PLANNING FOR JUST CITIES?

A study investigating the accessibility for and the characteristics of the vulnerable group on the housing market in Denmark and Sweden

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Abstract

This study explores how two national initiatives, the Danish policy, Ét Danmark uden parallelsamfund – Ingen ghettoer i 2030, and the Swedish policy proposal, Ett gemensamt bostadsförsörjningsansvar, characterise and affect the position of the vulnerable group on the housing market in Sweden and Denmark, while attempting to counteract two different societal challenges related to housing and urban development. Ruth Wodak’s interpretation of Critical Discourse Analysis is used as a tool to examine how social constructions of the group are articulated in the texts, while Susan S. Fainstein’s theory of, The just city, will act as guidance in the evaluation of how the Swedish policy proposal and the Danish policy perform regarding developing more just cities. I state that the Danish policy characterises the vulnerable group on the housing market as part of the meaning and the problem of the Danish ‘ghettos’, while leading to a more unjust scenario for the group to access affordable housing. On the contrary, the Swedish policy proposal is aiming towards developing a more just city for the group in relation to housing accessibility as well as advocating for all citizens’ right to demand adequate housing.

Keywords: The vulnerable group on the housing market, right to housing, public and social housing, a just city, the Danish and Swedish housing market.
Preface and acknowledgements

This thesis was written in corporation with the strategic research institute, Nordregio. I was given the freedom to produce the study as I wished and include the elements which I found relevant. This means that the corporation has been focused on knowledge sharing rather than making a study ‘for them’. Nordregio was interested in getting a deeper understanding of the vulnerable group on the housing market’s ability to access housing in the Nordic countries. I have aimed to contribute with a study exploring this while focusing on Sweden and Denmark.

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1 Introduction

The Nordic welfare model is founded on values of equality, openness and efficiency (Nilsson & Høybråten 2017) and the region’s inhabitants are among the most prosperous in the world. Men and women are said to be enjoying greater equality than anywhere else on the planet here, and the people are listed to be among the world’s happiest. But like any other region, the Nordic countries face considerable challenges (Høybråten 2017).

Both Denmark and Sweden have committed themselves to the international human rights law which among other recognises everyone’s right to an adequate standard of living, including adequate housing (Carmo 2019). Despite this, the contemporary housing situation in Sweden and Denmark is largely characterised by inequality, emphasised by how access to housing and the characteristics of housing are increasingly becoming dependent on economic resources (Grander 2018a; interview with Malling). The UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Housing, Leilani Farha, argues that the so-called ‘financialization of housing’ is leading to housing being treated as a commodity instead of a social good. This means that the housing market is used as a vehicle for wealth and investment rather than acknowledging housing as a human right (United Nations Human Rights – Office of the High Commissioner 2017).

While both Sweden and Denmark have had long universal traditions for aiming towards providing everyone with good housing (Grander 2018a; Jensen 2013, p.50), the gradual demand for transitioning to competitive market principles (Grander 2018a, p.48) is putting the welfare state under strain. While some argue that it is the shortage of housing which is the problem (SOU 2018:35), other scholars blame the increasing differences in housing opportunities between different social groups, which could be described as increased housing inequality (Grander 2018a, p.4). The people who are most challenged by the current housing condition is the so-called ‘vulnerable group on the housing market’ (interview with Wiik and interview with Malling). It is this group which is the overall focus of this thesis.

Several initiatives have been implemented in both Sweden and Denmark over the years with the aim to develop more diverse and sustainable cities. Last year, two new national initiatives were introduced and both, in their own way, could be argued to have big implications for the vulnerable group on the housing market’s ability to access affordable housing. The Danish initiative consist of the policy, Ét Danmark uden parallelsamfund – Ingen ghettoer I 2030 (2018) (One Denmark without parallel societies - No ghettos in 2030 in English), which is a strategy for an area-based intervention aiming to reduce the number of deprived neighbourhoods defined as ‘ghettos’ by increasing the mix of people and tenures. The Swedish initiative, Ett gemensamt bostadsförsörjningsansvar (2018) (A shared responsibility for housing distribution in English), is a policy proposal, which suggests establishing a new housing distribution law to support citizens’ right to housing. While the initiatives target two different societal problems, they both characterise challenges and their goals in a way which affects the understanding of the vulnerable group on the housing market and
what the group is entitled to. How this is articulated in the texts and whether their suggestions lead to developing more just cities, is the primary focus of this study.

1.1 Outline of structure
Given this central part of departure, the thesis attends to the case through the following structure:

The thesis begins by giving the reader an overview of previous research which have explored similar subjects as this study, what questions have guided the investigation and how three central concepts are understood and used. An introduction to the used theory comes next, which explains how Susan S. Fainstein understands and uses her theory, *The just city*. A historical chapter will then present a short overview of how the housing systems in Sweden and Denmark have affected the accessibility of the vulnerable group on the housing market from after the Second World War up until the beginning of the 21th century. The method, methodology and material are introduced afterwards to explain what tools and rational were applied to answer the three research questions as well as what material were in focus. The analysis itself consist of four parts: (1) a simplified introduction into how the Danish housing system affects the ability of the vulnerable group on the housing market to access housing, (2) a simplified introduction into how the Swedish housing system affects the ability of the vulnerable group on the housing market to access housing, (3) a critical discourse analysis of the Danish policy, *Èt Danmark uden parallelsamfund – Ingen ghettoer i 2030*, and (4) a critical discourse analysis of the Swedish policy proposal, *Ett gemensamt bostadsforsöjningsansvar*. The results of the analysis are then discussed and evaluated in terms of how they correlate with Fainstein’s interpretation of *The just city*. The conclusion sums up the results by answering the three research questions and what the thesis has contributed with and ends by introducing recommendations for future research.

