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Urban densification considering sense of place and environmental justice – or not

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Abstract

Rapid urbanisation is a major transformative driving force of continuous and contested changes in socio-spatial urban structure. Such changes can lead to socio-spatial injustice especially when they involve marginalised populations. Managing rapid urbanisation thus requires goal-oriented inclusive urban planning and policies to secure sustainable development. The theory of environmental justice, as distributive justice, recognition justice, and procedural justice, has been developed in urban planning literature. The experience of justice – or the lack thereof – also affects sense of place, which in relation to urban change includes how people experience, relate to and create meaning in urban spaces. This thesis aims to deepen the understanding of the interplay between sense of place and issues of environmental justice in relation to urban densification in Swedish stigmatised neighbourhoods. The thesis is based on a case study with multiple sampling techniques: document analysis, visual discourse analysis, photo elicitation, and interviews with residents, planners and stakeholders. The first paper focuses on the role of media in creating discourses concerning e.g. safety and security and how these discourses impact the creation of socio-spatial injustice. The second paper concentrates on the impact of an urban densification project to shed light on issues of environmental justice and public participation. In the third paper, the concept of sense of place is introduced, and it examines how densification projects affect residents' lives, both in outcomes and as processes. The thesis concludes that the combined knowledge about sense of place and environmental justice research from an urban planning standpoint can provide a greater understanding of how to motivate residents to act collectively to improve their community and participate in local planning processes. This is important for planners and stakeholders, in order to strengthen a sustainable planning and design process by understanding and honouring the value of local meanings of places.

Keywords: environmental justice; sense of place; densification; urban planning; sense of place

Stadsförtätning med tanke på platskänsla och miljörättvisa – eller inte

Abstract

Snabb urbanisering är en av drivkrafterna till förändringar i socio-spatial stadsstruktur. Sådana förändringar, både i planeringsprocesser och resultat, kan leda till socio-spatiala orättvisor, särskilt när de involverar marginaliserade grupper. Att hantera snabb urbanisering kräver därför målinriktad och inkluderande stadsplanering och policy för att säkra hållbar utveckling för stadsinvånarna. Teorin om miljörättvisa har vidareutvecklats i stadsplaneringslitteraturen som distributiv rättvisa; rättvis fördelning av offentliga utrymmen och resurser, erkännande-rättvisa; inkludering av alla berörda grupper och processuell rättvisa; om rättvisa beslutsprocesser och planering. Känslan av rättvisa (eller inte) påverkar också platskänslan, som beskriver hur platser och urban förändring upplevs och hur människor relaterar till stadsrum och platser. Denna avhandling syftar till att fördjupa förståelsen för samspelet mellan platskänsla och frågor om miljörättvisa i relation till stadsförtätning i svenska stigmatiserade stadsdelar. Metodologiskt bygger avhandlingen på en fallstudie med flera tekniker; dokumentanalys, visuell diskursanalys, fotoelicitering samt intervjuer med boende, planerare och intressenter. Den koncentreras på effekterna av ett stadsförtätningssprojekt för att belysa frågor om miljörättvisa och platskänsla. Avhandlingen introducerar begreppet förtätningsskänsla, för att precisera hur förtätningssprojekt både som resultat och process påverkar de boendes liv. Den drar slutsatsen att den sammanslagna kunskapen från forskning om platskänsla och forskning om miljörättvisa ur stadsplaneringssynpunkt kan ge en större förståelse för hur man kan motivera invånare att agera kollektivt och delta i lokala planeringsprocesser. Detta är främst viktigt för stadsplaneringens praktiker, som genom att förstå värdet av lokala betydelser och hur dessa betydelser tar sig uttryck hos invånarna, får större möjlighet att genomföra hållbara planerings- och designprocesser.

Preface

Since I moved to Sweden in 2010, the notion of home has become my personal favourite interest. I remember my first days strolling around in Malmö city trying to connect to my 'new home'. Since then, I have seized opportunities in casual conversation with friends or strangers to ask people how they themselves relate to their surrounding places.

My interest in understanding people-place relationships grew after I finished my studies in landscape planning. Before I was accepted as a doctoral student, I became involved in a project where I looked into notions of home and the construction of new place attachment among newly arrived immigrants. Through my observations, interviews and informal conversations with the informants, I realised that making home, feeling at home and constructing new place attachments are very complex inner strategies, and they depend on different variables. My background in architecture and urban planning, combined with what I learned from the project, helped me come to the realisation that 'sense of place' is the combination of the feelings (positive and negative) towards one's physical and social environments, which are relational in between the physical and social, as well as to the broader context, such as the neighbourhood, city or even a region.

Imagine your home environment. Perhaps you have been living there for a long time, or perhaps not; perhaps it does not matter how long you have been living there. Imagine whether the physical structure of your neighbourhood is going to change. Your favourite place to sit is going to vanish; you will not see your beautiful walnut tree blossom next spring. Your neighbours are planning to move out. A lot of things around you are going to change. Perhaps you are unable to imagine the outcome of the change. This thesis is about experiencing physical changes in a neighbourhood that

has social problems from the point of view of residents, despite their different cultural backgrounds; it is about how they resist the change, and how they perceive the change as an unjust process.

The starting point of this thesis was the knowledge that urban green spaces have become increasingly crucial components in urban planning practice, and that multiple issues of environmental justice can be associated with their design, location, planning and management. These issues include gentrification and, frequently, poor accessibility to green spaces among lower socio-economic groups, as well as challenges relating to the recognition of vulnerable groups' needs, and more generally, the creation of governance processes that are respectful of the values and aspirations of diverse stakeholders and residents. The sense of place literature offers a range of theories and concepts for understanding the positive and negative meanings that vulnerable groups assign to places like green spaces; however, they have not been systematically integrated into environmental justice and green space governance scholarship. It is here suggested that much can be learnt about how to design, plan and manage green spaces by investigating how environmental justice and sense of place contribute to the creation of socially inclusive green spaces.

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List of publications

This thesis is based on the work contained in the following papers, referred to by Roman numerals in the text:

- I. Shahrad, A. (2023). Visual Representation in urban Spaces: a tale of two neighbourhoods. Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers – Urban Design and Planning, vol 177 (1) pp. 1-17
<https://doi.org/10.1680/jurdp.22.00037>
- II. Azadeh Shahrad*, Sanna Stålhammar, and Natalie Marie Gulsrud. Procedural justice for whom? A case study of a densification project. (submitted)
- III. Shahrad, A. Whose sense of place? Experiences of environmental (in)justice among residents of a densifying disadvantaged neighbourhood. (manuscript)

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The contribution of Azadeh Shahrad to the papers included in this thesis was as follows:

- I. I am the sole author of this paper.
- II. Planned and chose study design. Collected data and performed analysis data with co-author. Led the writing of the paper. Corresponding author and had overall responsibility for the paper.
- III. I am the sole author of this paper.

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1. Introduction

The world is becoming increasingly urbanised, and urbanisation is a driving force of continuous and contested changes in socio-spatial urban structure, rapidly transforming urban life. Urban development is often entangled with processes such as gentrification (Ananian et al. 2018; Di Masso et al. 2021), commodification (Holgersen & Malm 2015), and marginalisation (Baeten & Listerborn 2015). Such processes have a harsher impact on the population with lower socio-economic status than on affluent groups. In many cases, the decision-making process and the outcome result in socio-spatial injustice, particularly when they involve marginalised populations (Anguelovski et al. 2016). Although awareness of such inequality has increased in the social sciences and in planning policy documents on different levels, the gap between disadvantaged and wealthy residents continues to grow (Malmö Commission 2013; Musterd et al. 2017; Meerow et al. 2019; Nicoletti et al. 2023). Managing such rapid urbanisation thus requires effective urban planning, infrastructure development, and social policies that will secure sustainable development and value-added living conditions for the urban inhabitants.

Rapid urbanisation takes place in the form of densification and infill development affected by the compact city ideal as a response to modernist planning (McFarlane 2016), and has later appeared as a strategy to fulfil sustainability goals (Bibri et al. 2020). Sustainability aims include protection of undeveloped land and its biodiversity and fertile soil from urban sprawl (Siedentop & Fina 2012; Artmann et al. 2019; Angelo & Wachsmuth 2020). Densification may also reduce carbon emissions because denser environments shorten commuting distances (Ahlfeldt et al. 2018). Furthermore, densification stimulates other desirable direct and indirect socio-economic effects, such as the creation of affordable housing (Phillips

2020; Wicki & Kaufmann 2022). However, densification has not been free from criticism in urban planning discourse (Hautamäki 2019; Cavicchia 2021, 2022; Jansson & Schneider 2023). As part of the critical discourse of densification with an urban sustainability aim, this thesis critically examines a densification project in Bellevuegården, a stigmatised neighbourhood in Malmö, Sweden, in order to study the implementation process in depth, but even more importantly, to understand the perspectives of urban residents and their experiences of such a densification project in their neighbourhood. How do they respond to the suggested changes, how do they perceive the process, and what are their arguments?

Densification and how it affects residents' perception has been discussed by some scholars seeking to understand the social aspects of density (Lewis & Baldassare 2010; Cook et al. 2012; Smith & Billig 2012; Arvola & Pennanen 2014; Nematollahi et al. 2016). Perceptions and experiences of urban density are understood individually and highly influenced by the cultural, geographical, temporal and economic context (Alexander 1993; Livingstone et al. 2021). There is often strong resistance from residents in local areas that originates in the uncertain social outcomes that are the product of new development. For example, in their case study in Perth, Australia, Nematollahi et al. (2016) find that a main cultural characteristic such as an unwillingness to socialise with different people is a negative reaction to dense neighbourhoods.

Place research, and more specifically the sense of place concept, deals with place experience and place meanings. In their recent book, Raymond et al. (2021) direct our attention to global challenges such as climate change, new forms of mobility and migration, new technologies and media renovation, as well as the influence of redevelopment and gentrification in urban areas on our understanding of place (Raymond et al. 2021). All of these challenges alter our everyday environments and our relationships to these environments, and they also introduce new kinds of places with transformed meanings. In a highly concrete way, densification/infill development in residential areas changes the functions and characteristics of the outdoor environment, as well as its spatial dimensions and conditions, and might also offer new experiences and functions.

Manzo and Destano (2021) state that when our places change rapidly, the way we understand place, meanings, and values also changes. This means that how we experience urban spaces, how we relate to these places and how

we make meaning are affected by such changes in our living environment. In this regard, the sense of place concept makes us able to grasp the changes in both physical and social environments. There is a body of research on sense of place showing that urban change has a direct impact on the ways in which residents experience and understand their environments (Di Masso et al. 2021; Manzo & Desanto 2021). Furthermore, research on residents' perception of densification shows that densification and its consequences are complex and context-dependent (Schmidt-Thomé et al. 2013). Still, we know little about how denser areas affect the lives of urban inhabitants (Teller 2021; Jansson & Schneider 2023), and in particular how densification impacts stigmatised neighbourhoods. To fill this knowledge gap, this thesis attempts to shed light on densification from the urban residents' point of view and to understand how the processes and changes are implemented and experienced by residents.

1.1 Contextualising and Criticising Densification

Since the early 1990s, the idea of creating dense cities has been one of the leading global paradigms for sustainable urbanism (Bibri et al. 2020). This idea has affected the way in which Swedish cities have been growing since then to reach several sustainability goals. First, the dense urban areas promote environmental sustainability. According to different studies (Jabareen 2006; Dempsey & Jenks 2010; Hofstad 2012; Bibri 2020), densification can support environmental sustainability. Here, the topics are discussed in main two categories. One focuses mainly on transport, proximity, and reducing Co2 emissions. Building densely decreases the need to travel and shortens commuting distances due to the proximity of workplaces, services, facilities, and public spaces (Bechle et al. 2011): denser environments can shorten commuting distances, which in turn can reduce carbon emissions (Ahlfeldt et al. 2018). The second category of research deals with the advantages of densification for protecting undeveloped land and its biodiversity from urban sprawl. Building dense urban areas secures green and natural areas from sprawl and reduces the pressure on ecosystem services and biodiversity. In addition, it can limit the loss of biodiversity and green spaces. Finally, it protects rural and agricultural land from further development (Siedentop & Fina 2012; Artmann et al. 2019; Angelo & Wachsmuth 2020).

Another component of sustainability is the economic advantage that can be achieved by densifying urban areas. For instance, by creating proximity between employees and their workplaces (Næss et al. 2019), or supporting local services and businesses, a city can be economically viable through accessible infrastructure and facilities (Glackin et al. 2024). Finally, densely built urban environments contribute to social sustainability. Through proximity to services, workplaces, public spaces, amenities, and public transportation, the city creates a better quality of life through more social interaction and cultural vitality. Densification promotes health and wellbeing by providing better opportunities for walking and cycling. It can improve social equality, as there may be better access to services and facilities and flexible design of affordable housing (Phillips 2020; Wicki & Kaufmann 2022).

Although research and policy advocate for denser cities, citing advantages of higher density, mixed land use, sustainable transportation, and green areas (mainly outside the city), this approach to sustainable urban development is associated with various conflicts and paradoxes (Bibri et al. 2020). As previous research illustrates, there is relatively little research focus on the environmental, social and health impacts of densification compared to research on transport, public infrastructure and economy, which often reports positive relationships with density (Berghauser Pont et al., 2021). In their literature review, Gren et al. (2018) find that the majority of publications deal with transportation and air pollution, where the argument revolves around the quality of life, for example walking and cycling versus car use (Gren et al. 2018). Bramley et al. (2009) show that sustainable travel is supported in higher urban densities and compact forms. Aligned with other research (Campbell 1996; Purvis et al. 2019; Eisenmenger et al. 2020), they point out that focusing on sustainable travel ‘clearly conflicts with, or must be traded off against, the “community”/”attachment” aspects of social sustainability’ (Bramley et al. 2009: p 2139). However, high dense urbanities are positioned as necessarily lower in carbon consumption than lower-density places or sprawl. Frequently however, the global environmental costs of producing such urbanisms is not considered. Moran et al. (2018) state that relatively wealthy cities have the highest carbon footprints, and lifestyle within these cities is an important factor (Moran et al. 2018).

According to Haaland and van den Bosch (2015), a major challenge of cities undergoing densification is to provide green space for citizens without

losing the quality and quantity of green spaces. All over the globe, densification and infill development lead to the decrease and fragmentation of urban green space (Haaland & van den Bosch 2015). This happens despite the fact that the green structures are being increasingly conceptualised and modified to fit in the policies of the compact and dense city and fulfil the priority of densification. Densification has thus become a threat to the coherence of green space (Hautamäki 2019; Jansson & Schneider 2023). This issue is shown by Bibri et al. (2020), who investigate the compact city model that is practiced and justified in urban planning and development in the two Swedish cities of Gothenburg and Helsingborg. They state the problem thus:

While the goal of protecting open green space outside development areas or strategic nodes finds support in the two cities as manifested in densification and expansion projects, it is not certain when it comes to green areas located in or close to the urban fabric given the potential enticing opportunities offered by new urban development projects to further strengthen the economic goals of sustainability, which indeed is the dominant aspect of the compact city initiatives (Bibri et al. 2020: p 15). This means that such densification development may be putting urban green space and its functions at risk (Jansson & Schneider 2023).

Another critique concerns increased noise and crowding because of densification (De Roo 2000). In this regard, Eva Kristensson (2008) points to the socioeconomic aspect, explaining that people escape the density and crowds by driving to the countryside weekends or going on holiday (see also (Qviström et al. 2016)); the lower socio-economic population has fewer opportunities to compensate in this manner for living in such dense areas. Access to leisure and recreational areas nearby is thus more important for these groups. Important questions include ‘where’ and ‘how’ to densify, which brings in the aspect of context (Kristensson 2008).

According to some researchers, densification is context-dependent; this has not always been considered thoroughly (Kytä et al. 2013, 2015; Schmidt-Thomé et al. 2013; Wicki & Kaufmann, 2022). Bibri et al. (2020) emphasise the aspect of context in discourses of sustainability and densification, as

[...] sustainability depends on several intertwined factors that should fit the local context. In view of that, each city should tap into its local opportunities and capabilities as well as assesses its constraints and potentials from a more

integrated perspective given the complexity associated with the social, economic, and environmental aspects of the city (Bibri et al. 2020: p 3).

There are calls for more context-based planning approaches to integrate the current discourse of densification as a solution and to address how they are perceived by different user groups (Jansson & Schneider 2023; Jansson & Sunding 2024).

1.2 Densification in the Context of Sweden and Malmö

Between the Second World War until the 1980s, Sweden's built environment was predominantly affected and transformed by the social-democratic government's ideology of the public's right to welfare and wellbeing. 'Swedish spatial planning not only responded to rapid urbanisation by providing a range of services outside the commercial market, but was also a way to create new kinds of citizens and communities' (Pries & Qviström, 2021: p 923). There is a remarkable period in the history of housing construction in Sweden, from 1965-1974, during which the large public housing programme called 'the Million Home Programme' (*Miljonprogrammet*), was implemented. During these years, the Swedish government undertook the ambitious task of building one million dwellings in order to put an end to the shortage of housing. This was a bold decision. The idea of this project was to build high quality, affordable housing, and it was based on the notion of 'the right to a dwelling' of each person (Hall & Vidén, 2005). The housing units in the Million Home Programme consisted of flats in multi-family blocks (66%) and single-family houses (34%). Homes were built all over the country, and most of the building took place in new suburbs of the larger towns and cities or on the outskirts of smaller towns. 35% of the entire production was in the three metropolitan regions of Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Malmö. In proportion to the size of the municipalities, however, growth was at least as great in a number of big towns and in many small industrial municipalities (Hall & Viden 2005).

The design rationale of such residential blocks aimed to separate car traffic from pedestrians, cyclists and children. Each neighbourhood was designed with playgrounds and sports facilities, a centre with shops, school, day care, a library and other public services in the vicinity. The dominant house types are long structures with at least two stairwells and from two to seventeen floors. Of the houses, 65 % have two till four floors, and 20% have

six floors or above. The multi-family housing units are often surrounded by generous and lush green spaces (Vidén 2012).

In the early 1990s, discussions about advocating densification and inward growth started internationally, including in Sweden (Bibri et al. 2020). Cities in Sweden started to re-think how to deal with urbanisation and migration to the cities, parallel with a move towards urban sustainability. At the same time, there was a neoliberal shift in housing policy politics after 1991 that changed Sweden from ‘the most regulated in Europe to most liberal market governed’ (Hedin et al. 2012: p 460). In their introduction to the issues in Nordic countries in the post-welfare era, Baeten and his colleagues (2015) acknowledge that the processes of neo-liberalisation have been different in each Nordic country depending on the different paths they have chosen. Neo-liberalisation of the Welfare State Model of the Nordic countries has not faded, but rather became decentralised, with the responsibility shifting from the State to local governance such as cities or regions and private markets (Baeten et al. 2015).

Malmö, the largest industrial city in southern Sweden, had a high need for workers in the 1960s, and a large proportion of the Million Home Programme houses were built there as people moved in from the countryside and from abroad. In the 1980s, the economic situation changed completely and there was a recession in Malmö when the ship-building industry located there moved abroad. In order to deal with crisis, the city of Malmö started to reformulate the vision of Malmö towards a post-industrial knowledge city. The shift was manifested with a new university and an emphasis on economically-driven urban development benefitting a wealthier population (Holgersen & Malm 2015).

The construction of Västra Hamnen in the waterfront area was an early part of the urban transformation of the former shipyard into housing for affluent residents. Planning policies followed the idea of neoliberal notion of attractiveness which started in 1985, when the political motto was ‘New Times for Malmö’. The new comprehensive plan in 2000 concentrated on the idea of a knowledge city and the development of a university in Malmö; the aim was to attract affluent residents as well as more highly educated groups ‘as a kind of accumulation of human capital’ (Pries, 2020: p 257). As a result, the political concern driving urban change in Malmö was attracting ‘the right residents’, rather than supporting unprivileged groups. All of this development has been carried out under the guise of urban sustainability. The

approach has been neoliberal and potentially very exclusionary (Holgersen & Malm 2015). The combination of the densification approach and housing policy shift in urban areas has resulted in significant changes in the city of Malmö.

1.2.1 Urban Development and Neoliberal Planning in Malmö

Located in the southernmost part of Skåne County, Malmö is the third largest city in Sweden with a population of approximately 357 000. Since Malmö is surrounded by very fertile soils, the aim is for the city to grow inwards in order to preserve surrounding agricultural land. As a result, more housing will be built in all existing neighbourhoods and urban environments (Malmö Municipality 2018).

