SOCIALY MIXED HOUSING

A study on the operationalisation and outcomes of social mix policy in Sweden

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Abstract

In response to increasing patterns of socio-spatial segregation, Swedish cities have adopted policies to promote social mix, which is generally considered positive due to its effect on spatial justice and social cohesion. However, institutional changes have negatively impacted the possibilities of fulfilling this policy objective. Moreover, there is a suggested discrepancy between objective and outcome. This paper is a comparative study on the operationalisation and outcomes of social mix policies in Sweden, focusing on two large-scale urban development projects; Stockholm Royal Seaport and RiverCity Gothenburg. Qualitative content analysis of planning documents and interviews with key actors have been conducted and the results demonstrate that in both cases, social mix has been promoted to some extent by planning for a diverse housing structure. In Gothenburg, additional measures have been taken in order to safeguard affordability. However, the absence of such measures in the case of Stockholm has resulted in the exclusion of low-income households. I argue that while there is a perceived inability among the planners of Stockholm to influence housing costs, the planners of Gothenburg have found ways of utilising the current institutional setting in favor of social mix. By applying a social justice perspective, I conclude that a policy approach safeguarding the affordability of housing is critical for combating residential segregation and spatial injustice.

Keywords: Social mix, housing policy, segregation, social justice, urban planning.


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1. Introduction

1.1. Housing policy and segregation

To an increased extent, Sweden’s larger cities are characterised by socio-spatial segregation, where central parts of our cities are becoming increasingly inaccessible to low-income segments of the population. Over the past three decades, the Swedish housing sector has undergone a number of critical institutional and political changes which have negatively impacted the right to housing and resulted in a shortage of housing that is affordable to low-income households (SOU 2018:35: 42). Combined with past planning ideals based on zoning principles, as well as discrimination of minority groups, these developments have reinforced patterns of socio-spatial segregation (CRUSH 2016: 89-92). The spatial separation of social groups across the city is broadly recognised as having negative impacts on democracy and on people’s life chances (e.g. Tunström, Anderson & Perjo 2016: 37; Van Kempen & Bolt 2012: 2). Thus, residential segregation functions as both a cause for, and a manifestation of, socially unjust urban environments.

In response to the prevailing segregation, there is a national policy objective of promoting socially mixed cities and neighbourhoods. By creating a diversified housing structure where tenure forms, housing types and sizes are integrated, a social mix is expected to follow. Social mix is believed to promote spatial justice by ensuring equal access to services, workplaces and recreational spaces (Andersson, Bråmå & Hogdal 2009; Tunström, Anderson & Perjo 2016). It is also believed to foster social cohesion as different social groups interact on a regular basis (Bergsten & Holmqvist 2013). The policy objective of creating socially mixed cities and neighbourhoods has prevailed since the 1970s, when the negative effects of the Million Homes Programme became a fact. Low-income households were concentrated in separated enclaves consisting of public rental housing, which caused social stigma and consequently came to represent one side of the problematic of residential segregation. Today, the policy objective is found in a number of national political documents (Prop. 2012/13:178; SOU 2015:58) as well as in most municipal comprehensive plans. However, the operationalisation of social mix policies has sometimes been criticised for causing gentrification and thereby being counterproductive in the pursuit of mitigating the effects of residential segregation (Bergsten & Holmqvist 2013: 289). Departing from this suggested discrepancy between policy objective and outcome, this study aims to examine the ways in which social mix policy is currently being operationalised in a Swedish context, by applying a social justice perspective.
1.2. Objectives and contribution

In examining the contemporary operationalisation of social mix policy, this study focuses on two comparable, large-scale urban development projects: RiverCity Gothenburg and Stockholm Royal Seaport, both of which have an expressed objective of creating socially mixed housing. Through qualitative content analysis of planning documents and political reports, as well as qualitative interviews with key actors, I will seek to answer the following research questions: (1) In which ways has the political goal of creating socially mixed housing been operationalised? (2) What outcomes can be expected? (3) What possibilities and limitations are there?

This study makes a societal contribution by critically examining the nature and justness of modern housing development aiming to create a social mix. Furthermore, it makes an academic contribution to the fields of housing studies and urban planning by concerning itself with the expected outcomes of social mix policy, when few previous studies have had such a focus (Vetenskapsrådet 2018:22). Moreover, it makes a contribution by qualitatively comparing the ways in which the growing issue of residential segregation is addressed and handled by different local authorities within the same institutional setting. The results of this study can be of interest to municipalities and housing companies in Sweden, for which they can potentially contribute to decision making and to the development of policy. This study relates to target 11.1 of the 2030 Agenda, the aim of which is to "ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums" (United Nations n.d.).

1.3. Disposition

This introductory chapter gives a presentation of the subject and its relevance, and describes in brief terms how the study has been carried out. It also presents the aim and objectives of the study, its research questions as well as relevant concepts. The following chapter starts off with providing some theoretical points of departure, namely social justice and the right to housing, and goes on to give an account of previous research concerning Swedish housing policy, residential segregation, social mix, neighbourhood effects as well as the notions of affordability and accessibility. Thereafter, I go on to describe the methods and methodology used, followed by a justification of the choice of empirical field as well as a discussion on ethical considerations made. Subsequently, I go on to present the results of the qualitative content analysis and interviews conducted. Next, I proceed with analysing and
discussing said results by applying the theoretical framework. I start off this chapter by discussing each development project separately, in terms of the local planning context, the ways in which the social mix policy has been operationalised, what outcomes can be expected and what risks are associated. This is followed by a comparison of the two projects. The next and final chapter then provides some concluding remarks by returning to the aim of the study and its research questions. It also puts forward some policy recommendations as well as suggested further research.

1.4. Definition of concepts

1.4.1. Housing types and tenure forms

This study uses some concepts related to housing types and tenure forms that might need clarifying. There are a number of different housing types, some examples of which are multi-family housing, townhouses and single-family villas. Multi-family housing can furthermore be divided into high-rise buildings, mid-rise buildings and slab blocks, to name a few (Andersson, Bråmå & Hogdal 2009: 5). Moreover, the Swedish housing system primarily consists of three types of tenures, which refer to the terms under which housing can be occupied. These are rental housing, cooperative housing (also called tenant-owned housing), and ownership housing (also called owner-occupation housing). Living in a rental flat entails paying monthly rent to the property owner. The property is normally owned either by a public or a private housing company. Cooperative housing is a housing form which is specific for Sweden, where it is called “bostadsrätt”. Residents of cooperative housing do not own their flats, but through their ownership of shares in the cooperative housing society (bostadsrättsförening), they have the right to occupy them. This entails first a down-payment and subsequently a monthly maintenance fee. Cooperative housing is not to be confused with collective housing, where the residents of a property share certain facilities. Lastly, living in ownership housing entails having ownership of one’s home (Commin 2006: 60-61). Housing types and tenure forms are closely related as certain tenure forms are concentrated to certain housing types. Rental housing and cooperative housing exist predominantly in multi-family housing while ownership housing exists predominantly in single-family housing. Since 2009, ownership of housing is allowed also in multi-family housing, although this is still uncommon (Bergsten & Holmqvist 2013: 309).
1.4.2. Public housing, social housing and affordable housing

The terms public housing, social housing and affordable housing are commonly occurring in housing studies. The difference between them can often confuse and they are sometimes used interchangeably. The confusion is due partly to the fact that different countries apply different definitions. For the sake of clarifying what is meant when these terms are used throughout this paper, some distinctions will be made. 

*Public housing* is here used to refer to rental dwellings that are owned and maintained by local authorities, specifically by municipally owned housing companies. In Sweden, public housing is not targeted towards any particular income group. Rather, the Swedish model for public housing rests upon the universalist idea of equal terms for everyone. I will further explain the nature of Swedish housing policy in section 2.2.1.

*Social housing* is a term commonly used in a British or Dutch context, for example, and refers to rental dwellings owned by local authorities or private registered providers and which are targeted specifically towards households who find themselves in great need of housing and are unable to enter the housing market without assistance (Smith 2012). The term *affordable housing* is used to describe rental dwellings which are let at a price that can be deemed affordable, depending on the specific context (Milligan & Gilmour 2012). I will further discuss the notion of affordability and how it might be determined in section 2.2.5.
2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Points of departure

2.1.1. Social justice

In contemporary literature, social justice is often defined as the fair distribution of society’s advantages and disadvantages among its members. Young (2011) holds that in addition to issues of distribution, it is equally important to address the social and institutional contexts which help determine such distributive patterns (Young 2011: 23). A social justice perspective is relevant to housing studies as housing policy largely influences who has the ability to inhabit what spaces, which in turn influences people’s life chances. Holmqvist (2009) argues that social mix is essentially about social justice since it entails illuminating spatially embedded power inequalities in cities as well as advocating for the equal opportunity for all to access adequate housing in any part of town (Holmqvist 2009: 20).

According to Harvey (1996), there can be no universal conception of justice since we would continually be faced with conflicting rights. Instead, he argues, we need to apply particular conceptions of justice to particular situations (Harvey 1996: 345). Mels and Mitchell (2013) make a distinction between procedural and substantive justice. Urban planners are typically preoccupied with procedural justice, they argue. Procedural justice concerns the fairness of the processes that allocate society’s resources. Substantive justice, on the other hand, concerns the justness of the outcomes of said processes. Mels and Mitchell argue that there is an inevitable tension between these two categories as procedurally just processes often lead to substantively unjust outcomes, and vice versa (Mels & Mitchell 2013: 212).

In his influential work Social Justice and the City of 1973, Harvey (as recounted in Butler & Hamnett 2012) argues that social injustice is embedded in the institutions of capitalist cities as profit maximisation relegates low-income households to substandard housing in unattractive locations. Therefore, the degree of choice is very much limited for some income categories. As it is dependent on the ability to pay, the degree of choice is unjustly distributed throughout society. Those who have the ability to choose the very best tend to do so, whereas those with limited resources have to take what they can get, and some cannot afford housing at all. Butler and Hamnett make a note of the fact that while income is indeed the prime determinant of choice, one should not overlook how socially conditioned ideas of identification shape our
preferences and thus where we choose to reside, if granted the choice (Butler & Hamnett 2012: 3-5). In line with this, Alm Fjellborg (2018) holds that wealthier households tend to avoid low-income neighbourhoods, causing increased levels of income segregation. Moreover, he argues that, while financial conditions matter, the ability to navigate within the institutional frameworks that surround the housing sector is also important and impacts the household’s ability to exercise choice in the housing market (Alm Fjellborg 2018: 87-89).

2.1.2. The right to housing

A closely related discourse in the field of housing studies and welfare state theory is the right to housing. Bengtsson (2001) argues that the meaning of this concept is difficult to pin down as it is largely defined by the political and institutional setting in which it operates. He holds that depending on whether a selective or a universal housing policy prevails, the right to housing has a different meaning. In a selective model, public housing serves the purpose of providing housing for deprived households, while in a universal model, public housing serves all citizens on equal terms. In a context where a selective housing policy prevails, Bengtsson argues that the right to housing applies only to those of lesser means, whereas in a context where a universal housing policy prevails, the right to housing applies to society as a whole (Bengtsson 2001: 255-256). A more detailed description of the differences between a selective and a universal housing policy is provided in section 2.2.1. where I describe the Swedish model in greater detail.

In most developed countries, housing policy consists of the state making correctives to an open housing market. Put differently, housing policy serves the purpose of responding to housing needs that are not met by the market. Housing needs are commonly recognised as a matter of concern for welfare state policy. However, housing is simultaneously viewed as a market good. Therefore, direct state allocation is considered too paternalistic. At the same time, the market is incapable of providing all citizens with adequate housing at an acceptable price. Therefore, state correctives to the market constitute a compromise (Bengtsson 2001: 257-259).

