A Sense of Place:
Outdoor Pursuits and Cabin Fever.
A Nordic Haven for Gender Equality

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I Abstract

This thesis aims to examine how Swedish ‘sommarstuga’ (Summer Cottage) or ‘cabins’ contributes to the production of gender equal values. This ethnographic work is based on the central case study of the members from Uppsala Extremsportförening, (UppX) and their interactions during two cabin trips; one to a surf cabin in Ericeira Portugal and the other a family cabin in Ängskärs, Sweden. The fieldwork conducted was implemented in a multi-sited ethnographic approach allowing for a broader perspective of possible fieldsites and the techniques of ‘Following The People’ and ‘Carnal Sociology’. Consequently, this led to unique experiences where the ‘sense of place’ of Swedish cabin traditions and values could be seen being practiced in Portugal. While, aiming to address the participants of this fieldwork thoughts and views on myths and misconceptions of Sweden’s image as a utopia or role model for egalitarian values. This thesis highlights that cabins and their surrounding spaces facilitate more than just sporting pursuits. They are a microcosm of interactions, a social space for family and friends, for play and gender politics; a world within a world. Concluding that, Swedish cabins are a ‘heterotopia’ or haven that facilitates gender equal interactions, evidencing this through case studies of gender equal participation in various sporting activities while staying in two very different cabins.

Key Words: Gender Equality, Carnal Sociology, Sense Of Place, Heterotopia, Sweden, Cabins, Sports.
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“Now I see the secret of the making of the best persons.
It is to grow in the open air, and to eat and sleep with the earth”

Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (1855)
1. Introduction

Location: Ängskärs, Sweden.

In a clearing, surrounded by trees that reach up into the limitless blue sky of summer, nestled amongst a cluster of picturesque red and white wooden cabins\(^1\), just a short bike ride to where the sweetwater meets the sea, I stand with a gun in my hand. Admittedly, this particular weapon is just a pellet gun, but still it counts. My Swedish hosts are cheering me on and enthusiastically giving me pointers on how to knock the old tin cans off a tree stump, I still keep missing. This is probably one of the more unusual summers I have, or will ever, experience. In a short space of time; I joined an extreme sports club (when I am the least ‘sporty’ person I know), I went to Portugal and learned to surf with said sports club, visited lakes and forests around Sweden, rode a bike for the first time in years, tried longboarding, canoeing, water-skiing, and learned how to shoot a pellet gun (sort of). For my Swedish hosts however, this is more-or-less a typical summer spent in their cabin, playing sports, spending time with friends and family, in a space that contributes to the production of more gender balanced relations, while enjoying the freedom and space of the great outdoors.

It will become clear throughout the course of this thesis, that cabins and their surrounding spaces are more than areas of leisure, they are their own cosmos of interactions. Cabins are typically relatively secluded and isolated, yet they are a social space, a family space, a place of traditional values, play and gendered politics; a world within a world. A ‘sense of place’\(^2\) as this thesis is entitled, is a common phraseology in the English language that is normally understood in general terms, and yet there is no single universally understood ‘sense of place’. This is because everyone has a personal and subjective sense of what this phrase can mean and it is often a hard ‘sense’ to articulate (Beatley, 2004: 21). Massey, defines ‘sense of place’ as a contextual ‘character’ that a place, such as a cabin in Sweden, can hold (Massey, 2001: 156).

\(^1\) In this thesis I refer to a Swedish ‘sommarstuga’ (Summer Cottage) or simply ‘stuga’, as a ‘cabin’. This style of home was always translated for me as a ‘cabin’ since this word holds more specific meanings for English speakers than the word cottage. I shall be further clarifying why I made this linguistic decision in section 3.2 entitled ‘Cabin Fever’.

\(^2\) A ‘sense of place’ is a multidisciplinary concept that finds its origins in geographical theories, coined and defined most notably by Massey (2001 [1994]; 2012).
Various Nordic Cabins were where I based my fieldwork but how I accessed my participants was through joining in various sporting activities, organised by an extreme sports club run by a group of Swedish students called Uppsala Extremsportförening, or UppX, as they shall be referred to throughout this ethnography. This thesis is based mainly on my time spent, ‘following’ UppX, by applying the technique coined by Marcus to ‘follow the people’ (1995: 106). I soon realised that, since UppX was a sports group, I could not simply sit back and watch, I had to be an active participant, not just an observer, if I wanted to fit in I would have to join in. The cabins in my thesis were where UppX members went to participate in sporting activities and where they would spend their leisure time. Cabins became the common denominator in my work as I ‘followed’ (ibid) where UppX members went; I was led in my fieldwork from one cabin to another. This ‘pursuit of culture’ (Van Maanen, 2011: 13) also led this study to a surf cabin in Portugal. As further discussed in my ethnographic writings in Chapter 4.

Both cabins ‘sense of space’ was designed to be a functional space for leisure activities, like the surf cabin in Portugal. UppX made use of these spaces and the sporting activities available, thus creating a gender-balanced sense of place. These experiences and the concepts surrounding a ‘sense of place’ are explored through the use of sensory anthropology, to better understand and experience Swedish ‘cabin culture’. As noted by Feld; ‘as place is sensed, senses are placed; as places make sense, sense makes place’ (1996: 91). By incorporating sensory anthropology and a sense of place, I sought to eloquently analyse aspects of my time in the field and the views of the participants in my fieldwork. I aimed to achieve this by incorporating Wacquant’s theory of ‘carnal sociology’ (2007), where Wacquant’s main ‘tool of inquiry’ (ibid: viii) during his fieldwork was himself. I wanted to show that the ‘character’ (Massey, 2001: 156) of cabins and how they contributed to the production and negotiation of Swedish traditions and values was dynamic and active through the interactions that I observed during my time in the field with UppX.

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3 I use the term ‘participant’ rather than ‘informant’ in this thesis, as there are many negative connotations surrounding the term ‘informant’. Therefore, since it is at the discretion of the researcher’s personal preference, I chose to use ‘participant’ as it indicates a more positive and active role of those involved in qualitative studies (Morse, 1991: 403-404).
The context of a Swedish family cabin and through the use of outdoor sports as a methodological and topical platform has proven to me to be a very interesting area to address and highlight issues as well as successes of gender equality. Firstly, this is because Sweden’s image is shown to be that of a forward thinking, gender equal welfare state with a commitment to the environment and more importantly for this thesis; their commitment to egalitarian values. As their official website ‘Sweden.se’⁴ states their welfare system promotes ‘a healthy work–life balance has been an important factor in making Sweden a gender-egalitarian leader’. This prioritisation of a ‘healthy work-life balance’ could arguably link back to the high number of second homes in the form of cabins; ‘there are nearly 600,000 summer houses in Sweden. […] more than 50 per cent of the population have access to one through family or friends’ (Hincks, 2018 [Source: sweden.se]). Secondly, my interest in this topical area is furthered since the Swedish government is a self-professed ‘feminist government’, with a commitment to gender equality and a focus on methods and tools to ‘enhance the full enjoyment of rights, representation and resources for all women and girls’ (Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality, April 2018).

But what does it mean to be an ‘Egalitarian Society’ and to seek ‘Gender Equality’? There are many issues that arise with the discussion and definition of these terms. However, as an introduction to these key terms I looked to the most pertinent definitions for this thesis; the Swedish Government issued the definition for ‘Gender Equality’, as both men and women having ‘the same opportunities to shape society and their own lives’ (The Swedish Government’s Gender Equality Policy 2010–2014). Though they did not supply a definition for a ‘egalitarian society’ since they used this term sparingly, Fortes and Evans-Pritchard efficiently define an Egalitarian Society as having ‘no sharp divisions of rank, status, and wealth’ (1940: 5).

1.1 Research Aims

The central objective of this thesis is to examine how in Sweden gender equality and egalitarian norms and values are played out and reproduced in the more private domestic spheres of summer cabins. I have aimed to achieve this by examining the

⁴ https://sweden.se/
encounters and social negotiations I experienced during my fieldwork in the microcosm⁵ of Nordic cabins. This context allowed for my observations to be analysed through two specific case studies of UppX member’s time in the surf cabin in Portugal and the family cabin in Sweden. I aimed to analysis these two cabins, while still remaining pertinent to anthropological discussions of gender equal interactions in Sweden and other Nordic countries and gendered space (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003; Low, 2009; Gurholt, 2007; Rees 2014). The concepts of gender equality and egalitarian aims seem to be areas that are often highlighted and portrayed as almost simpatico with the Swedish national identity, as highlighted by the Swedish government themselves in statements such as Sweden being described as a ‘gender-egalitarian leader’ or ‘gender equality role model’ [Source: sweden.se].

My initial aim was to observe and interview various members of UppX with regards to their views and interactions surrounding outdoors and extreme sports, with a focus on a comparative study of gender equality from a Nordic perspective. I achieved this by incorporating theories of space and place, gender equality, and sports to utilise methods of sensory anthropology. The use of Wacquant’s approach to sensory anthropology of ‘carnal sociology’ (2007) allowed for a more active research perspective rather than what Van Maanan dubbed ‘delicately lurking’ (2011: 4) at the side-lines while my participants played sports. This approach allowed me to consider how my participants’ views, practices and values were woven into their personal interactions (Pink, 2015), through the medium of sporting activities conducted in more private spheres such as cabins. The research questions that guide this thesis are:

1. How do UppX members perceive Sweden’s image as a gender equality ‘role model’ and egalitarian ‘utopia’? Additionally, how has this affected their understanding of concepts such as feminism and gender equality?

2. In what way does the ‘sense of place’ of the two cabins in my fieldwork contribute to gender equal interactions and the reproduction of gender equal values, specifically when UppX members participated in sporting activities?

⁵ Microcosm, from Greek mikros kosmos, ‘little world’ (Encyclopaedia Britannica Online).
I shall achieve this aim by examining how my participants interpreted claims of Sweden being a ‘leader’ or ‘role model’ as stated by ‘Sweden.se’ or a ‘utopia’ (Booth, 2015; Ohlsen, Kaminski and Quintero, 2015: 292) and their views on terms such as ‘feminist’ and ‘gender equal’. In addition to this, I also wanted to see how these values were enacted in the private spheres of cabins and if there was any glaring gender stereotypes being acted out especially when participating in various forms of outdoor sports. I go on to address how cabins can be defined as a ‘heterotopia’ rather than a ‘utopia’ since according to Foucault in his work ‘Of Other Spaces’ (1986) who coined the term in the 1960’s; a utopia is an ‘unreal space’ (ibid: 24), whereas a heterotopia is a ‘counter-site’ between reality and a myth of a utopian space (ibid).

Although Rees (2014) was analysing literature from 1814 to 2005 (ibid: 1) concerning the negotiations of place and identity in cabin culture in Norway, I found her observations similar to my own finding, thus I go onto discuss my agreement with her conclusion of cabins being a form of heterotopia. For Example, Rees (2014) argues that a ‘cabin [is] perhaps the single most important heterotopia […] because of the important role it has played historically as a representation of national ideals and as a meeting point between nature and civilization’ (ibid: 10 [edited]). This is why I chose to look at cabins and their roles in gender equal relations, rather than the traditional domestic space of ‘home’ since, as already highlighted, there is a ‘cabin culture’ in Sweden with more than 50 per cent of the population having access to a cabin (Hincks, 2018 [Source: sweden.se]).

1.2 Relevance

Under this subchapter I shall be explaining how this study aims to make contributions to engage in both academic debates and social discourse outside of academia.

Social and Scientific Relevance

Conducting fieldwork in Sweden and specifically collecting data on the topic of gender equality, is of particular importance when addressing current concerns of the rights afforded to women and girls. This was examined by using the private setting of
family cabins that are often closed spheres, which enabled me to examine first hand how gendered space is created and learnt from the participants in this study. I considered how they practiced gender equal values, not only inside of a private setting but also outside in the cabins surroundings (Massey, 2001; Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003; Low, 2009; Gurholt, 2007; Rees 2014). I aim to further explore Sweden’s image as a ‘gender-egalitarian leader’ and ‘gender equality role model’ (Sweden.se) in a topical and engaging manner.

‘In October 2014, Sweden became the first country in the world to launch a feminist foreign policy’ so states the rhetoric from this year’s (2018) Feminist Foreign Policy Handbook⁶, released in August by Sweden’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Policies on gender equality set out by the Swedish government appear to be topical and ongoing when addressing matters of their feminist agenda. Their handbook was a product of over four years of accumulative studies by various federal agencies and departments on feminist policies, to show a continued commitment and ‘increased ambitions […] and continuation of many years of national gender equality policy’ (ibid: 16). The handbook addresses what they call a ‘working method’ that looks at three ‘Rs’ with the addition of a relational fourth ‘R’ of equal opportunities for women’s and girls’: ‘Rights, Representation and Resources, based on the Reality in which they live’ (2018: 11). This ‘reality’ of gendered spatial interactions is in keeping with Massey’s works on sense of place in the private spheres. Massey (2001) states that private domestic spheres such as cabins can be:

‘as much a place of conflict (as well as of work) as of repose; it is on the basis of such arguments and the greater difficulty of escaping the norms of sexuality and gender formation’

(ibid: 11)

One of their main focuses in the handbook is on gender-based physical, psychological and sexual violence (ibid: 19), which they define as serious attacks against human rights (ibid: 23). The handbook highlights that women and girls run the risk of being exposed to acts of gender-related or sexual violence or harassment in ‘public spaces, which seriously limits their freedom of movement’ (ibid: 22 [emphasis added]). They also address that by giving women a stronger voice through such

⁶ https://www.government.se/4a4752/contentassets/fc115607a4ad4bca913cd8d11c2339dc/handbook_s wedens-feminist-foreign-policy.pdf
polices in society, as well as in the domestic space of the home, they hope to aid in combatting the recent rise in gender-based violence in Sweden, (Swedish Crime Survey 2017, please see Appendix 1).

To paraphrase, Sweden’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs are trying to combat gender-based discrimination in all settings, be they private domestic spheres or public ones. Cabins, as this thesis shall go onto address, are often viewed as an idealised form of space where romanticised and ‘traditional’ Swedish values are enacted; including how male and female participants learnt, enacted and interacted with values of gender equality in mind (See section 3.2 ‘Cabin Fever’). This perfectly positioned my research perspective to allow for interesting discussions and interactions, especially since UppX was founded on similar principles of equality to Sweden’s Feminist Foreign Policy handbook. William, one of the participants in my fieldwork, felt that such policies set down by the Swedish government laboured the point to earn what he termed “goodness points” on gender equality, with voters. Thus, this topic proved to be an interesting platform for continued dialogue with my participants.

Scheper-Hughes (1995) has suggested that works such as Eriksen’s engaged public anthropology (2006), as a form of ethnographic writing would: ‘engage anthropology directly with questions of ethics […] that take into account (but do not privilege) our own "Western" cultural presuppositions’ (Scheper-Hughes, 1995: 418). While my aims and observations are motivated in making sense of place and gender equality in a much lighter capacity than some of Scheper-Hughes study of militant anthropology, my work could be seen as promoting Swedish values and simply adding to rhetoric of cultural supremacy; this is decidedly not the case. Though I hope that my work could be seen as an ‘engaged’ (Eriksen, 2006) study of a journey of integration into Swedish Society from first joining UppX and having to make the slow steps into acceptance and then finally being admitted into more private-spheres of their lives such as their cabins. This thesis also follows my time as a foreign student and the trials and tribulations that I had to face to connect with members of my host country. If any of my findings and experiences give insight or contributes in any way to others who are struggling with such obstacles of social, cultural or language differences, I would be very pleased if this work gives them some small comfort that they are not alone in this situation.
In this thesis I aimed to make my work as accessible and engaging as possible to allow for a more personable stylisation of my ‘tales of the field’ as suggested by Van Maanen (2011) where appropriate, by incorporating the use of self-reflexivity. Davies gives the broad definition of reflexivity as ‘turning back on oneself […] in which the products of research are affected by the [personal] process of doing research’ (2008: 4 [edited for clarity]). Scheper-Hughes asserts that in the reflexive style the anthropologist takes on the position of an active voice they are responsive, morally committed, a witness who is accountable to history, and moreover; they are accountable for what they see and do not see’ (1995: 419). In addition, I took inspiration from Lee’s sensory anthropological work with audio-visual media. Lee aimed to ‘give back’ (2016: 9) to his participants by using photos and videos from his time in the field to show his work in a more dynamic and appealing way. This is one of the reasons I tried to take photographs and videos of my participants that not only captured what I needed for my fieldwork, but that they could also use for social media platforms like Facebook or Instagram. This resulted in me becoming an unofficial photographer of the UppX surf trip to Portugal (please see Appendix 2 for photographs), but also allowed for more candid and relaxed photographs for my work. In this way my participants were active not passive subjects and would call me over to take photos of their sporting achievements. This allowed for me to give back (Lee, 2016: 9) in some small way.

I aimed to make my participants feel a part of this thesis, and find themselves within it. I wanted them to be able to read it and hopefully enjoy it, regardless of its academic purposes. I chose to use anecdotal episodes of our time together in my preferred style of reflexive anthropology where I was actively ‘engaged’ (Eriksen, 2006; Scheper-Hughes, 1995). This was done so that anyone who reads this work can be aware of who the fieldworker is and their cultural background.

1.3 Theoretical Approach

Firstly, I shall be discussing what has been called the ‘spatial turn’ in anthropology and its origins in the observations surrounding matters of space and place. Secondly, I
shall be exploring select subdivisions that fall under this rather interesting ‘turn’ in anthropological thought that are applicable to this thesis namely: definitions of what makes a ‘place’ and gendered space in conjunction with relational identity and thus interactions that are acted out as a result, especially when engaging in sporting activities. Thirdly, I shall go on to further examine the concepts and the arguments surrounding; gender equality and Egalitarian Society as well as touching upon feminist anthropological stances on these matters and their relations to spatial theories of gender.

**The Spatial Turn**

The very term ‘fieldwork’ implies that there is a sense of space and place to each anthropological undertaking, there is much to be learned from everyday spaces and places that can have a marked effect on our daily lives. Blank and Rosen-Zvi (2010) state that in recent years there had been a ‘turn to space’ in the humanities and social sciences (ibid: 6). As addressed at the start of this thesis the phrase a ‘sense of place’ originated in geographical theories. Massey, throughout her works was instrumental in defining ‘sense of place’ as a theory, specifically her work in feminist geography, in areas of place, space and power such as how gender relations are enacted in various spheres (Massey, 2001). Thanks to influential geographical works like Massey’s, the ‘turn to space’ (Blank and Rosen-Zvi, 2010: 6) in anthropology has a resituated theoretical approach to the role that space and place, additionally impacting anthropological ethnographic writings (Barfield: 2009: 361).

Blank and Rosen-Zvi (2010) crown Foucault as the instigator or ‘founding-father’ (ibid: 2) of this turn in anthropological work when he predicted that ‘The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space’ (Foucault, 1986: 22). Foucault added that ‘we do not live in a homogeneous and empty space, but on the contrary in a space thoroughly imbued with quantities’ (ibid: 23). This coincides with Massey’s observations that ‘places do not have single, unique ‘identities’; they are full of internal conflicts’ (2001: 155). Additionally, this is in keeping with my earlier point of cabins as a space that is relational and of continuous social negotiations: a world within a world. It should be noted that I am not going to add to debates of the
precedency of space over place or vice-versa, since this is not the focus nor the aim of this thesis.

*Place, Space and Identity*

Barfield defines places as: ‘a space made meaningful by human occupation or appropriation’ (2009: 360). To connect to theories within the discipline of geography, for the famous geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1977) the term ‘place’ usually evokes a sense of situated observations and the security that the concept of ‘place’ provides, which is comparable to the freedom of ‘space’ and how we designate these two concepts constructs our realities. All of these various possibilities are what make a space a definable and distinguishable ‘place’.

Barfield elaborates that ‘Place’ is fundamentally, a concept to discerning human relations to our environments that give us a sense of identity by; situating us in cultural constructed networks of social, historical, gender and power relations (2009: 360-361). Nakhal, gives examples of the classification of private, semi-public and public spaces and the divisions of gender appropriate use of each category. She organises private spaces as being as the name implies; privately owned quarters such as houses, gardens and cars to name a few. Public spaces ‘generally belong to the state’ (2015: 16) namely streets, public gardens and public transport. Finally, semi-public space consists of hotels, hospitals, restaurants, cinemas and religious sites and cemeteries (ibid). Augé (1995) and his hypotheses on ‘supermodernity’ producing what he coined as a ‘non-place’ under which semi-public spaces tend to fall, cannot be ignored on matters of space and the importance of place. In his work on ‘non-place’ (1995) Augé defines his argument thusly:

‘If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place.’ (ibid: 77-78)

Despite the relatively secluded placement of Swedish cabins and since many of the cabins in my fieldwork are typically underutilised and shut up for most of the year, they are still very much situated under Augé’s definition of ‘place’. Cabins hold and play important roles in ‘relational, historical or concerns of identity’ (Augé 1995: 77). This is because although they are not typically utilised as a full time ‘home’ they are
also not a form of non-places, quite the opposite, since Augé epitomises the liminal spaces of motorways, shopping malls and airports as non-places of ‘supermodernity’.

