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Searching for Ethics and Responsibilities of Everyday Life Mobilities. The Example of Cycling in Copenhagen

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1. Introduction

Ethics is, according to Sayer [2005; 2011], an inevitable part of living among other people. It doesn't mean that we always behave ethically, but that we evaluate others and their behavior according to our own ideas about what is right and wrong – good or bad. Evaluating other people's behavior, or the state of the world, brings the question of responsibility to the fore when the questions that follows good versus bad, right versus wrong, is what should be done instead. This article addresses the role of ethics and responsibility in late modern everyday life in general but with specific focus on mobilities. Focus is on illuminating how moral and ethical considerations are always part of individual's interaction with others. This is exemplifies through the experiences of being a cyclist in Copenhagen, through being part of a system of mobilities involving many different praxis's in limited space. Bauman [2009] claims that there are very few signs that "we who share this planet" are willing to take upon us the responsibility that whatever happens in one part of the planet has consequences for others. Still, he also suggests that hope, courage and stubbornness are qualities everybody entails, and therefore there is actually a chance to change things into something better [Bauman 2009, 30]. The ambivalence between ignoring and acting upon responsibility is a basic condition of the mobile risk society and the issues of sustainable mobility permeate the mobile risk society on all scales. I will not go into a discussion or definition of sustainable mobilities since this entails a number of issues

such as environmental depravation, life cycle analysis, inequalities, politics and so forth se [Banister 2008; Owens 2003; Swyngedouw 2010]. There is no doubt though that within my research, based on my normativities of good and bad, fair and unfair, the car is more unsustainable than the cycle, both in relations to energy use, life cycle and inequality (Car drivers are most often seen as the more important road user). The concept of sustainable mobilities is often used and seldom defined very well but there seems to be a general consensus that sustainable mobility is better than unsustainable mobilities. The problems appear in relation to what should be sacrificed; which freedoms everybody should be entitled to. This illuminates ideas of right or wrong, of moral standards on how the world "should" be, or, in other words, an ethically based normativity. Sayer [2005, 7] stresses how significant it is to "help social science do justice to this relation of concern, to lay normativity, and to the fact that we are sentient beings who can flourish and suffer." If we are pure realists and we only relate to the world from the visible and statistics, we lose the moral compass and the values we wish to preserve or create [Lefebvre 2003; Pinder 2005; Sayer 2005; Sayer 2011].

The examples used to discuss ethics and responsibilities within everyday mobilities in this paper, stems from an ongoing research project on "Urban Cycle Mobilities" funded by the Danish Counsel for Independent Research. The research is primarily based on qualitative interviews with cyclists in Copenhagen. In this paper, I will use material from 14 semi structured qualitative interviews [Kvale 1996] stratified on age, gender and everyday mobility modes besides the cycle (trains, buses and cars). Approximately half of the interviewees have kids, and all of them have (or are studying towards) an education, and belong to the middleclass. Thus their adherence in relation to class, ethnicity and gender are comparable. Denmark is a country with a very high genie coefficient and a very large middle class, so this focus entails a large group of the population [Freudendal-Pedersen 2014b]. Although the interviewees have similar living conditions, many differences exist. I have made a conscious decision not to describe the material circumstances in order to allow another narratives to come to the fore. Focus is on the emotional understanding the respondents have in their everyday life mobilities. Their mobility is created through physical restrictions and opportunities but also, to a very high degree, through emotional and sensory experiences [Sheller 2004]. The overall theme of the research project, is an examination on structural stories on cycling, about the rationalities behind every day cycling, and why people cycle [see Freudendal-Pedersen 2009 for work on structural stories]. The questions asked in the interview does not relate directly to ethics and responsibility. But these issues appear when the interviewees relate to the "other" when reflecting on communities, common goods and the right to the city. Thus this article does not present a comprehensive analysis of ethics and responsibilities within cyclists in

Copenhagen, but the cyclists reflections on these issues will be used as examples to show how ethics and responsibilities permeates everyday (velo)mobilities.

I will start the paper by outlining the empirical framework and presenting some facts about Copenhagen and its cycling policies. Copenhagen is often glorified as the perfect cycling city but car traffic in Copenhagen is on the increase. Also there are many cycle tracks in Copenhagen but then again there are also many people using them, creating a fight for space both in-between cyclists and also between cars and cyclists. This engenders aggression, and raises questions about the other road user and their behaviour and rights. Following on from this, I will sketch the mobile risk society as that which everyday life (velo)mobilities is taking place and negotiated in. Understanding the societal circumstances is basic in understanding how ethics and responsibilities unfold in everyday life mobilities. One of the consequences of having ethical considerations about right and wrong – good and bad – is living with ambivalences, and the question of ambivalences calls for a relation to responsibility. Responsibility can be paralysing but can also be activated through sub-politics and communities. The cycling culture in Copenhagen can be seen as a way to handle the individualised responsibility that the mobile risk society has enforced upon us. In closing the paper, I will discuss one of Sayer's [2005] important points on the ethics and normativity of social scientists and relate this to my own research.