If we are to define what the right to housing entails, we must not only establish the political and institutional context with which we are concerned, but we must also establish the meaning of rights themselves. Many suggestions have been made as to what rights might entail (e.g. Marcuse 2012; Attoh 2011; Hohfeld 2000[1919]; Dworkin 1977). One definition that can be found useful in understand the right to housing is provided by Marshall (1964), as cited in Bengtsson (2001). Marshall makes a distinction
between three sets of rights connected to citizenship. These are (1) civil rights, (2) political rights and (3) social rights. Civil rights refer to rights that are necessary for the freedom of an individual, while political rights refer to democratic rights, and social rights roughly refer to the right to welfare and security and to a decent and civilized life. Bengtsson suggests that in a selective housing policy, the right to housing should be regarded as a civil right, whereas in a universal policy, it should be regarded as a social right (Bengtsson 2001: 264-265). The difference is, in my interpretation, that in a selective policy, the right to housing entails a minimum right to shelter, whereas in a universal policy, it entails the rights of all to access adequate housing on equal terms.

Before 2006, the Swedish national housing policy stated that housing is a social right and that housing policy must create conditions for everyone to live in decent housing at reasonable costs. However, this goal has gradually been disassembled and today the housing political goal is defined as follows: “Long-term and well-functioning housing markets where consumer demand is met by a supply of housing which meets the needs”. Hence, the idea of housing as a social right has been removed and instead, we see a neo-liberalisation of the Swedish housing policy where the market is relied upon for the provision of housing (SOU 2018:35: 47). As such, housing as a social right is no longer an expressed national political goal and consequently the right to housing can be considered at risk. However, social mix policy can be interpreted as a strive for social justice in the housing sector as it promotes equal opportunities and equal rights to inhabit urban spaces.

2.2. Background and previous research

2.2.1. Swedish housing policy: A universal model

Bengtsson (2001) argues that housing policies are typically categorised as being either universal or selective. In both types, the market is the main distributive mechanism while the mode of state intervention differs. A selective housing policy separates the open market from the public sector. The public sector in this case aims to serve the less well-off and households are means-tested in order to be eligible for public housing. With a universal housing policy, such as the Swedish one, all households have the right to demand public housing on equal terms, regardless of income, and public housing companies operate on the same market terms as private housing companies (Bengtsson 2001: 261-272). This model is based on the presumption that housing is considered both a market commodity and a public good. This clearly distinguishes housing from other welfare commodities, such as education and medical care. Thus, the housing market serves the purpose of fulfilling both housing demand
and housing needs. Instead of earmarking certain properties or housing units for the benefit of less well-off households, the state grants housing allowances in order to strengthen the individual’s position in the general housing market (Bengtsson 2001: 257-259). However, a number of criteria must be met in order to be eligible for the housing allowance. For example, one must already have a tenancy contract in order to be eligible (Försäkringskassan 2019).

Selective housing policy is also known as social housing and is widespread in countries such as the UK and the Netherlands. Such policy has been criticised for relegating the poor to spatially isolated areas as a last resort, causing stigmatisation as well as a residualisation of the public housing stock, that is, the increased concentration of low-income households in the public housing sector (Kadi & Musterd 2015: 249). By refraining from making a distinction between households based on income, the universal housing policy is considered less stigmatising (Bengtsson 2001: 261-272).

The Swedish model of housing provision implies a rent setting system based on use-value, which applies to both the public and private rental sectors in an integrated rental market (Bengtsson 2001: 272). Use-value refers to the estimated value of the dwelling based on its standard and compared to equivalent units in its vicinity (Commin 2006: 7). Based on the use-value, the rent is negotiated between the Union of Tenants and the associations representing the property owners (Borg 2018: 43). However, the use-value system comes into play first if the Union of Tenants and the property owner cannot agree upon a rent level. Therefore, it is possible to set both lower and higher rents than the estimated use-value if both parties come to an agreement. This is what differentiates the use-value rent setting system from free market rents.

The Rental Commission, an independent expert group appointed by the Union of Tenants to evaluate the Swedish rental market, argue that the current use-value system gives the property owner an advantage due to the fact that rents in ongoing contracts are continuously adjusted according to the use-value system, resulting in an annual increase in rent for the tenant. Following refurbishments, rents can increase substantially, leading to the displacement of low-income households. An abolishment of the use-value system, they argue, would likely make it more difficult for property owners to increase the rent in ongoing contracts (Hyreskommissionen 2018: 8).

When it comes to cooperative housing, there is no regulation of the price setting. Rather, prices are determined by market levels. In large cities and metropolitan regions, this results in high prices due to the high demand, especially in attractive
locations. Therefore, the cooperative housing sector attracts high-income households in a self-selective manner. This results in tenure segmentation, that is, the uneven distribution of social groups among tenures. If tenures are spatially separated, tenure segmentation leads to segregation. These circumstances incentivise planning for an integration of different tenure forms (Bergsten & Holmqvist 2013: 309).

Another characteristic of the Swedish housing policy is the idea of tenure neutrality, which was formally established with the 1974 Housing Act. Tenure neutrality implies that no tenure should be favoured over the other through subsidies. It also implies the universal access of all households to all types of tenure. Moreover, the Swedish housing policy involves tenure security. This means that rental contracts, both in the private and public rental sectors, normally are not time-limited (Borg 2018: 43).

**Developments in Swedish housing policy**

Swedish housing policy has undergone some important changes since the 1990s. Borg (2018) discusses two major retrenchments in the modern history of Swedish housing policy. In the first retrenchment, following the economic crisis of the 1990s, an ideological shift took place where housing policy now was to be based on ideals of competitiveness and freedom. This led to the deregulation and privatisation of the Swedish housing sector. Government subsidies were heavily decreased, which led to a stagnation in the production of rental housing. The second retrenchment took place during the 2000s. During this period, ownership of flats in multi-family houses was made possible by law and a process of conversions from rental housing to cooperative housing took place with state support. These developments led to a significant decrease in the public housing stock. Moreover, following pressures from the EU, state aid to municipal housing companies was withdrawn definitively. From hereon, municipal housing companies were to operate on business-oriented principles, while carrying the responsibility of housing provision. Following these two retrenchments, Swedish housing policy consequently became a hybrid of a regulated system and a market oriented one (Borg 2018: 45-47).

Up until recently, municipalities have been able to apply for state subsidy for rental housing. The purpose of this instrument was to stimulate the construction of affordable rental housing. However, the subsidy has been criticised for being ineffective due to the fact that rents have ended up being high regardless. Moreover, the subsidy has not been available to municipalities in conurbations due to the fact that high pressures on the housing market would have inflated the rent levels. The subsidy has temporarily
been withdrawn but it planned to be reinstated. This time around, it will be available also to municipalities in conurbations (Ekots lördagsintervju 2019).

Due to the decreased state involvement in the housing sector during the past three decades, it is becoming increasingly difficult for people to find decent housing in the open market (Bengtsson 2001: 272-273). Sweden has experienced increased income disparities while housing prices have augmented at a much higher speed than incomes have. As a result, the possibility of buying a dwelling has become increasingly unrealistic for a growing proportion of the population. The amount of households restricted to the housing sector has thus increased (SOU 2018:35: 42). Simultaneously, the number of rental units has decreased significantly. Through the years 1998-2014, the amount of rental housing has decreased by 69 000 units, while the population has increased by 175 000 people. The decrease in rental housing is most prevalent in attractive neighbourhoods where the price of cooperative housing is very high. These developments have created a growing need for affordable housing and have considerably reduced the options for low-income households when it comes to choice of neighbourhood (Stockholms stad 2015b: 61-64).

Moreover, the amount of time one has to queue for rental housing has become significantly longer in recent years. In fact, it has as much as doubled during the past ten years in Stockholm. At present time, one has to wait approximately ten years to get a rental flat in the outskirts of the city and the difference between areas is much less significant than it once was (Stockholms stad 2015b: 61-64).

According to a report by the Commission for a Socially Sustainable Stockholm (2015), young people and low-income households are the two groups that are most affected by the housing shortage. The report states that the consequences of the housing shortage for these groups include an unstable and insecure living situation and overcrowding. Overcrowding is when there are more people living in a dwelling than there are bedrooms, which has a number of negative health effects. Approximately 20 percent of the inhabitants of Stockholm are affected by overcrowding and minorities are particularly affected. Furthermore, the issue of overcrowding is concentrated to areas with low socio-economic status. For the young, circumstances related to a shortage in housing cause many to postpone family formation until later in life (Stockholms stad 2015b: 61-64).

An official government report from 2018 states that Swedish municipalities in general should take greater responsibility of the local housing provision by improving their utilisation of the tools at their disposal. The government’s responsibility of providing
municipalities with legal and financial instruments to be able to adequately respond to the housing needs is also emphasised (SOU 2018:35: 36).

2.2.2. Segregation in Sweden: A result of planning ideals, policy changes and ethnic discrimination

Modern day cities are oftentimes characterised by socio-spatial segregation, which entails a geographical separation of social groups across the city. This spatially conditioned polarisation leads to stigmatisation, which further reinforces such social structures (Van Kempen & Bolt 2012: 2). The Swedish example is no exception and the segregation in Swedish cities generally follows a pattern of core-periphery, where high-income households reside in the central parts of the city and lower-income households reside in certain peripheral areas. This relationship is particularly evident in the Stockholm region (Tunström & Anderson 2016: 1).

The geographical separation of social groups is most often measured in demographic, socio-economic or ethnic factors. Andersson, Brâmå and Hogdal (2009) argue that these dimensions should be considered mutually-conditioning (Andersson, Brâmå & Hogdal 2009: 13). The negative social effects of segregation are unevenly spread throughout society and mainly affect low-income and marginalised groups. Residential segregation is considered to have a significant impact on people’s life chances as the area of residence determines access to workplaces, services, nature, social contacts etc. (Andersson, Brâmå & Hogdal 2009: 5). I will return to the relevance of the neighbourhood on the individual’s life chances in section 2.2.4.

The research cooperative Critical Urban Sustainability Hub identifies some critical causes for the historical emergence of socio-spatial segregation in the Swedish context. The identified causes relate to both planning ideals, housing policy and ethnic discrimination. The previous governmental system of interest subsidies did not allow for housing developers to mix tenure forms within the same construction project. Amplified by planning ideals of traffic separation, this resulted in isolated enclaves consisting of either rental housing, cooperative housing or ownership housing. During the 1970s, there was a vast influx of newcomers to Sweden, most of which were moved into the new mass produced rental dwellings of the Million Homes Programme. This resulted in a concentration of foreign-born residents in isolated enclaves of rental housing, causing socio-spatial segregation. Due to xenophobia, these areas quickly became stigmatised, which further reinforced the patterns of segregation (CRUSH 2016: 89-92). The researchers of CRUSH argue that the factors contributing to the contemporary reinforcement of segregation within the housing sector include an increased amount of conversions from rental housing to cooperative housing, along
with gentrification processes, renovation-induced evictions as well as institutionalised discrimination of minority groups (CRUSH 2016: 92).

Andersson and Kährik (2015) argue that in addition to deregulations and tenure conversions, increased differences in income have contributed to the reinforcement of residential segregation in Sweden. The increased differences in income, they argue, have been caused by economic restructuring and reduced wealth and property taxes (Andersson och Kährik 2015: 15). Based on longitudinal studies of residential mobility in Stockholm, Alm Fjellborg (2018) supports the argument that increased income inequality contributes to the reinforcement of residential segregation. He adds that some households are able to capitalise from the increased marketisation of the housing sector, which further reinforces patterns of socio-economic segregation (Alm Fjellborg 2018: 87-88). Rodenstedt (2014) shifts focus to the wealthy side of segregation dynamics in Sweden and argues that the media discourse as well as the popular discourse surrounding different types of neighbourhoods are important driving forces in the self-segregation of high-income households. Such discourses, she argues, create a social distance between low-income and high-income neighbourhoods which far exceeds geographical distance (Rodenstedt 2014: 237).

Brämå, Andersson and Solid (2006) argue that municipalities have access to a number of instruments to actively counteract residential segregation. First, the transparency of the centralised allocation system enforces the possibilities of disadvantaged groups gaining access to housing. Second, the influence that municipalities have on the municipal housing companies through owner directives gives them a great deal of influence over the local housing market (Brämå, Andersson & Solid 2006: 34). However, as the public housing sector is weakening and in some municipalities entirely dismantled, this instrument is becoming less efficient (Holmqvist 2009: 265-266). Third, through the municipal planning monopoly, municipalities have power over the long-term development of the areas within their jurisdiction in terms of housing and living conditions (Brämå, Andersson & Solid 2006: 34). Holmqvist (2009) adds that the municipality’s influence over the spatial distribution of housing production is largely contingent on the size of the municipality’s land holdings. Hence, land allocation is an important instrument available to municipalities in counteracting segregation and promoting social mix (Holmqvist 2009: 265).