1.2 Connecting to the Research Field
The Danish housing market has been thoroughly examined over the years by numerus researchers and compared to several other housing markets all over the world (Aalborg Universitet n.d. b). The professor, Hans Skifter Andersen, has published a considerable amount of research exploring the significance of urban development, housing politics and the housing market in Denmark while actively participating in the debate concerning the government’s aim to counteract the existence of ‘ghettos’ (Aalborg Universitet, n.d. a). Hedvig Vestergaard, another researcher working for the Danish Building Research Institute, has as well investigated the implications of the Danish housing market and housing policy and explained how social housing has evolved from having its heyday in the 1960s and 1970s, when around 10.000 new social housing units were build each year, to the past decade being in great danger of ending as a housing sector (Vestergaard 2007, p.32, 35). Much research in Sweden has focused on the implications of the housing market as well and how people are marked by shortage of affordable housing. While Grander (2018) claimed in his newly
released PhD, For the Benefit of Everyone? – Explaining the Significance of Swedish Public Housing for Urban Housing Inequality, that Swedish public housing has the potential to both counteract, enact and contribute to housing inequality (Grander 2018a, p.158), the researcher, Fölster (2017), highlights the complexity of the concept ‘the inclusive city’ and the consequences which can occur if areas with socioeconomic challenges are not prioritised. In that regard, Musterd and Andersson (2006) investigated if the social composition of a neighbourhood had specific positive or negative effects on the career prospects of the residents. This research and much more gives an essential insight into how the contemporary housing markets function in Sweden and Denmark today, but much more is needed.

The Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning characterises the future distribution of housing as the biggest challenge for the Swedish housing market and addresses the need for more knowledge concerning challenges related to the housing market, identifying where it does not function properly and why in order to implement initiatives supporting especially the vulnerable group on the housing market, which is distinguished as challenged in relation to establishing themselves on the housing market (Boverket 2015, p.9, 11). Likewise, the Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science advocates for more research exploring how the Danish social housing sector can support the vulnerable group on the housing market even further (Uddannelses- og Forskningsministeriet 2016).

Grander (2018) explains that while historical changes of Swedish public housing have been rather well described in earlier research, investigations focusing on changes in relation to empirical validity of the universal approach is limited (Grander 2018a, p.17) and Fainstein (2010) moreover claims that most policy analysis concerns itself with best practises or what ‘works’ in relation to specific goals without interrogating the broader objectives of these policies (Fainstein 2010, p.4). This thesis is aiming to contribute closing these gaps and to provide a deepened understanding of how Denmark and Sweden’s housing markets in a comparative manner affect the accessibility of the vulnerable group on the housing market.

1.3 Research Purpose and Research Questions

This study takes its point of departure from the recognition that the Swedish and Danish housing markets are becoming increasingly unequal and the fact that the vulnerable group on the housing market is challenged by housing becoming increasingly dependent on economic resources. The purpose of the thesis is:

To investigate how the Danish policy, Ét Danmark uden parallelsamfund – Ingen ghettoer i 2030, and the Swedish policy proposal, Ett gemensamt bostadsförsörjningsansvar, affect the challenge of accessing housing for the vulnerable group on the housing market, how the group and their entitlements are characterised within the texts and how the results relates to developing more just cities.
The goal of the investigation in this case implies not only revealing how the national strategies affect the accessibility of the vulnerable group on the housing market but also analysing which challenges and goals are constructed within the texts and how these understandings relate to the characterisation of the group. The following three research questions below operationalise such a perspective in the research purpose and act as guidance to the investigation of the purpose:

1. What challenges and goals can be found in the Swedish policy proposal and the Danish policy and how does these constructions reflect the characterisation of the vulnerable group on the housing market within the texts?
2. What implications does the Swedish and the Danish housing market have for the vulnerable group on the housing market to access housing today and how does the Swedish policy proposal, *Ett gemensamt bostadsförsörjningsansvar*, and the Danish policy, *Ét Danmark uden parallelsamfund – Ingen ghettoer i 2030*, affect that ability?
3. How does the Danish policy and the Swedish policy proposal perform in an evaluation of their implications in terms of developing more just cities?

1.4 Essential concepts
This chapter will explain how I define and use the concepts ‘vulnerable group on the housing market’, ‘social housing’ and ‘public housing’.

1.4.1 The vulnerable group on the housing market
I have chosen to use the term ‘the vulnerable group on the housing market’ as to define:

Groups with a vulnerable position on the housing market whose economy is not strong enough for them to access a dwelling in a reasonable time which correlates with their needs. It is people who find it difficult to establish themselves on the housing market or to find a dwelling which correlates with the individuals’ life situation without support from the society.

This definition is based on the definition applied in the Swedish policy *Ett gemensamt bostadsförsörjningsansvar* (2018) (SOU 2018:35, p.32). The definition correlates with how the Danish government, the Danish Ministry for Economic Affairs and the director of the Danish non-profit housing sector, Jens Elmelund, characterise residents living in the Danish ‘ghettos’ (Økonomi- og Indenrigsministeriet 2018; Regeringen 2018d; Elmelund 2018). I have therefore referred to a ‘vulnerable group on the housing market’ as living in the Danish ‘ghettos’ even if the Danish policy does not define or mention the concept.

1.4.2 Social housing
This concept is used when translating the Danish word ‘almen bolig’. The term is a collective designation for three different types of housing: social family dwellings, social dwellings for the elderly and social dwellings for young people. Danish Social Housing, the National Building Fund and the Ministry of Transport, Building and Housing are
among those who translate ‘almen bolig’ to ‘social housing’ (BL 2018b; Landsbyggefonden n.d. a; Ministry of Transport, Building, and Housing n.d.).

1.4.3 Public housing

‘Allmännytta’ is in this thesis translated to ‘public housing’ which in Sweden is constituted by municipal housing companies (MHCs), which are housing companies (to a majority) owned and political governed by the local municipality. Public housing is available for the general public usually applied for by a queue system and is supplemented by housing allowance and a secondary housing market (Grander 2018a, p.46). Because public housing in Sweden is neither needs tested or selective as in the case of Denmark it cannot be classified as social housing. Public Housing Sweden, an industry and interest organisation for public housing companies, use the term ‘public housing’ as well.

2 Theory – The Just City

Susan S. Fainstein introduced the book, *The Just City*, in 2010 to “…recommend nonreformist reforms directed at improving the lives of residents of cities within Western Europe and the United States.” (Fainstein 2010, p.19) while hoping to shift the conversation of planning and public policy to the character of urban areas. Based on a problematisation of the capitalistic system and the dominating discourse of planning distinguished by economic growth, profitability and competitiveness, she developed an urban theory of justice to evaluate existing and potential institutions and programs with the aim of convincing the importance of justice within public decision making (ibid. p.1, 5, 6, 19). The theoretical framework was used to answer the third research question.