**A Sense of ‘Home’**

The use of spatial analysis of architecture is often used to examine cultural symbols that identify the location or purpose of a place, on either a macro or micro scale. Anderson, Wishart and Vatè (2013) in their edited works address the dwelling and structures the peoples of the ‘circumpolar north’ call ‘home’. They address the origins of the ‘hearth and home’ by examining their affiliations to complex relatedness with forms of kinship (ibid: 1). They also address how this reflects a wider connection to the environment and beyond into concepts of ‘cosmos’, spiritual beliefs and engrained values (ibid). They distinguish three H’s: ‘Home, Hearth and Household’ (ibid: 3) and analyse the varying architectural formations classifiable as a ‘place’ and defined as a ‘home’ or a similarly associated linguistic choice.

There are almost limitless possibilities of analysis when it comes to discussing the importance of a place such as a cabin. This is because cabins are, in some cases, a part of my participants personal history. For instance, Amanda’s cabin belonged to her grandmother and Amanda has been going to the Ängskärs cabin every summer and for weekend trips since she was born. In this way cabins become a second home, a sacred space, a private place reserved for family and friends to rest and retreat. Cabins in Sweden, especially around cities like Stockholm, can be referred to as ‘sportstugor’ (Müller, 1999: 10). These ‘sportstugor’ are used for leisure activities such as recreational sports as either; summer cabins, weekend cottages or for private ski lodges (ibid). Many of the cabins in Sweden are built and used for the specific purpose of ‘enjoying nature, canoeing, hiking, swimming and fishing’ (ibid: 76). Therefore, the ‘sense of place’ a cabin can hold is often connected to sporting activities, since in many cases their purpose is to be a second home built to facilitate outdoor sporting pursuits. Although cabins are not typically full time homes, they are

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7 This northern most area is sometimes called the ‘artic eight’: the United States (Alaska), Canada, Finland, Denmark (including Greenland and the Faroe Islands), Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden [source: the official website of The Artic Council](https://arctic-council.org/index.php/en/about-us/member-states)
very much a part of Swedish life with ‘more than 50 per cent of the population have access to one through family or friends’ (Hincks, 2018 [Source: sweden.se]).

Massy’s (2001) relational approach to the exploration of spatial behavioural concepts such as gendered space and ‘home’, in which she speaks at length on identity and place formulation, are very applicable and translate well into anthropologically based observations. The concept of ‘home’ as addressed by Massey is more than just a physical place and much like the cabins in my fieldwork it holds an idea; a captured almost indulgent ‘sense of place’ of spatial and temporal significance an attachment of ‘memory, stasis and nostalgia’ (2001: 121) similarly to how a family cabin captures these ideals of a traditional Swedish ‘home’. For many of the participants in my study, cabins conjure idealised memories of childhoods spent in family cabins and the freedom of exploring the nature around them. Tuan discuss theories around ‘Topophilia’ that he defined as a ‘love of a place’ (1999 [1974]: xii) or a bond to a place or setting, which vary in meaning, expression and degrees of emotional intensity (ibid).

Massey (2001) addresses that within geographical writings, concepts of ‘‘home, ‘place’, ‘location-locality’, identity and sense of place’ are topical and extensive’ (ibid: 157) and yet none of these concepts are a universally definable notion. For example, an entire country can be referred to as a persons ‘home’ in a nostalgic generalisation of identity and situational belonging. Also, within the domestic sphere notions of a sense of identity and home are tied to gender and culturally specific negotiations within such space and places (ibid: 10). This links to discussions of belonging, identity and security (ibid: 171) more generally in debates on place and belonging since:

‘While it is frequently accepted that identities are relational, the possibilities are often closed down by the assumption that such relations must be those of bounded, negative counterposition, of inclusion and exclusion’ (Massey, 2001:169-170)

Bourdieu in his seminal work ‘The Berber House or The World Reversed’ (1970) makes the case that the ‘home’ is a microcosm that is governed by being a relational reflection of a wider social order (ibid: 160). Therefore, a place such as a home, or in this case a cabin and its surrounding space, can give key insights into the private spheres and the complex interworking’s of gender based interactions and negotiations.
Gendered Space

Space embodies meanings that are socially produced and a place holds meaning that is rooted and embodied in the experiences of its occupants. Nakhal, argues that the ‘production of space is currently held within the hands of the mainstream capitalist patriarchal system’ (2015: 21) and that spaces are ‘gendered’ (ibid: 17). She elaborates that as a place is a product of culture it is also the space where we ‘project’ our needs but ‘also our conscious and unconscious ideologies […]’ [b]oth gender and space are similar in reflecting social norms into the lived experience of the everyday’ (ibid [edited]). Ortner in her chapter within Rosaldo and Lamphere edited work (1974) discusses concepts around the ‘domestic unit’, where she states that typically a woman’s role is traditionally limited to a ‘mother’. Ortner states that:

‘The secondary status of woman in society is one of the true universals, a pan-cultural fact. Yet within that universal fact, the specific cultural conceptions and symbolizations of woman are extraordinarily diverse and even mutually contradictory’ (1974: 67 [emphasis added])

MacCormack and Strathern (1980), argue that even though Ortner goes onto explain that understandings of what being a ‘woman’ means are diverse, she does not say to whom women are considered to be ‘in some degree inferior to men’ (Ortner 1974: 69; MacCormack and Strathern, 1980: 17). MacCormack in her chapter asks who specifically thinks this is universally the case; men? Women? (ibid), she elaborates that in her own fieldwork she has:

‘talked with women chiefs, women heads of descent groups, heads of women's secret societies, and women household heads who would not agree […]. They would say that women are inferior to men in some ways and men are inferior to women in some ways, giving productive tasks in the division of labour as examples’ (ibid: 17-18 [edited])

Judith Butler (1990), explains that there is a presumed universality of ‘women’ and dichotomies or binaries of the ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ (ibid: 4). However, she emphasises that it must be recognised that the ‘identity’ of being a ‘woman’ is often ‘decontextualized and separated off analytically and politically from the constitution of class, race, ethnicity, and other axes of power relations’ (ibid [emphasis added]). Nakhal (2015) discusses the ‘gendering of space’ and how our identities should be considered within it rather than, to use Butler’s term ‘decontextualized’ (1990: 4).
One example Nakhal (2015) examines is of gender in urban spaces and architectural standardisation of everyday spaces being poorly designed to keep women safe in:

‘poorly-lit streets, pedestrian tunnels […] [that] might seem like ordinary urban areas or perfect transportation solutions, but they are in fact extremely hazardous to women of different ages.’ (ibid: 18 [edited])

Nakhal believes that such spaces are an example of the ongoing dynamic of power relations where spaces vary in their abilities to ‘support women and their needs’ (ibid: 21). I also had to consider the Swedish government’s Feminist Foreign Policy Handbook concerning how the differing ‘reality in which [women] live’ (2018: 11) could be perceived, in contrast to cabins often being idealised or romanticised as safe spaces that uphold and reproduce gender equal values or heterotopias (Foucault, 1986; Rees, 2014).

Low (2009) and Nakhal (2015), both touch upon the concept ‘embodied space’ and ‘body-space’ relations as a lived experience and centre of human agency and development. Low, who has been studying concepts of space within anthropology for more than twenty years and is a leading figure on the varied concepts, incorporates Bourdieu’s reintroduction of the concept of the Latin ‘habitus’ (Bourdieu, 1977). Low defines Bourdieu’s ‘habitus’ as how our body, mind and emotions are trained to understand our positions and social status that are embodied in everyday life, including how our moral virtues are acquired (Low, 2009: 28). This is something I had to keep in mind as I negotiated my role within both cabins. I was a guest in these spaces and my ‘habitus’ and ‘sense of place’ (Massey, 2001) in relation to the cabins and the UppX members must be taken into consideration for all of the reasons discussed by Butler (1990: 4) above. Rooksby and Hillier (2016) recognise the plurality of the notion of habitus as we negotiate our roles in a certain situation, due to our interpretations on our ‘sense of place’. They give the example of a young woman having multiple identities at any given time since she may:

‘regard herself as a teenage daughter, a college friend, a rap fan, a tennis club member, a part-time work colleague in a public house and a lover, all identities embodying a different habitus, sense of place and feel for the game’ (ibid: 14)
Concepts of Egalitarian Societies and Gender Equality

As initially defined and discussed briefly at the start of this thesis, it is often argued that there are many pluralities surrounding the English words of ‘Equality’ and ‘Gender’, since both can be interpreted and distinguished in varying ways. Hendry defines gender as: ‘a term of classification used to refer to concepts of male and female or masculinity and femininity in a society’ (2008: 20), which according to Barfield’s (2009) definition in his dictionary of anthropology, are distinctions between biological gender and social gender. These classifications can vary between and within cultures, thus he concludes that gender ‘norms’ are culturally assigned behaviours and meanings that are shaped by social and historical factors, not biological ones (2009: 217).

In the English Language there is a distinction that can be made between ‘sex’ as a biological factor and ‘gender’, which according to Butler (1990), is a social and cultural construct, although this distinction of discontinuity of given or assigned sex/gender dichotomies as ‘facts’ can also be disputed (ibid: 9-10). In the Swedish language they use the word ‘kön’ to mean both ‘sex’ and ‘gender’. However, the Swedish term ‘genus’ is defined as meaning ‘gender’ but this particular word is used more specifically for topics such as ‘gender studies’ (genusstudier). I believe that such language distinctions are important to keep in mind as this thesis progresses.

Issues surrounding the term ‘egalitarian’ especially when applied to a society such as Sweden, cause concerns of generalisation of a societies members actions or experiences. Flanagan reasoned that the ‘egalitarianism of egalitarian society was an egalitarianism of men’ (1989: 253) and that the oversimplified identifier of an ‘egalitarian’ or ‘inegalitarian’ society mask the complexity of a society’s inner workings (Flanagan, 1989: 262; Barfield , 2009: 147). In a similar vein, Lepowsky argued that the more influential anthropological examining’s of political equality and inequality have suggested a ‘universal principle of male dominance’ (1993: 33). On the other hand, the Swedish Government have defined ‘Gender Equality’ as both men and women having ‘the same opportunities to shape society and their own lives’ (The Swedish Government’s gender equality policy 2010–2014).
1.4 Chapter Overviews

The Second Chapter on the methodological approach that was taken to explore my fieldsites helps to further define the field. This section includes a reflection on the qualitative data collection methods employed and the implementation of methods from sensory anthropology. This section includes a further introduction to UppX and the participants who made this study possible as well as further analysis of my position as a researcher and the limitations that I encountered. The ethical implications are also addressed within these reflexive considerations.

The Third Chapter acts as contextual background on Sweden’s image and use of the terms ‘gender equal’, ‘egalitarian society’ and their ‘feminist’ agenda. This section includes the thoughts that my participants had on these terms and their application as national characteristics of Sweden. This leads into the contemplation of Sweden being crowned a ‘Utopia’, why this is and how it is perceived as a potentially harmful rose tinted view. Finally, I further define the designation of the noun ‘cabin’, leading the discussion onto what cabins represent and their importance to the participants of this study and cabins situational ‘sense of place’ in Sweden.

The Fourth Chapter, marks the start of the ethnographic portion of this thesis, followed by further ethnographic observations in Chapter Five. Chapter Four covers my initial meeting with UppX and our first interactions before the surf trip, the analysis of our time spent in a Portuguese surf cabin and the implementation of Wacquant’s carnal sociology as a method of data collection. In this chapter, I compare the setting or ‘sense of place’ of the Portuguese cabin and surf culture to how a Swedish cabin is utilised and what this represented for the members of UppX. I came to the conclusion that the cabin took on aspects of a Swedish cabin, as a result of members of UppX’s interactions in the space and participation in sporting activities. Additionally, by examining how UppX members adapted aspects of surf culture to fit their own ethos by furthering participation in gender inclusive activities in such a male dominated sport.

The Fifth Chapter, addresses concepts, discourse and location analysis of a privately owned family cabin in Ängskärs, Sweden. Within this penultimate
ethnographic chapter of this thesis I have taken anecdotes of my time in the private sphere of Amanda’s, a member of UppX and one of my key participants, ancestral family cabin and the activities that were undertaken while staying in the Swedish countryside, with all of the freedom afforded to us in the beautiful natural surroundings. This chapter analysis furthers what Chapter Three touched upon regarding the importance of cabins and how they act as a symbolic ‘sense of place’ that facilitates Swedish values of gender equal interactions, through concepts such as ‘friluftsliv’ and ‘allemansrätten’.

The Sixth Chapter marks the conclusion of this thesis with a summing up of the main points highlighted in the preceding chapters. This is where the direct answers to my research questions are given with a concise reflection upon the observations and discourse analysis addressed throughout this thesis. Here I address why I have elected to use the term ‘haven’ or as I further analysis in Chapters Four and Five a ‘heterotopia’ to refer to cabins and my observations in how they facilitate gender equal values as a part of their ‘character’. Concluding the final page with further possible areas of research topics based on what I was not able to address.

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8 ‘Friluftsliv’ is definable as ‘free-air-life’ in both Swedish and Norwegian (Gurholt, 2007: 1). ‘Allemansrätten’ “everyones-right” to access land (Gelter, 2000: 79). Both of these terms are defined further in Chapter 5.
2. Methodology

This chapter will be a discussion of my selected methodologies and their application in the field. The approach of anthropological ethnographic fieldwork that I undertook was to not only remain in keeping with the subjects tradition, but also to allow for my work to adapt to its surroundings and my participants needs, I found my field where my journey as an international student in Sweden took me. Ugo Corte, one of the lecturers for the ‘An Ethnography of the Senses’ course at Uppsala University [completed in 2017 course code: 5KA422], told our class “ethnography equals pursued luck”. This is something that has stuck with me throughout this study, as not only did I ‘follow the field’ (Marcus, 1995: 106), but it followed me right back. This is what makes anthropology such an inspiring topic, especially because of the use of participant observations, the axis of anthropological works. This method of data collection was championed by one of the founding fathers of anthropology Malinowski, in his work ‘Argonauts of the Western Pacific’ (1922).

In the following subsection I shall firstly, be introducing and clarifying what the term ‘Nordic’ means and how it shall be applied to this thesis, as well as including why and how my fieldwork expanded to include UppX’s surf trip to Portugal. Secondly, it is of paramount importance to also formally introduce UppX and their ethos to gender inclusive sporting activities. I shall then go on to introduce and further contextualise the methods of qualitative data collection that I utilised while conducting my fieldwork.

2.1 Finding And Defining The Field

For clarity the term ‘Nordic’ refers to the Scandinavian countries of Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland and Iceland. However, when the term ‘Nordic’ is implemented throughout most of this thesis I am referring to my observations in Sweden. Nordic is
also used in this thesis as a noun, an adjective and a verb for example; the Nordic countries [noun], Nordic walking[9] [verb], and a Nordic perspective [adjective].

My fieldwork spans the beginning of my time in the field in Sweden ‘following’ (Marcus, 1995: 106) UppX members from early March until the end of July. I shall also be discussing my time learning to Surf in Ericeira Portugal (May 3rd- May 9th 2017), since this portion of my fieldwork was conducted while ‘following’ (ibid) UppX during a seven-day sports cabin excursion that took my fieldsite outside of Sweden. Since my fieldwork incorporates observations and anecdotes from my time in both my fieldsites in Sweden and the surf cabin in Portugal, my project became ‘multi-sited’. Robben and Sluka advocate a multi-sited approach by moving away from Malinowski’s traditional fieldwork method, of one field for four seasons (2012: 372), but still retains Malinowski’s objectivity or as Robben and Sluka call it ‘Malinowski’s native point of view’ (ibid: 371). Robben and Sluka describe the advantages of multi-sited fieldwork, as it is conducted today means that ‘The research topics of multi-sited ethnographers are not bound to particular places, seasons or people.’ (ibid: 371).

At the beginning of my ‘pursuit of culture’ (Van Maanen, 2011: 13) and attempts to ‘follow the people’ (Marcus, 1995), rather embarrassingly, as an international student I did not actually know any Swedish people with the exception of a few of my classmates and lecturers to ‘follow’ (ibid). This is where my fellow anthropology masters student Hanna came in. She had joined an interesting sports group formed by Uppsala University students and suggested I accompany her for one of their events, which shall be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4 in my section recounting my time in the field. This was how I was introduced to the then Vice-President Inga Sjöberg and Chair and Founder Sofie Jansson, who were thankfully very enthusiastic about my project and subsequently very encouraging throughout my fieldwork.

[9] ‘Nordic Walking’: Nordic walking is a modern sport that started in Finland. […] athletes in Finland had been training for winter cross-country skiing by walking in the summers with just the ski poles (they called it “ski-walking.”) (Oulton, 2014) (http://www.nordicwalkingfan.com/a-brief-history-of-nordic-walking/)
Who are UppX?

As their website states:

‘We see extreme sport from a broader perspective and plan to organise everything from skating tours and kayaking to rock climbing and topptursåkning. We aim to organise activities without requiring prior knowledge or possession of equipment. Activities that [everyone can] feel they get something out of, whether you are enthusiast or a beginner who wants to try’ (taken from UppX website[10] when I joined in 2017- Google translated from Swedish to English and edited for clarity).

UppX’s ethos of sporting activities being accessible and fun for all Uppsala students and non-students, by giving them the chance to partake in a variety of sports regardless of previous proficiency, prior knowledge or owning their own equipment, was perfect for my limited sporting prowess. Additionally, and most importantly, UppX was formed with the aim of total inclusion of both male and female participants, since unfortunately even to this day in some sporting activities there are still clear examples of gender based division. This is something I shall be expanding on in Chapters 4 and 5. UppX were the perfect group for my fieldwork due to their welcoming and positive nature, as well as their interest in my study, and this is how I, learned to surf, rode a bike for the first time in years, attempted to learn how to longboard and met the other ‘key participants’ (Bernard, 2011: 196) who became dear friends and invaluable to this study: Amanda, William and Rahmat of my fieldwork. Bernard defines a ‘key informant’ or in this case participants as:

‘people who know a lot about their culture and are, for reasons of their own, willing to share all their knowledge with you. When you do long-term ethnography you develop close relationships with a few key informants—relationships that can last a lifetime. You don’t choose these people. They and you choose each other, over time’ (ibid).

I became acquainted with Amanda, William and Rahmat, with whom I spent part of the summer in a Swedish cabin, after meeting them on the UppX surf trip, when we were assigned to be roommates. Amanda and William have known each other since they were in school and had been dating for five and a half years and were both

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[10] [http://uppx.se/](http://uppx.se/)
twenty-one when we first met. Neither Amanda nor William knew the other UppX members until the surf trip. Amanda is the participant who kindly invited me stay in her family’s cabin over the summer, which shall be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5. Rahmat, is the oldest of our ‘surf roomies’ by three years and was already qualified as a dentist, and had also not met any other UppX members prior to the surf trip.

2.2 Methods

*Participant Observations and Deep Hanging Out*

The findings and observations in this thesis are based on qualitative methods for data collection from my time in the field. I incorporated methods such as ‘following’ (Marcus, 1995: 106) UppX, as previously discussed in addition to methods such as Geertz’s ‘Deep Hanging Out’ coined in 1998. Nothing could encapsulate ‘Deep Hanging Out’ quite like my time in the surf cabin in Ericeira or when being immersed in a Swedish cabin trip with all of their various activities and interactions. I am aware of the controversy of implementing this method of practice, due to the casualness that it implies, but I also combined this method with some semi-structured interviews and unstructured chats, which I initiated during my fieldwork process which will be included throughout this thesis.

*Interviews*

My aim was to conduct in-depth qualitative work and build a good rapport with not only the UppX board members such as Sofie and Inga, but other non-committee members as well. I conducted various semi-structured interviews and I made sure to follow Bernard’s advice to ‘build a guide to follow if you want reliable, comparable qualitative data’ (2011: 158). Bernard concludes that by having structured questions but allowing for a freer flowing rapport with participants through semi-structured
interviews ‘shows that you are prepared and competent but that you are not trying to exercise excessive control’ (ibid).

I asked to record all of the interviews I conducted for later reflection, ensuring my participants’ views were accurately recounted. On these occasions I found holding my phone or placing it on a table, as I normally would during a casual conversation, were much more tactful and less intrusive or intimidating ways to record my participants than an actual tape recorder. This meant that my phone became an interesting tool to use, as a recorder and as a camera to take photographs of my participants, for example, when they were surfing and longboarding. When appropriate, I would use my phones notes app during more relaxed social occasions when UppX met to go to non-sporting activities (i.e. pubs, clubs, park meet ups etc.). I reached this decision to use my phone as a less conspicuous mode of note taking fairly early on in my fieldwork, since I found that I drew much less attention noting observations down on my phone rather than carrying around and constantly scribbling in a notepad. Lee addresses under ‘The Future of Videos’ (2016:265), that smartphones are becoming ubiquitous and most participants in anthropological fieldwork are already comfortable with their presence (ibid).