A common political strategy to counteract segregation has been area based initiatives with the aim of making so called socially vulnerable areas more prosperous. However, such initiatives can be counterproductive as they cause gentrification, leading to the displacement of low-income households. Instead of solving the problem, it is merely
relocated to another area farther into the periphery of the city. Consequently, the segregation on a city-wide scale is not affected by such initiatives. Segregation is not only found and manifested in the so called vulnerable areas of the city, but in the city as a whole. Therefore, area-based anti-segregation measures cannot be fruitful unless conducted as part of a city-wide comprehensive scheme (Bergsten & Holmqvist 2013: 291). The rhetoric behind anti-segregation measures directed at vulnerable areas treat these areas as the cause of segregation. Such a rhetoric loses sight of the fact that the self-segregation of high-income and privileged households is even more substantial than the, often involuntary, segregation of low-income households and marginalised groups. Directing anti-segregation measures only at deprived areas effectively reinforces the stigmatisation associated with these areas, thereby failing to counteract segregation (Andersson, Bråmå & Hogdal 2009: 5).

2.2.3. Defining social mix as policy and practice

Social mix can be understood as the opposite of segregation as well as a strategy to combat segregation. It entails counteracting the spatial polarisation of various social groups and promoting equal prerequisites for all to access housing (Holmqvist 2009: 18, 20). In Sweden, the strategy can be understood as a reaction to the socio-spatial segregation that became intensified because of the Million Homes Programme. The programme, which took place during the 1960s and 1970s, was a response to a widespread housing shortage. Due to land-use regulations based on zoning principles, as well as a planning paradigm which premiered the separation of traffic, the new rental dwellings of the Million Homes Programme became isolated from the rest of the city. During the 1970s, there was a large influx of new-comers to Sweden, most of which were moved into the new mass produced dwellings of the Million Homes Programme. This resulted in a concentration of new-comers in isolated enclaves of rental housing, causing socio-spatial segregation reinforced by stigmatisation (Borg 2018, 44-45; CRUSH 2016: 89-92).

Past planning ideals have incentivised planning cities and neighborhoods in a way that allows and promotes the in-migration of people from various backgrounds. Social mix is generally considered positive due to a number of reasons. By allowing for social interaction between different social groups it is thought to bring social cohesion and positive network-building. This in turn could create opportunities for disadvantaged groups. Social mix is also thought to foster inclusion and participation and thereby the empowerment of disadvantaged groups (Bergsten & Holmqvist 2013: 288-9).
Social mix can refer either to a heterogeneous housing structure or to a heterogeneous social composition. Housing researcher Emma Holmqvist (2009) distinguishes between various dimensions of these categories. The housing structure is determined by (1) types of housing, as in single-family housing, multi-family housing etc, (2) tenure form, as in rented, owned or owner-occupied, and (3) size of housing, as in area and number of rooms. Furthermore, the social composition is determined by (1) demography, as in age, gender and household constellation, (2) socio-economy, as in income, level of education and class, and (3) ethnicity, which is commonly divided into natives and immigrants, although this is a simplification as both groups are very heterogeneous (Holmqvist 2009: 22).

Bergsten and Holmqvist (2009) argue that the main strategy for achieving a social mix has been to create a heterogeneous housing structure, that is, an integration of different housing types and tenure forms. This is assumed in turn to generate a heterogeneous social composition. The reason this is assumed is because, in Sweden, there is a close relationship between segregation and tenure segmentation. High-income households are primarily concentrated to cooperative housing and ownership housing, while low-income households are concentrated to the rental sector. The spatial separation of these tenure segments therefore logically reinforces patterns of socio-economic segregation (Bergsten & Holmqvist 2013: 289-290).

Holmqvist (2009) describes primarily two tools for creating a heterogeneous housing structure. These are conversions and new production. The first tool, conversions, entails the conversion from one tenure form to another. Normally this tool is used to convert rental housing into cooperative housing, which has been carried out on a particularly large-scale in Stockholm, compared to other Swedish cities. A large majority of these conversions have taken place in central Stockholm, where the percentage of rental housing has been significantly lower than in peripheral areas of the city. In some cases, public housing companies have sold off stock to private owners, without conversions taking place, which has nonetheless resulted in a loss of control over the housing stock. Such changes can therefore constrain the possibilities of creating socially mixed housing. Historically, the political motive behind conversions has not primarily been to create a social mix, but to promote freedom of choice (Holmqvist 2009: 212-214). However, in 2019, the City of Stockholm has decided to further accelerate the conversion speed, this time with social mix as the expressed motive. The conversions are now focused on the outskirts of the city, which are largely dominated by rental housing (Dagens Nyheter 2019). Conversions of rental housing into cooperative housing have also taken place in Gothenburg, in both central and
peripheral areas. However, in this case the conversions have been selective and small-scale, with the primary aim to create a social mix (Holmqvist 2009: 215).

Due to the strong correlative relationship between tenure forms and incomes, mixing privately owned housing into areas dominated by public housing is thought to bring prosperity to deprived neighbourhoods. However, Bergsten and Holmqvist (2013) argue that conversions should not be regarded as an efficient tool in the pursuit of socially mixed housing and that it can in fact counteract such intentions. Efforts to bring social mix into existing neighbourhoods have sometimes been criticised for being counterproductive as such interventions have spurred a gentrification process which has continued beyond the state of what can be considered socially mixed. The once deprived area becomes populated by higher-income households, driving up prices in the area and consequently pushing out the original residents. Bergsten and Holmqvist argue that the Swedish social mix policy, operating within the framework of a universal housing policy, has the potential of avoiding such displacement effects. Ideally, an influx of high-income households in areas with a concentration of low-income households is to be promoted at the same time as an influx of low-income households in areas with a concentration of high-income households is to be promoted. Thereby, a city-wide approach to segregation is applied, allowing for a more even distribution of the population throughout the city (Bergsten & Holmqvist 2013: 289). However, while the production of rental housing has indeed increased significantly in recent years, conversions from rental housing to cooperative housing have taken place to a much larger extent, thereby causing a disproportionate distribution of tenure forms. The political rhetoric is that these conversions are critical in the pursuit of socially mixed cities and neighbourhoods. However, if not paired with corresponding measures of the same magnitude to mix in rental housing in areas dominated by cooperative housing, the policy ends up reinforcing residential segregation instead of counteracting it (Andersson & Magnusson Turner 2014: 8). In a recent statement from an elected politician of Stockholm City Hall, it became clear that no such corresponding measures were planned or even deemed necessary, while conversions were to be accelerated (Wedin 2019). Thus the political rhetoric of combating segregation seems to be covering up a different agenda.

The second tool, new production, can either entail complementary housing production in existing neighborhoods, or it can entail the production of entirely new neighborhoods and city districts. Using new production to create a mix in existing neighbourhoods results in slow and small-scaled changes in the housing structure as land resources are scarce. However, as Bergsten and Holmqvist (2013) point out, it is easier to gain the acceptance of current residents when slow and small-scaled changes are made.
Public opinion constitutes a major obstacle in the pursuit of socially mixed housing due to the legal obligation to consult current residents, they argue. Mixing public housing into areas dominated by ownership housing has been proven most difficult to carry out (Bergsten & Holmqvist 2013: 289). Logically, the production of entirely new districts and neighborhoods characterised by social mix is easier to carry out due to the absence of neighbours to consult.

When comparing policy and practices regarding social mix in Swedish municipalities Bergsten and Holmqvist (2013) find that there are notable differences between Stockholm and Gothenburg. Seemingly, the City of Gothenburg has had a longer tradition of working towards the objective of achieving a balance between tenure forms. There has been a consensus concerning the benefits of social mix among key stakeholders over a longer period of time and therefore the municipality has been able to establish long-term objectives related to the goal of social mix. When it comes to the City of Stockholm, they argue that the attitude towards tenure mix has been more hesitant (Bergsten & Holmqvist 2013: 307).

Another concept which is closely linked to social mix is mixed-use, which refers to functionally diverse neighborhoods or properties. Mixed-use neighborhoods incorporate a variety of functions, such as housing, workplaces, services and transportation. In contrast to single-use or monofunctional areas, mixed-use areas thus favor accessibility. The two concepts go hand-in-hand as they reinforce one another. A socially and functionally mixed neighbourhood will provide people of various social groups with access to a variety of societal functions. Therefore, it promotes a socially just urban environment. Furthermore, it enables interaction between different social groups and thereby promotes social cohesion (Bailey, Manzi & Roberts 2007).

2.2.4. The relevance of the neighbourhood

Over the past two decades, there has been a growing body of literature within housing and segregation studies concerning so called neighbourhood effects. These can be described as effects on the individual’s life chances that can be linked to the neighbourhood dynamics within which the individual resides. While stressing that many other aspects influence the individual’s life chances, Andersson, Brând & Hogdal (2009) argue that the housing situation largely influences aspects such as social networks and access to services, nature, workplaces and recreational spaces (Andersson, Brând & Hogdal 2009: 45-46). Research conducted in Sweden has demonstrated the significance of the place of residence on the individual’s conditions for employment and income development, for instance. There is for example a proven
connection between residing in an area with high unemployment rates and having difficulties getting work for oneself (Andersson, Brămå & Hogdal 2009: 7-8). Moreover, individuals residing in areas characterised by social stigma oftentimes have to endure being subjected to prejudice and discrimination from outsiders, causing negative effects on their quality of life (Van Kempen & Bolt 2012: 2).

Andersson, Brămå and Hogdal further describe three main types of neighbourhood effects. These are endogenous effects, exogenous effects and correlated effects. Endogenous effects occur when one is influenced by the behaviour of one’s neighbour through interaction. This can refer either to socialisation processes, the creation of social networks or competitive behaviour amongst neighbours. Exogenous effects occur when characteristics or behaviours of one’s neighbours evoke different reactions or emotions, such as feeling unsafe. Lastly, correlated effects have to do with circumstances that favour or disfavour everyone living in a certain neighbourhood. This can relate to infrastructure or access to workplaces for instance. The prevalence of neighbourhood effects incentivises planning for a mixed housing structure, they argue (Andersson, Brămå & Hogdal 2009: 45).

The literature on neighbourhood effects is not unanimous regarding their significance on the individual’s quality of life. Van Kempen and Bolt (2012) argue that the empirical evidence to support the notion that neighbourhoods with a homogenous socio-economic structure can have negative effects on the individual’s life chances as well as on social cohesion could be more compelling, especially coming from European research. They argue instead that factors on the individual level such as education, income and age seem to matter a great deal more. In spite of this, there are many European policies aimed at creating socially mixed neighbourhoods and cities. While quantitative studies generally have arrived at the conclusion that neighbourhood effects are marginal yet existent, a number of qualitative studies have shown that they do have a significant impact. Among the negative neighbourhood effects are the development of deviant norms and values, while the positive include social networks and support. While they argue the evidence could be more convincing concerning the positive effects of socially mixed neighbourhoods on the quality of life, they hold that the research does convincingly show that it has positive effects on the possibility of pursuing a housing career within the neighborhood (Van Kempen & Bolt 2012: 5-14).

Andersson, Brămå and Hogdal (2009) argue that the prevalence of neighbourhood effects incentivises the policy objective of creating socially mixed neighbourhoods. However, they also emphasise the importance of not losing sight of the structural issues that reinforce segregation. Urban planning alone cannot combat segregation as
the prevailing social polarisation must be dealt with also (Andersson, Brämå & Hogdal 2009: 47). Nonetheless, socially sustainable planning measures constitute an important contributing factor in ensuring spatial justice by providing people with equal access to basic services (Tunström, Anderson & Perjo 2016: 40).