For the purpose of this study, the applicability of Fainstein’s theory of justice laid in the question of the policies’ implications for the vulnerable group on the housing market both regarding the group’s ability to access housing and in the characterisation of the group itself. The theory was used to help me understand, explain and evaluate the results of the analysis in a broader sense, shedding light on how the two national initiatives differentiated from each other and how they were alike. Furthermore, Fainstein acknowledges the implications of discourse and power, which correlates with the analysis’ point of departure within Critical Discourse Analysis as well as both orientations aim for supporting excluded and vulnerable groups. Lastly, as mentioned earlier, this thesis takes its point of departure from the recognition that the Swedish and Danish housing markets are becoming increasingly unequal. This fits well with the premises of Fainstein’s theory aiming to improve the lives of residents of cities and prevent urban regimes from excluding vulnerable groups for instead to foster equitable distribution of governmental revenues, produce lively, divers and accessible public realms and more democratic cities (ibid. p.14, 19, 24, 183).

2.1 Why justice?

A ‘just city’ is a city “…in which public investment and regulation would produce equitable outcomes rather than support those already well off.” (ibid. p.3), while injustice is distinguished by actions that “…disadvantage those who already have less or who are excluded from entitlements enjoyed by others who are no more deserving.”
(ibid. p.3). Fainstein’s normative description is one example of how to identify a ‘just city’, others before her, such as Sandercock (1998), has characterised ‘a just city’ as a social inclusive city where differences are not merely tolerated but recognised and respected, while Rawls’ (1971) fundamental work, *A Theory of Justice*, constitute criteria of ‘justice’, which Fainstein herself has distilled down to four topics which seemed most relevant to her concern: (1) the relation of democratic processes to just outcomes, (2) equity, (3) recognition and (4) the tension between democracy, equity and diversity. It is these three last components, democracy, equity and diversity, which constitute Fainstein’s core principles of the urban theory of justice (Fainstein 2010, p.23).

But why revisit the conceptualization? The ‘just city’ is distinguished as an envision of a viable alternative to the dominant neoliberal doctrine (ibid. p.8), which according to Harvey (2006) is leading to the state’s mission of creating a “good business climate” while optimising the conditions for capital formation regardless the consequences for employment or social well-being (Harvey 2006, p.25). The Danish policy and the Swedish policy proposal were adopted at a time where strategic spatial planning often takes the form of a hybrid between traditional welfare state planning and growth-oriented neoliberal strategic planning approaches, with each country having its own national peculiarity (Olesen 2014, p.289). Meanwhile, segregation is becoming an increasing problem in both countries (Würtz & Jespersen 2014; Ku2018/01462/D), which challenges Fainstein’s ideal of the ‘just city’, by decreasing shared environments which forces people to deal with difference (Fainstein 2010, p.72).

### 2.2 Equity

Fainstein distinguishes equity as a call for providing every citizen with a home. But planners can face issues when aspiring for equity and devising policies for housing and urban regeneration, because of the must that the policies must work within conditions such as questions of preservation and housing shortage. Fainstein encourages when defining a dispute to question what would be the most just solution, but at the same time recognise that depending on the context different values ought to prevail (ibid. p.79, 82).

Rather than using the word ‘equality’, Fainstein prefers the term ‘equity’ when proposing a standard for evaluating decision making for two reasons. First, ‘equality’ is too complex, demanding and unrealistic to be an objective in a capitalistic city and Fainstein acknowledges that the effects of more just policies would never be sufficient enough to radically change unequal income distribution. Secondly, ‘equity’ is commonly used in policy analysis, it implies fairness, which is a more broadly accepted value than equality while it has the power to easier gain political support. Consequently, ‘equity’ is more politically strategic than ‘equality’, even though, it is in fact a move towards greater equality (ibid. p.35-37).

To promote equity seven points are essential to take into account: (1) All new housing development should provide units for households with incomes below the median and the goal is to provide a decent home and suitable living environment for everyone, (2) housing units developed to be affordable should stay like that, (3) households or businesses should not be involuntarily relocated for the purpose of obtaining economic
development or community balance except in exceptional circumstances. If dislocation is applied, renters or owners should be given sufficient means to occupy an equivalent dwelling or business site, (4) economic development programs should give priority to the interests of employees and small businesses and all new commercial development should provide space for public use and when possible facilitate the livelihood of independent and cooperatively owned businesses, (5) megaprojects should be subject to heightened scrutiny and be required to provide direct benefits for low-income groups, (6) fares for intracity transit should be kept very low and should target low-income groups' ability to commute and (7) planners should take an active role in deliberative settings in pressing for egalitarian solutions and blocking ones that disproportionately benefit the already well-off (ibid. p.172, 173).

2.3 Diversity

Fainstein distinguishes ‘diversity’ as a multi-dimensional term with various meanings such as varied physical design, mixes of uses, an expanded public realm, and multiple social groupings exercising their “right to the city.” (Fainstein 2005, p.3), while Chris Hamnett (personal communication with Fainstein in 2009) associates the use of the term ‘diversity’ with a strategic decision to portray cities as attractive he advocates instead for the use of the term ‘tolerance’ (Fainstein 2010, p.67). Fainstein does acknowledge that her use of the term as denoting one of the three criteria of urban justice is problematic, however, she sees its strength in being

“…a convenient shorthand, [it] encompasses reference to the physical environment as well as social relations, and refers to policy ambitions that go beyond encouraging acceptance of others to include the social composition of places.” (ibid. p.67).

The goals of democracy, equity and diversity are difficult to combine in the ‘real world of politics’ though. Europe consist of national cultures which are deeply rooted and defined, juxtaposition of differing cultural traditions are therefore fraught with tension according to Fainstein (ibid. p.48, 49). While conditions are difficult to transform, Fainstein stand by the claim that diversity is very important to strive for, because “Diversity underlies the appeal of the urban, it fosters creativity, it can encourage tolerance, and it leads city officials to see the value in previously underappreciated lifestyles.” (Fainstein 2005, p.13). But the achievement of diversity may come at the cost of other values. Requiring housing in an area to encompass a broad income range and forbid discrimination, constitutes standards conducive to Fainstein’s identification of ‘justice’. However, dislocating people against their will in order to achieve more mixed areas is counterproductive and an infringement on liberty. The key is, according to Fainstein, to limit behaviour, but not people (Fainstein 2010, p.72, 73).