According to Malmö's comprehensive plan, the principal development strategy aims for the dense urban city; the overarching priority is to grow inwards in order to achieve 'a mixed-function dense, green and close city'. The argument involves three main aspects:

- 1) Saving resources through higher density urban development. The plan argues that 'a more compact city is more resource and energy efficient than a sprawling urban landscape' (Malmö-Municipality 2018: p 6). Development of this kind increases the potential to create an efficient transport system, which could encourage more people to use public transport, to cycle, or to walk.
- 2) Building for proximity. Malmö is a 'close' city in many respects; it is close to the continent, close to Copenhagen, close to the sea and close to the countryside. In dense development, residential areas are also close to private services and retail. Shops and other businesses directed at the general public should be located to a greater extent close to housing, along main roads and around public transport hubs.
- 3) Mixed-function city and vibrant city life. The compact urban landscape will become increasingly multi-functional with the addition of complementary elements such as employment opportunities in residential areas. With more people residing and operating in the same space, the demand for services, shops and leisure increases. In order to increase social sustainability, areas with homogenous forms of housing will be interspersed with new forms of tenure or architecture in order to achieve a more diverse mixture of households (Malmö-Municipality 2018: p 6).

These visions for the future of Malmö have also been criticised, however. Not least because the benefits from this ‘dense, close and vibrant’ city are not equally distributed. This became publicly known with the report by the Malmö Commission (Malmö Commission 2013), which showed an eight-year difference in the expected life span for residents in the most and the least privileged neighbourhoods of Malmö, respectively.

1.2.2 Development of stigmatised neighbourhood in Sweden

As stated earlier, the Million Home Programme was a way to solve the problem of housing shortage. When the project had hardly reached the halfway point, the housing shortage became a housing surplus, in part due to the rapid expansion of the housing stock and an economic crisis (Hall & Viden 2005; Grundström & Molina 2016). As a result, many of the flats remained vacant. The project was attacked and criticised, especially by the media at the end of the 1960s, when the programme had just started, as poor and monotonous architecture (Hall & Viden 2005); this was perhaps the starting point for the stigmatisation process that followed.

In their report ‘Million Home Programme and Media’ (‘Miljonprogram och media’ in the Swedish original), Ericsson et al. (2000) discuss the stigmatisation process of Million Home Programme, specifically Järvafältet in Stockholm, which is said to be a child of the Million Programme. They claim that the media played a significant role in stigmatising the housing environment, referring to reports from 1970 that criticised the Million Home Programme housing as dirty and unfinished, permanent outdoor living environments. At the end of 1970s and in the early 1980s, the criticism continued with reports of criminality and social problems:

‘The mass media reports alcohol and other [substance] abuse. Images and reports in newspapers show a combination of features from earlier, semi-modern environments: dishevelled and unfinished residential areas, squalor and antisocial behaviour, especially from alcoholics. Mass media images try to capture the destitution and crime. Now, in the late 1970s, these suburban areas are gradually being (re)presented as problematic’ (Ericsson et al. 2000: p 18).

Such discourses mainly place the blame on poor political decisions, which led to a situation in which living in Million Home Programme areas became unattractive. Consequently, many housing units remained empty. In order to solve the problem, many municipalities decided to accommodate a large

immigrant population with lower social status in Million Home Programme homes (Mack 2019). According to Ericsson et al. (2000), immigrants began to be central in representations of the suburbs in the 1980s and began to be seen as the problem; they were: ‘the exotic people, crime, violence, youth gangs, cultural attachment, outdated traditions, women’s oppression, dependency on social welfare, and cultural incompetence’ (Ericsson et al. 2000: p 19). This is partly why Million Home Programme areas have become associated with ethnic segregation, crime and poverty through stigmatisation and the making of a ‘problem area’ (Backvall 2019: p 36).

Wacquant (2008) introduces the term territorial stigmatisation, arguing that stigma can be attached to places. A neighbourhood becomes stigmatised through prejudicial beliefs about the characteristics of that neighbourhood, e.g. that it is dangerous or deprived or that its inhabitants are poor or from an ethnic minority; it does not matter whether the characteristics are representative or not – if others believe them, the neighbourhood will be judged accordingly (Wacquant 2008). In this thesis, I borrow the term territorial stigmatisation to illustrate the type of neighbourhood that the case study deals with. Although other terms, such as vulnerable area (especially in the Swedish context) and disadvantaged, deprived or marginalised neighbourhood, have been used interchangeably in the literature, territorial stigmatisation has been chosen here as most relevant for urban planning, especially since it points to spatial demarcation.

Stigmatised neighbourhoods have received much attention in urban planning literature where the focus is on the consequences of stigmatisation for socio-spatial segregation, aspects of growing injustice, and inequality between the poor and the rich. Million Home Programme neighbourhoods have predominantly been studied to examine urban transformation and issues of displacement among disadvantaged populations (e.g. (Baeten & Listerborn 2015; Baeten et al. 2017; Polanska & Richard 2019)), focusing on social injustice through gentrification. However, there is little knowledge about the sense of place of the residents in Sweden’s Million Home Programme areas. It seems that sense of place is overlooked in such urban environments, or even ‘contaminated’ by the notion of ‘vulnerable areas’ (Mack 2021).

In spite of the problems that have been ascribed to Million Home Programme areas, such as danger, poverty, and segregation, the outdoor environments have been appreciated by the residents. The modern

architectural design of these neighbourhoods often included car-free courtyards, and there are also separate pedestrian and cycle paths to make more greenspace possible (Vidén 2012). The courtyards and outdoor environments have been changed significantly in many areas to become softer, greener, more diverse and suitable for use by different groups of residents (Hall & Vidén 2005). Mack (2021) shows the contradiction between outsiders' and residents' perspectives on Million Home Programme neighbourhoods well: 'For outsiders, Swedish suburbs are spaces of danger, violence, social exclusion, and, critically, ugliness and concrete'. At the same time, they are a place to play, socialise and grow old (Mack 2021: p 558).

In the last decades, the large spaces in between buildings in Million Home Programme areas have become targeted for densification (Kristensson 2012), which more specifically brings issues of environmental injustice to such neighbourhoods. Environmental justice research has historically aimed at critical studies of the correlation between social status and environmental qualities; these studies could be used as arguments to protect marginalised populations against polluted land and improve accessibility to better quality of green spaces by including and involving unheard voices (Low 2013). Environmental justice includes fair distribution of environmental goods and bads (distributional justice) and meaningful decision-making processes that involve people (procedural justice) regardless of their ethnic background, class, sexuality, religion or race (recognition justice) (Schlosberg 2007). Densifying Million Home Programme areas creates two key problems that are mainly related to distribution and accessibility to green spaces. Zalar and Pries (2022) discuss how densification in Million Home Programme areas leads to dispossession of residents' right to green spaces. They claim that planning knowledge tries to justify densification and redevelopment by labelling exciting green spaces as unused or lacking design qualities. This process obscures the importance of green spaces for the residents and ultimately results in the loss of public green spaces in stigmatised neighbourhoods (Zalar & Pries 2022). The other issue is that the Million Home Programme areas are already over-crowded (Swedish Police 2017). Thus, the amount of green space per housing unit cannot be compared with that of, for example, a neighbourhood with higher socio-economic status. This is mainly because of the limited recourses to which the residents have access. Therefore, green spaces in these neighbourhoods have other and

more values that have been not considered when they are removed (Kristensson 2012).

1.3 Research Purpose and Questions

This thesis aims to deepen the understanding of the interplay between sense of place and issues of environmental justice in relation to urban densification in Swedish stigmatised neighbourhoods.

The thesis answers the following overarching research question: How is sense of place enacted and interrelated with the issues of environmental justice in a Swedish stigmatised neighbourhood undergoing densification?

In addition, three research questions have been guiding the study:

- 1) How is Bellevuegården represented in the Swedish media?
- 2) How has environmental justice been implemented in urban densification in Bellevuegården in relation to participation?
- 3) How have the residents experienced the densification project in Bellevuegården?

The thesis is a compilation of three papers; each of these addresses the issues of environmental justice and sense of place from a different perspective in the context of a densification process. Figure 1 illustrates the relationships between the papers.

Paper I sets the contextual background of the thesis by examining the role of media in the visual representation of a stigmatised neighbourhood in a Swedish urban context to answer RQ1 from the outsider's point of view i.e., that of the media. Paper II deals with the case study – the densification project in Bellevuegården – to answer RQ2 by exploring the issues of environmental justice, or more specifically the procedural aspect of justice, through study of a decision-making process for a densification project. Paper II assesses three layers of procedural justice: 1) the official layer (i.e., the regulations and actions at municipal level, to operationalise the planning and building law); 2) the applied (i.e., how the planners together with the stakeholders involved plan to achieve procedural justice in practice); and 3) the lived (i.e., how procedural justice is experienced by the residents). The thesis shows in in between the outsider- and the insider perspective. Paper III brings in the notion of sense of place in relation to experiencing densification to answer RQ3. It aims to understand conceptualisation of sense of place in a stigmatised neighbourhood and to explain the meaning of

place while experiencing the process of densification. It focuses on the insider's perspective and the questions of whose sense of place is included and favoured, and why this is so in planning processes.



Figure 1. Shows the relationships between the three papers of the thesis. Paper starts from the outside perspective, which shows how the media views Bellevuegården as dangerous, and moves inward towards the outside-inside level, which includes the perspective of stakeholders (outside) and residents (inside). Finally, it shows the inside perspective, that of Bellevuegården's residents.

2. Theoretical Concepts/Framework

This thesis is situated within urban planning disciplines and practices and aims to contribute to that field of research. It critically examines a densification project as an urban planning strategy, how it is implemented, and how it is experienced. In this chapter, I present the conceptual frameworks that I have used to understand and explain the issues arising with the discourse of urban densification.

The concepts of environmental justice and sense of place, as well as the merging of the two, has imbued the whole research for the thesis, although supportive theoretical concepts have also been used, such as intertextuality and communicative planning, as well as several methodological concepts.

2.1 Environmental Justice and Urban Planning

Environmental justice has a broadly triadic definition consisting of distribution, procedural, and recognition justice. Distributional justice refers to fair distribution of environmental goods and bads. Procedural justice relates to fair integration of all affected groups into decision-making processes and the planning of a public space. Finally, recognition justice is about the quality of interpersonal relationships in a specific place and whether people interact safely without being discriminated (Schlosberg 2007; Low 2013). Referring to Rawls' book *A Theory of Justice*, David Schlosberg (2007) points out that the meaning of justice as fairness is just distribution or 'more properly the rules that govern a just distribution of social political, and economic goods and bads for everyone, including less privileged groups (Schlosberg 2007: p 13). He includes both what to be distributed as goods and rights, and what the laws that support those proposed distributions should be.

Schlosberg (2007) claims that distributional justice has been the main focus of other components of environmental justice. Iris Young, Nancy Fraser and other theorists became concerned with recognition of the least wealthy and maintain that the recognition should be central, meaning that the lack of recognition established by different forms of devaluation and degradation at an individual and cultural level not only harms the communities in question, but are also the foundation for distributional injustice (Young 1990; Fraser & Honneth 2003). Young (1990) believes distributive injustice is due in part to a lack of recognition, which comes from social structures, cultural values and institutional circumstances (Young 1990). This is where the thesis positions itself: while distribution and recognition are the absolute keys to achieving justice, the focus on the process of justice and encouragement of transparent and meaningful public participation is a main tool for achieving both distribution- and recognition justice (Schlosberg 2007).

The issues of environmental justice have been studied in different ways in urban planning literature (Kabisch & Haase 2014; Soneryd & Lindh 2019; Anguelovski et al. 2020; de Vries et al. 2020; Hanson & Alkan Olsson 2022). Nonetheless, distribution justice has received more attention than procedural and recognition justice (Meerow et al. 2019; Edge et al. 2020). For example, green space accessibility and the distribution of public green spaces are one dimension of distributive justice studied in urban planning, where some scholars focus on marginalised neighbourhoods with less accessibility to green areas (Venter et al. 2023). Revitalisation of green spaces, brownfield development, and cleaning up environmental hazards are among other topics that connect distributive justice to urban planning literature (Curran & Hamilton 2012; Wüstemann et al., 2017; Silva et al., 2018; Anguelovski et al., 2020; Davide et al., 2022).

Various publications by Susan Fainstein have brought particular attention to the discussion of just planning (Fainstein 2000, 2001, 2005), not least her book *The Just City* (2010). Fainstein (2010) explicitly refers to an urban theory of justice as she writes: 'I have positioned the just city as the appropriate object of planning' (Fainstein 2005: p 126). She develops a paradigm of justice in the city that involves democracy as decision-making power; diversity included as inter-group relations and equity as the fair outcome is most important. She derives these three principles from the

contemporary political philosophy on justice and the work of scholars such as Rawls, Young and Habermas (Fainstein 2014). The Just City theory is grounded in addressing social and geographic inequality through processes that bring about participation and decision-making processes by marginalised groups, leading to more equitable outcomes. Fainstein (2010) believes that achieving a just city entails creating different values of democracy, equity, and diversity; applying processes of participation, contestation, and democratic planning; and performing concrete outcomes. She maintains that just policies do not reinforce inequalities but instead produce more equitable outcomes. She emphasises just policies that facilitate protection of the less privileged (Fainstein 2010).

Meaningful public participation has been discussed in urban planning research and practice and has primarily originated in communicative planning theory. The idea of communicative planning is mainly based on participatory dialogue and transparency through the involvement of different groups. It is important to create a fair process of urban development and arenas for expression of opinion and the exchange of information and knowledge between professionals and citizens (Sager 2018). According to Fainstein, democracy is one of the values of a just city; she refers to the importance of citizen participation as well as diversity, which deals with inclusion and recognition of different social groups in decision-making processes (Fainstein 2014). Communicative planning and citizen participation are not immune to criticism, however. Soneryd and Lindh (2018) write that there have been two approaches in planning research: the normative and the critical. The normative approach is based on the Habermasian idea of deliberative democracy, where citizens must be given more opportunities for meaningful participation. The normative approach sees citizen participation as part of wider processes of democratisation or citizen empowerment. The critical approach relies on Foucauldian conceptualisations of power and governmentality and criticises citizen participation in which citizens are invited to a dialogue that is very difficult for them to influence and that is closely defined by private interests and investments (Soneryd & Lindh 2018).

Scholars have criticised the normative approach of public participation. For example, Mees' (2003) criticism of communicative planning includes that the participatory and communicative parts of planning processes are often manipulated towards neo-liberal ideals (Mees 2003). Other scholars

have expressed concern about the way in which power relationships are assessed, which hampers the effectiveness of communicative planning and more specifically citizen participation (Huxley 2000; McGuirk 2001; Westin 2021). This means that citizens are invited to influence a process in which public and private interests are conflicting (Soneryd & Lindh 2019; Montin 2021). Handling social conflicts of interest that arise in the planning process is another problem that arises with communicative planning (Gualini 2015). Sager (2018) points to a weak link between communicative planning and procedural and substantive qualities, which means that the focus on designing and carrying out a democratic process is oversimplified (Sager 2018). Thus, citizen participation does not necessarily become an arena for co-production of the urban environment (Tahvilzadeh & Kings 2016).

On the other hand, recent environmental justice scholarship moves on to a new generation of critical environmental justice issues, which draws more attention to multiple forms of inequality, multi-scalar analyses, and socioecological threats being faced (Pellow & Brulle 2005; Pellow 2016). Anguelovski et al. (2020) argue that most research in the field of environmental justice has a more positivist approach, placing the inequalities in three 'boxes' as distribution, recognition, and procedure (Anguelovski et al. 2020). Recent discussion divides environmental justice into two phases: (1) the 'first-generation', which mainly focuses on documenting environmental inequality through the lens of race and class; and (2) 'second-generation' studies that extend beyond questions of distribution to integrate a deeper intersectionality, consideration of how gender, sexuality, and other categories of difference shape environmental justice (Pellow 2016). According to Pellow (2016), critical environmental justice scholars need to move from single-scale to multi-scalar analysis of the causes, consequences, and possible resolutions of environmental justice issues (Pellow 2016). This thesis uses the capacity offered by critical environmental justice to analyse and assess how environmental justice has been implemented in urban densification processes in relation to participation, on state, municipality and neighbourhood level.

At the same time, discussions of justice have been part of the compact city concept and urban densification discourse, where there has been a focus how the dense built environment should contribute to more social equity and social justice. Burton (2000) shows a substantive case, where she focuses on distributional aspect of justice: on '... the fairness of the intended end-result

of the compact city proposition' (Burton 2000: p 1971). She finds that density has some negative effect on social equity by leading to 'less domestic living space; lack of affordable housing; increased crime levels; and lower levels of walking and cycling (Burton 2000: p 1987). Bibby et al. (2021) believe that examinations of the relationship between urban density and social equity have generally been based on comparative analysis at the city level, thus failing to address variations in intra-urban experiences and taking no consideration of the process of urban densification (Bibby et al. 2021).

2.2 Sense of Place Concept

Generally, the concept of sense of place describes human experiences of places. Place has been researched in geography, sociology, psychology and other disciplines, each of which has developed its own theoretical and practical approaches (Trentelman 2009). Human geographer Tuan (1977) was one of the first scholars to define sense of place as an emotional attachment one has to a place, the meanings – both personal and shared – that emerge from place-human relationships. Tuan (1977) and Relph (1976) drew on a phenomenological perspective which focuses on the lived experience of a particular individual or group (Cresswell 2010). Sociology scholars consider place, where social interaction occurs, plays an important role in social life in urban spaces (Gieryn 2000). Environmental psychology scholars argue that people create sense of place through their active engagement with their environments, and that this is also how meanings are created and experiences interpreted (Stedman, 2016).

In the following sub-sections, I present the conceptualisation of sense of place (Hidalgo & Hernández 2001; Jorgensen & Stedman 2001; Trentelman 2009; Stedman 2016). These are grouped into 'place as a locus of attachment' and 'place as a centre of meaning'.

Place as a locus of attachment (place attachment)

Place attachment is an emotional bond, usually positive, between individuals or groups and their environments (Low & Altman 1992). It is fundamentally evaluative and can be measured using indirect variables such as length of residence and satisfaction. Place attachment is commonly evaluated through the dimensions of place identity and place dependence (Lewicka 2011). Place identity refers to an individual's personal identity

with regard to the physical environment. Place dependence refers to an instrumental connection between people and place and can be measured as the ability of an environment to facilitate and fulfil important needs (Masterson et al. 2017). Empirical research on place attachment and green spaces and national parks has found strong positive associations between place attachment and level of satisfaction for different green space activities and infrastructures (Ramkissoon et al. 2014), as well as between place attachment and willingness to engage in pro-environment behaviour or other place-protective actions (Scannell & Gifford 2010; Stedman et al. 2014).

Place as a centre of meaning (place meaning)

Place as a centre of meaning has been an approach to characterise human experience, meaning, and relationships with one's environment with a more qualitative method. Unlike attachment, it is more descriptive and relates to perceptual, cognitive and affective responses (Stedman 2016). Stedman maintains that 'a setting is more than one "place": settings contain multiple meanings based on patterned experience' (Stedman 2008: p 66). In the place as a centre of meaning approach, 'sense of place sometimes refers to the intangible meanings and symbols that are hard to recognise or articulate (and hard to quantify)' (Williams 2008: p 17).

2.2.1 Two viewpoints on sense of place: Essentialism vs Progressive places

'Place is how we make the world meaningful and the way we experience it' (Cresswell 2014: p 19). Researchers have debated how to explain this meaning, however. Some scholars, such as Tuan (1977) and Relph (1976), believe that place is a way of being-in-the-world, or place as being. This is derived from a phenomenological approach, in which subjectivity and human experiences are emphasised. They believe in the essentialist meaning of place, in which a place has a *genius loci* (Latin for 'spirit of place'); i.e., that the spirit of a place gives that place an identity (Relph 1976; Tuan 1977). In the discussion of how sense of place is created, Stedman (2016) argues that the dominant view emphasises individual actors engaging freely in chosen personal experiences. People construct sense of place by interpreting these encounters, taking in environmental stimuli and actively creating meaning. Stedman criticises this prevalent view, drawing attention to the point that interpretations are made according to social conventions within a

social-ecological system. He maintains that people see the landscape not merely from their point of view as individuals but from a particular and socially produced perspective. Through this latter view, we are able to explain how a dominant sense of place takes form when more emphasis is on power and dominant meanings (Stedman 2016). In line with Stedman (2016), Ingalls et al. (2019) state that '[p]lace meanings are produced and compete across a highly uneven landscape of power wherein some places claims are privileged while others struggle to gain traction' (p 625). Another critique comes from Doreen Massey, who calls the essentialist view a reactionary notion of place. In the early 1990s, Harvey and Massey developed the idea of progressive places, which are based on a more constructivist and postmodernist approach (Massey 1993; Harvey 1996). Progressive places are dynamic and reconstructed through social relationships and social processes, place as becoming (Massey 1993; Cresswell 2015; Lewicka et al. 2019). The thesis takes a progressive approach to understanding place and sense of place, maintaining that place meanings and place experiencing are socially produced, competing, and dynamic. This is especially relevant to the study of a stigmatised neighbourhood, in that there might be combinations of positive and negative attachments and experiences.

