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Tracing sustainability meanings in Rosendal: interrogating an unjust urban sustainability discourse and introducing alternative perspectives

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ABSTRACT

Sustainability is a much debated concept, often criticised as ill-defined. While some argue it is time to leave sustainability behind, others defend the concept's potential to initiate change. In this article we depart from the potential of sustainability, while being aware that the term is often appropriated by discourses reproducing status quo and keeping existing injustices in place. We do so by studying the urban sustainability discourse reproducing certain types of sustainabilities in Rosendal, a developing urban district in Uppsala, Sweden. Guided by the "What's the problem represented to be" approach we analyse written and visual material, produced by Uppsala municipality and developers. Through the policy analysis we identify four intertwined meanings of sustainability: *Everyone is included*, *It's all about aesthetics*, *Closeness to nature* and *Sustainability is easy*. Together, these meanings shape the *Sustainability in Rosendal* discourse, which we argue does little to overcome existing injustices. We point towards the silences involved in the discourse and hold that the failure to question the growth-dependent economic system within which Rosendal is being developed, results in insignificant changes as opposed to just transformation. By building upon the notion of just sustainabilities, we outline a set of alternative perspectives, departing from coupling a pluralist understanding of justice with a feminist ethics of care, to open up for more emancipatory and transformative urban sustainability discourses.

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Introduction

"The era of sustainability is over" Mentz (2012, 586) declared already 10 years ago. He argues sustainability implies sustaining things as they are, although change is urgently needed. Gottschlich and Bellina (2017) limit their criticism to the mainstream sustainability discourse, considering it appropriated by the dominant economic system. They insist sustainability be viewed as an arena within which unjust political and economic structures may be questioned. However, as sustainability initiatives often fail to question the very systems within which they operate (Bradley 2009; Castán Broto and Westman 2019; Swyngedouw 2010), injustices are reproduced and often aggravated (De Rosa, de Moor, and Dabaieh 2022; Di Chiro 2018; Hoffman 2017). The most crucial issue with sustainability, as we see it, relates to sustainability initiatives operating within systems relying on economic growth. This is connected with the anthropocentric character of sustainability. Humans are centre stage, while animals and environments –

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the very material world that humans are connected with – are erased from the picture (Alaimo 2012). Nature is generally seen as passive, and there for humans to exploit (Alaimo and Hekman 2008). It is easy to justify current extractivist ways of life when humans are regarded as superior to nature, and the environment as "out there" for humans to use.

Mentz (2012) did not imply giving up, but that sustainability discussions have failed to initiate change. He proposed a way forward inspired by stormy waters, and used swimming and surfing as metaphors for advancing on an unpredictable path. Although this resonates with how we think current challenges need to be met, we prefer to continue grappling with sustainability than abandoning it altogether. The widely quoted definition of sustainable development as development that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" originating from the Brundtland Report (WCED 1987), is often seen to have paved the way for sustainability's popularity (see for example Kaul et al. 2022; Lele 2013). This definition has been widely criticised for being too vague (Jacobs 1999), for focusing solely on human needs (Alaimo 2012) and for resulting in economic growth oriented ideas of sustainability (Castán Broto and Westman 2019). Due to the complexity of sustainability, Ramsey (2015) argues against defining the concept and suggests accepting its open and contested nature. This resonates with Brown (2016), who applies Laclau's concept of "empty signifier" when discussing sustainability's potential, and suggests the various and contested meanings may serve as an opening to question current conditions. Further, although Mentz (2012) and others (see, for example: Benson and Craig 2014; Blühdorn 2017) have suggested it is time to leave sustainability behind, the concept prevails. Despite being criticised for being elusive (White 2013), ubiquitous (Beasy and Corbett 2021), and meaning everything and nothing (Alaimo 2012; McDonough, Isenhour, and Checker 2011), sustainability and the closely related "sustainable development" remain central concepts within policy and social science (Olsson and Öjehag-Pettersson 2020). Additionally, as many issues associated with "unsustainability" appear tied-up with how urban environments are organised, the urban setting is widely seen as an arena for sustainable transformations (Castán Broto et al. 2019; Rose and Cachelin 2018). Therefore, we find it important to interrogate meanings of urban sustainability. In line with Castán Broto and Westman (2019) we acknowledge sustainability is often appropriated by forces striving towards keeping things as they are, while we maintain there is potential for sustainability discourses to become more just, emancipatory and transformative.

The aim of this article is to question taken-for-granted ideas related to urban sustainability, and to open up for alternative perspectives. We do so by tracing and critically interrogating meanings reproducing the sustainability discourse concerning an urban district called Rosendal, located in Uppsala, Sweden. Rosendal is developed under the umbrella of sustainability, and it is chosen due to representing a typical example of contemporary urban development taking place in the name of sustainability. Guided by Bacchi's (2009) "What's the problem represented to be?" approach we analyse written and visual material representing Rosendal, produced by Uppsala municipality and developers involved in the district. We depart from the notion that sustainability has potential to contribute to urban transformations, by questioning how sustainability is commonly understood. By building on the work of Castán Broto and Westman (2017; 2019) we contribute to the discussion on just urban sustainability by outlining a set of guiding principles for more transformative, just urban sustainabilities. Primarily, we suggest uncoupling sustainability from economic growth and placing a plural understanding of justice alongside an ethics of care (Gottschlich and Bellina 2017) at the core of urban sustainability policies. Rather than attempting to define sustainability, we argue sustainability policies need to be seen as open-ended processes, striving towards justice and conclude with questions by which we wish to prompt further discussion on alternative approaches to policies and research on urban sustainability.