2. Velomobilities in Copenhagen

Copenhagen is the capital of Denmark and has half a million people living in the city and 1.2 million in Greater Copenhagen. Copenhagen has an extensive network of public transportation and in 1947 the so-called "finger plan" was initiated, dividing the suburbs into five fingers, defining the s-train lines as well as the highways [Gaardmand 1993]. The finger plan has thus provided the cornerstone for the infrastructure of Copenhagen. In relations to everyday commuting on bikes, the S-trains play an important role. Bringing your bike on these trains are free of charge and thus commutes that might be to long for cycling are made possible. 36% of Copenhageners cycle to work or education every day and the infrastructure priorities (350 km of bike lanes) do play an important role herein [Copenhagen 2011; Andrade *et al.* 2011; A. Jensen 2013]. Copenhagen has a long tradition of planning for cyclists and what makes it different from many other cities is that it didn't stop considering the cyclists completely in the 1960s and 1970s when transport planning was strongly focused on car traffic [Koglin 2013]. From the 1980s onwards, the focus on cycling has been slowly growing and today the backbone of the cycling infrastructure is the

cycle tracks, which are important for the accessibility and safety of cyclists [Andrade *et al.* 2011; Snizek *et al.* 2013]. In addition, as part of the Copenhagen infrastructure, there are special traffic lights for cyclists, giving the cyclists a head start before motorized traffic, and on several big roads, a green wave for cyclists is established. Also on several streets in the inner city cycling against one-way traffic is allowed [Andrade *et al.* 2011].

Copenhagen as a cycling city is an important part of the political branding barometer of Copenhagen [O.B. Jensen 2013]. In 2009, the Department for Cycling at the Copenhagen Municipality decided to try to quantify the significance of cycling in relation to health and socioeconomic gains for society. Calculations and models – normally made to calculate how new roads will create more growth – resulted in a bicycle account, showing the significance of cyclists to the national bottom line. By using the same methods and thus line of arguments normally used for increasing car traffic the cycling department support the building of a culture where health is no longer only an externality but instead internalised in deciding how we might calculate growth. One of the important arguments coming out of this exercise is that: When a person chooses to cycle, society has a net gain of 0.16 Euro per kilometre cycled. Contrarily, society has a net loss of 0.1 Euro per kilometre travelled by car [Københavns Kommune 2010]. Showing the importance of cycling for health reasons – and thus socioeconomic gains for Copenhagen – is an important part of the puzzle in creating the basis for prioritizing cycling in Copenhagen. This is, of course, also something the cyclist knows, and this can show up in a morally superior attitude toward car drivers as exemplified here:

> "I think more attention should be on environment and health. Both in terms of questioning people's right to have a car, and sit one person in it and being able to transport themselves like this, because they can afford it and because it means a lot to them. It is not for the common good especially not on the long term. It is very shortsighted to operate from such a parameter."

This also means that even if all the interviewees feels prioritized in Copenhagen they also says that the car is a higher priority, and that it seems that cycling is more important in relations to branding than real-life planning and policy. Still some important goals have been reached, like today the cycle path is part of Copenhagen's "level 1" street in winter. This means that the cycle paths, together with two major road arteries into Copenhagen, have priority in snow clearing. For some this might seem like a small thing, but deciding who should have the best opportunities for smooth and easy mobility is quite a conflict-ridden issue. By making these kinds of decisions the Copenhagen municipality support the cycling culture by marking how

important it is for the city that its cycling citizens can get to work safely. Thus as part of the cycling culture in Copenhagen is also the "naturalness" of cycling all year round weather its raining or snowing.

Sandercock [2003] talks about the importance of stories and storytelling in planning practice and Copenhagen definitely embraces this by reproducing and utilizing the story of the cycle as an everyday praxis. In 2009, Copenhagen municipality made a pamphlet about cycling, saying that "in Copenhagen we don't not have cyclists but merely people transporting themselves on bikes" [Copenhagen 2009]. This pamphlet was primarily aimed at visitors, both professionals and tourists, but the municipality is also very active in maintaining and strengthening the cycle culture among the Copenhagen cyclists. Examples hereof is a campaign and (Facebook like) website called "I bike CPH" or one of the many cycle counters meeting Copenhageners on their daily commute. The municipality puts a lot of focus on work with the technological and trendy elements of the bike, in alignment with how the young Copenhageners identify themselves through their bike. In December 2012, the IT University of Copenhagen together with the association Bicycle Innovation Lab was hosting a workshop for young people. The overall theme of the workshop was to think about the connection between the bike and technology and develop new ideas for the future cycling city. The projects developed at the workshop pointed out that modern society is in a process of "mobilization," changing human relations and ways of communicating – on and off the bike. Among other things, the Facebook for bikes (Facebike) showed a whole new kind of identification process with the movement technology, which has earlier been reserved for the car. An interesting issue throughout the workshop was also a constant dilemma between an eagerness to make the bike more technologically efficient and multifaceted, while at the same time constantly being confronted by the need to keep it free from overwhelming opportunities and just function through its basic technology where the body becomes the main tool for mobility (http://www.bicycleinnovationlab.dk/activities?show=jvu). Thus, the infrastructure of Copenhagen allows for promoting cycling as everyday mobility, but as I will show later the conflicts with the car, as well as the parallel to being a car driver, are an omnipresent part of Copenhagen cyclists' relation to velomobilities. Relating to the "other" in traffic based on ethics and responsibilities is an inescapable part of the mobile risk society.