2.2.2 Sense of Place and Urban Planning

Williams (2014b) argues that there are at least two levels of place application in landscape planning and management (Williams 2014b). One focuses on how people experience places, to address the content of place meanings and senses (Manzo 2005; Skår 2010). 'It aims to chart place-based meanings and sentiments as embodied in concepts such as special places, sense of place, and place attachment held by residential occupants, visitors, tourists, and other stakeholders' (Williams 2014b: p 75). The other level concentrates on governance of places or landscapes with emphasis on social processes by which meanings are shaped, consumed, and contested (Yung et al. 2003; Wheeler et al. 2016). The application of both levels is relevant in this thesis, since I investigate the sense of place among the residents, as well as social processes such as the discourses and decision-making processes.

The concept of place has been studied in connection with various urban planning issues. One of the dominant topics is nature conservation, the

planning and management of natural resources. Research of this kind focuses on the degree of people's attachment to a special place with shared values, such as a national park with high amenity values (Stedman et al. 2004a; Beckley et al. 2007), recreational areas with high cultural history of settlement (Wheeler et al. 2016), or cultural ecosystem services (Stålhammar & Pedersen 2017). In these studies, the residents' narratives of their attachment to the place and the meanings might be useful for decision-makers in relation to conservation or management of the valuable landscape.

In spatial planning and urban design, the term sense of place focuses mainly on physical attributes of the place, which come from an essentialist viewpoint. This means that each place has its own unique character or atmosphere, or *genius loci* (Jivén & Larkham 2003; Beidler & Morrison 2016). As discussed earlier, criticism of the essentialist approach to sense of place has included that a singular conception of sense of place fails to grasp the complexity of people-environments and the dynamic relationships. Thus, other researchers emphasise multiple sense(s) of place and that these senses of place are created in both the physical and social environments (Beidler & Morrison 2016; Puren & Drewes 2021). Puren and Drewes (2021) illustrate how and when the concept sense of place was integrated into spatial planning; they maintain that the emphasis on the interplay of people-environment-context started when planning practices encouraged people's participation and collaboration in decision-making processes was optimised (Puren & Drewes 2021). This motivates choosing the progressive approach to sense of place when it comes to examining the experience of densification; that is, knowing about residents' sense of place – the meanings, beliefs, symbols, values, and feelings that individuals or groups associate with their local environment (Williams & Stewart 1998: p 19), as it encourages collaborative public participation.

2.3 Theoretical Framework of the Papers

In this section, I explain the interrelations of theoretical framework in the three papers. Paper I focuses on the role of media in creating the discourses of safety and security. Here, I examine news reports from two neighbourhoods in Malmö – Bellevuegården, which has social problems, and Västra Hamnen, whose residents are predominantly well-off. In the paper, I use the intertextuality concept, as it points to the way in which the discourses

are related and created through the combination of different elements. Norman Fairclough (1995) focuses on intertextuality and intertextual chains, which concerns how texts relates to one another (Fairclough 1995). Rose (2016) includes images in the construction of intertextuality, defining it as ‘the way that meanings of one discursive image or text depend not only on that one text or image, but also on the meanings carried by other images and texts’ (Rose 2016: p 188). Intertextuality became an appropriate concept for understanding how meaning from texts and images creates a discourse and also that new meanings can be constructed when they are viewed as a chain.

An aspect that is not elaborated in Paper I is the interrelationship between discourses, which are socially constructed through social processes (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002), in connection with the sense of place concept, which is based on symbolic meanings attributed to a physical setting (Stedman 2003). According to social constructionist philosophy, we create our world within specific social contexts. Our understanding of the world is constructed by history and culture, and it is therefore place-specific and historically contingent (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002). Discourse as ‘a form of social action that plays a part in producing the social world – including knowledge, identities and social relations’ may inform the appearance of specific social patterns and processes (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: p 5). Studying and considering everyday language is thus essential in order to understand social reality (Di Masso et al. 2020). Discourses are constructed and articulated through different sorts of resources, such as written texts, spoken word, visual and verbal images (Rose 2016). Furthermore, discourses have been of interest to place researchers for showing how we make or remake places while talking about them (Tuan 1991), and how we through storytelling locate ourselves in the symbolic and material place (Sarbin 1983). Low (1992) proposes a typology of place attachment, positing that we bind ourselves to a place by telling stories and through place naming (Low 1992). This shows how language plays a role in shaping the meaning and experience of people-place relationships in place research. These studies however, did not specifically aim for discourse analysis.

According to Di Masso et al. (2020), discursive research has pinpointed two neglected aspects of people-place bonds. First, there is the social dimension of place meanings, i.e., place meanings are collectively shared, disseminated and deployed through interactional processes (Di Masso et al. 2020). Such processes mainly take place in our daily spoken and written

language. The media plays an important role in this regard, not least by creating negative connotations, giving specific names and attaching symbolic degradation to specific places by assigning meanings to such places (Jensen & Christensen 2012; Kearns et al. 2013; Stjernborg et al. 2015; Nayak 2019). For example, the media may accelerate the process of stigmatising a neighbourhood by publishing more negative images of e.g. crime and violence. Schwarze (2022) demonstrates how newspapers emphasise stigma and racial boundaries in Chicago by framing black communities as ‘violent no-go zones’ (Schwarze 2022: p 1424). The second neglected aspect is action-orientation of everyday discourse. This explains that the discursive approach is concerned with what kinds of social actions take place by everyday accounts of social and psychological realities; i.e., ‘how such accounts work in interaction as forms of blaming, justifying, excusing, excluding, threatening, etc.’ (Di Masso et al. 2020: p 78). Thus, some behaviours or actions become expected from those neighbourhoods.

In Paper II, I examine the procedural aspects of a densification project, where the neighbourhood has already experienced socio-spatial injustice created in part by media. The theoretical framework in Paper II was environmental justice (mainly procedural aspects) and communicative planning theory. I sought to integrate these frameworks to examine a decision-making process of a densification project at the neighbourhood level. In communicative planning the focus is on transparent communications and citizen participation (Sager 2018). Procedural justice encourages meaningful participation, i.e., inclusion of all different groups regardless of their class, race, and gender (Schlosberg 2007). This perspective also embraces the possibility that in practice a project needs to provide different support for different groups.

Paper III takes an urban planning perspective, integrating environmental justice theory with the concept of sense of place in order to understand how processes of urban change impact people’s sense of place and vice versa. This combination is based on my empirical work, my encounters with complex arguments, and my search for explanations that draw on theories of both sense of place and environmental justice. The paper shows the contested and multiple senses of place, where the residents’ sense of place is actively and continuously constructed and reconstructed within their minds, shared culture and social practices (Williams 2014b; Manzo et al. 2023). (For further detail see theoretical framework chapter).

3. Methodology

This thesis follows the traditional philosophical assumption that knowledge is a social and historical product, and that facts are socially created and essentially depend on human perception (Johansson 2016). ‘Knowledge about social facts is required by studying people’s beliefs and the actions they perform in accordance with those beliefs’ (Johansson 2016: p 99). Moreover, as social scientists, we interpret people’s beliefs and recognise how social facts are being created.

According to social construction theory, we create our world within particular social contexts. Our understanding of the world is created by history and culture and it is thus place-specific and historically dependent (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002). Social constructionism questions what humans and society define as reality. Therefore, social constructs may differ from one society to another and depending on the events surrounding the time period in which they exist (Okasha 2016). It is assumed that what we generally call reality – including knowledge, facts, and texts – is a construct of social interactions (Bruffee 1986; Burr 1995). We create our world within a social context, and our meaning and knowledge are socially constructed. Discourse as ‘a form of social action that plays a part in producing the social world – including knowledge, identities and social relations’ can reveal specific social patterns (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002: p 5). Thus, social interactions cannot be understood without knowledge of the reference to the discourses that lend meaning.

In my research on place, I adopt a critical pluralist stance which maintains that no single research theory or programme on its own can successfully engage the various facets of place inquiry and bring them together into one view of reality (Patterson & Williams 2005):

‘This varied positioning means that there is no unified platform from which all knowledge can be gathered and integrated into a single understanding. Rather, by comprehending the world from multiple, competing vantage points the pluralistic view enriches each perspective and reveals assumptions that otherwise may have remained hidden’ (Williams 2013: p 25).

The ontological pluralism focuses mainly on the aspect of multiplicity of reality, which is strongly associated with cultural differences and competing senses of place held by different groups (Williams 2002, 2013, 2014b).

3.1 Working Process

This doctoral study was initially part of VIVA-PLAN¹ research project (2018-2021), which aimed to develop sustainable spatial planning framework for revitalising in-between spaces in deprived areas to promote social inclusion, biodiversity and well-being. The VIVA-PLAN project was a response to the densification pressure in urban areas in Sweden and Denmark. The project was conducted in two deprived districts in Malmö and Södertälje in Sweden, and one in Copenhagen, Denmark (<https://www.viva-plan.eu/>). Thus, the Bellevuegården neighbourhood in Malmö was already in sight from the start of this doctoral project, even if the research questions and the theoretical framing were not yet finalised.

The working process of this thesis was not straightforward, and it had to be adapted accordingly to the situations that arose. When I was preparing to start my fieldwork on photo-elicitation in March 2020, a year after I started my PhD, the Covid-19 pandemic hit the world. I had to change my strategy. Instead of going out and talking to people, I began collecting news reports about Bellevuegården and started a discourse analysis study that investigated a broader image of the neighbourhood from the outsider perspective.

I started my fieldwork meeting and interviewing informants in the summer/autumn of 2021. It was around that time that Bellevuegården’s residents filed an appeal against the densification project. Listening to people’s experiences of the densification project, I realised that aspects of just (distributional injustice) came up in almost every interview. Interviewees talked about the injustice of their green areas being taken, stating countless times ‘it is not fair to take away our gardens’. This is part

¹ The doctoral project was funded by VIVA-PLAN Formas project (grant 18-00175).

of how the thesis was shaped, and it informed the selection and hierarchy of concepts.

3.2 Case Study and Selection Criteria

This project follows a qualitative approach, conducting a single case study in order to achieve more insight into unexplored research phenomena and to answer research questions such as how and why. There is also personal motivation to the choice of a qualitative approach for understanding how meanings are shaped in a context and for revealing qualities through direct conversations with people, rather than testing variables and relationships between them. Furthermore, qualitative research aims to report multiple realities and present different perspectives, perceptions, and beliefs (Creswell & Poth 2017). In this thesis, case study plays an important role in the exploration of a real-life situation and a contemporary phenomenon in a specific context (Patton 2015; Yin 2018) through in-depth data collection from multiple sources (Creswell & Poth 2017). In my thesis, I used the case study method as an empirical inquiry to ‘investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context especially when the boundary between the phenomena and the context is not very clearly evident’ (Yin 2003: p 13).

The context of the project is the city of Malmö, where the city policy prioritises to be ‘a close, dense, green and functionally mixed city’ accomplished through densification in both new and infill developments, in order to save the surrounding agricultural land (Malmö Municipality 2018). At the same time, the city struggles with segregation and social problems with disparities in income, health and education across districts and neighbourhoods (Malmö Commission 2013). In 2015 the Swedish police introduced the label vulnerable areas for neighbourhoods with low social status, high level of unemployment and an over-representation of crime. Bellevuegården is relevant for an in-depth study, as an example of densification, as well as an example of a vulnerable area. The densification project in the neighbourhood provided an opportunity to fill a knowledge gap on how residents in stigmatised areas experience their home environment, and furthermore, how they experienced a change of this environment, initiated and carried out by the authorities. Densification is often connected with positive associations, regarding both social and environmental

sustainability. However, Bellevuegården was interesting from the perspective that the residents had not chosen to settle in a dense neighbourhood, and begs the question of how densification is perceived under such circumstances. I was also aware of the “research fatigue” of some areas in Malmö, where a lot of research work had been done previously. Therefore, the selection of Bellevuegården, where there had not been a lot of research undertaken before, was an advantage. It was beneficial that contacts had already been taken with the local government (Malmö City) within the VIVA-PLAN project. Altogether, Bellevuegården seemed to be a satisfactory choice of case, even if I was not at the time fully aware of the specificities I was going to research. In fact, there has been a mutual relationship between on the one hand the neighbourhood and its residents, and on the other hand the research project and my growing knowledge about the area as well as about the relevant theory and methodology. There is probably no such thing as a perfect match, but rather a growing closeness between the research and the research site. It became an added interest for the research that the residents in Bellevuegården resisted the new plans for densification through a protesters’ group and appealed against the plan. It is also not an extreme case with regards to vulnerability and criminal activities. Criminal incidents happen there from time to time, of which the latest took place some time before the interviews were conducted (summer 2021).

In the case of Bellevuegården, the phenomenon is the residents’ sense of place in a densifying stigmatised neighbourhood in relation to the transformation of their everyday outdoor environment. The residents resisted the new plans through the formation of a protest group and filed an appeal against the plan. Bellevuegården is not an extreme case with regards to vulnerability and criminal activities, although criminal incidents do take place there from time, most recently some time before the interviews were conducted in the summer of 2021.

3.2.1 Description of the case study: Bellevuegården neighbourhood

Bellevuegården is a mainly rental residential area in the Hyllie district in southwestern Malmö with around 4 500 inhabitants (Figure 2). Built in 1974, the area was one of the last Million Home Programme areas constructed (see pp 50-51 of this thesis). The neighbourhood is divided into western and eastern parts by a boulevard (Lorensborgsgatan). The municipal-owned

rental housing company MKB Fastighet AB owns the rental flats in the eastern part, while the private property company Stena Fastigheter owns the housing in the western part.

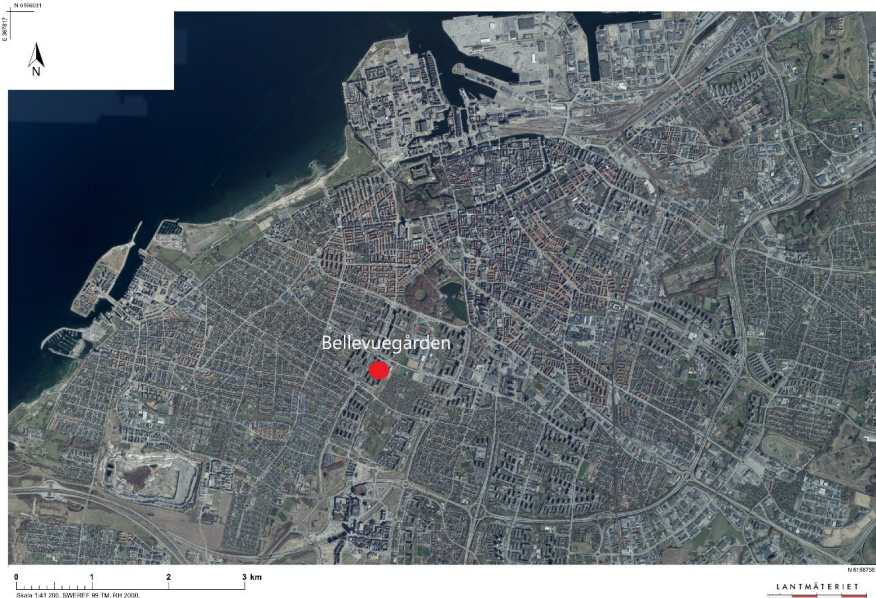


Figure 2. The location of Bellevuegården in the city of Malmö.

The residents of Bellevuegården are socio-economically challenged, with a higher level of unemployment (~50%) compared to Malmö on the whole (~12%), and a lower level of education (~30%) compared to Malmö on the whole (~52%), and the proportion of foreign-born residents is about 45% (in all of Malmö, this is around 30%) (Malmö-Municipality, 2023). Since 2015, Bellevuegården has been on the list of so-called vulnerable areas, which are characterised by a higher rate of criminality than the average in Malmö (Swedish Police 2015, 2021).

There are around 2330 flats in Bellevuegården, contained in uniform architecture comprising freestanding rectangular building bodies (called lamellhus in Swedish); this is the dominant house type there. The buildings are long with at least two stairwells and a height varying from anywhere between two and seventeen floors. Between the multifamily dwellings are spacious courtyards (see Figures 3 & 4). In the 1960s and '70s, the

architectural layout of Million Home Programme areas were influenced by a car-centric ideology that separated cars from humans – children, cyclists and pedestrians (Vidén 2012). Large green yards and pathways in between large-scale housing blocks are characteristic of Million Home Programme architecture, and the open and spacious outdoor environments were attractive for residents. According to Kristensson (2003, 2012), the large open spaces in Million Programme areas are also one reason why these neighbourhoods became attractive for densification efforts and the addition of more housing.



Figure 3. The structure of the outdoor environment in Bellevuegården, with walking paths connecting the entrances, surrounding common greenery and hills.



Figure 4. The hills in Bellevuegården, combined with playground and places to sit.



Figures 5 and 6. Children are playing on the hills on a snowy day.



Figure 7. Urban farming in Bellevuegården, where there are plans for densification.

3.2.2 The densification process in Bellevuegården

The infill development and densification of Bellevuegården is part of larger regional planning and even related to the national public transport planning. To provide the necessary increase in public transport, the artery Lorensborgsgatan will be narrowed into a separate lane for an express bus, one car lane, and bicycle lanes. According to the detailed development plan for Bellevuegården (Stensjön and Delsjön residential areas), 330 new flats will be built partly on hard and grey surfaces such as parking lots, and partly on green spaces² (see Figure 8) (Malmö Municipality 2022a).



Figure 8. Bellevuegården (Delsjön and Stensjön) with existing buildings and the planned new buildings (Malmö Municipality 2021a). Illustration modified by Christopher Klich. This figure has been used in Paper II.

² The total number of flats in Bellevuegården is around 2330 (Malmö Municipality 2022a).

This thesis focuses on the eastern part of Bellevuegården for a number of reasons. The main one was that the protest group originated in the eastern part. Stensjön and Delsjön residential areas – 344 new flats and 24 semi-attached houses were proposed; these are denoted in brown on the map.

The city planning board decided to review the densification plan of Bellevuegården in 2020, and the proposal was sent to referral bodies and interested parties. The public had access to information about the plan proposal through the city's website, at Bellevuegården's library, and at the municipal rental housing company MKB's office in Bellevuegården. The residents received information about the plan proposal, the review period and the invitation to the review meeting via post, and it was also announced on posters in building stairwells. A digital review meeting was held on 11 November 2020 (Malmö Municipality 2021b).

The opportunities for a dialogue process were limited due to the Covid-19 pandemic during the consultation period for both the detailed development plan and the planning programme. The initial information meeting was cancelled at the last minute due to the pandemic. Instead, the residents were asked to contact the city planning office by phone to access information about the plan. Three information meetings (one digital and two in person) were arranged after the end of the consultation period, in June 2020, due to pandemic restrictions (Malmö Municipality 2020). Therefore, the city planning board office could not collect the residents' opinions from consultation meetings during the official consultation period.

The consultation period for the broader planning programme for the area was from 9 June and 30 September 2021 (Malmö Municipality 2022b). Two consultation meetings were held online, one at the beginning of the consultation period and one at the end; in total, around 55 people attended each meeting. Attendees could send their questions both before and during the meeting, and the experts and politicians were available to answer questions. Furthermore, the planners from municipality offered 'future walks' (*framtidsvandringar*) to provide a better picture of the project goals and proposals by walking around the neighbourhood. They planned three occasions during the consultation period (Malmö Municipality 2022a). There were additional citizens' dialogues conducted before the official consultation, such as workshops organised by Malmö city and one of the

housing companies, the aim of which was to collect residents' viewpoints about the planning area.

Residents of Bellevuegården mobilised and protested against the densification project in 2020. The mobilisation started after Malmö municipality announced an information meeting and published material about the project on their website. Some of the residents started a Facebook group where they could express and discuss their objections to the project. They organised protest lists, which had around 700 signatories. In February 2021, the protest group appealed to the Land and Environmental Court (*Mark- och miljödomstolen*). The appeal mainly cited poor procedure for consultation meetings and referred to the fact that the plans would decrease the amount of green areas by densifying on green commons in the courtyards. The appeal emphasised the high value of green spaces for residents, especially since the area is characterised by stigmatised populations with lower socio-economic status; together, green spaces were claimed to have critical importance for the residents' recreation and social cohesion. Additionally, the appeal states that residents often have limited mobility and thus are not able to travel to other green spaces, which increases the importance of the very local green commons. The appeal also included concerns about gentrification and how new buildings would increase the rent for existing residents. The appeal was dismissed by the court, which referred to the Planning and Building Act (5 Section 11), which states that it is up to the municipality to decide the content of the public consultation, as well as how to use information (PBA 2010). The residents submitted a second appeal to the Supreme Land and Environmental Court with 121 signatories, but this appeal was also dismissed and was not granted a trial permit. The final news from the court had not yet been received at the time of the interviews, and the residents were still hopeful.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

The use of multiple data sources increases data credibility (Patton 2015). In my thesis, I utilised triangulated data collection (Patton 2015; Yin 2018) using four different sources that included visual and textual methods, a combination of interviews (semi-structured interviews and photo-elicitation

interviews), document analysis, and observation³. Table 1 shows the data collection method used for each paper.