Theory: guiding principles for advancing just urban sustainabilities

Growing attention on the unequal distribution of "environmental goods and bads" (Walker 2009, 627), as well as growing injustices in urban areas (Hughes and Hoffmann 2020), have brought justice to the

fore within urban sustainability (Westman and Castán Broto 2021). By building upon just sustainabilities as outlined by Agyeman, Bullard, and Evans (2003) and Agyeman (2013), Castán Broto and Westman (2017; 2019) have started to envision more transformative, just urban sustainabilities, while mapping initiatives taking place around the globe. Just sustainabilities have much in common with environmental justice, a field that grew out of the discontent concerning environmental burdens experienced by disadvantaged communities (Schlosberg 2013). Environmental justice movements have translated the environment into places where "we live, work and play" (Gottlieb 2009; Novotny 2000), as opposed to something "out there". While early articulations of environmental justice concerned distribution, the field has evolved to encompass justice as *recognition*, *procedural* or *participatory* justice and *capabilities* (Coolsaet 2021; Gottschlich and Bellina 2017; Schlosberg 2007). Therefore, Schlosberg (2007) has suggested a pluralist understanding of environmental justice.

Castán Broto and Westman (2017; 2019) bring in feminist theorist perspectives to advance the field of urban sustainabilities. We highlight their suggestion of following Haraway's (1988) notion of situated knowledges. As knowledges are always situated and the perspectives of knowers only ever partial (Haraway 1988), what comes to count as sustainability depends on the context as well as the knowledge upon which the "sustainabilities" in question rely. Acknowledging a partial perspective opens up for questioning prevailing knowledge claims (Castán Broto and Westman 2019). We suggest advancing just sustainabilities further by incorporating a set of additional perspectives. We build upon Castán Broto and Westman's (2019, 67) view of emancipatory, just sustainabilities "as a living, changing theory and one that requires remaining radically open to new conceptualizations and experiences".

Our first and main perspective relates to coupling a plural understanding of justice with a feminist ethics of care when striving towards a more emancipatory sustainability discourse (Gottschlich and Bellina 2017). When developing alternatives to mainstream economics, feminist thinkers have turned to the concept of care to foreground interdependencies indispensable for life among humans, non-humans and the environment (Harcourt and Bauhardt 2019). By viewing the field of economy "as concerned with how societies organise themselves to provide for survival and flourishing of life" (Nelson and Power 2018, 81) the focus shifts from production and growth – to interdependence and care. Like others, Gottschlich and Bellina (2017) engage with Tronto's work (1993; 2013) where care is approached in a broad sense, including tasks essential for the survival of individuals and functioning of society.

> On the most general level, we suggest that caring be viewed as a species activity that includes everything we do to maintain, continue and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, ourselves and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web. (Tronto and Fischer 1990 in Tronto 2013, 19)

This definition stresses interdependency as a crucial element of any society and extends care to the "more-than-human" (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017). Such a perspective questions economic growth and moves away from human-centeredness.

Second, we stress how moving away from human-centeredness resonates with working against dualisms underpinning Western thought. Overcoming dualisms such as nature/culture and the hierarchies such dualisms impose, has been a concern of many feminist thinkers (Alaimo and Hekman 2008; Gaard 2017; Harcourt and Bauhardt 2019). Environmental justice movements' view of environment as where we "live, work and play" (Gottlieb 2009; Novotny 2000) resonates with such thinking, as environment and nature are no longer understood as passive entities "out there" to extract, but active and something humans are interdependent with. Whereas "the environment" has been seen as something that needs to be taken care of due to human needs (van den Berg 2019), an ethics of care includes more-than-humans that need to be cared for, for their own sake, due to our interdependency with, as opposed to superiority to, nature.

Third, we open up for going beyond the discourse/material dualism, where discourse is seen to shape our understanding of matter. By building on material feminist thinkers we hold that discourse

is not superior to matter. Instead, they are interdependent in that they shape one another (Alaimo and Hekman 2008). Sustainability discourses are thus entangled with matter through what Barad (2008) calls material-discursive practices. The intra-active relationship (Barad 2008) of discourse and matter is relevant when discussing urban sustainability: discourses have material effects (Bacchi 2009), and matter contributes to shaping discourses.

Lastly, we turn to how the homogenous "we" often employed in sustainability discourses renders the differences among people invisible (Rogers 2008), although people are affected very differently by both "environmental goods and bads" (Walker 2009). This is relevant from a global perspective, as populations in western and northern parts of the world are generally less burdened by environmental harms. However, environmental injustices are also found regionally and locally, within nations and cities across the globe. Although "we-saying" is often used with an inclusive intent, it leads to excluding those who do not consider themselves part of the taken-for-granted group (Code 1996). Further, in light of environmental justice, it is important those of us who identify with "we", referring to affluent populations, question our own assumptions regarding who we think we are, and what rights and responsibilities we have (Code 2015). By being critical towards any use of "we" when it comes to sustainability, injustices can be given more attention.

What we have outlined above, are guiding principles for more just, transformative and emancipatory urban sustainabilities, departing from a plural understanding of justice, coupled with a feminist ethics of care. Justice is not an add-on, but at the core of situated sustainabilities (Castán Broto and Westman 2019; Westman and Castán Broto 2021). A feminist ethics of care helps question hegemonic discourses of growth dependency (Moriggi et al. 2020) by moving away from human-centred extractivist attitudes. These perspectives call for an approach to sustainability policies that is not purely consensus-driven, but one that recognises opposing views and struggles (Gottschlich and Bellina 2017) as part of attempts to strive towards just urban sustainabilities.

