Gender Renovation

A case study analysis of the feminist urban development project #UrbanGirlsMovement discussing gender-transformative urban planning techniques as a means for more equal cities

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Abstract

This thesis is a case study analysis of the feminist urban development project #UrbanGirlsMovement discussing how gender-transformative urban planning techniques impact local girls in the Million Dwellings Program area Fittja south of Stockholm. The thesis draws on a theoretical framework of feminist geography, intersectionality, and territorial stigmatization to analyze narratives from eleven girls participating in #UrbanGirlsMovement. The girls’ narratives reveal that it has been an empowering experience to be part of an urban development process as it has enabled them to recognize their own abilities. By re-evaluating the role of the planner to take on a more facilitating role, the girls shouldered the role of experts. It legitimized the girls’ ideas and designs, enabling them both to recognize and to use their own agency. Additionally, the process of redesigning a familiar place enabled the girls to regenerate the meaning of the urban public space around Fittja to mirror their own subjective spatial identities. The thesis shows that intersectional planning tools that transform, rather than inform, power and spatial oppression are crucial when renewing the Million Dwellings Program of Swedish suburbs. #UrbanGirlsMovement shows that a planning process is more than physical designs, it is as much a tool for enhanced democracy, equality, and justice in cities.

Keywords
#UrbanGirlsMovement, Fittja, gender-transformative urban planning, intersectionality, Million Dwellings Program, participation, territorial stigmatization.
Preface

The spring of 2017 I was an intern at the Swedish independent sustainability think tank Global Utmaning, where I got the task to write a pilot study on feminist urban planning methods for the newly launched initiative #UrbanGirlsMovement. After my internship had ended, #UrbanGirlsMovement was granted funding from Sweden’s Innovation Agency, Vinnova, to be further developed throughout 2018-2019. During the fall of 2018, a first feminist urban innovation hub was launched in the municipality of Botkyrka, South of Stockholm, to create a platform for girls and young women to engage in urban development processes first hand. The data for this master’s thesis has been collected in cooperation with this hub and written as an extension of #UrbanGirlsMovement on behalf of Global Utmaning. However, my involvement in the matter is much more personal. The data I conducted for the pilot study was composed to a report published by Global Utmaning called #UrbanGirlsMovement: From local good examples to global lessons (2017). As a preface to that report I wrote the following:

“'Ohh Baby…’
A middle-aged man leans closely towards my face and whispers “Ohh Baby…”. I have just finished at the gym a Tuesday evening and people on their way home from work are swarming around us. The moment passes by quicker than my mind is able to process the situation, but a feeling of discomfort rises within me. I am trying to understand this subtle feeling and realize that it is neither fear nor anger, it is disappointment. “Not again!” I keep thinking over and over again. I rattle almost frantically every word I wish I had said to that man, but could not, since the shock unconsciously made me walk away instantly. That same weekend someone touches me inappropriate in a bar, but I do not bother telling the person off, because it happens too often. A few days later, on my way to work, I hear a “Kss, kss, kss” from a male cyclist passing by. Not even at 8 AM can I, as a young woman, use the urban public space of my city without receiving condescending comments due to my very existence.

Anneroth et al 2017: 6 [translated by me]

Writing this made me realize how close I was to the issue. Catcalling, which is a common form of street harassment, might seem like a mild experience, but it has changed how I perceive the urban public space around me. As a 25 years old Swede in the midst of urban Stockholm, I am constantly aware about my surroundings. No matter where I am, no matter what day of the week, and no matter what time of the day, I know that when I enter the urban public space men might take advantage of me. I have white skin and heritage from upper class Swedish society, giving me social and cultural capital to avert many societal sanctions I would have experienced otherwise. But when I use the urban public space I am omitted to the social structures and dominated hierarchal structures dictating that specific space, highlighting my gender and submerging my existence to a social category I did not chose. I know that this subjective understanding of the urban public space in Stockholm is not unique, and that many of my fellow women have greater struggles than I do when using the urban public space. Nonetheless, with first-hand experience from street harassment and the feeling of constantly needing to consider when and where I would be safe, I write this thesis from the bottom of my heart. May this be a contribution to the planning discourse to ensure more equal and just cities; where everyone, no matter social categorization, can feel included, welcomed and prioritized equally. I dare to dream of cities for all.

So, one million thanks to the eleven girls who made this thesis possible, due to them we are one step closer.

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1 Caroline Wrangsten, master’s student in cultural geography specializing in environmental social sciences at Stockholm university, also wrote her master’s thesis the spring term 2019 on behalf of Global Utmaning. She, however, focused her analysis on the physical design proposals by the girls in #UrbanGirlsMovement while I have focused on the process and its impact on the girls socially. We have attended the workshops together but not collaborated during our thesis writing process.
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1.0 Introduction

The Swedish contemporary urban planning and policy is rooted in modernistic and positivistic ideologies, constantly seeking the *optimal* or *ideal* city (Bradley et al. 2005: 20). But what is the ideal city? And who has the power to determine what is ideal? Ideal for whom? The societal relevance of the ideas inherent in Swedish planning practice and institutions are questionable. Society has changed drastically over the last decades, altering both our physical use of space and our symbolic understanding of the world. Traditional power structures and the hierarchal realms of social categorizations of gender, age, ethnicity, sexuality, etc. are being questioned and a greater diversity is both acknowledged and acceptable. However, the architectural and city-planning institutions of Sweden have according to scholars failed to keep up with the pace of societal change (Bradley et al. 2005:14). Consequently, the planning practice hails the development of a more equal and just world. As long as our cities are not developed through an equal process, with a clear goal of creating equal spaces, equality may not be achieved. Cities can be seen as spatial and organizational expressions of social relations, based as much on power and conflict as on cooperation and consensus. Suggesting that when certain societal groups, such as women, children and immigrants, are marginalized to the periphery of urbanization agency, they are also marginalized in societal terms (Sandberg and Rönnholm 2016).

Stockholm is expanding by the minute. We have a current housing crisis that scholars have compared to the crisis that lead to the Million Dwellings Program initiative in the 1960s (Molina 2018). The Million Dwellings Program is one of the world’s grandest public housing projects built in Sweden between 1965-1975 on the principle of actualizing housing for all and creating the ideal city. Unfortunately, the suburban Million Dwellings Program areas around Stockholm are nowadays often characterized by unemployment, poverty and social welfare dependency. A dream of the ideal city eventuated to segregated areas with less access to societal resources than the rest of Stockholm. Scholars have for decades researched how this could be, I want to research how this may be prevented in the future. Fifty years later, in 2019, Stockholm are once again experiencing a housing crisis, not only in terms of housing shortage, but with around 50% of the Million Dwellings Program housing units in dire need of refurbishment. Åsa Dahlen (2016) has in the report ‘From fractured to united city: Planning for social sustainability’ discussed the planning practice’s responsibility for a social sustainable Stockholm. She states that, if not done right, this rapid expansion may lead to a reproduction of existing challenges, leading to that vulnerable areas may be further stigmatized. Planners have a great responsibility to address these challenges and propose priorities. We have the possibility to improve places of the Million Dwellings Program that are currently marginalized and largely neglected or perceived as unsafe. We need to use this as an opportunity to create more equal cities and challenge our established urban development practices. (c.f. Ibid) We need to ask ourselves: How do we secure a just renovation of these neighborhoods without segmenting the relation between the inner city and these suburbs even more? And how may the planning practice advocate equality, diversity and justice that enables an inclusive society where structural oppression are minimized?

To seek answers, I have been inspired by the sustainability think tank Global Utmaning’s project #UrbanGirlsMovement, a feminist urban development initiative exploring this conundrum. The project highlights girls and young women in underprivileged areas around Stockholm to be a societial group severely and adversely affected by an unequal distribution of resources, oppression, and social exclusion. #UrbanGirlsMovement proposes that the
participatory urban development methodology, *feminist urban development*, could be a tool to mitigate the struggles of girls and young women in rapidly urbanizing, underprivileged areas in Stockholm. The actual meaning of feminist urban development is not accentuated by the think tank, but it will in this thesis be understood as a unification of theoretical models and methods of *gender-transformative urban planning, feminist urban theory* and *genderation*. Hence, feminist urban development is best understood as a toolbox for identifying and redefining issues of democracy, gender equality, equity, and justice in the planning process of city spaces. In this thesis, the methodology is explained and studied through the local context of the suburb Fittja in the Stockholm region. In Fittja, #UrbanGirlsMovement puts young women from the local community in the forefront of urban development and gives them design tools to re-develop Fittja main square from their own perspectives. The objective of #UrbanGirlsMovement is to observe how urban planning processes can act as a tool to identify, redefine and overcome norm barriers and social boundaries making girls and young women one of the most vulnerable groups when using the urban public space.

#UrbanGirlsMovement will be used as a case study to analyze and comprehend how local girls’ inclusion in urban development processes interlink with their perception, use, and understanding of the urban public space they inhabit. #UrbanGirlsMovement is an example of how the planning practice in Sweden has the potential to be progressive and adjust to a changing society, with new needs and new ideals.

Through using #UrbanGirlsMovement as an exemplifying case, this thesis is an academic contribution to (1) the impact of planning policies and practices in the identification processes of young women inhabiting an area classified as especially vulnerable and (2) the need for intersectional planning tools that transform, rather than inform, power and spatial oppression when renewing the Million Dwellings Program of Swedish suburbs, to promote a gender equal built environment.
2.0 Background

To whom does the city belong? And who has the right to use it? Even if the regular claim is that the city belongs to all its inhabitants, it is filled with barriers, both visible and invisible. The contemporary city in many ways mirrors a society of oppression and exclusion, reminding us of past norms and values founded in boundaries between the sexes (c.f. Jarvis et al 2009; Larson and Jalakas 2008; Rendell et al 2000; etc.). In this chapter, I will highlight key academic paradigms that have shaped our understanding of the relationship between gender and urban open space, with specific focus on planning, execution, and long-term effects of the Million Dwellings Program in Sweden. My research has not appeared in a vacuum but is both informed and influenced by previous research and literature, and will, as most social research, contribute to what already exists (c.f. Bryman 2012:5). I will begin with a general historical retrospect of gender analysis in urban planning and development and move on to a discussion concerning gender mainstreaming and gender transformation as tools to influence the planning discourse to become more gender aware and inclusive. This discussion will be the foundational background leading up to the aim of my research and the selected research questions.

2.1 The Man-Made Million Dwellings Program: The Synthesis of the Issue

Gender analysis of the urban built environment has a history reaching from the mid 1900s. Planning theory has been heavily criticized for ignoring gender perspectives and lived experiences, resulting in an unequal and unjust planning practice. Throughout the course of the 20th century, the structure of urban life in Western societies changed dramatically. During this so-called subtle revolution, women began to enter the workforce at large scale, an event of the same magnitude as the industrial revolution a century earlier. The cities sought economic advantages of the increasing urbanization of double income families. Unfortunately, the sudden change in habits, movements, needs, and wants of women could not be met by the contemporary urban structures and services (Hayden, 1980: 171; Roistacher and Spratlin Young, 1980: 220f). Dolores Hayden (1980) was one of the first to recognize how cities are inherently sexist in a capitalist landscape since they constricted women who moved from the private sphere of the home to the public sphere of the workplace. Cities had namely been designed for the principle of the homebound/homemaking woman (Ibid.). Helen Jarvis with Paula Kantor and Jonathan Cloke amplify this idea in their book Cities and Gender (2009) by stating:

“The early European and North American cities were constructed to a large extent through clear architectural distinctions between residential areas and sites of industry, commerce and government. Residential areas were spatially separated, designed for (not by) women as the domain in which ‘respectable women’ were expected to display feminine skills of home-making – subject to the authority of the husband”

Jarvis et al 2009: 133

This view of the city as gendered has later been applied to a Swedish context, not the least when analyzing the long-term effects of the Million Dwellings Program. In the era following World War II, the national urbanization and international migration in large scale to the bigger cities in Sweden resulted in a major housing crisis. Low income worker families lived crowded in small housing, without access to running water or sanitation. Swedish authorities considered it to be a national health hazard and solved the crisis by launching the biggest public housing project in the world, what later came to be called the Million Dwellings Program. The Million Dwellings Program was an initiative to build one million housing units over the course of ten years between 1965-1975. The project was subsidized by the Swedish government and
promoted as equal housing for all. The areas chosen for the project can be found all over Sweden and have different characteristics; villas, townhouses, but particularly apartments in tower blocks.

The Swedish Human Geographer Irene Molina (2019) has studied the long-term effects of the planning and execution of the Million Dwellings Program in relation to gender, race, and class. Molina describes the modernist planning ideologies that inspired the planning policy and practice of the Million Dwellings Program as patriarchal urban planning (Molina 2019: 38), an ideology also proposed by Daphney Spain (2014) in her explanation of the Post-World War II American city. In the article ‘Gender and Urban Space’, Spain explains that “traditional gender expectations were inscribed on the urban landscape. Feminist scholars view the ‘man-made’ environment as just that: “the material manifestation of a patriarchal society” (Ibid: 585). Even if the Million Dwellings Program achieved its goal of diminishing the housing shortage in Sweden’s major cities, Molina argues that the dominant planning ideologies of the Post-World War II era were a drawback for women’s increasing liberation. Two key aspects of the modernistic ideologies that dominated the Swedish building sector during the construction of the Million Dwellings Program was suburbanization and the traffic separation principle. She explains:

“Most of the housing estates were located in the outskirts of cities, and whereas an easily accessible infrastructure of routes for both private and public traffic was developed mainly for the use of the industrial (male) workers, the women, children and elderly were supposed to stay within or close to the residential areas […] Although the dominant planning ideology was family-friendly, it presupposed a special labor market for women within childcare and elderly care services, local commerce, education and part-time jobs”

Molina 2019: 39

Molina further explicates that despite good intentions, the patriarchal urban planning mechanisms that guided the development of the suburban city centers reinforced hierarchal gender norms and reduced women to the private sphere of the home and local community. Gender relations were so entrenched that urban separation came naturally in the ideal city of the 1960’s (Molina 2019). Which also mirrors the underlying gender relations of the patriarchal capitalist city where men produced goods in the city center, and women produced labor in the urban periphery (Spain 2014: 582). Today, women are overrepresented, and underpaid, in all professions mentioned by Molina (2019). Additionally, Human Geographer Roger Andersson (2017) explains that the processes of urban residential planning that dominated the Million Dwellings Program contributed to increased segregation. There was an investment redirection shortly after the Million Dwellings Program was completed towards the top segment of the housing market leading to spatial polarization between centers and their peripheries. Andersson concludes that “socio-economic and ethnic differences grew, gentrification of certain neighbourhoods (sic.) increased, housing shortages and overcrowding increased.” (Ibid: 3) Hence, spatial planning is highly affected by contemporary norms and values which determine the inhabitants’ life, being, and movements within the city, as Sandberg and Rönnholm (2016), among others, have established.

As in Molina’s (2018) research, emphasis in previous analysis of the gendered city has been put on urban land-use patterns and transportation systems. For example by Clara Greed (2019) in the article ‘Are we still not there yet? Moving further along the gender highway’. Greed (2019: 29) explains that the separation of urban land use with detached home and work localities have caused unsustainable transportation patterns. So-called zoning is a car-dominated urban infrastructure where land use areas of different sorts are placed with great distances between
each other, making owning a motor vehicle a fundamental requirement. Greed (2019: 28) calls this “the unsustainable city of man”. Globally, a vast majority of car owners are men (in Sweden, only 28% of car owners are women [Trafikanalys 2019]), hence, by giving priority to cars in a city space, urban planners priorities the needs of men over the needs of women, children, and elderly. This creates a power asymmetry between users of urban open spaces, that hinders freedom of movement to those not owning a car (Anneroth et al. 2017). Together with Dory Reeves, Greed (2005) has co-written the article ‘Mainstreaming equality into strategic spatial policy making: are town planners losing sight of gender?’ where they address and challenge current assumptions about land-use zoning. A city of short distances with mixt land-use and multiple centers are, according to Reeves and Greed (2005), more suitable and just. This approach is advocated as “the city of everyday life” (Ibid: 1060). They further argue that this type of structural changes in urban form would benefit men to, as gender roles are changing and women’s prescribed role as primary carers of children and elderly is being challenged and transformed.

In summary, based on the experiences mentioned in this section, it is clear that traditional gender relations and expectation have materialized through planning policy that has determined the built environment, thereby reproducing the gender contract over generations. One explanation for why hierarchal and oppressive gender norms have been built into the very walls of our cities is because urban planning as a profession have been dominated by a homogenous societal group, i.e. middle-aged white males, taking others’ lived and affective experiences of urban space into slight consideration (Snyder 1995: 103f). Hence, to broaden perspectives of urban space, a wider range of experiences must be integrated into spatial planning processes. To this I now turn.

2.2 Gender Mainstreaming and the Awake of Equal Urban Planning

Criticism of the planning discourse started a shift towards a more collaborative and communicative approach to planning, where citizen participation has become a foundational principle. Several strategies of addressing these questions have carried out on a policy level, for example by implementing gender mainstreaming. Greed (2006) has in her work with urban gender issues developed a Gender Mainstream Toolkit in the context of the United Kingdom. The toolkit draws on values regarding gender roles and the gendered use of public space. Greed identifies that the built environment has a gendered nature and that women have long struggled to combine their work and ascribed role as carers because of it and that gender mainstreaming might be a solution. Gender mainstreaming applied through planning may be understood as a “process whereby gender issues, relations, power differentials and identities are taken into account within all stages and aspects of the plan-making process” (Greed 2006: 268). Hence, gender mainstreaming is a concept that takes the differing lives of men and women into consideration, widening the perspective of equality in urban planning. Planners are required to review land use patterns and development necessities for each target group and shape the city according to both needs (Greed and Reeves 2005: 1061). 002). Gender mainstreaming is recognized and regulated by EU policy since 1997 by the Amsterdam Treaty (European Communities 1997: 24).

Gender mainstreaming is one of many tools used in urban policy and planning to advocate political matters. According to Greed (2019), amongst other scholars, urban planning is a political tool and should be used as one. She clarifies in the following statement that questioning contemporary planning policies is a matter of power, representation and democracy:
“(…) the deeper constraints that result in the lack of political power and policy-making influence amongst so-called minority groups in our society, including women, children and the elderly: who together actually make up the majority of society. Thus, they have taken the debate into the realms of power in society and have drawn upon issues of democracy and representation”

Greed 2019: 28

2.3 Equality in Swedish Urban Policy and Planning

According to international regulation, Sweden have implemented several policies regarding gender equality. Sweden is advanced in regard to creating policies of inclusion and participation in several areas of society. For example, in 2014, the Swedish Prime Minister announced that during the upcoming four years, gender equality would be a top priority and Sweden would have “the world’s first feminist government” (Government offices of Sweden 2018). Anita Larsson (2006) identifies in the article ‘From equal opportunities to gender awareness in strategic spatial planning - Reflections based on Swedish experiences’ that even if gender awareness in Swedish policy development has been progressive, it has not reached spatial planning. However, some measurements have been made. According to the Swedish Planning and Building Act, developers are compelled to consult residents in an area subject for renovation, although there are no directives on how or when in the process. Boverket, the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning, (2018a) encourages actors in the building sector to include residents of an area subject to development at an early stage in the planning process. Citizen engagement is in line with several national and international agendas for sustainable development, such as the 2030 Agenda, New Urban Agenda, The Paris Agreement, and The UN Convention on the Rights of Child. The 2030 Agenda states clearly in sustainable development goal 11; “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”; that “By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries” (United Nations Knowledge Platform 2016). Apart from international goals, Sweden have additional national targets of equality between men and women as well as a political goal to include youth in governmental decisions and initiatives that affect young people’s lives. There are several other social benefits to citizen engagement that have been identified by Boverket (2018b). Citizen engagement builds trust which increase social cohesion, social networking and being heard has positive effects in public health.