3. The Mobile Risk Society

The concept "mobile risk society" is framed by [Kesselring 2008b] and combines key elements from the "theory of reflexive modernisation" [Beck *et al.* 2003] and the "new mobilities paradigm" [Sheller and Urry 2006]. Theorists such as Ulrich Beck [1992], Anthony Giddens [1991] and Zygmunt Bauman [2000], describe how environmental, economic, and social risks are increasingly crucial to the social structures of societies, their social cohesion and integration of individuals, and their future developments. Beck [1992] points out that modern societies do not necessarily have increased risks, but, more saliently, increased perceived risk because of increased mobilities. The ability to instantly communicate and be informed about global events and new knowledge (time space compression) means that living with risks has become a constant component of a reflexive, time pressured, everyday life, where we need to make a lot of choices made possible by physical mobilities [Giddens 1991; Beck 1992]. What will genetically modified food do to me? Which kind of hormones are in my kids toys? Are my kids going to get hurt in traffic if I let them cycle? Moreover, is the temperature rising to the extent that a big part of the world will be flooded? We make these choices based on expert knowledge and form our opinions based on the experts we sympathies and agree with, and whom we feel are trustworthy. Different risks, with different time spans, have a prominent place in the news, the focus of politicians and thereby the world surrounding the individual. Different media constitute the basis for the re-evaluation of knowledge, and the risks this re-evaluation carries are often communicated to individuals with more emphasis upon presentation than the news itself. Furthermore, histories and subjects, which in reality have nothing in common except that they are newsworthy, often get juxtaposed in their presentation [Giddens 1991], hence the distance between genetically modified food and the state of the world mentioned above. The social effect of the definitions of risks, it seems, is not dependent upon their scientific durability, but more on whether or not the expert presenting the issue seems trustworthy [Beck 1992]. Consequently, individuals are aware that the knowledge they choose to believe is provisional and this constant reassessment and negotiation builds an increased sense of risks [Beck 1992; Beck *et al.* 1994].

The new mobilities paradigm frames how modern societies are constantly dealing with the negative consequences of both virtual and physical mobilization and the insecurities, uncertainties, and unintended side effects for individuals, institutions, and organizations. The mobilities focus was initiated by John Urry in the book *Sociology Beyond Societies* from 2001 where he:

"(…) elaborate some of the material transformations that are remaking the 'social,' especially those diverse mobilities that, through multiple senses, imaginative travel, movements of images and information, virtuality and physical movement, are materially reconstructing the 'social as society' into the 'social as mobility'" [Urry 2000, 2].

Research following this approach investigates "how the development of various networks and flows undermines endogenous social structures (…)" [Urry 2000, 1] by generating environmental, economic and social risks for individuals, collective actors and societies. This underlines mobility as a highly ambivalent phenomenon when is has brought about positive economic and social effects, such as wealth, international collaboration and exchange, but at the same time issues such as increased inequality, climate change, urban sprawl and mobile lifestyles highly dependent on oil and other fossil resources, follows. Historically mobility have contained the idea and promise of frictionless speed [Urry 2007; O.B. Jensen and Freudendal-Pedersen 2012], as that which would lead to better and happier lives. Instead the realization of the vision of "seamless mobility" and a "zero-friction society" ended up in congestion, noise and environmental problems [Urry 2011; Adey et al. 2013].