Rosendal – an integral part of Uppsala's sustainability policies

Rosendal is a new and developing district in Uppsala, a town often said to be among the fastest growing cities in Sweden. The city is located 70 kilometres north of Stockholm and hosts two universities as well as many large employers. Like many other cities across the globe, Uppsala is striving to be recognised as a forerunner in sustainable development, both nationally and internationally (Uppsala kommun 2017). The municipality's sustainability policies include, becoming a fossil fuel free city by 2030 and a climate positive city by 2050 (Uppsala kommun 2020a). Additionally, one of the municipality's policy goals is to create "innovative new neighbourhoods" where attention is given to sustainable transport options, long-lasting materials with small environmental impact, and green spaces (Uppsala kommun 2020b). Rosendal is one of the new districts developed within this frame (Uppsala kommun 2020b) and forms part of the municipality's ambitions to create a more sustainable city (Uppsala kommun 2016). These plans resonate with Wachsmuth and Angelo's (2018) observation that urban sustainability across the world is repeatedly represented as green and grey urban nature. Green urban nature refers to bringing nature back into urban environments by establishing urban parks and supporting urban gardening, whereas the grey urban nature concerns high-tech solutions related to urban transport and energy-efficient buildings (Wachsmuth and Angelo 2018). Rosendal thus represents a typical expression of contemporary urban sustainability.

Rosendal is located a few kilometres south of Uppsala city centre, next to a nature reserve called the City Forest (Figure 1). The first residents moved to the district between 2015 and 2017, and since then the area has grown significantly (Uppsala kommun 2022a). The detailed development plan adopted in 2015 includes approximately 35 00 apartments, in addition to a new university campus area, offices, commercial spaces, day care centres, schools, parking garages and sports facilities (Uppsala kommun 2022b). The area is being built in five phases; only the first is finalised at the time of writing, and the other parts are under progress to various degrees (Uppsala kommun 2021; 2022c). The district is estimated to be completed in 2027 (Uppsala kommun 2021).

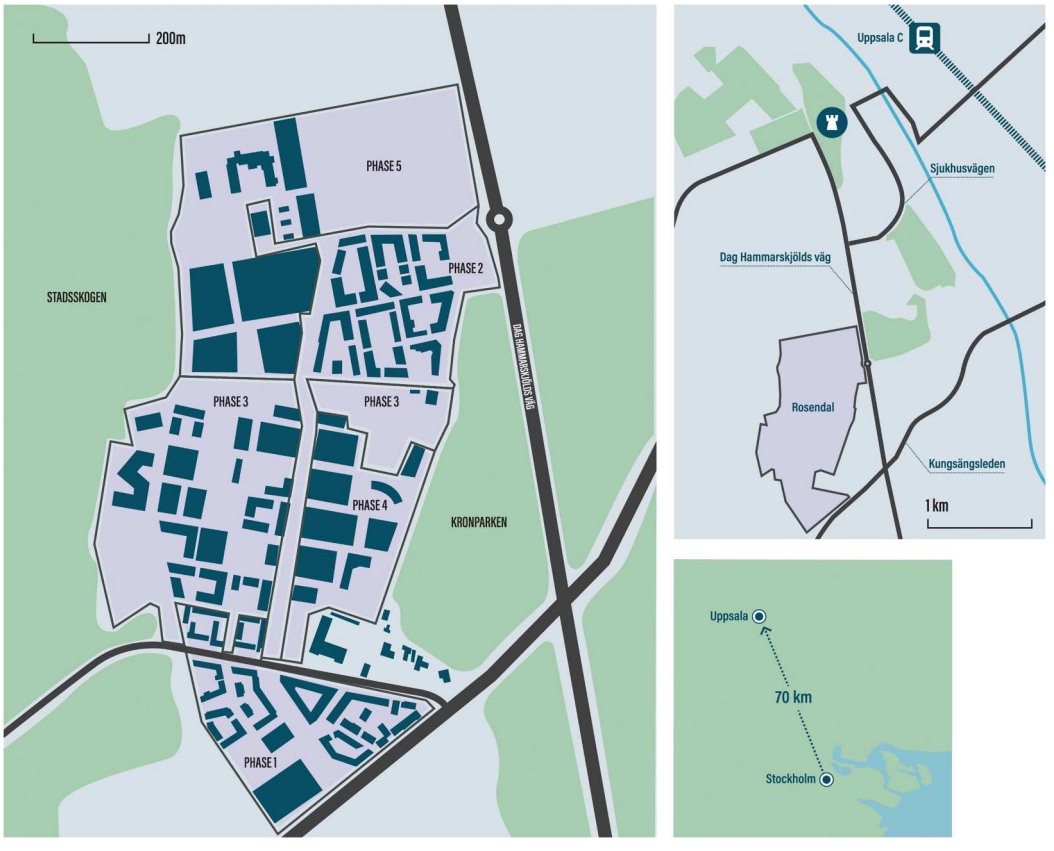

Figure 1. Maps of Rosendal, Rosendal's location in Uppsala and Uppsala's location in relation to Stockholm.

Rosendal was a pilot project within City Lab, a nationwide project initiated by the Swedish Green Building Council (SGBC 2022; Uppsala kommun 2016), resulting in a certification system for sustainable urban development in Sweden. The so-called *Uppsala model* has also influenced the development of Rosendal (Uppsala kommun 2022a). Larger areas are usually allocated to just a few developers, resulting in districts with uniform architecture (Ibid 2022a). The Uppsala model, in contrast, allows developers to compete amongst themselves over aspects beyond pricing, such aspects have primarily been "quality" and "sustainability" (Uppsala kommun 2022a). This has made it easier for smaller actors to enter the market, especially if they have offered "interesting" solutions (Ibid 2022a). The model has contributed to Rosendal's varied architecture, which according to the municipality (Uppsala kommun 2016), strongly signifies the district's identity.