2.2.5. Affordability and accessibility

Andersson et al. (2006) argue that strategies solely based on mixing tenure forms are insufficient when attempting to create socially mixed neighbourhoods. A varied housing composition must be accompanied by a price variation in order to have effect on the social composition of an area (Andersson, Hedman, Hogdal & Johansson 2006: 46). The current housing shortage that can be observed in Sweden affects particularly, but not exclusively, economically vulnerable groups such as students, newcomers and single parent households. Increasing the construction pace and building more rental housing is by many assumed to be the solution to the housing shortage. However, new production housing tends to be unaffordable for low-income groups and even average-income groups. Despite efforts to lower the costs of construction through an industrialisation of the construction process and through the use of prefabricated catalogue homes, few can afford to demand new production rental housing (Grander 2017: 38). Creating a mix of housing types and tenure forms is therefore no guarantee in itself that a social mix will occur. These circumstances challenge the assumed relationship between a mixed tenure structure and a mixed population. Concepts such as affordability and accessibility here come into play, the former describing who can afford housing and the latter describing who gains access to housing (Neuteboom. & Brounen 2010). Affordability and accessibility go hand in hand as the cost of housing is a key barrier to being able to access housing (Smith 2012: 7). The accessibility of housing is furthermore impacted by factors such as ethnic discrimination and the ability to navigate within the institutional settings of the housing system (Alm Fjellborg 2018).

Smith (2012) makes an important note of the fact that housing shortage, in many cases, does not imply a shortage in units, but rather that it implies a shortage in units that are available at a certain price level. Smith emphasises the importance of making such a distinction due to the fact that the two have different implications for urban planning. Housing shortage requires the production of new housing units, while shortage in housing of a certain price level does not necessarily require this. As new production housing is generally high priced, the production thereof would not necessarily benefit low-income households if the price of new production would render it inaccessible to this group. Moreover, such a distinction shifts focus to the pressing
issue of rising income inequality (Smith 2012: 11). Smith also makes a note of the fact that housing production is assumed to follow the demand when in fact private housing developers generally target high-income households. This results in low-income households being unable to demand housing in the private sector, especially in attractive locations (Smith 2012: 7).

In Swedish urban planning, a common notion is that new housing production, while recognised as being unaffordable for many households, sets off a chain of events where cheaper housing is made available, thereby creating opportunities for low-income households to enter the housing market (so called “flyttkedjor”). However, there is a lack of empirical evidence supporting the idea that new production indirectly benefits low-income households. The cheaper housing does not seem to reach this income group before the chain is broken (Rasmusson, Grander & Salonen 2018). With an accelerating speed, many municipal housing companies sell part of their housing stock to private actors, whom the they have no influence over, in order to release capital to reinvest in the production of new housing which is composed of both rental and cooperative housing. Therefore, the public housing stock is decreasing in spite of a record high construction rate (Grander 2017: 38). This further incentivises planning for a diversity in new production, with regard to both size, location, tenure and, perhaps most importantly, price level. Housing production should be adapted to the needs of the population as well as to the composition of the existing housing stock (Rasmusson, Grander & Salonen 2018).

Affordability is a relative term and can be measured in different ways. One approach proposed by Stone (2006) to going about deciding what is to be considered affordable is the residual income approach. Residual income refers to the disposable amount left of an individual’s income after they have covered their housing costs. If a housing unit is to be considered affordable, the residual income should cover the costs for other basic necessities. This cost of course differs depending on the household composition. For example, a family with children has more expenses than a single person household (Stone 2010: 163). Consequently, a residual income standard cannot be universal, but is socially defined. The residual income approach acknowledges that affordability is a relative concept and shifts focus from the cost of housing to the individual’s ability to pay for housing (Leishman & Rowley 2012: 14).

The Swedish Social Insurance Agency annually establishes regulations on maximum acceptable housing cost. This can be interpreted as guidelines as to what can be deemed affordable housing in a Swedish context. The regulations form the basis for decisions on housing allowances. Table 1 illustrates the accepted ratios for 2019
regarding the highest acceptable housing cost in the Stockholm metropolitan area and the Gothenburg metropolitan area respectively.

Table 1: Maximum acceptable housing costs for 2019 regarding the Stockholm metropolitan area and the Gothenburg metropolitan area respectively (Source: Försäkringskassan 2018, modified by author)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Stockholm</th>
<th>Gothenburg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - 2 adults</td>
<td>9 000</td>
<td>8 725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 2 adults and 1 child</td>
<td>11 075</td>
<td>10 575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 2 adults and 2 children</td>
<td>13 900</td>
<td>12 950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 2 adults and 3 children</td>
<td>17 000</td>
<td>15 950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 2 adults and more than 3 children</td>
<td>17 000 + 2 825 per child beyond 3</td>
<td>15 950 + 2 375 per child beyond 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Methodology and methods

3.1. A critical approach

The present study aims to examine the operationalisation and outcomes of social mix policies as a way of counteracting segregation in the metropolitan regions of Stockholm and Gothenburg. This research is carried out using a critical approach, which is a commonly adopted approach within urban planning research. A critical approach aims to uncover and problematise socio-spatial inequalities and power structures embedded in the institutional settings of society (Sager 2013). Therefore, I believe a critical approach aligns well with a social justice perspective and is suitable to this research. Moreover, critical research within the social sciences can offer new perspectives on societal matters and possibly lead to a change of practice (Flyvbjerg 2001: 166). In examining the outcomes of social mix policies from a critical perspective, my starting point is that there is a discrepancy between objectives and outcomes when it comes to the operationalisation of social mix policy. Therefore, I believe a critical examination is due of the ways in which Swedish municipalities operationalise the policy objective of social mix within the prevailing institutional framework.

3.2. Choice of empirical field

As I have established in the literature section, there are a number of recognised methods of achieving socially mixed housing, the main ones being conversions and new production. New production can in turn be used either to complement existing neighborhoods, or to create entirely new neighborhoods and city districts with a mixed housing structure. In this study, I will focus on the latter by taking a closer look at two comparable large-scale urban development projects: Stockholm Royal Seaport (Norra Djurgårdssstaden) in north-east central Stockholm, and RiverCity Gothenburg (Älvstaden), which is located in central Gothenburg. The City of Stockholm and the City of Gothenburg have taken on somewhat different approaches to the operationalisation of social mix policies, which has resulted in varying outcomes. The two development projects are quite similar in nature as they are both situated in old industrial harbors in central parts of the city. Furthermore, the planning documents of both development projects state the objective of creating socially mixed neighborhoods. The fact that both areas are to be developed into brand new mixed-use city districts should give them the prerequisites to do so, as there are no existing housing structures to take into account, nor is there an existing population. Moreover, their central locations give them
the potential to contribute to desegregating the city centre. The development of Stockholm Royal Seaport is to be completed by the year 2030, however, some stages are already completed and hence some outcomes can be established. The development of RiverCity Gothenburg, on the other hand, has not come as far along the way. However, as I will argue, some things can be established regarding the outcomes even at this early stage.

3.3. Qualitative methods

3.3.1. Content analysis

In examining the operationalisation and outcomes of social mix policies from a critical perspective, I have chosen to use qualitative research methods. Such methods are typically aimed at unfolding a deeper understanding of a given phenomena (Snape & Spencer 2003: 13). In this study, I have looked into goals and implementation strategies by first conducting qualitative content analyses of documents. Qualitative content analysis entails actively scanning for underlying themes whilst reading. The uncovered themes are sometimes illustrated in the write-up of the research, typically in the form of quotes (Bryman 2016: 563). The documents analysed in this study are primarily planning documents related to the development projects which are subject to this research. When reading these documents I have sought to learn about the main characteristics of the plans in terms of scope, location, time plan, aims, goals and so on. Moreover, I have sought to learn about the local prerequisites and strategies for the implementation of social mix. The qualitative content analysis has also served the purpose of learning about the local planning context within which these development projects operate. The following documents have been studied:

- Comprehensive plan for Stockholm (2018)
- Planning program for Stockholm Royal Seaport (2017)
- Social impact assessment for South Värtahamnen, Stockholm Royal Seaport (2016)
- Sustainability report for Stockholm Royal Seaport (2017)
- Resident survey report for Stockholm Royal Seaport (2016)
- Comprehensive plan for Gothenburg (2008)
- Visionary document for RiverCity Gothenburg (2012)
- Planning program for Frihamnen, RiverCity Gothenburg (2014)
- Land allocation policy for Gothenburg (2018)
- Land allocation contest for Frihamnen (2014)
- Social impact assessment for Frihamnen, RiverCity Gothenburg
- Sustainability report for RiverCity Gothenburg (2018)
- Suggested allocation model for socially mixed housing in Frihamnen, RiverCity Gothenburg (2018)

3.3.2. Interviews

In order to provide a more in-depth understanding of the possibilities and limitations surrounding the implementation of social mix policies, as well as of the reasons for the different ways of operationalising the policy within these respective development projects, I have conducted qualitative interviews with key actors such as planners and housing companies involved. Qualitative interviewing follows an interpretative methodological tradition. This means that the truth is not viewed as something that is objectively fixed, but rather as something that is subjectively negotiated (Bryman 2016: 26). There are two main types of qualitative interviews; the unstructured interview and the semi-structured interview. Both types are flexible in structure but while the unstructured interview lets the interviewee lead the conversation to a great extent, the semi-structured interview is structured around an interview guide while leaving some room for improvisation. Semi-structured interviews are appropriate when conducting multiple-case study research so that the replies are somewhat comparable. The method is also suitable when aiming to answer specific research questions (Bryman 2016: 468-469). The interviews conducted for this study were therefore of a semi-structured character. I had prepared a number of questions and sub-questions but maintained a flexibility throughout the conversation. An interview guide was sent to participants beforehand, in order to prepare them. When conducting the interviews, I sought to establish a good rapport by showing respect, interest and professionalism towards the interviewees (Legard, Keegon & Ward 2003: 143). The conversations were recorded and then carefully transcribed in order to enable thorough examination (Bryman 2016).

Some of the interviews in this study were carried out per telephone or e-mail, depending on the availability and preference of the interviewee. Conducting interviews per e-mail or telephone has become an increasingly recognised method within qualitative research. There are some disadvantages to conducting interviews over a distance, such as the risk of misinterpretation due to the absence of nonverbal communication. Moreover, the possibilities of receiving rich descriptions are limited and e-mail interviews demand a certain level of writing skills on both parts. There are also some advantages to these forms of interviewing. For instance, they enable the bridging of geographical barriers between researcher and participant and the material
does not require transcription but can be analysed right away. In sum, e-mail and telephone based interviews are appropriate in cases where there is a geographical barrier between researcher and participant and where non-verbal communication is not critical to the specific conversation (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009: 165-166). Therefore, I found the method appropriate when conducting interviews with participants who were located in Gothenburg. The empirical material generated through interviews was then critically analysed from a social justice perspective and in relation to previous related research.

Within qualitative research, purposive sampling is typically used. This entails a strategic selection of participants based on their relevance to the study. The aim is thus not to achieve representativity but to gain a deeper knowledge (Bryman 2016: 408). When conducting qualitative studies, saturation can occur at a relatively small sample size, depending on the research design (Bryman 2016: 417). The participants in this study were selected strategically based on their specific professional knowledge and position, and I conducted as many interviews as I deemed necessary in order to gain enough knowledge about the subject. The following seven interviews have been conducted:

- Urban Planner, City Planning Office, City of Stockholm (15 March 2019)
- Development Engineer, Development Office, City of Stockholm (15 March 2019)
- Project Manager RiverCity, City Planning Office, City of Gothenburg (27 March 2019)
- Process Manager Social Sustainability, Älvstrand Utveckling AB, Gothenburg (6 March 2019)
- CEO, Botrygg AB, Gothenburg (13 March 2019)
- Department Manager, Business Development, AB Familjebostäder, Stockholm (15 March 2019)
- District manager, Distrikt Innerstaden, Svenska Bostäder, Stockholm (14 March 2019)

3.4. Ethical considerations
When conducting research, there are a number of ethical considerations to be made in order to ensure participants are treated respectfully. With reference to Diener and Crandall (1978), Bryman (2016) distinguishes between four main areas of ethical principles. Researchers should ask themselves (1) whether there is harm to participants due to induced emotional stress for example, (2) whether there is a lack of informed consent, (3) whether there is an invasion of privacy, and (4) whether deception is
involved (Bryman 2016: 125). When carrying out this research, I made sure to be clear about the aims and intentions of the research and to gain the informed consent of participants. Furthermore, I made sure to ask permission before recording interviews. Transcription, analysis and writing was then carried out with care for the purpose of accuracy and of respect for the participants.