In 2010, Boverket published an inspirational guide for all actors in the planning industry, both public and private, to recall gender issues specifically in urban planning and develop tools for gender mainstreaming. The guide pressed the issue of gender equal planning and highlighted several governmental goals of equality undertaken on a national level. However, in regard to policies, Greed (2019: 26) points out that most policies in general are too abstract to apply to citizens’ everyday lives and access to the city. Gender needs to be problematized and used essentially to address the transformative goals of participatory development. Additional experimental ideas of implementing a more just planning practice have been done by Boverket over the past years. 2015, Boverket launched an action plan for redeveloping the Million Dwellings Program. The report is intended for real estate developers and discusses the value of cultural planning as a renovation strategy. Cultural planning is understood as a method to accommodate residents view of an area and utilize social, cultural and place making values already in place in an area, something of high importance when renovating areas of the Million Dwellings Program, such as Fittja. The cultural identity of a place is determined by the people and their traditions, backgrounds, ambitions for the future, meaning making practices, talents etc. This identity may be upholding by the built environment and/or the social components the
space presents. To obtain this sort of information, a participatory planning process with broad citizen engagement is crucial. It is a view of the urban planning practice that is interdisciplinary and in need of new perspectives, such as human geographical. In this sense, cultural planning resembles feminists’ notions of urban planning in many ways, although, no special consideration is taken to gender perspectives in Boverket’s description of cultural planning. Additionally, if cultural planning has been integrated in any planning processes in Sweden is remain unsaid. Boverket (2015: 63) states in a conclusion that “Our image and experience is that additional strategic research and development can and should be done in a national perspective” [my translation]. Conclusively, an awareness of the need for new methods to planning and developing in the Million Dwellings Program is present in Swedish planning policy, just not the tools.

2.4 Gender-Transformative Urban Planning – A Solution?

Even if the planning practice has changed considerably since the modernistic and positivistic paradigm of the Million Dwellings Program, many scholars are not yet satisfied with how a gender perspective should be integrated in urban planning processes (c.f. Beebeejaun 2017; Listerborn 2008; Greed 2006; Cornwall 2003 etc.). For example, as recently as two years ago, Yasminah Beebeejaun wrote in the Journal of Urban Affairs about the inferior use of feminist perspectives in the school of planning:

“Gender remains a neglected focus for theory and practice in shaping cities. Given women’s continuing economic and social marginalization and the prevalence of violence against women, how can this be the case?”

Beebeejaun 2017: 323

Feminist scholars argue that the participatory approach of urban planning in itself is an unequal practice (Listerborn 2008: 61). Andrea Cornwall (2003: 1328f) raises this issue in the article ‘Whose Voices? Whose Choices? Reflections on Gender and Participatory Development’ when asking the question “who participates and who benefits?”

Cornwall (2003: 1330) problematizes the participatory turn when she argues that participatory urban planning processes do not necessarily address concerns of power, which is the underlying spatial issue creating unequal opportunities for men and women in urban realities. Gender is not equivalent to women, but an analytical tool to address the power relations inherent in gender and understand it as a constitutive variable of all social relationships. Cornwall (2003: 1326) signifies that gender awareness in urban planning need to address a transformative process of these power structure, not simply illuminate that they are present in constituting space. She argues that many projects that engage citizen participation, women’s opportunities for decisions making are still limited. This is due to “prejudice embedded in organizational cognitive systems and work cultures” (Ibid: 1332). One of the biggest threats to women engagement is gender assumptions inherent in the planning industry itself. Something Mary Gail Snyder (1995: 99) verified a decade earlier when establishing that “if inequalities and domination continue to result from planning practice, as they so often do, one must examine the theory and methodologies behind that practice, and what is discovered there must be applied”. Snyder advocates that an emancipatory urban planning is needed to master this challenge.

It also matters how gender perspectives are integrated into urban policy and planning. Cornwall (2003) suggests that participatory methods not inherently address issues of gender, creating a gender-blindness in many development projects. Additional complexity is created by practitioners translating a theoretical understanding of gender into actual methods. To address
the different concerns of how gender may be emphasized and integrated throughout all urban planning processes, Sara Ortiz Escalante and Blanca Gutiérrez Valdivia (2015) have developed a method called gender-transformative urban planning. Gender-transformative urban planning differs from gender mainstreaming in that the aim is to question and transform oppressive gender structures rather than just acknowledging them within an urban planning process. Employing a gender perspective in urban planning means seeking to eliminate all types of gender discrimination as well as ensuring everyone a right to the city. The right to the city is described by Tovi Fenster (2005: 219) as “the right to appropriate and completely use urban space in everyday life, as well as the right to participate in decision-making processes related to urban space”. Ortiz Escalante and Gutiérrez Valdivia (2015: 115) articulate that including a gender perspective in urban planning implies “allow[ing] the different facets of people’s everyday life to be prioritized and planned for, with the aim of building neighborhoods and cities that meet everyone’s needs”. Hence, gender perspectives ensure a holistic view of urban space. Without gender perspectives, urban planning processes reproduce, rather than confront, cemented stereotypes of social categorization of gender, age, ethnicity, sexuality etc. This is the aim of Gender-transformative urban planning. Gender-transformative urban planning practices visualizes women’s experiences, activities, movements and responsibilities within a city-space, with special acknowledgement to women’s informally ascribed role as carers. It also acknowledges women as bearers of a sexualized body in the public space and breaks the dichotomy of private/public inherent in urban planning practice. Today, both men and women are part of both the private and urban public spheres, and care work is not inherently ‘female’ or ‘private’. On the contrary, care work is an essential part of both our social and economic systems, hence vital both to sustain the economy and the social structures of everyday lives. In order to address these issues, the foundation of gender-transformative urban planning lies in participation. Participation is seen as a tool to empowerment. Women are experts on their own locality and need to be a central part of the planning process, however:

“An issue which we have frequently encountered is that government departments and city authorities (and other institutions!) often do not understand that applying a gender perspective in projects of urban transformation will benefit not only women and girls, but also other groups who are generally marginalised (sic.) from planning processes. It is a way to begin to include a diversity of experiences and subjectivities”
Ortiz Escalante and Gutiérrez Valdivia 2015: 122

This may be tied to #UrbanGirlsMovement that was initiated with the foundational idea of “build a city for girls, and it will work for everyone” (Anneroth et al. 2017: 8). Ortiz Escalante and Gutiérrez Valdivia confirm this notion, although it this is an idea that needs additional research to be problematized further. However, the theoretical foundation of gender transformative urban planning will be a valuable tool in my research, as it gives a comprehension of holistic eventuation of implementing a gender perspective to urban processes.

2.5 Aim and Research Questions

To address the research shortage experienced by Boverket, and others, several aspects of planning interventions need to be considered. Above all, implementing a gender perspective. A deeper gender analysis with an intersectional perspective of contemporary planning practice and built environment is crucial to loosen the predominant masculinity norms shaping our cities (Listerborn 2007: 4). Only a fraction of the extensive literature of the field is mentioned above, but certain patterns can be distinguished. Previous research establishes that gender affect a user’s understanding and use of a particular space, and that girls and women are disadvantaged
in compared to boys and men in policy and planning of urban public spaces. Although, the research of gendered spaces and how they affect lived experience of girls and young women is in a great extent about girls and young women, not with them. Hence, there is a similar understanding of girls’ ability to create valid scientific knowledge in urban development and planning, as it is in academic research. The common conclusion of previous research is that gendered spaces are problematic and need to be addressed by including girls and young women in the planning process – but little knowledge is produced about how girls want to be included.

The lack of female perspectives and gender awareness in policy and panning have led to a power asymmetry between men and women as users of urban public spaces. Although, research has established this power asymmetry, there is not as much research on actual tools to overthrow these power asymmetries in order to create more equal and just urban public spaces. Especially on how participatory urban development processes that has a clear gender transformative approach may contribute to more symmetrical gender relations in urban public spaces in the long run. This is a research gap I aim to fill through this thesis.

In this thesis, I use #UrbanGirlsMovement as a case study to observe and analyze how urban planning processes can act as a tool to identify, redefine and overcome norm barriers and social boundaries making girls and young women one of the most vulnerable groups when using the urban public space. Hence, the aim of the study is to analyze and comprehend how girl’s lived experience of being included in urban development processes interlink with their perception, use, and understanding of urban public space, using the process set by the project management of #UrbanGirlsMovement in Botkyrka, Sweden, as a case study. The following questions will be addressed:

1. How do the girls participating in #UrbanGirlsMovement describe Fittja and how do they identify with Fittja as a space?
2. How are the girls’ expressed social identities and experiences of Fittja reflected in their design proposals of Fittja main square made during #UrbanGirlsMovement?
3. What in the girls’ narratives may give a comprehension of how being part of a participatory urban development process influence their identity formation processes and understanding of space?
3.0 Theoretical Framework

The academic discipline and theoretic framework this thesis appertain to is foremost Feminist Geography, a sub-discipline of Human Geography that focuses on gender relations as a primary understanding of space. I will in this chapter describe and operationalize the theoretical concepts of gender, power and space, intersectionality, territorial marginalization and feminist urban theory to see how these theories intersect with gender mainstreaming planning policy in practice. As I chose to follow the process of the project #UrbanGirlsMovement, this thesis’ orientation has a deductive tendency, which means that the data collection is an outcome of the chosen theoretical approach. Hence, the theories have as much informed as influenced my research (c.f. Bryman 2012: 25ff).

3.1 Feminist Geography

Feminist geography is related to other gender-oriented disciplines, but with a spatial dimension to the understanding of gender. It is where gender studies and spatial studies intersects. Gender studies is founded on the notion that gender is socially constructed and performed, called gender performativity. Gender performativity is a discursive concept where constructional practices form subjects to perform their “sex” according to normative demands (Butler 2006). The foundation of these performances is the underlying hierarchal order of gender where the man creates the norm and the woman the abnormal. Hence, inherent in the understanding of gender is the power structure between the sexes is socially constructed. To disrupt one’s gender performance results in social sanctions, which creates a continuance of the scheme. Gender is not binary, but the construction of gender is contextual, relational and productive (Butler 2006). Additionally, gender studies respond to the consequences of inhabiting a female sexualized body. Drawing on theoretical concepts presented in anthropologist Mary Douglas’s work Purity and Danger (1966) and philosopher Judith Butler’s Bodies That Matter, on the Discursive Limits of “Sex” (1993) the body is subject to gender as a materiality of sex, thus a social construct in the political discourse of gender performativity. It is highly relevant for me to consider the embodiment of the hierarchal power structure between the sexes as a certain dimension of spatiality experienced by the girls and young women subject to the research.

Feminist geography use this understanding of gender to analyze place and space. Place and space are central theoretical concepts in geographic studies. Place may be understood as a geographically defined location that is given meaning through the concept of space. Space is generally described through a constructivist point of view as something socially produced in relation to human interaction. Space is a conceptual tool geographers use to understand contextual meaning making. A place is both implied as material and meaningful, where the material dimension of place is the actual location and the meaning is produced through the emotional connection people experience in relation to the location, the sense of place. Hence, place and space are essentially related as they constitute each other. (Koops and Galic 2018: 22ff) Space and place will be used in my research to understand how Fittja is constituted both geographically and socially, as they are useful tools to comprehend identity formation processes constituting Fittja as a place.

Hence, feminist geography is built upon theories of gendering space as well as spatializing gender, two important theoretical concepts with a complimentary relationship (Bondi and Rose 2003: 230). Feminist geographers seek knowledge of how society has evolved around the conceptualization of male and female (Forsberg 2003: 11). The common belief of the discipline
is the notion of that space and place act as reproductive tools to gender divisions, hence gender inequality (c.f. Sandberg and Rönnholm 2016). Although, the ambition is not only to highlight gender divisions, but to understand and explain how they constantly reproduce to shape space and place. The gender perspective within the larger discipline of geography has added a new dimension of the organization of space. I.e. how space is systematized around gender relations and how those relations form spatial actions, as well as how an understanding of gender is connected to other forms of differentiating habitus and power relations (Forsberg 2003: 14ff).

All spaces are socially produced, and all human actions have a spatial dimension, hence gender, and other power relations, are built into material spaces (Listerborn 2007: 3). Comprehending the connection between gender and space, i.e. the central approach of feminist geography, is imperative in my research to grasp the complexity of gender relations and how it is constructed and reconstructed in relation to space and the built environment. Also, to understand gender as performed, often through clothes, activities, colors, actions, movements etc. is to understand gender as ever changing and not constant. This is essential to my research as it implies that gender norms can change in accordance to justice and equality of the sexes, i.e. gender norms are not fixed but in continual transformation. I seek to understand and define the essence of human interaction with Fittja both socially and physically in terms of subjective feelings of being in- or out of place.

3.2 Intersectional Spatialities

Comprehending the explicit power dimension of space, spatial gender relations require an intersectional analysis. Intersectionality is a theoretical concept considering the power relations of e.g. gender, age, class, sexuality, and ethnicity to be interconnected. Hence, intersectionality conceptualizes the relationship between certain social categorizations (Valentine 2007). Paulina De Los Reyes and Diana Mulinari (2005: 99) explain that the concept of gender is transformed in the junction of other social categorizations, indicating that there is no homogenous experience of being a man or woman. Additionally, this transformation implies that social categorizations cannot be used as theoretical tools without simultaneously illustrate power relations. The hierarchical order within and between social categorizations reproduces in processes of dominance, where identity attribution and social barriers are central to regulate the accessibility and entitlement to societal recourses (De Los Reyes and Mulinari 2005). Exercise of power is founded in norms which stigmatize, exclude and neutralize subordination (Ibid.).

For a human geographer intersectionality becomes a theoretical tool to illustrate the cruciality of space in subject formation processes, hence, a geographical intersectional analysis adds space as an arena for hierarchal power relations (Valentine 2007: 18). This is particularly relevant when studying socio-economic deprived areas, such as Fittja in Botkyrka. Here, gender identity intersects with age, class, ethnicity, and space creating multiple layers of prejudices against the girls and young women subject to my research.

Intersectionality as a theoretical tool will be operationalized to understand and theorize the complexity and workings of different power relations present in Fittja. Additionally, intersectionality will be used to illustrate how the girls interviewed narrates their experiences of being girls both within and outside of the area, to illuminate how space acts as an arena for oppression and exclusion. This to understand and overcome how norms of marginalization shape and reshape especially gender relations in regard to the built environment. Furthermore, understanding spatial power relations are crucial in participatory planning processes in order to address a transformative urban development that challenge gender structures, not only illuminate them (c.f Listerborn 2008; Cornwall 2003).
3.2.1 When Gender Intersects with Generation

Age, as gender, is a social categorization where societal expectations and demands construct behavior. The social construct of age matter to my research because the girls I have interviewed are between the ages of 16 and 23, meaning they fall under the UN’s definition of youth. The United Nations (2015) describe youth as the period of time when a person is transitioning from childhood to adulthood. This age period implies social expectations and performativity, just like gender categorizations are understood to be performed in relation to social and cultural discourses. Youths are often perceived as inexperienced and immature, and are rarely seen as active agents of society, which exclude them from many decision-making processes (c.f. Ambjörnsson and Jönsson 2010; Mabala 2006). This established view of youth reproduces discourses of young people as not earnest societal members and agents.

Youth is not a homogenous group, and gender, for example, play a vital role in how age is performed and perceived. The aspirations, support functions, and societal opportunities for boys and girls when entering youth is often very different (Mabala 2011: 159). Youth as a concept is gender biased towards young men, leaving young women less acknowledged. This means that young women are positioned in an age category where they are not accepted as neither children, nor authentic women, which exclude them from many opportunities to create life quality. Richard Mabala addresses this societal challenge in his article ‘From HIV Prevention to HIV Protection: Addressing the Vulnerability of Girls and Young Women in Urban Areas’ (2006). He argues that:

“If women are a disempowered majority and young people an invisible majority, girls and young women stand at the interface of gender and generation. They have far less power and resources than older women and are even more invisible than adolescent boys and young men. One area of invisibility is the paucity of data on girls and young women. They have no autonomous place of their own. First, they are subsumed into youth (…) Second, they are subsumed into households”

Mabala 2006: 412f

He conceptualizes this invisibility and disempowerment of girls and young women in the term genderation, which I will use as a tool to understand the intersectional relationship of gender and age. Hence, genderation is a concept theorizing how gender relations are dependent on age categorizations. Even if Mabala’s research and analysis of the relationship between gender and age is diced from an African context, I believe it is applicable to the spatiality of Fittja as well. Mabala (2011: 161) argues that European societies has had a cultural shift in their view of youths after the Second World War as a consequence of the so called “baby boom”. The new generation assimilated positively into the already established population and its cultural values already in place. Mabala (2011) argues that this cultural development, where youth are perceived as an integrated part of the population, has not yet happened in many African cultures, resulting in a repressive rhetoric towards the abilities of the young population. Although the perception of youth differs slightly between an African and European context, there is a common understanding that youths need to play a central role in urban development and must be empowered to participate in its processes, as well as supported to take leadership roles. Mabala concludes that “this can only be done when governments, civil society and donors come to accept that young people are here to stay in towns and that the development of the towns depends on their creativity, intelligence and enthusiasm” (2011: 180). In my research genderation is a useful theoretical concept since it highlights age as a social categorization of power that intersects with gender, undermining girls and young women through multiple power dimensions. The established need of integrating youth in the development stages of urban processes will also help me to understand the dimension of how genderation conceptually is
produced within #UrbanGirlsMovement as a project. Since young girls from the locality of Fittja, and adjacent places, work together with adult professionals in the project.

3.2.2 Class and Ethnicity

The intersectional concept of genderation has more dimension in my research, i.e. class and ethnicity. As spaces can be seen as gendered, they may also be identified to a certain class. Class theory is founded on the notion of capital movement and how power relations are produced and reproduced through capital distribution (Skeggs 2004: 21). Hence, the larger volume of capital, the higher respectability, and therefore class positioning. Apart from capital class positioning also depends on social mobility and individual identity (Ibid.). Class is a complex concept, but theoretically very useful, since an individual’s class position is part of a society’s power structure. Members of various societal classes experience different life opportunities due to uneven resource distribution (Ibid.). The class dimension is vital in my research due to the contextual economic situation that prevail in vulnerable urban areas, such as Fittja. Fittja has less resources to engage in the societal and structural challenges of the urban public space. Class also intersects with gender, age, ethnicity and in this case space which enhances class inequity.