Materials

When interrogating meanings of sustainability in Rosendal, we analysed written and visual material collected from online sources produced by Uppsala municipality as well as involved developers. The backbone of the analysis is a document entitled *Rosendal Quality Programme – Design and Sustainability* (Uppsala kommun 2016), which has been important in shaping sustainability meanings within the Rosendal project (from now on referred to as QP). It was produced as a tool for discussion among stakeholders, and to ensure important issues are not forgotten along the way (Uppsala kommun 2016). The plans outlined in the QP are reflected in the material produced by developers.

In line with Bacchi's (2009) WPR approach, we take a broad perspective to policy and treat the QP as part of Uppsala municipality's sustainability policies. The QP was generated as part of City Lab, and has been guided by the criteria set out within that project. The City Lab certification scheme is based on 10 sustainability goals, outlined with reference to the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals, and several national directives relating to sustainable urban development (SGBC 2019, 20–21). This implies meanings of sustainability in the QP have been influenced by national and international policies, which further supports our claim that Rosendal exemplifies contemporary urban development. However, the QP states how it describes what sustainability means within Rosendal (Uppsala kommun 2016) and is thus intended to have a local focus. The QP presents a vision (Uppsala kommun 2016, 4) consisting of three main key points: *in Rosendal everything is close-by*, *in Rosendal everyone is welcome* and *Rosendal is a smarter urban district*. Further, a set of goals are outlined by which Rosendal is to become a sustainable district (Uppsala kommun 2016, 16): *Rosendal is safe and liveable*, *Rosendal is close to nature*, *Rosendal is varied* and *Rosendal is resource efficient*. The vision, along with the goals, which are influenced by national and international urban sustainability policies have in turn affected how sustainability has been taken up in the developers' projects.

In addition to the QP we have analysed the Rosendal project website (Uppsala kommun 2022d) produced by the municipality, along with developers' material. In order to select developers that would give us an overview of the different types of buildings constructed and planned, we chose to analyse the projects listed under the heading *Housing in Rosendal* on the project website (Uppsala kommun 2022e). Table 1 presents our selection of projects in the district, representing a variety of developers and buildings. For each building we have analysed the presentation found at the Rosendal project website and the presentations from the developer's website, which often included online brochures that described both the building and the district.

Methodology

The material was analysed using the "What's the problem represented to be?" (WPR) approach (Bacchi 2009), in order to question taken-for-granted ideas and open up for alternative perspectives. WPR takes a "Foucault-influenced poststructural perspective" on policy analysis (Bacchi and Goodwin 2016, 4). It departs from the notion that governance takes place through "problematisations", thus the problems to be solved through policies are not seen to exist "out there" but as being shaped as part of the policy-making processes (Bacchi 2009). We understand governance in a broad sense, including any form of activity that " … aims to shape, guide or affect the conduct of people" (Bacchi and Goodwin 2016, 5). According to Bletsas (2012, 30) WPR opens up a space to "critically reflect on the taken-for-granted nature of problem-solving". It thus questions the

Table 1. The selected developers and buildings.

Developer	Name of building
Genova	*Botanikern*
Rosendal fastigheter	*Brf Grindstugan*
OOF	*Prefektgatan 8*
RAW Property	*RAW Rosendal*
JM	*Rosalia 1* and *Rosalia 2*
Byggvesta	*Rosendalsfältet*
SKB	*Docenten*
Wallenstam	*Tre vänner* and *Flanören*
Skandia	*Woodhouse Rosendal*
Åke Sundvall	*Kvarter E*
Serneke	*Eureka*
Sveafastigheter	*Rubeckia* and *Murgrönan*
Botrygg	*Rosendal*
Akademiska hus	*Aqualia*
(Co-housing project without developer)	*Byggemenskapen gården*

idea that problems are "fixed" and need to be solved by interrogating the problematisations inherent in policies (Bacchi 2009; Bacchi and Goodwin 2016). WPR views policy as political in that the knowledges guiding policies are never neutral (Bacchi and Goodwin 2016). Furthermore, WPR acknowledges that policies have lived effects that impact different people in different ways (Bacchi 2009). Consequently, undertaking a WPR analysis is political in that it seeks to question current power structures while suggesting that things could be otherwise (Ibid 2009).

An integral part of WPR lies in analysing the discourses through which meaning is made: "Calling something a 'discourse' means putting its truth status into question" (Bacchi 2009, 35). Discourses can be described as *knowledges* presented and accepted as truths (Bacchi and Goodwin 2016). By undertaking a policy analysis, we are seeking to understand discourses through which sustainability meanings are made, and the effects produced through them – many of which are material. In line with WPR we are sceptical to the truth claims the analysed policies entail. As we are building on Barad's (2008) notion of material-discursive practices, the relationship between discourse and matter is understood as mutually constitutive. As the analysed material contains both text and images, we have included the visual material in our analysis. In line with Rose (2016, 188), we understand visuality as discourse, as just like text, images carry certain meanings and "a specific type of visuality will make certain things visual in particular ways, and other things unseeable".

The WPR approach consists of six questions including a prompt to reflect upon one's own problem representations (Bacchi 2009, 2). We have chosen the following four questions to guide our analysis:

(1) What's the problem represented to be in a specific policy?
(2) What presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the problem?
(3) What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the "problem" be thought about differently?
(4) What effects are produced by this representation of the "problem"?

