2001). Throughout history the government has attempted to make all poor relief more uniform in the country. This policy has been more or less successful, but the local nature of poor relief dies hard.

The handling of social assistance is regulated by a framework law that does not give much support in individual cases. There are also guidelines for the amounts that different recipients are entitled to, but there are also different expenditures that social assistance recipients can apply for that are not regulated by the guidelines. There are national and local guidelines. The idea of using a frame law was that this gave the municipalities the possibilities to adapt to local circumstances (Johansson, 2001). This cultural setting, lack of rights regulated in the law or national guidelines, heavily affects the constraints within the individual municipality.

The young unemployed
There were differences and similarities between the young unemployed social assistance recipients. What is clear is that, in one sense or another, they were all in a vulnerable position vis-à-vis the social assistance system in their cultural setting.

The young people were about 58 per cent women and 42 per cent men. Thirteen of the respondents, about 20 per cent, were born abroad; 27 respondents, just over 40 per cent, were born abroad or have foreign-born parents. The young people in the study are also characterized by a low level of education. More than half of them do not have complete high school grades, which reduces the chances of getting work. At the same time, 45 per cent have a fairly good education and have finished high school or post high school education. The interviewed group is heterogeneous in terms of education.

Another example of vulnerability from a structural point of view is the state welfare system which refers individuals to the municipalities. Although the young are reimbursed by state systems, it is common that they need additional social assistance because of low levels of benefits. Approximately one-third of young people receive social assistance as a supplement to the welfare state supply system or salary as their main income. The link between social assistance and state welfare

systems can also be exemplified by the young economic support situation. It is not only when the state changes the rules and boundaries for who gets to support or not that affects the young. Low reimbursement rates, low unemployment benefits and low pay also contribute to young people's needs of social assistance. Social assistance is the last safety net, and stricter limits in other welfare-policy systems will increase the number of recipients within the social assistance system (Salonen, 1997).

All these differences in education or income and similarities in vulnerability in the individual settings are heavily affected by the pockets of local order.

Pockets of local order

The formal system of social assistance regulates the activities within a pocket of local order, a social order that is constructed by people to perform activities with explicit expectations and rules in a geographical setting (the local social service office). In this case, focusing on the young unemployed client, one of the main goals is to receive resources – economic and social – that are based on social rights, to make it possible to achieve goals in everyday life. The social worker and the young unemployed contribute to the construction of the pocket of local order and the social service office is a condition in which important resources are distributed. In Sweden the social service office is considered to be in control of one of the last safety nets available. In that sense, the social services offers a project that very few people want to be a part of. One could say that the social service office is a pocket of local order that offers sustenance according to rules and regulations (authority constraints) when other options (pockets) are sealed with constraints. The clients have small opportunities to exercise power as the relation gives them no, or very little, control. They are offered a project in the pocket of local order (the office) that involves coercive measures in order to "normalize" persons who do not know how to take care of themselves. Two examples will be presented, based on three vignettes of fictitious cases of young unemployed clients that "measure" the significance of labour market position with regard to how they are handled by the social workers. The vignettes are all similar in all conditions, such as age, sex and living conditions, with the exception of how attractive the unemployed are on the labour market. The first highlights the social workers' ways of treating young unemployed who do not accept the demands of the social services. The second example shows the same conditions, but with the difference that the young unemployed have children.

Social security in the social welfare office as a pocket of local order

The social service office with its social workers is assigned to interpret the law (authority constraints) in relation to the needs of the client (capacity and coupling constraints). Differences in interpreting the social services expose the degree of variation in the social service system and the individual's opportunities to obtain social rights. Table 1 show that the social workers' ways of treating the young unemployed varies between the municipalities. In all eight municipalities, the clients ask for social benefits for daily expenditures.

Table 1. The social workers' ways of treating young unemployed people who does not accept the demands of the social services

A: No restrictions

B: The client is called to a meeting. If there is no acceptable excuse, the client gets only food coupons.