Lastly, ethnicity is a relevant dimension in my research due to the fact that 75,4% of the inhabitants in Fittja are born in Sweden with foreign background, i.e. both parents are of foreign origin (Statistiska Centralbyråns 2017). The heterogeneity of youth lies in the aspects of dichotomies relevant to the context (Mabala 2011). In my interviews the girls positioned themselves as youth in relation to the dichotomies of boy/girl, suburb/inner city, educated/uneeducated, Swede/non-Swede, and above all rich/poor. An understanding of the performativity of social categorizations and how it affects lived experience are vital to my research to comprehend how the girls participating in #UrbanGirlsMovement express being young women using the urban public space in Fittja. Hence, the girls’ narratives will be analyzed by using the terms performativity, genderation and intersectionality – all in relation to the spatiality of Fittja.

3.2.3 Territorial Stigmatization

Intersectionality theorize the power asymmetries between social categorizations and how they intertwine, but do not necessarily include the component of space. To add the component of space in the analysis of power relations within the spatiality of Fittja I have chosen to integrate the theoretical concept of territorial stigmatization into the basis of the intersectional discussion throughout the thesis. Territorial stigmatization was coined by the social anthropologist Loïc Wacquant and theorizes how societal marginalization processes are correlated to space and spatialities. The theoretical framework of territorial stigmatization is developed from the socialist Erwin Goffman’s theoretical concept of stigmata (Waquant 2007: 67). According to Goffman (1963: 4f) a person is devalued through a social categorization scheme of ‘blemishes of individual character’, ‘abominations of the body’ and impressions of ‘race, nation and religion’. Hence, an early form of intersectionality. Waquant argues that, like the stigmata identified by Goffman, a person’s territorial inhabitation is also a variable of devaluation. The phenomenon of territorial stigmatization is present in every metropolis of the West where one or several housing areas are reserved for the urban outcast. These areas are often recognized and known as places with an alternative societal structure of criminality, corruption, and negligence (Waquant 2008: 67). Waquant exemplifies this through the suburban area Tensta north of Stockholm, Sweden, which is an area with numerous similarities to Fittja. Both Tensta and Fittja are areas classified as especially vulnerable areas by the Swedish Police, i.e. areas
underprioritized by political reforms and where high criminal activity and extremism can be identified (Underrättelseenheten 2017). Consequently, what the Swedish Police classifies as an especially vulnerable area may be correlated with what Waquant argues are areas subject to territorial stigmatization. However, important to note is that Waquant contends the following:

“Whether or not these areas are in fact dilapidated and dangerous, and their population composed essentially of poor people, minorities and foreigners, matters little in the end: the prejudicial belief that they are suffices to set off socially noxious consequences”

Waquant 2007: 68

Hence, inhabiting a territorial stigmatized area have various effects on identity formation processes. Stigmatized areas are produced through societal and medial discourses that diminish the inhabitants of the area, rising uncertainty and fear both from the outside and within the area. Stigmatization processes produces and reproduces stereotypical notions of an area and its inhabitants.

Territorial stigmatization will be operationalized in combination with an intersectional analysis of the girls’ narratives to understand how inhabiting a stigmatized area form their identities and understanding of space, which is vital for my research in relation to how they experience and create meaning from participating in an urban development process such as #UrbanGirls-Movement. In the end, power in any form comes down to “someone being able to get another to do something that the other would not otherwise do” (Koops and Galic 2017: 27). That does not solely mean using physical force but include limiting others space of decision-making through for example agenda-setting. As well as using mechanisms of cultural, institutional or architectural practices that have disciplining effects (Ibid.). The social production of public place and space validates how these mechanisms are part of power relations making these theoretical concepts of primary importance to my research.

3.2.4 Identity formation processes

Intersectional understandings of space are closely related to identity formation processes. However, space and identity formation processes cannot be correlated unproblematically. Spatial identities are co-produced when people come to identify with a space while at the same time being shaped by their ambient environments. It is important to understand identities in continual transformation and not as totalities (Cupers 2005: 732). Cupers (2005: 736) explains identity formation processes as the following “subjects are multiplicities; everyone represents more than one identity; class gender and race disrupt and recombine”. Hence identity formation processes need to be analyzed and comprehended in intersectional terms. Identity formation processes are in this thesis understood as the intersectional processes shaping the girls subject to my research’s ideas of the self and the community in Fittja.

3.3 Feminist Urban Theory

Introducing the intersectional understanding of power relations into planning theory has led to the emergence of feminist urban theory. Feminist urban theory is a counter-discourse to mainstream urban theory that arose from a feminist understanding of space. Mary Gail Snyder argues in the article ‘Feminist Theory and Planning Theory: Lessons from Feminist Epistemologies’ (1995: 103) that planning theory can be positively renovated through feminist theory, making it “critical, emancipatory, and conscious of gender and other differences”. Hence, feminist theory highlights an intersectional understanding of social relationships as a variable of planning knowledge and practice. Snyder (1995: 98ff) argues that Feminist theory
challenges the inherent principles of planning theory in many ways, which may be understood through the hierarchal dichotomies of private/public, expert knowledge/lived experience, theory/practice. Thus, it reveals a discussion about the right to the city, citizen participation and the role of the planner. All of which are considered to be conceptual barriers of planning theory in order to enable an emancipatory planning practice (Snyder 1995: 100), as well as essential theoretical concepts of my research.

The duality of expert knowledge and lived experience is especially useful when analyzing the girls’ narratives about participating in #UrbanGirlsMovement. #UrbanGirlsMovement is a project where experts in the field of urban development and planning come together with young girls living in the local community of a disadvantaged neighborhood. Urban planning is based on the principle that scientific and technical knowledge grants greater authority, legitimacy and credibility over personal and lived experience (Ibid.). This is a view challenged during the process of #UrbanGirlsMovement which makes the methodological standpoint of feminist urban theory exceptionally significant to my research. Feminist urban theory is my entry point to comprehending the methodological standpoints forming my research. To this I now turn.
4.0 Research Design

4.1 Methodological Standpoint

Feminist research presuppose an epistemological perspective of social categories as gendered, which determine how the world is understood and perceived by various subjects (Listerborn 2008). Feminist scholars recognize not only women’s voices as absolute knowledge, but also consider the experience of gender as part of social relations and identity. Hence, gender influence the subjects’ individual understanding of society. This epistemological standpoint will shape the result of my research due to my methodological orientation. To reach the stated aim of my thesis, I need to gain in-depth understanding of the girls’ and young women’s experiences when using the urban public space in and around Fittja main square in Botkyrka, as well as their subjecting experiences of being part of the participatory process of the project #UrbanGirlsMovement. This is vital in order to understand how the girls’ and young women use the space and what it means to them. In order to gain this specific knowledge, I will mainly use qualitative research as my methodological orientation. Qualitative research is relevant to my research aim because it is a tool to distinguish the complexity and construction of meaning in everyday life of the girls’ subject to the research. The foundation of qualitative research lies in the ontological assumption of subjectivity, highlighting the importance of local knowledge to gain insights of spatial social structures, which is my aim in Fittja (c.f. Delyser et al. 2010).

Additionally, geography as an academic field is based on the ontological insight that knowing is un-foundational and do not reside in an essence but is ever-changing. This ontological insight influences the view of knowledge production, the epistemological foundation, as well (c.f. Coop 2010: 25ff). The qualitative approach in human geography explore the situated nature of meaning, symbols, values, feelings and knowledge, addressed through abductive reasoning rather than inductive reasoning, that is applied within quantitative research. The crucial phase in abduction is providing a scientific interpretation of the social reality described through the participants’ perspective, and that scientific accounts sprung from the research are founded in the participants’ world views, rather than the researcher’s (Bryman 2012: 401).

Hence, qualitative research provides an opportunity for me to give a voice to the girls and young women of Botkyrka. Additionally, through a feminist geography framework, it is a tool to emphasize social exploitation mechanisms within society, embedded in social categorizations of gender, age, class, and ethnicity, as well as space, which makes qualitative research especially in line with my theoretical framework of power and intersectional spatialities. It will give me an opportunity to analyze and comprehend situated social identities and power relations that prevail within my chosen scope of research (c.f. Bryman 2012).

Moreover, these methodological and epistemological stances are especially interesting in the relation to feminist approaches to planning and urban development. Apart from the hierachical duality of man/woman, the hierachical duality of expert knowledge/lived experience plays a vital role in knowledge production within the discourse of my research (c.f. Listerborn 2008: 62; Cope 2002: 45; Snyder 1995: 100). Snyder (1995) states that the planning discourse is founded in a notion that planning expertise is absolute knowledge, independent of locality or identity of the space. Hearing the public’s experiences have traditionally been considered irrational and biased by emotions, hence experience-based knowledge has not been accepted as real knowledge. Additionally, the more marginalized the individuals are, in terms of social identity and socioeconomic status, the less valued are their experiences in the eyes of the experts.
(Listerborn 2008: 63). Feminist theorists, no matter if they operate within the planning discourse or not, recognize the importance of involving more voices and kinds of knowledge that may also be subjective, such as sentiment and experience (Snyder 1995: 101; Cope 2002: 45). Which would broaden ontological stances within various research fields. Therefore, I have adopted the feminist discourse of valuing the voices of the marginalized. My knowledge production will be founded in the subjective experiences, sentiments, and understandings of the girls and young women taking part of #UrbanGirlsMovement in Fittja.

4.2 Research Strategies
To produce knowledge about the girls’ own perspectives and experiences from using the urban public space around Fittja main square, within the perspective of feminist geography methodology and epistemology, I have used a case study design as my research strategy. #UrbanGirlsMovement Botkyrka is seen as an experimental case study in which data collection has been obtained through the use of qualitative interviews, in combination with observation, participant observation, and analysis of workshop material. Through this multi-method approach I will gain different and complementary knowledge of social life, producing a more nuanced data set in the process. Additionally, for my qualitative research to be a reliable and valid production of knowledge, I have needed to be fully aware of my own involvement in the research field. To understand my own impact on the field, reflexivity in the context of representation, knowledge production and evaluation is needed (c.f. Coop 2010). It is one of the foundational pillars in producing valid and reliable qualitative knowledge. To be reflexive entails to critically reflect upon the implications of the social, cultural and political context of the researcher and what biases, values, and knowledge those capitals bring to the field (c.f. Bryman 2012). I reflexively discuss my involvement in the field throughout this section, in relation to the chosen research and data collection strategies.

4.2.1 Case Study Research
Simons (2014: 21) defines a case study as “an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project”. In other words, a case study considers an object of interest in itself, and the researcher provides a comprehensive illustration of it (Bryman 2012: 69). Using case study research is suitable when wanting to achieve a detailed and thorough examination of a particular phenomenon. Case study research approaches a single phenomenon through multiply perspectives and angles, enabling a holistic and contextualized understanding of the researched. In a human geography context, a case study design is particularly relevant as it enables me to study the particular in order to understand a bigger picture, which is the common research technique within the field (c.f. Forsberg 2003: 9).

4.2.1.1 My Case: #UrbanGirlsMovement
The project that will act as my case is #UrbanGirlsMovement in Botkyrka. #UrbanGirlsMovement is an initiative that launched in the beginning of 2017 by the Swedish independent think tank Global Utmaning. Global Utmaning is a non-profit organization working with advocating and facilitating a transformation to a sustainable future within the ecological, economic and social systems (Global Utmaning, n.d.). The rationale behind the initiative was to investigate how using feminist urban development techniques in vulnerable areas may improve living condition for all societal groupings. #UrbanGirlsMovement identifies girls and young women in vulnerable urban areas as the societal group most often ignored in urban development processes, systematizing oppression and exclusion from urban space and place. Based on this, #UrbanGirlsMovement was initiated on the hypothesis cities planned for girls, work for everyone and is connected to United Nation’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable
Development (Anneroth et al. 2017, United Nations General Assembly 2015). Even though this hypothesis is not yet fully tested, the initiative highlights its probability and potential in such a claim. The initiative wants to inspire other actors in the building sector and increase knowledge of how feminist urban development can be applied in practice. The project #UrbanGirlsMovement in Botkyrka was introduced in the fall of 2017 as an operationalization of the foundational idea behind the initiative and the hypothesis is now tested in an actual city development project. The project is led by the think tank Global Utmaning in partnership with Botkyrka municipality, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat), Mistra Urban Futures and teach company Itteam.

In addition to the close collaboration with Botkyrka municipality, #UrbanGirlsMovement teamed up with the local NGO Changers Hub. Changers Hub works with democratizing success and empowerment of young people in Botkyrka. As Changers Hub has the local knowledge Global Utmaning lack and the social and cultural connection to the young population of Botkyrka that the municipality lack, the NGO has been in charge of finding and hiring girls to participate in the initiative. Hence, important to note is that the girls have been through a hiring process before they became part of #UrbanGirlsMovement and are paid by Global Utmaning. Listerborn (2007: 65) explains that it is of primary importance that planners and local politicians wanting to engage citizens in a collaborative process need to engage local people to act as a social node within the neighborhood. Changers Hub has been this node. Without the engagement of Changers Hub, it might have been hard for Botkyrka municipality and Global Utmaning to find girls who wanted to participate in the project, hence Changers Hub has had a great impact on the project’s outcome. Additionally, Changers Hub has had representatives present on every workshop, which created stability and a perceived safety amongst the girls, especially the younger ones. Belle, Kenza and Lucy, the youngest girls I interviewed, explained that they sought out help and comfort with Changer Hub’s representatives during the first workshops.

Through six workshops over the course of one year, 2018–2019, the girls had mandate to identify challenges, brainstorm solutions, and visualize their ideas. To finalize the project the girls pitched their proposals for redesigning Fittja main square to decision-makers within the municipality that possess the power of implementation. The basis of involving local girls in urban development processes has been to promote urban development targeting larger societal services and opportunities, i.e. access to education and employment, sanitation, public health, and security (Anneroth et al. 2017). Consequently, the objective for the project is to elaborate new methods for urban development, with a focus on integrating feminist perspectives into urban development processes, that can originate from the locality of Botkyrka to generalized and integrated knowledge in the contemporary planning discourse regionally, nationally and eventually globally (Ibid.). This thesis uses #UrbanGirlsMovement in Botkyrka as a case to evaluate how the girls participating in the project have experienced being part of the process, in order to assess what aspects of the process used during #UrbanGirlsMovement may be generalized to a larger context, and what aspects that may not.

#UrbanGirlsMovement falls into the category of case studies called exemplifying case for two reasons: firstly, it embodies how to work with girls and young women in participatory urban development processes, that may be derived to a broader context of cases in the same category; and secondly, it allows me to observe significant social processes within my scope of my research (c.f. Bryman 2012: 70). However, #UrbanGirlsMovement also has the properties of a unique, or extreme, case due to the rarity of segregated projects focusing on girls and young women solely in urban development processes. Through using #UrbanGirlsMovement for a
case study, I aim to give the project a voice through its participants. Therefore, the case is situated within the methodological framework of constructivism, where I am interested in comprehending how #UrbanGirlsMovement is perceived by its participants and how their understandings of the case are constructed/co-constructed during the process.

4.2.1.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Case Study Research

The advantages of case study research are several. What applies most significantly to my research is that case studies may be conducted over a longer period of time, as in the case of #UrbanGirlsMovement. This thesis is a result of research over a period of 10 months, from September 2018 to June 2019. Additionally, case study research is flexible in its approach to the field and is maximized through the use of mixed methods, which enables the researcher to reveal the complexity and underlying social components of the case in focus (Simons 2014: 6). This is also in line with my methodological standpoints, hence, in my data collecting process I have used qualitative interviews, observation, participatory observation, and analysis of workshop material. Qualitative research of this kind makes it possible for the participants to shape and engage in the research process, thereby contributing considerably to knowledge generation of the case (Ibid.). Simons (2014: 23) indicates that this is “a political and epistemological point. It signals a potential shift in the power base of who controls knowledge and recognizes the importance of co-constructing perceived reality through the relationships and joint understandings we create in the field”.

This subjectivity that is inevitable through qualitative methodologies, and the implications of me as a researcher being the primary tool of data gathering, have been important for me to reflect on extensively. Especially for me as I am an outsider to the field. Using #UrbanGirls-Movement as a case has been vital for me to get access to the field, hence mitigated possible negative implications of my outsider position. Due to social difficulties with segregation, criminal networks and parallel societal structures identified in Fittja by the Swedish police, this research field might have been a closed setting for me to investigate without the milieu and relevance created by Global Utmaning and #UrbanGirlsMovement. Under other circumstances I would have needed to negotiate my entree to the field with local organizations or the municipality of Botkyrka. Hence, through using #UrbanGirlsMovement as a case study, it simultaneously acts as my sponsor to the field. Conducting observations and interviews within the framework of #UrbanGirlsMovement have given my research legitimacy and allowed me to be involved and infiltrate a social world that otherwise might have been sensitive to outsiders (c.f. Bryman 2012: 494). Nevertheless, even though Global Utmaning been key for me to access the field, it has also induced limitation for my research. As a contributor to knowledge for Global Utmaning as an organization might have shielded me from certain information in the field.

However, case study research that only portrays one single case has often been subject to criticism (Bryman 2012). The reason I have chosen to use only #UrbanGirlsMovement as a case is because it assembles the complex social processes of participatory design methods with girls and young women from vulnerable areas, which I have not found in any other urban development project at this given time in Stockholm. Additionally, I have had access to this case due to my personal connections to the think tank Global Utmaning, as I have worked for them before. Another potential limitation surfaces in regard to the creation of generalizable conclusions. Simons (2014: 19f) argues, however, that concepts and processes may be generalizable from single case research. That means that concepts and processes identified within the context of the case may have equal significance in other similar cases, even if the contexts differ. Henceforth, it is not the content that generalizes but the concept or process.
Simons clarifies by stating that “it is possible to identify a significant process in one case (or several cases) that is transferable to other contexts, irrespective of the precise content and contexts of those other cases” (2014: 20). To generalize parts of the process or concepts used in the project #UrbanGirlsMovement indicate the cognitive understandings of the qualitative interpretations of the study, which is one of my objectives with this case study. However, one might argue that the justification of case study research is not in its generalizability, but in its particularization, hence, the real insights derivable from case study research is the in-depth knowledge of the particular (Simons 2014: 20).

4.3 Data Collection Strategies

To develop a nuanced comprehension of #UrbanGirlsMovement and its social processes, I have chosen to look at the case by using multiple data collection strategies. I have wanted to achieve a thorough description of the case through the perspective of the girls’ participating in the project, hence, I have used qualitative methods of interviews, observations, participatory observations, as well as analysis of workshop materials.

4.3.1 Qualitative Interviews

I have used qualitative interviews in various forms (one-to-one interviews and group interviews) to comprehend how the world is constituted from the girls’ perspective. The method enables me to approach the girls as subjects who actively participate in meaning making, rather than objects controlled by an overall social structure (Birkenmann and Kvale 2015). This constructivist ontological assumption is a reason for the methods’ vast possibilities to create new and distinctive data sets. Research interviews can be described as professional conversations that have a structure and a purpose, where knowledge is produced in synergy with the interview participants. Hence, there is a dual aspect of the interviewing scene where emphasis needs to be on both the personal interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee, and the knowledge produced through that interaction (Ibid: 4f).