We started by reading material describing Rosendal, gradually selecting material for a more focused analysis. Once we had decided on what material to include, we made a first round of coding using the software NVivo, where we identified proposed solutions for arriving at a sustainable district. By going back and forth between the material, theory, WPR questions and writing, we identified a set of sustainability meanings in the material. These were successively clarified through the analysis, and finally we arrived at four intertwined meanings that together shape the *Sustainability in Rosendal* discourse.

In addition to analysing the material, the first author has closely followed the development of Rosendal from early 2019 onwards. This was primarily done by participating in an urban gardening initiative. Additionally, the first author has: "test-lived" in the area during 1 week in 2019; participated in public events where features of the district were presented; and read Uppsala municipality's newsletters about the district. By following Rosendal's development, she gained a contextual understanding of the district.

Analysis and findings

Through the analysis we identified four meanings of sustainability: *Everyone is included*, *It's all about aesthetics*, *Closeness to nature*, and *Sustainability is easy*. These meanings are intertwined, and together they shape the discourse *Sustainability in Rosendal*. In the following section we discuss each meaning separately, while *Sustainability is easy* acts as a summarising section for what sustainability in Rosendal entails. The quotes have been translated from Swedish to English by the authors.

Everyone is included

> In Rosendal everyone is welcome. (QP, 4)

This statement is part of the vision of Rosendal, which describes how the district attracts people from different parts of Sweden and the rest of the world. Mentions of Rosendal being for "everyone" can be found throughout the analysed material, and relates to ambitions of taking diversity and equality into account:

> Rosendal is a multifunctional urban environment with variation and diversity in all its senses. All humans are respected equally and their inherent strength and creativity are cherished. (QP, 24)

Despite pointing towards social diversity, the QP focuses heavily on physical features and architecture. The varied architecture is echoed in the developers' material, where each building has its own characteristics, often stressed by a specific name (see Table 1), and seems to be designed with an intention to stand out for its uniqueness. Social diversity seems limited to different age groups. For instance, a wooden building called Botanikern is described as:

> … a dwelling for everyone, regardless of age. There are apartments for the first-time buyer, for the family with children or for the elderly couple. (Genova 2022)

The diversity described relates simply to different age groups among people who are able to buy their own apartment. However, there are attempts to cater for different housing needs and preferences by providing different types of tenure status, seen as one way to ensure different types of people will move to the area. There are also more unconventional housing types. For example, the area hosts two different types of co-housing where privately owned apartments are combined with common spaces such as kitchens, living rooms and roof terraces. One building consists of "raw" apartments where the buyers are responsible for the fittings themselves. This is described as a way to offer more people the possibility of buying their own apartment, as they can themselves decide how much they want to invest in the interiors, resulting in lower prices as compared to one where fittings are included. As stated by the municipality the "raw-project" is:

> … part of the municipality's ambition to expand the housing supply in Uppsala. (Uppsala kommun 2018)

Despite these alternative housing models, Rosendal predominantly reflects the Swedish housing market, consisting of either privately owned or rental apartments[1]. Still, Rosendal differs from other parts of Uppsala, as different housing types mix to a greater extent. Elsewhere, larger housing complexes tend to consist of either rental or owned apartments. Regardless of the variety, it is worth noting that since buildings in Rosendal are recently produced, they are generally more expensive than in other parts of the city. However, in the analysed material any mention of socio-economic differences, resulting in people having very different opportunities of obtaining an apartment in Rosendal, remain absent.

The district is often described as "attractive" due to the variety of places designed for different activities, like sports, play, and relaxation. This connects to the vision where "everyone" should be able to find places they enjoy. However, throughout the QP, diversity is touched upon largely by mentioning recreational activities intended for different age groups. One example of this is a photograph referred to as an "inspirational image" where two blond children are playing boule with an elderly man (QP, 26). Additionally, despite repeatedly stating how the area is for "everyone" the photographs portraying humans predominantly feature white, fair-haired people. We interpret these images as portraying stereotypical Swedes, especially in pictures where people are photographed close-up. The only visual material where this is not the case is produced by developers.

Within the material *everyone* and *diversity* are described without any mentions of difficulties. Differences other than age, such as socio-economic background, ethnicity, or gender, are absent. These silences reflect an avoidance of challenging issues related to inequality, justice and residential segregation. It thus becomes evident that Rosendal is not an area for "everyone". Instead "everyone"

is used in a similar way as the homogenous "we" (Rogers 2008), with a disregard for people's differences. The exclusiveness inherent in "we" – and how "we" always risks disempowering others (Code 1996) – comes across in a similar manner by using "everyone". In Rosendal a specific type of sustainability is only available for those who have the opportunity to live there. As will be explained in the next section, this specific type of sustainability looks a particular way.

It's all about aesthetics

The measures undertaken to create a "sustainable" district in Rosendal are, to a great extent, focused around aesthetics. This concerns the plans, as well as how these have materialised. Considering the subtitle of the QP, "Design and sustainability", it is perhaps unsurprising that much of what comes to count as "sustainable" feeds into a certain type of aesthetics. Although design encompasses more than aesthetics, every physical design has an aesthetic character. The design focus in Rosendal is noteworthy, as this has been a conscious choice from early on in the district's development. For example, design and sustainability are tied together in the QP:

> The quality programme illustrates what sustainability implies within the scope of Rosendal. Sustainability and design are issues that often go hand in hand and add value – a quality that is to permeate the new district. (QP, 6)

Design and sustainability are highlighted as features to be embedded in the district. Yet the use of "add value" is somewhat contradicting the embeddedness of these features, as it points towards additional features chosen for their attractiveness. Attractiveness is a much-used adjective throughout the QP. For instance, the "lush greenery" of Rosendal is repeatedly linked to the area's attractiveness. We consider the greenery an aesthetic trait and interpret the extent to which greenery is brought forth, both in the text and in the images, as a way to highlight Rosendal's sustainability profile and to ensure the district's attractive character. The importance of greenery is echoed in the developers' material. Inner yards, facades and rooftops are explicitly characterised as "green", with greenery on rooftops in particular being eagerly stressed. Along with the many roof terraces intended as meeting places for residents, several rooftops host opportunities for cultivation, and sedum roofs abound[2]. The images in the developers' material highlight the rooftops; for example, one photograph taken from above, portrays a rooftop where one side of the roof is covered with a sedum carpet and the other by solar panels (Sveafastigheter 2021).

