LEGO and maps: the two objects through which my interest in urban and regional planning, as well as economic and urban geography, can be traced.

As a child I loved LEGO. I could sit all day in the basement of our row house in Falun building model cities and playing out (spatial) narratives. Maps also fascinated me and I could, and still can, pour over them for hours dreaming about other places. For example, it was always exciting when the new National Geographic Magazine (with perhaps a new map came)! With these roots, I guess it isn't surprising that I become a planner and geographer.

Cities have always fascinated me and exploring how they work has been a preoccupation of mine for as long as I can remember. I'm like a flâneur who likes to explore the urban landscape in various ways; through my camera lens, by engaging with urban theories or conducting scientific fieldwork. It is the diversity that appeals to me; from exclusive shopping streets close to grand parks and intimate gardens, to rough industrial areas that experienced decay.

Since my undergraduate studies in urban and regional planning at Stockholm University, I have had the opportunity to work with cities and urban questions professionally. In my doctoral thesis I explored my hometown Stockholm in depth, and as a researcher and lecturer in economic and urban geography, I have had the opportunity to live and study in cities such as Newcastle, NSW, Australia and Baltimore, MD, USA.

However, my spatial story would not be complete (if such completeness were ever possible!) without recognizing my rural heritage and interest in the outdoors. I have my family roots in Dalarna and before my studies, I worked for a couple of years as a ski instructor in Härjedalen.