The extension and speeding-up of mobilities systems has led to the rise of mobile forms of working and living [Kesselring 2006; Kesselring 2008b; Freudendal-Pedersen 2009; Urry 2007]. This has opened up unforeseen global opportunity spaces for economies, transnational cultures, communication, community and social networks bringing about new "cultures of immediacy" [Tomlinson 2004] by the possibilities of facilitating interaction both from nearly every place in the world but also across spaces for lived everyday life. However, simultaneously the amount of unintended consequences from energy use, CO_2-emissions, working environments, etc., cause problems that neither modern institutions nor individuals have appropriate routines and instruments to deal with. These problems are present in modern individuals' everyday life, but without institutional support it becomes more or less impossible for individuals to tackle this [Beck 2008]. The complex and time pressured everyday life needs other ways of behavior than "the right one," when there is so much knowledge that needs to be integrated when making decisions [Freudendal-Pedersen 2009]. Everyday life mobilities, to be able to move from one place to another, seeking out new and maintain old communities, plays an important role for identities [Urry 2000; Urry 2007; Beckmann 2001; Kaufmann 2002; Kesselring 2006; Freudendal-Pedersen 2009]. Individuals have requirements to everyday life's components which must be fitted together, creating the good life, and it is filled with a number of competing discourses, all of which are significant for the understanding of the good life and for increasing mobility [Thomsen 2005; Pooley *et al.* 2006; Freudendal-Pedersen 2009].

The individual copes with everyday life mobilities in the way it makes sense to themselves and their families, and ignoring the consequences of increased mobilities is likely to be the most manageable solution in a time pressured everyday life. Nevertheless, the issues of environmental problems caused by transport need to be regulated on a transnational scale, since it is a transnational problem. There is, however, no global political structure which can act and react appropriately. For the sustainability of mobility, and for the future of a post-carbon society, there is no convincing concept available and it is an open question how one can be developed within current political and economic structures [Kesselring 2008a; Beck 2008]. Hence, the solution today seems to let the responsibility rest on the individual. One of the more unified ideas taken from the individual level in relations to mobilities behavior is the term *Copenhagenize*, used to describe a specific planning and design strategy for cyclists in the city. The term elevates Copenhagen as an example of a city intentionally working with sustainable mobilities by supporting and promoting cyclist as everyday mobilities. This is clear in the strategy from Copenhagen municipality aiming at 50% of Copenhageners cycling to work on a daily basis in 2025 [Copenhagen 2011]. Still this concept is being implemented without confronting the fact that during the last 60 years western societies have made automobility the hegemonic practice of mobility [Urry 2000; Urry 2007; Featherstone 2004; Horton 2006; Aldred 2012]. All of this is ambivalent, in the sense that on the one hand automobility is supporting the proliferation of modern ideals such as wealth, flexibility and freedom, but, on the other hand, increasing mobility implies a self-destructive potential for mobile societies and their members. Urban life is given a specific meaning when particular spaces are reserved for the facilitation of automobility, emptying them of all other functions than those which take place in the individual cocoons [Featherstone 2004; Freudendal-Pedersen 2009; Conley and Mclaren 2012]. The mobile risk society is thus a society where ambivalences become the accompanying spouse and mobilities and risk are increasingly crucial to the social structures of societies, their social cohesion and integration of individuals, and their future development.

4. Ambivalences within Everyday Mobilities

The mobile risk society thus means living a life with ambivalence, and with ambivalence comes ethical considerations. In the everyday life of the mobile risk society, individuals learn to navigate and ignore some of these risks when moving around in the city, but, when asked, ambivalence and ethical consideration is lying just beneath the surface [Freudendal-Pedersen 2009; Freudendal-Pedersen 2007; Freuden-

dal-Pedersen *et al.* 2010]. Thomsen [2001] has analyzed transport as a part of identity formation and concludes that:

> "Personal transport is thereby not only a part of everyday life one does not consider, it can also be a conflict ridden area of behavior which can get the users to think about whether or not their behavior is justifiable" [my translation] [Thomsen 2001, 121].

The ambivalences in relation to justifiable behavior described by Thomsen can mostly be placed under two categories, altruism and responsibility towards other people. In relation to the ambivalence of altruism, Thomsen mentions that only one of her interviewees initiated a conversation on environment as a problem in relation to transport, for the remaining part she had to raise the issue herself. In general, the interviewees reacted to questions about environmental consequences of their transport behavior as a rejection to being able to do anything about it. This dismissal of responsibility is also something I have found in my earlier work. In the late 1990s, one of my interviewees stated: *"CO_2 is something the scientists invented to get more money."* It seems, though, that this is changing. Already in empirical work done in 2007 [Freudendal-Pedersen 2009], statements recognizing the consequences of using the car in relation to the CO_2 problem (and to some extent their responsibility to do something about it), was prominent. In a recent interview, this woman with two children is very clear on this ambivalence:

> "If we think about the environment there is no doubt that all of us should cycle everywhere, but then comes this thing about freedom and that some things just gets easier in everyday life if you ignore sustainability and take the car. But I can of course count, so I know what I should do."