Although the sedum roofs are presented as important for insects, as insulation and a way to delay storm water, their presence, accompanied by the solar panels, contributes to what sustainability in Rosendal looks like. Sedum and solar panels are present to the extent that they become a justification for buildings being recognised as sustainable. As noted, many of the sustainability measures done in the area are visible, the exception being energy-efficient features beyond sedum roofs and solar panels. These include "passive houses" and buildings heated by recycled heating from appliances, lighting and water. Yet, these solutions are not given much attention in the material. We assume this is due to their invisibility, which means they are not contributing to the district's aesthetics. Much attention is given to the varied and playful architecture in the area, which is seen as a way to ensure there is something for "everyone", while increasing the area's attractiveness. Another highlighted feature is the "blue–green" storm water solutions. Although these do protect a water reservoir located underneath Rosendal and prevent flooding, they are emphasised for their visibility and contribution to greenery. The greenery and closeness to nature are ever-present throughout the material.

Another aesthetic feature in Rosendal relates to highlighting cyclists while erasing traces of cars. Cycling is portrayed as a desired alternative to that of driving a car and aligns with the municipality's over-arching agenda for sustainable transport:

> In Rosendal cycling is encouraged over driving a car. Good opportunities for bicycle traffic is one of the cornerstones in Uppsala's prevailing goals for sustainable transport and reduced environmental impact, therefore it is a given also in Rosendal. (QP, 28)

The bicycle is thus a self-evident option in Rosendal. Although this does not necessarily differ from other parts of Uppsala, pictures of bikes and cyclists recur across the analysed material. For instance, in the QP there is one "inspirational picture" where a woman is riding a cargo-bike with two children on-board (QP, 27). All of them look happy, and are in the foreground of the photograph, with cars in the background blurred. While cyclists and bikes are highlighted throughout, cars are largely absent, especially in the images. However, the QP clearly states how:

> Rosendal is not a car-free district. (QP, 29)

Despite efforts to emphasise cycling, it has noticeably been important to point out that cars are allowed in Rosendal. There is parking for cars in many of the residential buildings, while car parks and garages are placed at the periphery of the area. The location of parking spaces is a way to ensure liveability and safety; however, it also comes across as a way to render the car invisible. Further, the garages are called "mobility houses". Although this may be intended to imply they are not only for cars, it comes across as yet another attempt to erase traces of cars while ensuring car-driving remains a convenient option. We interpret rendering the car invisible as a way of creating distance to a mode of transport that is often associated with "unsustainability". What comes to count as sustainability in Rosendal is to a great extent related to a certain type of aesthetics. As such, this does not actually pose a problem, and all areas inevitably portray some type of aesthetics. What is of concern here, is whether the way sustainability looks in Rosendal is misleading. We think it is problematic if a district is interpreted as "sustainable" based solely on how it looks. Further, we consider the "sustainability aesthetics" of Rosendal to strongly contribute to the area's attractiveness. This attractiveness is in many respects associated to Rosendal's closeness to nature, and this is the topic of the next sustainability meaning to be examined.

Closeness to nature

One of the goals outlined in the QP is "Rosendal is close to nature". This trait is also frequently pointed out in developers' descriptions of the area. For instance, one developer introduces the area as follows:

> Rosendal is located in an area of natural beauty, a few kilometres south of the city-centre. In this area we are involved in developing a new, modern and sustainable urban district close to the city pulse as well as to the lush greenery of the City Forest. (JM 2022a)

While closeness to nature flourishes in developers' descriptions, they are keen to emphasise other qualities, such as modernity and convenience. At the same time, the urban character is often mentioned, implying one does not need to give up the comforts related to urban living, such as services and well-functioning public transport. In Rosendal, inhabitants should be able to enjoy both nature and urbanity without having to make sacrifices on either part.

In the plans for Rosendal, ecological sustainability often translates into preserving existing nature and making sure the outdoor spaces are green. At several places in the QP, the preservation of vegetation and insects is described as a way to enhance the area's identity. For example, when describing principles for the design of parks, biodiversity is prioritised:

> Particularly valuable parts have been measured and ought to be preserved, primarily old pine trees giving shelter to rare species with great value for the cityscape and the area's identity. (QP, 45)

Preserving biodiversity is to be done by selecting certain trees and insects which are to be protected, not for their own sake, but rather as a way to ensure a certain type of aesthetics and to enhance the area's identity. The way more-than-humans are described is continuously referred to as something that helps inhabitants in different ways. Trees give shade and character, closeness to nature can be beneficial to environmental education, while green areas can help prevent floods. This echoes Alaimo's (2012) conception of human-centred sustainability since what in the QP is referred to as "nature" is passive and there to serve human needs. Viewing nature as commodity also comes

across in how developers refer to the City Forest as a recreational area, there for inhabitants to make use of. Many of the images in the developers' material portray nature. Two examples of this can be found in JM's material, with one photograph of a girl walking a dog in a forest (JM 2022b), and another one where a jogger is running on a path surrounded by trees with autumnal foliage (JM 2022c). Additionally, it seems the forest next to Rosendal has been preserved for the sake of attractiveness, rather than seeing it as having value in and for itself. The many descriptions of Rosendal as "close to nature" portray nature as something "out there", rather than something inhabitants in Rosendal are inevitably part of, and thus reproduce the culture/nature dualism inherent in much Western thinking. This is the very perspective that environmental justice movements have tried to overcome by referring to environment as "where we live, work and play" (Novotny 2000).