Most of the UppX members and the few non-members that I formally interviewed were from Sweden and were either in or had recently left higher education at university level. The participants in my study were all between twenty to thirty years of age. A total of seven in-depth interviews were conducted from when I fist joined UppX until the end of my time in the field, six of which were members of UppX, I interviewed three male participants and four female. This number would have been in the ratio of four to four, but at the last minute one of my participants on the surf trip decided that he only wished to speak with me about my research topic in a casual setting not an interview. When I stated that our interview would not have to be recorded he still asked to no longer participate, and as requested I have respected his wishes.
Upon reflection, my decision to openly discuss my purpose for attending the surf trip as a researcher with my fellow UppX members could have made me appear rather intimidating. However, I did so to avoid breaching the Association of Social Anthropologists (ASA [U.K. and Commonwealth]) ethical guidelines (2011) that ‘Participants should be made aware of the presence and purpose of the researcher’. I should have considered that this could have also impacted my findings, as I had entered the very real possibility of encountering the ‘Hawthorne effect’, documented in Landsberger’s 1958’s work ‘Hawthorne Revisited’. In this text, Landsberger describes the ‘Hawthorne effect’ or the ‘observer effect’, where the workers in the Hawthorne factory would begin behaving differently when they knew they were being observed or when they were interviewed, portraying what they thought ‘model workers’ would do or say.

2.3 Sensory Anthropology

Sensory anthropology defined by Classen is focusing on sensory perception being a cultural as well as physical act (1997: 401). Methods of sensory anthropology in this thesis are used to engage the senses and consider their usage rather than necessarily the cultural order in which they take precedence. Methods such as embodied ethnographic works like Wacquant’s carnal sociology (2007), and the use of photos in ethnographic works like Lee’s (2016) Duneier’s (1999) and sensory anthropological work with audio-visual media were my main platforms of dialogue.

The approach that this fieldwork project was undertaken with was to hone my participant observation skills, by throwing myself (sometimes literally) physically and mentally into my fieldwork. This method of participation was inspired by Wacquant’s work ‘Body and Soul: Notebooks of an Apprentice Boxer’ (2007). As his title suggests, he fully embodied the life of his participants, by immersing himself into the boxing world, even entering the ‘Golden Gloves’ competition. Wacquant’s main ‘tool of inquiry’ (ibid: viii) was himself, which led to him coining the qualitative research method of ‘carnal sociology’. Wacquant’s ‘carnal sociology’ was influenced and fashioned after his mentor Bourdieu’s own methodological style: ‘Participant
Objectivation’. Bourdieu defines his take on reflexivity as the ‘objectivation of the subject of objectivation, of the analysing subject – in short, of the researcher herself’ (2003: 282 [translated by Wacquant]). To paraphrase, these two methods both incorporate the lived ontological and methodological embodied experience of fieldwork as experienced by the researcher. Wacquant and his work on carnal sociology also included Bourdieu’s concepts on habitus (1977) but Wacquant refers to what he called ‘pugilistic habitus’ (2007: 16) ‘pugilistic’ being a fist fighter and their ‘habitus’ is in this capacity related to their ‘specific set of bodily and mental schemata that define the competent boxer’ (ibid). In Wacquant’s ‘carnal sociology’ or more aptly for my own study ‘carnal anthropology’, he uses Bourdieu’s theories by practically applying and utilising habitus as a methodological rather than theoretical approach; thereby it becomes a more ‘engaged’ (Eriksen, 2006) form of anthropology. I aimed to incorporate these methods while simultaneously taking into consideration my observations of the participants’ experiences and knowledge of their embodied space. I also considered how this affected the ‘sense of place’, because of the sporting activities and who was participated in them, in both the surf cabin and Amanda’s family cabin.

Pink (2015) highlights the importance of rethinking how we approach fieldwork to make it more reflexive by creating an accessible retelling of not only the practices and knowledge of the researcher, but of the participants in their studies. She suggests that this is achievable through a term she coins as the ‘sensoriality’ of the ethnographic experience and practices being conveyed through methods such as Wacquant’s theory of ‘carnal sociology’ (2007) as well as his writing style, that appeals to a wider audience to convey the ‘sensoriality’ of his experiences.

In addition to this, I made use of audio-visual data collection, which also falls under methods of sensory anthropology. Duneier in his work ‘Sidewalk’ (1999), made use of both visual and audio data collection in his ethnographic works by using photographs and audio recordings to curate daily occurrences. His participants even began to encourage his use of a tape recorder in non-interview based conversation ‘I hope you got that on tape, Mitch. That was a good conversation’ (ibid: 284). However, I personally found this technique to be more invasive, compared with Lee’s approach of photos and videos. However, similarly to Duneier, once I got to know my
participants better I would often be asked by UppX members to take photographs, especially during sporting activities where I would be asked if I had documented their success, progress or funny falls. I quickly learnt that action or group shots were the most desired by my participants. I tried to ensure that on all of the occasions when I was recording or photographing my participants I followed the Association of Social Anthropologists (ASA [U.K. and Commonwealth]) ethical guidelines with regards to informed consent during interviews. Section 4 ‘negotiating informed consent’, subsection d:

‘When audio-visual media is to be used, be it merely for data-gathering or for broader representational purposes such as producing ethnographic films or photographic essays, the principal research subjects should be made aware of the technical capacities of these media and should be free to reject their use.’ (2011: 5)

**A Note On Reflexivity and Limitations**

Stylistically, this thesis draws inspiration from ethnographic writing styles that were either influenced or written after the ‘reflexive turn’. The reflexive turn in anthropology found popularity in the 1980’s (Faubion and Marcus, 2009: 1), and caused a shift in ethnographic writing styles to allow for more anthropologists adding what could be called identity disclaimers and how their own subjectivity could impact upon their work. An anthropologist should never neglect to remember that our own identity effects how participants react to our presence.

I also decided to mention my identity and how it pertains to this thesis, since being female and an international student from England, it is possible that my views differ from domestic Swedish students and indeed from person to person, be they international or domestic, or which gender they identify as. I had to be aware of these differing concepts as I pursued my study and began to conduct my interviews and be sensitive to my own impact and to consider my ‘social origins, affiliations, dispositions, [and] gender’ (Coleman and Collins, 2007: 5 [edited]). As discussed by Davies (2008: 28), due to my position as a female fieldworker, this could have had an impact on my interactions with the others in my group and at the surf camp and thus on the data that I collected during my fieldwork. Davies states that:
‘feminist researchers had for long emphasized reflexivity, not only in terms personal experience but also in the recognition of the situatedness of the observer and its effect on social interactions and theoretical perceptions’ (ibid: 266).

A possible limitation that I encountered could have been language, since I am a non-native speaking anthropologist, I cannot fluently speak, read or write in Swedish and all of my interviews and daily interactions were conducted in English. However, I would suggest that my language barrier and my identity as an English ethnographer was ultimately not as formidable an obstacle as I first rationalised it to be, though I still had to be self-aware of my role in my interactions, my status of being foreign and a new member of UppX became an interesting ‘tool of inquiry’ (Wacquant, 2007: viii). My linguist abilities, specifically my English accent, led to my surf cabin roommates asking me to read bed time stories for them and on one occasion as a go between translator for an angry bus driver in Lisbon when we took a day trip to rescue Rahmat’s lost bag (see Chapter 4). On these occasions my identity as a native English speaker was considered an asset rather than a hindrance.
3. Context and Background

This chapter aims to explore and discuss further Sweden’s image as an Egalitarian Society and gender equality role model by opening a dialogue for the implications this had for the participants in my fieldwork. This chapter also discusses what defines a ‘cabin’, their purpose in Swedish Society and their spatial importance to this study.

3.1 Thoughts on Sweden as a ‘gender equality role model’

As already addressed in the context of a Swedish family cabin, through the practical use of outdoor sports as a methodological and topical platform, I explored this interesting area of practice and concepts of gender norms, values and equality. However, I also wanted to discuss general opinions on gender equality with my participants to ground my knowledge of Swedish mind-sets on this matter. The Swedish government is democratically elected and by their own admission a ‘feminist’ government (Sweden.se; Feminist Foreign Policy Handbook, 2018). As public servants they represent the will of the Swedish people and therefore this should be reflected in their policies regarding matters of gender equality as state promoted projects. These policies and projects should therefore be a reflection of the values that people such as UppX members wish to have enacted in both political public spheres and private domestic ones. However, the participants in my fieldwork seem to be dissatisfied with the generalisation that comes of being a ‘role model’ and they still strive for better gender equality in all aspects of their lives. Sofie and Inga put the following idea to me:

Inga: “Everything is relative – it depends what you compare it to. If you compare us to developing countries of course we’re good BUT- it’s not perfect.”

Sofie: “comparing Sweden to another country- and then saying ‘oh look at you, you have it so good in Sweden – you have gender equality compared to this country.’ Yeah compared to this [country] but just because they have it worse than we have it - is not meaning we have it: ‘gender equality’ in Sweden.”
Through my fieldwork I examined why Sweden has obtained and maintained high rankings in the World Economic Forum’s (WEF) 2017 ‘Global Gender Gap Report’. I believe it is because Swedes have instilled into their sociocultural psych that they must continue to strive to lessen the still apparent gender gap between men and women. I aim to examine this throughout my fieldwork and this thesis, by focusing on spatial relations in cabins and various outdoor sporting activities that I participated in during my fieldwork. One of the questions I asked the participants in my research that I met along my fieldwork journey was: “How do you feel about Sweden being seen as a ‘Gender Equality Role Model’?” I sought to understand how and why Sweden especially is considered to be an ultimate example of modern societal ‘perfection’. Mostly, this question was answered with great interest and consideration, but the general consensus was in fact sometimes quite forcefully answered with a unanimous: ‘NO.’ This was normally followed by laughter at such a sweeping statement and comments about still not being there yet.

The official website for information regarding Sweden [Source: sweden.se], inspired me to ask the question “How do you feel about Sweden being seen as a ‘Gender Equality Role Model’?”. This is due to the website stating that: ‘[Sweden is] [o]ften considered a gender equality role model’. The website goes on to say that ‘The Swedish government has declared itself a feminist government, devoted to a feminist foreign policy’. Interestingly, when I broached the topic of feminism and gender equality the participants I interviewed had mixed responses. ‘Feminism’ is often seen as a controversial word for one reason or another, one example is that it is associated with aggressive political and social manoeuvres. Redfern and Aune in their book ‘Reclaiming the F-word’ (2010) discuss how in popular imagination those who identify as feminist are:

‘sinister, mysterious figures, pitiable women clinging to outdated notions about men and women despite the evidence that the world is now an egalitarian paradise. Alternatively, they’re actually the ones responsible for women’s pressurised lives and today’s overtly sexualised culture. Or they’re ball-breaking, white, middleclass women who just want power and get it by making men’s lives a misery.’ (2010: 3)
The Swedish government maintains their commitment to feminist polices both domestic and international, as their website states that they are ‘reclaiming the F word’ and I noticed that they try to use it interchangeably with ‘gender equality’ to disassociate the negativity and almost fear using the term feminism in social and political talks. The Swedish government state on ‘Sweden.se’ that they are very aware of the negative associations that are attached to this weighty word. They assert that they are using the ‘F word’ (feminism), since it is not such a negatively charged word in Sweden as in other countries. However, many of the participants in my study felt more comfortable identifying as believing in gender equality, so I am not entirely convinced that ‘feminism’ is seen as a ubiquitous and accessible word as the Swedish government would like. William added that outside of Sweden he would feel more comfortable to identify as a feminist rather than when home in Sweden, due to the aggressive concept of the term. This careful use of phrasing around issues and terms such as gender equality or feminism is not an anomaly. All of those I spoke to in Sweden were very eloquent on the matter.

This eloquence around such often-controversial use of terminology can also be seen when ‘Sweden.se’ gives the example of how in Sweden, rather than having the term ‘maternity leave’ or ‘paternity leave’, in 1974 Sweden became ‘the first country in the world to replace gender-specific maternity leave with parental leave’ [emphasis added]. The United Nations in 1997 coined the term ‘Gender Mainstreaming’ to be incorporated into the work conducted by government agencies at various levels, so that gender equality:

‘is not a separate, isolated issue but a continual process. To create equality, the concept of equality must be taken into account when resources are distributed, norms are created and decisions are taken.’ (Sweden.se).

The website does go on to say ‘Sweden has come a long way. Still, there’s room for improvement’ which was the general consensus of those I interviewed with regards to Sweden’s status as a ‘gender equality role model’ as Inga put it: “Everything is relative”. To contextualise this, currently, Sweden (at the time of this thesis being written: 2018) holds the position of 5th ranking according to the World Economic Forum’s (WEF) 2017 ‘Global Gender Gap Report’. Additionally, Iceland holds the top rank and Norway, comes in second followed by Finland and Rwanda
respectively. My other fieldsite of Portugal, in contrast is ranked thirty-third due to factors such as; low political empowerment and economic participation for women (Please see Appendix 1 for Figures from WEF).

The article written by Myers (2017) analysing the WEF’s Global Gender Gap Report, echoes the sentiments of ‘sweden.se’ that globally there is still ‘a long way to go’ to close this gap in areas such as education, health, life expectancy, economics and politics. According to the WEF data, there is still an estimated hundred years to go to close ‘gender gap’ in the countries the report has covered since it was first put together in 2006. Interestingly, or rather worryingly, according to Myers in 2016 it was ‘only’ eighty-three years until this goal was achieved, highlighting the reduction of progress in the previous year. The overall picture especially with the ‘economic gap between men and women is even more bleak. This won’t be closed for another 217 years’ (ibid).

*The Myth Of A Scandinavian Utopia*

My own country, The United Kingdom, ranks in 15th place in the WEF Global Gender Gap Report and there have been several articles written analysing this outcome. Haines writing for the English newspaper ‘The Telegraph’, stated that how in the WEF 2017 Global Gender Gap Report, ‘[t]hat these Scandinavian nations lead the way may not come as a big surprise’ (Haines, 2017). For a researcher from the U.K., gender equality statistically speaking in Sweden is comparatively very impressive.

In his book ‘The Almost Nearly Perfect People: Behind the myth of the Scandinavian Utopia’ (2015), Booth discusses a range of topics relevant to my own findings. In his chapters discussing Sweden, Booth makes the comparison that although Sweden has never had a female prime minister ‘almost half of Sweden’s MPs and currently more than half of government ministers are women, making the British government look positively Arthurian’ (ibid: 365). Additionally, I noticed that
Booth’s book is proudly displayed in both Stockholm Arlanda and Bergen Flesland airports which I am taking as sign it is well regarded as an accurate depiction of the so called myth of a ‘Scandinavian Utopia’. Gustafsson and Kolam (2008), address the 2007 European Union (EU) data that depicted Sweden as being more ‘gender egalitarian than most other [countries and] […] one of the best places in the world for women to live in’ (ibid: 27). They follow this sweeping statement of praise by highlighting that this does not mean Swedish women do not face challenges, or that all Swedish women live in a utopia on earth. Gustafsson and Kolam argue, that this status is still a goal that faces daily challenges and is a constantly ongoing dynamic process.

3.2 Cabin Fever

Firstly, I have chosen throughout this thesis to refer to Swedish second homes or summer-homes/cottages as ‘cabins’ since this is how my participants always translated this style of home to me. Secondly, as very artfully put by Rees (2014) the Nordic words such as ‘sommerhus’ or ‘sommarstuga’ in Swedish or ‘hytte’ in Norwegian which is the ‘linguistic cognate “hut” […] does not very often produce the kind of nostalgic and positive associations for English speakers’ (ibid: 9 [edited]) unlike the word ‘cabin’. Ohlsen, Kaminski and Quintero (2015), writing for lonely planet on their sixth edition on Sweden describe the cabin culture in Sweden as a sort of phenomenon since having a:

‘rural [cabin] is almost de rigueur, at least as an aspiration; there are around 600,000 second homes in Sweden, but no Swede doesn’t want a little wooden cottage […] Sweden boasts the highest number of holiday cottages per capita in the world’ (ibid: 306)

There is a sentimentality and emotional connection to cabins that I observed during my fieldwork. The cabins symbolise something for my participants, they evoke a sense of identity (Barfield: 2009: 361) both a social and it could be argued a national sense of identity too. They are a place in which Swedes return to in order to reconnect with family and friends, to experience the freedom of the countryside that towns and cities do not offer. Cabins represent this freedom, this ideal of Swedish life. The sense
of space they capture in their character is linked to ‘memory, stasis and nostalgia’ (Massey, 2001: 121). Cabins are so quintessentially perfect. They are so ‘Nordic’ or ‘Scandinavian’ - with their flagpoles flying their nations colours proudly on a perfect summers day. When Bourdieu (1977) discussed the concept of ‘habitus’ he described how people are inclined to produce a material environment, which in turn socialises children and adults into reproducing a similar environment. Barfield called this environmental habitus a type of ‘mnemonic’; a learning memory device that instils set values of order and space (2009: 29). Wishart in his chapter within his collective works with Anderson and Vaté (2013) discusses that how homes are built structurally and organised in their internal spaces relates to a ‘set of cosmological beliefs that architecturally serve as a mnemonic […] between the parts of the home and the whole – the landscape’ (ibid: 9 [edited]).

In his article ‘The Swedish Summer House – a love affair’ (2018), Hincks writing for ‘sweden.se’ addresses how Sweden has a long history with summerhouses and how ‘for many [cabins] still shapes their image of Sweden: red-painted cottages in an endless pastoral landscape broken only by a liberal scattering of beautiful blondes with flowers in their hair’ (ibid [edited]). He likening the visiting of one ‘a ritual deeply engrained in the Swedish psyche […] [and] many Swedes took advantage of something else cheap and plentiful: land’ (ibid [edited]). Müller argues that there are other structures ‘than typical Swedish red white cottages’ (1999: 10), designed in acknowledgement of ‘the value of outdoor life and contact to nature, a lot of small cabins were built for leisure purposes exclusively […] These very simply equipped so called "sportstugor" form even today a considerable share of second homes, particularly in the Stockholm archipelago’ (ibid [edited]).

This concept of ‘sportstugor’, reminded me of the surf camp or as I have entitled it for the purpose of continuity the ‘surf cabin’ in Ericeira, being a purpose built ‘sports cabin’. The surf cabin was more of a base camp that was equipped with everything to encourage guests to not only surf but also provided longboards and bikes and encouraged guests to visit the local town centre or hike around the surrounding area. The organisation of the surf cabin was not dissimilar to how Swedish summer cabins or sports cabins were run, this could explain why other members of UppX seemed to adapt to the surf cabin lifestyle of communal living
more readily than I did. For example, I must confess that I was initially taken aback at having to sleep in mixed-gender bunk bed dorms with strangers who I barely knew. Unlike in Bourdieu’s Berber house (1970), in the surf cabin there was in fact a distinct lack of gendered space. My inner English prude really wanted to speak up on the matter, but none of my fellow UppX members seemed to be ruffled by the prospect of co-ed roommates. So I adapted and thought to myself what would an anthropologist do? I decided to use Geertz’s tactic of adopting the relaxed attitude of ‘when in Rome’ (2005[1973]: 58).
4. Sensory Fieldwork

In this first ethnographic chapter I shall be exploring UppX’s time in the Portuguese surf cabin. Firstly, I will discuss my initial observations upon arriving in Sweden in August 2016 and joining UppX in March 2017. Secondly, I have taken an anecdote from my fieldnotes detailing my first meeting the other UppX members who I would be surfing with. Thirdly, I shall be introducing Rapture Surf Camp and contextualising the ‘sense of place’ and ‘character’ (Massey, 2001:156) that the surf cabin held. This shall then lead into how the surf cabin took on aspects that lent itself to the way a Swedish cabin is utilised, but also how UppX members interacted in the surf cabin as they took on aspects of surfing culture. Finally, I will then make the argument that the cabins in my fieldwork took on a spatial significance of being a ‘haven’ or ‘heterotopia’. This is where I highlight how the cabins in my fieldwork were utilised which in turn contributed to the production of much more balanced and gender equal interactions. The observations that follow are taken from my fieldnotes and audio-visual material to allow for a more accurate retelling of events in a reflexive impressionist narrative (Please see Appendix 2 for photographs). Van Maanen defines ‘Impressionist Tales’ which are written to:

‘convey the drama of what occurred. […] These tales describe both the researcher's thought process as well as the participants actions. They are written to maintain the audience's attention by focusing on unique or interesting aspects of a culture. The goals of such tales is to have the audience understand or feel the spirit of being in the field’ (Van Maanen, 2011: 7)

Since my access to Uppx was as a member of their organisation, joining in sporting activities was imperative to this study, much like Wacquant’s own experiences, which involved and demanded a more physically in-depth approach. In the manner of Hendry’s (1999) and Wacquant’s (2007) work, the long-term nature of my fieldwork from living in Sweden for a year, meant that I developed a closer connection to my participants and we still stay in contact to date11. I hope that the following ‘tales’ are enjoyable and also act as a way to give back (Lee, 2016: 9).

11 Where names have been omitted and assigned pseudonyms this is to protect the privacy of those who I did not receive explicit consent to use their names. As mentioned under my ethics subsection, where photos are used including members of UppX I was given full consent and my status as a researcher on all of my adventures with UppX was made known.
4.1 ‘Find that Field!’

- SWEDEN -

Uppsala, is located 71 Kilometres north of the capital city of Stockholm, and is the fourth largest city in Sweden. Known for its history as the main pagan centre of Sweden (Gamla Uppsala), the largest cathedral in Scandinavia Uppsala Cathedral and Uppsala University - the oldest university in Sweden (founded 1477) [Source: Lonely Planet online ‘Welcome to Uppsala’\(^{12}\)].

‘Finding the Field’ in Sweden, specifically Uppsala, was harder than I thought. As I have already confided, I may have lived in Sweden but outside of knowing a few Swedish classmates and lecturers I was not acquainted with a single Swedish person. I was due to stay in Sweden for a full two years, so when I had to decide where to conduct my fieldwork I had a choice; I could travel further afield (again) or I could ‘stick it out’. I decided to stay in Sweden and use my interesting position of feeling perpetually stuck in Van Gennep’s liminal stage, also known as the ‘rite of transition’ (1960: 11), of being in situ in Sweden, at a Swedish University, attempting to learn about all things Swedish, whilst still seeming to not be integrated, to my advantage.