The experience of not being able to do anything about growing automobility themselves is still prevalent, though my interviewees see everyday cycling as their contribution to sustainable mobility. However, this also underlines that in the mobile risk society mobilities – and its consequences – have been highly individualized. It is up to the individual to negotiate with themselves which kinds of mobilities to use when connecting spheres of everyday life [Kesselring 2008b; Elliott and Urry 2010]. This is also raised by Bauman [1995], who argues that re-establishing the individual as a moral actor is a consequence of the common understanding that it is impossible to get one specific certain order in our knowledge on social life. Thereby, it becomes difficult to maintain one single collected societal ethics with rules for correct behavior, and this means that the responsibility for action, and choosing what is morally correct, falls back on the individual. Thereby, individuals are forced to

relate to moral issues emerging in everyday life, where most actions are conducted by routine [Bauman 1995].

Bauman talks about two kinds of moral; conformity-moral, where the individual is responsible in relation to expressed conventions or institutional rules; the other kind is responsibility-moral, where the individual is responsible to someone or something based upon a personal commitment. In order to handle the conformity-moral constantly present in everyday mobilities, individuals become part of "institutionalized" taken for granted regimes of behavior. Kesselring and Vogel [2013] describe how mobilities are ordered through the concept of "mobility regimes," which are "a matter of disciplining and channeling movements and mobility by way of principles, norms, and rules" [Keselring and Vogl 2013, 4]. Through the concept of "structural stories" Freudendal-Pedersen [2009] demonstrates how these stories people tell helps to rationalize and support everyday life mobility behavior. One of the most prevalent structural stories (also used by the woman quoted above) is the structural story that automobility affords more freedom. Structural stories are totally dependent on the validation and recognition from the mobile community using this specific mode of mobility. Based on both the mobility regimes, and the structural stories, it seems evident that the communities of mobility spaces are highly regulated and restructured through morals and ethics. These "institutionalized" – and taken-for-granted regimes of behavior – are also a way of avoiding the responsibility-moral in relation to everyday mobilities, because mobility for some creates immobility for others [Beckmann 2001; Drewes Nielsen 2005]. It also has negative side effects for the spaces that the individual shares with those they have a personal commitment to. Cars in cities take up a vast amount of space and the (idea of) freedom individuals get from automobility has consequences for others, but also for the individual themselves [Freudendal-Pedersen 2009]. This also comes out in the interviews, here formulated by a man using both the car and cycle as everyday mobility:

> "When I'm driving a car I think a lot about that I just as well could have cycled, I also think about how I use a lot of resources and space. But I have taken a conscious decision that I do not bother to worry. Nothing good comes from that. So I'm not worried about what the future will look like, I'm not worried about it; I cannot use worrying for anything."

Bauman [1995] states that the modern project of ethics seeks to ground moral choices in universally, rationally accessible principles, and by doing so, to relive the individual of the ambivalence – the ambivalence of freedom. In late modern life, we have the freedom to define and create the good life on our own. Traditions are no

longer governing us into specific communities with specific rules [Giddens 1991]. The problem with this freedom is that it, to a large extent, places responsibility back on the individual as a heavy burden [Beck 1992] creating insecurity and ambivalence because we are alone with the responsibility of our actions [Bauman 1988]. This is why individuals need a strategy, like the one mentioned above where the man has "taken a conscious decision that *I do not bother to worry*," and in this way he is handling the ambivalences from his responsibility moral.

5. Ambivalences and Responsibility

These ambivalences can result in paralysis if they cannot be dealt with via routines, thus the "need" for, and creation of, "mobility regimes" and "structural stories." This plays an important role in the difficulties in changing mobilities habits. But ambivalences do not necessarily have to mean paralysis; Becker-Schmidt and Knapp [1987] discuss how ambivalences also can create social learning. Focusing on women's everyday lives, they describe two kinds of ambivalence: "ambivalence-tolerance" and "ambivalence-defend." Some ambivalence we learn to live with and navigate, while others we ignore or evade. Recognizing the ambivalences and their causes creates social learning, not understood as contradictions that can be resolved, but that individuals handle ambivalences better by assuming that issues can get better when one recognizes them [Becker-Schmidt and Knapp 1987]. This elderly man proposes this ambivalence – defending solutions to everyday mobilities:

> "I do not think we in everyday life are particularly altruistic about the environment. We just want to get around! Therefore, I believe that we should be forced (planned) to more environmentally friendly modes - and as far as possible should look at new ways to take this into account."

Thereby ambivalences are not only a paralyzing part of everyday life that are accepted and navigated, but instead something which can create learning and evolving. Social learning is shared and developed through communities, and the "courage" to state the above stems from feeling at home in a highly accepted community of cycling in Copenhagen. Communities are essential for individuals to facilitate exchanges of everyday life experiences, of sharing responsibilities [Giddens 1984; Beck 1992; Bauman 2001; Beck 1997; Rosa 2013; Delanty 2003; Offe 2012]. Individuals have the need to exchange experiences as well as responsibility with others concerning various topics such as childcare, marriage, working life, the environment and mobility behavior. According to Bauman, the degree of this form of social dependency has largely been unchanged over centuries, as it is a necessary condition for the human

community's existence and continuation [Bauman 2001, 39]. In a world of extreme individualization, the acceptance and help from the community is essential for an individual's ontological security, which is essential for living. We need to share responsibilities, and also the responsibilities of what we have learned to consider being part of the individual sphere [Freudendal-Pedersen and Hartmann-Petersen 2006].