C: The client is called to a meeting. If there is no acceptable excuse, the client's application is turned down.

D: The client gets only food coupons.

E: The application is turned down. The client is not at the disposal of the labour market.

F: The application is turned down partly. If the client follows the agreement, a new application can be submitted.

G: Other

Municipality	Case 1: Peter							Case 2: Adam							Case 3: John						
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Älmhult					X						X							X			
Alvesta	X								X						X						
Lessebo				X							X					X					
Ljungby	X									X					X						
Markaryd			X							X							X				
Tingsryd		X							X												X
Uppvidinge				X							X				X						
Växjö			X							X											X
Total	*2*	*1*	*2*	*2*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*2*	*3*	*3*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*3*	*1*	*1*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*2*

The results show that one municipality does not impose any restrictions at all. In another, the client received an unconditional refusal. This is the case with Peter's application in Alvesta and Älmhult. No two of the eight municipalities treat the young unemployed alike, even though the needs are described as similar. The differences between the municipalities shows quite explicitly how the social services respond to the clients' needs and how restrictions are imposed on young people outside the labour market. In that way, young unemployed in Kronoberg County do not have their social rights satisfied in similar ways. It appears to depend on which municipality they live in. These findings show significant local variations in the interpretation of the law between different municipalities – and within them.

The images of the significant variations are evident in the questions emanating from the three vignettes. But what happens if Peter, Adam and John have children? In the following, based on the same vignettes, table 2 describes how parenthood affects the handling of the young unemployed. The table is, as before, based on discussions of how social workers handle young people who do not accept the social services' action plan.

Table 2. The significance of having children among the young unemployed in the processing of social allowance

A: It would not have any significance if the young unemployed had children[1]

B: The client gets only food coupons. No restrictions for the rest of the family.

C: The client's application is turned down. No restrictions for the rest of the family.

D: The application is turned down for the whole family

E: Other

Municipality	If children: Peter					If children: Adam					If children: John				
	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E
Älmhult					X				X					X	
Alvesta	X					X					X				
Lessebo				X					X					X	
Ljungby	X							X			X				
Markaryd			X					X					X		
Tingsryd		X				X									X
Uppvidinge				X					X						X
Växjö			X					X							X
Total	*2*	*1*	*2*	*2*	*1*	*0*	*2*	*3*	*3*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*

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[1] Answer a means that the social services do not impose any restrictions on Peter and John, at least initially, if they maintain their own strategy to become self-sufficient, even though it is not shared by the social worker.

The result of the vignettes shows that there seems to be a greater consensus about Adam, who is neither completely close to the labour market nor really far from it, than about the others in the sense of smaller local variations between the municipalities. The answers suggest that even in terms of whether the processing is affected by the young people in the vignettes have children or not, it is those who are closest to or furthest from the labour market that are most affected by which municipality they live in. The table above suggests that the practical outcome of being a parent is very much influenced by the municipality in which the young unemployed live. Two social workers say that the young unemployed would be completely rejected. When asked if it would affect the assessment if the young applicant had children, a social worker (SW) answers:

SW1: Not a thing.
Not a thing?
SW1: No it's almost even more that he has to take responsibility after all.

There is significant variation between the municipalities. In the same discussion as above, a social worker in another municipality says that the young applicant will not only receive social assistance, but also an apartment if he has children:

SW2: Well then he has to have his apartment, no discussion.