3.3.1 Visual and Textual data

I used visual and textual data for Paper I, which examined the discourses that emerged from newspaper reports. In this study, I collected all the images and text from Swedish newspapers about crime and/or safety in the two neighbourhoods of Västra Hamnen and Bellevuegården. The empirical data was compiled from reports concerning safety and security in these two neighbourhoods from the Swedish media database 'Retriever'⁴. The reports reviewed were from 22 April 1998⁵ to 01 January 2020. Search strings were applied in four groups: 1) 'Bellevuegården' AND 'Malmö' AND 'safety', 2) 'Bellevuegården' AND 'Malmö' AND 'crime', 3) 'Västra Hamnen' AND 'Malmö' AND 'safety'⁶, and 4) 'Västra Hamnen' AND 'Malmö' AND 'crime'. For methodological reasons, only local and national newspapers and other potential sources, such as radio and TV programmes, were included. Swedish newspaper layouts are quite similar in terms of titles, columns, and images, which facilitates compilation and interpretation of the data. A total of 131 reports from Bellevuegården and 192 reports from Västra Hamnen contained any of the words 'safety' or 'crime' in their titles, text, or image captions. The articles comprise two categories: relevant articles, which report directly about each neighbourhood, and indirectly relevant articles, which primarily report on something other than Västra Hamnen or Bellevuegården (i.e., reports in which these neighbourhoods are mentioned in the text or in the image caption).

³ Here, observation entails participation in workshops and consultation meetings, and when the protest group collected the residents' signatures. Data from observations was not included in the official data, but rather served my understanding of the situation.

⁴ Retriever is a digital archive hosted by Retriever Sverige AB. It gathers printed press, web content, radio and television coverage for Scandinavian and some European countries and its content includes Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Finnish, Finland-Swedish, German, French, Spanish and English material dating back to the 1980s. (<https://www.retriever.se/product/mediearkivet/>).

⁵ The first available data in the archive was from 22 April 1998.

⁶ The Swedish terms used in the searches were 'trygghet', which can be translated into English as a feeling of safety/security, and 'otrygghet', which translates as insecurity and feeling unsafe (Rodenstedt 2014: p 49).

Table 1. Overview of empirical data collection and data analysis methods

Study	Data Collection	Data Analysis	
Paper I	Visual and textual data	Discourse Analysis and Content Analysis	Outsider perspective
Paper II	Semi-structure interviews and Document analysis	Thematic analysis	Outsider-insider perspective
Paper III	Photo-elicitation interviews and semi-structure interviews	Thematic analysis	Insider perspective

3.3.2 Informants and Interviews

Interviews are one of the most common ways for collecting qualitative data, which seeks to understand phenomena by asking questions (Creswell & Poth 2017). There are different types of interviews, ranging from unstructured to very structured. For this thesis, I conducted photo-elicitation and semi-structured interviews with the residents (9) (same people and same occasions) and semi-structured interviews with the other stakeholders (2), including a representative from the real-estate company and a planner who represented the municipality.

Informants among the residents

Potential informants were identified using a snowball-sampling method. This is one of the most frequently used sampling methods in qualitative research (Parker et al. 2019), in which data collection usually starts with a small number of initial contacts who fulfil the research criteria. Those informants are then asked to recommend other contacts who might be willing to participate. The main criterion for recruitment was that the informants were residents who had participated in the consultation meetings. All informants were signatories of the list protesting against the densification project. In total I interviewed nine residents – five women and four men – who have been living in Bellevuegården from 18 to 40 years. In three sessions, the informants were interviewed in couples, as per their own wishes. The interviews took place at the informants' homes, on a bench in

the garden, or in a public meeting place in the neighbourhood; the informants chose the location themselves.

Photo-elicitation interviews with the residents

Research shows that visual methods for studying place meaning and experiences have great potential to engage participants, to sharpen their memories, and improve possibilities for communication of embodying multiple meanings (Briggs et al. 2014; Kyle & Chick, 2007; Stedman et al. 2004, 2005, 2014). The photo-elicitation method entails inserting photos or any kind of visual tools, such as film or video footage, into an interview (Harper 2002). Use of these visual methods offers many potential benefits; for one, the method produces knowledge differently than verbal interviews, because the part of the brain that processes visual information is evolutionarily older than verbal information processes, and images thus arouse human consciousness more deeply than words do (Harper 2002). In addition, using both images and words engages more brain capacity than using only words. Perhaps this is why photo elicitation interviews generate more information of a different sort, knowledge that goes beyond tangible facts to also include opinions and emotions (Harper 2002).

Personal narratives of places are important to informants, and they help to facilitate understanding of how individuals and groups feel about places within their communities. Kyle and Chick (2007) assert that sense of place and place meanings are influenced by social relations, which differ from one context to another. Their study using photo-elicitation guided interviews shows that sense of place is grounded more in memory, experience and social relations than in the physical setting of a place (Kyle & Chick 2007). There is however a debate stating that social relations always take place somewhere, which makes the physical setting as important as the social (Stedman 2003).

Photo-elicitation interviews can be researcher-driven, where the visual material is provided by the researcher, or resident-driven, where the informant takes photos or other visual material and brings it to the interview sessions (Amsden et al. 2010). The latter type offers greater opportunity for collaboration (Loeffler 2004). In this study, I encouraged participants to bring their photos/videos to the interviews. In addition to the visual material, the verbal interview is also an important part of the sessions, as it allows researchers and informants alike to explain the content of the visual material, what it represents and the story behind it (Stedman et al. 2004).

Each interview with residents lasted between 45 and 60 minutes and was divided into two parts. I started with a photo-elicitation interview, and then segued into a semi-structured interview. Each session started with a short talk about the informants' background, the length of time they have been living in Bellevuegården, and why they had chosen to live in the neighbourhood. The conversation then moved on to the visual material; either they had brought material to the interview sessions or I provided some photographs of the neighbourhood that I thought they might be interested in talking about. The first part of the interview focused on sense of place and related questions about places important to the resident, i.e., the places they like and use for some kind of activities. In Paper III, where the main focus was on the study of sense of place, I used the photo-elicitation interview method, motivated by how Stedman et al. (Stedman et al. 2004, 2005, and 2014) benefitted from using visual methods in sense of place and place attachment studies.

Semi-structured interviews with the residents

In the semi-structured interviews conducted with the residents of Bellevuegården, the questions concerned the ongoing densification project, experiences from the consultation meetings, and more focus on environmental justice questions. I used an interview guide with a series of supporting questions for the interviews. Semi-structured interviews allow for the discovery or elaboration of information that is important to the informants but may have been overlooked by the researcher (Gill et al. 2008). The main data for Paper II was generated from semi-structured interviews with the residents who had experienced the consultation meetings.

Semi-structured interviews with other stakeholders

In addition, I conducted a semi-structured interview with a planner from the planning office of Malmö who was involved in the densification planning processes for the Bellevuegården project, as well as the project manager from the local rental housing company (MKB). Each interview lasted 1-1.5-hours. The interviews were conducted online (Zoom) and aimed to understand the interviewees' involvement in the densification process, how they applied the procedures, how they themselves had experienced the process, and finally, what their main challenges had been.

3.4 Data Analysis

3.4.1 Content Analysis and Discourse Analysis

In Paper I, I used content analysis to analyse the visual data in order to see what was illustrated by the newspapers and how the contents of the images could be described. According to Rose (2016), content analysis is a suitable method for dealing with a large number of images by using the four-step technique suggested in Rose (2016), i.e.: 1) selecting relevant images for research questions, collecting all reports from each neighbourhood, and eliminating reports without any images; 2) creating a list of categories for coding; 3) coding the images; and 4) interpreting the results (Rose 2016).

I then used discourse analysis for all of the reports (texts), regardless of whether there was an image or not, to examine how the texts assign specific meanings to Bellevuegården and Västra Hamnen. Discourse analysis was used to comprehend the intertextuality, i.e., how different texts interrelate with each other (Rose 2016). The analysis process started with reading and re-reading the texts and headlines that included the words Bellevuegården or Västra Hamnen. Content analysis and discourse analysis were combined in Paper I in order to understand not only the illustration of the visual images (what was illustrated in the images) but also to add extracted meanings from the discourses.

3.4.2 Thematic Analysis

My proposed data analysis refers to the process of identifying patterns or themes that are important or interesting within qualitative data. My approach aims not only to summarise the data, but also to interpret and make sense of it (Braun & Clarke 2006; Maguire & Delahunt 2017; (Braun & Clarke 2013). A strength of thematic analysis is its flexibility, which allows the researcher to conduct research in a variety of ways independently from epistemological and theoretical perspectives of the research. For Papers II and III, I use Braun and Clarke's six-step framework as my analysis method. It starts from becoming familiar with data to generate initial codes, search for themes, review and define the themes and finally write them up. Thematic analysis can be done on two levels, as Braun and Clarke (Braun & Clarke 2006) suggest; these are semantic and latent. Semantic themes look '[...] within the explicit or surface meanings of the data and the analyst is not looking for

anything beyond what a participant has said or what has been written.’ (p 84). In contrast, the latent level looks beyond what has been said and ‘[...] starts to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualisations – and ideologies – that are theorised as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data’ (p 84).

3.4.3 Document Analysis

In Paper II, my co-author and I carried out document analysis to understand the procedural aspect of justice in the Bellevuegården densification project. The documents were all from different sources within the city of Malmö (see Table 2). The comprehensive plan and documents related to the densification project in Bellevuegården were collected, as were political decisions, material from information meetings such as workshops, and handouts or pamphlets, in order to understand in greater detail how the municipality operationalised procedural justice in Bellevuegården. The second compilation of documents is related to the process of appeal.

Table 2. Lists the documents used for document analysis.

Official planning documents	Summary of outcomes from legal cases concerning the densification process
Comprehensive Plan (Malmö Municipality 2018)	Appeal, Växjö District Court P1127-21 Aktbil 1 (Växjö district court 2021)
Planning programme 6050 (Malmö Municipality 2022a)	Appeal, Svea Land and Environment Court of Appeal P5906 21 Aktbil 3 Överklagan Dp 5513. (Svea Land and Environment Court 2021)
Detailed plan 5513 (Malmö-Municipality, 2020b)	Protocol for decision. Svea Land and Environment Court of Appeal. 2022. Aktbilaga 35 Mål nr P5906-21. (Svea Land and Environment Court 2022)
Statement report after review (Malmö Municipality 2021b)	
Consultation report for detail plan 5513. (Malmö Municipality 2020)	

3.4.4 Ethical Considerations

Due to the sensitive nature of questions relating to the issues of vulnerability, segregation, and stigmatisation in this study, ethical approval was sought and granted from the Swedish Ethical Review Authority (Dnr: 2019-05938).

The research informants received information (in Swedish) about the VIVA-PLAN project on an A4 paper. In this handout, they could learn about the aim of the project, as well as what they were going to be asked:

‘How you think and feel about parks, the forest, the footpaths and various meeting places in your neighbourhood. We also want to know how you think and feel about being able to influence political decisions related to these

places. This also applies to your everyday experiences in green areas, and we ask you to evaluate what opportunities and limitations exist for your voice to be heard in relation to political decisions. In the project, we also collect some basic information about you to facilitate processing of the study data’.

The informants received information about how their contact information would be handled, as no information about the person will be published. Each participant read and signed a consent form to ensure they understood what the interview entailed.

This doctoral study has striven to treat research informants with respect throughout the duration of the study, while focusing on multiple-perspective stories of individuals (Creswell & Poth 2017). The neighbourhood struggles with social problems, and I was careful not to be part of the stigmatisation process. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were not to be based on discriminatory arguments such as race, ethnicity, or economic or social status. My focus during the interviews was to hear the residents’ narratives on living in a vulnerable area and how this could affect their lives, without discussing individuals’ vulnerability related to e.g. employment status, income, or their ethnicity.

I argue that by releasing the name of the neighbourhood, I do not merely add to their vulnerability, but can instead give voice to the residents fighting to save their local green spaces. At the same time, the choice of the photo-elicitation method gives voice to the informants to talk about their neighbourhood, which they know best. In this way, I could decrease the imbalanced power relations in my role as a researcher and give them more space (Aldridge 2014; von Benzon & van Blerk 2018) to discuss the important places in their outdoor environments.

4. Summary of Papers

This chapter presents summaries of the three papers that comprise this compilation thesis, providing the motivation for each paper and their contributions to the overall thesis aims. Table 3 summarises the contributions of the three papers.

4.1 Paper I: Visual Representation of Safety in Urban Spaces: A tale of two neighbourhoods

Paper I (Shahrad 2023) focuses on the role of media in creating discourses related to safety and security through an examination of Swedish newspaper reports. The paper explores how newspaper images and texts portray safety and security in urban spaces, specifically in the context of Malmö. In addition, it compares visual representations of two neighbourhoods with different social status in the city of Malmö, Sweden: Bellevuegården and Västra Hamnen. Bellevuegården has lower socio-economic status and a higher level of unemployment compared to the city of Malmö on the whole, while the newly developed waterfront area Västra Hamnen in Malmö has attracted a more affluent population. As stated earlier, the formerly industrial city of Malmö was transformed into a post-industrial city with a knowledge focus with the introduction of a university to attract more affluent residents with higher incomes. The city has been struggling with segregation (Nylund 2014; Stjernborg et al. 2015) and higher crime rates (Brå 2019). Västra Hamnen plays an important role in boosting Malmö's image, showcasing the city's nicer parts. For this reason, Västra Hamnen was a relevant addition to the data set.

Paper I introduces the contextual background of the thesis by examining the media's role in the visual representation of a vulnerable neighbourhood

in a Swedish urban context. The purpose of the paper is to understand the visual representation of the stigmatised Malmö neighbourhood Bellevuegården in response to RQ1. The paper shows how the media, specifically newspapers, creates injustice for the residents of less well-off areas through discourses of safety and security by assigning meanings to urban places, both textually and visually. Although the paper does not discuss sense of place or environmental justice issues, it shows how the different discourses concerning e.g. Million Home Programme areas, poverty, migrants, and low socio-economic status are associated and intertextually linked. It thus indirectly illustrates that the sense of place of Bellevuegården is from the media's (the outsider) point of view.

The paper identifies two categories of reports: directly relevant news, i.e., reports that are specifically about one of the neighbourhoods; and indirectly relevant news, i.e., reports that are about something else other than Västra Hamnen or Bellevuegården in which these neighbourhoods are mentioned somewhere in the text or in image captions. The results show how discourses of safety and security emerge from the texts and images in directly relevant newspaper reports. Unsurprisingly, the main findings show that Bellevuegården is portrayed negatively, as a problematic area, whereas Västra Hamnen is depicted as attractive and safe.

Furthermore, the negative depiction of Bellevuegården and the positive depiction of Västra Hamnen are evident in the indirectly relevant news reports. The paper shows that the current image of each neighbourhood is the result of a more complex background, and that the concept of intertextuality can explain this complexity by showing how different discourses interrelate and overlap. It explains that Million Home Programme areas are frequently associated with particular ethnicities, migration, poverty, violence, and even homicide, and that indirectly relevant news has created a discourse about Million Home Programme areas. It is argued that presenting a list of the names of vulnerable areas in a separate text box can attract visual attention, and that readers may associate the title, images, etc. with Million Programme housing and vulnerable areas without even reading the article in question. Here, the focus is on the intertextuality, i.e., the interrelationships between the texts/images and the other texts/images. Such intertextuality exists in the images/texts from Bellevuegården, where the text is not about Bellevuegården but mentions Bellevuegården as a vulnerable area. This connects Bellevuegården to Million Home Programme discourse, including

associated problems such as segregation, poverty, unemployment, and violence. At the same time, the study identifies the interrelations and intertextuality between each neighbourhood and the city of Malmö as a whole. This is a way for city of Malmö to safeguard the city's reputation from becoming that of a dangerous place, instead presenting it as secure, attractive, and friendly. Due to the intertextuality between the discourses, vulnerable neighbourhoods with socio-economic challenges, such as Bellevuegården, carry the burden of the bad reputation.

4.2 Paper II: Procedural Justice for Whom? A Case Study of an Urban Development Project

Paper II focuses on the implementation of environmental justice, and more specifically on the procedural aspect of justice in planning processes, to answer RQ2. The paper examines a densification project in a stigmatised neighbourhood – Bellevuegården – by analysing how procedural justice is manifested at three different levels of planning, i.e., the official procedural justice layer, the municipal planning and housing developer level (applied layer); the resident level (lived layer). Official documents related to the development project in Bellevuegården were collected. Document analysis was used to understand how procedural justice has been operationalised. By interviewing the planner from the municipality and the project manager at the rental housing company (MKB), the paper examined the challenges with which the city had to contend during the project. Finally, the study investigated the lived procedural justice by conducting semi-structured interviews with ten⁷ residents of Bellevuegården.

The overall results reveal that the residents did not perceive procedural justice in the process, i.e., they did not experience the process on the whole as just and fair. The study points at the trivalent interrelationships between procedural justice, distributive and recognition justice (Schlosberg 2007). The residents' main concern is to save their green spaces, and they disagree with the proposal to construct new houses on green spaces, which have greater or different values for the stigmatised neighbourhood in particular. This is where distributional injustice takes place. According to interviewees,

⁷ The tenth informant in Paper II was from the data material of Sanna Stålhammar, who is the co-author of the paper.

the issue of removing green spaces is more important in Bellevue than in Malmö city on the whole due to the lower socio-economic status of Bellevuegården's residents; the courtyards play a significant role in their lives (Kristensson 2008, 2012). As the results show, while residents were invited to a consultation meeting, they felt that they had no power to influence the proposal presented, which caused them to feel disappointed and unheard. This causes recognition injustice. As a result, the participation – where processes are meant to be co-productive – was as perceived unjust (procedural injustice). These three components of environmental justice are intertwined and interconnected.

Moreover, the study illustrates a disconnection between the three layers of the official, applied and lived procedural justice, especially between the applied and lived layers. Although communication and dialogue between local governments and other actors has been regulated in Sweden, it has not always led to a fair outcome; this is particularly true when public and private interests are in conflict. The Bellevuegården case study shows that planning development is increasingly controlled by private interests for which building would not be profitable unless a large number of housing units could be constructed in the area. Although the municipality attempted to create a meaningful and inclusive participation process, the residents were dissatisfied with the way in which consultation meetings were held. For example, when the consultation meeting was held online because of the pandemic, residents felt they were unable to engage in a meaningful way for a variety of reasons; e.g. there was limited time for deeper discussions, and older groups were less familiar with the online format. In addition, according to the residents, it seemed that the municipality had chosen the less challenging questions for discussion.

While the city and developers must remedy the shortage of housing in Malmö, it is the residents who have to deal with the changes that entails, and more importantly, the loss of their green spaces. Ideally, consultation meetings are a way for citizens to influence a plan. But as the results show, urban development processes are often deemed too large and complex, and residents are excluded from the process. In this way, the planners' role is more to mediate neoliberal thinking (Sager 2013). Through the interviews with three kinds of actors (real estate owners, planners and residents), it became evident that the process being studied is an example of the planner being squeezed between private and public interests. Discussion or

elaboration of these interests is not really a part of the regulated process, however.