Today, the individual has to design their own lifestyle, and, through this, demonstrate what kind of person they are and which values they hold [Giddens 1991; Bauman 2000; Freudendal-Pedersen 2009]. Everyday ambivalences, combined with tradition's low impact on decision-making, and the always-apparent reflexivity, means that the individual has to make more and more choices. As a consequence, we create life politics as a politics through which individuals reflexively make choices based on the abundance of information and experiences accumulated through late modern life, and thus create a lifestyle. Life politics provides us with ontological security, and a place from were decisions about rights and wrongs can be made [Giddens 1991]. Being a cyclist in Copenhagen is a lifestyle with attached life politics, sometimes clearly articulated, as by this young woman:

> "Well for me cycling is some kind of statement about sustainability and environmental issues, etc. I almost feel like part of a movement that cycle and also likes to talk about cycling with my friends and with people who do not cycle. So for me the cycle represents a sensible healthy future and way of life and transport and I think there is so much potential in cycling."

It is through life politics that individuals make connections between earlier experiences and future actions, through which life obtains continuity [Giddens 1991]. Through life politics we attempt to reduce a world with many little differences to a world with a few big differences, which makes it easier to grasp [Eriksen 2001]. As in this quote where this young man makes clear distinctions on who car ownership is important to:

> "It certainly has prestige for some to have a car. I have many friends who live in the countryside and for them there is prestige in having this posh new car and constantly replacing it with a new one. In Copenhagen, it is vice versa. In my circle of friends one would be almost looked down upon if one had a car because it is unnecessary."

These categories are based on groups' (here a circle of friends) ethical and moral questions of how everyday life mobilities in the city should be performed. This is what Beck [1997] defines as sub-politics. Traditional political forums are no longer guarantors for security, and a politicizing of earlier non-political areas – such as everyday life mobilities – has developed [Freudendal-Pedersen and Hartmann-Petersen 2006; Freudendal-Pedersen 2010; Freudendal-Pedersen 2009]. Sub-politics is not neces-

sarily organized butis a radical element of actions. Individuals are not necessarily aware when they act sub-politically [Beck 1997], but for several of my interviewees, cycling in Copenhagen is a conscious part of acting sub-politically, as this young man expresses very precise: "One of the reasons why I bike is because the car pollutes and is so noisy. The bike is just a fantastic mode of transport." Whereas life politics is the politics of lifestyles focusing on choices and moral questions for the individual, sub-politics is concerned with the area in which societal consensus is created around different subjects and the impact this has. The concept of sub-polices opens up the possibility for action in the interplay between the individuals choices of action (life politics) and more established (sub-) political institutions where consensus, and giving more space for action, is cultured. In other words, Beck's [1992] concept of risk opens up the possibility of placing responsibility on the community instead of letting it rest on the individual. The cycling "community" in Copenhagen, both in terms of the planning agenda and the large number of different cycling associations and societies on Facebook creates a strong sub-political agenda.

6. Individualized Responsibility

Nevertheless, the individualized responsibility is most predominant in the interviews. Reflecting on one's own everyday behavior and the ambivalences that proceeds starts out with the individuals own responsibility to change things. This is why, (also showed in an earlier quotation) the first response is to ignore or accept the problems with sustainable mobilities:

> "I'm starting to accept that this is how it is. It may well be that in the past I was young and angry, but now I'm getting old and boring. But still when I sit in traffic jams I can't help thinking about how many resources that just disappears into the air. But that's the way we have chosen to organize society, so ..."

Zeitler [2008, 233] proposes the keyword "response-ability" in ethical theory, as well as in mobility and planning, saying that, "proper responses depend on our ability to respond, our 'response-ability'". For Zietler, ethics is ontology coming from our individual sense of right and wrong, our built-in normativity. This is what Thomsen [2001] detects when she talks about "justifiable" behavior and also the basis for Bauman's [1995] responsibility-moral. Beck's [1997] sub-politic is essential for Zeitlers [2008] "response-ability." The ability to respond to issues of ethics permeates responses to everyday mobility practices. And yet, in relation to sustainable mobility, there seems to be a big gap between the ethic and the ability to respond to the problems accumulating. The ability to respond to a common good in a world

where individualization is a main player seems, from an everyday life perspective, to be increasingly challenged [Beck 1992; Kesselring 2008; Freudendal-Pedersen 2009]. This should not be mistaken for egoism, or a lack of ethics nor common responsibility. Instead, a permeating paralysis hinders individuals' ability to respond to that which their ethics tells them needs a response. This is a question of scale; when a path dependency, very visible in relation to automobility, reinforces the reification of how society works and which elements can be influenced [Graham and Marvin 2001; Urry 2007; Dennis and Urry 2009; Furness 2010], an individual response feels insignificant. This path dependency of the car also comes out in all the interviews, not formulated as a path dependency but as a reflection on the superior status the car has in Copenhagen, despite the effort to get more people to bike. Here it is expressed by a young man.