As points were listed by Fainstein in furtherance of equity, the term ‘diversity’ was also appointed specific requirements: (1) households should not be required to move for the purpose of obtaining diversity, but neither should new communities be built that further segregation, (2) zoning should not be used for discriminatory ends but rather foster inclusion, (3) boundaries between districts should be porous, (4) ample public space should be widely accessible and varied, (5) to the extent practical and desired by affected populations, land uses should be mixed and (6) public authorities should
assist groups who have historically suffered from discrimination in achieving access to opportunity in housing, education and employment (ibid. p.174).

2.4 Democracy

The term ‘democracy’ is not as prioritised by Fainstein as the other terms incorporated into the meaning of justice, because the democratic system is regarded as good in itself in democratic theory and the ‘good city’ is as mentioned earlier not Fainstein’s focus. But she does make clear that she associates democracy with institutional citizen participation, equal opportunities and as an instrument in reaching the goal of justice. Throughout the book, she criticises democratic theory for being weak if not tied to an economic program and for afflicting genuine inconsistency in its effort to preserve minority rights. Fainstein states that if justice is the goal, the requirement of democracy is mainly instrumental and without it, people with less power are likely to be treated badly (ibid. p.29, 51, 66, 175).

In an unequal society democracy and justice are frequently at odds. To make democratic progress three points are important to implement: (1) groups which are not able to directly participate in decision-making processes should be represented by advocates, (2) plans should be developed in consultation with the target population if the area is already developed, but the existing population should not be the sole arbiter of the future of an area either, citywide considerations must also apply and (3) in planning for sparsely occupied areas, broad consultation should be established that includes representatives of groups currently living outside the affected areas (ibid. p.30, 175).

2.5 Conclusory remarks

Fainstein’s aim have been to provide a guide for what to do if justice is the first evaluative criterion used in policy making. She believes that implementing a continuous concern for developing policy with the aim of justice can prevent urban regimes from displacing residents involuntarily, destroying communities and directing recourses in costly megaprojects which leads to few general benefits. Put in a more positive way, focus on justice can lead to policies that foster equitable distribution of governmental revenues, produce a lively, divers and accessible public realm and make decision making more transparent and inclusive regarding excluded groups. A crucial step in the right direction would be if the discourse surrounding policy making focused on the implications for justice rather than the contribution to competitiveness (ibid. p.5, 6, 48, 165, 183, 184).

Equity, diversity and democracy are characterised by Fainstein to be three primary qualities constituting urban justice, however, these standards may sometimes be in conflict, both internally and with each other and be difficult to merge in contemporary world of politics, where the majority sentiment for equity is often lacking. Though, Fainstein do argue that a continues pressure for justice will change the system incrementally and restructure capitalism into a more “humane system” (ibid. p.6, 165). It is important not to consider Fainstein’s theory as a conceptualization of the ‘good city’, but instead as a significant and necessary component of the vision of what can be identified as a ‘good city’ (ibid. p.58). The theory has not been received without remarks though. Song (2015) critiques Fainstein for not paying enough attention to the
relationship between “race, urban political economy and transformative planning” (Song 2015, p.152) while Harvey and Potter (2009) critique her theory for being limited by its scope of acting within the existing capitalistic regime and for avoiding the necessity for outright conflict and struggle (Harvey & Potter 2009, p.46). Umemoto (2013) argues that Fainstein fail to articulate the meaning of the just city at a more abstract level of principles, missing the opportunity to present a set of guidelines that could be applied across a broader range of city contexts and a wider array of substantive policy areas (Umemoto 2013, p.327). Although the theory may not be flawless, it works as a great point of departure for a discussion considering how the Swedish policy proposal and the Danish policy perform in terms of making more just cities and how they affect the possibility for the vulnerable group on the housing market to access housing.

3 The development of the- Danish and Swedish housing system

This chapter gives a short introduction into the development of the Danish and Swedish housing systems after the Second World War with a focus on describing the different mindsets influencing the formation of the systems and what was prioritised at particular stages in time exemplified by different political initiatives. The chapter is meant to give the reader a short overview of the development of the systems for the reader to more easily understand why the housing systems in Denmark and Sweden looks the way they do today.

3.1 The post-war period – A crucial time in Swedish and Danish housing politics

In the post-war period, Denmark and Sweden were challenged by intense housing shortages, overcrowded flats and a decreasing housing standards. In addition, many of the housing units were without modern conveniences such as bathrooms or central heating (Bengtsson 2013, p.131-132; Vestergaard 2007, p.7). The housing problems were put on the Danish political agenda before the Second World War, but it was first after the war that they gained a more dominant position as important elements in the development of the Danish welfare state (Vestergaard 2007, p.7). The politicians in Sweden acknowledged the problems as well. Gustav Möller, the earlier Swedish Minister for Social Affairs in Sweden at the time, promoted housing as a question of significant social importance in 1924, but it was first in 1945 when Möller was handed the result of the commission, Bostadssociala utredningen (Investigation on social perspectives on housing in English), that housing became a bearing pillar of the Swedish ‘Folkhem’ (Grander 2018a, p.viii) often referred to as ‘the Swedish model’ (De Vries 2011). In Denmark, the earlier social democratic prime minister of Denmark, Jens Otto Krag, had an important role working on the program, Fremtidens Danmark (The Future of Denmark in English) (Hvidt 2016), which described the current housing situation in Denmark as one of the most important issues at that time and presented the goal of making “More housing, better housing, cheaper housing”. The new Danish housing approach was universal in its character, not only focusing on the most vulnerable group on the housing market but acknowledging everyone’s right for a better quality of life (Jensen 2013, p.82, 83).
3.2 Social and public housing

The time span after the Second World War was crucial in terms of the formation of Swedish housing politics. It was during this time period, that the universal system for financing housing was developed and the Swedish municipalities was set to be responsible for public housing (Bengtsson 2013, p.131-132). The universal housing politics aimed for the goal: ‘Good housing for all’. The main tool for achieving this has been and still is ‘allmännyttan’ (for the benefit of everyone in English), which is constituted by MHCs and formed as a result of the commission, Bostadssociala utredning, in order to offer rental housing of high quality for everyone and counteract speculation on the housing market (Grander 2018a, p.2). Social housing was developed in Denmark in the beginning of the 20th century (Christensen 2013), but it was first in the time period after the Second World War that the amount of social housing units increased tremendously relating to the emphasis on building up the Danish welfare state (Vestergaard 2007, p.32). In 1945, around 20.000 social housing units existed, 20 years later the amount had increased to 152.000 (Jensen 2013, p.86).