The interviews have been semi-structured or unstructured with open ended questions and active listening in order for my interviewees to steer the conversation. The advantages of unstructured interviews are numerous. Revealing the perspectives of the study subjects sincerely might increase through keeping a minimum, more flexible, structure (Bryman 2012: 403). Although, to obtain maximal outcome from the interviews, it is required by the interviewer to use active listening. Through paying attention to the silences, and analyze their meanings, the underlying meanings of the narratives may be revealed. Additionally, by inviting the interviewee to engage in the research by telling their story and reflect on issues often have a self-evaluating and learning effect for the interviewee, as well as for the audience of the research. This also opens up for a dialogue between the interviewer and the interviewee, making the atmosphere more laidback which may increase the interviewees’ perceived feelings of safety and belonging. (Simons 2014: 12) The interview questions can be found in Appendix 1.

4.3.1.1 Power Asymmetries in Interview Research

There lies a delicate craftsmanship in interviewing. The produced knowledge will be contingent of the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee, a relationship that is often argued to be a product of complex social power relations, which I have needed to be aware of (Birkenmann and Kvale 2015). The power asymmetry in an interview originates from the researcher’s control of the situation, and authority to form the conversation to suit his or her own research objectives (Ibid: 20). Birkenmann and Kvale (2015: 38) explain that power is
inherent in any form of relationship, and power acknowledgement is more relevant than power elimination. There are power asymmetries between me and my interviewees as I am an authority both in my position as a researcher and as part of Global Utmaning’s workforce. In reaction to this dominance, the interviewee might suppress information, intervening with the knowledge outcome. Hence, conducting this research as a commitment to Global Utmaning might have induced limitations to my research. I have wanted to know how the girls perceive a space and how they feel and think when accessing it, not how they believe they should feel or think depending on me or other social conventions shaping their narratives.

Additionally, the power asymmetries between me and my interviewees are greater than me only being an authority since I also have a greater social capital in normative terms. This due to power relations inherent in social categorizations me and my interviewees may identify with. For example, I am not from Fittja, and before #UrbanGirlsMovement started their work in Fittja I had never been to the southern suburbs of Stockholm. I grew up in Danderyd, an affluent suburb north of Stockholm associated with the Swedish upper class. After I finished my bachelor’s degree in Uppsala, I moved to Östermalm, an area in the midst of Stockholm city with high economic and social capital. To come to Fittja I only have to take one subway straight, but even if I live on the same subway line as the girls subject to my research, our lives differ in several ways. Hogstedt et al. (2006) were the first to illustrate the differences in life expectancy and incapacity rates along the subway lines in Stockholm, something that since then has become a symbol of segregation patterns visible between areas around the city. During the 36 minutes of commuting from my home to Fittja station, the life expectancy rate drops four years and the incapacity rate increases from 11 to 24 days/year/person (Försäkringskassan 2018). The inequality is not only evident when examining the health statistics but differs significantly in unemployment and education rates as well. Due to where I come from, I can expect different life chances than the girls subject to my research, which is a fact I many times am ashamed of. However, how I act in the field will shape the information I receive from my responders and I have the possibility to mitigate these power asymmetries by assuring the girls a safe and friendly environment.

Nevertheless, I believe I have an advantage of being a young woman myself. Even if I am an outsider to Fittja, I, just like my interviewees, am a young woman using the urban public space. My experiences of using the urban public space might differ from those of my interviewees, however, I believe it has been to my advantage to share the experience of having a female body with my interviewees. It entails certain behavioral norms and assumption hard to comprehend by a non-woman. Nevertheless, to mitigate my involvement in the knowledge production process, there are certain tools that have been used. For example, I hope to further mitigate the power asymmetry between me and my interviewees by using semi-structured or unstructured interviewing techniques, which invites the interviewee to be an active part of the conversation and knowledge production of the interview. I believe this strategy has nuanced the interview data collected and assured greater validity of the knowledge produced.

4.3.1.2 Challenges of Interviewing a Marginalized Group

A vulnerable group is characterized by a social group holding a societal status weakening their autonomy which marginalizes their lives (Dempsey et al. 2016: 482). As established in chapter three, gender identity intersects with age, poverty, ethnicity, and space creating multiple layers of prejudices against the girls and young women subject to my research. Hence, the girls participating in #UrbanGirlsMovement have been approached with certain care due to their marginalized societal position of inhabiting an especially vulnerable area in combination with their ethnic belonging, gender, age, and class identities. Additionally, I have needed to consider
the age of my interviewees as they have been between 16 and 23 years old. In the Act concerning Ethical Review of Research Involving Humans ² enforced by Swedish national legislation in 2004, clause 18 § regards research involving people under the age of 18 (Regeringskansliet 2003:460). It states that if a person is under the age of 15 a legal guardian to the child needs to be informed and give his or her consent to the research (Ibid.). Hence, this does not apply to my research as all my interviewees are older than 15 years. I have, however, according to the same legislation, needed consent from all participants in the research and made sure that they have understood what my research objectives are. I have documented their consent in the recordings of the interviews.

Additionally, as a researcher, I have several responsibilities I need to consider properly in order not to harm my interviewees in any way, no matter their age. I have been clear about the research objective when interacting with the people in the field, and clearly stated what I attempt to do with the data produced. I have in my research undertaken three primary principles of the human rights framework for ethics highlighted by Nairn and Clarke (2012: 4):

1. The interviewee’s wellbeing
2. The informed consent and voluntary nature of the interviewee
3. The researcher’s respect for privacy and confidentiality of all data

The interviews have been conducted in a manner that maintain the interviewees’ anonymity and confidentiality. These principles are developed for research with children, but I believe they are applicable to all research subjects disregarding context. These principles are also emphasized by the Act concerning Ethical Review of Research Involving Humans in clause 16 § and 17 § (Regeringskansliet 2003:430). They are applied to all of my research, no matter data collecting strategy.

Moreover, through engaging the girls in my research, I hope to empower them. For me, their narratives are crucial for the result and I will cherish their stories and experiences, to create a platform where their voices are important and heard. As Andersson and Hatton (2000: 250) state “through thoughtful data gathering and analysis and the identification of opportunities for reciprocity, the research venture can provide empowerment to both study participant and researcher.”

4.3.1.3 My Interview Process

I have conducted five semi structured interviews with a total of 11 girls. The girls have been, as aforementioned, between the age of 16 and 23 years old and all have actively participated in the project #UrbanGirlsMovement. I have solely been collecting data from girls participating in the project subject to my case study research, as my objective has been to obtain a deeper insight of the girls’ experiences of this project specifically. All girls were asked via email if they wanted to participate in an interview with me. In the email I stated my objective with the research and what they could expect from the interview situation. To ensure greater engagement by the girls I confirmed the possibility to conduct the interview together with a friend, and all but two girls wanted to be interviewed together with someone they knew from the project. I have had two interview situations with girls alone, three interview situations with girls in a group of two, and one interview situation with girls in a group of three. I experienced the interview situations with the groups as more dynamic interviews where the girls found comfort in each other’s presence. They talked and discussed with each other in a way that created a conversation like atmosphere of the interview. I believe that have had a positive impact on the

² Translated from Lag (2003:460) om etikprövning av forskning som avser människor
collected data as it may have unveiled certain aspects if the discussed topics that may not have been brought up otherwise.

All interviews were conducted in Swedish and recorded with permission by the interviewees and all the interviewees have been ensured anonymity. I am using pseudonyms when referring to the girls in citation and text. All girls interviewed got the opportunity to choose their own names and I have throughout the thesis used their own chosen pseudonyms when I refer to them. After the interview situations I have transcribed the interviews and translated the girls’ narratives to English. In this process I have made my audiotaped data available in textual form, as well as translated the text between languages. This is not an unproblematic process (c.f. Poland, 2001). As a researcher I become a constructor of knowledge when transmitting conversation and observation to text. Hence, to produce valid and reliable knowledge, it is significant for me to acknowledge my choices as an observer and writer in the analyzing process of my data (c.f. Bryman 2012: 394). I have had an advantage of being Swedish-speaking as it has equipped me with a cultural understanding of the field and possible of underlying assumptions in the girls’ narratives, although, certain cultural meaning may be lost in a translation process (Temple and Young 2004: 174).

I have adapted some strategies in order to create the most just translation of the girls’ narratives. The narratives are in the citations written in a more informal manner than the rest of the text, which is an attempt to transmit how the girls expressed themselves during the interviews. Additionally, when transmitting the interviewees’ narratives to text I have used the symbol (…) to indicate that the interviewee actively paused to think or to find the right words. I have also marked certain words with italics to indicate where the interviewee has subtly changed pronunciation, voice volume or disguised their voice in any way. This to give the reader a comprehension of underlying connotations in the narratives. Moreover, the narratives have been through an analyzing process by me as a researcher where the narratives have been clustered into three themes; identification, spatiality, and participation. They have then been connected to previous research and my set theoretical framework to form my analysis and discussion of finding. My aim has been to transmit the interviewees’ narratives to theoretical academic knowledge of a specific phenomenon. I have been careful to put my own assumptions aside and let the girls’ narratives speak for themselves.

4.3.3 Analysis of Workshop Material

The process of #UrbanGirlsMovement as a feminist urban development project has consisted of six workshops performed between September 2018 and June 2019. The participants of the workshops were a mixed group of local girls and adult professionals, e.g. urban planners, architects, technicians, engineers, public official from the municipality of Botkyrka, and other stakeholders. Workshopping as a qualitative research methodology is not very developed in the academic field, although it is a commonly used method and step in urban planning processes. Workshopping is a participatory research tool aimed to create data in a forward-looking approach. This means workshopping is an especially useful tool in research of the emerging or unreliable, which is the case of my research (c.f. Ørngreen and Levinsen 2017). It becomes a means for understanding and analyzing the present as a tool to create what does not yet exist. Except for interviewing, analysis of workshop material has been the main tool for data collection when following the process of #UrbanGirlsMovement, mainly due to its ability to create valuable and reliable data with a large group of people (Ibid.). The aim of the workshops has been to identify urban challenges in Fittja and make a needs assessment to measure accessibility to public space, and how it affects quality of life, and, through that, brainstorm possible solutions.
I have followed and collected data from five of the six planned workshops due to the inconvenience of further data collection after turning in my thesis in the end of May 2019. The analyzed material has been gathered by me through fieldnotes covering my experiences of the respective workshops as well as spontaneous conversations and interactions with the participants. After every workshop, Global Utmaning compiled the results and insights in a short workshop report shared with the participants of each workshop. These reports have been a basis for my analysis as well. The material has been analyzed together with the girls’ interview narratives and connected to the chosen theoretical framework. Important to note is that I, as a researcher, have not been part of developing or planning the workshops, I have only been present to observe and participate.

The first workshop was conducted on September 29th, 2018 (girls=9, women=21 and men=5). The main goal of the workshop was for the participants to acquire an apprehension of the project and the purpose of developing more inclusive urban planning methods. The workshop included a Girls’ Urban Walk, a tool developed by Global Utmaning to provide qualitative data of girls’ experiences of their own area, as well as quantitively define important factors of a girl’s sense of spatial inclusion. The Girls’ Urban Walk was inspired by the urban development method Girl’s Safety Walk, a method that was initially developed by UN Habitat, Plan International, and Women in Cities International for the Safer Cities for Girls Program to be used globally in marginalized communities with inadequate housing status. To fit the context of Fittja, the method was customized by Global Utmaning. Utilizing the Girls’ Urban Walk tool, the girls got to analyze the area in mixed groups with the adults through nine different themes: Good footpaths and public mobility; Places for women, children, and elderly to loiter; Good lighting and visibility; Safety and the presence of authority; Open access; Human scale design; Flexibility, multi-purpose, and multi-functions; Well working infrastructure, water, and sanitation; and Mixed use and population. The results from the walk could identify four spatialities, or places, around Fittja town center that were especially critical regarding the nine different themes. The four areas were the subway station, the main square, inside the mall, and behind the mall. These four spatialities then became the focal points of redesign throughout the rest of the workshops.

The second workshop was conducted on October 24th, 2018 (girls=12, women=19 and men=4). Building upon the data collected during the previous workshop’s Girls’ Urban Walk, the main goal of the second workshop was to identify challenges and opportunities. Through working with concrete tools for urban development, the participants identified specific challenges and needs in Fittja, as well as brainstormed how the potential of the space could be utilized. Additionally, the participants analyzed and discussed what privileges prevail the space today, and what the girls want to use the space for. During this workshop, the girls and the adults were separated, in order to disperse the knowing of the two groups. Based on the dichotomy of expert knowledge/lived experience inherent in the urban planning practice, this was an attempt to encourage the girls to speak their minds without the feeling of getting interrupted or silenced. I analyze the collaboration between the girls and the adults in section 5.3.3 on page 52.

The third workshop was conducted on November 22nd, 2018 (girls=17, women=15 and men=3). It focused solely on opportunities, and the participants got to brainstorm, in small groups of two or three, possible changes that could be implemented in Fittja. The brainstorming session was divided into three stages. The participants were asked to provide their craziest ideas, quick fixes, and most inclusive ideas. All ideas were supposed to be connected to the four critical spatialities identified during the first workshop. The ideas included both physical
changes to the build environment as well as social interventions. Many of the interviewed girls really enjoyed this workshop stating that “When we got to brainstorm - it was great fun! There were no limits, you could write what you wanted” (Belle, 16). Here, as in the previous workshop, girls and adults worked separately. The ideas were collected and compiled to be used as a foundation for the fourth workshop.

The fourth workshop was conducted on February 2-3, 2019 (girls=11, women=9 and men=5). This was a two-day workshop where the participant visualized their ideas from the previous workshop with the use of the computer game Minecraft. Minecraft was launched by a company called Mojang in 2011 as an adventure and building game, and it has since become one of the most sold games in history with over 100 million players worldwide (von Heland et al 2015). It is an open-world game built on 1x1 blocks, a common analogy is “digital Lego bricks”, where the player has the possibility to create creative structures in a three-dimensional environment as wished. Together with UN Habitat, United Nations Human Settlement Program, the concept of Minecraft has been developed to an urban development method for youth participation (Westberg and von Heland 2015). The basis for the method is to use information and communication technology (ICT) to involve youth in urban design and governance without the obstacle of lacking expert knowledge in the field (Ibid). Hence, one could argue that using Minecraft in urban development processes mitigate the dichotomies between both youth and adults, as well as between expert knowledge and lived experience. Minecraft, as a method for citizen participation, has been developed since 2012 by UN Habitat under the name Block by Block. Extensive evaluations of the method have been conducted with good results. Pontus Westberg and Fanny von Heland have, for example, evaluated the method for UN Habitat through analyzing several case studies where the method has been used and conclude the following:

“The game has the potential to increase youth’s interest and engagement in urban planning and design, promote creativity, innovation and visual learning, help encourage dialogue between different groups and opinions and contribute to a development of important skills such as collaboration, public speaking and negotiation as well as giving young women a more powerful voice”

(Westberg and von Heland 2015: 17)

Hence, the main tool for the fourth workshop was Minecraft. The workshop was conducted over two days to allow the participants to get familiar with the game and to have enough time to rebuild Fittja main square. The participants were divided into eight groups, four groups consisted of only girls and four groups consisted of only adults. Every group got to redesign one of the four spatialities identified during the first workshop; the subway station, the main square, inside the mall, or behind the mall. Before the workshop started, a team of Minecraft experts from UN Habitat had modeled Fittja town center in Minecraft, and the below images depict what it looked like before and after the participants of #UrbanGirlsMovement redesigned it.
Figure 1. Overview of Fittja Town Center in Minecraft before redesign (Mojang 2009) [screenshot from play 2nd-3rd of February 2019]

Figure 2. Overview of Fittja Town Center in Minecraft after redesign (Block by Block 2019a)

Figure 3. Overview of Fittja Town Centre from Google Earth (Google Earth 2019)
The fifth workshop was conducted on April 25th, 2019 (girls= 3, women=26 and men=4) at White Architects. White Architects has had representatives present during all workshops and the project management has been in close collaboration with architects from the firm. During the beginning of the workshop, representatives from White presented their view on how architecture contributes to equality by making an inclusive city that fulfill all needs. The overall aim of the fifth workshop was to modify and develop the proposals from the fourth workshop using different architectural techniques. The participants were divided into three groups mixing girls and professional adults. The three groups were assigned a thematic focus they would work with at three different workshop stations. Each station presented a set of design tools for the built environment used by urban developers. The workshop stations consisted of (1) a computerized sketching program called Sketchup, (2) a model area for development of a physical model of Fittja main square and a (3) a virtual reality room where the participants got the chance to walk through their Minecraft model from an eye level perspective.

The sixth workshop is to be conducted on June 4th and due to time inconvenience I have not been able to collect data from this workshop. However, the aim of the last workshop is to discuss what is required for the proposals to be realized. The girls and the adult professionals will together develop policy recommendations to present to decision-makers.

4.3.4 Ethnographic Observations

During the workshops I have mainly used ethnographic observation and participant observation to gather data. Additionally, I have supplemented my data by doing spatial observation in Fittja main square. Observation and participant observation are two closely related methods within ethnographic research (Watson and Till 2010: 122). Ethnography was originally developed within the discipline of anthropology to comprehend foreign cultures subjectively and more nuanced as a researcher. Observation as a research method entails a “description of and reflection upon embodied and emotional experiences, intersubjective and material exchanges, and social and nonhuman interactions” (Ibid: 126). Understandings of everyday geographies are gathered through fieldnotes, where subjective emotions, material encounters and comprehension of space all are practices of discoveries. During my observation sessions, as aforementioned, I have used a notebook to collect my reflections of the social realm surrounding me when in the field. These notes have later been used as a foundation for analyzation and interpretation.

In Geography, ethnographic methods are useful when analyzing spatial processes and concepts. Ethnographic methods allow the researcher to ask research questions that might not be accessible through language but must be understood through body language or movement patterns. For example, Watson and Till (2010: 122) explains that “ethnographic observations of, and interactions with, others highlight how bodies interact, meld, and constitute social spaces, and thereby create inclusions and exclusions”. Hence, using ethnographic observation has been useful in my data collection process as it enabled me to thoroughly and subjectively understand how Fittja as a space is constituted socially. Placing myself in the girls’ reality helped me understand the girls’ every-day life experiences, which is one of the positive values often created during observational research (c.f. Ibid.). Observing both in Fittja and during the workshops enabled me to be an active part of the spatial imaginaries of the place and a participant of the girls’ perceived experiences during the workshops and in Fittja main square. Additionally, by participating in the workshops myself, I gained a deeper understanding of the girls’ situated experiences through using my own feelings, reactions and thoughts of the process. Participatory observation in this sense is about submerging yourself into the life of the
researched (Ibid: 129). This type of participatory observation was crucial for me to, as subjectively as possible, describe the girls’ realities and experiences during the workshops.

