In April, Professors Lynn Schofield Clark, Erika Polson, and Carlos Jimenez traveled to Lund University in Sweden to be a part of a two-day research workshop on how our understandings of the relationships between technologies and social structures are changing in the era of mobile media. The focus of the workshop was on the emerging concept of "mobile socialities," a phrase that is meant to address the phenomena of people on the move and the varied roles that mobile media play in our experiences of movement, migration, place, and mobility.

The DU contingent joined another 16 scholars from around Europe to present and discuss interdisciplinary perspectives on mobilities of various kinds (people, places, information, migration, commodities, communication). Renowned media ethnographer and theorist, David Morley (Goldsmith’s College, London), served as keynote and was an active participant over the two days of events, and the organizers, Professors Annette Hill and Magnus Andersson (Lund University) and Professor Maren Hartmann (Berlin University of the Arts) laid out an initial framework for the concept of mobile socialities that the group worked collaboratively to both refine and expand during the course of the presentations and discussions.

According to Polson, the opportunity for a small group of researchers at so many levels of their careers to spend two days sharing ideas in an inspiring setting was a career highlight (to date!) "However," Polson said, "the most incredible part was how I began to see my work in relation to that of my colleagues, Lynn and Carlos, in a new light. I realized how much we have in common - particularly the form of empirically rich media ethnography we are doing. The commonality stood out to others as
well; it was exciting when a well-known senior scholar pulled me aside on the last day and said, "Wow...the University of Denver!"

Lynn Schofield Clark presented “Reconsidering mobilization: Smart transnational young people in the allegedly smart and open city." She discussed a participatory research project that involved working with students from South High school, many of whom are from families that have recently migrated to Denver, to address the public transportation challenges the high school students experienced. The group, also co-led by MFJS professor Margie Thompson, conducted research and developed a targeted media-rich presentation of their own experiences that was part of a dialogue between students and key officials with the Regional Transportation District (RTD). The dialogue resulted in positive change in the bus lines for the high school students, thus offering students insights into civic and political engagement. Carlos Jimenez presented "Farmworker Visibility: Mobile Phones in Strawberry Fields," based on his research into the ways that the adoption of mobile phones in California farms has reshaped the labor market and allowed farmworkers to produce their own images on and off the field.

Farmworkers, Jimenez noted, are able to compare experiences of fair and unfair workplaces and wages, thus fostering greater accountability. Moreover, through social media on their mobile phones, they are able to share moments of their everyday lives, including their joys and experiences of belonging, with others in their communities both near and far. Erika Polson’s presentation, "The Socialities of Place-Based Mobile," demonstrated how the public nature of WiFi introduction in Havana, Cuba (in parks and along streets) aimed to create a more social form of Internet use in the country in compared to the more individualized usage noted in North American contexts. Her presentation highlighted the ways that people gathered with others and shared both information and wifi connections, inscribing new locations as public spaces in the process.
A University of Denver Strategic Partner Internationalization Grant provided funding to send the three faculty members abroad and contributed to some of the organizational costs of the symposium. “These partnerships enrich the learning that faculty are able to bring back to their home contexts,” said Clark, who is Chair of the department. “They provide the foundation for relationships that support students in their experiences with study abroad, and also underscore the important contributions that the University of Denver continues to make internationally through its commitment to excellence in research,” she said.