> "I think in Copenhagen there is a culture around cycling, at least among my friends. One thing is of course to design cities so it's great to cycle but also ... it's damn hard to compete with large car brands and their ... their whole culture, the whole reality that is created around driving a car and owning a car. Buying a car is just like being married for many people."

There is a tendency within social science to look at everyday life, its ethics and normativities, as something that can be studied inside a glass dome, something with clear boundaries that does not affect planning, politics or research. From this perspective the idea is that everyday life needs to be regulated or people "should" be incited to change behavior. But everyday life and its emotional responses infuse all individuals' interactions with the world, also in conducting tasks in their working life. The ethical considerations, and the normativity that follows, are not something removed when "stepping out of the glass dome" into the "other" life. This means that if a city planner or politician's everyday life is based on the car as the most important everyday mobility, it also infuses their work life, and reinforces the cars strong grip on city planning. Much contemporary architecture and city planning is – in its narratives about future cities – very attentive to sustainability as an important part of plans. Often, narratives impossible to contradict are created, encompassing green and social spaces and introducing ideas of hedonistic sustainability (meaning no loss of opportunities or lack of enjoyment) [O.B. Jensen and Freudendal-Pedersen 2012; Essebo 2013]. But, in order to "sell" these ideas, automobilities are often only described in a frictionless and flexible flow, without any unintended consequences. This is resulting in a reproduction of a path dependency masked by positive green and social visions of future cities based on a predict, and provide mind-set. This also reproduces the aggression between automobility and velomobility and individualises

the responsibility. Cyclists' morals become censorious towards car drivers; they believe they need to "wake up," has expressed in this quote:

> "I think it is time to do something about it. It is not consistent with what is reasonable and the knowledge we have about all sorts of things. So it's about time that the car drivers wake up. And yes, it means they have to compromise but I think they should. Perhaps it is not for their own good at this time because they are so fond of sitting in the car, but then for the good of their children."

The individualized conflict with the car when moving around the streets of Copenhagen shows up as omnipresent. It seems though that the sub-political arenas are growing stronger both in Copenhagen but also internationally [Freudendal-Pedersen 2014b; Spinney 2010; Furness 2007; 2010], and the sub-political arena opens up the maneuver room for response-ability.

7. Ethics and Responsibilities in Researching

This paper was introduced with Sayer's [2005] statement that ethics is an invertible part of living among other people. In line with this, he also addresses the responsibility of social science researchers to acknowledge and take seriously the lay normativity of both researchers and their fields of study [Sayer 2005, 5]. When social sciences ignore or reject ethical and thus normative considerations the understanding of both small and overarching situations of the world becomes insufficient:

> "Emotional responses to the inequalities and struggles of the social field and how people negotiate them are to be taken seriously both because they matter to people, and because they generally reveal something about their situation and welfare; indeed, if the latter were not true the former would not be either." [Sayer 2005, 37]

The examples I have used from my fieldwork shows how often ethical and normative consideration shows up in conversations about everyday life praxis. In this paper I have chosen to focus on the "conflict" with the car driver in the urban space but going through the interviews again with a different aim might spur up new stories. What this underlines is Sayer's [2005] point on normativity in research, how this direct our eyes towards specific themes and makes us blind to others. Following this argument through highlights the importance to openly reflect upon my own ontological and epistemological considerations. The center of attention in this article is the ethics and responsibilities emerging in relation to the (velo)mobilities of everyday life and city planning. Much contemporary research on mobilities, in varying degrees, takes sustainability and/or climate change as its starting point, background or vision for the future. The responses to these issues vary from the very dystopian

to the utopian narratives of what future mobilities might bring. Either way, there is a clear sense of an ethical foundation and a need to respond to these pressing issues within mobilities research [Cresswell 2006; Cresswell and Merriman 2011; Canzler et al. 2008; Dennis and Urry 2009; Urry 2011], a concern that also makes the foundation for my research. But most importantly, it is not only about the ethics of the "other," or the subjects we study, but also about recognizing and embracing the ethics and normativity we as researchers inhabit:

> "Social scientists are taught to adopt and prioritize the positive point of view and, unless they also read philosophy, to suppress normative reasoning. The gradual separation of positive and normative thought that has occurred over the last 200 years in social science has involved not only an attempt (though incomplete) expulsion of values from science, but an expulsion of science or reason from values, so that values appear to be mere primitive, a-rational subjective beliefs, lying beyond the scope of reason" [Sayer 2005, 5–6].