Some concluding remarks on my chosen data collecting strategies are that it has been especially important for me, due to my position as an outsider to the field, to use qualitative methods of interviews, observation and participant observation. To use qualitative research methods has given me an insider point of view of social processes constituting Fittja as a space, which is information I would never have been able to obtain otherwise. I have been aware of my outsider position to the field and that it could imply difficulties and halt my research. However, it may also give me opportunities to see certain details in the field I would not have seen otherwise and analyze my data without the bias of familiarity or “home-blindness”. I have assured to use my position as an outsider to better my chances of a more nuanced analysis. I have used it as a tool to understand Fittja’s social and cultural context from the girls’ perspectives, just as they narrated it for me.
5.0 Analysis and Discussion of Findings

The following chapters have been obtained through processing and analyzing the gathered data. The findings are divided into three sections, each discussing different aspects of the girls’ narratives in relation to identification, spatiality, and participation. The first section establishes how the girls express their lived experience of being young girls in Fittja, and how they identify themselves with Fittja as a space. Their narratives are connected to intersectionality and territorial stigmatization. The second section focuses on the girls’ urban design proposals as presented during the fourth workshop. The section discusses how the built environment in the girls’ design proposals is closely connected to their experienced intersectional identities. The third section binds the previous two together when discussing the participation process of #UrbanGirlsMovement. It highlights specific characteristics of the process and how it made an impact on the girls’ identity formation processes. Lastly, some conclusive remarks tie the knots of the previous chapters and explain how #UrbanGirlsMovement could be seen in a larger context. The conclusion contributes with key learnings from the girls’ perspectives that may be originated from the spatiality of Fittja to other spatial contexts.

5.1 Identification: Fittja and Territorial Stigmatization

This section will elucidate how the girls participating in #UrbanGirlsMovement describe Fittja and how they identify with Fittja as a space. To understand how the identities of the girls participating in #UrbanGirlsMovement are constituted it is important to apprehend how Fittja as a place is situated in relation to spatial discourses. To this I now turn.

5.1.1 Fittja – a dangerous place?

Fittja is located south of Stockholm in a municipality called Botkyrka. Fittja is, at least geographically, largely country side with lakes and forests and has approximately 8 000 inhabitants. Archeological evidence points to over 7 000 years of human settlement in the area, but the long history of Fittja is often overshadowed by more recent events. The landscape of Fittja changed radically during the development of the Million Dwellings Program. In Fittja alone, 2 700 new housing units were built in the 1970s. They were built close to green areas and many with lake views overlooking Albysjön or Vårbyfjärden. The guiding principle behind the urban structure was modernistic. Land use zoning was implemented on large scale while major roads and parking lots were built in the outskirts of the area, creating small but car free town centers, inner courtyards, and luminous green stretches along the lakes. When walking around in Fittja, this urban vision is very present. However, even if the beauty of the place is one of the main reasons for the girls speaking so fondly of Fittja, it is rarely highlighted by outsiders.

Nelly and Amy are two 18-year-old girls living in Alby, one subway stop from Fittja station, and both of them work close to Fittja main square. I meet them at one of the few meeting places for young adults in Alby that are still left. I am fascinated of their familiarity to the place, they greet everyone we meet on our way to a small hang out room. We are offered drinks and cookies upon arrival and I gladly accept the offer. When seated we start chatting about why they wanted to be part of #UrbanGirlsMovement in the first place. They explain that one of the reasons they wanted to be a part of the project was because they felt that Fittja needed better reputation. They explain that Fittja is stigmatized as a dangerous place, and that media only cares for stories
about burned out cars, drugs, and criminal activity. As Amy and Nelly describe, Fittja, as many other Million Dwellings Program areas, has become a term synonymous with segregation. Andersson (2017: 4) establish in the publication ‘Segregation: What it is and how it can be measured’ that there are three distinct types of segregation: housing segregation, i.e. differences in household types; socio-economic segregation, i.e. spatial class differences; and ethnic or racial segregation, i.e. spatial segregation due to personal attribute or characteristic. In Fittja, all three of these are highly present.

Even if no question in my questionnaire was specifically targeting how the girls comprehend the picture transmitted by media about Fittja, everyone brought it up at numerous times during the interviews. Fittja and Alby are mostly famous on a national level for its status of being considered especially vulnerable areas by the Swedish police, i.e. areas where parallel social structures, extremism, and a very high concentration of criminal activity can be identified (Underrättelseenheten 2017). This has caused Fittja to be subject of media attention and portrayed as a space founded by criminality, drugs, and immorality. When searching for Fittja on Sweden’s two major news sites, Svenska Dagbladet and Dagens Nyheter, the girls’ narratives are confirmed. The latest headlines read ‘Parliamentary Ombudsman will not review gang rape case in Fittja’ (Cato 2019), ‘No one arrested for shooting in Fittja’ (Svenska Dagbladet, January 13th, 2018), ‘Security guards found drugs - got their cars vandalized’ (Dagens Nyheter, February 26th, 2019), and ‘Botkyrka invest 70 million [Swedish krona] to increase safety’ (Dagens Nyheter, October 28th, 2018). Mass media has an effective role in producing and reproducing discursive ideologies, and the continuous stigmatization of Million Dwellings Program areas since the 1970s is much due to how media has portrayed them (c.f. Molina 2005; Ericsson et al. 2002; Pripp and Ramberg 2002). Stigmatized areas are produced through societal and medial discourses that diminish the inhabitants of the area, which is an important part of what Waquant (2007) refers to as territorial stigmatization. The girls interviewed are from Fittja or adjacent places and all position themselves, and the space they are inhabiting, in relation to the established discourse about Fittja, and places like Fittja. How the outer world looks at a place influences how the inhabitants within the place look at themselves, which may determine their identification strategies. This is especially noticeable in my interviews. Hence, inhabiting a territorial stigmatized area have various effects on identity formation processes.

Belle, Kenza and Lucy are the youngest girls participating in #UrbanGirlsMovement. They are all 16 years old and live either in Fittja or adjacent Alby. We have found a place to sit in a school that has closed down for the day. People are however still there in lack of other places to go and it feels crowded around our seating area. A group of middle school students are playing close by, screaming and laughing. Belle tells me that she feels like media has deceived her to look at Fittja negatively. She explains that even if she lives there, media has planted a bad image of the place in her head which she has come to believe. Kenza and Lucy nods as Belle talks, and Kenza builds upon her friend’s reasoning and recounts when two friends of her were moving to Fittja.

“There are many who go to our school who live in Fittja who feel threatened by the place. I remember that there were two girls who would move here, and they were very sad because they just thought it was a criminal place. Because that was what they were told”

Kenza, 16

This statement could be analyzed using the theoretical framework of territorial stigmatization through which Kenza’s narrative illuminates how territorial stigmatization impacts outsider’s view of Fittja as well as the inhabitants themselves. According to Waquant (2007) territorial
inhabitation is a variable of devaluation, hence, by inhabiting Fittja the residents are automatically devaluated as people. Ove Sernhede (2011: 163) has used the concept of territorial stigmatization in a similar way in the article ‘School, Youth Culture, and Territorial Stigmatization in Swedish Metropolitan Districts’ where he understands territorial stigmatization to “penetrates (sic.) every corner of life in these areas—the schools, the social welfare office, associations, and the relations between people as well as individuals’ self-image”. It is the stigmatization that produces and reproduces stereotypical notions of the area and its inhabitants, something the girls face on a daily basis.

5.1.2 Ortengrabbarna – the definers of space

Focus for the medial attention is usually on what the girls call Ortengrabbarna (roughly translated to the Suburban boys). The interviewees’ understanding of Fittja as a place and space enunciates through their view of The Hood (my translation from the Swedish term Orten) which equip the girls with a collective reference system. Maria Bäckman (2009: 51) is a Swedish ethnologist and clarifies in her book The Million Dwellings Program Swedes: Contentious Places and Identities [translated by me] that The Hood has a special meaning when spoken about in definite article. The Hood is a geographical place with certain social connotation. It is not merely situated in a city’s periphery but is constituted by a stigmatized set of symbolism (Ibid.). The relationship between The Hood and the inner city is social rather than geographical, something Bäckman (2009) refers to as a city’s social geography. Social geography and territorial stigmatization are in this sense closely related. The social geography of Stockholm puts Fittja and adjacent places both geographically and socially in the periphery of society, something that is referred to repeatedly by all my interviewees. As with territorial stigmatization, a city’s social geography is often reproduced through mass media, where the meaning of a space is created by people who have never been there. Hence, mass media has in this sense the power to define a place. Territorial stigmatization processes often move from being about the geographical area to be about its inhabitants. Therefore, constituting Fittja as The Hood in Bäckman’s (2009) terms, indirectly connotates its inhabitants to be stigmatized as well.

My interviewee Amelie is 18 years old and is in her last year of high school. I meet her together with her friend Nova, and during the interview we are sitting in an almost empty café drinking a hot beverage each, it is almost spring outside. Both Amelie and Nova smile understandingly when I ask them to further explain their thoughts about Ortengrabbarna. Ortengrabbare are boys loitering outside Fittja town center or around Fittja main square and they tend to share a special set of symbolic identification markers such as clothes, language, and occupation, as well as a strong feeling of belonging to the suburb they are living in. Amelie explains that “they Ortengrabbarna are always there, it’s like they are a natural part of the facade. If they are not there, you wonder if something is wrong”. Hence, Ortengrabbarna belong to Fittja as a space, and Fittja would not be the same without them. Ortengrabbarna could be described as an urban social formation in how they use the urban open space as a means of expression. Urban social formations, traditionally defined as subcultures, often emerge in the periphery of society as an antipode to a society’s normalized cultural activities (Daskalaki and Mould 2013: 1). However, even if Ortengrabbarna use the urban open space of Fittja main square in other ways than urban planners intended, they also tend to engage in criminalized activities, and it is these activities

3 When defining subcultural activities, such as skateboarding, graffiti, and parkour, as subcultures it reproduced their societal position as isolated groups in the marginalization of society, hence reinforce the process of othering. Daskalaki and Mould (2013: 1) instead discuss such urban activities as urban social formations indicating their formation, existence and practice as rhizomatic.
that media often highlights. It could also be argued that this urban social formation has emerged through the territorial stigmatization of Fittja as a place. My interviewee Nelly, who I met together with her friend Amelie, states that the stigmatization of Fittja sometimes comes from within. “Some people use this stigma to say that ‘Yes, we’re dangerous, what are you going to do about it?’” she says. Territorial stigmatization as a theoretical framework establishes that residents of marginalized urban communities often internalize stigmatizing traits, which have several negative effects, however, when analyzing the girls’ narratives in the matter this may only be true to some extent (Waquant 2007; c.f. Jensen and Christensen 2012). Amy, who nods beside Nelly as she speaks, continues the discussion by reasoning that Ortengrabbarna as an entity also may have emerged through class struggles.

“It also has to do with class. You know different types of societal classes, that the higher up you are, the better off you are… when you belong to a class that… well pretty often there is a working class population inhabiting vulnerable areas and if you cannot move away from that class, you kind of have to embrace it. And I think that it is what they have done in vulnerable areas. It has become an identity to be proud of… But I think that if these people had belonged to another class, they would have behaved in a different way…”

Amy, 18

This statement by Amy illuminates some of the negative effects of territorial stigmatization. As a result of these stigmatization processes, due to their marginalized position, many of Ortengrabbarna have been prevented from social mobility. Amy argues that the engagement in criminal activity by Ortengrabbarna is a sign of class struggle. However, Amy proves in this narrative that internalizing the stigmatizing traits of Fittja is not all negative but may be used as a commodity to be proud of and to create a sense of belonging. This is confirmed by Jensen and Christensen (2012: 88) as they explain that rebellious acts against societal structures, like Ortengrabbarnas engagement in criminal activities, often lead to local empowerment up against territorial stigmatization. This results in an internalization of the awareness of being discredited by outsiders, but not a discrediting of the self. They continue to explain that “this awareness sometimes results in inhabitants having ambivalent experiences of the area, in the sense that they have to live with and take into account that outsiders perceive the place they live in negatively” (Ibid.). This ambivalence towards Fittja is present in many of the girls’ narratives about Ortengrabbarna. The girls agree that the activities carried out by Ortengrabbarna are problematic but, just like Amy, put these spatial challenges in a political context. Frida is 23 years old and moved to Fittja from Latin America when she was 17. She explains that she never felt threatened by any of the guys hanging around Fittja square and is very careful not to talk about them in negative terms. She states:

“I would never describe Ortengrabbarna as something bad, as then it feels like pulling down all guys who live in the suburb. I would say that these guys are guys that haven’t gotten help anywhere else, that they also need help. You never know their lives, you don’t know if they have food on the table at home, or why they have sought out this path – it’s easier to get money of course… So, I wouldn’t say they are bad people, absolutely not, they just need a way to get money. It feels like the government forgotten about these youngsters, especially the guys who have it tough. It feels like these guys need help with jobs or to continue school”

Frida, 23

Even though not all the interviewed girls have the same experience of never feeling threatened by Ortengrabbarna, there is a shared understanding amongst the girls that Ortengrabbarna are victims of the hierarchal power structures inherent in territorial stigmatization processes. On the other hand, on a local level, other power structures dominate. Amy explains that the urban
social formation constituted by Ortengrabbarna is often permeated by a macho culture and is almost exclusively including boys and young men. This means that both physically and socially, the space of Fittja is occupied by boys and young men. And it has been stated that space and place act as reproductive tools to gender divisions, i.e. gender inequality. If only guys or men dominate a place, then they get symbolic power in that place which reproduce their spatial and societal power (Sandberg and Rönnholm 2016). Therefore, it could be argued that there is an inherent hierarchal gender structure in the urban social formation of Ortengrabbarna as they have the power of defining the space, leaving the girls to the periphery of urbanization agency in Fittja.

Frida, who was so careful about not degrading Ortengrabbarna, highlights an interesting issue of spatial attention. She states that “I don’t want to talk shit about anyone, but it is always us girls ending up to paying for it [Ortengrabbarna’s actions]”. The attention of Ortengrabbarna has created a division within the space both between them and other boys, but also between Ortengrabbarna and the girls of the area. Ortengrabbarna become defining elements of youth in Fittja. Mabala (2011: 159) explains that youth as a concept is inherently biased, leaving young girls less acknowledged. Frida articulates this when speaking about how she as a girl needs to accommodate to Ortengrabbarnas’ activities. She tells me about how her mobility is limited after dark due to a feeling of unsafety, and that she rarely does anything in Fittja main square except waiting for the bus due to the presence of Ortengrabbarna. She expresses that the origin of her perceived unsafety lays in the conflict prone culture of Ortengrabbarna towards each other, not her. Therefore, the statement “us girls ending up paying for it” may refer to the instability among the boys within their own group formation. This instability creates an uncomfortable and unsafe feeling for other residents, especially girls due to the asymmetrical power relations inherent in gender. Through the framework of territorial stigmatization, the stigmatizing processes of Fittja are produced through societal and medial discourses of Ortengrabbarna, diminishing the girls as inhabitants of the area. Girls of the area are often portrayed as victims of un-security shaped by Ortengrabbarnas’ presence in the space. This process often raises uncertainty and fear both from the outside and within the area, which is what Frida experiences when she says she, as a girl, needs to pay for Ortengrabbarnas’ behavior.

5.1.3 Coded Spatial Identities

When Ortengrabbarna get attention by mass media, they are the definers of Fittja socially, reproducing Stockholm’s social geography and the duality between Stockholm inner city and its stigmatized suburbs. This duality is highly present in some of the girls’ narratives. Stockholm’s social geography and how it characterizes Fittja may preferably be analyzed through an intersectional approach. Spatialities are often coded with certain social identities such as gender, class, and ethnicity that are connected to hierarchal power structures. When analyzing the girls’ narrative about Fittja, an understanding of these social categorizations and how they impact the girls’ perception of the space is crucial. The social geography of Fittja is highlighted when the girls travel to other parts of Stockholm. Many of the girls bear witness about how their residential status has prevented them from using different societal services. Queen and Princess are both 20 years old and good friends. They have known each other since kindergarten but have now graduated from high school and are trying to figure out what they want to do in the future. They explain that they have grown up knowing that their starting point is behind the majority of society because they come from Fittja in Botkyrka. The social geography is in this case one of the foundational variables of the social barriers the girls have encountered while growing up. For example, Queen explains that in her application process to high school she visited several schools in Stockholm city that she was interested in attending.
During a conversation with a teacher at one of the schools she heard that she probably should not bother to apply to the school because her middle school was located in Botkyrka. “You probably won’t stand a chance here”, the teacher had said. Princess nods affirmatively and tells me about a time when she was denied a job opportunity because she lived in Botkyrka. Many of the other girls tell me about similar incidents and that they get labelled with the biased ideas about where they grew up. Encoded spatial stigmatization often move from connotating the actual geographical space to including its inhabitants. What the girls are experiencing in these narratives may be described in terms of othering. Molina (2005: 105) highlights this when explaining that the public debate about Botkyrka and its inhabitants is dominated by their segregated status which has defined the space in terms of class differences and the view of migrants as ‘the others’. The discourse of ‘the other’ refers to places and people who according to dominating norms are considered different or abnormal (ibid.). Othering often comes with understanding people through specific notions degrading inhabitants of Botkyrka to stereotypes. Noticeable is that the whole municipality of Botkyrka has adapted the stigmatized characteristics of Fittja and Alby, although, Botkyrka at large is not inhabited by a socioeconomic underprivileged population.