3.3 The 1960s and 1970s – Building for the people

The social housing sector had its heyday in the 1960s and 1970s in Denmark, building a substantial number of units, many of them large apartments with four to five rooms, two bathrooms and large balconies located in very large estates (Vestergaard 2007, p.32). In 1964, a new development project was projected to be “…in such a high quality, applicably, technically and environmentally, that it will not – on the contrary to most other new development projects – become hopelessly old-fashioned in ten, twenty or thirty years…” (Jensen 2013, p.89).

The project, which I am referring to here is the development of Gellerup, which today is argued to be the prototype of a so-called ‘ghetto’ in Denmark. It has been connected to an increasing problem of residential segregation, which has led to the vulnerable group on the housing market being increasingly concentrated in Danish social housing units. The issues affected the image of the sector, from characterised as a problem solver to being seen as part of the problem itself later in the 1980s (ibid. p.89, 99-101). Many development projects were inspired by the modernistic philosophy and the ideas of Le Corbusier around the 1960s, but it was also a time when critical thinkers started questioning the benefit of modernism for the human being. The book by Jane Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities (1961) and the sociological investigation by Jan Gehl, Life Between Buildings (1971), published ten years later are examples of how architecture became part of a debate focusing on what the main purpose of architecture was and for whom it was to serve.

In 1965, the government decided to establish the famous ‘Million Homes Programme’ (Miljonprogrammet in Swedish) in Sweden, with the goal of building one million new homes in ten years (Bengtsson 2013, p.139, 140). The project succeeded. Within ten years, one million new homes were a reality and the housing queue was gone.
(Boverket 2014). As the Gellerup-project in Denmark was made with very high expectations, the Million Homes Programme was as well. Unfortunately, it ended up with similar problems as the Danish project. The large-scale Million Homes Programme areas developed into increasingly segregated cities and are today part of an intense debate considering whether to demolish the buildings within the areas or change them radically (Formas 2012). The societal problems resulted in many residents choosing to leave the areas when they had the opportunity. This triggered the MHCs to change focus from construction to management and maintenance (Grander 2018a, p.91, 95).

3.4 The 1990s in Denmark – The housing costumer and the ‘owner gen’

In the 1990s, the Danish government, led by the Social Democratic Party, introduced several political initiatives which aimed to improve the specific problematized areas. Integration became an important agenda in politics. Moreover, the social housing sector needed to improve its image and its ability to compete with the owner-occupied sector. The proposed solution to do that was to strengthen the individualisation for a better customized service in which the residents should see themselves as ‘costumers’. The role of the ‘rental resident’ thereby developed into the idea of the ‘consuming costumer’ (Jensen 2013, p.103-105). While the housing movement and the Social Democratic Party had argued for a long time that the drive for owning a home was a typical liberal constructed ideology, the political party now turned its direction towards the so-called ‘owner-gen’ and introduced a new tenure form to accommodate that: cooperative housing. The idea was to give residents the possibility for owning part of their dwelling and thereby acquire a more powerful position in contrast to ‘just’ renting. Furthermore, the new tenure form was required to be handed over to the association if the resident chose to move instead of selling it on the housing market. It thereby became a judicial compromise between the private and public sector (ibid. p.103-107).

3.5 1988-1990s – Rethinking Swedish housing politics

Sweden experienced one of the worst economic recessions in Swedish history between 1990 and 1995, which affected nearly all parts of the society. At the same time, the number of immigrants increased dramatically between 1993-1995, when a large proportion of refugees came to Sweden due to political conflicts in their home countries (Bengtsson 2013, p.160-162). Brämå argues, that these societal developments can be one of the reasons why the residential segregation of immigrants increased in many Swedish cities during the 1990s (Brämå 2006, p.1127, 1131). The economic crisis triggered a debate considering the expenses of the subsidy system, pointing to the fact that it had cost the state 300 billion Swedish kroner from 1977 to 1994. Furthermore, it was discussed whether the money really benefited the most vulnerable on the housing market. The debate ended dramatically. The right-wing government led by Carl Bildt took office in 1991 and decided to close the Housing Ministry and cut a large part of the economic subsidies. But the most symbolic cut was done when abandoning the Housing Distribution Law, which made the municipalities responsible for providing housing for Swedish citizens,
the Housing Directives Right Law, which gave the municipalities the right to allocate a household to a specific property owner and the Housing Sanitation Act, which gave the Swedish Union of Tenants the power to influence the rebuilding of properties. The right-wing government changed the financial and subsidy system, forcing the MHCs to solve their own funding on the same term as other property owners (Bengtsson 2013, p.160-162).

3.6 The 2000’s – Challenging times for the vulnerable group on the housing market

Danish Social Housing continued throughout the 2000s and 2010s to focus on their obligation to solve social problems associated with housing, while the state at the same time chose to withdraw financial subsidies (Christensen 2013, p.30) and carry out strict regulations for allowed building costs in the sector. This led to a reduction in the number of new social housing units except for dwellings for the elderly (Andersen 2012, p.18). The financial crisis in 2008 meant that the Danish government turned much of its attention towards improving the financial situation, also regarding housing politics. The capacity of Danish Social Housing and its ability to create successful residential areas was questioned and it was suggested that the system should be controlled by the market. Alongside this, the Housing Ministry was disbanded, making the sector unable to contribute in political processes and decision-making. But beside these tough circumstances, Danish Social Housing was able to withhold its position as a safety net for the Danish citizens and became the only alternative for providing institutional arrangements for counteracting segregated areas (Jensen 2013, p.111-112). Meanwhile, the demand for housing was increasing and the vulnerable group on the housing market’s conditions were becoming worse, while the waiting list for social housing was becoming longer (Byforum 2001, p.4). The Danish housing system was clearly unbalanced.

3.7 A Swedish marketisation process

The Social Democratic Party lost the election in 2006 after being in power for ten years. A new right-winged government was established led by the party leader Fredrik Reinfeldt from Moderaterna who became prime minister. The government continued to phase out the idea of having the right to adequate and affordable housing when they rewrote the 40-year-old political housing goal in 2007. A new goal was established instead, which was clearly affected by a dominant marketisation process, characterizing citizens as ‘consumers’ rather than tenants, including goals of economic growth and steering the focus towards a well-functioning housing market (Bengtsson 2013, p.170, 171).