**Meeting UppX**

It was at a public event held at Kalmar Nation\(^{13}\), in this case a ‘Saturday Flea Market’, which my classmate Hanna had invited me to attend, where I first gained access to my chosen group. At the Flea Market, UppX were running stalls and selling a range of things such as second hand ski’s and skateboards. Hanna also actively encouraged me to actually approach some of the UppX members running the stalls. I was eventually directed up the chain of command all the way to the then Vice-President Inga Sjöberg and Chair and Founder Sofie Jansson. Through their encouragement and willingness to aid in my fieldwork I had found my answer on how to use participant observation

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\(^{12}\) https://www.lonelyplanet.com/sweden/svealand/uppsala

\(^{13}\) One of the thirteen student Nations that represent a specific region of Sweden. The Nation houses act as a non-divided fraternity and sorority, where social events are held and normally house student pubs, clubs, restaurants and banquet halls.
to examine gender equality in Sweden: by participating in sports and events run by UppX.

This fascinating group of students are the reason I was able to live and surf with twenty Swedish students who I had previously had limited access to. It took my field being moved to another country for my real participant observation of gender equality in Sweden from a more emic perspective to begin. The irony is not lost on this ethnographer that it took leaving Sweden to actually get to know Swedish people. As I have previously mentioned, I became very close with three of my fellow UppX surf camp roommates, in particular; William, Rahmat and Amanda. I was fortunate enough to spend some of the summer of 2017 at Amanda’s family cabin, where I got to see a private glimpse of how Swedes spend their leisure time in the private spheres of Swedish summer cabins, which I shall be discussing in greater detail in Chapter 5.

“Ethnography Equals Pursued Luck”

Location: Smålands Nation, Uppsala, Sweden.

I am sitting in a Nation house pub, nursing a beer I do not want to drink, but I am also tempted to guzzle, in the hopes of gaining some Dutch courage. I am surrounded by Swedish students on one intimidatingly long table. UppX have just been bowling; I am not partial to bowling. In fact I am a terrible bowler. I am surrounded by strangers all speaking Swedish who I am meant to be going surfing with in just over two weeks. My ‘luck’ feels like its already run out, I keep trying to remain professional or at least amicable as a few people try to make polite conversation. Thankfully, from our previous encounters and subsequent interview I already know Sofie, the founder of UppX and one of board members arranging the upcoming surfing trip, who keeps trying to engage me and others in conversations conducted in English. Inga, is unfortunately not joining us on this trip so there was one less friendly face there for me to cling to.
On my left is ‘Leia’\textsuperscript{14} one of the girls I was on a bowling team with. Leia already knew quite a few of the other girls, since they were all friends before deciding as a group to come on the upcoming surfing trip, but she has barely spoken to me since then – I do not think my bowling skills impressed her. So she sits with her back to me talking to her friends. Mead and Bateson consider aspects of sensory anthropology and how studying a persons posture and movements can reveal curious facets of cultural, personal and human behavioural patterns beyond what verbal accounts can convey (2012: 450-464). Having considered this, unfortunately it does not take an anthropologist to know that her body language is conveying that she does not want to talk to me.

To my right is ‘Fredrik’ who speaks with an American twang and seems pretty confident (and he has surfed before), so at this point I am determined to at least make one friend of sorts or at least find someone who is happy to be interviewed. I need to find one participant for this surf trip, just so that Sofie does not have to end up being my rock for the whole trip. Interestingly, although Sofie is organising and participating in our surfing trip she never identifies herself as being one of UppX’s founders or even the current chair of the sports club. I would later learn that this is not uncommon in Swedish institutions, as flat non-hierarchical structures are ideally distributed based on values of equality with a shorter chain of command, the boss will often dress like any other employee and you normally call them by their first name, thereby making them hard to distinguish (Isaksson, 2008).

Just accept it, I told myself, you are going to have to shake a lot of hands and put yourself out there. Rather paradoxically, although there appears to be a game of ‘Where’s Wally’\textsuperscript{15} in finding the boss in Swedish work places due to their flat-organisational structures, they are very formal when it comes to shaking hands, even in casual settings. When you first meet someone it is only polite to shake his or her hands.

\textsuperscript{14} Where I have not received explicit permission to use their names in this thesis I have opted to use pseudonyms which I shall indicate with ‘’.

\textsuperscript{15} ‘Where’s Wally’ is a famous children’s puzzle book character created by English illustrator Martin Handford. The aim of the books are to locate ‘Wally’, who is hidden in a crowd or a scene in each illustration. In Sweden it is often called by the American versions title of ‘Where’s Waldo?’.
hand. In English universities it seems that male students more commonly shake hands in casual settings, this often acts as a masculine greeting, but in Sweden everyone equally uses it as a greeting.

With all of these new social cues it feels like the first day at a new school, and I am the exchange student who is already terrified of my peers. Sofie took on the role of a teacher trying to facilitate my engagement with the others while I simultaneously clung to her leg (metaphorically speaking). But I have to be brave; they might smell fear. One thing nobody tells you about fieldwork is that it can be awfully intimidating; especially when you are attempting to insert yourself for a short space of time in a group you normally would not come into contact with. Not only are they all Swedes, speaking in, shock horror Swedish in Sweden, they are also all interested in sports. Van Maanen even comes to the conclusion that:

‘To do fieldwork apparently requires some of the instincts of an exile, for the fieldworker typically arrives at the place of study without much of an introduction and knowing few people, if any.’ (2011: 2)

Now I am just waiting for someone to ask me what sports I am interested in or if I have ever surfed before and my cover is blown. If my bowling was any indication – I am not athletically inclined. Yet here I am, money handed over, tickets booked and the feeling that this is only the beginning of my fieldwork adventures.

From Uppsala to Ericeira

Two Weeks Later…

Unfortunately, I catch a bad cold few days before we are due to leave, which did not help my surfing skills and I must acknowledge did have an impact on how much I could physically do during my fieldwork in Portugal. The flight is tedious and painful for my sinuses, which caused me to tear up uncontrollably. However, I think this event was a blessing in disguise for my fieldwork. Across the row from me and my traitorous tear ducts are sitting Amanda and Rahmat, two of the people I ended up sharing a room with - and to this day I still proudly call them my ‘surf roomies’. They
believe I am crying over either a boy or because I am nervous about the trip, neither of these options were thankfully the case. I could not have predicted that Amanda, Rahmat and also William would have ended up being so vital to this thesis. As stated in my introductory chapters they all became ‘key informants [participants]’ (Bernard, 2011: 196). They were willing to share their knowledge of Swedish cabin culture and other aspects of Swedish life, such various useful Swedish phrases like “stäng dörren” (shut the door), which I found to be a very useful phrase in communal cabin living; “stäng dörren, I want to get changed”, “stäng dörren the bugs will get in”, “stäng dörren, the dog will escape”, to name a few instances.

4.2 Upon Arrival…

- PORTUGAL -

Ericeira, is located on the Western coast of Portugal and is often referred to as a ‘surfing mecca’, owing to Ericeira being one of the ten World Surfing Reserves (WSR) [Source: WRS official webpage\(^{16}\)], and the only one in Europe. Ericeira is approximately 35 kilometres from the capital of Lisbon and a 4 hour and 15 minute direct flight from my main fieldsite in Sweden [(ARN) to Lisbon, Portugal (LIS) Source: Norwegian Air\(^{17}\)].

Location: Lisbon to Ericeira, Portugal.

Once we landed it is already pitch black and we bundled onto the bus where I sat alone, unsure of where to go or if I would be a bother by clinging to Sophie, Amanda, William or Rahmat. Once on the road we pass a large IKEA store lit up like a Christmas tree, the irony of being in a bus full of Swedes in Portugal and happening to pass a proud ambassador for Swedish living was something I found rather amusing.

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\(^{16}\) https://www.savethewaves.org/programs/world-surfing-reserves/reserves/portugal/

\(^{17}\) https://www.norwegian.com/uk/booking/flight-tickets/farecalendar/StockholmArlanda-Lisbon
As previously mentioned there is irony in that as an international masters student at Uppsala University, in Sweden, I had never been so overwhelmed by strangers who all identified as and spoke Swedish until I landed in Portugal. This became even more apparent when we arrived at our final destination: the Surf Camp. It was late and most of the other visitors were sleeping, but the camp workers had stayed up to welcome ‘the Swedish group’ as we were dubbed, to Rapture Surf Camp. The ‘Swedish Group’ consisted of twenty-one members of UppX, twenty of whom were Swedish and then there was me (the English girl).

_The Surf Cabin_

Rapture Surf Camp in Ericeira, Portugal, is one out of a network of five surf camps based around some of the world’s best surf spots. The Rapture Surf Camp group run cabins in Nicaragua, Costa Rica, two cabins in Bali and of course the one in Portugal, where my fieldwork was based 18. Portugal’s Rapture Surf Camp, was more of a surf house/cabin than a ‘camp’ but I could see why the designation of a camp was given, since it was a sort of ‘base camp’ or as I suggested earlier a ‘sportstugor’ or sports cabin (Müller, 1999: 10).

The only way to access the road on which the cabin was situated was to follow an unlit dusty slip road, which was slightly bumpy, and a little bit of a tight squeeze for our bus. I had horrible ‘we’ve been kidnapped’ or ‘we are very very lost’ scenarios running through my head. Since it was dark when we arrived the surf camp was not fully visible upon our initial arrival but what struck me was how we did not enter through the front door of the building, but we were taken through a side gate that led to the back of the house. I learnt later that the front door was not in use, but blocked for reasons that were never explained to me. Down the side alley and a set of stairs later, with our suitcases in tow, we were welcomed to the back patio of the house connected to the communal open-air dining area, from where we could see straight

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18 Further information on all of the cabins can be found on Rapture Surf Camp’s website: [https://www.rapturecamps.com/](https://www.rapturecamps.com/)

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into the kitchen in which all of our meals would be served. We were invited to sit down on the long wooden dining benches, once seated we were introduced to the various surf instructors and other members of the Surf Camp team who would be our hosts for the trip.

When it was time to settle in, Sofie and the other board members of UppX were discussing their list of who they would be assigning to which room group. When signing up for the trip we could mention who we would like to share a room with, but since I knew no one well enough, I had been placed at random in a group with Sara, Rahmat, Amanda, William. This is when my ‘when in Rome’ (Geertz, 2005: 58) moment came; typically even anthropologists tend to live in a dwelling of their own, still a part of their participants lives but not always as a constant live in resident anthropologist ‘delicately lurking’ (Van Maanan, 2011: 4) in the next bunk bed over. I faced the dilemma of when I was meant to be an anthropologist and when was I meant to just be me, I came to the conclusion to simply be myself and that my observations would come with time. It could be argued that in this case I was a full time ‘carnal’ (Wacquant, 2007) engaged (Eriksen, 2006) anthropologist. In the following subchapters I shall be further addressing the sense of space that the surf cabin held and how UppX utilised this space.

**A Space of Trust**

When we first arrived at the cabin we were all a little weary from our day of travelling due to our early start and connecting flight that went via Munich to arrive in Lisbon. The UppX group trustingly complied with the request to hand over our passports and patiently waited for them to be returned to us. This immediately establishing a sense of cooperation and trust since this was the team of people who would be looking after us during our stay.

The UppX’s board members Sofie, Rebecca and Hans who had arranged the trip had also assigned us to our mixed dorms. This sense of trust that everyone would
conduct themselves in a respectful manner, to them was an automatic assumption. Nevertheless, it was clear that the board members had been observing who naturally would fit together, especially when we had not specified who we wanted to share a room with. Our rooms were mostly made up of bunk beds, but what had not occurred to me at the time was that of course the surf cabin would have mixed gendered rooms, since like a hotel, there is not a distinction of divided gendered space in private quarters. Nakhal (2015) defines hotels as semi-public spaces and in this case it was more of a constantly accessible public sphere with the distinct lack of private space. This does not mean that the space on its own was encouraging gender equal interactions by lacking a distinct divide, but what was interesting to see was how the members of UppX negotiated our living situations. However, as I noted earlier, one useful Swedish phrase was “stäng dörren” (shut the door) which was made practical and effective use of on a few occasions when myself and two other female roommates kicked the boys out of the room so that we could change in privacy. In this way, the space was claimed as a ‘female’s only zone’ for a temporary amount of time, and thus we created our own gender divide.

With one bathroom between fourteen of us staying in the main house and no locks on any of the dorm room doors, and since we were on the ground floor where the office, main bathroom, lounge and other guests were staying our ‘private space’ was straight off of the main thoroughfare; not really allowing for much privacy at all. On a more positive note, this did facilitate roommates becoming a lot closer in a short amount of time since the lack of space and privacy made our resulting friendships a necessity. Our living situation and an unplanned daytrip back to Lisbon airport, to rescue Rahmat’s bag that he had left on the coach, also strengthened the dynamic of our dorm and aided the development of our subsequent friendship. When Wacquant (2007) encouraged ‘carnal sociology’ he did so with his ‘body and soul’ but he also kept a private apartment near the boxing ring that he could retreat to for rest and reflection. Therefore, it could be argued that I took Wacquant’s take on Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus (1977) to form ‘pugilistic habitus’ (Wacquant, 2007: 16) one step further, even if it was for a fairly short amount of time.
The communal trust of dorms lacking locks was echoed in various aspects of the surf cabin. There were fridges stocked with drinks that we were welcome to help ourselves to in the dining room. These fridges were based on a ‘trust system’; you could take as much as you liked out of the fridge, whenever you liked, as long as you put a tally next to your name which would be counted up upon your departure and you would then pay the tab owed. This relaxed system was very fitting for not only the laidback surfer vibes that abounded in the Surf Cabin but also were ingrained into my Swedish cohort. The fridges were kept in an open social space where anyone could access them, but due to social conformity that the arrangement of the space, this lent itself to people being honest about how much they took.

The situation of the fridges in full view of the communal areas was not dissimilar to Foucault’s (1995 [1975]) discussions surrounding the design of Bentham’s ‘Panopticon’19. Similarly, to open the fridges or take out one of the surfboards or bikes you had to turn your back to the open spaces, and your actions could be observed. Thus, your behaviour could be monitored which resulted in guests being conditioned and socialised into being honest. Foucault claimed that the ‘Panopticon’ is ‘a marvellous machine which, whatever use one may wish to put it to, produces homogeneous effects of power’ (1995: 202).

This trust extended to all aspects of the surf cabin and the communal objects such as; the ping-pong table, the guitars, the computer, the TV, bikes, wetsuits, longboards and surfboards were ours for as long as we stayed there. None of the communal rooms or dorms had locks on the doors except the bathrooms and we simply had to trust that no one would enter our rooms to steal our possessions. William told me that this is also the case in more secluded cabins in Sweden however in cities such as Stockholm, doors are locked just like in any other part of the world since cities are where the most crime tends to happen. He also rationalised that if there is always someone at the surf cabin why would you need to lock the door?

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19 The Panopticon is type of institutional building design, with a central prison tower containing a prison guard monitoring the inmates, who could see the inmates but could not be perceived in return. This in theory conditions inmates to self correct and behave at all times for fear of being watched.
A Sense of Style

By the early morning light of the first day, I could see the beach villa style of the surf cabin; from the front of the main building was almost inconspicuous in the neighbourhood of similarly constructed buildings. Architecturally, the style of the surf cabin was a whitewashed Portuguese beach house, that much like the odd point of entrance the camp continued to be a maze of a space and had various unsystematic sets of stairs and ramps that led to different areas, levels and structures.

The main house was where the open plan office was and to access our ground floor dorm rooms we had to go past the desk of the ‘big kahuna’ who was the manager of the surf cabin. However, it took me a few days to figure out what his role was since he was always dressed in board shorts, a t-shirt and flip-flops, just like all of the other camp hosts. His relaxed attire suited the beach house aesthetic of the surf cabin. The back of the surf cabin was the main hub of activity, it was made up of different levelled patios with wetsuits and swim wear hung out to dry in the sun on all available surfaces. The view from the back of the house was breathtaking; the surf house sat adjacent to a winding stream and looked out onto agricultural farmlands and green hills.

The cabin had all of the necessary comforts and amenities, and although its roof terrace and balcony were outfitted with beautifully sun faded pillows and rugs, it was designed to encourage its guests to do more than lounge around after a day of surfing. There were longboards and bikes mounted on racks which could be taken out, and after a few lessons when the waves were calmer we could grab a wetsuit and a surfboard and head back out to surf. Nothing about the surf cabin was off limits; we could wander where we wanted as long as we did not disturb the semi-wild chickens. The only times that were dictated were when we would be eating, which was effected by when we would be surfing. This decision was made by mother nature and not the surf instructors; who would crowd round the laptop in the main office to check the weather forecast and wave watch websites for the next day.

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20 A term used to refer to a powerful leader in surf culture.
Almost everything is communal in this surf cabin and the space was designed for unsegregated open plan living. We slept in dorm rooms full of bunk beds, shared a single bathroom, ate every meal together, surfed together and also had all of our down time from surfing to ‘hang out’ (Geertz, 1998). There was no space for privacy among strangers. We lived and breathed the surfing lifestyle; I can see why Wacquant (2007) would advocate employing the use of carnal sociology and how he came to incorporate his mentors Bourdieu’s habitus into his own work on ‘pugilistic habitus’ (ibid: 16). Everyday we collectively rose at dawn with the tide, we ate our breakfasts, suited up, then we all picked up a surfboard to load into the van or carry down to the closer beach. Upon arrival at the beach we would go through the motions of warming up by stretching, doing drills or running up and down the beach. Then as one we would head out to sea to commence our lessons that often lasted for at least two hours. There is a choice of three colours for surfboards; yellow, green and blue. There was no squabbling over colour choices or assigned surfboard sizes based on our genders or heights, we were treated as equal in all things.

During our stay, two separate Norwegian surf groups also arrived at our camp. This made the surf cabin take on a mini Nordic Nations characteristic that, as I have mentioned, made me wonder how I could feel more involved in Swedish private spheres in Portugal than I ever had in Sweden. Due to the sheer number of us traveling as a group at some points the main language spoken in a room was Swedish. It took at least a couple of days for people at the Surf cabin to realise that I was the odd one out, since one the instructors specifically assigned to our group (Magnus) was Norwegian. This resulted in our first lessons nearly being conducted in a mash up of Norwegian/Swedish, but for my benefit it was soon switched back to English. I was also approached by another English girl who was staying at the surf cabin who told me that my English was “very good” and that my accent was “convincing”, since she presumed that I was also Swedish due to my travelling companions all being from Sweden. Once I informed her that this was because I actually was from the U.K., it was interesting to hear her perspectives on UppX’s interactions and how our presence had changed the atmosphere of the surf cabin, she joked that it was a case of China Town or Little Italy. In effect this meant that the cabin became a ‘Lilla Sverige’
(Little Sweden) while we stayed there and created a paradox of the dominant cultural space.

This microcosm of Swedish and also Norwegian cabins, displaced in Portugal made the cabin, if not for the weather and architecture of the beach house, feel like it could easily be mistaken for a Nordic retreat. For example, although I have decided not to include my experiences of cabins in Norway in this thesis, they do have similarities to the cabins in Sweden in not only their architectural spatial sense of place but also how that space is embodied. UppX’s and the Norwegian surf groups through not only their use of the cabin and embodiment of space, was in keeping with aspects of cabin and Nordic culture that I observed in Sweden and in Norway. Low (2009) discussed how the concept of ‘embodied space’ highlights the importance of the lived experience (ibid). She argues that embodied space is the location where the ‘human experience and consciousness take on material and spatial form’ (ibid) and one interesting observable nuance of embodied cabin culture is: clothing.

In Norway I was often engaged in conversations about how ‘koselig’ cabins are, which is roughly translated to me as ‘cosy’. However, ‘koselig’ can hold deeper meanings, much like the Danish ‘hygge’ (Wiking, 2016) as a ‘sense of place’ that spaces like a cabin can hold. There is a deeper nostalgic sense of place in ‘cosy cabins’ for my participants than for myself (Rees, 2014: 9; Massey, 2001: 121). To achieve this sense of ‘koselig’, we also had to dress the part; that meant cosy knitted ‘Mariusgenser’ jumpers and woolly socks, preferably handmade by a family member or friend, even in summer cosy socks to walk around the cabin are a must have item to complete the experience. In the surf cabin cosy-ness was still key in the cooler evening air with cosy jumpers making a few appearances, although not in the Mariusgenser style since this jumper normally starts to come out of the cupboard in late October time. Argyle (1988) explained that clothes are one example of key non-verbal signals along with gaze, facial expressions, posture non-verbal vocalisations and spatial behaviour (ibid: 1). Massey (2001) argued that rather than understanding places as areas of boundaries they can be interpreted as dynamic articulated relational
moments, situated in networks of constantly negotiated social relations and understandings (Massey, 2001: 5; Convery, Corsane and Davis, 2012: 1).