I meet Leona after her school-day is finished. We order iced latte at a café and start talking about her up-coming exams. She is studying to become a high school engineer. Later on, Leona tells me that the othering processes of Fittja and Alby has affected her extensively. Whenever she travels elsewhere, she feels that she needs to prove herself to everyone and convince them that she is who she feels that she is: Swedish. As stated in the following narrative:

“I constantly need to keep my head high to prove that I’m not some weak ass… well, I guess immigrant, even if I’m born here. I always have something to prove (…) It makes me pretty annoyed… I understand that I don’t look Swedish, that I don’t have those blue eyes or that blonde hair or a slim body. But I’m still born here. I speak Swedish fluently. It is just tiresome to always have to prove myself. But I try to look at it as a learning process. It doesn’t matter where I go, I will always have to prove myself either because I’m a woman, or because I’m an immigrant, or because my family is from the working class, in some way I always need to prove myself. It’s a preparation for the future”

Leona, 17

In this narrative Leona describes her experiences of being an ethnic minority in intersectional terms. Leona acknowledges these struggles due to the hierarchal power structures inscribed in the social categories of gender, class and ethnicity (c.f. De los Reyes and Mulinari 2005). Due to her descent she feels a need to prove herself worthy of her Swedish identity, but she highlights that it is only when she is outside of Fittja she feels this need. This sentiment illustrates the cruciality of space in subject formation processes. Identities are not constituted in a vacuum but are defined and redefined in relation to others (Pripp 2002: 58). A person’s identity is both objective and subjective. The objective identity is partly based on social categorizations such as gender, age, ethnicity and class, and partly based on personal traits (Ibid). It is the objective identity Leona expresses in her narrative. Due to the social identity she, together with the other girls, are inscribed, their individual identities get suppressed. The individual identity is based on how others perceive a person’s individual traits, which in this case are shadowed by her objective identity of being a black woman from a working-class background. The objective identity may both be enhanced and undermined by a person’s subjective identity, i.e. a person’s self-perception. In this case, many of the girls want to define their selves in other terms than their inscribed objective identity.
Other girls have shared similar experiences. In Fittja, many of the girls dare to be themselves, something many of them feel they need to suppress when spending time in other parts of Stockholm. For the girls, Fittja is a place free from labels. Amelie, for example, feels a togetherness within Fittja despite the image transmitted by media that the space is constituted of conflict. She describes Fittja as a caring community, something she feels lacking in many other parts around Stockholm. “In many suburbs such as Alby and Fittja (...) you generally take care of each other. Compared to other places that are marked by being more introvert, you do not mix much with others, or families, or others’ lives if you say so. You are just for yourself?” she says, almost surprised. Amelie is not the only one feeling this way. Leona speaks about how growing up around Fittja has formed her personality in this community feeling. She articulates that she is more open. She believes, just like Amelie, that people outside the suburb are more individualistic and up-tight. She says “I think it depends on the culture one has grown up in, that one should take care of oneself before taking care of others. Alby is not as individualistic as the rest of Stockholm. It is different there.” Leona reasons that the multiethnic and multicultural background of the people inhabiting Fittja and Alby are one of the foundational reasons for its community feeling and openness. She continues:

“Allby has made me more open. It has made me realize that it is not just one group of people, but several, that can work together as one. I don’t just need to be with my ethnicity, I work with everyone. My best friends, for example, we don’t come from the same countries, but they are still my best friends with whom I have close contact. Although we don’t speak the same language, we understand each other through Swedish. Alby has shaped me to be open and kind to everyone”

Leona, 17

Both Amelie and Leona express a feeling of hostility towards people not from the suburb, indicating that when you grow up in a community of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds you become a more open and accepting towards human differences, as compared to people who have not. This statement also connects to Leona’s experiences of having to “prove herself” because she does not fit the accepted and normalized description of how a Swedish person should appear. The girls’ experiences witness about a social dichotomy of suburb/inner city inscribed in the social geography defining the suburb. This acts as a basis for identity formation, both subjectively and collectively, and is a community builder for the residents of the suburb. Many of the girls express a close connection to Fittja, and even to Ortengrabbarna. Amy, for example, clarifies:

"I feel that I can relate to them [Ortengrabbarna] pretty much. I think I am in the working class though you work your way up too, but it’s still like I will not forget where I started. It's like... all these people here... the stigma... you know these people from within and you know what they were before, and you know what they have become. This is where you still feel a connection. We started on the same track, but now you have taken that path and I took this one, but our roots are still together. Even if we are not like them [Ortengrabbarna], I think that is why we haven’t split up in a ‘us’ and a ‘them’. There is still a community deep down, we still have many memories. I think that is why we don’t judge anyone the way others do, because we know how it is to grow up in such a society”

Amy, 18

Amy clearly positions herself away from Ortengrabbarnas’ livelihoods, but not from their identity. She presents a togetherness with these boys due their shared identity of belonging to the suburb. Their shared identity comes from inhabiting a marginalized area constituted of various oppressive power structures shaping their understanding of both the self and the spatial community. Additionally, Amy illuminates she does not intend to stay in her marginalized
position as she “works her way up” the class ladder, hence she believes in her own opportunities for social mobility. Hence, internalizing a stigma is not certain, as stated by Waquant’s (2007) theoretical description of territorial stigmatization. Jensen and Christensen (2012: 88) had similar findings when researching the impact of territorial stigmatization in a marginalized neighborhood in Denmark. They conclude that the residents are conscious about that they are looked down upon but that this had led to local empowerment as a counter discourse to territorial stigmatization. They explain that inhabitants become aware of being discredited which starts a process of belonging and self-identification instead of discrediting of the self.

Therefore, to conclude, inhabiting a stigmatized area may drive identity formation processes of empowerment and belonging. Queen and Princess, similarly to Leona’s earlier narrative, explain that growing up in Fittja has given them several personality traits that they would not want to live without. They explain that growing up in Fittja has made them strong and thick skinned. They are driven to work extra hard for what they want and take nothing for granted. They are open to multicultural diversity and understand people’s struggles of marginalization from an insider’s perspective. All the girls have in common that the multiethnic and multicultural traits of Fittja are what makes them feel at home. Despite all, they love Fittja, and they want to change outsiders’ view of Fittja to match their own subjective experiences and understandings of the place. These girls have never been in the position to define their own space in their own terms.

5.2 Spatiality: Expressing Togetherness Through the Built Environment

The girls express belonging and togetherness towards Fittja as they identify with the suburban symbolization the space represents. They articulate a strong need to break social barriers marginalizing them when travelling to other parts of Stockholm, hence tools to enhance their self-defined subjective identities. As highlighted in the previous sections, many of the girls interviewed portray a counter discourse towards the medial image and the territorial stigmatization constituting the meaning making processes of Fittja as a space. The girls explain that growing up in Fittja has had a positive impact on their identity formation, and media’s constituted meanings of Fittja as a space have been significant in these processes. In this section, the girls’ subjective spatial identities will be discussed in relation to their physical models and designs of how they believe Fittja can be improved both physically and socially. Their designs can be analyzed as symbolical identification markers.

5.2.1 The Value of Local Knowledge

Already during the first workshop the girls encountered the medial image and how outsiders view their locality. Queen and Princess both had similar experiences of the Girl’s Urban Walk executed during the first workshop in September 2018. They state during our interview:

Queen: “Media creates an image of what it looks like here and people who have never been to Fittja then get that image, and they unconsciously speak of that image and then see everything here as something extremely unsafe or super weird, although it doesn't look weird from our perspective”

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4 The designs analyzed in this chapter were all created during the fourth workshop in February 2019, where the participants in #UrbanGirlsMovement got to visualize their ideas of spatial improvement of Fittja main square in the computer game Minecraft together with UN Habitat. See page 27-28 for more information about the workshop.
Princess: “We talked a lot about that after the first workshop, what we had heard from the others and that we thought it was strange”

Queen: “There were many who saw stuff as dangerous and unsafe as we didn't see. The person who said that might not think about it, but that person has a picture already painted in the back their head. While we, who have grown up in the suburbs, know that this is what everyday life looks in a way - it may be a lamp that is broken but it is not a big thing! But it has been a great lesson to understand these two worlds”

The local understanding of the space possessed by the girls visualizes in the meeting with the professional adults also participating in #UrbanGirlsMovement. Nova has a very similar experience to Queen and Princess during the Girl’s Urban Walk and explains:

“Linked to media images is that others who do not live there get their picture of the area from the media. I think it was the first or second meeting we had, we had to walk around Fittja center and then we talked about how we felt in small groups. We girls were mixed with the adults… Then I remembered that it was an older woman who said it didn't look so nice because there were so many young guys standing outside the center and it didn't feel welcoming. When I heard that, I mostly thought that the [guys] have no employment, but usually people have a picture from the media that there is a lot of trouble and stuff. I don't have that picture myself. I've lived in Fittja and I know my friends who also live where they don't have that picture. Well, that was just such a thing I noticed”

Nova, 18

The narratives of Nova, Queen and Princess all tell a story about a contradiction in how different participants in #UrbanGirlsMovement view the environment in focus for the redevelopment. The contradictions are based on local knowledge. Elisabeth Lilja (2000: 2) addresses the divide between planning and lived reality that characterizes the modern planning practice of the Million Dwellings Program in the article ‘Periphery and identity – the paradox of the modern suburb’. The concern is founded in insufficient local knowledge of the lived reality of the suburbs and the relationship between the inhabitants and the built environment. Lilja (2000) points to the inherent dichotomy in the planning practice, that expert knowledge of the planner often has greater weight in the planning process than lived experience. Through the girls’ narrative, I sense that this divide is not yet fully closed. Belle, for example, adds that:

“It is good that they ask us who knows all the places, that have larger knowledge of what is needed and what is available than someone who doesn’t live here. Someone who comes from a completely different municipality who doesn’t live here shouldn’t come here with their opinions and say what’s right and wrong”

Belle, 16

Belle illuminates the vitality of local knowledge in the planning process. In a creative process, such as planning and development, a person’s knowing becomes a means of expression and creation. Hence, whether or not a person is aware of a place’ spatial uniqueness will be mirrored in the designs. Karen A. Franck (2000: 295) discusses this in the article ‘A feminist approach to architecture: Acknowledging women’s ways of knowing’. She explains that “we construct what we know, and these constructions are deeply influenced by our early experiences and by the nature of our underlying relationship to the world”. Due to the different ways people experience the world, their constructions of the world will differ, as well as their way of analyzing and knowing. This is especially also true when it comes to both gender and local knowledge of a space. An insider will analyze and understand the space differently than an outsider.
This becomes relevant when analyzing how the girls narrate their creation processes and the results of the workshops. When analyzing the girls’ physical design proposals for Fittja, it is possible to determine these contradictions as in how the girls’ proposals are founded on a re-establishment of the medial view of the place. Hence, based on the girls’ spatial experiences of Fittja, they use the built environment in their designs to address certain issues of media’s objectifying processes.

5.2.2 The Symbolism of Dirt

During the first workshop and the Girl’s Urban Walk some immediate conclusions could be drawn from what the girls commented on negatively as we walked around. The most common commentaries referred to that Fittja was either dirty, trashy, smelled bad, or was boring to look at. They argued that the square was boring to look at due to all the colors in different shades of grey and brown and that many of the trash cans were overfull. Noticeable about these comments is that they refer to that the visual appearance of the place sends certain signals. Frida describes Fittja in terms of dirt in more depth during our interview. She explains that she often notices people littering, or not separating their domestic waste or recycle. She expresses a feeling of annoyance towards this and explains that she would never do that. These statements could be analyzed through Mary Douglas (1966) theoretical framework of dirt as something contextual and charged with meaning. Usually we react to impurities in spaces we feel close and connected to, i.e. the girls might not have described a space they do not consider home as dirty. Identifying dirt is according to Douglas (1966) a way of sensing that something is out of place, as dirt disrupt order in a social and societal sense. Hence, through this perspective, dirt becomes a reason for accepting Fittja as abnormal and unworthy as along with its inhabitants. Ingrid Ramberg (2002) has a similar discussion in the article ‘Ambivalence, protest and passion: Three voices about living in Fittja’ [translated by me]. One of her interviewees speaks about trash in a similar way to Frida. Ramberg (2002: 16) explains that trash often acknowledge the negative image of Fittja, and that this image contaminates to its inhabitants. Therefore, the girls’ strong feelings of wanting Fittja to look pleasing is not uncalled for, it is part of the counter discourse they personify. That the physical appearance of Fittja is charged with meaning is enhanced by many of the other girls interviewed. Belle, for example, explains that during her time in #UrbanGirlsMovement she has been comforted in knowing that she is not alone in not liking Fittja for what it is. She says: “I have found out that there are others who also seem to think Fittja is problematic, although, I don’t think we should see Fittja based on the fact that everything is bad. Because there are lots of talented people here, it's nothing wrong with the people, it's the environment itself.”

On the same note, Frida is assured that the dirty and trashy character of Fittja is a fundamental reason that Swedish people do not settle in the area. Which signifies that the spatial stigmatization is connected to ethnicity and how Fittja is ethnically constituted. She explains:

Frida: “So, there are Swedes living there. I have seen it where I live, but it feels like they mostly are at home. You rarely see them. I had a neighbor who was Swedish, but he moved at once. He was only there a few months before he moved elsewhere in Stockholm, so he wasn't there for long. It's like they don't like to live here”

Me: “Why do you think that is?”

Frida: “That's what I've tried to figure out, why? I don’t think they’re racists or bad in any way, but they may just be unhappy here. It feels like they are thinking ‘it’s not okay what you’re doing right now’. He may be sorting his waste at the sorting station and thinking ‘what the hell is this?!’ one is actually disappointed”

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Frida expresses that Swedes probably are disappointed at immigrants due their inability to understand Swedish waste management norms. Bäckman (2009) identified a similar scenario when interviewing girls in another Swedish suburb. She refers to trash management as a “(low intensity) source of conflict amongst the inhabitants” [translated by me] (Bäckman 2009: 71). How you manage your waste, becomes an identificatory distinction showing how adaptable you are to normative cultural norms. Hence, when Frida states that she would never litter is a way for her to show cultural belonging to Sweden. Trash, or dirt in Douglas’ terms (1966), becomes a social distinction as well as an ethnic symbol (c.f. Bäckman 2009: 72). Another social phenomenon Frida is referring to in her narrative is a common conundrum called white flight. White flight, or white avoidance, is a term lent from American research to understand residential segregation patterns (Bråmå 2006: 1127). White flight is one of the underlying concepts of ethnic segregation, something highly visible in statistics about moving patterns to and from Fittja. Molina (2018) explains that segregation patterns and stigmatization of the Million Dwellings Program is an effect of white flight, as it conveys and underlying assumptions of spatial otherization. Molina (2018) argues that the racialized population of stigmatized areas are through the process of white flight ascribed certain personal traits as a means of otherizing rather than normalizing the inhabitants. Which additionally witness about a spatial power asymmetry between the inner city and the suburb. In Frida’s narrative these traits are connected to being negligent, hence not worthy for Swedes to settle. So, the girls wanting a larger number of trash cans has a whole other symbolism than where to put trash in the public open space.

In summary, the designs contain spatial elements of beauty for several reasons. The girls have added colors in streets and on walls, worked with creative lighting, used many different materials and above all added greenery in many different forms. Often in attempts to attract visitors to the area. During the fourth workshop I mingled with the girls and asked them about their designs. One of the girls whom I interacted with explained their groups thoughts about creating a green space like this:

“(…) the last thing we did was a terrace on the roof of the mall. It's very grey in Fittja, a lot of concrete, and we just wanted it to be greener. And then having a nice view with greenery is really cool, people want to take pictures there so it will be a tourist attraction in some way. But above all something nice for the residents in Fittja, because it is those who are the number one priority, that's the ones who live here”

Girl, pers. comm., 2019

Hence, it may be argued that the girls interviewed position themselves against territorial stigmatization processes through beatifying their physical surroundings. As discussed in the previous section, when areas become stigmatized, the encoded spatial stigmatization often move from connotating the actual geographical space to including its inhabitants. The strong need for the girls to create a space that look physically pleasing is part of re-shaping their self-defined spatial identities, as well as a way to reconstitute how the medial image regarding Fittja may be transmitted in the future.

5.2.3 Contradictions of Hanging Out

The most common attributions in the girls designs where cafés, places to sit and eat, or just simply somewhere to hang out. The girls call to attention that there are no establishment in Fittja offering somewhere to sit and have a fika^5, something they would really like. In contrast

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^5 A Swedish word for conversing while having a coffee and something sweet.
to Ortengrabbarna, who hang in Fittja main square without a special activity, the girls express a need for spaces programmed specifically for both arranged activities and spaces of consumption but in a greater extent they ask for spontaneous social meeting spaces, to just hang out. Martin Grander and Mikael Stigendal (2012) explain that informal meeting places are generally lacking in Million Dwellings Program residential areas. The modernistic planning strategies focused the on the principle of dividing functionalities, whereas spontaneous meeting places and recreation opportunities were not prioritized. For example, the lack of street corners and open ground floors have resulted in a lack of kiosks, cafés, and other small services that promote social interaction. Grander and Stigendal (2012: 64) highlight the value of informal and spontaneous meeting places to increase social cohesion in society, and that they mitigate disturbances and conflict as well as promote safety.

Due to the constructed discourse of Ortengrabbarna and the power structure that dominate Fittja as a space, there is an underlying social contract between men and women saying that women have less right to use the urban public space unless they have a clear aim with being there, while men are allowed to dwell. Mary Thomas have observed girls “hanging out” in London’s urban public spaces and reviews her conclusions in the article ‘Girls, consumption space and the contradictions of hanging out in the city’ (2005). She shows that hanging out is a contradictory action full of underlying social assumptions. This due to that girls experience greater control of their movements and criticism of their behavior when dwelling in respect to how they pose to the social contract of obtaining the ideals of femininity. Hence, spatial mobility should be analyzed through the theoretical term generation (Mabala 2011, Mabala 2007). Girls’ spatial mobility is more controlled than men due to a combination of power structures shaping social categories of gender and age. Thomas (2005: 587f) states that “Girls, like boys, have to contend with spatial constraints imposed by adults and older youth, but unlike boys they must also deal with gendered ideals of femininity that further restrict their public behaviour (sic.)”. Hence, spatial constraint is a strategy imposed by older individuals to keep girls within the boundaries of femininity. Thomas concludes that hanging out in the urban public sphere is an apprehensive activity for girls and young women. However, hanging out also includes processes of shaping identities and carving social spheres in a sociality discursively programmed for boys and men (Ibid: 602). The girls’ experiences of hanging out in Fittja affirms Thomas’s view of the activity of hanging out in the urban public sphere to be gendered, although, for different reasons. While some of the girls argue that Ortengrabbarnas’ presence is a strong reason for not wanting to dwell in Fittja main square, Nova explains it otherwise.

“What makes me not want to hang out in Fittja center is because I don't see other girls doing that, so I don't feel represented, why would I go there if only young guys are there? But it is not them who make me feel insecure, it is more that I don’t want to hang there because I do not see any reason to be there. It's not because the guys are there”

Nova, 18

In her narrative Nova clearly articulates that she wants a reason to hang out in Fittja town center, as a girl. This might be a reason for the several social meeting spaces visible in the girls’ designs, the girls have integrated small spaces where it is okay for them to dwell. However, many of the meeting spaces are not for them per se. They have consciously created spaces that would attract a great variety of societal groups like children, mothers, elderly, larger groups of friends etc. in an attempt to feel represented in the urban public space. Geographers have previously acknowledged that girls have a capability to sculpt social spaces beyond the discursive reach of material spaces for men and adults (Skelton 2000; Thomas 2005). Additionally, by negotiating space in this sense, girls diminish themselves as victims of control (Skelton 2000: 90).
Interesting in the discussion of the girls’ suggestions of spontaneous social meeting spaces is how they enable, rather than disable, urban activity. Jarvis et al (2009: 155) explain that from a feminist perspective of everyday life experiences the architectural and planning practice often result in an urban form dominated by the “persistence of a narrow androcentric rubric ‘disabling’ rather than ‘enabling’”. This is especially relevant in Botkyrka and Fittja as many of the interventions of increasing safety for women has focused on Ortengrabbarna and restricting their activities in Fittja main square. Instead on enabling and encourage girls and women through the use of the built environment to take space in Fittja. All the design suggestions by the girls have a clear focus on enabling, rather than disabling. For example, by creating spontaneous social meeting spaces in Fittja main square, the girls are enabled to hang out there. Jarvis (2009: 154f) explain that social theory applied on design have given a comprehension of how design determine behavior.