Aside from adhering to these ethical principles, it is also important to maintain a level of reflexivity when conducting research within the social sciences. Being reflective entails being aware of one’s own cultural, political and social bias as a researcher, and of how it may impact the outcome of the study (Bryman 2016: 388). When gathering and analysing the empirical data of this study, I have sought to remain attentive to these issues throughout the research process. That is, I have continually made such considerations throughout both empirical work, analysis and writing. During interviews, for instance, I have asked open-ended questions in order to avoid letting my personal preconceptions steer the conversations too much. When later transcribing the interviews, I have been attentive to intonations, sarcasm and so on, for the sake of accuracy.
4. Results

4.1. RiverCity Gothenburg

4.1.1. Local planning context

The City of Gothenburg is faced with issues related to socio-spatial segregation, which cause stigmatisation of certain neighbourhoods and negatively affects disadvantaged households (Göteborgs stad 2008: 84). In reference to the prevailing socio-spatial segregation, the comprehensive plan for Gothenburg expresses a goal to produce a diverse housing stock by means of integrating different housing types, tenure forms and also price levels. It is stated that while there is a balance between tenure forms and housing sizes seen to the city as a whole, some city districts have a very homogenous housing stock, and as a result, a homogenous social composition. In order to counteract this pattern, the strategy is complementary construction within existing neighbourhoods. The idea is that an increased local variation will attract different kinds of households and stimulate movement within local housing stocks (Göteborgs stad 2008: 62-63).

Moreover, the comprehensive plan states that there is currently a shortage of housing available to students and to the younger segment of the population. Previously, student housing and housing for youth have been produced separate from the rest of the housing stock, so when producing new housing of this type, the goal is therefore to integrate them with other housing categories in favor of social mix (Göteborgs stad 2008: 62-64). Another focus area in regard to social mix is to create public spaces that are inviting and inclusive and where spontaneous interactions between various social groups can take place. This is believed to foster tolerance and cohesion. The importance of connecting different areas of the city is also emphasised, with reference to its effects on cohesion and safety (Göteborgs stad 2008: 85-86).

4.1.2. Connect the city, embrace the water and reinforce the centre

RiverCity Gothenburg is one of Northern Europe’s largest urban development projects. By the time it is completed, it will have doubled the size of central Gothenburg in regard to the amount of developed land. The project has three primary strategies. These are to (1) connect the city, (2) embrace the water and (3) reinforce the city centre. The aim is to create a dynamic and green urban district that is inclusive and open to the world. Furthermore, the objective is to connect the city centre across the river and to create a functionally and socially integrated urban district. The plans
include 25 000 new flats and 45 000 new workplaces and is to be completed by the year 2050. A municipally owned company, Älvstranden Utveckling, has been established and tasked with the realisation of the city’s vision for RiverCity Gothenburg (Göteborgs stad 2019b). The development area extends over both sides of Göta Älv (the river which runs through the city) and includes the areas Backaplan, Centralenområdet, Frihamnen, Gullbergsvass, Lindholmen, Ringön and Södra Älvstranden. Figure 1 illustrates the locations of the different areas.

![Figure 1: Overview of the areas included in RiverCity Gothenburg (Source: Göteborgs stad 2012)](image_url)

Much in line with the comprehensive plan, the visionary document also stresses the importance of combating socio-economic segregation and recognises how one’s place of residency affects one’s life chances (Göteborgs stad 2012: 9). Connecting the city across the river is seen as an important focus area, the purpose of which is to overarch physical and social barriers and create an integrated city centre that is welcoming to everyone. In order to create a city district where anyone is able to find housing for themselves, the strategy is to build with a variety regarding tenure forms, sizes and
types of housing. A socially mixed housing sector is believed to not only counteract segregation, but to also contribute to variation in other sectors, such as services and workplaces (Göteborgs stad 2012: 14).

The ambitions to create social mix are not limited to the housing sector, but include public space as well. Public spaces are to be diverse, attractive and to encourage interactions. The needs of all should be attended to and everyone should have a sense of belonging. Such spaces are believed to be important from a democratic perspective and in order to create such spaces, local knowledge has been utilised through the extensive involvement of citizens in the planning process (Göteborgs stad 2012: 12-18). By building with density, the aim is to create safe, vibrant and accessible urban spaces. A dense city structure is also believed to stimulate the local economy (Göteborgs stad 2012: 34).

4.1.3. A test-bed for socially sustainable housing

Figure 2: Visionary image of Frihamnen, RiverCity Gothenburg (Source: Göteborgs stad n.d.a)
The area called Frihamnen is situated at the centre of RiverCity Gothenburg and will function as a node, connecting the surrounding areas (Göteborgs stad 2012: 43). Frihamnen is of particular interest to this study because it functions as a test-bed for socially sustainable housing. In Frihamnen, new and innovative models to create socially mixed housing are currently being tested (Göteborgs stad 2019a). Solutions are continuously evaluated to assess whether they should be upscaled. A model for the feedback of knowledge and experiences gained along the way is currently being developed. Partnerships are made between the municipality, the academy and businesses. For example, universities and colleges use Frihamnen as a case in research and student projects, I am informed by an interviewee (Project Manager, City of Gothenburg 2019). Figure 2 illustrates the design objective for Frihamnen.

Frihamnen is a pilot project for the city’s new and modified land allocation policy which states that all development should promote socially mixed housing by means of mixing housing types, tenures and sizes. It also states that developers should demonstrate ability and willingness to take social responsibility by providing category housing as well as facilities for health and social care. Moreover, the policy states that there should be a variety of developers, both large and small companies, in order to create conditions for diverse housing and facilities at reasonable costs. Furthermore, developers should demonstrate progressiveness, long-term commitment and stable finances (Göteborgs stad 2018a).

For the first construction phase of Frihamnen, which involves approximately 3000 dwellings and 2000 workplaces, developers were urged to provide at least 50 percent rental housing. They were also encouraged to include alternative forms of accommodation, such as collective housing. Furthermore, developers had to be able to provide flats at a rent of approximately SEK 1000 per square meter and year, which is a notably low cost for new production housing. To be able to meet these demands, new business models have had to be developed (Göteborgs stad 2014a: 12).

4.1.4. Unique business and allocation models

Despite the high demands on cost efficiency, there has been a great deal of interest among developers in the area. When asked why Botrygg was interested in taking part in the project, the response was due to the opportunity of owning and managing properties in a central and attractive waterside location with a 10-hectare city park and unique recreation area in connection to several city districts. Moreover, there seemed to be a curiosity as to whether this model could in fact contribute to combating segregation (CEO, Botrygg AB 2019).
50% of the allocated land will have rental housing, out of which half (approximately 500 flats) will have lower rents (Process Manager Social Sustainability, Älvstranden Utveckling AB 2019). The developers chosen by the City of Gothenburg for the construction of rental housing within Frihamnen are Rikshem, Botrygg, Magnolia and the municipally owned housing company Framtiden. Cooperative housing will be constructed by Rikshem, Bonava, Framtiden, Botrygg, and by Hauschild + Siegel Architecture (Göteborgs stad n.d.b.). The interviewed representative of Älvstranden Utveckling states that allowing for the construction of cooperative housing flats has been a necessary compromise in order to attract developers. However, they would rather have seen a larger quantity of affordable units (Process Manager Social Sustainability, Älvstranden Utveckling AB 2019).

In order to meet the city’s demands, the developers have worked out different ways of streamlining their costs. The municipally owned housing company Framtiden, for instance, is working actively to expose its procurements and contracts to competition on the international market in order to keep construction costs at bay (Process Manager Social Sustainability, Älvstranden Utveckling AB 2019). Botrygg, has long worked on cutting their construction costs and they have control over the entire production chain. This way, they can keep costs low and their calculations will be reliable. Furthermore, they have lowered their yield requirements, which means they have accepted a lower profit level. Moreover, they will build cooperative housing flats in order to partially finance the construction of rental units, and they will not cover parking costs for residents (CEO, Botrygg AB 2019).

When negotiating the rent levels, an important target group has been a single person with an assistant nurse’s salary of approximately SEK 20 000 per month, which leaves a disposable income of approximately SEK 15-16 000. The rent levels have thus been based on what a person with such a salary would be able to pay in rent, and have enough left for other necessities. With this in mind, three rent levels have been decided upon: 25% of the flats will cost SEK 1000 per square meter per year, 25% will cost SEK 1 400 per square meter per year and 50% will have regular rent setting based on use-value (Käll 2018: 3). The housing companies involved have agreed to these rent levels for the duration of a 15 year period, after which time the rents are expected to be adjusted according to the use-value system, and that they will proportionate to the general income development in society (Process Manager Social Sustainability, Älvstranden Utveckling AB 2019). When allocating land, the city has sold the land to developers at market price, including the rent differentiation in the cost assessment. However, this does not reduce the value of the land significantly. Whether the land
being sold is intended for cooperative housing or rental housing according to the detailed development plan has a much larger effect on the price, an interviewee holds (Process Manager Social Sustainability, Älvstranden Utveckling AB 2019).

The developers have adopted different business models not only for keeping construction costs low, but also for how the rent differentiation in a property should look. Some developers are working with quality differentiation. This entails building flats with a variation of standards and pricing them accordingly. For example, a top-floor flat with a balcony and seaview will have a higher rent than a ground-floor flat. Some developers are instead building with equal standard in all units of the property. However, they administer rental discounts to individual tenants (Process Manager Social Sustainability, Älvstranden Utveckling AB 2019).

The project also applies unique models for the allocation of housing. When working out the allocation models for the first construction phase, one has taken into account the fact that high income generally coincides with a high amount of time in the rental queueing system. Regular allocation of all units would therefore most likely result in high-income households moving into the more affordable units. Therefore, the following alternative allocation models have been suggested: (1) Regular allocation via the municipal housing queue, (2) priority based on a maximum income of 3-4 times the rent combined with queue time, (3) targeted distribution where households with special needs due to lack of economic and social capital are prioritised, (4) internal relocation from one public housing unit to another, and (5) allocation via municipal contracts, which means flats are subleased to individuals with social or medical issues (Käll 2018: 3). Table 2 illustrates the number of units of each category as well as rent level.

**Table 2:** Allocation principles and rent levels in number of units (Source: Käll 2018, modified by author)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allocation Model</th>
<th>SEK1000/m2/year</th>
<th>SEK1400/m2/year</th>
<th>Regular rent</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular allocation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority income/queue time</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeted distribution</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>13,3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal relocation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal contracts</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2,7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>275</strong></td>
<td><strong>275</strong></td>
<td><strong>550</strong></td>
<td><strong>1100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage</strong></td>
<td><strong>25%</strong></td>
<td><strong>25%</strong></td>
<td><strong>50%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With this allocation model, the expectation is to create an influx of people of both low, middle and high income segments. The targeted distribution will be focused on economically vulnerable families with children. Furthermore, it will be concentrated to the lowest rent segment in order to minimise the city’s expenses for rent support. This is also expected to create better conditions for people to be able to stay long-term. For the same reason, there will be no monitoring of the income development of residents. This way, one will not be forced to move because one’s income increases (Käll 2018: 3).

4.2. Stockholm Royal Seaport

4.2.1. Local planning context

Much like Gothenburg, the comprehensive plan for Stockholm describes a city that is characterised by socio-spatial segregation resulting in unequal life chances for the various social groups inhabiting the city. Therefore, there is an expressed ambition to plan for a future Stockholm where these groups naturally interact with one another in order to promote equal opportunities and social cohesion. To achieve this goal, the strategy is to create a variation of tenure forms and housing types (Stockholms stad 2018a: 53). It is stated that during the past decade, housing production in Stockholm has favoured cooperative flats over rental flats, which is why the city is now focusing on balancing the scales (Stockholms stad 2018a: 49). This is thought to enable a social mix as well as the opportunity to move within the same area when the individual’s life circumstances change. An identified challenge related to this goal is to produce rental housing at affordable costs. In response to this, it is argued that new housing production, while expensive, sets off a chain of events where cheaper housing is made available to low-income households (Stockholms stad 2018a: 53).