3.8 Conclusionary remarks

Housing holds a special place in the heart of the Swedish and Danish welfare states, though the ability to access housing has had its ups and downs since after the Second World War (Grander 2018a, p.1; Vestergaard 2007, p.32). Housing politics in Denmark and Sweden has followed a similar course through time, steered by politicians with related ideologies and guided by similar goals. They both established a universal housing system after the Second World War embodying the egalitarian
ideal of a decent home for everyone and followed the same path of competitive marketization cutting a large amount of state’s subsidies (Sweden in the 1990s and Denmark in the next decennium). The Danish Social Housing and The Swedish Public Housing Sweden still exist today though and both account for around 20% of the total housing stock in each country (SABO n.d. b, p.3; Trafik-, Bygge- og Boligstyrelsen 2019a). Sweden is claimed by many in the latest years to be in a so-called ‘national housing crisis’ marked by a severe shortage of housing (Petersson 2016; Hejdelind 2017; Reuterskiöld 2016). A new commission of inquiry is advocating for supporting Swedish citizen’s right to housing and establish a clear overview of responsibility for solving the lack of housing. The initiative is called, *Ett gemensamt bostadsförsörjningsansvar*, and is part of the investigation of this thesis. While a housing crisis has not been characterised as a national concern in Denmark, the country is experiencing a high level of shortage of affordable housing especially in the big cities and a pressured market for the most vulnerable on the housing market as well as increasing segregated neighbourhoods (interview with Malling; By- og Boligudvalget 2014). The Danish government latest initiatives to counteract so-called ‘parallel societies’, which can be seen as a consequence of increasing segregation (Geografisk Orientering 2015, p.10), is the national strategy, *Ét Danmark uden parallelsamfund – ingen ghettoer i 2030*. This policy is part of the second half of the focus of this thesis’s investigation.

4 Methodology, methods and material

In the previous chapters I have articulated what subject I have intended to research and how I understood it. In the following chapter I have focused on how my research was realised and what considerations I took into account.

4.1 Positioning – The point of departure

The thesis is grounded in social constructivist ontology, which according to Jensen (2011) implies an acceptance of social reality as a product of human action and constructions of language and discursive power struggles, while descriptions of the world are based upon knowledge determined by historical and social circumstances (Jensen 2011, p.84, 96). Social constructivism is a common trade of the discursive tradition, focusing on phenomenon which in society is considered as natural. Berger and Luckmann (1966) argue in the book, *The Social Construction of Reality*, that everyday life consists of things which is taken for granted and understood as common sense (Berger & Luckmann 1966, p.21). Moreover, they distinguish that an understanding of language is “…essential for any understanding of the reality of everyday life.” (ibid., p.35). Epistemology within social constructivism echoes this idea of knowledge by proclaiming that there does not exist a true point of view in which the world can be observed, because an individual’s realisation is affected by these discursive power struggles and social constructions (Jensen 2011, p.95). The Danish policy and the Swedish policy proposal are therefore understood in this thesis as constructions of reality in which certain ‘truths’ can be articulated as common sense and where discursive power struggles can exist within.
4.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was used as a tool to answer two of the research questions (number 1 and 2) and acted therefore as a base for this investigation. This chapter will introduce what CDA implies, how I have used it as a method for my analysis and what limitations it broad with it.

4.2.1 What is Critical Discourse Analysis?

CDA became a household name in the social sciences and was used more consistently in the 1990s when a network of scholars, consisting of Teun van Dijk, Norman Fairclough, Gunther Kress, Theo van Leeuwen and Ruth Wodak, established the legitimacy of a linguistically oriented discourse analysis anchored in social reality with a deep interest in the forms of inequality in societies (Blommaert 2005 p.5, 6). CDA came to take a particular interest in the relationship between language and power (Weiss & Wodak 2003, p.12) and is today distinguished by Ruth Wodak as aiming towards unmasking "…ideologically permeated and often obscured structures of power, political control, and dominance, as well as strategies of discriminatory inclusion and exclusion in language use.” (Wodak, De Cillia, Reisigl, Rodger & Liebhart 2009, p.8).

CDA is explained by Wodak et al. as committed to an emancipatory, socially critical approach, supporting those who suffer political and social injustice and which aims to intervene discursively in social and political practises (Wodak et al. 2009, p.8).

Ruth Wodak has devoted much of her work to exploring the field of politics and encourages the investigation of political initiatives. She defines policies as sites of struggles between different actors and different ideologies, as rules that have been decided upon and as means of codifying a particular construction of social reality (Wodak & Savski 2018 p.4). Language is not powerful within itself, only through the use of powerful people which is why it is essential to understand how power is used and legitimised (Wodak & Meyer 2001b, p.8). It is because of Wodak’s thorough investigation of policy, politics and political discourse, that her interpretation of CDA was found applicable in the analysis of the Danish policy and the Swedish policy proposal. Essential elements of Wodak’s substantial work was used, which I found relevant in relation to this thesis. These subjects are explained more in depth below.

4.2.2 Discourse

Wodak et al. (2009) defines discourse as

“…a form of social practise…which assumes a dialectical relationship between particular discursive acts and the situations, institutions and social structures in which they are embedded: the situational, institutional and social contexts shape and affect discourse, and, in turn, discourses influence social and political reality.” (ibid. p.8).

On a social level, discursive practises may influence the formation of groups and can conceal relations of power and dominance between people in multiple ways (ibid. p.8). Wodak distinguishes between ‘discourse’ and ‘text’ as the former implies
patterns and commonalities of knowledge and structures, whereas ‘text’ is seen as a specific and unique realisation of a discourse (Wodak 2009, p.39). Moreover, in CDA, language as discourse is seen as both an action in which people can affect the world around them and as an action which is socially and historically situated. It is these discursive practices which can lead to creating or reproducing unequal power-relations between different social groups (Phillips & Jørgensen 1999, p.67-69). Wodak emphasises the importance of taken the context of every text into account in an investigation to ensure that the results of an investigation can be distinguished as valid. This relates to Wodak’s characterisation of discourses as historically produced, interpreted and situated in time and space (Wodak & Meyer 2001b, p.3; Wodak & Meyer 2001a, p.28). The focus on the importance of contextualisation reflects my own decision to include the chapters explaining how the Danish and Swedish housing system have affected the accessibility of the vulnerable group on the housing market through time as well as exploring the current implications of the housing systems in each country today for the positioning of the group.