Table 3. Thesis papers and their contributions

Paper	Research Question	Contribution	Field of Contribution
Paper: Visual Representation of Safety in Urban Spaces: A tale of two neighbourhoods	RQ1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Suggests discourses presented by media are partly formative for sense of place - Suggests media plays a role in the process of stigmatisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sense of place Urban studies
Paper II: Procedural Justice for Whom? A case study of an urban development project	RQ2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Suggests decision-making process of densification project was perceived as unjust -Suggests densification project adds to distributional injustice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental justice Procedural, recognition and distribution justice Urban planning research and distributional justice
Paper III: Whose Sense of Place? Experiences of environmental (in)justice among residents in a ‘vulnerable area’	RQ3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finding of ambivalent place attachment in a stigmatised neighbourhood - Suggests densification project impacts sense of place by destroying the qualities of open space - Suggests densification causes worry, uncertainty, fear of loss of place and of loss of sense of community - Suggests consultation meetings and protest group provide an arena 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sense of place Urban planning Sense of place Sense of place Environmental justice, urban planning, and sense of place

Paper	Research Question	Contribution	Field of Contribution
		to negotiate and create new senses of place	

4.3 Paper III: Whose Sense of Place? Experiences of Environmental (In)justice Among Residents in a ‘Vulnerable Area’

Paper III aims to understand conceptualisation of sense of place in a stigmatised neighbourhood and to shed light on place meaning and place experiencing in the face of a densification process in the built environment. Paper III brings in the notion of sense of place and integrates it with environmental justice issues to answer RQ3. I conducted photo-elicitation interviews with nine residents of Bellevuegården to answer three questions. First, the paper investigates the conceptualisation of sense of place in a stigmatised neighbourhood in order to understand how residents interact with their everyday outdoor environment, their emotions about places in the neighbourhood, and their experiences of living in Bellevuegården. Second, it examines the ongoing densification project as a driving force for change, and also explores how it relates to changes to the sense of place. Finally, the paper seeks to examine how environmental justice affects changes in sense of place. The conceptual framework of the paper integrates environmental justice theory with the sense of place concept from the perspective of the urban planning discipline. It focuses on questions regarding whose sense(s) of place are included and favoured, in planning processes, and why.

The paper makes three main contributions. First, aligned with previous research, the residents of Bellevuegården have an ambivalent place attachment with their outdoor environment, which means that their attachment to their neighbourhood has a ‘shadow side’ (Chawla 1992); when they are out in the neighbourhood, they think about previous criminal incidents and feel generally unsafe. At the same time, they appreciate their surroundings when they are out walking their dogs, sitting on a bench, gathering socially with family or neighbours, or simply watching the view from their windows. The paper illustrates the aspect of temporality and the

dynamic relationship of humans to places. It shows that there are multiple senses of place, and that these are not static but change over time.

Secondly, the paper discusses the sense of densification in Bellevuegården, focusing on how the densification project has impacted residents' sense of place. The densification project will transform the characteristics of the neighbourhood, and in many ways impact people's sense of place. New buildings in the courtyards would destroy many of the qualities of open space; for example, there would be a loss of quality in the outdoor environment, which includes open green spaces and a hilly landscape; a loss of the playground; a loss of existing areas for growing vegetables; and a loss of trees. All of these elements have been very appreciated by the residents. In addition, the new buildings block the view. Furthermore, densification increases the movement of more people and thereby increases noise levels and crowding in the neighbourhood. All of this together causes worry, uncertainty, and fear of losing one's place and of losing a sense of community.

Thirdly, the paper demonstrates how the perception of (in)justice impacts sense of place. The residents perceived the decision-making processes as well as the outcome as unjust, which resulted in protest and resistance to the change. The paper argues that senses of place are recreated and renegotiated through new platforms such as consultation meetings, a Facebook page where residents exchanged their ideas about the densification project, and through the process of appeal. Furthermore, the paper discusses the issue of power relations, raising the question of whose sense of place is being considered. The residents mentioned that politicians, city planners and developers are outsiders deciding about their neighbourhood environment, whilst they themselves live in single-family homes with gardens in the city or in the countryside. As one interviewee stated: 'They don't understand how life is here in Bellevuegården. They have no idea how much of a role the courtyards play for children, adults and the elderly'.

Finally, the results indicate that the Covid-19 pandemic influenced the residents' sense of place in the case of Bellevuegården, even though there was no drastic lockdown period in Sweden. The interviewees expressed that they had become more aware of the importance of green spaces than they had been in pre-pandemic times. Social distancing during the pandemic made them realise that they needed more space.

5. Discussion

This thesis aims to deepen understanding of the interplay between sense of place and issues of environmental justice in relation to urban densification in Swedish stigmatised neighbourhoods. Close studies of the densification process with a three-layered model shows the difference in the power and experience of 'environmental justice' between official, applied and lived levels of involvement (Paper II). This aligns with findings about media reporting and the verbal and visual discourses on 'vulnerable areas' (Paper I). The residents' points of view are found to be well described with the concept 'sense of place'. In this case, the residents show that sense of place is ambivalent (the environmental qualities are much appreciated, but there are negative sentiments connected to low social status and the area's reputation) as well as progressive and dynamic, through reconsideration and reconstruction in everyday conversations, but especially in social situations linked to the densification project (Paper III).

The case study contributes to literature on urban planning. In particular, it adds important aspects regarding the densification of Million Home Programme areas in Sweden, where it connects to the concepts of environmental justice and participation. It also adds to the understanding of segregation and how the differences between neighbourhoods need to be considered when implementing a densification planning strategy. Furthermore, it contributes to literature on sense of place, unpacking residents' ambivalent feelings about their home environment in a stigmatised neighbourhood, and it shows that sense of place is progressive, dynamic and reconstructed through social relations and social processes (Massey 1993; Cresswell 2015).

5.1 Outsiders' and Insiders' Views – Emotional Ambivalence and the 'Sense of Densification' in a Stigmatised Area

The empirical contributions of this thesis are based on two main kinds of empirical data: visual and textual data from Swedish newspapers, and interviews (semi-structured and photo-elicitation). Based on the first data set, the thesis contributes to previous research on media representations of stigmatised urban areas. Aligned with previous research (Stjernborg et al. 2015; Baranauskas 2020; Halliday et al. 2020; Schwarze 2021), the thesis suggests that the media plays an important role in the stigmatisation process by illustrating a negative image of not only Bellevuegården, but also the image of any stigmatised neighbourhood in the city of Malmö in relation to the whole city and more affluent areas. That image is created from outside (the society) and affects how the residents experience injustice through the process of stigmatisation. As Walker (2009) states, 'the misrecognition of people can be entwined with and realised through the misrecognition of places' (Walker 2009: p 626). The visual representation of a stigmatised neighbourhood with a higher level of crime is implicitly intertwined with distributional injustice by hindering the accessibility to green spaces (Gobster 1998; Walker 2009).

The second type of empirical material, which focuses on the residents' perspective, contributes to the environmental justice literature within the urban planning discipline. It suggests that the decision-making process for the densification project in Bellevuegården was perceived as unjust, resulting in procedure- and recognition injustice. On the whole, it increased the level of dissatisfaction. Tahvilzadeh (2021) reflects that planners' preferences often play an important role during consultation meetings, and the knowledge produced during these meetings is compiled by planners, without much insight being gathered from those who participated (Tahvilzadeh 2021). On the other hand, since the new flats will be located in part on what has been green spaces, the densification project creates distributional injustice. Here, I argue that the green spaces in Bellevuegården are of particular value to residents of this stigmatised neighbourhood because of the residents' lower socio-economic status: such spaces are perhaps less vital in denser gentrified neighbourhoods where the residents have other socio-economic privileges. Few green spaces are less consequential if one has the means to e.g. travel to the countryside. Moreover, building on green spaces

is not merely a matter of distribution injustice, but it is also related to recognition injustice (Fraser & Honneth 2003) by not considering residents' extra needs for green space.

This thesis increases the knowledge for communicative planning by criticising the discourse of densification, which moves towards neoliberal planning and more benefits to the developer than to citizens. This illustrates the increasing influence of neoliberalism in the housing sector. This means that citizens are invited to influence a process in which there is a conflict between public and private interests (Soneryd & Lindh 2019; Montin 2021). Furthermore, the thesis is aligned with what Montin (2021) refers to as individual interests being superimposed and reinterpreted as public interests. The superimposition of individual interests as public interests in this study created circumstances for public participation in which the dialogue with residents was depoliticised, favouring individual interests in line with pre-defined economic and regional development (Montin 2021).

The thesis contributes to sense of place and environmental justice and to understanding of the ambivalent attachment (Manzo 2014) to an area which is often described as stigmatised. The interviews show clearly that the green spaces are greatly appreciated by the residents, whilst the lack of safety in the area affects the residents' relationships to the place. Physical changes prompt feelings of loss, and how these feelings are related to these perception of justice illustrates how the residents' sense(s) of place compete with each other, depending on whether we are talking about insecure or dangerous outdoor environments or about densification and building on green spaces. In line with a progressive approach to place (Massey 1993), the decision-making process of densification enables social practices and sharing meaning and values of green spaces among the residents, which illuminates how sense(s) of place and environmental justice are interrelated.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

The thesis contributes to media studies and visual studies, showing how discourses – text and images – are intertextually related and linked like a chain. The current image of the neighbourhood is thus the result of a more complex background. The concept of intertextuality can explain this complexity as it shows how different discourses interrelate and overlap (Fairclough 1995; Rose 2016). This highlights that by assigning meaning to

places, the media impacts the ways in which planners perceive the places and act upon these perceptions. The thesis introduces additional perspective on the discourse on Million Home Programme areas, which have been associated with immigrants, certain ethnicities, poverty, low socio-economic status, and social issues such as drug dealing, violence, unemployment, and crime (Backvall 2019; Wiard & Pereira 2019; Mack 2021). The thesis argues that the layout of Swedish newspapers – presenting for example a list of the names of stigmatised neighbourhoods in a separate text box when reporting on an incident in a stigmatised neighbourhood – can draw visual attention. This means that without even reading the whole story, a reader makes an association between them and Million Home Programme housing, stigmatised groups and social problems, simply by looking at the title, the separate text box, and the images. This shows the intertextuality, or the interrelationships, between texts/images and the other texts/images (Rose 2016). It adds to the discussion of the consequences of media representations and their impact on people's lives, which raises the question of social justice in the city, specifically for vulnerable neighbourhoods (Harvey 2012). The negative image of a stigmatised neighbourhood is thus not the only product of visual discourse created by media; other results include inequality and injustice for the least well-off populations. A broader definition of distribution justice emphasises how and what is distributed in order to create a just society (Schlosberg 2007). Here, I strive to shed light on the connections between discourses of safety and security, and issues of distribution-, recognition- and procedure justice.

Another contribution of visual representation is to shed light on the construction of discourse that emerges from text and images that shapes the meaning and experience of people-place relationships. The discursive approach as action-orientation is concerned with the types of social actions that have occurred. This means 'how such accounts work in interaction as forms of blaming, justifying, excusing, excluding, threatening, etc.' (Di Masso et al. 2020: p 78). According to Wiggins (2017), 'if discourse constructs particular versions of reality, and these constructions are situated in particular social contexts, then there will be particular functions or actions that are accomplished by the discourse' (Wiggins 2017: p 14). This is relevant to the case of Bellevuegården as well as other vulnerable areas in Sweden about which the media reinforce a normative conception of place by depicting certain types of residents (immigrants) or actions (violence, crime

scenes, and police). Thus, place meanings and attachments are shaped through socio-political processes (Manzo 2014) (e.g. the recent discourse on Million Home Programme areas is associated with poverty, certain ethnicities, and crime). I argue that discourses of safety and security constructed by the media attach symbolic meanings to places, e.g., that all so-called vulnerable areas, including Bellevuegården, are dangerous. Furthermore, discourses as social processes can create socio-spatial injustice by favouring one neighbourhood and disfavouring another.

The thesis brings together environmental justice perspectives with communicative planning theories and elucidates institutionalised and perceived justice in relation to the distribution of green spaces, and examines recognition in the planning process and the experience of justice – or the lack thereof – among residents.

The theoretical contribution of this thesis is the introduction of the concept sense of densification, discussed in detail in the following sections. Sense of densification emphasises the place experience and place meanings in relation to how densification planning influences residents' everyday lives. It focuses on the ways in which residents experience the densification project and sheds light on two aspects.

1- What are the consequences and outcomes of a densification project that affects residents' everyday lives?

Densification will result in the Bellevuegården neighbourhood losing some of its identity, for example the hilly landscape, or more specific elements like old trees or the walnut tree in the courtyard. This concerns the distribution aspect of justice, when it affects the stigmatised groups in urban environments. Zalar and Pries (2022) have written about the disposition of green spaces in stigmatised neighbourhood (Zalar & Pries 2022). Although the densification in Bellevuegården is predominantly being carried out on hard surfaces such as parking lots, some of the new buildings will be constructed on green spaces, raising questions of accessibility to green spaces and green distribution for the stigmatised area (Stålhammar & Raymond 2024). As discussed earlier, the value of green spaces in stigmatised neighbourhoods should reflect whether residents have resources to compensate for crowding and density (Kristensson 2012). Furthermore, according to Stedman et al. (2004), it may be crucial to include local residents' views into management of protected or recreation areas (Stedman et al. 2004).

2- How does the densification planning enter residents' everyday lives as a process?

The sense of densification concept sheds light on how the decision-making process impacts the residents of Bellevuegården. Specifically, this refers to how residents have experienced the consultation meetings and how they were informed about the project. The results aligned with previous research (Soneryd & Lindh 2019), showing that the residents experience was that they were not included in the decision-making process. In particular, they reacted to the proposal to construct new buildings in the courtyards. As a result, people felt disappointed, unheard, and not acknowledged. This compounds the knowledge gap, which Bibby et al. (2020) refer to as how the discussion of urban density and social equity fails to address considerations of the process of densification. More specifically, densification as a process influences both procedural and recognitional aspects of justice. Seen thus, the sense of densification in Bellevuegården resulted in environmental injustice from the resident's point of view. Sense of densification contributes to environmental justice literature and urban planning by bringing in the discussion of urban changes through densification and applying it to the stigmatised population.

In addition, sense of densification adds to sense of place research with improved understanding of how processes of change at the neighbourhood level create feelings of fear, uncertainty and transformative anxiety (Manzo et al. 2023). Furthermore, it strengthens the idea changing sense of place and the existence of multiple, competing senses of place, e.g. through the discussion of how residents fight back to save their courtyards whilst simultaneously considering moving away because of the project. This aligns with the ambivalent attachment to an area that is frequently described as stigmatised (Kleit & Manzo 2006; Manzo 2014). Multiple, competing senses of place align with how meanings and experiencing places are reconstructed and renegotiated through involvement in the decision-making process.

Arguments in favour of urban densification focus mainly on sustainability aspects (Jabareen 2006; Dempsey & Jenks 2010; Hofstad 2012; Ahlfeldt et al. 2018; Bibri 2020), e.g., that it supports public infrastructure, stops urban sprawl, supports agricultural land and nature conservation; and the economic aspect, e.g., that it makes use of the land capital. What is overlooked is the contradictory situation created. While the agricultural land and nature around the city must be protected (Malmö Municipality 2018), residential green

space being taken away for more housing misplaces the burden and injustice on stigmatised groups. With regard to health and wellbeing, experiencing densification impacts citizens' lives in different ways. The emotional aspects of urban densification have yet to achieve a noticeable position in academic literature. Skrede and Andersen's (2022) study of people's emotional responses to physically and socially densified neighbourhoods in Oslo, Norway reveals that densification can provoke emotions like insecurity, fear, anger, and grief over lost homes (Skrede & Andersen 2022). This aligns with the results of Paper II, where residents expressed emotions such as anxiety and worry in relation to the uncertain outcome of densification. Urban change can cause 'transformational anxieties'; Manzo et al. (2023) describe these as 'feelings of instability and unease derived from sudden or ongoing changes in the landscapes and life-spaces that we inhabit' (Manzo et al. 2023: p 38). Furthermore, residents reported feeling saddened by the loss of some of the physical elements of the landscape. Mack (2021) uses the term 'green affect': 'Through this green affect, residents express nostalgia for outdoor spaces that have been conspicuously neglected, disparaged, and targeted for destruction, a nostalgia that media and political portrayals of these same spaces suggest is impossible.' (Mack 2021: p 560).

5.3 Methodological Implications

The thesis contributes to urban media studies by combining discourse and content analysis in comparing two neighbourhoods with different social status, Västra Hamnen and Bellevuegården. Paper I tests the use of discourse analysis and content analysis, examining newspaper reports on neighbourhood characteristics in order to understand how the two neighbourhoods are described. The paper employs a visual discourse approach by combining content analysis and discourse analysis to study the representation of crime and safety. According to Rose (2016), content analysis is an appropriate method for working with a large volume of images. I also used discourse analysis, which is an appropriate method for comprehending intertextuality, i.e., how different texts interrelate with each other (Rose 2016). I combined content- and discourse analysis for the purpose of Paper I, aiming to understand the impact of the visual images as well as to add the meanings from the discourses and intertextuality of discourses. Furthermore, discourse analysis was used to look more closely at

the images – to detect what is visible and what is invisible. According to Rose (2016), ‘invisibility can have just as powerful effects as visibility’ (Rose 2016: p 213).

The thesis offers a multi-layered assessment of procedural justice, where the official, the applied and the lived procedural justice of a densification project are examined in relation to each other. It contributes to critical environmental justice literature, which moves from single-scale to multi-scalar analysis of the causes, consequences, and possible purposes of environmental justice issues (Pellow 2016). The thesis thus responds to the potential of multi-layered assessment of procedural justice in order to understand the complexity of densification projects at the neighbourhood level, from both residents’ and stakeholders’ perspectives.

The thesis contributes to visual methodologies and photo-elicitation interviews with residents, focusing on local values and the meanings of outdoor environments. As part of its overall aim, this thesis seeks to develop the photo-elicitation technique, which has been used in and recommended for research on sense of place (Stedman et al. 2004, 2005, 2014; Van Auken et al. 2010). The photo-elicitation method was used during the interviews, where the discussion was about places that formed part of the residents’ everyday landscape. Developing the photo-elicitation method adds to visual method research, to place-based studies, which can contribute to public participation research.

5.4 Practical Implications

In addition to theoretical contributions, this thesis has a number of practical implications. In the following, I will discuss important insights for planners, policy-makers and stakeholders that I have gathered during my doctoral studies, whilst trying to create a bridge between residents and stakeholders. As a qualitative researcher, I had the privilege of listening to the thoughts and experiences of both sides in the face of the challenges related to the densification project in Bellevuegården, and of observing how each side attempted to find a solution.

This thesis calls for including sense of densification in discussions of and arguments for compact cities and more dense urban areas, particularly in Million Home Programme areas. The thesis shows how sense of place plays a role when people are experiencing the change. There is potential in using

the concept to facilitate planners' and decision-makers' understanding of residents' local knowledge and local values. The roles of the planner and landscape architect are significant in identifying the different meanings and desired uses of places of importance to residents. Sense of place thus offers a way to understand and deal with urban change, facilitates the coproduction of knowledge, and supports socio-spatial justice (Wheeler et al. 2016; Manzo et al. 2023).

This thesis examines the aspect of context-dependence in the urban densification discourse in order to support distribution-, procedure- and recognition justice. The idea of densification fulfils multiple urban sustainability goals, but this thesis seeks to pay closer attention to the aspect of socio-economic problems in the place where densification takes place. When it comes to sense of densification, it is vital for the planners and politicians to consider how denser environments can put greater pressure on people who already face socio-spatial injustice in the form of segregation, poverty and social problems. In addition, the thesis increases awareness of the discourse and how it is shaped by the media.

The thesis shows a misalignment between the law and planners and citizens' layers of procedural justice. According to Swedish law, it is compulsory to include all affected groups in the planning process; however, creating meaningful public participation is a difficult task for planners. Aligned with previous research, the thesis finds the planner's role is being torn between dialogical ideals and neo-liberal realities (Sager 2009). Fainstein & Fainstein (2013) explain that while planning development is increasingly influenced by private interests with the rise of neoliberalism, the planner becomes a 'facilitator of the market processes' as a mediator between politicians, developers and affected community (Fainstein & Fainstein 2013: p 41). The planner's role is currently under pressure from conflicting values and expectations from community planning practice, as well as politicians and administrators, who promote efficiency and cost-effectiveness (Sager 2009).

5.5 Limitations along the Research Path

This thesis addressed a number of existing knowledge gaps in the discourse of urban densification literature and faced some challenges and limitations along the way.

I started collecting data in March 2020, the same time the world began facing the Covid-19 pandemic. Its drastic effects on our lives included delays to my research. I had planned to conduct photo-elicitation interviews combined with ‘go-along’ (walking) interviews to explore the relationship between changing senses of place and aspects of environmental justice. Rather than conduct the interviews with residents digitally, I had to postpone them, and ultimately had to wait over a year to start my fieldwork, conducting my interviews with residents during the summer and autumn of 2021. Pandemic restrictions also made the process of recruiting potential informants even more difficult, as people preferred to avoid unnecessary contact, especially with unfamiliar people. As a result, the group of residents was limited and consisted of people who were quite active in the protest group and who had attended the consultation meetings and developed critical arguments.

The main argument in favour of this was that it facilitated understanding of how the implementation of the decision-making process had been perceived from the residents’ viewpoints. Interviewing the planner and the project manager of the local housing company offered additional perspectives. I am however aware that I have not included the perspective of residents who did not participate in the meetings, nor do I know their reasons for not attending. This non-willingness to participate in consultation meetings is just as important to explore as the experiences of the residents who actively protested and fought against the project. Furthermore, it is important to reflect on the protest group and the Facebook page, which served as a platform where residents shared their ideas and frustrations. This certainly contributed to the interviewee’s roughly similar ideas regarding the process and the outcome of the densification project.