Access to green areas can be seen as an "environmental good" (Walker 2009) and a form of right from an environmental justice perspective. In Rosendal this becomes an exclusive right for those who have the means to live there. Further, closeness to nature connects with convenience and enjoyment – characteristics found throughout the material. Simultaneously, the way a sustainable district becomes seemingly easy to create is present throughout the material. These considerations will be further discussed when presenting the summarising sustainability meaning below.

Sustainability is easy

When analysing "the problem represented to be" (Bacchi 2009), it is striking how simple a task creating a sustainable district seems to be, as "problems" are absent. A sustainable district is created by building in an aesthetically appealing way, with varied architecture, ensuring plenty of greenery along with places where different age groups can play, exercise or simply enjoy nature in peace. Convenience is given significant attention, whereas closeness to nature, the city centre and services are repeatedly emphasised when describing what it is like to live in Rosendal. The closeness to "everything", stated in the district's vision, is echoed by developers with statements such as:

> Rosendal is a small scale district close to nature, with the city centre within easy reach. There are green areas for walking right outside the door, and you can reach one of the universities within just five minutes. (Byggvesta 2019)

The convenience of Rosendal is also highlighted by explaining that living in a sustainable way should be effortless. As described in the QP:

> Sustainable urban development in Rosendal means that it should be easy to do the right thing. A sustainable lifestyle is not just the result of individuals' active choices, it is supported by the district's structure and content. (QP, 10)

The different ways within which sustainability is supported become visible by examining the initiatives planned and realised with reference to "sustainability". Although many of these features have been mentioned above, we have summarised them in order to clarify what is seen to enable a "sustainable" lifestyle and in what ways Rosendal is "sustainable" according to the municipality and the developers (see Table 2).

The initiatives are seen as solutions that, according to the analysed material, prevent "unsustainability". The solutions require little or no effort from the residents. This implies a sustainable lifestyle in Rosendal does not call for change among individuals. Instead, the district offers an effortless way to live sustainably. This is exemplified in how one developer claims:

> When you move to this place you contribute to a greener future. (Skanska 2022)

Simply by buying or renting housing in Rosendal, people are seen to contribute to a desired future, regardless of their everyday choices or what goes on in the rest of society. Sustainable living becomes something accomplished through individual consumption. And while there are efforts to support "sustainable choices" in everyday life, these remain voluntary. As mentioned, the QP points out that Rosendal is not a car-free district and parking is provided to cater for those who

Table 2. Overview of sustainability initiatives in Rosendal.

Feature	Description
Rosendal's location	Strategic. Allows inhabitants to cycle to the city centre, walk to work, be close to nature and services.
Energy efficiency	Solar panels, sedum roofs, "passive houses", buildings with heating recycling system.
Places for different activities	Playgrounds, parks, tennis and padel courts, sports centre, meeting places and opportunities for cultivation.
Lighting	For safety and comfort.
Transport	Focus on pedestrians and cyclists, while ensuring private cars remain an option.
Building materials	Wood, "environmentally friendly" and long-lasting.
Blue–green storm water solutions	To protect water reserve underneath Rosendal, prevent flooding and enhance the greenery.
Greenery	To enhance biodiversity and attractiveness.

choose to drive. We interpret this as a way to uphold the district's attractive character while cherishing residents' freedom of choice. Free will is also highlighted when shared spaces are described as enabling social connections, as the voluntary character of all socialising and collaboration is underlined.

The co-houses represent the few solutions where current or future residents have to various degrees contributed to shaping their desired living environment. Although both planned and unplanned features are mentioned in the QP, where the unplanned would encourage inhabitants to participate in the development, the unplanned remain absent in the analysed material. To the authors' knowledge, there have been a couple of questionnaires querying options for parks whose location was decided by the municipality. Additionally, there was an allotment garden in an empty field, where people could grow vegetables. This was initiated by residents and realised in collaboration with the municipality. The first author had her own allotment there for a couple of years. Even though the initiative was popular, it came to an end when it was no longer possible to access the allotments due to fencing around construction sites in the area. This example demonstrates how the unplanned and citizen-driven developments are not given priority, nor does there seem to be much flexibility in the plans made.

As residents' opportunities to contribute to the development of Rosendal have so far remained limited, it follows that they have had little say in what makes Rosendal sustainable. As a consequence, the way certain meanings of sustainability are materialising are driven mainly by the municipality and the developers. Further, sustainability is understood from the perspective of the common three-pillar model of environmental, social and economic aspects. The QP seems to rely on a consensual idea of sustainable urban development since the complexity and contested meanings of urban sustainability are erased. Instead, convenience, attractiveness and freedom of choice are emphasised when describing what it is like to live in Rosendal.