Some social workers thought that parents "use" children to escape the requirement within the social assistance system. However, there is no support for such a picture in the young people's description about being a young and unemployed parent. The children were discussed mainly when we asked direct questions about them, as well as being an argument for getting a job. Starrin, Forsberg and Rantakeisu (1999:26) show a clear correlation between a minimum level of income security and families' mental health, stability and cohesion. The family that does not have that minimum level guaranteed will find it difficult to ensure favourable living conditions for their children. Again, the results show a great variety of restrictions depending on local affiliation. Young unemployed parents do not have their social rights satisfied in similar ways. In Alvesta and Ljungby, it would not matter if the young unemployed, as in the case of Peter and John, had children. The other municipalities do not handle the application in the same way. The project of being a parent is dependent on individual and cultural settings in the municipality. In fact, we see how the young unemployed, in some cases, have greater difficulties getting social allowance if they have children. This limited access to resources and social security can obviously affect the children as well as the parents. In the following, we ask how local variations influence the client and what kinds of restrictions and capabilities are considered in the social service office.

The project of getting along
Time geography draws attention to personal obstacles in relation to the time structures of the local environment. Hägerstrand (1991, 2002) argues that time is crucial even when people are to be studied in socio-economic systems. Each person navigating through space/time forms an individual trajectory (life path) in which human physical activities often are affected by various types of constraints. Life processes are affected by and caught in a web of restrictions throughout different

phases of life. In the case of young unemployed people in need of welfare support, the time geography hypothesis is that the restrictions interact with and reinforce each other in concrete situations in space/time (Enokson, 2010). Three types of restrictions are defined by Hägerstrand (1970): (1) capacity constraints, (2) coupling constraints and (3) authority constraints.

(1) Capability constraints reduce the individual's activities because of her biological structure, including the fact that she is tied to her body and in need of meals and a place to rest. A limitation in mobility and communication occurs in that we cannot travel from one place to another in no-time without having to compromise between various solutions in space and time. Those who, for example, have access to a car or can take a train have an advantage in mobility, being able to include more stations in the individual life-path than those who are limited to walking or cycling. Differences in the capacity of individuals and groups within the same local place can be very large. Capability constraints among young unemployed can, for instance, be a question of mobility.

When asked what she thinks about the social programme of which she has been a part, a young female said that she was very positive to the programme but there were sanctions on her possibility to get there:

IP: They messed much with my bus pass. That was … that was probably why I was annoyed, that every time I got a new bus pass (…) it was delayed and sometimes it didn't come and that kind of stuff.

Her limited resources and dependence on the social services for mobility reduced her capability to participate in the social programme. The distance to the place (station) where the services are located creates capability constraints due to her limitations in transportation. A young man says:

IP: *There aren't so many buses and I have no driver's licence, and I live out here in the boonies so it's almost essential to have a licence if you're going to have a job. So I'm going to apply for an apartment in Tingsryd (town).*

The capability constraints can appear as a limitation in mobility. Without access to money for petrol or a bus pass to get transportation to a job or to a programme meeting, the young unemployed are at risk of not sharing the resources and activities that are important for their individual projects. This is a restriction that also affects the possibility to develop social networks.

(2) Coupling constraints indicate difficulties in performing activities because the individual cannot get in touch with other individuals or things needed. It might be due to different locations in time and/or space or due to rules set up by authorities. The life course has to be linked with others if we are to achieve a common goal. It can be about relationships in the workplace for production, in domestic work or the local store for consumption. The coordination requires individuals to be in a particular place at a particular time. Relations are often driven by timetables and schedules, with small individual opportunities for change. During the duration of the project, individuals also participate in other activities outside the world of work, ongoing projects involving family and friends in the private sphere. Telephone and the Internet allow people to get in touch without having to lose time in transportation. Unlike restrictions in capacity, it is possible to enter and leave these relations when you

want. In that case, access to technology such as transportation and communication is crucial. Coupling constraints can thus, in addition to lack of time and social capital, also consist of a lack of technical equipment.

IP: It would be nice to be able to earn my own money and … well … get out of here and make friends … well, just get out and do something, avoid climbing the walls at home. It would mean a lot to actually get a job.