Normativity is not a barrier for knowledge production. However, it needs to be accompanied by respect for, and understanding of, the social realities, wishes and preferences of the subjects studied. This might evoke the question: why do I provide such little information about my interviewees? The reason is that it is my experience that the more information we get about the practical conditions of the interviewee, the more our own ethics steps in and relates to whether it is right/wrong, good/bad or "just because." In addition, it is my main point to state that it doesn't matter how we ethically or normatively "judge" the statement. What we need to take seriously is that this is *their* experience and how *they* evaluate or describe their lives and what propels *their* actions. That is what we need to learn from and understand, whether we think there is a "reasonable" explanation to it or not. Thus being conscious about normativity has a significant impact on empirical work and believing that one, through the empirical, can access an objective social reality, independent of the researcher, is according to Kvale [1996][1] evidence of a "naive empiricism." The empirical is always based on choices, choices guided by normativity and ethical consideration towards the examined subject. In line with Sayer [2005], I would argue that "lay ethical practices… are concrete and governed by practical reason as well as by rules; it is messy, concrete and practical rather than tidy and concise" [Sayer 2005, 146]. This often conflicts with the researcher's requirements to present mobility practices as tidy and concise in order to create resonance and understanding for a wider audience. So, based on the ethics of research practice, this means there is a

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[1] This statement is added in Kvales Danish version of the book from 1997 together with some other quite critical statements.

responsibility in remembering that mobility preferences, everyday life, politics and planning are messy, concrete and practical. Thus, the responsibility within mobility research is to be careful and reflexive in relation to the empirical analysis. When, for instance, mobility research is presented in a tidy and concise manner in order for it to convince colleges or future funding partners, it is a fine line between being true to the messy, concrete and practical, while still trying to make it palatable for those still unsure why mobility research is essential in understanding modern lives.

Mobilities research has the opportunity, and maybe also a responsibility, to counter this understanding of modernity through its ability to understand how new types of communities, challenging ethics and local/global responsibilities, are also a part of mobile lives that can be transformed into positive future utopias. The field-work shows how the response-ability can feel quite low for the Copenhagen cyclists, but it also shows that it is present in their lives and that there is a need for living it out. Putting limitations on car traffic in order to create more space for sustainable mobilities is an uphill struggle in most cities around the world and also in Copenhagen. The systemic change required to create this change needs to be grounded in the ethics of everyday life. Connecting everyday life activities produces and reproduces taken for granted knowledge, reification and path dependency, and diffused into all spheres of society. Even if all of the interviewees are car drivers they all acknowledge the benefits from cycling in the city – both to themselves and others. But their response-ability is low since the car is seen as the superior mobility even in a cycling city like Copenhagen. In 2010, Mike Davis wrote the article 'Who will build the ark' which was a direct call for taken seriously the responsibility for changing the path dependencies steering us in a dangerous direction.

> "One of the most encouraging developments in that emergent intellectual space where researchers and activists discuss the impacts of global warming on development has been a new willingness to advocate the Necessary rather than the merely Practical" [Davis 2010, 45].

When Davis addresses the "Necessary" instead of the merely "Practical," he points out that researchers need to take upon themselves the responsibility of not only being researchers, but also intellectuals who promote ideas of how to create a better and more sustainable future. Doing fieldwork on cycling in Copenhagen is multifaceted when it both provides knowledge about everyday mobility practices and how they might be changed in a direction of more sustainable mobilities. But equally important, it also highlights how ethics, morals and emotions are interconnected with mobilities and materialities in the city. Also it shows the need for, and the building of new communities and the hopeful futures also present in people's lives. This re-

lates back to Bauman's [2009] points in the introduction about hope, courage and stubbornness. He makes this point in relation to Václav Havel and why he left such a powerful trace on the world and says:

> "He had only three weapons: hope, courage, and stubbornness. These are primitive weapons, nothing high-tech about them. And they are the most mundane, common weapons: humans all have them, (…) Only we use them much too seldom" [Bauman 2009, 30].

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Searching for Ethics and Responsibilities of Everyday Life Mobilities

The Example of Cycling in Copenhagen

Abstract: Living an everyday life among other people entails evaluating their behavior according to our own ideas about what is right and wrong – good or bad. And living according to our own ethics in a mobile risk society entails ambivalences and opens up the issue of responsibility. This article discusses how moral and ethical considerations are always part of individual's interaction with others, exemplified through the experiences of being a cyclist in Copenhagen. The article finalizes by touching upon the role of social sciences whom for a long time has learned to ignore or reject ethical and thus normative considerations.

Keywords: (Velo)Mobilities, Everyday Life, Normativity, Ethics and Responsibility.

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