I used the photo-elicitation technique as part of this thesis as well as in the VIVA-PLAN project. One aim was to engage a more vulnerable population, such as migrants or children (Ortega-Alcázar & Dyck 2012). In addition, the method has been used in and recommended for sense of place research (Stedman et al. 2004, 2005, 2021; Van Auken et al. 2010). The photo-elicitation method was used during the interviews, when residents discussed places in their everyday outdoor environments in the neighbourhood. The informants’ photos were used to enhance and enrich the data, but they were not used for data analysis. This choice was made because not all of the informants came to their interview session with their own

photos, and I did not want this difference to influence my analyses and interpretations of the interviews.

Another well-known limitation to consider is informant bias, where interviewees may be likely to provide the answers they believe the researcher wants to hear. Aligned with previous research, the thesis shows that residents have ambivalent place attachment (Vale 1997; Manzo 2014); whilst they love their outdoor environment, they also suffer from social problems and are affected by plans for densification. What is specific with this study is that the extent to which people generally talk about their green spaces is unclear, and perhaps the feelings expressed about losing them are exaggerated. Perhaps residents would have responded differently to questions regarding their feelings about living in a stigmatised neighbourhood if they had not been facing a loss of their green spaces. At the same time, this strengthens the notions of multiple- and competing senses of place. Residents' senses of place are continually constructed and reconstructed in their minds, in their shared culture, and in social practices.

5.6 Concluding Thoughts and Future Research

This thesis has been guided by questions of how it is to live in a neighbourhood whose residents are experiencing both social problems and an infill densification; how the project has been implemented, and how residents experience it. In order to understand and investigate this complex situation, this thesis merged knowledge from different disciplines, sense of place research, and environmental justice research from an urban planning standpoint. Sense of place can provide a greater understanding of how neighbourhood spaces may motivate residents to act collectively to protect or improve their community and participate in local planning processes. At the same time, by bridging infill densification and the process for such changes with aspects of justice, we achieve a better understanding of the residents' resistance and of the escalating conflict between the residents and the authorities. This is particularly important for planners and other practitioners to strengthen the planning and design process by understanding the value of local meanings and how those meanings are honoured by the residents.

This project focused on residents who have been living in the neighbourhood for a long time (17-40 years). Future studies could expand

the residency duration and include residents with a shorter residency duration. The thesis only includes residents who participated in a decision-making process. Future research could also include the voices of people who did not engage for or against the process of change in the neighbourhood, in order to understand why they chose not to be involved. Further investigations could add and compare different living conditions in different environments, for example a neighbourhood with fewer social problems and/or more well-off neighbourhoods, by engaging with a larger sample of municipalities and the use of comparative case studies. These could include various socio-demographic and other cultural variables, as well as different planning and governance contexts in other densification cases in Sweden or internationally.

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Popular science summary

A societal challenge in recent years has been that urban population is growing very fast, with cities and urban areas growing and transforming as a result. These dynamic processes are driven by many different factors and have become pivotal for understanding the complex relationship between socio-spatial structures and human dynamics. Rapid development and urban changes can create uneven and unjust situations and often exacerbate existing inequalities by impacting those with lower socio-economic status. Socio-spatial injustice looms large, particularly when decisions regarding urban development are made without consideration of the needs of marginalized communities. Although awareness of such inequalities has increased, the gap between the privileged and the underprivileged continues to expand. To handle fast-growing cities, we need good, sound plans for their growth, and we need social policies to secure sustainable development and add valuable living conditions for every urban inhabitant for better living in cities.

One strategy to create more housing for urban populations is the densification of cities. Densification changes everyday environments; when new buildings are added to an existing built area, the physical environment is altered. There are changes to e.g. light and shade conditions, as well as space for recreation and plant life. The neighbourhood looks different. Places for sitting and trees might disappear. Densification causes demographic changes; new people will move in and some neighbourhood inhabitants will move out. The starting point of this thesis is to understand how residents in a neighbourhood with social problems experience their environment and its transformation, how they resist the change, and how they perceive the change as an unjust process. The thesis uses two theories/concepts to find answers to these questions.

‘Environmental justice’ is a framework about issues of justice related to our environment. This includes ensuring that resources and public spaces are distributed fairly, giving a voice to everyone affected by decisions, and ensuring that the decision-making process itself is fair and includes all affected residents, despite their ethnicity, class, sexuality, and religion. The concept ‘sense of place’ helps us understand the interaction between humans and the environment. Sense of place is a collective term for the meanings, beliefs, symbols, values and feelings that individuals or groups associate with a specific place. How individuals see and interact with their surroundings plays an important role in shaping community identity and well-being.

This thesis explores the relationship between environmental justice and sense of place, focusing on the urban densification of Bellevuegården, a socio-economically weak neighbourhood in Malmö, Sweden. Using a mix of methods such as document analysis and interviews with residents and experts, the research aims to uncover the complexities of an urban densification.

This thesis compiles three different studies, the first of which examines how Swedish newspapers and other reports represent Bellevuegården with regard to safety and security. This study compares Bellevuegården with Västra Hamnen, a newly developed neighbourhood in Malmö that attracts a wealthier population. The study offers a broader view of how the media is an important actor, creating an image of whether a location is safe, attractive, and pleasant, or dangerous, vulnerable and best avoided. By exploring the media rhetoric on safety and security and how that affects inequality, the thesis highlights struggles faced by people living in less attractive neighbourhoods.

The second study examines how decision-making processes for densification in Bellevuegården have been applied, and how residents experienced them. The results show that the residents felt unheard and disappointed by the process as well as the project outcome, revealing a disconnection between the authority and planner and the residents. The final study looks at residents’ sense of place living in a vulnerable neighbourhood. Overall, this research is about understanding urban change better and ensuring that every voice is heard. By linking theory and real-life practice, it offers urban planners tools to make cities fairer and more inclusive for everyone who lives in them.

Ultimately, the thesis shows the importance of listening to what people who live in these neighbourhoods have to say. By understanding their experiences and values, urban planners can confirm that their plans actually help the community and get everyone involved in the process. How people feel about the places they live – their ‘sense of place’ – is essential. It affects how they see themselves and their community, and how happy and connected they feel. It also explores how densification projects – building more in already crowded areas – can affect fairness and people’s connection to their homes.

Populärvetenskaplig sammanfattning

En samhällsutmaning de senaste åren har varit att stadsbefolkningen växer väldigt snabbt, med städer och tätorter i förändring som ett resultat. Dessa dynamiska processer drivs av många olika faktorer och har blivit avgörande för att förstå det komplexa förhållandet mellan socio-spatiala strukturer och mänsklig dynamik. Snabb utveckling och stadsförändringar kan skapa ojämna och orättvisa situationer och ofta förvärra befintliga ojämlikheter genom att påverka dem med lägre socioekonomisk status. Socio-spatiala orättvisor är stora, särskilt när beslut om stadsutveckling fattas utan hänsyn till behoven hos marginaliserade samhällen. Även om medvetenheten om sådana ojämlikheter har ökat, fortsätter klyftan mellan de privilegierade och de underprivilegierade att växa. För att hantera snabbväxande städer behöver vi bra och sunda planer för deras tillväxt, och vi behöver socialpolitik för att säkerställa en hållbar utveckling och tillföra värdefulla levnadsvillkor för varje stadsinvånare för ett bättre boende i städerna.

En strategi för att skapa fler bostäder för stadsbefolkningen är förtätning av städer. Förtätning förändrar vardagliga miljöer; när ny bebyggelse tillkommer i ett befintligt bebyggt område förändras den fysiska miljön. Till exempel så förändras ljus- och skuggförhållanden, samt områden för rekreation och växtliv. Kvarteren ser annorlunda ut och sittplatser och träd kan försvinna. Förtätning orsakar demografiska förändringar när nya människor flyttar in och andra flyttar ut. Utgångspunkten för denna uppsats är att förstå hur invånare i en stadsdel med sociala problem upplever sin miljö och dess förvandling, hur de ställer sig till förändring och i vilken utsträckning de uppfattar förändringen som en rättvis process. Avhandlingen använder två teorier/begrepp för att hitta svar på dessa frågor.

"Environmental justice" (miljörättvisa) är ett ramverk som handlar om rättvisa relaterad till miljö. I detta ingår att se till att resurser och offentliga

utrymmen fördelas rättvist, att ge en röst åt alla som berörs av beslut och att se till att själva beslutsprocessen är rättvis och inkluderar alla berörda invånare, oberoende av deras etnicitet, klass, sexualitet, och religion. Begreppet "sense of place" (platskänsla) hjälper oss att förstå samspelet mellan människor och miljö. Platskänsla är ett samlingsbegrepp för de betydelser, föreställningar, symboler, värderingar och känslor som individer eller grupper förknippar med en specifik plats. Hur individer ser och interagerar med sin omgivning spelar en viktig roll för att forma samhällets identitet och välbefinnande.

Denna avhandling undersöker förhållandet mellan miljö rättvisa och platskänsla, med fokus på stadsförtätningen av Bellevuegården, en socioekonomiskt utsatt stadsdel i Malmö, Sverige. Med hjälp av en kombination av metoder som dokumentanalys och intervjuer med invånare och experter syftar forskningen till att avslöja komplexiteten i en stadsförtätning.

Avhandlingen sammanställer tre olika studier, varav den första undersöker hur svenska tidningar och andra reportage representerar Bellevuegården med hänsyn till säkerhet och trygghet. I denna studie jämförs Bellevuegården med Västra Hamnen, en ny stadsdel i Malmö som attraherar en rikare befolkning. Studien ger en bred syn på hur media är en viktig aktör och skapar en bild av om en plats är säker, attraktiv och trevlig, eller farlig, sårbar och som bör undvikas. Genom att utforska mediaretoriken om säkerhet och trygghet och hur det påverkar ojämlikhet, belyser avhandlingen svårigheter som möter människor som bor i mindre attraktiva stadsdelar.

Den andra studien undersöker hur beslutsprocesser för förtätning i Bellevuegården har tillämpats, och hur invånarna upplevt dem. Resultaten visar att de boende inte kände sig hörda och var besvikna över såväl processen som projektresultatet, vilket avslöjar kopplingar mellan myndigheter, planerare och de boende. Den sista studien fokuserar på invånarnas känsla av plats som bor i ett utsatt område. Sammantaget handlar denna forskning om att förstå stadsförändringar bättre och se till att varje röst hörs. Genom att koppla ihop teori och praktik erbjuder den stadsplanerare verktyg för att göra städer mer rättvisa och mer inkluderande för alla som bor i dem.

Till sist visar avhandlingen på vikten för planering och kommunal demokrati av att lyssna på vad människor som bor i stigmatiserade stadsdelar har att säga. Genom att förstå deras erfarenheter och värderingar kan

stadsplanerare få med alla i processen, ge utrymme för boendes synpunkter och på ett relevant sätt förmedla hur deras planer faktiskt hjälper samhället samt hur/om förändringen kan åstadkomma nya värden. Hur människor känner om platserna de bor - deras "känsla av plats" - är viktigt. Det påverkar hur de ser sig själva och sitt samhälle, och hur glada och sammankopplade de känner sig. Denna avhandling visar också hur förtätningsprojekt – att bygga mer i redan trånga områden – kan påverka rättvisa och människors koppling till sina hem.

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Azadeh Shahradi, April 2024

Appendix

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Visual representation of safety in urban spaces: a tale of two neighbourhoods

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Urban studies have addressed the role of media with regard to the ways in which the production of news affects the practicing of urban life. Media promotes urban growth, but also plays a role in the creation of negative images ascribed to places and neighbourhoods. This paper explores discourses of safety and security, illustrated in Swedish newspaper representations of two neighbourhoods in Malmö, Sweden, with different social status. Content analysis and discourse analysis methods were used to contribute to the understanding of potentiality as well as hindrances for a just urban planning. The overall result shows a negative image of Bellevuegården as a problematic area, whereas Västra Hamnen is presented as an attractive and safe neighbourhood. The study also identifies the interrelations and intertextuality between each neighbourhood and the city of Malmö as a whole. It is highlighted how Malmö has struggled with its negative reputation as a dangerous city. To favour one and disfavour another area does not contribute to equality and integration, which is the vision involved in the comprehensive planning of Malmö city. It has been concluded that the news media's representation of neighbourhoods has influenced how they are perceived, both by inhabitants and by society at large.

Keywords: safety/social impact/town & city planning

1. Introduction

Urban studies have addressed the role of the media with regard to the ways in which the production of news affects the practicing of urban life. The media, and newspapers in particular, are often used when identifying and providing evidence for urban research (Rodgers *et al.*, 2009). Some studies focus on the media in terms of how it is theorised in urban politics (Ward, 2009), how newspapers play a role in urban growth (Maruani and Amit-Cohen, 2013; Raynor *et al.*, 2017), or how various media in the city today can have an influence in the form of social/democratic commentary (Bridge, 2009). In this regard, this paper wishes to contribute to the field of urban research and urban planning by investigating the discourses that emerge from Swedish news media as a source of producing local knowledge. This is also in order to increase understanding of how media reports can influence urban planning, through the ways in which planners, citizens and local actors and participants perceive neighbourhoods and thereby are affected by news reports. This paper is part of a doctoral thesis investigating different perspectives on urban planning and justice – how environmental, procedural and recognitional justice are being considered and played out in planning projects. In this context, the focusing of media reports and images on urban neighbourhoods is seen as a way of revealing underlying estimations of neighbourhood characteristics, seemingly built on either actualities or prejudice. Such ideas are likely to play a role in urban planning and design.

In urban planning practice, local knowledge plays a central role when it comes to prioritisations and decisions for localisation of new investments. Local knowledge includes information related to local contexts or settings, including knowledge of specific characteristics, circumstances, events and relationships, as well as important understandings of their meaning (Corburn, 2003). Local discourses (i.e. how districts and neighbourhoods are talked about, and their reputation, especially in terms of safety and security) not only affect the prices of houses and apartments but also the ways in which politicians resonate and how planners act, with regard to changes in the urban landscape in the form of redevelopment and gentrification (Schwarze, 2022), even if this is not always openly declared. In planning literature, however, the links between local discourses and planning actions have not been thoroughly studied. Although this research field is admittedly complex, with difficulties in gaining an overview and the impossibility of ever being completed, there are some sources, such as newspapers, that reach citizens in the same way and to the same extent, possibly both reflecting and influencing predominant opinions. This paper aims to test the use of discourse analysis (DA) and content analysis (CA) on newspaper reporting of neighbourhood characteristics, in order to draw conclusions for how different neighbourhoods are described, including as representations of how these areas might be treated in urban planning.

There are two main categories of literature dealing with media and urban studies that have been found to be most relevant to the scope of this paper. By assigning meanings to a place, the media plays an important role in creating negative associations, giving specific names and symbolic defamation to particular urban spaces (Jensen and Christensen, 2012; Kearns *et al.*, 2013; Nayak, 2019; Stjernborg *et al.*, 2015). Stigmatisation is produced by the ways in which the media represents neighbourhoods by illustrating more negative images, such as crime and violence. Schwarze (2022) shows how newspapers reinforce stigma and racial boundaries by framing black communities as violent ‘no-go zones’. He states that ‘by using hyperbolic language, newspapers generate mental images of the community in the readers’ mind which work through graphic depictions of violence’ (Schwarze, 2022, p. 1424).

On the other hand, the media can also be used to promote identity, place branding and city development, which are discussed within the context of urban economy and urban growth (Avraham, 2000; Lavy *et al.*, 2016; Paganoni, 2012). Rapid urbanisation and deindustrialisation enhance the justification of competitiveness in the domain discourse of city planning (Fainstein, 2010). One example is the city of Malmö, which is the third largest city in Sweden. The city has been transformed from an industrial city dominated by harbour and industry, to a ‘knowledge city’ by focusing on university and cultural production (Anderson, 2014; Holgersen, 2015). The transformation of the city through such development has succeeded in raising the image of the city as being more sustainable and green, but also resulted in increased segregation as part of the negative effect of gentrification (Holgersen and Malm, 2015). Malmö has been struggling with its image as a segregated city (Nylund, 2014; Stjernborg *et al.*, 2015), with high rates of crime (Brå, 2019). In its annual report published in 2020, the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brottsförebyggande rådet) indicates that the rate of crime in Sweden has been increasing since 2006 (Brå, 2020). Swedish news media have also been reporting on an increase of unsolved crimes in Sweden – more specifically, in Malmö – in recent years (Expressen, 2015; Kvällsposten, 2012; Sydsvenskan, 2017). According to Malmö city, the sense of insecurity among Malmö residents remains high, although it has decreased in 2021 (71.8%) compared with 2020 (73.5%) (Malmö city, 2022). It is not surprising that places with social problems get more attention in news media, compared to other areas with fewer social problems (Lindgren, 2009). This paper seeks to explore how newspaper images and texts represent safety and security in urban spaces, specifically in the context of Malmö. The paper also aims to compare two selected neighbourhoods with different social status: one that is labelled as socially vulnerable (Bellevuegården), and one that is newly built and more privileged (Västra Hamnen).

1.1 Discourse and intertextuality

According to social construction theory, individuals create their world within particular social contexts. The understanding of the world is created by history and culture, and it is therefore place-specific and historically contingent (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002). Discourse as ‘a form of social action that plays a part in producing the social world – including knowledge, identities and social relations’ can inform the appearance of specific social patterns and processes (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 5). For example, the photograph in Figure 1 was taken during the celebration of Sweden’s National Day in 2008. The positive features of the discourse of Swedish nationalism can be elicited from the picture, which shows the Swedish flag located at almost the centre of the frame, being held by a blonde girl, looking towards the sky against a background of a huge number of blue and yellow-coloured balloons. Two more people can be seen at the bottom-right corner of the photograph, although they are in the background. The image was re-used in an article about Swedish values among the supporters of different political parties. The article says that supporters of the Sweden Democrats (the far-right party) had no problem naming Swedish values as values that are consistent with Swedish norms, traditions, rules and culture (Svenska Dagbladet, 2016). This example shows not only that text and conversations create reality, but also, as stated by Gillian Rose (2016), that visibility is the central part of the cultural construction of social life in contemporary Western societies (Rose, 2016), as visibility does not simply mean an image or object in itself, but is more about the perception and the meanings attributed to the images (Prosser, 2013).

Discourses are created and expressed through different sorts of resources, such as spoken and written texts, and visual and verbal images. As a result of the diverse forms in which a discourse can be articulated, the term ‘intertextuality’ becomes important in order to understand a discourse (Rose, 2016). Intertextuality points to the ways in which discourses are related and constructed across a combination of elements, which themselves draw from different discourses. For example, Norman Fairclough (1995) focuses on intertextuality as intertextual chains, which concern how one text links to another text (Fairclough, 1995). Rose (2016) includes images in the construction of intertextuality, and defines it as ‘the way that meanings of one discursive image or text depend not only on that one text or image, but also on the meanings carried by other images and texts’ (Rose, 2016, p. 188). Discourses and intertextuality are well demonstrated in the work of Schwarze (2022), which shows the role of newspapers in producing stigma concerning a black community in Chicago by depicting violence and crime (Schwarze, 2022). Another example is a study of the Danish neighbourhood Aalborg East, where Jensen and Christensen (2012) claim that ‘discourses related to



Figure 1. A total of 50 000 balloons in the colours of the Swedish flag (yellow and blue) were released at the Logårdstrappan on Skeppsbron in front of the Royal Palace in Stockholm on Sweden's National Day, 6 June 2008 (source: photograph by Maja Suslin (Svenska Dagbladet (2016))

ethnicity, age, gender and crime intersect. The categories at play, each a potential sign of trouble, intersect into a complex sign whose symbolic weight is more than the sum of its parts' (Jensen and Christensen, 2012, p. 81). Here, it can be seen how the intertextual chains are being created, in the form of ethnicity, age, gender and crime.

At the same time, culture becomes a significant way of understanding how social processes, social identities and social changes are articulated in urban contexts. Stuart Hall (1997) explains culture as being 'concerned with the production and exchange of meanings – 'the giving and taking of meanings' – between the members of a society or group'. Thus, culture depends on how individuals interpret their surroundings meaningfully and make sense of their world (Hall, 1997, p. 2). Adding to this argument, Rose (2016) claims that human-beings are surrounded by different kinds of visual technologies, such as photography, film, video, television programmes and newspaper pictures. In Western society, visual materials increasingly offer people a means to interact with one another on the basis of constructed representations of space (Rose, 2016).