4.2.3 ‘Topoi’, identity and culture
Argumentation in policy papers can time to time lead to a construction of different groups or positions as to be blamed for trouble or for causing potential failure. Wodak’s concept of ‘Topoi’ can be used to investigate these positive self- and negative other-presentations which requires justification and legitimation-strategies and which can be distinguished as elements of ‘persuasive rhetoric’ (Wodak et al. 2009, p.42). Topoi is defined by Wodak as

“…the content-related warrants or ‘conclusion rules’ which connects the argument or arguments with the conclusion or central claim. As such they justify the transition from the argument or arguments to the conclusion.” (ibid. p.42).

‘Topoi’ can thereby be seen as ‘reservoirs’ of generalised key ideas from which specific statements can be generated (ibid. p.42, 43). These legitimisations can be articulated in the construction of specific identities or ideas about culture. Wodak distinguishes ‘identity’ as having two basic meanings: absolute sameness and a notion of distinctiveness. She applies Jenkins (1996) to explain how all human identities are social in nature because identity is about meaning and meaning develops in context-dependent use and can be co-constructed (Wodak 2009, p.13). The concepts of ‘sameness’ and ‘distinctiveness’ or ‘uniqueness’ are based upon Ricoeur’s (1992) understanding of identity, in which the former concept is characterised by relations of similarities and the latter determines differences. This understanding relates to how Wodak uses Clifford Geertz’s explanation of ‘culture’ as limiting action by mechanisms, which constructs specific ‘rules’, standards and actions as appropriate (Wodak et al. 2009, p.11, 12, 21) whereby automatically identifying ‘others’ as different if not following ‘this set of rules’, which echoes Wodak et al.’s (2009) definition of a ‘nation’ as a belief of connectedness and emotional attachment, “…constructed and conveyed in discourse, predominantly in narratives of national culture. National identity is thus the product of discourse.” (ibid. p.22).
4.2.4 Language and Power

Power is a defining feature of CDA. It can be distinguished as a central condition in social life and policies can portray sites of power struggles between differing discourses and ideologies each aiming for dominance. The dominant structures stabilise power-relations and can be taken as given if not questioned. Language is in that way entwined in social power in different ways normalising specific ideas and understandings (Wodak 2001 p.3, 8). CDA strongly relies on linguistic categories, directing its attention towards the form, meaning and context of language with the aim of unmasking ideologically permeated and often obscured structures of power, political control and dominance, as well as strategies which can lead to inclusion or exclusion in language use (Wodak et al. 2009 p.8). But discourse analysis is not only to be perceived as a method, but also as theories about text production and text reception where social processes are inherently linked to language. Discourse analysis is thereby both theoretical and empirical (Kendall 2007). The purpose of analysing the chosen policies was to incorporate this critical thinking, questioning the use of the chosen language and aim to discover possible underlying power dynamics and discourses in the documents, which could project different meanings and ideas as ‘truths’.

4.2.5 Writing from somewhere

CDA has been criticised for being a biased interpretation in the way that it is prejudice on the basis of an ideological commitment and researchers choosing texts which complement a preferred interpretation. Fairclough contradict this claim, by arguing that CDA, unlike most other approaches, is very explicit about the researcher’s own position and commitment (Wodak & Meyer 2001b p.4). Wodak adds that CDA, in contrast to other types of discourse and conversational analysis, does not pretend to be able to assume an objective, socially neutral analytical stance (Wodak et al. 2009 p.8). By acknowledging this claim and following the ontology of social constructivism I also acknowledged that my writing and the perspectives I have introduced in this thesis ‘came from somewhere’. We all write and speak in a particular place, in a particular time, and in a specific cultural arena, which affects the choices we make and how research unfolds. My own position and my own understanding of the world have thereby affected how and why I conducted my study, what I wrote and how I wrote it as well as what I chose to include.

4.2.6 Limitations of Critical Discourse Analysis

CDA is not flawless, many critiques have emphasised that over time. I wish to introduce some of the critique which I have aimed to not copy.

As mentioned earlier, CDA aims at disclosing structures of power and to unmask ideologies with the goal of enlightenment and emancipation. Taking sides for the oppressed and excluded can thus be viewed as an integral element of CDA. But in an external way, social and political problems can be recognised before the analysis and not in the course of it, “…critical discourse analysts take explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality.” (Dijk 2001 p.352). This endanger that the respective relations of power and domination have already been distinguished as a problem before beginning the analysis whereby limiting the ability to capture other relevant insights, which might contradict this focus
(Nonhoff 2017, p.3). Another limitation which can occur is if critical analysts fail to be self-reflexive to the extent that the critical limits of critique becomes ignored and thereby hidden (Weiss & Wodak 2003, p.37). By using CDA as the main method to analyse the Danish policy and the Swedish policy proposal I do limit myself in term of using other methods which could have been as relevant as the focus on discourse, power and language and I could have produced as relevant a thesis as I have intended to do here, but as mentioned earlier I found this method suitable to answer my two research questions.

4.3 International comparative research

4.3.1 Comparing the Swedish policy proposal and the Danish policy
A large part of human learning has always occurred through comparison. From antiquity to the present, humans have sought to understand and explain similarities and differences they perceive between themselves and others (Landman 2005 p.3). Comparing approaches enables you to distinguish how countries, which are dealing with similar challenges, respond differently and why and you are able to capture the complexity of different systems and discover ways in which countries can learn from each other (Deutsch 1987, p.5,9; Weiler & Antal 1987, p.14). My thesis became a comparative study in the evaluation of the two national strategies in relation developing more just cities. I have thereby primarily focused on the national level but included perspectives of how the national initiatives affects the local level as well.

When comparing policies, which identifies a public problem you must be aware that policymaking is not simply problem-solving. It is a matter of setting up and defining problems in the first place. Housing inequality becomes a problem in the light of a principle: housing inequality is equal to injustice. A policy problem is thereby a political condition that does not meet a constructed standard (Anderson 1978, p.19, 20). Policies are affected by historic events and decisions, the culture in which they function and the decision makers who produce them. They illustrate a mode of governance at a specific moment in time, they can be understood in various ways and be designed with various purposes, being plans, proposals, decisions and documents. What policies do have in common is the perception of ‘good governance’ (Yang 2014, p.285, 287, 288, 301). Comparing national policies can in that way be more than ‘just’ a way to illustrate certain similarities and differences between countries, it can also be a way to understand why something is characterised as a problem in the first place and how and why it is portrayed differently.