Other examples of Nordic traditions being practiced in the Portuguese cabin are, specifically taken from Uppsala University: singing. This is an interesting aspect of communal gatherings as part of a formal evening called a ‘gasque’ held at various Uppsala University Nation Houses. Gasques usually consist of a formal dinner, an odd combination of alcoholic drinks and singing, with some of the songs performed to thank the workers who help run the nation houses for their hard work. On our last night in the surf cabin, UppX decided to sing a song to thank the workers for having us, it was set to the tune of Abba’s ‘Thank You For The Music’, with the lyrics changed to convey our gratitude as; ‘Thank You For The Surfing’. Rebecca, one of the UppX board members who had helped to arrange this trip said before we performed “where we come from we like to thank people with a song”. With all of the cabin members gathered it was a little intimidating so I stood with Sofie at the back. When I asked her why she was not at the front as the founder and leader of UppX to lead the song, she simply shrugged and asked me why I was not at the front since the song was sung in English. Once again I was intrigued by how as the ‘boss’ she did not ever present herself as such. This was my observation, however one of the participants also made a comment to me, the exchange went as follows:

UppX member: “Sofie can be quite bossy can’t she? Always telling us what to do and stuff - like with that game to get to know each other”

Me: “No, not really, and she only tells us what to do because she’s organising the trip”

UppX member: “I thought that was Rebecca”

Me: “Rebecca is running the trip with Hans and Sofie, but Sofie is the chair of UppX and its founder”

UppX member: “Oh”

During our interview prior to the trip Sofie had said to me that she’s been told she was ‘bossy’ a lot of times, she felt that it is more often the case that: “you always tell a girl, who has a strong opinion or strong will “oh you are bossy” […] not “you’re a strong leader” I am always told “you’re like a guy””. I found Sofie’s leadership style
to be very relaxed but organised. I observed her being encouraging not forceful and in her own way she looked after all of us without it ever feeling like she was trying to wrap us in cotton wool, quite the opposite; she was hands-off without being absent when her presence as a leader was needed. This is in keeping with the flat organisational structure often found in Swedish businesses (Isaksson, 2008), as previously discussed. This was similar to how the cabin was run with the manager acting and dressing like many of the seasonal workers. Therefore, the sense of style or sense of place that make the surf cabin take on aspects of Nordic culture seemed to be in keeping with UppX’s organisational ethos of everyone being treated and seen as equals. As already defined Barfield states that a ‘Place’ is ‘a space made meaningful by human occupation or appropriation’ (2009: 360 [emphasis added]). The Portuguese surf cabin was ‘occupied’ by UppX members for their own ‘appropriation’, therefore creating a ‘sense of place’ embodying the characteristics (Massey, 2001: 156) of a Swedish cabin.

4.2 Surf Sweden

Now that I have introduced the surf cabin, under this subsection I shall be exploring surf culture and further issues surrounding gender equal representation and interactions in this sport. The subculture of surfing was adopted by the members of UppX very enthusiastically and continued to influence our interactions even after we left Portugal and returned to Sweden. I shall go on to discuss how the surf cabin not only taught us how to live like surfers, but the space also became a microcosm of Swedish culture; since the space naturally lent itself to being utilised much like a Swedish sports cabin.

Surf Culture

Every aspect of our lives during our stay in Ericeira was mostly dictated by the tides, so we were fully emerged in the surfing lifestyle. The surf culture that I noted as it permeated into our groups lexicon was when UppX members started making
comments on the quality of the ‘surf’ and embodied behaviour once we began to improve our ‘attack’ stances as Magnus, our Norwegian surf instructor called them, on our surfboards when trying to catch waves. Even during our downtime and when speaking to other guests we discussed our surf lessons, while throwing in some technical terms to sound like we knew what we were talking about; “yeah the surf was pretty good today”, “there were tons of people bunching out there”, “did you catch a wave?” 21 “Nah, I got rejected and had to do the walk of shame” and of course whenever possible my cohort were ‘throwing shakas’ 22, at every opportunity.

The surf culture or what Wacquant (2007) denotes as a ‘folk’ culture of a sporting lifestyle we came to adopt went beyond just learning how to surf. By the end of our trip everyone in the group was almost instinctively ‘throwing a shaka’ to each other. Our use of the Shaka was openly encouraged by our surf instructors who would signal the other instructors with shakas to let each other know that their students were all accounted for during our surf lessons. Our surf instructor Sam in particular, encouraged us to also ‘throw shakas’. He even asked me ‘have you thrown a shaka yet?’ and told me that that was a major part of surf culture. Wacquant states that:

‘one should not underestimate the importance of these seemingly mundane conversations, for they are an essential ingredient in the “hidden curriculum” [...] they convey in oral and osmotic fashion to the apprentice boxers the folk knowledge of the occupation’ (2007: 40).

There are even different styles of shaka’s depending on where you surf, for example in some parts of Hawaii the shaka is held loosely and in California the hand should form a distinctively shaka formation and be held with the fingers facing inwards. There is also some debate as to the shaka being from a predominantly male surf cultural action, in some surf subcultures 23. The ‘folk knowledge’ that I acquired from Sam when I asked him what this symbol even meant was that the shaka symbol was a greeting that could be used by anyone, since it was a way of communication to let the other person know that everything was “all good and love and stuff” [direct quote from Sam]. This was a

21 Asking; “did you catch a wave?” is an enquiry to establish if someone managed to fully stand up and surf.
22 ‘Shaka’ and ‘throwing shakas’ also known as the ‘hang lose’ hand gesture; of keeping the thumb and little finger extended and lowering the index, middle and ring fingers. This hand gesture has Hawaiian origins and is deeply ingrained into surf culture
23 A video on Shaka etiquette provided by The Inertia interviewing pro surfers: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J4S9WNt-YQ
large embodied cultural symbol that UppX took back to Sweden with them and applied it eagerly in our subsequent interactions as a symbol of camaraderie or just for fun as a reminder of our trip. Since this hand gesture seems to have many different manifestations, it was only fitting that it was adopted for our own reasons back in Sweden.

It is interesting to take into consideration the inexplicable phenomenon of cultural borrowing that is occurring in these scenarios, all within the space of the surf cabin. Surfing culture originated from ancient indigenous Hawaiians, and this knowledge was then passed down to us by our Norwegian and English surf instructors, and then acted out by Swedish UppX members, whilst being observed by an English ethnographer, in Portugal.

The Gender Equality of Surfing

Under this section I shall firstly be discussing gender and views on its role as a social, cultural and historically changing construct. Secondly, I shall be giving a brief overview of surfing’s long history of gender inequalities and equalities of dividing the sport by gender, since this allows for a comparative and situated analysis of UppX’s interactions and opinions when participating in this sport. Thirdly, I shall be addressing women’s representation in the media and I shall be discussing how Rapture Surf Camp and UppX negotiated and facilitated our time in Portugal to make sure that there was little to no unequal or negatively intended interactions. Lastly, I shall be examining observations made by the participants in my study comparatively with literature about women having less involvement in sports than men and the negative impact gender roles can have on both men and women.

‘Anna’ one of the other UppX members told me ‘you just have to take a look at history to know that women have been forbidden from participating in sports—we’ve come so far in such a short amount of time’. Moore states that ‘[t]he images, attributes, activities and appropriate behaviour associated with women are always
culturally and *historically* specific’ (1988: 7 [emphasis added]). As emphasised the term ‘activities’ when made in reference to discussions of gender it is normally brought back into the same rhetoric, of men and women being divided, different, opposites. Butler (1990), as already discussed, sees gender as a social and cultural construct, that she describes as a:

‘shifting and contextual phenomenon, gender does not denote a substantive being, but a relative point of convergence among culturally and *historically* specific sets of relations.’ (ibid: 10 [emphasis added]).

Surfing, unlike many historic tales of the origins of a sport, was not always a masculine pastime. There are many legends dating back to ancient Hawaii surrounding tales of strong female surfers. Sadly, missionaries soon discouraged the sport. Booth (2001) takes a quote from one of these missionaries as an example; Sheldon Dibble was aghast at seeing surfing due to the ‘constant intermingling, without any restraint, of persons of both sexes and of all ages, at all times of the day and night’ (Booth, 2001: 4). Roper in her work ‘Gender Relations in Sport’ (2014) looks into a brief discussion on how women were once discouraged from participating in sporting activities due to ideologies of the past such as stereotypes ‘about “appropriate” women’s sports […] For example, physicians in the mid-19th century believed that menstruation and reproduction were so exhausting that women could not (and should not) participate in physical exercise’ (ibid: 4).

Booth maps the history of surfing and the sports rise and fall in popularity. Spaces such as beaches are normally thought of as communal public-spheres, with a few exceptions of privately owned or territorial ‘locals only’ surf spots. However, he takes an example from New South Wales, Australia in the Victorian era where beaches were segregated ‘by sex’ (ibid: 5). This is reminiscent of Bourdieu’s (1970) concepts of male and female space functioning as divided spheres of gender-based norms that reflect the wider social order. Originally, Booth argued surfing was actually an exercise in egalitarianism (2001: 5), but unfortunately, women only returned to the waves in Hawaii following the rediscovery of surfing in the early twentieth century, when the sport emerged in the form we recognise today. In the
1950s women and men competed against each other until the organisers of the International Surfing Federation (formed in 1964) who ran the surf heats separated the contestants by gender (ibid: 4-5).

As the sport stands now, women have found themselves to a certain extent to still be marginalised, as surfing has taken on what Booth calls a ‘fraternal structure’ (ibid). Female surfers even now are mostly underrepresented or portrayed in an overtly sexualised manner. For example, when Amanda, William, Rahmat and I went into one of the surf shops in the town centre of Ericeira, Amanda pointed out a poster to me, which she later brought up in our interview and told me I had to remember to include it in my thesis. She observed that the male posters in the surf shop were all full body action shots of male surfers riding impressive waves, either in wetsuits or board shorts with a covered surfing rash guard. In sharp contrast, the one poster in the store of a female surfer had been decapitated; her head had been cropped out of the photo and the focus was on her posterior and legs as she stood on a beach clad in a very skimpy bikini. I cannot be sure if Amanda would have commented on these posters had she not been aware of my fieldwork’s purpose and my stance on the unequal depiction of female representation in so many sports, but I am glad that she was so aware and willing to voice her observations on such overtly differing representations of male and female surfers.

Stedman (1997), looked at this subjectification of the female form in the Australian surfing subculture from a sociological perspective and the drastic change of portrayal of female surfers in the media. Stedman observes that in the 1970s the female model used to look straight back at the viewer and almost challenges his gaze, whereas by the mid 1990s the images resemble the one that Amanda pointed out in the surf shop with the models head cropped out, her back to the camera and all of the focus is drawn to her body (ibid: 82-83). She concludes that this only encourages a voyeuristic overtly heterosexual male point of view and reduces the women who are meant to be represented as equals in not only sports but in gender to status symbols or what Stedman called ‘status objects’ (ibid).
This issue is not only present in women’s representation in surfing but in several sports and in general public discourse over positive portrayals of women in the media. Debates surrounding the male / female form and representation of female athletes in sports can be scrutinized through terms such as the ‘male gaze’, Mulvey coined this term to draw attention to the media’s portrayal of women ‘connoting to-be-looked-at-ness’ (1975:11). For example, more recently during the women’s beach volleyball matches at the Rio 2016 Olympics, there was controversy over the women’s uniform of skimpy bikinis in contrast to the men’s uniform of knee length board shorts and loose fitting vests. Though both genders are qualified Olympic level players the women’s sporting prowess is overshadowed when they are objectified as sex symbols. Hutchins (2016) in his article claims that, as per the uniform handbook, male beach volleyball players are not allowed to take their tops off due to advertisers needing to make up for lack of space on the female players ‘uniforms’.

William commented that in Sweden there is less of a divide when ‘gendering’ jobs such as a pro surfer or other athletes’ positions. He also pointed out how on a construction site in Ericeira there were no women working but, in Sweden you would be more likely to see at least one female construction worker but then he added “maybe I’m overreacting”. Daun, who was a leading ethnologist sometimes referred to as the guru of Swedish character believed that conflict avoidance is an integral part of their Swedish national characteristic. He states in his book ‘Swedish Mentality’ (1996 [English Translation]) that ‘before expressing one’s views on a controversial issue, one tries to detect the position of the opposite party’ (1996: 102). The comment by William about how he might be ‘overreacting’ by making such a non offensive comment based on his observations, links back to my earlier point of my Swedish participants being very aware and cautious with their phrasings and expressions of their opinions, especially on matters concerning gender equality.

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24 The official Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB) handbook states that the female player’s bikini bottom band cannot be thicker than a maximum of 7cm. The FIVB Beach Volleyball Players’ Uniforms Guidelines For Olympic Games: [http://www.fivb.org/EN/BeachVolleyball/Rules/BVB%20Uniforms%20Olympic%202004.pdf](http://www.fivb.org/EN/BeachVolleyball/Rules/BVB%20Uniforms%20Olympic%202004.pdf)
The surf cabin unlike the surf shop in town, was run on a similar ethos to UppX; with the focus on everyone’s enjoyment be they a beginner or a pro, and regardless of gender identification. As the leader of UppX, Sofie, pointed out: “You don’t do sports with your gender”. Ultimately, it was in the surf cabins best interest for economic reasons to be run on egalitarian values by not solely catering for male clients, since surf culture can be so male dominated it was imperative that they did not conform to this negative stereotype, but aimed for the all inclusive positive chilled surfer ideal. Additionally, it is important to note that both the male and female wetsuits were not made to highlight our bodies. They were black, with long sleeves and legs that covered us completely. Although they were tight fitting for practical reasons, when watching from the beach it was almost impossible to distinguish which surfer was male or female.

To make us feel a part of the surf cabin family upon our arrival we were given sturdy water bottles to encourage us to drink plenty of water, and cloth bags to carry them in along with other items down to the beach, both of these items had the Rapture Surf Camp’s log printed onto them. Even our surfboards had the Rapture Surf Camp logo. In the surf shop run out of Rapture Surf camp, unlike the one in town, we were also encouraged to buy unisex items such as caps and hoodies. Hendry (1993; 1999), in keeping with theories from Low (2009) and Nakhal (2015), of gendering of space and concepts ‘embodied space’ and ‘body-space’ coined the term ‘Wrapping’. She defined it as how we ‘wrap’ ourselves in not only layers of things such as clothing but cultural layers of social manners. How we present our daily selves is an indication of our perceptions of self and our societies expectations of us. Of course there are always exceptions to this rule and Hendry was applying it to Japanese culture and specifically looking at manners and traditional values still applied to fashions such as the kimono. By buying into the concept of surf culture being a lifestyle, we all began to adopt a style more in keeping with our surroundings, like Wacquant’s ‘pugilistic habitus’ (2007: 16) we had started to ‘wrap’ ourselves in surfing cultural queues. As already discussed, Rooksby and Hillier (2016) recognise the multiple possibilities of a single persons ‘habitus’ when negotiating our roles and identities as we situate ourselves in a ‘sense of place’. As previously quoted they give the example of a young woman having multiple identities at any given time since she may:
'regard herself as a teenage daughter, a college friend, a rap fan, a tennis club member, a part-time work colleague in a public house and a lover, all identities embodying a different habitus, sense of place and feel for the game’ (ibid: 14)

This flowing dynamic of spatial and bodily relations is also apparent in Mauss’s work; ‘Techniques of the Body’ (English Edition: 1973). In Mauss’s works he claimed that how we conduct ourselves is indicative of our cultural influences and that our bodies are constantly in cultural negotiation. Butler (1990), discusses her theory of ‘performativity’, which she sees as a dynamic act a ritual of a specific cultural and temporal nature. She states that in this sense ‘gender proves to be performance - that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing’ (ibid: 25 [emphasis added]). She uses the example of drag shows, where our perception of ‘reality’ is challenged by three factors: ‘anatomical sex, gender identity, and gender performance’ and by ‘imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself […] dramatizes the cultural mechanism’ (ibid: 137-138). Butler (1990) made the point that ‘the body’ ‘is itself a construction, as are the myriad “bodies” that constitute the domain of gendered subjects’ (ibid: 8).

This is especially important as I negotiated how sports are so tied to our bodies through the use of carnal sociology (Wacquant, 2007) and theories surrounding the spatial turn. For example, on many occasions if a participant during my fieldwork was worried as to whether they could manage to stand on a longboard, or negotiate social interactions with other members of the camp from different cultures, more often than not it was more mind over matter. Sofie told me that she tended to see female members of UppX doubting their abilities more so than male members. She gave me the example of when her vice president Inga doubted she would make a good vice-president during their election night, unlike one of the boys who she was running against, who never once voiced his doubt on his aptitude for the role of a board member of an extreme sports club. Sofie went on to remind me throughout my fieldwork that unfortunately, even in Sweden where their goals are for gender equality and egalitarian values, women more so than men tend to doubt their abilities,
especially in sports: “Guys often overestimate their ability levels and girls mostly underestimate”.

“I’m A Feminist Why Aren’t You?”

Sofie and Inga ran UppX on values that echoed that of the Swedish government, they wanted everyone not just women to have a voice. Sofie and Inga both acknowledge that there are still issues surrounding ‘the F-word’ as both Redfern and Aune (2010) and the Swedish government refer to it. Sofie questioned why, when someone identifies as a feminist, people question them and more often than not women have to say “oh I’m a feminist but… I don’t hate men” and that feminism and gender equality are for everyone but she would never fear the ‘f-word’ she said the question should be thrown back at people: “What I like to say is yeah I’m a feminist, aren’t you?”.

Simone de Beauvoir wrote that; ‘Enough ink has flowed over the quarrel about feminism; it is now almost over: let’s not talk about it anymore. Yet it is still being talked about.’ (2011 [1949]: 23). Butler (1990), makes multiple references to Simone de Beauvoir’s work ‘The Second Sex’ (1949). Butler analysis how for Beauvoir gender is constructed and ‘one is not born a woman, but, rather, becomes one.’ (Beauvoir 2011 [1949]: 330; Butler, 1990: 8). Butler comments that this phrasing is a little ‘odd’ (ibid: 111) but interprets Beauvoir’s message as suggesting that the category of ‘women’ is ‘a variable cultural accomplishment’ though she questions some of Beauvoir’s observations on sex being a set of definable features and gender being constructed (ibid: 112). Butler highlights this idea of a constructed ‘performativity’ as an interesting topic.

Young, in her feminist literature entitled ‘Throwing Like A Girl’ (1990), claims that based on a child’s assigned gender, how they are treated and raised by their parents differs. She claims that in many societies much like in Bourdieu’s (1970) work there are dichotomies of what is defined as male and what is defined as female. In the Berber house he places significant importance on the threshold (1970: 168) and the proverb that ‘man is the lamp of the outside and woman the lamp of the inside’
Young argues that in many societies girls are taught to believe that they must not allow themselves to participate in activities that could lead to her becoming dirty or injured. Thus teaching women and men to believe that women are physically ‘fragile’ (1990: 54). Whitehead (2002) agrees with Young’s example, and that in contrast ‘most men do not experience their bodies in this way’ (Whitehead, 2002: 189; emphasis added). Nguyen (2008) also refers to Young’s work through her subheading ‘Throwing Like A Butch’ (2008: 670). Nguyen goes on to discuss how Young explores the ‘feminine’ way of inhabiting and utilising the body in direct contrasts to how men are taught not to be afraid of their bodies. Nguyen argues this conditioned attitude of women not knowing their own physical capabilities ‘continues to perpetuate, women’s subordination’ (ibid).

In contrast to Young’s (1990), Whitehead’s (2002) and Nguyen’s (2008), work on the perception of women in popular culture there is currently a perception of the ‘hegemonic ideal’ of masculinity, especially in outdoor sports such as surfing. Hutchings’s defined this ‘ideal’ as ‘a man who is independent, risk-taking, aggressive, heterosexual and rational’ (2008: 392). Podnieks’s definition echoes this eerily almost word for word as; ‘power, strength, action, selfishness, ambition, competition, aggression, virility, rationality and the public sphere, among other qualities’ (Podnieks, 2016: 13). I was given the example by Sofie of how the suicide rate of men not only in Sweden but internationally is much higher than that of women, and some might argue it is based on the pressures men face in our unequal societies to ‘be a man’ which she argues: “The role of ‘being a man’ is just creating a problem for men and for women”. In their report on the high rate of suicide among men Wyllie (et al.) highlighted one of the major factors was attributed to:

‘Masculinity – the way men are brought up to behave and the roles, attributes and behaviours that society expects of them – contributes to suicide in men. Men compare themselves against a masculine ‘gold standard’ which prizes power, control and invincibility. When men believe they are not meeting this standard, they feel a sense of shame and defeat. Having a job and being able to provide for your family is central to ‘being a man’, particularly for working class men. Masculinity is associated with control, but when men are depressed or in crisis, they can feel out of control. This can propel some men towards suicidal behaviour as a way of regaining control.’ (2012: 1)
Massey (2001), when addressing gender based spatial relations to concepts of boundaries and the construction of identity, highlights how children are raised to understand their sense of self in relation to a societal ‘norm’ (ibid: 170). This sense of self and sense of place, Massey argues ‘reverberates […] very specifically through notions of place as a source of belonging, identity and security’ (ibid). In Halberstam’s work, when discussing concepts of masculinity the most commonly held image of embodiment of ‘masculinity’ is a ‘white male middle-class body’ (1998: 2). In many studies concerning suicidology the ‘default subject is arguably a “Western,” male, white, middle-class human’. These implicit assumptions serve as a “gold standard”’ (Broz and Münster, 2016: 3). The issues discussed by both works are that of agency and socio-structural norms confining men’s abilities to reach out in particular, which disrupts their sense of personhood and agency – suicide gives back to them the power of control over their own personhood (ibid). Saadia Zahidi, head of education, gender and work at the WEF is quoted to have stated, “Gender equality is both a moral and an economic imperative” (Haines, 2017), I think this is true not just for women but also for men as Sofie put it: “Everyone loses in these gender roles we have, I think”.