The comprehensive plan identifies the main tools available to the municipality when it comes to the provision of housing. These are (1) the municipal planning monopoly, which gives municipalities the sole right and responsibility to practice land use planning, (2) the vast amount of buildable land owned by the municipality, and (3) the municipally owned housing companies (Stockholms stad 2018a: 49). In line with the comprehensive plan, the city’s land allocation policy states that new development should promote a diversified housing stock and that the amount of rental housing should increase. It also states specifically that new development should favor housing at reasonable costs. Some prioritised social groups are mentioned in this regard, namely students, youth and others who are excluded from the housing market to a large extent. The policy also states that competition within the housing sector should
be fostered in order to lower the costs of production and thereby create conditions for reasonable housing costs (Stockholms stad 2015a: 4).

4.2.2. A pioneer in sustainable urban development

Stockholm Royal Seaport is one of Stockholm’s largest urban development projects. Located in the borough of Östermalm in central Stockholm, it expands over the areas of Frihamnen, Hjorthagen, Loudden, Värtahamnen and Energihamnen. Figure 3 illustrates the locations of each area. More than 12 000 homes and 35 000 workplaces are planned, as well as 600 000 square meters of commercial space. It is also one of Stockholm’s most complex urban development projects. It has to overcome challenges such as soil pollution due to the fact that the area was previously used for gas production, shipping and other industrial activities. It also has to deal with sound pollution due to current businesses that operate in the area. The planning of Stockholm Royal Seaport took off in the early 2000s and the developments are expected to be completed by the year 2030 (Stockholms stad 2017a: 4-5).

Figure 3: Overview of the areas included in Stockholm Royal Seaport (Energihamnen is left out of the image but is located just above Värtahamnen) (Source: Stockholms stad n.d.)
Following the construction of Hammarby Sjöstad, Stockholm Royal Seaport is the second urban development project in Stockholm with an environmental profile. It aims to be a pioneer in sustainable urban development by means of building energy efficient houses, solar cells and closed circuits for water, waste and energy. Moreover, developers must attain a certain level of so called Green Space Factor, which is a measurement of the amount of facade greenery, cultivation space and richness of species in courtyard environments. There is also a long-term goal of making the city district entirely free of fossil fuels (Andersson 2012).

Furthermore, the objective is to create an urban district where the needs of a growing population are met by planning for housing, workplaces, services, connections, education, green spaces and recreational spaces. Building a dense city structure is expected to create the prerequisites for inclusive urban spaces, as well as energy efficiency and reduced climate impact (Stockholms stad 2017a: 7).

The visionary document for Stockholm Royal Seaport presents a number of specific sustainability targets. When it comes to social mix, the overarching goal is to contribute to the creation of an egalitarian city. The implementation targets include (1) creating a place for everyone to live in, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity or other individual circumstances, (2) creating a diverse housing supply that meets the needs of all life phases, and (3) to participate in the development of knowledge within the city administrations on how the housing supply can be developed to meet the diversity of society (Stockholms stad 2017a: 52).

As regards housing supply, the ambition is to provide a diversity of housing forms and tenure types in each construction phase, where 50 percent is composed of rental housing. For example, there is student housing, nursing homes and private building cooperatives (byggemenskaper). The aim with this variation is to create a city district that attracts and welcomes everyone, in all of life’s phases. The objective is to create a socially mixed city district as this is thought to enrich and evolve society. The importance of spontaneous interactions between different social groups is emphasised and consequently the need for inclusive public spaces is emphasised as well (Stockholms stad 2017a: 26-27). Figure 4 illustrates the built environment in part of Stockholm Royal Seaport, where new production housing is contrasted to the industrial heritage of the area.
In the sustainability report for Stockholm Royal Seaport from 2017, it is stated that the objective of producing 50 percent rental housing has been fulfilled so far (Stockholms stad 2017b). However, when looking more closely into the areas involved, it becomes clear that this objective mainly concerns the area of Hjorthagen, which is well underway. Concerning the areas which have not yet been built, the objective is far less ambitious. In the area of Värtahamnen, for instance, the objective is to produce somewhere between 10 and 20 percent rental housing (Stockholms stad 2019).
such, the diversified tenure structure emphasised in the planning programme will not be as ambitiously implemented throughout the development area. In the social impact assessment for Södra Värtahamnen, a concern is stated regarding the disproportionate amount of cooperative housing, as well as the expected high prices in all segments. It is suggested that the city investigates opportunities to create a differentiation in rents as well as in sizes of housing, in order to meet the needs of a diverse set of households. Accordingly, the report suggests the city considers alternative business models, such as those adopted in Frihamnen, Gothenburg (Stockholms stad 2016: 57).

4.2.3. High costs of housing

The costs of housing in Stockholm Royal Seaport are higher than the city average. This is due to a number of factors. The cost of new production certainly contributes, as does the attractive location, the size of housing, as well as the drive for profit maximization on the part of developers. Not least, it is due to the high demand, according to one interviewee (Project manager, City of Stockholm 2019). In line with the environmental profile of the area, the properties of Stockholm Royal Seaport have notably high standards regarding environment and energy, which further inflates the cost of housing (Kovacevic 2013).

Municipally owned Familjebostäder was the first company to develop in Stockholm Royal Seaport. Due to the fact that there was no existing development in the area, there was no use-value upon which to establish the rent levels. In the rent negotiations, the company did not come to an agreement with the Union of Tenants and decided to set an independent rent. The independent rent was based on the use-value of nearby areas, which in this case is primarily the borough of Östermalm - the most expensive area in the country. For a three-room flat\(^1\) of 77 square meters, the standard rent level in Familjebostäder’s property is set at SEK 2 250 per square meter and year, which entails SEK 14 437 in monthly rent. This corresponds well to the average rent level in Stockholm Royal Seaport (Bostadsförmedlingen 2017). The number is higher than the maximum acceptable housing cost for a household of three, according to the Swedish Social Insurance Agency (Försäkringskassan 2018).

A representative of Familjebostäder informs me that the key actors who provide the framework within which the company operates are the Development Committee and the City Planning Committee. Furthermore, I am informed that the company receives few direct missions from the elected politicians of the committees to produce housing

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\(^1\) Three rooms in addition to kitchen and bathroom
for the benefit of certain specified social groups. The only mission they have is to reach the city’s production targets with regard to the number of housing units that needs to be produced. In the case of Stockholm Royal Seaport, I am informed that the company was never given an expressed mission to create socially mixed housing (Department Manager, Familjebostäder 2019).

One interviewee claims that, in an effort to stimulate the production of less expensive housing, the city has in some cases leased land to developers through site-leasehold rights, instead of selling it. Site-leasehold rights are temporary rights to hold land, and they can be administered with the purpose of stimulating the construction of rental housing. When administering site-leasehold rights, developers pay significantly less for the land, which leaves room for reduced yield requirements. This strategy was tested on the first 2000 flats built in Stockholm Royal Seaport, however, they turned out to be just as expensive as if the land had been sold at market price, due to the profit maximisation on the part of developers. Therefore, the price at which land is sold or leased to developers does not seem to have a significant influence on the cost of housing, according to an interviewee (Project manager, City of Stockholm 2019).

When asked whether the reinstatement of the state subsidy for rental housing (mentioned in section 2.2.1.) could entail improved chances of achieving a social mix in Stockholm, one interviewee regrettfully states that it probably will not. Just as the price at which the municipality sells or leases land to developers at best has a marginal effect on housing costs, the concern is the same regarding the state subsidy. The interviewee stresses the fact that rent levels do not correspond to construction costs but that they instead correspond to the use-value of equivalent units in the same area. Hence, in order to provide housing at affordable costs, there must be a commitment from the developer to accept lower yield requirements. The interviewee emphasises that the terms are equal for private and public developers as they operate on the same market and they all have an obligation to deliver profit to the company owners. The interviewee argues that this is in line with the universal model of housing supply that prevails in Sweden (Urban Planner, City of Stockholm 2019). When it comes to cooperative housing, it becomes apparent that it is assumed and accepted that only the high-income segments of the population will be able to demand such housing. This is not considered much of a problem, it seems (Project manager, City of Stockholm 2019).

When asked if the model employed by RiverCity Gothenburg, where land allocations are used to place demands on developers to deliver housing at affordable and varied prices, could be applied in subsequent phases of Stockholm Royal Seaport, the
representatives of the City of Stockholm suggest that it is up to the municipal housing companies. Hence, the municipality leaves it to the municipal housing companies to initiate such a process. Among the representatives interviewed for this study, there seems to be a rather low faith in efforts to keep the cost of housing down as the costs are expected to even out with time. One interviewee adverted to a project called “Stockholmshusen”, where standardized houses have been built in order to keep construction costs low and thereby keep the rents at an affordable level. However, the amount of money saved turned out to be marginal (Project manager, City of Stockholm 2019). Another interviewee holds that regulatory changes at state level are needed in order to resolve the issue regarding expensive new production housing (Urban Planner, City of Stockholm 2019).

It is clear from the interviews that high costs of housing were an expected outcome of the project. Moreover, a diversified housing structure alone was not expected to generate a social mix with regard to income. The interviewees hold that they do not have the tools required within the framework of their professional roles to influence these circumstances. When asked about how the city relates to the objective that anyone should be able to settle in Stockholm Royal Seaport when there is a perceived inability to fulfil such an objective, an interviewee states that the objectives should be considered visionary as they are not legally binding. They are expressions of ambition, and the abilities to meet them have not been overly reviewed, the interviewee explains (Urban Planner, City of Stockholm 2019).
5. Discussion

5.1. Small steps towards a desegregated city centre?

The ways in which the political goal of social mix has been operationalised in the plans and implementation of RiverCity Gothenburg suggest that the results will indeed demonstrate a social mix in regard to housing. A diversified housing structure has been planned for where tenure forms, housing types and housing sizes are largely integrated. As the literature has held (e.g. Andersson, Hedman, Hogdal & Johansson 2006: 46), a diverse housing structure can be expected to create a social mix if paired with measures to provide housing of diverse price levels. In the case of RiverCity Gothenburg, this has been realised in that a mixed housing structure has been combined with business models on the part of developers that will allow for low construction costs and differentiated rents. The municipality has thus made use of land allocations as a tool for creating conditions for social mix. The established rent levels are significantly lower than the maximum accepted housing costs according to the Swedish Social Insurance Agency, and in some cases even lower than the average housing cost in Gothenburg (Försäkringskassan 2018). Referring back to Stone (2010), one has made use of the residual income approach when establishing the rent levels, by calculating how much a nurse is able to pay for housing and still be able to cover basic necessities. This has assured that the housing units will be affordable to low-income households (Stone 2010: 163).

Moreover, new models for the allocation of housing will ensure that the housing units are in fact inhabited by a variety of social groups. Different income groups have been taken into account, as well as certain identified groups in special need. However, a concern of mine is associated with the fact that the allocation model does not include neither minorities or newcomers as prioritised groups. As such there is no strategy aimed at creating an ethnic mix or to provide housing for newcomers and refugees. However, the plans do state that the proportion of flats which will be let through targeted distribution could possibly come to include such groups in the future (Käll 2018: 5). Moreover, it is unclear how those who are eligible for targeted distribution will be informed of the housing opportunities in Frihamnen. Will the municipality reach out to people or are they to discover that opportunity by themselves? Because as Alm Fjellborg (2018) argues, the ability to navigate within the institutional frameworks that surround the housing sector impacts the household’s degree of choice in the housing market. This particularly has implications for the housing situation of foreign-born residents. (Alm Fjellborg 2018: 89).
Another concern of mine is associated with the fact that the implementation of the model to create socially mixed housing by means of differentiated rents has so far only been planned for part of Frihamnen. More precisely, it concerns one sixth of the flats in the first construction phase of Frihamnen (Käll 2018). Hence, the small scope of implementation raises some concern. As was discussed in the theoretical section, interventions to create social mix must be implemented on a city-wide scale if they are to be successful at counteracting segregation (Bergsten & Holmqvist 2013: 291). Therefore, it would require that this model is implemented on a large scale. One interviewee states that time will tell whether this model to create social mix will be applied in future construction phases. They wish to carry the project through and evaluate the end results before deciding whether or not to expand the scope of implementation and whether or not changes need to be made to the model (Project Manager, City of Gothenburg 2019). Hence, we will potentially witness a broadened scope of implementation in the future.