"Ecological sustainability" is achieved through greenery, closeness to nature, energy-efficient solutions and "environmentally friendly" materials. The bicycle is given considerable prominence, although the use of private cars is ensured. "Social sustainability" is portrayed by stating that "everyone" is welcome and that there are places everyone can enjoy, through emphasising the need for varied architecture and different types of meeting places. It is however stressed that socialising and collaborating with neighbours is always voluntary. "Economic sustainability" is largely absent. When mentioned, it relates to local businesses and jobs in, or in close proximity to, Rosendal. More importantly, the economic system within which the area is being developed is never questioned. On the contrary, by buying into a largely profit-driven housing market, individuals can consume sustainable living. We argue that presenting sustainability as something that can easily be achieved and consumed within the currently dominating economic model, takes attention away from the root causes of unsustainability and silences issues that should be discussed in the light of urban sustainability. While each sustainability meaning holds its own silence, we find that the lack of alternative approaches to a growth-dependent economic model in the *Sustainability in*

Rosendal discourse reproduces unjust urban sustainabilities that do not contribute to emancipatory transformation.

Concluding discussion: opening up for alternative urban sustainabilities

In this article we have studied urban sustainability policies by analysing written and visual material produced by Uppsala municipality and developers involved in the Rosendal project. Through the analysis we identified four sustainability meanings: *Everyone is included*, *It's all about aesthetics*, *Closeness to nature* and *Sustainability is easy* which together shape the *Sustainability in Rosendal* discourse. We argue this discourse reproduces specific types of sustainabilities, as discourses have lived effects – many of which are material. Additionally, these effects will influence discourse, as material and discourse are mutually constitutive in an *intra-active relationship* (Barad 2008). In other words, the types of sustainabilities materialised in Rosendal will further influence urban sustainability policies.

The WPR approach has allowed us to examine the silences involved in the analysed material. The silences can be discussed at different levels: one closer to the meanings of sustainability in Rosendal, and another over-arching level encompassing the discourse *Sustainability in Rosendal*. The silences within the meanings relate to: how differences among residents are erased, with the exception of age; how visible solutions are given more attention at the expense of less visible ones; how nature is portrayed as a passive resource, while ignoring human interdependency with it failing to overcome dualisms inherent in Western thinking while bypassing more-than-human agency. Additionally, sustainability is portrayed as something easy, achievable through a consensus-driven, three-pillar model of sustainability, silencing conflicting views and difficulties involved when planning for uncertain futures. We argue these sustainability meanings contribute to upholding the status quo as they fail to question the root causes of urban unsustainability. Therefore, we wish to highlight how the meanings identified refrain from questioning the very economic system within which the development of Rosendal is taking place. This silence is seen to be at a more over-arching level, present throughout the *Sustainability in Rosendal* discourse. We hold that economic growth-dependent urban development reproduces unjust urban environments (Castán Broto and Westman 2019). The injustices at stake in urban environments do not only concern the ways in which different people are affected differently, both regionally and globally, by the "environmental goods and bads" (Walker 2009), but extends to the more-than-human. By building upon the work concerning just sustainabilities (Agyeman 2013; Castán Broto and Westman 2017; 2019) we propose approaching sustainability policies through a care lens, alongside a pluralistic understanding of justice (Gottschlich and Bellina 2017). Such a perspective moves away from an anthropocentric worldview, taking the more-than-human into account. By doing so, this perspective suggests ceasing to view the environment as a passive resource provider and moves towards acknowledging agency in the more-than-human, including both living beings and materials. It is however difficult to imagine discourses and lived effects underpinned by such an urban sustainability perspective, while being part of the very same system we are interrogating. However, true to the WPR approach, our intention has been to question taken-for-granted ideas and open up for alternative perspectives which could give rise to other kinds of sustainability discourses. Ideally, such discourses would produce different lived effects.

Striving towards any form of sustainability is an endeavour taking place in stormy waters (Mentz 2012), fraught with conflict and uncertainty (Gottschlich and Bellina 2017). We are not suggesting sustainability should be abandoned, but we are, like Castán Broto and Westman (2019), suggesting urban sustainability should be re-appropriated. Such re-appropriation needs to question economic growth-dependent urban development. The WPR approach has enabled us to question taken-for-granted ideas (Bacchi 2009), and led us to propose alternative perspectives to urban sustainabilities. If sustainability policies are to become just, transformative and emancipatory, the very economic system within which they are developed needs to be questioned and altered. Otherwise, injustices

will continually be reproduced, while "urban sustainability" projects will result in nothing but insignificant changes in the built environment.

We argue the sustainability meanings reproduced in Rosendal ensure affluent populations gain access to attractive and comfortable "sustainable" housing, while hegemonic growth-dependent development discourses relying on extractivist mind-sets are retained. There are several other new districts in Sweden and beyond, developed within similar discourses. We are sympathetic to the ambition of catering for accommodation needs while striving towards more sustainable urban environments; there are indeed many attractive traits in Rosendal. However, our intention has been to use Rosendal as an example and show the ways in which urban sustainability meanings are reproduced as part of a sustainability discourse that lacks transformative potential and therefore results in unjust lived effects. We want to open up for further discussion and research around the ways in which "sustainable" districts could be different if urban sustainabilities were based on an ethics of care coupled with a pluralistic understanding of justice. We suggest such discussions and research could pose questions such as:

- *What sustainability meanings could shape discourses resulting in more just urban sustainabilities?*
- *How can the anthropocentric and extractivistic attitudes underpinning urban sustainabilities be unlearned and replaced by an ethics of care including the more-than-human?*

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1. Apartment buildings in Sweden generally consist of either "bostadsrätter", where residents buy a share of a housing cooperative, or "hyresrätter" where residents pay rent to a landlord.
2. A sedum roof is one type of living green roof, usually consisting of low-growing succulents.

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Appendix: Analysed Material

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