5.2.4 The Value of Enhancing the Good

The girls use the built environment to materialize their social relationship to the space. Which may be a strategy for reshaping set images of Fittja as a place. One common trait throughout the girls’ designs is their enhancement of what is good about Fittja. Apart from social meeting places as cafés and spaces to “hang around and chill”, this enhancement of what is good about Fittja is materialized through architectural designs such as a radio station and different activity cubes built in glass. These designs signify values of belonging in various ways. One of these designs has become a signature creation by the girls. It is a greenhouse entirely in glass including a café, a radio station, and a terrace on the roof. The pictures below are screenshots taken by the girls from their Minecraft model created during the fourth workshop.

In addition to the café that is an invitation for people in Fittja to socialize in a structured and programmed area for just that, the radio has another important spatial and social function. Queen and Princess bring up in our interview that creating and listening to local music are vital means for belonging and identity making strategies in Fittja. Many famous hip hop artists are born in Botkyrka and the territorial stigmatization of the spatiality is a foundational aspect of
their music. The girls describe music, especially hip hop, to be a community builder, something everyone in Fittja can relate to. Queen is glad that the radio got integrated in the designs due the music’s close connection to Fittja’s spatial identity. She talks fondly about her favorite artists and she is noticeably proud of them, and proud of originating from the same place. She explains that music is the substance of their community and a reason why they feel a strong togetherness towards each other and the place. Princess agrees and says:

“I also think not everyone identifies with this stereotype the music gives but we all can listen to it and feel a connection with the music. I don’t feel that I fit that image [the hip hop culture] but I can still understand the music. It is very nice to feel that we belong together”

Princess, 21

Princess argues that even if she does not feel that hip hop symbolizes her own self-defined identity, she feels a close connection to what the music represents. Many scholars have analyzed hip hop and how this music genre intersects with gender, ethnicity and class from a spatial perspective. Kalle Berggren (2013: 190), for example, emphasizes how many pioneering hip hop artists came from the marginalized and segregated suburbs and used the music as a tool to challenge institutionalized racism. This has given hip hop a symbolic meaning the girls interviewed connect to on an emotional level. By building a radio station, the girls have materialized this symbolic meaning inherent in the music. Hence, the girls invite the social symbolism of the hip hop culture to permanently integrate the space of Fittja. So, the music’s integral ability to question cemented social power structures is transferred to a spatial context.

Apart from playing music from the locality, the idea behind the radio is to invite people from Botkyrka to talk and to perform. A will to enhance what is good about the area and show off its talents are visible in many of the designs. Many of the girls feel like the people who are successful and talented are not credited due to their decent in Botkyrka. Hence, highlighting local talents becomes a way of enhancing the communal feeling and spatial identity. Queen establishes this in regard to the hip hop artists of the area:
“Why I recall the music is because many hip hop artists originally come from Alby, Norsborg. They created the entire Swedish hip hop culture that is now all over Sweden. There we have created some history in the Swedish music industry, so I think it is more history than identity. What I thought was important to highlight is that when talking about suburbs, the debate is about that people are unemployed, that crime is going on here. No one brings up the story of what the suburbs have given to Sweden and society.”

Queen, 21

Queen positions herself in relation to dominating spatial discourses in this narrative. She indicates that the territorial stigmatization of the space inhibits talented people from actually getting credit, which makes her want to re-claim the history of in this case hip hop. Other girls have argued in similar ways. Leona for example explains that one of her favorite designs were the different activity cubes. The activity cubes were built outside of Fittja subway station as small spaces for social gatherings. The three cubes were built entirely in glass with different themes; an art exhibition; a library of children’s books; and a gaming hall.

Leona explains that the cube with the art exhibition would exhibit art from local young artists in Botkyrka. Leona explains that young artists of Botkyrka rarely get a platform to show their work, something the girls wanted to change by creating this small space for young artists from the area. The locality is constantly present in the girls’ narratives about the built environment, and it has been important to give the suburban identity a central role in their design making processes. Leona establishes:

“Art and music are very important in Botkyrka. It is a way for Botkyrka to show what they are worthy. It is important because we live in such a bad environment… or not like that… not dangerous either… but where we don’t always feel safe. Then it can be good to express yourself when you need it. I believe that music, as well as other forms of art, is an important tool for coping”

Leona, 17

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6 Norsborg is an area situated in Botkyrka just south of Fittja and Alby.
For Leona it is important to create a platform for and by the locality specifically. She expresses a need for spaces free from judgement and barriers, where one can be creative without being held back. Hence, according to Leona’s narratives, performing various art forms becomes a means of expression, as well as a tool for acknowledging one’s subjective spatial identity free from stigmatization processes. Additionally, art in the urban public space has several positive effects of both placemaking, social cohesion and well-being. Placemaking is an urban planning methodological concept referring to the process of creating a meaningful place (Koops and Galic, 2017). Boverket (2010; 2015) has for example stated in several reports that art production plays a vital role in visualizing and concretizing a space and its’ qualities. Through representing art and music in the built environment, the people of Fittja have the power to define and narrate the story of the space. Forms of art may namely utilize immaterial recourses and differences making a space to what it is. The girls have illuminated that the key to the strong feeling of belonging they experience in Fittja lies in the people, not in the built environment. Hence, they have taken key elements from social and cultural values that gives Fittja meaning and integrated them into the built environment. Which might be argued to a first step of a normalizing process and a tool to break territorial stigmatization. Frida explains how important it was to her to establish a We in her groups’ design suggestions during the fourth workshop:

“We mostly thought about the We, who We are, because it is different cultures and different countries here - so we thought about what represents the We - and what We can be - instead of focusing on where we come from”

Frida, 24

In this narrative it becomes clear that the discourse of inhabiting a vulnerable area and being subjects to stigmatization processes influence how the girls view the build environment and what it represents. The visualizations of the girls’ urban designs show that the built environment and the social geography of the space, here symbolized by territorial stigmatization, are closely related and cannot be separated from each other. The workshops have enabled a new set of values that goes beyond the actual process of giving input to an urban planning process. The girls show in their designs that when the identity of a place get integrated and valued, it can challenge dominating power structures and stigmatization norms. One fine example of this is a sign on the top of Fittja mall reading Fittja = Home and then a heart. When the girls who built this presented their design ideas at the end of the fourth workshop in February 2019, they said:

Girl 1: “We thought that this will represent what the residents of Fittja think of Fittja, because it is their home. And so that media doesn’t define what Fittja is. That those who live in Fittja get to represent the place themselves in a good way”

Girl 2: “And it is also said that the sound from helicopters are the national anthem of Fittja, because police helicopters are always souring above Fittja main square and Fittja in general, so when they do, they will know that Fittja is home and there will always be love here”

4+ workshop 4+ of February 2019 (video recording) [translated by me]

To summarize, the girls have integrated all senses into the city structure, something acknowledged by scholars to be important in city development processes, because it is with our senses, we have the ability to reach our feelings. This means that a city is more than its appearance, it is its smells, tastes, sounds and how it feels to inhabit in a specific location. The

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7 This presentation was filmed and uploaded in a publicly accessible folder on Google Drive. As I want to protect the anonymity of the girls interviewed for this thesis, I have chosen not to publish the names of the girls who did the presentation cited above.
ways the girls use their senses in their designs are closely connected to their spatial identity and their local knowing. Lena Falkheden (2005: 81) argues in a discussion about the sustainable city that feelings are vital when designing and redesigning city structures. Feelings are closely connected to our ability to feel empathy and concern, which are important parameters in relationship building processes. She says that “We need to be emotionally concerned to get the power and motivation to participate in processes of change” (Falkheden 2005: 81) [my translation]. The foregoing applies to both residents and visitors of Fittja.

Through the use of Minecraft as a method to understand Fittja as a place, the girls have visualized in their designs how Fittja is constituted socially as a space, and materialized their meaning making strategies. This is one of the fundamental variables in placemaking as an urban planning method. Placemaking is a method increasingly adverted to by urban planners, public authorities and residents as a means to reclaim, remake and regenerate an urban public space (Sweeney et al. 2018: 571). Through design as a methodological approach, the girls get tools to describe and define Fittja in their own term. Their definition of Fittja challenges the medial image of the place as dangerous, unsafe and in other ways stigmatized, renewing the image of Fittja as a place instead characterized in terms of togetherness, openness and belonging.

Observing the built environment from the perspective highlighted in this section challenges us to think about the concept of architecture and planning to be more than just material (c.f. Jarvis et al 2009). How the girls identify with Fittja as a space is clearly visible in their design proposals, which arguably make their design solutions context based. Hence, these physical design suggestions cannot be implemented in another area without considering that area’s own spatial identity and meaning making strategies. However, there are aspects of the process used in #UrbanGirlsMovement that other urban development projects should be inspired by. To this I now turn.
5.3 Participation: Gender-Transformative Urban Planning

This section draws on the previous two and brings the intersectional identities experienced by the girls in relation to the process of participation in #UrbanGirlsMovement. It illustrates how participating in an urban development process has for these girls become a meaning making process. It focuses on power structures inherent in gender and age categorizations. I connect these narratives to previous research on gender transformative urban planning and what methods may be used to transform power relations inherent in the planning process. In the analyzing process I have identified three aspects of the process in #UrbanGirlsMovement that have impacted the girls’ identity formation processes and questioned set notions of themselves as young girls. Hence enabled their abilities to participate in the process on equal terms. These aspects are facilitation, gender separation, and adult collaboration.

5.3.1 Facilitation

Many of the girls expressed a surprised feeling after the first workshops in that they actually got attention. Nova for example explains that she thought that she would go there to listen not to speak. She says:

“They listened so much to us. Before I got there, I thought it would be us girls who would listen to them. It was more that we got there, and they asked us questions. We were in focus. I got to reflect on Fittja. I’ve been there a lot, but I’ve never thought about why I didn’t enjoy it before, I came to realization and learned to think differently”

Nova, 18

Nova unconsciously believed that she would be the listener, and one might argue that this is due to her social position of being a young girl. Sofia Wiberg (2018: 237) concludes in her PhD thesis ‘The Practice of Listening’ [translated by me] that there is a power asymmetry between speaking and listening. Speaking is discursively interconnected to something active, and listening to something passive, i.e. the same discursive power relationship between men and women, and children and adults. There are several dimensions to listening. Nova highlights a power dimension of listening that can be seen in social categorizations of gender and age. Wiberg (2018) responds to this by arguing that listening also is an active process and highly relevant in urban development processes, especially to mitigate the inherent dichotomies of expert knowledge/lived experience, man/woman, adult/child. Understanding the practice of listening through this perspective, it becomes political and a strategy for urban planners and adults to activate a subjective identity formation process within children and youth. Active listening could be argued to be a temporary power shift. Ortiz Escalante and Gutiérrez Valdivia (2015) address the role of the planner in similar terms as Wiberg (2018) as a method for gender transformative urban planning. They argue that “Urban transformation through bottom-up participation is easier in places where planners are receptive to the principles of participation and bottom-up development, and therefore content to adopt the role of facilitator instead of the expert” (Ortiz Escalante and Gutiérrez Valdivia 2015: 122). Hence, active listening becomes a tool for urban planners to address power asymmetries both within the planning practice itself, but also as a means to questions power struggles of in this case genderation. However, this is stated by Ortiz Escalante and Gutiérrez Valdivia (2015) to be one of the biggest challenges when implementing processes of gender transformative urban planning. It requires knowledge and a special collection of skills to facilitate participatory processes with marginalized communities. A skill many of the adult professionals in #UrbanGirlsMovement seemed to have.
To connect this challenge to the case of #UrbanGirlsMovement, having active listeners triggers certain subjective feelings within the girls important to highlight. Similar to Nova’s narrative aforementioned, Belle states that:

“No one took us for granted, like ‘here, draw your ideas’ and then they would throw it in the trash, it’s really not like that. You feel that you have an influence, you feel like part of something bigger”

Belle, 16

The feeling of being important, or part of something bigger as Belle articulates, was consistent throughout all the girls’ narratives about their experiences of #UrbanGirlsMovement and its process. This could be described as empowerment. According to Ortiz Escalante and Gutiérrez Valdivia (2015) one main strategy for successful implementation of gender transformative urban planning is building women’s empowerment. They understand empowerment as “a process of reaffirmation of women’s capacities, as well as the appropriation of spaces to perform these capacities.” (Ibid: 117). That is, empowerment does not entail giving power but recognizing power. Empowerment implies an awareness of the individual and collective power of women and to provide platforms and opportunities for women to execute that power through decision-making processes. Finding tools that acknowledge women in this sense, especially women from marginalized communities, visualize their distinctive knowledge and experiences of the social realms. Narratives from the girls’ interviewed indicate that #UrbanGirlsMovement has used tools where the girls have felt acknowledge in the way Ortiz Escalante and Gutiérrez Valdivia (2015) indicate.

5.3.2 Gender Separation

The second aspect of the process used during #UrbanGirlsMovement that has had similar empowering effects as facilitation with active listening is gender separation. Young girls from Fittja and adjacent places have in this project been targeted specifically due to their marginalized position in terms of gender and age. Cameron and Grant-Smith (2005) explain that separating young women and young men from each other in development processes does have an impact on the result. Leona for example explains how she felt about being separated from boys as the following:

“I think it [#UrbanGirlsMovement] is great, that you give the girls power and the platform to do what we want. You’ve said fantasize, write, exaggerate, do what you want, we won’t judge you. Finally, girls get a safe space to do it without being condemned as ‘pffft, do you really think you can that?’ No one drops unnecessary comments but encourages each other to do their best. Just pushing each other. I often feel suppressed because I’m a girl… Urban Girls Movement have helped us show that we can”

Leona, 17

Leona explains to me that her experiences of being condemned has emerged during recent years. She tells me about her high school class where she is one of three girls. She rarely feels like she can express herself due to her boy peers questioning her ability to do certain things because of her gender. In contrast to this, #UrbanGirlsMovement becomes a space where she feels encouraged, instead of suppressed, because of her gender. Hence, a platform where Leona is encouraged to utilize the power she actually inhabits, and a reason for empowerment. Often, routine consultation techniques used in urban planning processes may not be applicable to settings regarding populations of marginalized positions. This has for example been discussed by Cameron and Grant-Smith (2005) in an Australian context. They argue that transformative planning methods are needed to address the needs of marginalized groups in the Australian
urbanity, such as Aboriginals or Torres Strait Islanders, as well as young people and women (Cameron and Grant-Smith 2005: 23). One of these methods are to conduct separate consultation processes. To separate consultation processes is a strategy to target specific societal groups in isolation from each other. It has shown to be particularly useful to enhance marginalized citizens. Cameron and Grant-Smith argue that “this is important for ensuring that the voices of those who might normally be absent from or marginalised (sic.) in a mainstream engagement program are heard and their perspectives taken into account in planning and decision-making processes.” (2005: 25f)

Connected to this, Amy and Nelly discuss that being in a group of only girls makes them more open. They explain that they probably had been more reserved and not been able to articulate their ideas in the same way if boys were part of the process. Something confirmed by Cameron and Grant-Smith (2005) who claim that young women tend to be more open and willing to speak if young men are absent. Amy states:

“I think girls care too much about what people should think. Personally, I don't care for a shit, I say what I want as long as it's not offensive. I think it depends on what upbringing you've had, if you had parents who stopped you from saying anything and closed you in a corner. Or if you’ve been raised in a way that you can speak but you should speak right. It’s a pity”

Amy, 18

Amy expresses that how you act as a girl, or how you feel you should act as a girl, are connected to your upbringing. This corresponds to gender as a performative and socially constructed phenomenon (Butler 2006). Additionally, it brings another dimension to approaching girls with an upbringing of being silenced. The role of the planner as a facilitator of speech becomes vital. Listerborn (2008: 72) amplifies this as she concludes that using participatory planning methods with marginalized populations demands high sensibility to citizens mental mapping, i.e. how citizens everyday life worlds, specifically how they are gendered both socially and geographically. Listerborn (2008) clarifies that planners in general are aware of the importance of a local perspective, but rarely have a comprehension about citizens’ mental maps. Many urban development processes spear few resources to understand the locality and the citizens mental mapping on a deeper level. However, if gender categories and stereotypes are treated as “natural” they remain largely unquestioned. An aspect especially important to take into consideration when working with young girls. The Social Anthropologist Fanny Ambjörnsson has together with Maria Jönsson (2010) studied the intersectional relationship of gender, age and sexuality and explains that there is a strong discourse of normative demands inherent in the social category girl. It is this discourse Amy describes in her narrative. The girls interviewed showed great knowledge about their discursive societal position in regard to several social categorizations, which affect their understanding of the world. Belle, for example, addresses women’s prescribed societal role as primary carers when explaining why it has been important for her to engage in a consultation process solely with other girls. She says:

“It is important to get girls to feel that girls actually have an influence, because they have always had this ‘second job’… or what should I say… been behind the scene? We have never been able to show ourselves, it has always been the boys' job to take care of this and that. And now that we get to do such a big project that mostly consists of girls, it is really cool that we get to show ourselves, and like this was created by girls. It gives a little more power…”

Belle, 16
Belle highlights a traditional understanding of gender roles, the role of women as belonging to the private sphere and men to the public sphere. She feels like it is not her job, as a girl, to have an influence. Belle’s narrative show that the inherent power dimensions in gender categorizations impact how her everyday life world is constituted. To her, being separated from boys has been an empowering experience as she feels that she, together with the other participants in #UrbanGirlsMovement, get the opportunity and platform to show their abilities. However, it might have been experienced differently by someone with another mental mapping. According to Ortiz Escalante and Gutiérrez Valdivia (2015) it is also of primary importance to take women’s discursive role as carers into consideration and questioning when working with gender-transformative urban planning techniques.

In #UrbanGirlsMovement, the girls’ narratives indicate that gender separation has had a transformative effect in that it has encouraged them to speak and consequently brought a feeling of being heard. With that said, boys should not be left out of urban planning processes in Fittja, or other deprived neighborhoods. They possess distinctive spatial experiences needed to tackle socio-economic instabilities in these neighborhoods, but other processes might be needed to target that specific societal group. All perspectives are necessary to achieve an inclusive city. Additionally, Cameron and Grant-Smith (2005) pose two fears of separation as a consultation strategy. Firstly, it may encourage groups to focus solely on their own interests and needs, in contrast to having a holistic approach targeting the “collective good” as many planning policy documents suggest. Secondly, it shields citizens from hearing, comprehending and managing ideas and perspectives that other societal groups might have. These are valid fears, nevertheless, as #UrbanGirlsMovement has a process where the girls integrate with adults of different professional knowledge, many of the negative effects of these fears are mitigated. Amelie for example addresses that collaborating with adults from other parts of town made her see Fittja from multiply perspectives. She says:

“I have been given the opportunity to think about how others think about the place. If you compare experiences from those who live here and what media says and such things - to mix different views”

Amelie, 18

In summary, #UrbanGirlsMovement has used a process where young girls from the locality of Fittja and adjacent places have been hired as part of a consultation process. Hence, the process has separated young girls from young boys in order to highlight the needs and wants from young girls solely. However, even though #UrbanGirlsMovement may be seen as a separate consultation process based on gender and age for the girls, they express noticeable values of having to collaborate and interact across generation boundaries. To this I now turn.