A poor economy makes it difficult to get a driving licence which can be important for finding jobs and getting to work. Here is what one young unemployed man said when asked what he would need to establish himself in an important project such as the labour market:

IP: Licence. It would have helped me a lot. But I can't afford to pay for everything, so … it's not working there. I have to get a job in order to get a driving licence – I can't get a job because I don't have a licence.

Another young man talks about his restrictions and how hard it is to make the social worker understand:

IP: For one thing, I've tried talking to her about finding an apartment and getting help with it, because I don't have a job, and then she explained that I live two miles from the bus, but it has nothing to do with that. I am 20 years and I live with my parents. I wake them up when I'm sitting at the computer, and the baby is at home now. The social worker doesn't really understand it, and then where you'd like to stay at home when you are 20 years old. Then I try to explain to her that it's easier to get a job if I live in Tingsryd, the buses run from Tingsryd at all times. But from XXXX (anonymized) to Tingsryd there are two buses a day. I might get off work at 5 a.m. and wait until 8 and then take a bus, and then I have to sit at the bus station for three hours.

The lack of a licence is not only a disadvantage in trying to find a job. There will also be a social marker of an unfavourable economic situation (Lindbladh and Castro, 1999). The poverty describe by the young people, having to live on a very limited economy, creates problems in different ways. The opportunity to be involved in the community through clubs and other activities, and the opportunities for young people to follow what is happening in society through newspapers and the Internet are affected negatively (Hjort, 2004; Harju, 2008). A low income which also increases the risk of, for example, rent debts, also reduces the ability to move and find a job and get a driving licence. Angelin (2009) uses the term alienation to describe the unemployed. In this perspective, there can be a number of reasons for coupling constraints. For instance, being unemployed in the first place is a coupling constraint when the labour market is an important domain to connect with others and develop social networks (bundles). That also indicates a lack of power or access to work as a dominant project in society, since projects co-exist in bundles on the labour market.

(3) Authority constraints consist of power relations in the control of space. Individuals, organizations or institutions limit access; it can be anything from a nation's control over a territory to a house owner's control over his ground. It creates domains to protect resources which may prevent the individual from gaining access to certain sites, residential areas or private clubs, such as golf clubs. Barriers to entering

Sweden and obtaining a residence permit, for example, represent the control of a domain at the national level. Barriers to gaining social security and income supply when unemployed are a control instrument of the municipalities. Domains used in everyday life can be anything from workplaces and sporting facilities to a favourite chair in front of the television, a place in a queue or on a bench along the promenade (Hägerstrand, 1991, 2002; Åquist, 1992).

Young unemployed give a balanced picture of their situation, and several believe that it is reasonable to have a low economic level when they can't support themselves. There are stories of how the low sum makes it impossible to get fairly basic needs and things that most of us take for granted. A small buffer may be one such example, which means that we can handle short-term financial pressures. A young man describes how the National Insurance Agency (Försäkringskassan) is often late with its payments. When he turns to social workers to ask for support, they say:

IP: You must have built up a buffer. I would like to put them in an apartment and let them live on 1200 crowns (approximately 130 euro – authors' note) a month after everything, so they would try to build a buffer, I would have like to see that, it's not that easy.

Another young man talks about the restrictions of being out of work and having to live on social assistance.

IP: You want to be independent and have a job. It's an important part of life to have a good job and all that. And to spend my money on what I want. (…) This is so much stress, that the money is never enough for what they say it should cover. They believe that food should cost 53 crowns (approximately 6 euro – authors' note) per day. That's the money we get, 53 crowns. Not per meal either, it's for the whole day. And yes, I cook all my food from scratch, too. And I buy the cheapest I can. But it doesn't work as they expect. (…) It (the amount they receive from the social assistance scheme – authors' comment) has been the same for two years, a long time.