What kind of social effects are caused by visual material, such as photographs? Rose (2016) first directs the attention to the question of how images visualise (or depict invisible) social differences, such as class, gender, race or sexuality, before examining how images are looked at. Visual methods examine images in order to unveil how social categories are constructed (Lynn and Lea, 2005; Prosser, 2013; Rose, 2016). For example, images of immigrants in news media might be more likely to

depict them as a threat (Carvalho, 2010) or as deprived (Larsen and Deigaard, 2013), or focus on their 'otherness' (Batziou, 2014). Another study examined the portrayal of demographics of poverty in five American news magazines, and found that significantly more African Americans were present in depictions of the poor than Whites, Hispanics or Asian Americans. The authors claim that, as a result of such representations of the poor in these magazines, many citizens overestimate the number of black people who are poor. They also found that images of Hispanics were absent in the data they analysed (Clawson and Trice, 2000), which points to what is 'invisible' (Rose, 2016, p. 17) or what is absent and not photographed (Lynn and Lea, 2005).

Another factor is not only how images look, but also how they are looked at. In other words, it is necessary to consider the importance of the role of the person looking at the image. Rose (2016) uses a quote from John Berger to point to a broader aspect of the way images are created, moved around and socially circulated: 'we never look at just one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves' (Rose, 2016, p. 18). One example is what Lutz and Collins (1993) describe in their book *Reading National Geographic* as different types of gazes in the photograph and its social context. One of the gazes that they describe is the reader's gaze: 'Independently of what the photographer or the caption writer may intend as the message of the photo, the reader can imagine something else' (Lutz and Collins, 1993, p. 195). The reader's gaze is constructed individually, by their personal, cultural and political background (Lutz and Collins, 1993).

The purpose of this paper is to find out how discourses of safety and security emerge from reports in Swedish newspapers (local and national) concerning two neighbourhoods in Malmö: Bellevuegården and Västra Hamnen. The paper also investigates the ways in which media has been influential in the representation of security and safety in these neighbourhoods, thereby potentially affecting perceptions of how it is to live there. A visual discourse approach has been employed by combining CA and DA to examine the representation of crime and safety in Bellevuegården and Västra Hamnen. Drawing on an analysis of 323 reports, the paper will show specific ways in which social meanings are created and circulated through newspapers. One reason to include newspapers and no other sources is that, according to the latest report from Mediebarometern (Mediebarometern is an annual survey of the Swedish population's access to, and use of, different types of media (Mediebarometern, 2021)), 68% of the Swedish population aged 9–85 years old read a newspaper on a daily basis (Mediebarometern, 2021).

Prior research shows that news media can contribute to negative portrayals of disadvantaged neighbourhoods through

biased representations of crime activities (Baranauskas, 2020; Halliday *et al.*, 2020; Keene and Padilla, 2014) – specifically, as compared to well-off neighbourhoods. For example, consider the following stories from a well-known Swedish newspaper (*Sydsvenskan*). One article, published on 13 November

2016 (Figure 2, the Appendix), reports that a dead man was found in a car at the bottom of the water in Västra Hamnen – a well-off neighbourhood in Malmö. The other article reports another crime from Bellevuegården – a neighbourhood with lower income status and a higher population of people with



Figure 2. Example of a report from Västra Hamnen (source: Pier *et al.* (2016))

immigrant background. The article reports that, on 10 June 2019 (Figure 3, the Appendix), a young man was shot in the head in a public place during the daytime. The way in which these two crimes are represented visually is significant. The images of Västra Hamnen show a long shot of a crane pulling

a car out of the water. The images from Bellevuegården, on the other hand, all illustrate groups of police officers and police cars near the crime scene. Although these two examples describe the murder of a citizen in different circumstances, and both cases were as yet unsolved, they are made to look very

B-delen · Tisdag 11 juni 2019

SYDSVENSKA

MED LUND, BURLÖV, SVEDALA, VELLINGE OCH SPORT

MALMÖ

"Utgångsläget har aldrig varit tuffare för ett svenskt damlandslag."
Låg neder Sverige VM med match mot Chile.
Jan Jönsson leder på hä Peter Gerhardsson
Landlag kommer att klara sig. 812



DÖDSSKJUTNING



Polisen tekniker letar spår på platsen för skottlossningen. Den dödade mannen var känd av polisen sedan tidigare.

LORENSBORG

Två män beskjutna - ingen skadad

Igår uppgav två män 120-årsåldern att de blivit beskjutna av två okända gärningsmän på Lorensborg. Polisen hittade tomhylsor på platsen och utreder händelsen som mordförsök.

Vid 12.04 fick polisen samtal från två män i 20-årsåldern som sa att de hade blivit beskjutna av två okända gärningsmän.

De är inte skadade, men de upplever att de har blivit beskjutna, säger Filip Annas, presstalesperson vid polisens ledningscentral.

Polisen ryckte ut och spärrade av ett område kring Vendelsfrågatan och sökte med vagnband. På platsen hittades tomhylsor som kommer att undersökas av polisens tekniker. De två männen förhördes och även andra eventuella vittnen. Om de två gärningsmännen firades i något fordon eller flydde till fots är oklart.

Tidigare på tågen sköts en ung man till döds på Bellevuegården ungefär 400 meter bort.

Ser ni någon koppling till den tidigare skottlossningen idag?

Den initiala bedömningen är att det inte finns någon koppling, men det kan ju ändras efterhand. Detta är något man tittar på, säger Filip Annas.

Sent på igår kväll var ingen misstänkt gripen. Polisen utreder händelsen som mordförsök.



Polisen spärrade av ett område kring Vendelsfrågatan efter att boende slagit larm om höga smällar.

Ung man sköts ihjäl utanför socialkontor

BELLEVUEGÅRDEN
En ung man sköts ihjäl i närheten av socialkontoret på Bellevuegården strax efter klockan 13 igår. Flera personer hörde skotten avlåsas och försökte hjälpa mannen.
- Han låg ett buskage i festerställning, berättar ett kvinnligt vittne.

Klockan 13.16 fick polisen flera påringningar om skottlossning på Bellevuegården.
- En ung kille sprang in på kontoret och skrek att någon hade blivit skjuten. Alla blev rädda och sprang ut, säger en kvinna som var inne på socialtjänstens västerns kontor på Hälögatan.
Hon vägrar att hon hörde två smällar och att hon såg en bil försvinna i hög fart. En bilkörare var öppen. Uppgiften bekräftas av en man som bor i området.
- Jag hörde en bil köra i hög fart, sen smäll det och bilen försvann snabbt från platsen igen, säger vittnet.
En man hade blivit träffad.
Vid 16-tiden på måndags-eftermiddagen bekräftade polis att mannen är död och att hans anhöriga är underutredda.
Den avlidne är i 20-årsåldern och är känd av polisen sedan tidigare.

En nära anhörig till honom sköts ihjäl i Malmö förra året.
-Allt som kretsar kring den avlidne mannen kommer att utredas. Om det finns kopplingar så kommer man att se dem i så fall, säger polisens presstalesperson Richard Landqvist.

Den skjutne låg i festerställning ett buskage utanför ingången till socialkontoret. Anställda vid socialtjänsten väster fanns bland de personer som försökte hjälpa på den skjutne mannen.
Socialkontoret stängde efter händelsen och kommer sannolikt också att ha stängt hela tisdagen. Det finns flera uppgifter som talar för att skjutningen har koppling till socialförvaltningens verksamhet.
-Vi stänger delvis för att

Vitne.

"Jag hörde en bil köra i hög fart, sen smäll det och bilen försvann snabbt från platsen igen."

Platsen är avspärrad och delvis för att personalen är väldigt skrämd, säger Orjan Eksengren som är presstansvarig på Malmö stads arbetsmarknads- och socialförvaltning.
Socialtjänstens klienter hänvisas till socialjour eller kontoret i södra Malmö.
På måndagskvällen var ännu ingen misstänkt gärningsman gripen.

TEXT: OLOF WESTERBERG
FOTO: JOHAN PALMROST
TEXT: KENAN HABUL



Figure 3. Example of a report from Bellevuegården, with images (source: Thomasson (2019))

different. While in the Bellevuegården case the police are active at the scene, no police is seen in the case of Västra Hamnen. Thus in Bellevuegården, an ongoing fight against crime is displayed (between the lines: between the police and the neighbourhood itself), while the image chosen in Västra Hamnen, there is no actual visual link made between the crime and the neighbourhood (it is more like a coincidence that a murdered man has been found there – the image itself does not show criminality). More specifically, they present two Malmö neighbourhoods as embodying very different levels of criminality and safety. Although the crime rates in these two districts are not equal, the focus of this paper is to examine how images can create specific meanings in their social contexts.

It is also argued that the consequences of media representations of different neighbourhoods have an effect on residents' lives, raising the question of social justice in the city, specifically for vulnerable neighbourhoods. This means that a negative image of a stigmatised neighbourhood is not the only product of visual discourse created by news media but also results in an unwillingness on the part of the residents to become involved in their 'loser' community and/or that they want to move away as soon as they are able to (Lindgren, 2009, p. 93). Another consequence is, as argued by Castro and Lindbladh (2004) that living in a poor suburb increases the risk of vulnerability for young adults on both the individual and the community level. Different agencies such as media are counted as an important actor to create the hegemonic discourse of vulnerable areas (Castro and Lindbladh, 2004).

1.2 Research context

1.2.1 City of Malmö

During the past two decades, the city of Malmö has undergone an extraordinary transformation, from an industrial city in deep crisis to a post-industrial 'knowledge city' (Holgersen, 2012). For example, there has been tremendous, increasing investment in two areas, (1) banks, real estate, business services and (2) education and research. Malmö city decided to revitalise the city by converting industrial land into housing for affluent citizens, and the construction of office buildings with the focus on the concept of sustainability (Holgersen, 2014). Holgersen and Malm (2015) use the term 'green fix' to explain how the local authority managed economic and ecological crises by introducing Malmö as a 'green city', which was a business strategy for the real estate market and also shown possible to export as commodity in itself (Holgersen and Malm, 2015).

Västra Hamnen is the product of a series of transformations of industrial land into an area for housing, offices and recreation. It is located on the coast to the west of the city's main

harbour, on the site of a former shipyard. For some, the neighbourhood stands as proof of the fact that the transition from an industrial into a 'knowledge city' has changed the image of Malmö for the better: for example into a more attractive location in which to live, especially for the wealthier part of the population – essentially the tax payers (Holgersen, 2012; Holgersen and Malm, 2015). Among the characteristics of the area are that around 70% of the population in Västra Hamnen have post-secondary educational level (eftregymnasial), and their income is 30% more than the average for the city of Malmö (Malmö City, 2021). Despite the benefits of urban greening, the green fix strategy creates socio-spatial inequalities (Anguelovski *et al.*, 2018) (Figure 4).

Increasing segregation, and disparities in income and poverty between ethnic groups, are results of both demographic changes, due to globalisation and a high rate of immigration (Nylund, 2014; Stjernborg *et al.*, 2015), and green strategies (Holgersen and Malm, 2015). Bellevuegården is one of the districts in Malmö that has been labelled as a 'vulnerable area' (The Swedish Police has established a list of 'vulnerable areas', in order to allocate extra resources and protocols to deal with their crime rate. According to the report by the Swedish Police, there are three types of vulnerable area: (a) a vulnerable area presents a problem that primarily requires police presence and police efforts to deal with existing problems; (b) a particularly vulnerable area presents a problem that, to a large extent, requires joint efforts from several societal actors in order to address co-existing problems and (c) a risk area is an area that meets all the criteria for a vulnerable area but does not really meet the criteria that characterise a particularly vulnerable area. However, the situation in a risk area is so alarming that there is an imminent risk that the area could become particularly vulnerable unless adequate measures are put in place (Swedish Police, 2015)), and was built in 1974 during the Million Programme era (The Million Programme was a national housing programme that aimed to build approximately 1 million homes during the period 1965–1974. The first decades of the post-war era in Sweden, with rapid urbanisation and growing prosperity, led to a housing shortage. To rectify this, the government (formed by the Social Democratic Party) decided to build 1 million new apartments. This ambitious project was intended to provide housing for middle-class workers around the bigger cities. About halfway through the Million Programme, the housing deficit became a housing surplus, partly due to the rapid expansion of the housing stock, and partly due to the economic crisis (Grundström and Molina, 2016; Hall and Viden, 2005). The project was not as well-received as the government had expected, and by the end of the 1960s, the project was already being criticised due to what some people perceived as uniform and poor architecture (Hall and Viden, 2005). The areas in which the scheme's housing had been built became unattractive places in which to



Figure 4. Map of Malmö, showing the location of Västra Hamnen and Bellevuegården (source: <http://www.lantmateriet.se>)

live, and many apartments remained empty. To solve the vacancy problem, many municipalities accommodated large immigrant populations with lower social status who did not have any other choice (Mack, 2019). For this reason, the Million Programme neighbourhoods have become associated with ethnic segregation and poverty, and Bellevuegården (as our focus area in this paper) is no exception). According to the Swedish police, Bellevuegården has been experiencing social problems since 2015, together with other vulnerable areas in Malmö and other parts of Sweden (Swedish Police, 2017). According to Malmö Municipality's website, the residents of Bellevuegården have low economic status, and a higher level of unemployment (40%) and lower level of education (compared to Västra Hamnen) (Malmö City, 2022), and, importantly, the local community has been influenced by criminal activities (Police, 2017). The latest report published by the Swedish Police concerning vulnerable areas stated that the situation in Bellevuegården has improved, but there is still a risk that the improvement trends could be reversed (Swedish Police, 2019). What is specific for Bellevuegården is its elderly population,

with up to 25% of residents being more than 65 years old, and the proportion of residents with a foreign background is around 45% (Malmö City, 2022). The main differences between Västra Hamnen and Bellevuegården concern socio-economic status, level of education, income and ethnic background.

2. Method

To study the effect of visual representation, two districts in Malmö were chosen: Bellevuegården and Västra Hamnen. The data were collected among the relevant reports that concern about safety and security in these two neighbourhoods from Swedish media database 'Retriever' (Retriever is a digital archive hosted by Retriever Sverige AB, covering printed press, web content, radio and television coverage, for all Scandinavian countries and some European (Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Finnish, Finland-Swedish, German, French, Spanish and English) dating back to the 1980s. (<https://www.retriever.se/product/mediarkivet/>)). The reports were browsed from 22 April 1998 (the first data which were available in the archive

started on that date) to 01 January 2020 by applying the search strings in four groups: (a) 'Bellevuegården' AND 'Malmö' AND 'safety' (in the actual Swedish searches, 'trygghet' was used which can be translated into English as a feeling of safety/security, and 'otrygghet' as insecurity and feeling unsafe (Rodenstedt, 2014, p. 49)), (b) 'Bellevuegården' AND 'Malmö' AND 'crime', (c) 'Västra Hamnen' AND 'Malmö' AND 'safety' and (d) 'Västra Hamnen' AND 'Malmö' AND 'crime'. Only local and national newspapers were included among other possible sources, such as radio and TV programmes. This selection was made for the methodological reason that the layouts of Swedish newspapers are quite similar in terms of images, titles and columns, which makes it easier to collect and interpret the data. This paper includes local and national newspapers in order to understand the production of local discourse at the city level and their relations to a broader perspective of national level. In total, there were 192 reports from Västra Hamnen and 131 reports from Bellevuegården that contained any of the words 'safety' or 'crime' in both areas, either in the text, the title or the picture captions. Both relevant articles (It means those reports that are directly about each neighbourhood.) and indirectly relevant articles (It means that the report is about something else other than Västra Hamnen or Bellevuegården (e.g. reports that just mention these neighbourhoods somewhere in the text or in the picture caption).) were kept.

CA and DA were employed and combined to analyse the data. According to Rose (2016), CA is an appropriate method for dealing with a large number of images. DA was used, which is an appropriate method for comprehending intertextuality – that is, how different texts interrelate with each other (Rose, 2016). Although CA and DA come from a very different philosophical base (Hardy *et al.*, 2004), CA and DA were combined for the purpose of this paper in order to understand not only the effect of the visual images but also to add extracted meanings from the discourses. CA was used in order to see what was illustrated by the newspapers, and how the contents of the images can be described. DA was used to look more closely at the images – to identify what is visible as well as what is invisible, as Rose (2016) mentions that 'invisibility can have just as powerful effects as visibility' (Rose, 2016, p. 213). CA is based on four steps, of which the first is to find the images in accordance with research questions. This paper considered the images that appeared in newspaper reports that consist of 'safety', and 'crime' as keywords in both neighbourhoods. The second step was to create a group of categories in such a way that each aspect of the image would belong to one category. The categories must not overlap, and they should produce interesting coherent information. The third step was to code the categories in such a way that the coding process would be replicable. The fourth and final step was to analyse the results, which could be done in various ways, but the simplest way was to count the frequencies (Rose, 2016).

The aim of using DA was to explore how images that form a particular view of the social world can be constructed. If the fact is accepted that discourses are produced socially, then this type of DA is especially interested in the image itself, social production and effects of discourses (Rose, 2016). However to understand the meaning of a discourse and the social production of it, it is necessary to know the importance of intertextuality, which Fairclough explains as 'how an individual text draws on elements and discourses of other texts' (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 7). This means that all spoken and written statements necessarily draw on and incorporate earlier (and parallel) spoken and written statements (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002). Intertextuality therefore requires a certain breadth of source material.

3. Analysis and results

The material was first analysed with CA, using the four-step technique suggested by Rose (2016): (a) selecting relevant images for research questions, collecting all the reports from each neighbourhood, eliminating the reports without any image; (b) creating a list of categories for coding; (c) coding the images and (d) interpreting the results (Rose, 2016). Then DA was used for all the reports, regardless of whether there was an image or not, to investigate how news and reports assign specific meanings to Bellevuegården and Västra Hamnen. The process of analysis started by reading and re-reading the texts and headlines that contained the words Bellevuegården or Västra Hamnen. Two categories were recognised. First, the news was about Bellevuegården or Västra Hamnen, and that something had happened there. Second, the news topic was about something else, and Bellevuegården or Västra Hamnen were just mentioned somewhere in the text. For the first category, after examining the text and image, a short description was written of what it was about, and examined which objects were represented in them. For the second group (To clarify how the second category was defined, here is one example of a report from Sydsvenskan published on 11 August 2019 about Seved – a neighbourhood in Malmö with social problems. The title is 'Seved is on the right track – but the fear remains', and it explains that, although the engagement of different groups, such as police, municipality and stakeholders, has improved the level of safety in the neighbourhood, there is still evidence of shootings in public places. At the end of the report, Bellevuegården was described as 'characterised by open drug dealing, dissatisfaction with society, acts of violence that harm third parties' (Sydsvenskan, 2019b). In this category, Bellevuegården and/or Västra Hamnen are stated in the reports were implicitly assigned to either negative or positive meanings depending on the whole story of the report.), the same process was followed, as well as assessing where the name of Bellevuegården or Västra Hamnen was mentioned, and how it related to the main topic

of the article. The next step was to identify a central theme that emerged from the texts, headlines and images.

The paper studied 131 reports from Bellevuegården and 192 reports from Västra Hamnen, both directly and indirectly concerned with safety and security. Among these, 28 reports from Bellevuegården and 53 reports from Västra Hamnen contained images. It also included 38 reports from Bellevuegården and 50 reports from Västra Hamnen that featured indirect news but contained images (one image or more) (Table 1).

3.1 Content analysis

Figures 5 and 6 show the content of images from directly relevant news of Bellevuegården and Västra Hamnen. By comparing these two diagrams, it can be seen that around 80% of the focus of the news from Bellevuegården is on the crime (by showing images of police and crime scenes), while only 45% of the reports from Västra Hamnen focuses on crime and crime scenes. This is quite significant, considering the number of reports from Bellevuegården compared to those from Västra Hamnen (Table 1). There are even differences in the ways in which the images showing crime scenes and police officers have been visualised in these two areas. The photographs published from Västra Hamnen that depict serious crime are mostly taken from a distance, which makes it hard to recognise police officers, for example. By contrast, in Bellevuegården, the viewer can often discern the faces of police officers, which suggests a nearness or proximity to the threat of crime (and thus the need for security) (e.g. Figures 2 and 3, the Appendix). One interpretation of these different depictions of police in the two neighbourhoods could be to emphasise the level of crime – for example, crimes in Bellevuegården are more serious than in Västra Hamnen, due to the higher number of police officers in Bellevuegården. Here, it is important to emphasise that, depending on socio-cultural background, the interpretation of these images can be different – for example, the police presence could create a sense of reassurance and protection, or, on the other hand, it could create a feeling of fear and insecurity due to the proximity to crime. There is not so much difference in depictions of people in the reports from both neighbourhoods, but visualisation of outdoor environments and city development is much more in focus in Västra Hamnen.