5.3.3 Adult Collaboration

In the girls’ narratives, several transformative effects may be identified regarding the aspect of having a collaborative element between young girls and adult professionals. The adults have had a connection to the project in various ways and attended the workshops as part of their work tasks. A selection of companies and organizations represented by one or several people during the workshops are: Botkyrka municipality; Umeå municipality; PLAN international; PLAN Sweden; Sweden’s innovation agency, Vinnova; real estate developer Kungsvåningen; White Architects; Ericsson; tech company iTeam; The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida; and UN Habitat, as well as Stockholm university; Södertörn.

8 As a side note, this is the same understanding of men and women that was the basis of the modernist and positivist planning policy that dominated the 1900s when large parts of the housing units in Fittja were built.
university; and KTH Royal Institute of Technology. Hence, the group of adult professionals have been very diverse and harbored a wide variety of knowledge. Amy and Nelly discuss how they experienced having to interact with adult professionals in the following way:

Nelly: “I have to say that I liked that it wasn’t only us girls. You know, that it came architects and people from the working life. It was inspiring to like ‘Wow she works as a social scientist, she is an architect’”

Amy: “Yeah you really felt inspired, you felt like something actually might happen! It makes you find your inner spark again (…) I also think it was good that the adults stepped aside a bit and like ‘here youngsters, do your thing!’”

Me: “Was it good to be separated from the adults during some of the workshop tasks?”

Amy: “I think so… you really feel intimidated… you know, a little afraid or reserved by a professional architect”

Nelly: “They were really open to our ideas though when we worked together. They weren’t like ‘no we can’t do it like this’, they were more like ‘good, we can work with this!’”

Amy: “I thought they would be more boxed in… you know, pretty standard, but it was really cool to see their ideas and designs! They used so much colors and stuff I had never heard of before! And that really got my mind spinning. I think you choose the right adults”

There are several dimensions of the relationship between youth and adults inherent in this discussion. As the girls’ narratives about how they experienced the process of #UrbanGirls-Movement illuminated a complex relationship towards being heard, this conversation can be analyzed through the theoretical term genderation (c.f. Mabala 2007; Mabala 2011). Amy and Nelly describe an almost ambivalent relationship towards working with adult professionals. On one hand, an adult presence gave legitimacy to the project and the adults’ professional abilities made the girls feel inspired. It also mattered who the adults were. On this note, Frida addresses that it was important to have high-level officials from the municipality present. Botkyrka municipality had official representatives present in all workshops. Having the municipality present had an effect on how the girls perceived the project and its legitimacy. Frida, for example, explains that “There’s [in #UrbanGirlsMovement] a lot of people who actually want to help. The municipality was there and really wanted to hear us out and that made me feel it was for real. Because if we don’t say something, they will never know.” Irvin and Stanbury (2004: 56) have listed advantages of citizen participation in the article ‘Citizen Participation in Decision Making – Worth the Effort?’ and contend that an in-depth citizen participation process aid to exceed barriers between government and citizens creating mutual trust and learning.

However, the professional abilities the adults embody are also intimidating to Nelly and Amy as stated in their abovementioned narrative. I believe that the underlying reason for this ambivalent relationship towards the adult professionals are connected to genderation. Adults have a more powerful societal position than youth, something highlighted by Thomas (2005) in her study of girls’ resistance to adults’ spatial control in the United Kingdom. Youth are often considered problematic due to normative ideas of youth being unpredictable, immature, and incapable of taking reasonable decisions for themselves and others (c.f. Mabala 2007; Mabala 2011; Ambjörnsson and Jönsson 2010; Thomas 2005). Due to these normative assumptions, adults have traditionally imposed their power over youth to preserve and restore social order, hence, decision-making arenas have become exclusively for adults. Resisting this imposed power is, according to Thomas (2005: 588), an identificatory activity amongst most youth, both boys and girls. Henceforth, the impost power over youth and youth restriction processes are constitutive parts of the definition of youth itself. These youth/adult dualities are affirmed in
the girls’ narratives. In intersectional terms, the girls interviewed are being controlled in multiple ways, both as girls and as youth. Giving them few venues where they are allowed to express themselves freely. Many of the girls were expecting to be controlled by the adults and were surprised when they were not, making them ambivalent to the situation. Leona, for example, experienced that it was positive that girls and adults needed to collaborate in the workshop activities, however, she explains the following:

“I thought it was good to be together with the adults, but it was important that us young people did the tasks ourselves, they just helped us and guided us on how we would do it (…) I think it was really nice, if I say so, that no longer be controlled by older people but being able to think for myself, to be able to solve by myself, to be able to decide what I should do and what I can do. It was really nice.”

Leona, 17

Leona explicates in this narrative that she enjoys not being controlled by older people as it gives her an opportunity to subjectively understand and exercise her own abilities without restrictions. However, it was not simply an adult presence creating this transformative effect. It was the adults’ manners in attending the workshops as passive participants that impacted the girls. This passivity may be connected to the facilitating role of planners aforementioned. Interacting with adults with facilitating or passive roles in comparison to the girls made Belle, for example, suddenly felt like an adult:

“I feel like an adult in that I can participate in such a big project and share my thoughts. Because it is still me and girls of my age who live here, and we should also get the right to decide how it should be. In this way, it is very good that they have chosen to bring young girls into this project.”

Belle, 16

In relation to the abovementioned discussion of normative behavior of adults and youth, respectively, feeling like an adult might indicate that the girls recognized themselves with the normative qualifications of an adult, i.e. mature and capable of making valid decisions. Therefore, the process of #UrbanGirlsMovement included aspects had a transformative effect on power relations inherent in genderation. Having local girls collaborate with professional adults gave the girls a feeling of legitimacy and empowerment to pursue and develop their own thoughts and ideas. It created a space where they felt meaningful and acknowledged. However, these transformative impacts on power structures could only be identified as long as the adults had an indicative role. Hence, these three aspects identified to have a gender transformative effect, facilitation, gender separation and adult collaboration, do not operate in isolation to one another but are complimentary and have a cohesive relationship.

To shortly summarize the findings, the design proposals developed by the girls in #UrbanGirls-Movement symbolizes and enhances the spatial identity of Fittja experienced by the girls interviewed. Therefore, these actual designs are highly contextual and should not be seen as an example for gender transformative urban architecture. However, there are aspects of the process applied in #UrbanGirlsMovement that could be generalizable to other geographical and social contexts, but the result from the process will likely differ depending on contextual settings. Being part of an urban development process generates certain set of values and meaning experienced by the participating girls. Belle and Lucy highlight that only being part of #UrbanGirlsMovement has empowered them.

Belle: “I think we should inspire other places to do the same as we have done here. Even though 99% does not come true, they should really give it a try.”
Lucy: “Besides, you get to feel the power to be heard… you really feel it! It is something that I will bring with me for the rest of my life - that I was in urban girls and expressed my thoughts – so powerful!”

Belle and Lucy believe #UrbanGirlsMovement could inspire other places to implement a similar process. Just being part of an urban development process and given the opportunity and platform to be heard has according to Lucy been inspiring and powerful. Wiberg (2018: 28f) stresses in her study of the practice of listening in urban consultation processes that “…by giving residents the opportunity to participate in political conversations, knowledge of democratic processes is developed, which can lead to residents gaining stronger political self-confidence and starting to engage and organize themselves” [translated by me]. Hence, allowing young girls to take part in decision-making processes has societal values that go beyond the actual process. Princess points to one of several positive externalities created involving girls in an urban development process:

“I also think that there are other younger people who check this out and think that these are suburban girls who try to make a change - if that does not happen then they will not try. If they see that we are trying to change something and notice that it is working, others may follow and try to improve society.”

Princess, 21

Princess highlights values of empowerment creating a feeling of being able to make a change. She also expresses a new dimension to citizen engagement and societal organization, i.e. being engaged in your locality encourages the next generation to develop societal organizational skills. Princess hopes that her participation in #UrbanGirlsMovement will make younger girls realize that it is possible to make a societal difference when and where needed, creating citizens aware of their democratic rights and with the power to use them. Which would be a socio-economic benefit for society as a whole in the long run.

5.4 Considered Challenges

I would like to finalize by uttering some concluding remarks on the challenges of gender-transformative urban planning techniques. Gender-transformative urban planning methods are time and resource consuming. It requires a multidisciplinary approach to the urban planning practice and challenges planners’ expert knowledge. All actors involved in an urban development project need to engage in critical reflection. Addressing gender cannot simply be collecting and staging sex desegregated data but implies problematizing and questioning of set notions of gender (Cornwall 2003). However, Cornwall argues that good analysis and tools for gender-transformative urban planning are seldom enough, but what is needed is “advocacy, persistence and influence to accompany the process all the way through to the writing stage” (Ibid: 1336). A participatory method addressing gender, and other power structures, needs to start at an early stage of the urban development process and follow all the way through the final synthesis stage. It is to this day uncertain if Botkyrka municipality will engage in further actualization of the ideas and designs created by the girls. The girls are worried about the outcome of the project and highlight that most of the positive alternative values that have been created during the process of #UrbanGirlsMovement will be lost if the municipality do not actualize any of their ideas.

Additionally, to challenge and transform gender norms, strategic work that takes into account the power effects of difference is needed. This means that processes enabling people both to recognize and to use their agency needs to be combined with advocacy (Cornwall 2003: 1338). Hence, implementing a process that includes the aspects of facilitation, gender separation, and
adult collaboration might not be enough for effectively questioning and transforming intersectional structures making girls and young women in socio-economic deprived neighborhoods one of the most vulnerable group when using the urban public space today. For this to happen advocacy is crucial. Advocating transformative aspects of the process is piloted by Global Utmaning and will be developed during the fall in 2019. This will hopefully lead to successful policy recommendations on how to address gender issues in urban planning processes and open up for strategic advocacy on women’s distinctive experiences and knowledge about urban livelihoods.

To conclude, through analysis of several participatory urban development processes, Cornwall (2003) points out several key factors for development processes to have a positive impact on gender relations. These factors are: community knowledge by collaboration with local NGOs, presence of high-level officials throughout the process, advocacy for policy recommendations, and that a gender analysis is central through all stages. The same tendencies can be identified in #UrbanGirlsMovement, making it a well-deserved exemplifying case for successfully implementing gender-transformative urban planning techniques.
6.0 Conclusion

#UrbanGirlsMovement in Fittja was launched as a project with the explicit purpose of highlighting young girls in marginalized positions, to test new methods for inclusive and just urban development. Fittja is one of the many Million Dwellings Program areas around Stockholm that are expanding while the majority of the existing housing units are in dire need of refurbishment. This thesis has observed and analyzed how girls participating in #UrbanGirls-Movement express their spatial identities towards Fittja and how these identity formation processes are materialized into their design proposals of Fittja main square. This analysis of the girls’ narratives has proved that a participatory method addressing gender is crucial when working with physical redevelopment interventions in socio-economically deprived areas.

Through their participation in #UrbanGirlsMovement, the girls have expressed a counter discourse towards territorial stigmatization processes constituting and defining Fittja as a place. The girls’ narratives reveal that the residents of Fittja have inherited a shared identity that comes from inhabiting an area constituted of various oppressive power structures, shaping their understanding of both the self and the community. As a result of stigmatization, the inhabitants share a territorial identity of coming from the suburb. The girls’ expressed social identities and experiences of Fittja as a space are reflected in their ideas and designs proposed throughout the process of #UrbanGirlsMovement. The girls have used physical urban design techniques to enhance their own subjective spatial identities and how they, as young girls, create meaning of Fittja as a space. The girls show great comprehension of how Fittja is constituted socially and culturally, and highlight that an atmosphere of belonging, togetherness, and openness shape the residents in Fittja. This atmosphere is integrated in the design proposals by the girls and may be described as efforts to break norm barriers created between Fittja and other parts of Stockholm. The girls have through their designs made it possible for residents of the area to spontaneously socialize, as well as invited outsiders to visit Fittja and re-evaluate their objective image of the place formed by the dominant media discourse. These efforts have socio-economic benefits as they enhance social cohesion both within the area and between Fittja and the rest of Stockholm, which in the long run may have the possibility to break segregation patterns.

The design proposals created by the girls are correlated to their spatial and socio-cultural connection to the spatiality of Fittja, making them highly contextualized. The outcome of #UrbanGirlsMovement may not be generalized to other spatial contexts, albeit, aspects of the process have the possibility to be universalized and normalized in planning processes. Based on observations and analysis of #UrbanGirlsMovement as a case, an urban development processes including girls and young women creates meaning and empowerment to the ones participating in the process. Hence, planning policies and practices impact the identity formation processes of young women as they may facilitate a platform to re-define the meaning of space and express their own subjective spatial identities, leading to empowerment. This in turn, challenges set norms of gender, age, class, and space. #UrbanGirlsMovement shows that a planning process is more than the physical designs of the built environment, it is as much a tool for enhanced democracy, equality, and justice in cities. Nevertheless, for planning processes to be used as a vehicle for enhanced social and spatial values, there is a need for intersectional planning tools that transform spatial power and oppression. Awareness of normalized power structures forming young girls’ ever-day lives should be a requirement for all actors involved in urban development processes, as it enables them to target this specific societal group tactfully. There are aspects of the process used in #UrbanGirlsMovement that
initiate gender-transformative effects. These aspects could be summarized as facilitation, gender separation, and adult collaboration. These aspects are cohesive as they challenge inherent generation power structures when applied in conjunction with one another.

The girls’ narratives give an idea of how being part of a participatory urban development process influence their identity formation processes and understanding of space. The girls’ narratives reveal that it has been an empowering experience to be part of #UrbanGirls-Movement as their self-defined identities of being young girls in Fittja have been enhanced, both socially and physically. Socially, the process enabled the girls to recognize their own abilities. By re-evaluating the role of the planner to take a facilitating role, the girls shouldered the role of experts. It legitimized the girls’ ideas and designs, enabling them both to recognize and to use their own agency, which is the definition of empowerment. Physically, the process of redesigning a familiar place enabled the girls to regenerate the meaning of the urban public space around Fittja main square to mirror their own subjective spatial identities and connection to Fittja. Hence, the girls’ participation in #UrbanGirlsMovement may be viewed as much as a participatory planning process, as a process of belonging and self-identification for the girls.

This thesis has contributed with perspectives and insights of how a gender-transformative urban planning approach positively impacts girls inhabiting an especially vulnerable area. These insights are particularly valuable in contemporary Sweden, when large building complexes produced towards the end of the 1900s are in dire need of renovation. Through implementing a clear gender perspective founded in the local social and cultural context throughout the planning processes, these renovation interventions have vast opportunities to facilitate a much-needed transformation towards a more socially sustainable Stockholm. We have an opportunity to not only renovate the built environment and ensure adequate housing for all, but to renovate gendered power structures oppressing and excluding women from many of our cities’ services and decision-making arenas. Involving women in urban development converts the city to a support system, instead of a barrier.

Supplemental research is required to fully comprehend the impact of policy and planning in identity formation processes and how a transformative change of the planning discourse might positively impact society at large. Longitudinal research of this sort will most likely show behavioral changes within areas implementing gender-transformative urban planning techniques. The girls show signs of increased societal trust as a consequence of taking control over their ambient environment. This might lead to socio-economic benefits of increased educational levels and better work opportunities, as well as reduced mental illness and societal exclusion. This increases the economic value of the area, enticing businesses to settle, as well as increasing the revenue of the properties. Hence, this would not only positively influence girls and women of the area, but there are clear signs indicating that the type of planning process declared in this thesis would benefit all parts of society. However, additional projects implementing a gender perspective are necessary, and they need to include a comprehensive follow up and evaluation. At the moment we lack methods to efficiently calculate both the business values and socio-economic benefits of a more equal and just urban planning process. Further multidisciplinary research needs to be conducted on how alternative values in the urban planning process can be quantified and incorporated into the planning processes already in place, as they are regulated by political and economic policies. Deeper knowledge of how to ensure social sustainability is crucial if we are to achieve international goals of e.g. the 2030 Agenda, the New Urban Agenda, as well as the Paris Agreement – we have the possibility to ensure a sustainable development right here and now by questioning the planning discourse and implementing alternative gender-transformative urban planning techniques on a large scale.
7.0 References


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### 7.1 Personal Interviews and Personal Communication

Amelie (pseudonym). Interviewed by: Anneroth, E. (27\textsuperscript{th} of Mars 2019).

Amy (pseudonym). Interviewed by: Anneroth, E. (20\textsuperscript{th} of Mars 2019).

Belle (pseudonym). Interviewed by: Anneroth, E. (1\textsuperscript{st} of April 2019).

Frida (pseudonym). Interviewed by: Anneroth, E. (8\textsuperscript{th} of April 2019).

Girl. (2019) Participant in the 4\textsuperscript{th} workshop of #UrbanGirlsMovement, pers. comm. 3\textsuperscript{rd} Feburary 2019.

Kenza (pseudonym). Interviewed by: Anneroth, E. (1\textsuperscript{st} of April 2019).

Leona (pseudonym). Interviewed by: Anneroth, E. (11\textsuperscript{th} of April 2019).

Lucy (pseudonym). Interviewed by: Anneroth, E. (1\textsuperscript{st} of April 2019).

Nelly (pseudonym). Interviewed by: Anneroth, E. (20\textsuperscript{th} of Mars 2019).

Nova (pseudonym). Interviewed by: Anneroth, E. (27\textsuperscript{th} of Mars 2019).

Princess (pseudonym). Interviewed by: Anneroth, E. (1\textsuperscript{st} of April 2019).

Queen (pseudonym). Interviewed by: Anneroth, E. (1\textsuperscript{st} of April 2019)
Appendix 1

**Interview questions [originally conducted in Swedish]**

Tell me a little bit about yourself - who are you? Where you grew up, your family constellation, background etc.

How did you get in touch with UGM?

Why did you apply for UGM?

Have you done anything similar before?

Do you have any other local involvement in addition to UGM? Why do you want to get involved in your locality?

Did you have any expectations before you started to participate in UGM?

Has UGM met your expectations? Why, why not?

What has been best? If you were free to change anything in UGM’s process, what would it be? Why?

Would you have participated in UGM even if you did not get paid? Is it important for you to be paid for such an engagement?

Do you tell others about #UrbanGirlsMovement, such as family and friends? What do you usually say then?

Are you proud of being part of UGM?

What is your relationship with Fittja Square?

What does Fittja mean to you? Why?

Tell me about a place you feel that you belong to.

Has your relationship with Fittja been permanent always, or has it changed?

Has your relationship to Fittja specifically changed during your participation in UGM? What made your relationship to Fittja change/not change?

During the workshops, there have been several conversations about the so called ‘Ortengrabbarna’ - what is your view of ‘Ortengrabbarna’? Are ‘Ortengrabbarna’ an important part of Fittja's identity?

Has your view of the city and city development changed through your participation in UGM?

Have you become more aware of how cities and places are planned and how it affects you in your everyday life?

Have you considered these things before you participated in UGM?

For example, how your surroundings affect you as a girl, or how you adapt to your surroundings because you are a girl.

What is your main lesson that you bring with you from your participation in UGM? Why is this lesson important?

Would you have liked to have had more opportunities to engage in this type of project as a young woman? Why is it important/unimportant to get involved in this type of project?