The time-geographical restriction analysis can show what barriers underlie the unemployed young people's different strategies to gain social support. The analytical method is used to draw attention to the differences in social and economic empowerment and how the restrictions affect each other. A locally based policy contributes to making that interpretation different in different municipalities. Social security is then a matter of geographical affiliation. This means that authority constraints can differ in a way that was not likely to be found when the state had an explicit policy of universalism in the social security systems. That is a policy change that has made the right to social security more varied. That is also a step away from the classic Nordic welfare state intentions of equality.

Concluding discussion
The inherent nature of social assistance is still today based on poor-relief logic, where the demand for work in return for welfare has for a long time been prevalent in the case processing of young unemployed people. Since the universalism described by Esping Andersen (1990) has started to flake off since the 1980s, social security is, to an increasing degree, differentiated between citizens that are well established in society and those on the margins of society. Our study can help us understand how

this time-geographical framework puts its mark on future policies in the space of outcomes.

As pointed out by Hägerstrand (1991), the context of geographical location, cultural and individual settings is of great significance, and we have shown that it is important for understanding young unemployed and the structural barriers in society. Results show that differences in cultural settings and interpretation of the law heavily affect the restrictions of the individual. These barriers can be understood as constraints due to spatial capacities, social position and access to important locations (stations) such as a workplace. The young unemployed, in our case, have no access to participation in a dominant project (work) on the labour market. Hägerstrand uses the term "crashed project" when this kind of intended dominant projects cannot be realized. Instead, the young unemployed have to participate in a project at the social welfare office, a project they have not chosen themselves. The social welfare office can be understood as a pocket of local order (Hägerstrand, 1970) where social obligations and structures are institutionalized at a geographical location administrating social assistance. Resources such as activation schemes and economic support are controlled by the social worker and by the rules and regulations that he or she represents. The handling of social assistance for the young unemployed demands certain services, or counter-performances, in return. In order to get hold of these resources, the young have to perform and repeatedly take part in activities controlled by others (Hägerstrand, 1985, 1991). If individuals are not willing to do so, or of any reason cannot perform the recommended activities, restrictions are imposed to change the individual's mind and make him or her understand the social obligations involved. This takes place, often in a certain room inside a certain building where this kind of power relation is legitimized and sanctioned by society. Results show that young unemployed do not have their social rights satisfied in similar ways depending on cultural settings and geographical location. The requests for social benefits to cover daily expenditures are met by no restrictions in one municipality, but an unconditional refusal in another. Other results in the interview case show everything in between and no two of the eight municipalities treat the young unemployed alike. The municipalities all share geographical borders with each other, which we first thought would limit the variation in the results. That was not the case. Even in a small region in the south-east of Sweden, the extent of authority constraints and coupling constraints depends on geographical affiliation. And so too, of course, do the possibilities to get resources to fulfil important projects in everyday life, including being a parent. In other words: what happens in the social office has repercussions for the opportunities the individual has outside that pocket of local order.

One possible and trustworthy interpretation is that social security for the majority of Swedish citizens, through decent welfare systems, is preserved those most in need of the social security system, such as youngsters who are referred to the municipalities. On the other hand, more powerful groups have unions to safeguard their interests. This benefits groups with experiences and skills already established on the labour market, but not individuals who have not yet got a job and don't have representatives to back up their interests.

The policy change has changed the pocket of local order when young unemployed meet service employees in the social welfare office. Various solutions in the social security system have made the need of timing more important than ever. Mental and social expectations of possible futures cannot pass through the waist of the hour-

glass due to constraints and power relations in the local and cultural settings. Individual intentions are hard to realize and can even cease to exist, depending on these locations and settings. The right individual settings must meet the most favourable cultural ones at the right geographical location if you want to get past the waist of the hour-glass. Hägerstrand's time-geographical approach gives us tools to comprehend how the young unemployed in need of social assistance are dealt with in local settings and the possibilities to participate in projects and gain access to resources. The pocket of local order has become an even more important theoretical framework for understanding policies of social security when geographical variations are in focus, causing constraints and limited access to power and projects at various locations in society.

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