Table 1. Number of articles concerning Bellevuegården and Västra Hamnen

	Directly relevant content		Indirectly relevant content	
	Image	No image	Image	No image
Bellevuegården	28	48	38	17
Västra Hamnen	53	47	50	42

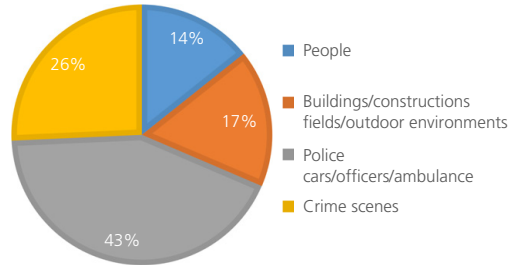


Figure 5. Direct news from Bellevuegården

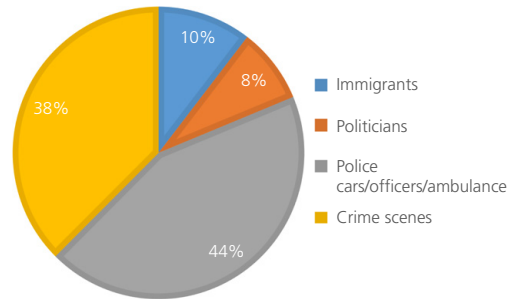


Figure 6. Direct news from Västra Hamnen

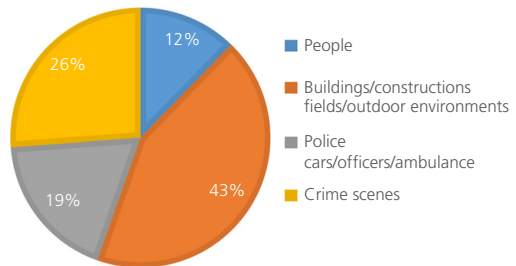


Figure 7. Indirect news from Bellevuegården

Examples of indirectly relevant news from Bellevuegården and Västra Hamnen are shown in Figures 7 and 8. Both direct and indirect news from Bellevuegården demonstrate that, in total, more than 80% of images in the total number of reports from Bellevuegården are about crime (percentage of photographs depicting crime scenes or crime-related scenes, such as police cars, officers and ambulances). In Västra Hamnen, the equivalent figure is 50%. It is important to note that the reports in this group were not specifically about these neighbourhoods – the

main topics were actually about something else. The remaining images depicted more people with immigrant backgrounds and politicians in Bellevuegården. However, there were also a variety of pictures showing people such as native Swedish together with immigrants in outdoor environments (e.g. beaches) in Västra Hamnen. There were also images depicting the former mayor of Malmö city, Illmar Reepalu, who had a great impact on the development of Västra Hamnen (Holgersen, 2014).

3.2 Discourse analysis

Tables 2 and 3 demonstrate the main themes that emerged from the DA for Bellevuegården and Västra Hamnen. Reports from both areas show that the main theme is crime, although the number of news reports that were from Bellevuegården was

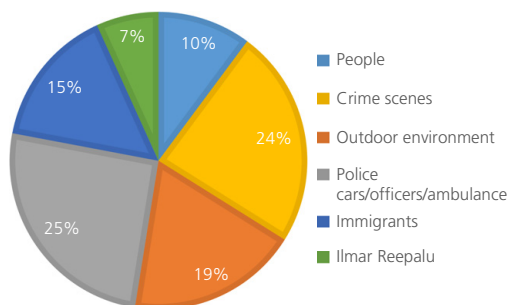


Figure 8. Indirect news from Västra Hamnen

more than twice those from Västra Hamnen. The results show that, on the one hand, the media is producing a discourse of insecurity through crime-related news from Bellevuegården. On the other, the results show the breadth of news about crime prevention as densification development in Bellevuegården, and housing companies' special programmes for the area. As Table 2 shows, the majority of the reports focus on crime incidents in Bellevuegården, which explicitly and implicitly concern issues of danger and insecurity in the area. Accordingly, a few reports described how Malmö Municipality has presented the new densification development in Bellevuegården by concentrating on the crime prevention aspect of the design. This is one way to argue for densification of the neighbourhood. At the same time, there were some reports about residents' protests against the densification. Moreover, housing companies, such as Malmö Kommuns Bolag (MKB), ran projects with the aim of making the neighbourhood safe. In contrast, there was a variety of topics about Västra Hamnen (e.g. sustainability, education, regional growth, famous example of building, public space structure). It is worth mentioning that Västra Hamnen was described using adjectives such as attractive, excellent, sustainable, safe place, expensive, luxury, rich, diverse and dense. This is what Rose (2016) emphasises as how specific visuality can make certain things visible in a special way, and certain other things invisible (Rose, 2016). In this case, what is made most visible from Västra Hamnen is the idea of an area that is an attractive and nice place, both for residents and for business.

Table 4 presents the results for indirectly relevant news concerning Bellevuegården. It shows two main themes: first, the reports

Table 2. Direct reports on Bellevuegården

Main themes	Crime	New development: densification and protest	MKB project
Number of mentions	65	8	3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Different types of crime, such as dealing drugs, murder, shootings ■ Follow-up reports about those crimes, such as trials, or news about the suspects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Information about the new development and densification focused on increasing safety and security ■ The protest of Bellevuegården's residents against the densification plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ MKB employed a few residents focused specifically on increasing safety and security

Table 3. Direct reports on Västra Hamnen

Main theme	Description of Västra Hamnen	Crime	New development/investment	Problems with visitors
Number of mentions	22	36	13	5
	Adjectives: attractive, excellent, sustainable, safe place, expensive, luxury, diverse, dense, rich			VH becomes unsafe due to visitors

Table 4. Indirect reports concerning Bellevuegården

Main theme	Crime in Malmö	Vulnerable area	Increasing safety	Comparison between high and low rent
Number of mentions	37	12	5	1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Shooting, murder, crime took place in Malmö ■ Follow-up reports about unsolved crime in Malmö, trial 	Any news about a vulnerable area has a column showing a list of vulnerable areas in Sweden/Malmö	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Installing camera MKB, CTC projects to increase security 	

Table 5. Indirect reports concerning Västra Hamnen

Main theme	Description of Västra Hamnen	Västra Hamnen as an example	Västra Hamnen against Rosengård or other problematic areas	Malmö and Västra Hamnen	Crime
Number of mentions	39	20	13	23	13
	Adjectives: expensive, exclusive, rich, attractive, safe, white, sustainable, successful, lively, diverse	VH was mentioned as an example of sustainable city development	VH was compared with vulnerable areas to emphasize on positive aspects of VH and negative elements of vulnerable areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Segregation ■ Safe and unsafe ■ The bridge, university, city tunnel and VH 	Murder, crime in Malmö and in VH

about serious crime in Malmö city or elsewhere in Sweden, and second, the reports about vulnerable areas in Sweden. The incidents of serious crime, such as shootings, murders and lethal violence, repeatedly mention previous incidents from Bellevuegården as well as other places. Moreover, there are follow-up reports about the suspects, police investigations and, more importantly, reports about unsolved crime in Malmö. There is a special phenomenon for reports about vulnerable areas in Swedish newspapers. Whenever there is news from a vulnerable area in Sweden, there is a separate column that defines vulnerable areas and lists places that belong to these groups. In this way, the reader gets the extra information about for example, Bellevuegården, which is on the list of vulnerable areas, even if the report is actually about somewhere else. Furthermore, there were a few reports focusing on crime prevention, such as the installation of cameras or various projects carried out by housing companies or other organisations.

Table 5 shows the indirect reports concerning Västra Hamnen, which illustrate mainly positive perceptions. Most of the reports that mention Västra Hamnen describe it as an attractive, expensive, safe and sustainable location. Västra Hamnen is cited as a good example for other new developments, and is also compared positively to the most problematic areas in Malmö, such as Rosengård and others. Although Västra Hamnen was mentioned in the crime-related reports from Malmö/Sweden, there are more reports that show Västra Hamnen together with the Öresund Bridge, the city tunnel and Malmö University as being part of the positive side of Malmö.

4. Discussion

Throughout this paper, possible discourses of safety and security have been explored, as illustrated in newspaper representations of two neighbourhoods in the Swedish city of Malmö: Bellevuegården and Västra Hamnen. Unsurprisingly, reflecting the earlier descriptions of the two neighbourhoods, the overall results show that the image of Bellevuegården regarding safety is negative, whereas the image of Västra Hamnen is of an attractive, lively and safe place to live. This is aligned with previous research which found that media tends to cover news from disadvantaged neighbourhoods disproportionately (Baranauskas, 2020; Halliday *et al.*, 2020; Stjernborg *et al.*, 2015). Bellevuegården and Västra Hamnen differ in physical and social aspects. Bellevuegården belongs to the Million Programme era of the 1970s, while Västra Hamnen is a newly developed area which, by having access to the waterfront, is much more attractive. Their social environments also vary, with Bellevuegården's residents having lower social status, lower income and a higher level of unemployment, and, more importantly, it has been listed as a vulnerable area of Malmö. Västra Hamnen, on the other hand, is a place for wealthier residents with higher social status. The negative image of Bellevuegården and the positive depiction of Västra Hamnen, as explicitly shown in this paper, came as no surprise. The contribution of this study is that the current image of each neighbourhood is the result of a more complex background, and it would be suggested that the concept of intertextuality can explain this complexity by showing how different discourses interrelate and overlap with each other.

As stated earlier, multi-storey Million Programme buildings have been associated with ethnicity and migration, poverty, low socio-economic status and social problems such as drug dealing, rioting, violence and even murder (Backvall, 2019; Mack, 2021; Wiard and Pereira, 2019), which together created a discourse about the Million Programme. It is argued that presenting a list of the names of vulnerable areas in a separate column can draw attention in a visual sense. One might not need to read the whole story to understand what has happened. Instead, merely by looking at the title, the separate column and the images, one can associate them (title, images etc.) with Million Programme housing, vulnerable areas and social problems. Figure 9 (the Appendix) is an example that shows how the combination of text and image can create a discourse of the perceived unsafe situation in vulnerable neighbourhoods. Here, the focus is on the interrelationships between texts/images and the other texts/images as intertextuality.

Rose (2016) defines intertextuality as how the meaning of one discursive image/text relates to the meaning of other

images/texts. Such intertextuality in the images/texts can be seen from Bellevuegården, for example, where the text is not about Bellevuegården but mentions Bellevuegården's status as a vulnerable area. This connects the *discourse of the Million Programme* to Bellevuegården, while involving associated problems such as segregation, poverty, unemployment and violence. Figure 9 (the Appendix) shows an example from Rosengård, which is a particularly vulnerable neighbourhood in Malmö built during the Million Programme era. Reading this report, one associates and interrelates problems with Million Programme residential areas in general. When the article states which areas are still vulnerable neighbourhoods, it reminds the reader that Bellevuegården is still not safe. This is also aligned with the quote from John Berger, which says that 'we never look at just one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves' (Rose, 2016, p. 18). In this case, the interpretations could differ if, for example, one had an immigrant background and lived in such an environment or if the person was Swedish Native who had never visited such a place. According to the viewer's personal,



(a)



(b)

Figure 9. Report from Rosengård – particularly vulnerable area in Malmö (source: Thomasson (2019))

cultural and political background the images are looked at (Lutz and Collins, 1993; Rose, 2016). This does not mean that both interpreters would not know, in a superficial sense, that a 'vulnerable area' is tainted with negative characteristics. What it means is for example that while a person living in such a neighbourhood would have a more diverse and broad conception of the place, more mixed with positive feelings and sense of place, the stranger is more likely to believe the media reports in a literal sense. Since those unfamiliar with vulnerable areas dominate the representatives and authorities of the society, this is likely to cause a bias in terms of prejudice, in questions and assignments associated with these areas.

One of the categories of reports from Bellevuegården concerns the ongoing densification project in the neighbourhood. These reports may sound neutral or even positive, but Jensen and Christensen (2012) call them 'paradoxical stories', as the overall approach of these reports is often positive, but they still imply a negative description of the area (Jensen and Christensen, 2012, p. 80). In the case of Bellevuegården, it can be seen that the argument for the development and densification project is to make the area safe and secure. This is in alignment with the literature, which discusses how the negative image produced by the media serves capitalism by arguing that such stigmatisation results in the devaluation of an urban area, which means that redevelopment and revitalisation are needed in order to 'revive' the area (Parisi and Holcornb, 1994; Schwarze, 2022; Willer, 2021).

To clarify the intertextuality between Bellevuegården and other vulnerable areas and *the discourse of the Million Programme*, here is a concrete example from Sydsvenskan (Sydsvenskan, 2019a). An article about Rosengård has the headline 'A neighbourhood to love – or to be afraid of' ('En stadsdel att älska – eller vara rädd för') (Figure 9, the Appendix). The report contains four images, the biggest of which shows two women with an immigrant background sitting on a bench in the shopping centre in Rosengård and looking happy. The caption reads: 'I have heard many bad things about Rosengård, so it is good to highlight the positive aspects here: there is a warmth.' ('Jag har hört många dåliga saker om Rosengård och därför är det bra att lyfta upp det bra här: Det finns en värme.') The next image shows a Swedish-looking woman with smile on her face, saying that 'You don't need to go away on holiday. There is a lot of culture – when you come here to shop, there is a completely different range. The spices, for example – if you don't know what to do with them, you get given a recipe for free.' ('Ja, man behöver inte åka på semester. Det är mycket kultur, när man går upp här och handlar är det ett helt annat utbud. Kryddorna till exempel – när man inte vet vad man ska göra med dem får man ett recept på köpet.') Although these images focus on a positive aspect of this vulnerable area, the text still implicitly focuses it

being unsafe, including a picture showing fire and explosions. There is also a special column that provides information such as the rate of employment (36%), the proportion of the population with a foreign background (90%), and the proportion of families receiving financial support (37.7%). In the newspaper article, Bellevuegården is mentioned as a vulnerable area. All of this information, from the images and the text, combines to create a mental image with specific meanings, which by means of intertextuality one relates to their previous knowledge. It has been argued that this process empowers and augments *the discourse of the Million Programme*. This is an example of how a basically positive news article can be given another tone, thereby contributing to a more negative discourse that was not central to the content of the article. It can therefore be argued that it is very hard to change a negative image. This is partly due to the superficial and judgemental 'positive' reports, and partly due to culturally biased perspectives on safety and security, most of which lack an understanding of spatially relational differences between how the neighbourhood is perceived in comparison with other urban areas (Listerborn, 2014).

The interrelationships and intertextuality between each neighbourhood (Bellevuegården and Västra Hamnen) and the city of Malmö as a whole have been recognised. Swedish newspapers play an important role in the creation of the discourse of insecurity in certain parts of the city, and a discourse of safety and security in the other parts. Such discourses are part of the construction of a city that is segregated by class, social status and ethnic background (Grundström, 2019). On the one hand, there is an image of a dangerous city (Martin, 2000; Schclarek Mulinari, 2017; Stjernborg *et al.*, 2015), where Bellevuegården is part of it as one of the vulnerable areas. On the other, the attractive, exclusive and more privileged area of Västra Hamnen would improve the negative image of Malmö. However, Västra Hamnen is not totally safe from criminals, as the results show, but there is quite a strong emphasis on the high quality of life in Västra Hamnen in both direct and indirect news reports.

Västra Hamnen as positive side of Malmö constructed a segregated city, contradicts the vision of Malmö city, which aims to ensure social sustainability and to reduce inequality among the residents (Stigendal and Östergren, 2013). It has been claimed that the process of dividing the city of Malmö into safe and unsafe areas, is partially caused by the impact of indirectly relevant newspaper articles concerning both neighbourhoods. For example, more than 30% of articles describe Västra Hamnen in one or two sentences, using descriptive adjectives such as attractive, exclusive, successful and sustainable, or describe it as a good example for future developments in other cities. In addition, around 15% of the articles compare Västra Hamnen to other, more vulnerable, areas in Malmö, which increases the focus on the problems in those areas, as well as *the discourse of the Million Programme* that emphasises segregation. This trend of increased

social inequalities is in direct conflict with the ambition for sustainable city development (Stigendal and Östergren, 2013).

This paper explains how representations by news media explicitly and implicitly influence the image of Bellevuegården and Västra Hamnen. What is important to consider, are the consequences of such discourses and how they can affect residents' lives. The redevelopment of Västra Hamnen results in more inequality and social injustice in the city of Malmö, which Harvey (2019) criticises as a capitalist strategy to increase the flow of capital through development and the promotion of tourism (Harvey, 2019). Holgersen and Malm (2015) argue that a neighbourhood can become favourable on the basis of its ability to attract more business and higher property values (Holgersen and Malm, 2015). The issue of investment being unevenly distributed in Malmö has also been discussed in a newspaper article (Sydsvenskan, 2021). It explains that Malmö Municipality invests three times more in the rich areas than in the poorer ones, which contributes to increased inequality and segregation. Moreover, Mitchell (2017) argues for a relational approach to landscape and urbanism. He explains that landscape is relational, and this relationality enables individuals to understand the construction of such segregation which means that the development of landscape of privilege and marginalised are dialectically entwined with each other (Mitchell, 2017).

Furthermore, this is not only about labelling places with 'good' or 'bad' meanings; more importantly, it is about how these meanings come to play an active role in peoples' lives. Stigmatised neighbourhoods and their inhabitants experience a range of negative consequences on their health and well-being by being exposed to greater stress (Halliday *et al.*, 2020; Kelaher *et al.*, 2010; Tran *et al.*, 2020). There is limited access to resources and opportunities (Keene and Padilla, 2014) – what Andersson describes as 'places of few opportunities' (Andersson, 2016). For example, children from disadvantaged neighbourhoods experience failure in their education at school, with consequent employment in low-paid jobs (Gulczyńska, 2018).

Discourses of safety and crime in Swedish cities have increasingly become part of the political debate in recent years, and this accelerates the process of segregation. In the Swedish context, Sager and Mulinari (2018) argue that the discourses of safety and crime produced by nationalist and racist agendas create socio-spatial political and economic patterns in the city, which raise the question of 'safety for whom?' The authors argue that, within ethnonationalist ideologies, the notion of 'safety' means to protect and care for white women, and the logic of femonationalism considers gender equality to be a national cultural value, with 'the others' (both male and female immigrants) threatening this gender equality (Sager and Mulinari, 2018). The socio-spatial political and economic status can explain why the residents of vulnerable and unsafe

neighbourhoods feel at home, even though the news reports about crime concentrate on such areas more than on other parts of the city. In *Geographies of the Veil*, Listerborn (2014) examines the meaning of violence for Muslim women in Malmö, which develops in relation to place and space. The narratives from Muslim women reveal that socio-economic segregation of the city can be overlapped with socio-spatial order in the public space, as some areas are defined in terms of being Swedish or immigrant areas (Listerborn, 2014).

5. Conclusion

There is quite a substantial body of literature on the effects of alternative approaches to master planning and neighbourhood design, with regard to behaviour, feelings of comfort and life quality, everyday functions and sense of place (Douglas, 2010; Mack, 2021; Romice *et al.*, 2020). This paper does not counteract or contradict these findings, but argues that the media plays an influential role with regard to prejudice and expectations of neighbourhoods. Media narratives concerning neighbourhoods can therefore affect societal interventions, such as the allocation of resources, urban planning, infrastructure and design. As segregation has shown adverse effects on urban life quality and possibilities (Andersson, 2016; Keene and Padilla, 2014), it is important both to detect biased and pejorative reporting about neighbourhoods, and to find ways to counteract prejudice and support environmental, procedural and recognitional justice in urban planning and design. Suggestions for further research include critical studies of segregated cities (on a comprehensive planning level), considering alternative spatial-demographic divisions, as well as methodological development for participatory neighbourhood design and management.

It has been concluded that in order to promote social development with equal upbringing and living conditions and good life chances for everyone, it is especially important for urban planners to consider the role of the media in the creation of such discourses. The Swedish government's strategy for decreasing segregation states that segregation is a relational phenomenon that includes an entire city or region. It is in alignment with the discussion of this paper, and maintains that segregation is determined by the relationships between, for example, two or more residential areas (Regeringen, 2022). It is therefore not only areas with socio-economic challenges that 'are' segregated, but also that developments in different residential areas affect each other. In this regard, the opportunities to reduce the counteracting residential segregation are affected by handing over the responsibility for the design of cities to urban planners at municipalities.

End note

The title of this paper is clearly a paraphrase of Charles Dickens' historic novel 'A Tale of Two Cities'. Even if neither

purpose nor scope is shared with this novel, its famous opening lines could apply to a dystopic view of a segregated city:

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us...
(Charles Dickens, 1859)

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Appendix

See Figure 2, Figure 3 and Figure 9.

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This thesis investigates the interplay between sense of place and issues of environmental justice in relation to urban densification in Swedish stigmatised neighbourhoods. The results are a contribution to the debate of densification as starter to create sustainable city. It suggests that the merged knowledge from sense of place and environmental justice research provide a greater understanding of how to motivate residents to act collectively to protect, or improve their community and participate in local planning processes.

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