Another concern is what will happen to the rent levels once the landlords are freed of their contracts. The landlords are bound by contractual agreements to adhere to the negotiated rent levels for the duration of a 15 year period. After that, rents will likely be adjusted according to the use-value system, leaving no guarantee that these housing units will remain affordable for an average income household. The new and adjusted rent levels will probably look somewhat different depending on the business model applied. For properties where each flat has the same standard but housing allowances are administered, the new and adjusted rents will likely be significantly higher in the entire property. For properties where there is a differentiation in standard, however, the flats in themselves have differing values. Therefore, the new and adjusted rents will likely remain differentiated, although higher than prior to the expiration of the rent regulative contracts (Process Manager Social Sustainability, Älvstranden Utveckling AB 2019). While the expectation is that the new and adjusted rents will proportionate to the general income development in society, this outcome cannot be guaranteed. The proportion of flats which will have regular rent setting can potentially become very expensive after the 15-year period if the property owners were to reach such an agreement with the Union of Tenants. In such a case, these dwellings would become inaccessible to an even larger proportion of the population than they initially will be. Therefore, the long-term affordability of housing in Frihamnen, and hence the justness of the project, cannot be guaranteed.

There is also the risk that the flats in RiverCity Gothenburg are renovated and or sold off, which could drive up the prices. The prevalence of this risk is confirmed by a representative of Älvstranden Utveckling who nonetheless asserts that developers
have been carefully selected based on credible cost calculations and good corporate values. Therefore, the expectation is that the properties will be managed responsibly and that rent levels will correspond to those of the existing housing stock (not new production levels) after the 15 year period (Process Manager Social Sustainability, Ålvrstrandens Utveckling AB 2019). The success of this project thus depends on the long-term commitment of the actors involved. Moreover, it depends on the presence of engaged and committed developers also in future development phases. Consequently, the affordability of these dwellings, and the justness of their allocation, is in the hands of property developers, both private and public.

In order to achieve low rent levels, developers of RiverCity Gothenburg are working to heavily reduce construction costs. A hypothetical outcome might be that savings in construction costs negatively affect the working conditions for construction workers. Another is that it will negatively affect the standard of housing units being constructed. So I believe an important question to ask is whether the saved costs for construction end up being paid by someone else. This would also have implications for social justice. While this issue cannot be addressed adequately within the scope of this paper, it could be investigated in future research on the results of RiverCity Gothenburg.

Another possible critique of the RiverCity Gothenburg project is that it touches upon the principles of social housing. The literature has held that such a selective model of housing provision causes social stigma by separating low-income households from middle- and high-income households (Kadi & Musterd 2015: 249; Bengtsson 2001: 261-272). However, in the case of RiverCity Gothenburg, the differentiation of rents and allocation models will be spread throughout the Frihamnnen area and even within properties, thereby preventing the social stigma that follows a separation of household categories. Moreover, the differentiation in rents is not a result of state subsidies, but a result of new and innovative business models, where the developers take the financial risk. This further distinguishes the model from that of social housing.

A critique which has been expressed in local media has to do with concerns that the project, through rent differentiation, attempts to control the market in a negative way. The argument is that that the responsibility of a failed housing provision is shifted onto the private sector by demanding rents below the market level. The city has responded by arguing that, rather than attempting to control the market, one has turned to the market for innovative ways of fulfilling the city’s objectives. By requesting innovative business models that enable low rent levels, competition in the housing sector is promoted, it is argued (Fredholm 2018).
Due to the fact that the development project is not yet completed, not much can be stated with absolute certainty regarding the outcomes of the strategies to create socially mixed housing. However, as land has been allocated to developers who are bound by contractual agreements to provide mixed tenures and differentiated rents, a very plausible outcome of the project is that a social mix is indeed promoted, at least to some degree. This outcome is made increasingly credible due to the models of housing allocation which have been developed. While there are some risks associated with the project, it can be stated that the City of Gothenburg demonstrates ambition and creativity in its pursuit of combating segregation and in creating an open and just city centre where all income groups are able to afford and to access adequate housing.

5.2. Sustainability for whom?

What can be observed in the case of Stockholm Royal Seaport is that a mixed housing structure is indeed created with regard to both tenure forms and housing types. However, dwellings are generally large and the costs of housing in the area are alarming. As such, the housing production in Stockholm Royal Seaport is inaccessible to low-income households and does not correspond well to the housing need. This result is not in line with the objective stated in the comprehensive plan to create conditions for reasonable housing costs for the benefit of students, youth and others who are excluded from the housing market to a large extent.

The lack of variation in the cost of housing prohibits the development of a socially mixed city district and the completed areas of Stockholm Royal Seaport have indeed become populated by a rather homogenous household composition (Sweco 2016: 6-7). Most of the people who have moved into the area have come from other parts of central Stockholm. There are few people under the age of 25 residing in the area and 60% live in cooperative housing. The residents of Stockholm Royal Seaport have higher education as well as higher income compared to the city average. Creating a mix with regard to the size of housing has not been an expressed priority, which has resulted in the flats generally being larger, and hence more expensive, compared to the city average as well as neighbouring areas (Sweco 2016). These outcomes have rendered Stockholm Royal Seaport an upper-class enclave which is largely inaccessible to lower-income groups. Due to its central location, it thus reinforces the pattern where central parts of the city are reserved for well-off households (Tunström & Anderson 2016: 1). The ambitions to create a socially mixed city district have fallen short and instead, the development project has contributed to the reinforcement of segregation and spatial injustice.
As stated in the comprehensive plan, new housing production is expected to set off a chain of events where cheaper housing is made available to low-income households. However, as the literature suggests, this notion remains theoretical as it has not been empirically proven that cheaper housing is in fact made available to low-income households this way (Rasmusson, Grander & Salonen 2018). Therefore, without a direct commitment to securing a just distribution of housing, the chances are small that new production housing will benefit all social segments of the population.

My observation is similar to that of Loit (2014) in that the planners of Stockholm are aware of how the high prices in Stockholm Royal Seaport hamper any real possibilities of achieving a social mix. However, they find, regretfully so, that they do not have the tools required within the framework of their professional roles to influence the price levels. Some efforts have been made to stimulate the production of less expensive housing, such as leasing land through site-leasehold rights, however, this has been proven ineffective due to profit maximisation on the part of developers. Therefore, there is low faith in such strategies among the interviewed planners of Stockholm (Project manager, City of Stockholm 2019). As a result, the exclusion of low-income households from new production housing has become an accepted fact, which is alarming.

Due to this perceived inability to influence the cost of housing, more efforts are instead put into creating public spaces that encourage social mix by attracting different people (Urban Planner, City of Stockholm 2019). I argue that, while inclusive and vibrant public spaces are important from a social justice perspective, they cannot compensate for the absence of a just housing sector where all income groups are able to demand housing. Social mix is not only about creating urban spaces where interactions between different social groups are enabled. It is also about creating equal prerequisites for all to access housing in the area of their choice. Therefore, I find the shift of focus from housing to public space rather problematic from a rights perspective. Moreover, excluding certain socio-economic groups will likely have a negative effect on the perceived character of the area, where the intention has been to convey openness and diversity.

As was made clear in the interviews, the high prices in the cooperative housing sector was an expected and accepted outcome. However, if we are to return to the theoretical discussion on tenure segmentation as a catalyst for segregation, such an approach will lead to an increased tenure segmentation. If it is accepted that only the high-income segments of the population are able to demand cooperative housing, then
tenure segmentation will be reinforced and patterns of residential segregation alike (Bergsten & Holmqvist 2013: 309). The fact that a social mix was not an expected outcome, despite the expressed objective of creating socially mixed housing, indicates that social objectives have been incorporated into the development plans in more of a tick box-wise manner. I argue that without being concerned with the outcomes of such objectives, they fail to serve their purpose.

I wish to return to Bengtsson’s (2001) discussion on the Swedish universal housing policy, the idea of which is to allow everyone access to public housing on equal terms. This entails that the amount of time in the rental queueing system, combined with how much one is able to pay, determines if one is able to access public housing. This can be related back to Mels and Mitchell’s (2013) discussion on procedural and substantive justice. I suggest that the Swedish system of housing provision is procedurally just, due to the fact that everyone has access on equal terms, but substantively unjust due to the fact that not everyone has the ability to pay. Hence, the objective of the Swedish housing policy fails due to the unjust outcomes, where some are excluded because of their income. Stockholm Royal Seaport thus becomes a telling example of a discrepancy between the procedural and substantive justness of the Swedish model of housing provision.

So who can afford to live in Stockholm Royal Seaport? In 2017, the municipal housing companies of the City of Stockholm demanded that in order to be eligible for rental housing, the tenant’s residual income, after paying rent, should be at least SEK 4 734 (Lövgren 2018). This implies that, in order to be eligible to rent a three-room flat in Stockholm Royal Seaport, the net income cannot fall short of SEK 19 174. Given the current tax rates of the City of Stockholm, the gross wage must then be at least SEK 24 399 (Statsskuld 2019). These numbers reveal that two thirds of the inhabitants of Stockholm are financially unable to rent a newly produced dwelling within Stockholm’s public housing stock (Lövgren 2018). Hence, seen strictly to income, a large proportion of the population is excluded from the public housing stock in Stockholm Royal Seaport. Moreover, the results show that the average cost of housing in Stockholm Royal Seaport exceeds the maximum acceptable housing cost according to the Swedish Social Insurance Agency (Försäkringskassan 2018). The rent level of SEK 14 437 for a three-room apartment can also be seen in contrast to the rent levels in Frihamnen where a proportion of equivalent flats will be priced at SEK 5 800 in monthly rent.

The demands of private housing companies are oftentimes stricter. They normally demand that the tenant earns three times the annual rent but sometimes the demand is
up to four or five times the annual rent. In some cases two incomes combined are accepted but oftentimes one person has to fulfil the demand on their own. Moreover, tenants must have good credit and normally they must have permanent employment, although permanent positions are becoming increasingly rare, especially in Stockholm. All of these high demands make it difficult for a large proportion of the inhabitants of Stockholm to get a contract for tenancy. In addition, good references are often required, which particularly makes it difficult for young people to enter the housing market (Lövgren 2018).

I find it interesting that, despite the expressed goal of creating socially mixed housing in Stockholm Royal Seaport, the municipally owned housing company Familjebostäder was never given such a directive. As explained in the results section, the company was the first to develop in the area, and in the absence of a local use-value one chose to set the rents based on the use-value of the rich neighbouring district of Östermalm. In this case, the municipal housing company had the opportunity to set a lower rent but chose not to. This demonstrates an interest of profit maximisation on the municipality’s part, as owner of the housing company. I argue that profit maximisation in the public housing sector is problematic in light of the fact that there is a shortage of affordable housing. The very institution that is supposed to safeguard the right to housing thus impinges on that very right by maximising its profit.

The city’s expressed focus on creating a balance between tenure forms is interesting given the fact that the currently elected politicians of Stockholm City Hall have decided to sell off an increasingly large part of the public housing stock to tenants (Dagens Nyheter 2019). It is claimed that this political initiative is incentivised by the need to battle social segregation. The idea is that by converting public rental housing into cooperative housing in areas dominated by the public housing segment will stimulate an influx of socio-economically advantaged groups and thereby create a social mix. However, no corresponding actions to promote social mix in well-off neighbourhoods are planned (Wedin 2019). Without producing a larger proportion of rental housing as compensation, this strategy opposes the goal stated in the comprehensive plan of creating a balance between tenure forms. Therefore, it will likely result in a decreased rental housing stock as well as an increased level of gentrification, along with the negative effects that follow for disadvantaged groups. When new city districts, such as Stockholm Royal Seaport, are planned, it is therefore critical that they do not exclude low-income groups. The developments in Stockholm Royal Seaport being exclusive is therefore alarming seen to the level of segregation on a city-wide scale.
In sum, the rent levels in Stockholm Royal Seaport are exceptionally high, even in the public housing stock, due to a number of factors the planners of the city say they are unable to influence. This logically entails that the housing units in the area are inaccessible to low-income families as they are not affordable to them. This of course has implications for the possibilities of achieving a mixed social structure in the area. From a rights perspective, Stockholm Royal Seaport does not exist for the benefit of everyone, despite such expressed intentions, as a large proportion of the population are excluded from housing in the area. Hence, Stockholm Royal Seaport reinforces the structure where the central parts of the city are reserved for resource-rich households. Although much of Stockholm Royal Seaport has been completed, there are still many construction phases left. Therefore, much can happen in the remaining time and the developments might take a different direction in the future.