Ortner and Whitehead (1981), state that these biologically assumed ‘givens’ of men having to act in potentially harmful manners are products of social and cultural constructs that form over time. However, the ‘emphasis on the biological factor within different cultural traditions is variable’ (ibid: 1[original emphasis]). This topic of analysis in Anthropological works Ortner and Whitehead accredit to being first addressed by Margret Mead. Mead is one of the pioneering anthropologists in the twentieth century on matters concerning her own cultural origins and that of her participants on matter such as socialisation, adolescence and gender (Barfield, 2009: 314). Specifically, in her work ‘Coming of Age in Samoa’ (1928), she paved the way as one of the first women in American Anthropology to undertake intensive fieldwork overseas (Barfield, 2009: 314).

Mead, they claim, could arguably be credited for “‘discovering” them – over forty years ago […] Yet until recently, few have bothered to identify in any systematic way the cultural and social process [of sex and gender] notions might be related’ (ibid [edited]). Rotman (2006) in her article for the ‘Current Anthropology’
Journal examined Archaeological and historical evidence from Deerfield, Massachusetts, as an analysis of gendered social relations in the setting of a village (ibid: 667). Within her work, Rotman acknowledges the complexity of imagined ideologies that shape gender and that during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there were several theories that held related ideals to address this (ibid). Rotman identifies the examples of; ‘the cult of domesticity’, ‘equal-rights feminism’ and ‘domestic reform’ (ibid). She goes onto claim that:

‘Domesticity sought to elevate women’s status through the domestic sphere, while equal-rights feminism rejected the domestic arena and embraced public politics as a vehicle for social change. […] Therefore, although domesticity, equal-rights feminism, and domestic reform were ideologically separate entities, these distinctions were often blurred in lived experience as individuals differentially incorporated these ideals.’ (ibid)

Sofie was very much an advocate of equality and feminist values, since she actively created a sports group (UppX) that would embody this in any spaces that they occupied. She openly encouraged all of the UppX members to always be active even when we were not taking surfing lessons. There was always some physically demanding activity in motion or under consideration. On one occasion Sofie and the other UppX organisers, Hans and Rebecca, decided to play football on the beach and there was no division of gender or hesitation from the girls to join in, it was for fun not for a competition. I chose to observe on this occasion and Sofie reminded me once again to never underestimate my abilities, for my body was just as capable of playing football as any of the other UppX.

On this occasion I was reminded not to doubt my own abilities as a ‘woman’. It is clear from such observations made by Young, Whitehead, Nguyen and by Sofie, that human beings are stuck in a very interesting dilemma. In Descartes’s theory of Cartesian Dualism (1984 [1641]), we have an immaterial mind and a material body. However, both our immaterial mind and our material body are subject to variables beyond our control; from how our body is seen by not only others but how we perceive ourselves and present our material form. This is all affected by various factors of socio-cultural possibilities and limitations. This leads into the next ethnographic episode from one of UppX’s surf lessons, where I got to fully utilise Wacquant’s (2007) methodological approach to fieldwork of ‘carnal sociology’.
Applying Carnal Sociology

Location: Praia do Matadouro, Ericeira, Portugal.

“You’re a turtle”

“I’m a what?” I ask my Norwegian surf instructor Magnus, while being mercilessly pelted by waves, as I clutch helplessly to my surfboard.

“Yeah, a turtle - you like to take your time with things.” He helps me steady my board then pats it to indicate I have to haul myself up. This conversation feels oddly deep and cryptic to be having while I am simultaneously grappling with a surfboard twice my height and flailing helplessly like a beached whale to stay on said surfboard. “Just remember to look straight and pop up25 with your hands” he reassures me, “ok? You got this. Now stand!” he commands as he pushes me into the oncoming wave.

By some miracle or perhaps sheer determination not to let Magnus down, I did stand up. It is an amazing feeling, the rush, the speed, the sheer joy of knowing I achieved my goal - for the first time in my life I stood up on a surfboard. I can hear Magnus cheering, something he never normally condescends to do. I must have been one of his least athletically inclined and most hesitant students. As the waves guide me back to the beach I see some of the other UppX’s members, all drenched in seawater, all grinning from ear to ear “did you catch a wave?”26 they ask. That was when it struck me; that there is an odd camaraderie to both surfing and being a member of a sports club like UppX. There was a joint appreciation for the strength and skills required to even stand, irrespective of age or indeed gender. Then there is this rush, that kick of adrenalin as you battle Mother Nature at her strongest. I am bombarded by the waves as soon as I re-enter the surf, ready for round two. At this moment I think to myself, while spitting seawater from my mouth as I navigate the

25 ‘pop up’ meaning to literally push yourself up off of the surfboard into an upright position after paddling to catch a wave.
26 Asking; “did you catch a wave?” is an enquiry to establish if someone managed to fully stand up and surf.
waves back over to Magnus for another launching: “this is for your fieldwork you can to do this - but how on earth did I get here?”.

Ericeira is not one of the most forgiving places to learn to surf, with its unrelenting waves and strong currents. Especially, when I later found out that the beach that we were taught on ‘Praia do Matadouro’ can actually be translated as ‘Slaughter House Beach’ and is not always recommended for first time surfers. This could explain why I ended up looking like I had entered into an altercation with a shark, as my right foot left a trail of blood on the beach, but this is a story for another time perhaps. I had come to Ericeira in Portugal, searching for answers about gender equality in Sweden. Ironically I learnt more about how my Swedish participants acted in their private spheres whilst ‘throwing shakas’ at Swedes in Portugal and being launched like a fledgling ballistic missile by a Norwegian, who one of my camp mates playfully referred to (secretly) as the “sexy yeti”.

A Cabin With A View

Within this section I analyse how the word ‘utopia’ is often too liberally used when praising the Nordic countries for being family orientated, deeply committed to sustainable living, having a profound connection to nature and their egalitarian values (Booth, 2015). I would argue that in this case, the surf cabin and the Swedish summer cabin, that I shall be discussing in the next chapter, are what Foucault dubbed a ‘heterotopia’. Firstly, Foucault defined a utopia as presenting society in ‘a perfect form’ (1986: 24) and that ‘these utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces’ (ibid). Foucault took the concept of a heterotopia from human geography and elaborated that since a utopia is a ‘placeless place’ (ibid), more so than even Augé’s (1995) non-places that do actually exist, then a heterotopia is between reality and this myth of a utopia. Foucault gave the example of a mirror as a reflection of a society, or in his metaphor the person looking into a mirror, as a counter-space of reality being a reflection but also distorted: ‘at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal’ (1986: 24 [edited]).
Secondly, Foucault claimed that heterotopias can take many forms and there is no one defining universal heterotopia (1986: 24). He gives the example of a newly emerging temporal heterotopia of vacation villages (ibid: 26), that are apposing in their abolition of time and yet the experience is a rediscovery of time and historical knowledge persevered and encapsulated when being acted out in microcosms of space, they encapsulate a slice of life (ibid). Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga (2003) in their collective work maintain that the ‘construction of gender and space are mutually constructed process that find expressions over time’ (ibid: 12). Therefore, it can be argued that the heterotopia of the cabin culture that I observed being practiced by UppX members was formed in Sweden and other Nordic nations as a reconnection to a romanticised preservation of a national identity. I found that during my fieldwork cabins also took on a role in facilitating the gender equal goals and values we see manifested and reproduced in the surf cabin in Portugal.

In Conclusion

In this first ethnographic chapter I have introduced the key participants to this study and provided a few anecdotal episodes of our time together in the field. I have shown that the contextual setting of a cabin and its spatial importance can be transported and recreated under the right conditions even outside of Sweden to positive effect. I shall now be summarising how our surf cabin in Portugal became a Nordic cabin, with the interesting number of Swedish and Norwegian guests that descended upon Rapture Surf Camp while I was staying there with UppX. Foucault's (1986) concept of a ‘heterotopia’ was applied while arguing that while we stayed in the surf cabin, it not only influenced how my participants acted, but they also made the space become a microcosm of Swedish culture. The observations that I made during my time in the surf cabin were relational; the ‘sense of place’ and gender relations that I have described would probably be an entirely different experience. Places have dynamic identities and are a part of on going spatial and social negotiations since ‘places do not have single, unique ‘identities’; they are full of internal conflicts’ (Massey, 2001: 156).
The Surf Cabin was a space or a heterotopia of constant cultural and social negotiation. There was a gradual negotiation of UppX adapting to their new environment as the participants in my study appeared to adapt to the surfing lifestyle through; buying Rapture Surf Camp merchandise and their shift to usage of vocabulary specific to surfing. It is relevant to note, that Sofie had been to Rapture Surf Camp the previous year and I feel that she would not have chosen to come back if the surf cabin was not run in a manner that did not live up to her expectations of gender equal sports and interactions. Not only was the cabin run with gender equal accessibility in mind rather than simply replicating ‘masculine’ sports camp vibes, but since Sofie and her board members were leading this trip they made sure everyone felt comfortable. As Sofie informed me when we fist met she wanted UppX to be an accessible club and that meant men and women working and participating as equals because as she put it; “you don’t do sports with your gender”.

The following chapter will be an exploration of my fieldwork back in Sweden and my subsequent visit in July 2017 to spend a week during the summer break in a classic red and white family cabin. In the following sections, I shall be discussing various sporting activities that facilitated not only a relaxed family atmosphere but also strengthen gender equal values. This environment was a direct result of how the cabin was run and also the inclusive nature of the sporting activities conducted outside of the cabin’s walls.
5. Summer In Sweden

In my previous ethnographic chapter I presented how Rapture Surf Camp in Portugal took on aspects of a Swedish sports cabin and defined it as what Foucault (1986) dubbed a heterotopia. In this ethnographic chapter shall be exploring a family summer cabin located in Sweden. This shall be examined through the use of Wacquant’s (2007) carnal sociology. I shall also be incorporating theories surrounding the spatial turn by examining works from geographers such as Massey’s theories on a ‘sense of place’, defined as the character a place holds (Massey, 2001: 156). This shall be applied as well as further literature on the role cabins play in forming Swedish values and establishing and maintaining the Swedish national character, whose values include ambitions of a more egalitarian and gender equal society.

In this ethnographic chapter I shall be focusing on three of my key participants (Bernard, 2011: 196); Amanda, William and Rahmat and the time we spent in the summer of 2017, after first meeting and sharing a room during the UppX surf trip to Portugal. It is important to note that this aspect of my time with members of UppX was not initially meant to be included in this thesis but with my participants’ encouragement I have decided to include this cabin trip as my main example of a Swedish family summer cabin. Hendry (1999), even admits that at times ‘Anthropologists can be quite a burden, so inquisitive are they about every minute detail of ordinary life’ (ibid: xiii). The time I spent in the summer at Amanda’s family cabin was my first ever experience of a cabin and I am very grateful to her and her family for being so willing to introduce and teach me all that they could about their lives (Please see Appendix 3 for photographs).

A Very Swedish Summer

I met Amanda, William and Rahmat when we became roommates during our surf trip with UppX and practically spent all of our time together exploring the areas around
the surf cabin. We had stayed in touch ever since then and always seemed to congregate together at all of the subsequent UppX events such as the ‘barbecue, rounder’s and slack lining’ meet up that was hosted shortly after we had arrived back in Sweden. I had also visited Amanda’s house after a day of exploring the lakes around Uppsala. I can still recall how cold the water felt to me, and yet William, Amanda and Rahmat all happily jumped in for their first swim of the summer. Later that day at Amanda’s family home she had told her mother “Viking” (which is spelt the same in both English and Swedish only said with a longer ‘V’ and a stronger ‘e’ sound; vveking) while grinning from ear to ear. When I asked what she meant by this she said that she was jokingly referring to their Viking blood keeping them immune to the cold water. I rather liked this thought, that somehow their ancestors had made them stronger, be they male or female they had a sense of a ‘warriors’ spirit. Since we were on the topic of all things typically ‘Swedish’ this was when I made the comment that their family home looked just like a Swedish summer cabin. This was how I first learnt of Amanda’s family cabin and she suggested I joined her and her family there for some of the summer.

If Amanda’s family cabin was anything like her home; a perfectly picturesque red and white traditional wooden house with a hammock strung from two trees in the garden, and a mini Wendy house built by Amanda’s father for her to look like their real home as well as a menagerie of pets; then I was in for a very exciting trip. Anderson, Wishart and Vaté (2013) address the origins of the ‘hearth and home’ by examining their affiliations to complex relatedness with how differing forms of kinship shape and in turn are shaped by our built material environments (ibid: 1). Rapoport (1969) also advocated that the building of a house is a cultural phenomenon (ibid: 46) that influenced the tangible material structures of our dwellings, that are constructed to be fitting for not only the purpose of our lifestyles but our world-views.

This stance is also applied by Bourdieu (1977) in his concept of habitus and how we produce our material environment, which in turn influences our behaviours. Rooksby and Hillier (2016), links a ‘sense of place’ to Bourdieu’s ‘Habitus’ and build their chapters around a conference held in 2000 of the same name as the edited works
‘Habitus: A Sense of Place’ (2016). In their work they define the correlation of these concepts of habitus as a ‘sense of one’s (and others’) place and role in the world of one’s lived environment. […] habitus is an embodied, as well as a cognitive, sense of place’ (ibid: 21 [edited]). The ‘sense of place’ of being typically ‘Swedish’ that Amanda’s family home held was for me due to the resemblance to a red and white wooden cabin, that are typically constructed very differently than the brick built house that I had grown up in. Massey (2001) points out that when it comes to defining the a sense of place and a concept like ‘home’:

‘Of course geography makes a difference - it is a point which geographers have been arguing for a decade - but ‘presence-availability’ does not somehow do away with issues of representation and interpretation. That place called home was never an unmediated experience. ‘ (ibid: 164)

Within Chapter 3.2 that I entitled ‘Cabin Fever’ I referred to Ohlsen, Kaminski and Quintero (2015) observations on the cabin culture in Sweden since most Swedes aspire to own ‘a little wooden cottage’ (ibid: 306). Gannon and Pillai, (2012) in their edited works on global cultures, also state under their chapter on Sweden that the ‘dream for most Swedes is to spend the summer in the family stuga’ (ibid: 145 [original emphasis]). As discussed in Chapter 3.2, ‘stuga’ can be translated as ‘cottage’ but I was always taught to refer to this form of building as a cabin. These cabins according to Gannon and Pillai are typically a ‘small wooden house, painted the traditional reddish-brown color that is the byproduct of copper mining’ (ibid), with the doors and windows traditionally painted white. Whilst, the interiors of the cabin typically consisting of modest facilities and functional furnishings (ibid). However, they dedicated an entire section in their discussion of Sweden to the topic of equality. They began with declaring that the summer cabin ‘brings into focus most of the important values in Sweden, including equality’ (ibid: 151). They credit this to the cabin facilitating the practice and use of both ancient tradition of ‘Allemansrätt’ (the right to roam) and the moral force of ‘jämlikhet’ a universal term used in Sweden that refers to the creation of equal opportunities (class, race or gender) (ibid).
The Ängskärs Cabin

Location: on the road to Ängskärs, Sweden

We are driving along in Amanda’s open top Jeep blasting music as we make our way through the Swedish countryside. The car is packed to the gunnels with all of our bags for the cabin trip and sitting buried under our bags in the back seat Rahmat and I are enthusiastically gobbling ice-lollies. It is a perfectly blue-skied summers day and I am about to have my first ever experience of staying in an authentic Swedish Cabin. From central Uppsala the drive to the cabin took roughly an hour as we headed towards the coast, to stay in the cabins Amanda’s mormor (grandmother) had gifted to her mother and aunt.

As we pulled up the small grit road that was almost concealed by the tall trees that had lined the last stretch of our drive, I could see cabins on all sides of the road. When we neared Amanda’s one story cabin we were greeted by enthusiastic barks from Alice. Alice, who I had met before at Amanda’s house, I had learnt from our initial encounter, likes to bark for about two to five minutes when people arrive and after that she is the sweetest French bulldog you could ever hope to meet, oh and she likes lettuce. After the obligatory greeting to Alice who, now satisfied she had valiantly guarded her home had trotted off back inside, I could take in the cabins. Parked on the drive next to the Jeep was a speedboat on a trailer, and some bikes, that were placed next to the path that led to the cabin. The main cabin had a porch that wrapped around the front and side of it. Inside it was designed for open plan living with the entrance hall flowing into the kitchen and built in dining table and onto the living room. The main cabin was the equivalent of open dining room on the surf trip as it acted as the main hub or heart of the cabins. Amanda’s aunt and her children stayed in the more modern cabin across the road while we would be housed in one of the smaller self-contained classic styled cabins next to the main structure.
On the same plot as the main cabin were two other cabins, both painted red and white, the larger of which also had a porch was where we would be staying. On the porch was a table and chairs and an attached ‘outhouse’ of sorts which housed my arch nemesis for the trip; the cold toilet\textsuperscript{27}. A terrifying contraption for someone who is used to a flushing toilet, but more commonly found in older structures situated in less densely populated areas. This was also very good for preserving limited water reserves, drawn by the cabin’s drinking well from natural aquifers and was utilised for the bathroom and kitchen. My hosts did not recommend drinking the water and we mostly drank from store bought bottled water. The cabin that we stayed in was fitted with a small self-contained kitchenette and dining table, but we mostly cooked our food and ate our meals inside or on the porch of the main cabin. Built into the wall were four bunk beds made up of two doubles and two singles. The cabins were situated in a clearing of tall evergreen trees that made the area feel snug like a mini forest haven, despite the neighbours cabin and the other family cabins being on the same road, this made the main cabin and its surrounding smaller ones feel surprisingly private and secluded.

In Sweden there seems to be considerably more of a ‘cabin culture’ than in the U.K. and the Swedes are much more open to utilising what Hincks (2018) and Gelter (2000: 79) pointed out they have in abundance; land. Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga (2003), observe that the meaning that landscapes form and mediate are constructed “places”, that imbue the physical environment with social meaning through social structures such as kinship (ibid: 16). These relationships tie us to a place and create a spatial identity for both the person and the land (ibid). Cabins, due to their location seem to hold a certain power in representing both nature and culture in a somewhat romanticised ideal and yet a key historical narrative of the Swedish version of the American dream; an original, traditional, simpler life closer to nature where families reconnect and societal values such as equality are upheld (Müller, 1999: 31).

\textsuperscript{27}Also called a bucket toilet, dry toilet or freezing toilet. This is a non-flushing toilet where the collective waste is deposited in a large bag placed in a pedestal type toilet.
We started off our first day at the cabin with a bike ride to one of the inlets off the gulf of Bothnia, or Bottenhavet in Swedish, that is a northern arm of the Baltic Sea. By participating in this activity I was able to see even more red and white cabins that populated the area around the Ängskärs nature reserve; and I have never seen so many flagpoles in my life. There is a great sense of pride and care taken with all of the cabins that I saw since their red and white paint was, as far as I could see, never visibly faded or peeling. Furthermore, many of the bigger cabins were situated in large gardens that were beautifully appointed. Amanda told me that sometimes people will simply move into their cabins as a full time home if they are big enough and have easy access to cities or towns for work and amenities.

Amanda, William and Rahmat also pointed out and stopped to look at various plants along the way that had berries that could be picked at certain times of the year such as cloudberries or lingonberries. There seems to be a basic ‘folk knowledge’ that I had to learn in order to fully engage in my carnal sociology (Wacquant, 2007: 40) that was connected to how my Swedish participants saw, inhabited and indeed utilised their environment. During my fieldwork especially during my cabin trip excursion in Sweden, the way my participants interacted with their environment as we walked, compared with how I saw it was very insightful.

William, Rahmat and Amanda knew the name of many different types of vegetation and their usage or edibility that grew wild in Sweden. When I asked them how they knew this they explained that they would often learn such things in school on outings into nature, through sports trips held outdoors such as hiking or from their family when on a cabin trip, as I was now. As already mentioned, Wacquant (2007) highlights that that an ethnographer should never underestimate the importance of such conversations since they convey sometimes obscure information in the ‘hidden curriculum’ (ibid: 40) that those in an emic perspective already know but are passing on to the ethnographer. Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga (2003), discuss the importance of
the practice of ‘walking, naming, narrating and remembering […] [which] develops a theory of lived spatial practices’ (ibid: 32).

Rooksby and Hillier (2016), claim that in one of the case studies in their collective works of Waterso’s observation on the Sa’dan Toraja people of Sulawesi in Indonesia, she observed a deeper connection to their landscape and that this form of ‘habitus incorporated a strong sense of place of everyone and everything’ (ibid: 27). Waterson illustrates the important element of habitus as ‘history, passed on through generations […] [as] recitations of myth and memory’ (ibid). Anderson, Wishart and Vaté (2013) as already discussed, also refer to a set of ‘cosmological beliefs’ that serve as a mnemonic ‘between the parts of the home and the whole – the landscape’ (ibid: 9). This application takes the concept of habitus (Bourdieu, 1977) as a sense of place (Massey, 2001), but also as a taught ‘mnemonic’ of environmental habitus (Barfield, 2009: 29). These ongoing mostly unseen negotiations of identity and behaviours when applied to my observations of the cabins and their surrounding areas, is very enlightening. This is because parallels can be drawn with the Swedish ‘folk knowledge’ (Wacquant, 2007: 40) that Amanda, William and Rahmat were trying to pass on to me as we explored the nature around Ängskärs and in the private domestic sphere of the cabin.