5.3. Equal prerequisites, different outlooks

As stated by Bergsten and Holmqvist (2009), the main strategy for achieving a social mix is to create a heterogeneous housing structure by means of mixing tenure forms and housing types. This goal has been expressed in both comprehensive plans as well as incorporated into the plans for both development projects. Both comprehensive plans also recognise the need for producing housing that is affordable, which also is in line with what the literature holds is necessary in order to achieve socially mixed housing (e.g. Andersson, Hedman, Hogdal & Johansson 2006: 46). In the case of Gothenburg, a number of measures have been taken to ensure affordability of housing and the municipality has found new ways of utilising the tools that are available. The land allocation policy has been revised in order to better accommodate social objectives, and land allocation contests have been used to pressure developers to find new and innovative business models to provide a variation with regard to housing types, tenures, sizes as well at price levels. Being a test-bed for socially sustainable housing, there is a constant focus on the outcomes. Hence, what can be expected is that a social mix will in fact occur in the designated area of differentiated rents. As the literature (e.g. Andersson, Bråmå & Hogdal 2009; Bergsten & Holmqvist) has held, this will result in positive effects on individual life chances by ensuring equal access to services, workplaces, recreational spaces etc., and on social cohesion by enabling spontaneous interactions between different social groups on a regular basis.

In the case of Stockholm Royal Seaport, on the other hand, no measures have been taken in order to ensure that the new dwellings are affordable and hence accessible to lower-income segments of the population. This shows that a direct commitment to
social justice and the right to housing has been absent in the case of Stockholm Royal Seaport. Moreover, while the comprehensive plan for Gothenburg states a need for housing of varying sizes, this is not recognised in the comprehensive plan for Stockholm and as was made clear in the sustainability report from 2018, dwellings are generally large in the development area, resulting in high prices. As I have argued, the ambitions to create a socially mixed city district have fallen short and instead, the development project has contributed to the reinforcement of segregation and spatial injustice.

Substantial changes in the institutional prerequisites for housing provision have rendered the Swedish universal housing policy ineffective in providing housing on equal terms for everyone. Municipalities are tasked with solving the issues of housing shortage and segregation without being provided with the financial support to adequately do so. Both of these development projects operate within this nationally determined institutional framework. Hence, the judicial predicaments give them the same acting space in their pursuit of creating socially mixed urban districts. Therefore, I find it interesting that, in the case of Gothenburg, one sees opportunities within the current institutional setting in regard to affordable housing, while in Stockholm, one does not. One plausible explanation might be the fact that the City of Gothenburg seemingly has had a longer tradition of working with issues regarding social sustainability, resulting in these kinds of efforts being more entrenched among key actors there than they are in Stockholm (Bergsten & Holmqvist 2013: 307). Another plausible explanation might be the fact that Stockholm attracts more international attention, which could cause them to adhere to well-proven methods and refrain from venturing into unknown territory. This would explain the positive attitude towards the efforts made in Gothenburg. The planners and politicians of Stockholm might want to see the end results before they implement the model themselves, in order to avoid risk.

The City of Stockholm has the opportunity of better utilising the tools that are in fact available within the prevailing institutional system, such as land allocations and the municipal housing companies. By making use of land allocations, the municipality should be able to require that developers provide an adequate proportion of rental housing in each project, and an adequate proportion of smaller flats. Furthermore, by engaging in dialogue and collaboration with developers, the city can investigate potential ways of providing lower rents in parts of Stockholm Royal Seaport where land has not yet been allocated. If the current high rent levels are to be accepted also for future sub-projects, creating a greater mix with regard to the size of housing will be critical for the inclusion of low-income groups and thus for the substantive justness of the project.
As regards both of these projects, one can question their role in counteracting segregation on a city-wide scale. Creating new, socially mixed, urban districts is undoubtedly positive in the sense that, if successful, it does not contribute to the maintainance or strengthening of the segregation that already exists in the city. However, given that segregation must be understood as a phenomena affecting and manifesting itself in the entire city, area based interventions are ineffective if not carried out as part of a larger objective (Bergsten & Holmqvist 2013: 291). Nonetheless, the interventions of RiverCity Gothenburg to create socially mixed housing, despite their present small scale, will likely contribute to opening up the city centre for a more heterogeneous demography. As such, the model for affordable housing tested in RiverCity Gothenburg could possibly be part of the solution to the growing issue of segregation and social injustice.

In light of increasing patterns of segregation, it becomes clear that institutional changes are needed in order to effectively resolve the issue of segregation and to reinstate the right to housing. However, such changes do not come about overnight. In the meantime, municipalities must make efficient use of the tools that are available within the current institutional system, that is, the planning monopoly, land allocations and municipal housing companies. While there is a perceived inability among planners of Stockholm to influence housing costs, the City of Gothenburg has found new ways of utilising the current institutional setting in favor of social mix. However, as RiverCity Gothenburg is yet at an early stage, there are no guarantees as to whether it will be successful. As discussed, a number of risks can be identified, for instance with regard to the scope of implementation, the long-term commitment of property owners, the rent development over time and potential consequences of heavily cut construction costs.

All things considered, no matter the dedication of planners, it inevitably comes down to the politicians in power. As the representative of Familjebostäder noted, the politicians provide the framework within which the company operates. Moreover, every detailed development plan and every land allocation require a political decision. Therefore, ambitions to create the preconditions for socially mixed urban development require a political will in order to be carried through.
6. Conclusions and policy recommendations

This study has sought to discuss and evaluate the ways in which social mix policies are currently being operationalised in a Swedish context by comparing the case of Stockholm Royal Seaport and that of RiverCity Gothenburg. In order to do so, I have attempted to answer the following research questions: (1) In which ways has the political goal of creating socially mixed housing been operationalised? (2) What outcomes can be expected? (3) What possibilities and limitations are there? In terms of how the policy objective has been operationalised, I find that in both cases, social mix has been promoted by planning for and creating a diversity with regard to tenure forms and housing types. However, in the case of Stockholm Royal Seaport, the dwellings are generally larger, both compared to the city average and to RiverCity Gothenburg. In the case of Gothenburg, additional measures have been taken in order to ensure affordability. Moreover, new allocation models will ensure that the cheaper dwellings are in fact inhabited by lower-income households. As such, the city has found new ways of safeguarding public interests. I find that the absence of such measures in the case of Stockholm has resulted in exceptionally high costs of housing. Factors such as high production costs, high market pressures, profit maximisation on the part of developers, as well as high environmental and energy standards have contributed to this result.

In terms of what outcomes can be expected, I find that in both cases, social mix can be expected to some extent due to the integration of various housing types and tenure forms. However, due to the high cost of housing in Stockholm Royal Seaport, low-income groups are largely excluded, which hampers any possibilities of achieving social mix. In terms of possibilities, I argue that there are possibilities of utilising the current institutional setting in favor of social mix. Mainly, land allocations can be used to request that developers deliver affordable housing units. The municipalities have the possibility of exerting such requirements towards the public housing companies through the owner directives. Moreover, it is evident in the case of RiverCity Gothenburg that there is in fact a great interest among developers to contribute to creating socially mixed housing, in spite of the fact that they have to accept lower yields. This can certainly be considered a possibility.

In terms of limitations, I argue that an obstacle in achieving social mix is the profit interest on the part of developers. Thus, the success of these strategies largely depends on the long-term commitment of developers to provide affordable housing.
Another limitation is related to the fact that, no matter the ambitions of planners, the success depends on whether there is a continued political will to achieve social mix. The perceived inability among the planners of Stockholm Royal Seaport to influence housing costs is another limitation. Lastly, both of these projects have a limited ability of affecting patterns of segregation on a city-wide scale. I conclude that while the institutional prerequisites, as well as the local planning context of both projects are similar, the expected as well as observable outcomes differ greatly, with differing implications for social justice and the right to housing.

6.1. Policy recommendations

The case of Stockholm Royal Seaport exemplifies the fact that it has become easier for the rich to access housing, due to rapid production of high cost housing in attractive locations, while it has become increasingly difficult for the poor, due to a lack of affordable units. In light of this, the analysis suggests that the right to housing is under threat. The City of Gothenburg seems to have realised that we must begin to take action within the prevailing system. There is no time to wait for institutional changes or a reassembling of the welfare state if the accelerating process of segregation is to be mitigated, because while we wait, the financial risk falls on the individual. Instead of relying on supposititious trickle down effects from new production, there should be a direct commitment among public institutions to safeguard the right to housing. The discourse must go beyond how to build more and faster, and address the issue of who we are actually building our future cities for.

I conclude that a needs-based policy approach safeguarding the affordability of housing is critical in the pursuit of combating residential segregation and spatial injustice. However, as the literature review has made clear, income disparities as well as ethnic discrimination must also be dealt with if residential segregation is to be mitigated. Therefore, policy interventions in other sectors, such as the labor market, are also needed. As Tunström, Anderson and Perjo (2016) have argued, planning measures are not the sole solution to the issues of segregation and social injustice, as they are not the sole cause. However, they constitute part of the solution (Tunström, Anderson & Perjo 2016: 40).
6.2. Contribution and suggestions for further research

This study has made a societal contribution by critically examining the nature and justness of modern housing development in Sweden aiming to create a social mix. Furthermore, it has made an academic contribution to the fields of housing studies and urban planning by examining the expected outcomes of social mix policy. Lastly, it has made a contribution by qualitatively examining the possibilities and limitations in planning for socially mixed housing in a Swedish context, by comparing the ways in which different local authorities operationalise the policy objective. The results can be of interest to municipalities and housing companies in Sweden, for which they can potentially contribute to decision making and to the development of policy.

The chosen methods of data collection only allow definite conclusions to be made regarding the diversity within the housing structure in terms of types, tenures and price levels. From such data, combined with information gathered from interviews, the expected outcomes, possibilities and limitations have been discussed. Longitudinal studies examining the social composition within the areas would be required to establish with certainty whether a social mix has in fact occurred, and to what degree, as a result of these strategies. It would be of interest to study the social composition of these areas using a variety of variables, such as income, education, ethnicity, age and gender, all of which determine the level of social mix within an area. Future research could also investigate whether decreased construction costs might lead to substandard working conditions for construction workers as well as if it leads to a poor standard of housing. Furthermore, while the present study has primarily focused on planning practices related to social mix policy, it would be of interest to conduct a similar study with focus instead on the political dimension.
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8. Appendix

8.1. Interview guide: Planners of Stockholm Royal Seaport

In what ways has the goal of socially mixed housing been incorporated into the detailed development plans?

What requirements have been placed on developers during land allocation?

What can be said about the results with regard to social mix so far?

Do you consider a mixed housing structure to be a sufficient tool to create a social mix?

What factors have influenced the costs of housing within the area?

Does the municipality have the ambition to keep the housing costs at an affordable level?

8.2. Interview guide: Planners of RiverCity Gothenburg

In what ways has the goal of socially mixed housing been incorporated into the detailed development plans?

What requirements have been placed on developers during land allocation?

What can be said about the results with regard to social mix so far?

How does the working methods differ with RiverCity compared to other urban development projects?

How will the homes be allocated in order to ensure a social mix?

8.3. Interview guide: Representatives of housing companies operating in Stockholm Royal Seaport

How do you view the role of public housing companies in promoting socially mixed housing?

How is a social mix being promoted in Stockholm Royal Seaport?
What factors influence the housing costs in the area?

How will the homes be allocated?

What challenges are there when it comes to providing housing for low- and middle-income households in the area?

Are there any risks associated with the implementation of the project?

What motivates the company to be part of this project?

8.4. **Interview guide: Representatives of housing companies operating in RiverCity Gothenburg**

How do you view the role of public housing companies in promoting socially mixed housing?

How is a social mix being promoted in RiverCity Gothenburg?

In what ways is the company working to achieve rent differentiation?

How will the homes be allocated?

What challenges are there when it comes to providing housing for low- and middle-income households in the area?

Are there any risks associated with the implementation of the project?

What motivates the company to be part of this project?