5.1 Nurturing Nature

Within this subchapter I examine the debates surrounding the dichotomies of female to male and nature to culture These following subsections analyse encounters with learning how embodied space and the use of it is as a ‘gendered’ cultural concept that is not a universal behavioural action (Low, 2009: Nakhal, 2015). Additionally, I discuss concepts such as ‘friluftsliv’, ‘allemansrätten’ and ‘allemannsrett’. Followed by another ethnographic account from the cabin in Ängskärs.
MacCormack and Strathern (1980), highlight that they view the dichotomies and concepts of ‘Nature’ and ‘Culture’ as ‘cultural constructs’ (ibid: 5). They claim that many works of ethnographic literature:

‘suggests that rather than viewing women as metaphorically in nature, they (and men) might better be seen as mediating between nature and culture, in the reciprocity of marriage exchange, socializing children into adults, transforming raw meat and vegetable into cooked food, cultivating, domesticating, and making cultural products of all sorts.’ (ibid: 9)

Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga (2003) discuss structuralist interpretations of gender relations such as in Bourdieu’s ‘The Berber House’ (1970) that ‘link women with categories of symbolic meaning such as “nature” in opposition to linkages between men, “culture”, and other symbolic categories’ (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga, 2003: 9). Bourdieu (1970) examines the Berber house and the division in the male and female roles in society with the dichotomies of masculine and feminine. He looks at the female private sphere and the male public sphere in relation to divisions of space with men outside and women inside. The division of inside to outside space, as a dichotomy of male to female spatial relations, from my observations of the cabins in my fieldwork was not observable. As already stated there was no division of normally explicitly divided spaces such as bathroom or sleeping arrangements, in the cabins that I conducted my fieldwork in. Additionally, the use of outdoor space was equally utilised through sports by all of the participants from UppX.

Ortner, in her article, within Rosaldo and Lamphere’s collective works (1974) examines the dichotomies of the female to male and nature to culture debate. She pronounces the entire nature : culture distinction as a product of culture (ibid: 84), which MacCormack and Strathern (1980) also refer to in making their argument on the dichotomies of these theories, but they highlight that Ortner ‘retreats from the extreme position by acknowledging women's role in mediating between nature and culture’ (ibid: 9). One of Ortner’s points that I wished to highlight once again was her observation on the ‘domestic unit’ implying the embodiment of typically a woman’s role as a mother within the domestic sphere. This is what Ortner terms ‘mediating’ the
socialisation of children from nature into culture (1974: 84). This means that the domestic unit is key for:

‘Any culture’s continued viability [which] depends upon properly socialized individuals who will see the world in that culture’s terms and adhere more or less unquestioningly to its moral precepts’ (ibid)

Thus, Ortner concludes the whole dichotomy of male to culture and women to nature is a construct of culture than ‘a fact of nature’ (ibid: 87) and in ‘reality’ a ‘woman’ is no closer nor further from nature than a man is (ibid). This is in keeping with concepts of the social and cultural constructions and embodiments of gender identities and realities, what makes a ‘man’ a man and a ‘woman’ a woman is not universal. Ortner believes that social change on societies views can only ‘grow out of a different social actuality; a different social actuality can only grow out of a different cultural view’ (ibid). The participants in my own fieldwork echoed this sentiment and I found that many of their views expressed that only a continued commitment could enact concepts of gender equality, since even though Sweden is perceived as being an egalitarian ‘utopia’ (Gustafsson and Kola: 2008: 27; Booth, 2015; Ohlsen, Kaminski and Quintero, 2015: 292) is not a realistic goal but instead an on going process. This could explain why the Swedish government and also Sofie were so keen to highlight how their gender equal and feminist values benefited not just women but also men, thereby benefiting society as a whole. Additionally, this is why I highlighted that I chose to refer to cabins as a heterotopia for they are real places with ongoing negotiations of power and values.

Cabins as a form of domestic sphere seem to be an interesting medium of ‘mediation’ (Ortner, 1974), a place that is not the full time domestic sphere and yet due to their ‘sense of place’ they hold an idealised form of the domestic unit. MacCormack and Strathern (1980) highlight that structural models such as kinship are ‘dynamic in that they are concerned with becoming and transforming’ (ibid: 7). Cabins preserve a romanticised sense of place that, as well as being imbued with social and cultural values, also helps construct what I observed of cabins being a safe space associated with ‘stasis and nostalgia, and with an enclosed security’ (Massey, 2001: 167). For example, Inga told me that she “grew up close to the mountains and the Nature” and would often go skiing with her parents in winter. Sofie also added that she got her love of outdoor sport from her parents who were “always outside”.
These statements highlight another interesting phenomenon; the Swedish relationship played out when in a space such as a cabin and their connection to nature or, as it is often referred to somewhat reverently, ‘the nature’.

This use of ‘the nature’ when the topic of a natural environment came into conversation could be seen as a grammatical error, yet it was so widespread among not only those who participated in my studies but chance encounters or random conversations that I did not even have to initiate. This term was not used by all of my participants, but when I asked or pointed it out to someone who did use ‘the nature’, people contemplated their reasons but seemed to have no explanation for why this was. Some even grew embarrassed that I was picking up on an ‘error’ in their English. This was certainly not the case, as even I found my own lexicon shifting in conversations and found myself using ‘the nature’ in sentences where I would normally have simply used ‘nature’ on its own. Such a relationship to the nature from my observations is encouraged through a frequent use of cabins and the sporting activities that are undertaken while staying in these normally isolated areas of natural beauty. This was a view conveyed to me across many of the interviews I conducted, the importance of sports getting them outside utilising their bodies, irrespective of gender and encouraging them to participate equally in family sporting activities outdoors.

*Lessons From Friluftsliv*

The term of ‘friluftsliv’ does not have an English equivalent in meaning but directly translated from both Swedish and Norwegian can be defined as ‘free-air-life’ (Gurholt, 2007: 1). Consequently, it would seem that the meaning of ‘friluftsliv’ conjures different associations across the Nordic Nations, as Gelter (2000) interprets it:

‘The essence of friluftsliv is difficult to define. It is a concept that can be found among outdoor people all over the world, but as a specific philosophy, and the use of a special word for it, is unique for Scandinavia, especially in Norway and Sweden. Here friluftsliv is deeply rooted in the soul of the people although far from everyone practices it. In Norway friluftsliv
is an important part of most people’s lives and a way of living close to the beautiful landscapes of the country. In Sweden and Denmark the word recently has obtained a more technical meaning in outdoor activities and has lost its philosophical dimension.’ (ibid: 79)

This is in keeping with how my participant Amanda phrased ‘friluftsliv’ as conveying an ‘active life outdoors’. Over the course of my fieldwork several participants have suggested that I should include the terms: sometimes written as ‘allemansrätten’ or by Gannon and Pillai, (2012) as ‘allemannsrett’ which is more typically used in Norway, which are both translated as the ‘right/freedom to roam’ or ‘the right to access’. For example, when I contacted Amanda, William and Rahmat asking them to help me define ‘friluftsliv’, William immediately asked if I was including ‘allemansrätten’. Amanda explained these terms for me as:

‘Friluftsliv = stuff that active naturepeople like to do outside. Hike, walk, ski, make a fire and build a tent etc [...] I think walking around in [the] forest around Ångskär is like friluftsliv… But allemansrätten is the right to build a tent and use wood/sticks etc.’

Gelter goes on to explain that ‘friluftsliv’ and what he translates as the ‘unwritten law of “Allemansrätten” (“everyones-right”) in Sweden and Norway that allows everyone access to the land, even private property’ (2000: 79), which is intrinsically linked to the Swedish peoples own self-image of ‘nature loving people’ (ibid). Gelter accredits this image to being ‘partly based on these countries’ unpopulated landscape, where even urban people have free nature very close by for recreation’ (ibid).

Backman (2010), makes the claim that in the philosophy of friluftsliv the foundations for gender equal values can be found. Although there are issues surrounding this connection, Backman maintains that friluftsliv in outdoor education, specifically in Swedish schools, is not practiced with notions of masculinity and femininity (ibid: 107-108). This is in keeping with my findings as Sofie and Inga told me that in Sweden they are typically taught together and if divided it is based on skill not gender. This is unlike the physical education system in England and my own experiences where boys and girls are segregated for outdoor physical education. I
discussed with Sofie and Inga the saying/insult “throwing or running like a girl”. They both claimed to have heard this term before and agreed that when they were younger they might have even said it themselves, without fully understanding the implications.

They went onto tell me about how in ‘Brännboll’, which sounded to me like a game of rounders they played in mixed gendered teams. By contrast at many schools in England, we are divided by gender to play this team sport. However, in Brännboll there were two styles of bats; one flat and one rounder shaped one, which Inga and Sofie told me that the boys used to tease each other and the female students to “use the women’s bat”, since apparently it was easier to hit the ball with a flatter bat. So even though they were not segregated by gender in Sweden stereotyping of women’s and men’s sporting ability is present. Backman (2010) claims that this is being addressed in Sweden by having male and female teachers represented when teaching students the importance of friluftsliv in outdoor pursuits such as sports thus making it an equalising force.

However, the criticism of this stance of friluftsliv contributing to equality also highlights that those with ‘a high degree of economic and cultural capital are more involved in practicing friluftsliv compared to groups with a low degree of economic and cultural capital’ (ibid: 108). It could also be argued, that this could be applied to cabins, since they imply a sense of what Bourdieu (1996 [1979]) might call a bourgeoisie lifestyle, with the materialistic luxury of a second home or such dispositions (habitus) of friluftsliv. Regardless of such arguments, I would advocate the nature of the private family space of cabins and philosophy’s of friluftsliv and allemansrätten are two aspects of the Swedish nation that help further rather than hinder equal interactions, especially in gender equality as argued by both Gannon and Pillai, (2012) and Backman (2010).

For example, in Sweden there are over 100,000 lakes (Ohlsen, Kaminski and Quintero, 2015: 19) and it was the first country in Europe to establish a national park in 1909. To date there are 29 but also 2600 smaller nature reserves; this amounts to
covering 9 per cent of Sweden (ibid: 313). All of these areas are free for public use to participate in activities such as swimming, or hiking, Nordic walking or simply to incorporate friluftsliv and allemansrätten into aspects of your life. Ängskärs where Amanda’s cabin was based there is also a large nature reserve and multiple bodies of water that we could access freely throughout our trip. Additionally, during the summer I went on multiple trips to lakes around Uppsala not just with my Swedish participants but with other international students. Some of whom decided to rent bikes, to cycle around and take in more of the Swedish nature. I hope to make the point that visiting lakes and making use of allemansrätten, is not something reserved for ‘bourgeoisie’ Swedish citizens, but is accessible and free to anyone who wishes to spend time outdoors.

The next ethnographic episode is a further example of how my fellow cabin goers, Amanda, William, Rahmat and myself made use of allemansrätten, as we explored the islands and forests around Ängskärs.

*Pyttipanna For Breakfast And Island Hopping Before Noon*

After our first night in the cabin following our bike tour and lessons on the flora and fauna of Ängskärs, I awake in my top bunk to the whines coming from the floor below. Alice had been let into our little cabin and is due her tribute; a morning pet from each of her adoring subjects, even Rahmat who by his own admission is ‘not a dog person’ is warming up to her. For breakfast we make our way to the main cabin with Alice in tow and cook up something Rahmat claims I have to try. I automatically dismiss this dish as sounding awful, but once again I apply Geertz’s tactic ‘when in Rome’ (2005: 58) and eating counts as Wacquant’s sensory theory of carnal sociology where main ‘tool of inquiry’ (ibid: viii) was himself. The dish is called ‘pytt i panna’ Rahmat, William and Amanda tell me the best translation for it is ‘bits in a pan’ and a quick Google translate defines it as ‘hash’ which tells me nothing and has me even more worried.
Pytt i panna turns out to be a combination of meat, potatoes and onions all diced and served with a fried egg. Rahmat apologies for it being frozen and not made from what we had lying around but by this point I have just tasted my new favourite quick meal on a student budget, so I am not complaining. After copious amounts of impossibly strong coffee that Amanda’s father makes in a large flask every morning of our trip, we are off on our next adventure.

On the agenda today is a boat trip with Amanda’s father, brother and two younger cousins and of course Amanda, William and Rahmat. We cycle ahead to the dock to unlock the gate while Amanda’s father brings the boat on the trailer. Once all eight of us have donned our life vests and boarded the boat we set off, speeding past the reed covered banks to where the sweetwater and the sea meet. Since the boat is too heavy for all eight of us to be in it to get up to speed so we can take turns water-skiing, we are dropped off on the little island Amanda tells me that she has been visiting with her family since she was small. Walking around the island gave me the opportunity to observe not only the way everyone took turns water-skiing but also when on the rocky island how surefooted my Swedish companions were. They jumped from one jagged rock to another and seemed to instinctively know where to place their next step. When I asked them how they knew how to do this compared with my clumsy arm waving technique to try and keep my balance, they simply told me they “just did”.

This confident surefootedness is not something I noticed in only my male participants but also in Amanda and the other female members of UppX during our trip to Portugal. All of the UppX members were able to clamber up rocky walls in the blink of an eye. There were no doubts or reservations about their ability or their right to be accessing these remote places due to laws such as allemansrätten. Keskinen et al. (2009), in their collective works examining the Nordic regions state that their ‘gender relations are based on the principle of equality. Men and women have equal rights in families, in politics, in education, at work and at leisure.’ (ibid: 381 [emphasis added]). The cabins were indeed facilitating these equal relationships, not only inside the privacy of the domestic sphere but also providing a further safe space
out in the nature that surrounded the cabins. For instance the woods that surrounded the cabin, the beach, the islands all became a part of the experience of our ‘sense of place’ as we were all openly encouraged as guests in Amanda’s cabin to roam where we liked around Ängskärs. There were no expectations upon myself or Amanda or her female cousins that we would not want to join in with every sporting activity that her male family members did.

To link back to how agile my Swedish companions were when exploring the island or even walking through the forests around Ängskärs, not once did they try to aid me in my clumsy trail, they simply lead the way. During, one of our walks William handed me Alice’s lead and told me ‘she’ll lead you, just follow’, which resulted in me being dragged into a deep muddy puddle. I was not patronised or given a hand or an arm to hold because I was a woman. On the contrary, they fully believed that I could make my own way across the challenging terrain as surefootedly as they could. When staying in a cabin people would typically spend their days ‘enjoying nature, canoeing, hiking, swimming and fishing’ (Müller, 1999: 76) also exploring and walking in forests are ‘mentioned as a major activity in Sweden’ (ibid: 183). All of these activities and more were a possibility that was offered to me by my hosts at the summer cabin. Comer (2004), claims that such activities are typically classed under the ‘masculine terrain of adventure sports, the premium on strength, fitness and mental acuity is big’ (ibid: 246).

Nguyen (2008) discusses these concepts of ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ ways of inhabiting and utilising the body. In her examination of topics on patriarchy, power and concepts of female masculinity, she looks at spatial supremacy in casual settings and compares how typically ‘male’ actions in space occupation when acted out by a woman is often labelled as ‘butch’. She believes that mannerisms and space occupation that ‘butch’ women command displays a ‘greater ease and sense of ownership’ (1998: 673). This embodiment of traditionally rationalised ‘masculine’ qualities when conducted by a woman are often perceived as behaving in an ‘unladylike’ or overtly ‘aggressive’ (ibid) manner. Butler (1990), argues that by making such stereotypical divisions:
‘the female sex becomes restricted to its body, and the male body, fully disavowed, becomes, paradoxically, the incorporeal instrument of an ostensibly radical freedom.’ (ibid: 11-12 [emphasis added])

This newfound sense of ‘freedom’ that I was slowly adapting to was an interesting lesson in how I had doubted my capabilities in this setting. This allowed for a discovery of how far a person can push themselves physically, which was being facilitated by cabin culture where there tends to be more time spent outside of the cabin than inside of it. As discussed the Feminist Foreign Policy handbook (2018) addresses women’s rights to feel safe and to have ‘freedom of movement’ (ibid: 22) and right to feel safe in the ‘Reality in which they live’ (ibid: 11).

From my observations and from what I have taken from various theorists, cabins represent this romanticised notion of exploring nature and having the freedom to do so through land access rights such as allemansrätten is a part of expressing that for both the male and female participants in this thesis. In the next subchapter I explore further what this romanticising of cabins and their spatial and temporal significance conveys.

5.2 Romanticising The Past

Löfgren, (2003), states that in the setting of a Swedish family home, there is a 'domestic tableau’ (ibid: 144) and in the past the styles of the home or in this case cabins vary but ultimately convey a sense of ‘romance, sentimentality and fantasy’ (ibid), an escape to an idealised world. But had gender equal values always been present in Swedish Cabins?
Masculine Mountain Cabins

From my fieldwork I have found cabins to be a relational and dynamic place, yet they hold nostalgia and act as a ‘mnemonic’ (Barfield, 2009: 29; Anderson, Wishart and Vaté, 2013: 9). As introduced in Chapter 1: ‘as place is sensed, senses are placed; as places make sense, sense makes place’ (Feld, 2008: 91). Places make sense as memories and taught embodiment cabin culture is also ever changing to fit the needs and current ideals of Swedish cabin goers. Ardener, in her work ‘Women and Space’ (1981) explores how the organisation of a space such as a cabin as well as the meanings and use of that space suggest a hierarchy in the societal structure, which conveys our ideologies within it.

Nakhal (2015) makes the similar observation of how the structures of such spaces can take on and also form these ‘unconscious ideologies’ (ibid: 17). Rotman (2006), also discusses the dichotomies of domesticity. She claims that social relations and the ideologies that shape them are ‘fluid, allowing for differential adoption of gender roles and variation in the physical spaces in which they operated.’ (ibid: 667). As already stated Massey (2001), in her understanding of ‘sense of place’ argued that rather than understanding places as areas of boundaries they can be interpreted as dynamic articulated relational moments, situated in networks of constantly negotiated social relations and understandings (Massey, 2001: 5; Convery, Corsane and Davis, 2012: 1).

For example, I would like to highlight Rees’s (2014), exploration of the history of cabins, where she analyses examples from literature mapping the roles of cabins in the Nordic countries, specifically in Norway. However, as previously stated her observations have been an interesting point of comparison to my own. Rees gives an overview of Britt Karin Larsen’s 1996 novel ‘Munnen igresset’ (The Mouth in the Grass) where she examines the main character of Elisabeth and her role and thoughts on the cabin, compared with that of her husbands Sigurd. In Larsen’s work she depicts how nature further separates Elisabeth from her husband and her two children, who she sees becoming men. Their cabin practices are very much dictated by how
Elisabeth sees the cabin as an ‘exclusively male space’ (Ress, 2014: 158) where she is trapped. This is because her identity in her children’s eyes is reinforced by her husband’s view of her role as a woman and a mother being reduced to a ‘domestic servant’ (ibid).

Rees dubs these dichotomies as ‘masculine mountain cabins and feminine rural cottages’ (ibid), the same space only seen as spatially different arenas depending on who is the observer and who is being observed. Rees rationalises that unlike in Larsen’s novel a modern cabin is seen with a less segregated view and are used for more recreational purposes to fit with modern social ideals of family and the use of leisure time in nature. Which Rees claims:

‘might also be understood as a result of decades of social engineering, not least in regard to gender equality. In the post-war period, cabins become unabashedly the realm of the family.’
(ibid: 16).

Rees further claims that the cabin only developed into the ones I have experienced due to ‘baby boomer and “generation X” […] the only two generations so far to have grown up with the Spartan values of golden age social democratic leisure practices.’ (ibid). This is where Rees makes her conclusion that the cabins in today’s Nordic countries are what Foucault (1986) classified as heterotopias. Rees states that she sees:

‘the cabin as perhaps the single most important heterotopia […] both because of how it functions today in the lives of so many people, but also because of the important role it has played historically as a representation of national ideals and as a meeting point between nature and civilization’ (2014: 10 [edited]).

**Modern Issues, Old Problems**

The issues highlighted by Rees (2014) and by the participants in my study in relation to cabins being seen to use Massey’s (2001) analysis of the domestic sphere; ‘as much a place of conflict […] as of repose’ (ibid: 11 [edited]), it would appear is due to them
mostly being used as bases for activities such as hiking or hunting and in the case of the surf cabin these all appeal to stereotypes of ‘masculine’ pastimes (Comer 2004: 246).

In Sweden however, there seems to be a heightened awareness among my participants that classification on what is masculine and feminine are both capable of being negative concepts and that gender equality is beneficial for both men and women. For example, when I conducted some interviews prior to meeting Sofie and Inga or joining UppX, I had spoken to Adam the then First Curator of Stockholm Nation in Uppsala, whilst following up on an inquiry into gender equality among the student body and their Nation’s role in ensuring such an environment. When I asked about gender equality in Sweden and concepts of masculinity he explained that “it is not a good thing to be masculine in any way […] quite the opposite”. To link back to the information I gathered on Sweden.se, under the section ‘Men’s violence against women’ the term ‘macho’ is discussed as being considered a negative attribute in Swedish society and not a trait to aspire to.

When I interviewed my participant Alex, a fellow student who has lived in Sweden for three years who is of English, Italian descent and asked for his opinion on this term, he said that it is “connected to being a ‘lad’, being into sport and working out in a gym […] but also connected to showing off and the kind of attitude that goes with it”. Alex believes that in Sweden to uphold traits that are the opposite of ‘macho’ is more highly regarded, even aesthetically by having longer hair and having more egalitarian norms. He gave the examples of not feeling the obligation as a ‘man’ to pay for a woman’s drinks or dinner, and by doing so they are actively not taking on the traditional role of a ‘breadwinner’. I then asked the First Curator Adam specifically about the term ‘macho’ since according to Booth (2015) and Sweden.se is seen to be a very negative word in Sweden he replied that:

“I don’t know if I would ever consider it a positive thing but, it’s definitely not a positive thing right now, I’d say. It could imply that it is a person that takes a lot of space, has to be a guy and like, it doesn’t have to be a guy but, […] so it’s directly a bad thing I’d say”.

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Collier and Yanagisako (1987), highlight Rosaldo and Lamphere’s collective works (1974) as being inspired by women’s movements in the late 1960’s, after which anthropologists began questioning if male dominance was universal and cross-cultural. They also analysed in the vein of Mead the homogeneity of the categories of male and female as social and cultural constructs, that can have varying meanings (Collier and Yanagisako, 1987: 14). They did so by examining questions surrounding sexual inequality and rejected it as ‘unchangeable, natural fact and redefined it as a social fact’ (ibid). In their own collective work Collier and Yanagisako put forward a unified analysis of gender and kinship, which is in keeping with Ortner’s (1987) theories of mediated culture in domestic units. Barfield (2009) claims that in recent years there had been a renewed and on going interest into ‘micro political’ processes of topics concerning ‘gender and kinship’ (ibid: 219).

Issues of space seemed to be a continuous theme throughout my thesis long before I decided to incorporate the theories produced by the spatial turn. As Low (2009) articulates it, this embodiment of space is ‘the location where human experience and consciousness takes on material and spatial form’ (ibid: 26). This could account for why Swedish cabins have become a space of not only masculine pursuits but a haven or ‘heterotopia’ (Foucault, 1986; Rees, 2014) of gender equal values that aligned with a nationalistic image of what it is to be Swedish. In the next ethnographic section I make further comparisons of cabins and the activities they facilitate furthering their status as a heterotopia.

“I Feel Like Cleopatra On The Nile”

We are off on another adventure; this time in the form of a canoe to an archipelago with a portable barbecue in tow. Foucault (1986), also lists boats as being an example of ‘the heterotopia par excellence’ (ibid: 27) and that apparently in ‘civilizations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates’ (ibid). To actually get into the floating heterotopia we firstly have to find it. The canoe is stored upside-down in the grass with many other boats of all shapes and seizes in this odd sort of boat graveyard (or is it a shipyard?). This area
was open for anyone to access or steal a boat, much like the trusting environment of the surf cabin, but when I pointed this out to my Swedish companions they pointed out “but who would want to steal an old boat?” and “It’s not the most subtle thing to run off with”.

Once Amanda, William, Rahmat and I actually managed to carry the canoe that they pointed out had not been stolen, we flipped it over and discovered an old wasps nest inside. After a lengthy debate of who should deal with the nest we finally ascertained the nest was abandoned. My attempt at using “Rahmat and William you’re boys, you deal with it” failed, and resulted in them countering with: “nice try, but you can’t trick us into conforming to stereotypical gender norms to write about it in your fieldnotes”. Eventually, Amanda since it was decided she was technically the owner of the boat, resulted in being our saviour by poking the husk of a nest repeatedly with her boat oar. Amanda in both her home and cabin, always reminded me of Astrid Lindgren’s Pippi Longstocking or Långstrump in Swedish. Although she did not have the physical characteristic of Lindgren’s Pippi, she did have a menagerie of animal friends, lived in a red and white cottage, and out of our little expedition team was for us ‘the strongest girl in the world’ (Müller, 1999: 68). Such books recounting these idyllic ways of life according to Müller, are positive representations of a Swedish gender equal and family orientated culture ‘indirectly contribute to the images of Sweden by imparting positive values’ (ibid).

Once we all bundled into the canoe we set out on our journey, as we passed the reeds and calmly made our way to our previously scouted barbecue destination, Rahmat made the comment that since he was not given a oar he felt very relaxed, so much so that he could fall asleep. I compared him to Cleopatra traveling along the Nile which he immediately said “YES I am Cleopatra and these are my slaves” gesturing to Amanda and William who were acting as our oarsmen. Once we landed on the shore, and had dragged the canoe out of the water to make sure we did not get stranded, we set about preparing our barbecue next to the waters edge. During my time in Sweden I saw more disposable portable barbecues than I ever had back in England, they seemed to be an integral part of the Swedish summer experience. The
A disposable barbecue was actually something everyone could communally use and enjoy, due to their portable nature; they are useful for many social situations and settings. Ortner (1974) discusses the dichotomies of food preparation being divided as ‘nature, the raw, and maleness’ (ibid: 86) as opposed to ‘culture, the cooked, and femaleness’ (ibid). However, from my observations these portable barbecues were not a stereotypically male dominated form of outdoor cooking.

As previously discussed, stereotypes can hold positive and negative connotations, but this does not always make them accurate or mean that they contribute to public, private or academic discourse. This is especially the case when assumptions or generalisations are made based on a person’s gender. Cultural construction of what it means to be a ‘woman’ or a ‘man’ are not to be assumed to be a universal category. Hendry states that ‘the recognition of gender as a *culturally relative* notion has added new demission to the ideas of ‘sex’ as a ‘biological feature’ (2008: 30 [emphasis added]). In a similar vein, Moore also asserts that ‘biological differences do not provide a universal basis for social definitions’ (Moore, 1988: 7).

After our lunch by the sea, I asked if anybody happened to know the time, we all came to the sudden realisation that none of us had either a watch or a phone, for fear that if we had capsized they would have been damaged. My Swedish companions all remarked on how nice it was that we were out here together with no distractions. We had fully realised Foucault’s heterotopia (1986), on and off of the boat. As a group we had all become so engrossed in our microcosm of cabin culture, that outside worries such as time had almost become secondary. William remarked that this was much like during our surf trip where the Rapture Surf Camp team and UppX took care of us; by booking all of our transport and shuttling us from place to place, whilst also providing all of our meals and cleaning up after us (making our beds etc.). He compared it to living “a child’s life” and I suppose in many respects the cabin and the ideals of family and exploring the land freely because of laws like allemansrätten and the heterotopia that the cabin culture represents (Foucault, 1986; Rees, 2014). This was what Müller (1999) was trying to highlight when comparing Swedish cabin culture to Lindgren’s works, of an idealised Swedish lifestyle.
As discussed above Müller (1999) and his comparative analysis to the spatial relations that real Swedish cabins are idealised spaces represented in literature such as Lindgren’s add to the narrative of Sweden as a ‘utopia’ or a role model (Gustafsson and Kola: 2008: 27; Booth, 2015; Ohlsen, Kaminski and Quintero, 2015: 292). This whitewashed rose-tinted image of Sweden as a utopia or role model was something my participants vocalised their distaste of. However, the cabins seem to be shaped to incorporate if not fully realise these ideals of gender inclusivity. Müller believes that there is a continued revival of cabins due to them becoming a:

‘national reaction to globalization and the rural arena is again considered as the cradle of the nation, a realm where globalization has not been able to destroy national values and traditions’ (ibid: 203)

Volksgeist meaning ‘national spirit’ coined by Herder, who believed that every nation had its own idiosyncratic spirit, which can ‘flourish through national culture and education’ (Murray 2004:1194). The perfect environment for this passing on of folk knowledge is through the use of cabins since the ‘natural environment itself became a national symbol’ (Rees, 2014: 9). Since cabins are often situated near mountains, lakes, the coast or simply in areas of natural beauty they are normally associated, and in turn, embody the very essence of accessing and channelling what Gelter (2000) referred to as the Scandinavian lifestyle of ‘friluftsliv’.

Booth (2015) references a study by the Swedish Institute of Public Opinion Research of how Swedes see themselves and the words they would use to describe their Swedish characteristics, one of the top adjectives used was ‘nature-loving’ and one the least used was ‘masculine’ (2015: 301). The concept of this self-image of ‘nature-loving’ (ibid) is further support to what Gelter identifies as the Swedish being a ‘nature loving people’ (2000: 79). Gurholt (2007), when discussing ‘friluftsliv’ and its use in Norway references Herder’s work and how there is a natural unity and symbolic connection to ‘nature, language and nation (das Vol)’ (2007: 6). This is in keeping with my own observations since cabins seem to hold spatial and temporal
significance for my participants. This I believe can help with the formulation of a person's self-image and national identity; especially in forming gender equal roles in families and allowing for egalitarian values to be edified to later generations.

**In Conclusion**

In this chapter I have addressed how the Swedish cabins that I have visited or in works that I have referenced throughout this thesis appear to encapsulate, embody and represent a very interesting part of what is referred to as the ‘Swedish Utopia’ or ‘role model’. It is important to note that not everyone in Scandinavia is sports or nature loving and own or rent the perfect red and white cabin at the base of a mountain or in a forest clearing by a lake. I would love to prove that this image is incorrect purely to buck the trend, but from my experiences in both the surf cabin in Portugal and Amanda’s family cabin in Sweden this image has yet to be shattered. Additionally, although I have decided not to include my fieldwork from my time in Norway in this thesis, my observation from the three other cabins that I visited during my year there and from my participants stories, also corresponded with my earlier experiences with UppX.

I would argue that it is because of these nurturing environments and traditionally their lack of amenities, such as strong cell phone reception, internet or sometimes flushing toilets encourages an outdoors or ‘friluftsliv’ lifestyle, participating in various seasonal sporting activates; thus creating the sense of place (Massey, 2001) of a heterotopia (Foucault, 1986; Rees, 2014), that allows for more gender equal activities and values. These values are then conveyed and passed down to future generations in what Barfield called a mnemonic (2009: 29) formed by the habitus (Bourdieu, 1977) that socialises children in to reproducing these values in wider social spatial situations, which Mead (1953) argued impacting upon the formation of a National Character.
6. Concluding Discussion

In this thesis I have examined how Swedish Cabins have embodied and reproduced the Swedish values of gender equality of the participants in my study. Within the ethnographic Chapters of 4 and 5, I have explored through the use of Wacquant’s carnal sociology (2007), how the UppX extreme sports group negotiated and influenced their spatial and temporal situations of the private and the peripheral spheres of the cabins. This led me to conclude that although the word ‘utopia’ is an unachievable ‘placeless place’ (Foucault, 1986: 24), the term of ‘heterotopia’ (Foucault, 1986; Rees, 2014) is a fitting analytical and theoretical tool since it is more applicable for the spatial and temporal significance of cabins. I chose to use the less divisive term of ‘haven’ within the title of this thesis to describe these heterotopias. My application of a ‘sense of place’ within this thesis is to be interpreted as a ‘sense’ of individual, but also communal belonging and cabins encapsulate and generate this sense of place or identity of ‘home’. In this concluding chapter, I shall endeavour to present the answers to the research questions posed in the introductory chapter of this thesis:

1. How do UppX members perceive Sweden’s image as a gender equality ‘role model’ and egalitarian ‘utopia’? Additionally, how has this affected their understanding of concepts such as feminism and gender equality?

2. In what way does the ‘sense of place’ of the two cabins in my fieldwork contribute to gender equal interactions and the reproduction of gender equal values, specifically when UppX members participated in sporting activities?

The Swedish Model: What Went Right?

As highlighted at the very start of this thesis, the Swedish government is a self-professed ‘feminist government’ and reiterates their commitment to gender equality and egalitarian values in all of their domestic and international policies. Yet even in Sweden there are issues surrounding the so-called ‘F-word’ (Redfern and Aune, 2010). The members of UppX that I spoke to on this subject were, as already
addressed, very eloquent on these matters (Daun, 1996). However, they felt more comfortable referring to themselves as believing in gender equality rather than as ‘feminists’, due to the negative connotations that are so often attached to the term. As William, Sofie and Inga expressed there is a stereotype of what being a feminist can imply; such as a strong dislike of men, ‘ball-breaking’ being the term used by Redfern and Aune (2010: 3) to stereotype and often vilify women especially who claim to believe in feminism. William stated from his personal experience this could be linked to the Swedish feminist party sometimes expressing extreme views that do not further gender equality but advocate male suppression and female domination. Personally, I would agree with the observation made by Inga that: ‘how you act and how you speak is more important than giving yourself a label like feminist”.

These opinions of the participants in my fieldwork all seeming to uphold notions of what gender equality can mean that were expressed on such matters as identifying as feminists or as believes in gender equality, were also observable though the sport group UppX and the various sporting activities they conducted is a tangible core that can be enacted and conveyed even outside of Sweden. As already discussed these values and practices are not confined to one country or culture, but the Swedish environment of cabins helps to further promote such interactions. Thus, the values of gender equality are taught practices reinforced though primary and secondary socialisation that are subsequently passed down to future generations as mnemonic (Barfield, 2009: 29) formed by the habitus (Bourdieu, 1977) that socialises children in the private and domestic sphere of a place.

Spaces such as cabins, can aid in the forging of these practices since they are similar to the ideas of an extension of the private sphere where the ‘domestic unit’ mediates interactions and teaches the socialisation of ‘individuals who will see the world in that culture’s terms and adhere more or less unquestioningly to its moral precepts’ (Ortner, 1974: 84). These values are then acted out in the public sphere; therefore it could be argued that cabins are also contributing to creating a perceived national character of Sweden as a gender equal role model (Barfield, 2009: 314). This theory is based on my observations, as cabin culture is a part of UppX member’s outdoor sporting lifestyles. As expressed by Rees (2014) a ‘cabin [is] perhaps the
single most important heterotopia […] because of the important role it has played historically as a representation of national ideals’ (ibid: 10 [edited]). Additionally, as evidenced throughout this thesis cabins were the ideal setting to observe UppX participating in various sporting activities. Ohlsen, Kaminski and Quintero (2015), and Hincks (2018) all claim that Sweden ‘boasts the highest number of holiday cottages per capita in the world’ (Ohlsen et al. 2015: 306) with approximately 600,000 summer homes (cabins) in Sweden, with more than 50 per cent of the population have access to cabins through family or friends.

Throughout my ethnographic chapters I have illustrated how UppX as an extreme sports group from Sweden have negotiated their identities and practices in the spatial setting of a sports cabin in Portugal, with a smaller scale study of key participants time in a family run cabin back in Sweden. Cabins in Sweden and in other Nordic countries that I have observed, stand the test of time with families returning to them year after year, generation after generation. I have discerned that more often than not, cabins are not only secluded private dwellings but they are a place of spatial significance as a form of heterotopia (Foucault, 1986; Rees, 2014). These heterotopias, embody much of the lessons passed on as Swedish cultural and social values such as gender equality.

I considered how the Swedish government’s aims and values are a reflection of the Swedish peoples will to promote existing national values of gender equality in both public and private spheres. I have examined this by discussing examples of two very different spatial, temporal and geographical locations that focus on the values that the Swedish government’s aim to highlight national practices of gender equality. UppX has proven to be a positive example of these gender equal aims being enacted by the participating members of UppX during my fieldwork. Conversely, the participants in my study also conveyed to me that this does not mean that Sweden is a ‘role model’ of egalitarian values or a ‘utopia’. This is why I use the term ‘heterotopia’ (Foucault, 1986; Rees, 2014), since Sweden is a real place not an unattainable romanticised utopia, that has to face their issues just like any other nation.
Lessons Learnt and Integrating With The Swedish ‘Volk’

My admittance into the private spheres of Swedish cabins was a journey of not only learning about anthropological undertakings, but also acted as a gateway enabling me to better to integrate into Swedish society. From the cabins I learnt so much about Sweden in a relatively short amount of time. I was introduced not only to how the Swedish language sounded and was applied in practice and not just in a classroom, but how the participants in my study embodied their space and ‘wrapped’ (Hendry, 1993; 1999) themselves in culture. Their Volksgeist or ‘national spirit’ (Murray, 2003) of what it meant to be Swedish and the gender equal aims of UppX members was encapsulated in the spatial and social negotiations during our times spent in both the cabin in Portugal and in Sweden.

As discussed in this thesis Barfield (2009), Ortner (1974) and MacCormack and Strathern (1980) all define gender and the divisions of ‘nature : culture’ as not being universal and women are sometimes associated with culture not nature, so the division identified by Bourdieu (1970) is not universal. From my fieldwork observations, I would argue that the participants in my study experienced their time in the cabins without these stereotyped dichotomies of gendered space being present. They equally participated in all of the various activities that the cabins facilitated in both the inner and outer spheres. This spatial usage, as I have discussed throughout this thesis, could indicate a relational reflection on a wider social order in Sweden (ibid: 160), with women not being explicitly associated with the ‘hearth and home’ (Anderson, Wishart and Vaté, 2013), but also as active members in wider public spheres. As addressed at the start of this thesis the Feminist Foreign Policy handbook (2018) addresses how they hope to tackle women’s rights. Within the handbook I noticed that there was a theme of space and safety in both public and private spheres regarding issues of women’s freedom being limited (ibid: 22). This was interesting since cabins represented, for my participants, a sense of freedom. They became a heterotopia where gender equality was facilitated in both the cabin and the surrounding nature, most notably when in the form of the various sporting activities UppX participated in.
Although, only briefly touched upon in the penultimate chapter, the idealised and romanticised spatial importance of what the cabins represent, Müller (1999) argues are directly correlated to the high amount globalisation and immigration in Sweden (ibid: 203). This ‘cabin culture’ and utilisation of land (Gelter, 2000: 79; Hincks, 2018) where I observed UppX members interactions and sporting activities taking place, was further facilitated by laws such as ‘allemansrätten’, the philosophy or ‘friluftsliv’ and ‘jämlikhet’ (Gannon and Pillai, 2012: 151). This meant that participating in some aspects of Swedish ‘cabin culture’, even when not in a cabin such as; hiking, biking, or lake swimming, were openly accessible and not simply a ‘Swedish thing’.

My experiences during my fieldwork have proven to me that gender ‘norms’ and practices are not what defines being a person universally and that even in a society admired for being an egalitarian ‘utopia’ (Booth, 2015; Ohlsen, Kaminski and Quintero, 2015: 292), there is still room of improvement (Gustafsson and Kola: 2008: 27). As Sofie told me you cannot make sweeping statements on such important issues such as gender equality. Sofie discussed how although statistically and through media representation Sweden is praised as an egalitarian society, this does not help further women’s rights to equality by discussing it as if universal equality had already been achieved.

Throughout my fieldwork I have experienced first hand the stereotypical cold Swedish shyness (Booth, 2015) melt away and I have witnessed new ways of seeing the importance a space can hold for teaching cultural and social values. I have been fortunate enough to learn from my co-participants and join in various activities in both private domestic spheres of the heterotopia of cabins and their homes. This thesis concludes that other nations such as my own country of the United Kingdom, could take aspects learned in these heterotopias of ‘friluftsliv’ to encourage better equal participation in outdoor activities. As Walt Whitman observed in his anthology ‘Leaves of Grass’ (1855):

“Now I see the secret of the making of the best persons. It is to grow in the open air, and to eat and sleep with the earth”
6.1 Recommendations For Further Research

While the research that I have conducted gives some insight into the spatial and temporal significance of how cabins facilitate Swedish values of gender equality, this is only the metaphorical ‘tip of the iceberg’ for possible research perspectives. Therefore, I have included areas of research I would suggest for further investigation below.

Firstly, I could only briefly discuss the spatial significance of cabins from my perspective as an international student living in Sweden, but had time allowed I would have liked to have conducted fieldwork into how other international students or migrants rationalised the Swedish ‘cabin fever’ and their interactions within such a private sphere. Secondly, I had conducted fieldwork in Norway on cabin culture, but for this thesis I decided not to combine it with my observations of the cabin in Sweden and the surf cabin in Portugal. However, it would have been interesting to see how Sweden and Norway compared on matters such as their use of ‘friluftsliv’ and allemansrörelsen [in Sweden] ‘allemannsrett’ [in Norway], with subsequent fieldwork and interviews. Cabin culture is also not an exclusively Swedish or Norwegian commodity, with frequent cabin trips to varying forms of cabins being a present phenomenon in Finland, Denmark and Iceland. Furthermore, studies could be conducted on, folklore discussed in cabins such as the Norwegian trolls and Icelandic elves or the actives and practices conducted such as the Danish philosophy of ‘hygge’ (Wiking, 2016).
References


Myers (2017), ‘*These are the World’s Most Gender Equal Countries*’. Online Source: https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/11/these-are-the-world-s-most-gender-equal-countries/ [Accessed: June 2018]


Appendix 1: Tables and Figures

Swedish Crime Survey Graph (2017):

![Swedish Crime Survey Graph (2017)](image)

World Economic Forum’s (WEF) ‘Global Gender Gap Report’ (2017) Graph:

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<th>Country</th>
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Appendix 2: Fieldwork Photographs from Portugal
Appendix 3: Fieldwork Photographs from Sweden