4.3.2 Cross-border translation
When you compare concepts that are bound to a specific culture, system and country you must be aware of the issues which surround the transportability of concepts from one national context to another. Consistent use of terminology is difficult, because language used in planning practise is culturally rooted and only very few terms used in spatial planning have a universal scientific meaning (Dühr, Colomb & Nadin 2010 p.22). Even though Swedish and Danish are very closely rooted, and I speak both languages, meanings become easily distorted if the translation is not done carefully. I have therefore been very cautious when translating quotes, looking up the different words and explore how officials use the different concepts, and when comparing how the two countries housing systems function and are organised.
4.4 The semi-structured interview

The Semi-structured interview is part of the qualitative tradition (Bryman 2002, p.300) and valued for its accommodation to a range of research goals. It incorporates both open-ended and more theoretically driven questions (Galetta 2013, p.45), which are set up in the interview guide as specific themes which the interviewer wish to speak about, while focusing on the interviewee’s point of view and how the respondents understands and experiences the subject(s). The interview guide does not have to be followed precisely step by step, but can instead be used as guidance. The interview process is thereby flexible (Bryman 2002, p.300-302).

4.4.1 Setting up the interviews

I have conducted four different semi-structured interviews in this study in order to get a deeper understanding of the interviewee’s ideas about the meaning and implications of the two national strategies in relation to their implications for the vulnerable group on the housing market. I used the interviews to include different perspectives to the research, making it more versatile and be able to ask the questions which I could not find in the documents. My interviews were guided by a semi-structured interview guide, helping me to structure the conversation by the topics I wished to cover with suggested questions, keeping in mind that the interview guide should be used as a helping tool and not as a script. You will find the interview guide in the appendix.

All informants received a document informing them of their rights, the purpose of the study, me and my supervisor’s contact information and I asked them whether it was okay to record our conversations and use their names and job titles in the thesis, which all agreed with.

4.4.2 The interviewees

The executive director, Hannah Wiik, was assigned in July 2017 by Peter Eriksson, the former housing minister, to be the research officer for the policy proposal, **Ett gemensamt bostadsförsörjningsansvar**, investigating the question of how the Swedish municipalities work with the need for housing for the vulnerable group on the housing market. The policy proposal was handed in May 2018. I chose to interview Wiik, because I was curious to know more about what thoughts had gone into the production of the policy proposal, what goals and challenges she portrayed as essential in relation to the policy proposal and question the argumentations introduced in the policy proposal to understand them more clearly.

The development consultant, Liv Jørgensen, works for Danish Social Housing. I chose to interview Jørgensen, because I thought it was important to include a representative who could speak for the Danish Social Housing now that the Danish government had decided to demolish several social housing units and characterised the tenure form as part of the problem of the problematised areas. I was curious to know what role social housing have today and whether she thought that the government’s solution was reasonable or not and why.

The architect, Tyke Tykesson, works for the municipality of Malmö. I chose to interview Tykesson, because I wanted to include a representative from a Swedish municipal which are, together with the state, responsible for housing distribution
today. I was curious to know what he felted about the policy proposal’s solution and how it might affect the municipal’s work in the future. Moreover, I wanted to know more about whether he agreed on the policy proposal’s identification of the problem and the critique of the municipalities’ lack of knowledge concerning the general housing situation.

Charlotte Amalie Malling works at the municipality of Copenhagen in the unit, ‘Udsatte Boligområder’ (Vulnerable housing areas in English). I chose to interview Malling, because I found it important to include a representative from a Danish municipal which are required by the government to make develop plans for the ‘hard ghettos’ illustrating how they are going to minimize the number of social housing units to the maximum of 40%. I was curious to know more about how the municipal was affected by this requirement, how the plans were to be produced and get information about the general content in the plans to understand more about how she characterised the ‘hard ghettos’ and the vulnerable group on the housing market.

The three interviews with Jørgensen, Tykesson and Malling were all conducted over the phone. This may have affected the conversations as well as the answers. Moreover, the distance made it harder for me to understand how they felt about the questions and their answers because I could not read their body language.

It is worth pointing out to the reader as well that there is a greater reliance on certain interviews, which I found more relevant regarding answering my three research questions. More information about the interviews is listed in the list of references.

4.4.3 Ethics
Holstein and Gubrium (1995) considers the interview to be a dynamic and meaning-making occasion on the part of both the interviewer and the interviewee, while Yates (n.d.) distinguishes knowledge in qualitative interviews as actively produced in the interaction between multiple power identities of interviewer and respondent. This marks why interviews can be categorised as saturated with moral and ethics.

The question of ethics should be initiated from the very start of the investigation, making sure to consider the aspects of informed consent, confidentiality, eventual consequences of the interview and the role of the researcher. My position as a researcher and as an interviewer gave me the power to question, while the interviewee was left in a more vulnerable position, being in focus and speaking from their point of view (Kvale 2009, p.62, 68, 70, 74). Most discussions in research concerning ethics focus on how the researcher should treat the interviewees considering aspects such as minimizing any potential harm and respecting the interviewee’s privacy, but it is also important to consider possible asymmetrical roles played out in interviews, which the interviewer and the interviewee constantly construct and redefine. Moreover, it is important to consider the language you use. I used non-leading and ambiguous questions as well as open-ended questions to make space for the interviewee to respond in their own way without feeling pressured. While you as part of the interview affect the interview, the defined problem statement can as well lead to preconceived categorizations of the participants which ought to reflect your result and the interview itself (Bengtsson & Fynbo 2018, p.22, 33). Lastly, because I was allowed to use the interviewees’ names in the thesis I
found it very important to ensure that the used quotes were accepted by the interviewees before handing in the thesis, which all of them were.

4.4.4 The use of the interviews
I wanted to use the interviews to support, problematise and contextualise my observations, aiming to make my analysis and discussion illustrate how complex the question of housing distribution is and how many different opinions there exist in connection to how the vulnerable group on the housing market is to be handled. After I had transcribed my interviews, I divided the text into several topics, which I characterised as important and relevant to understand more clearly how the strategies affected the position and the understanding of the vulnerable group on the housing market. I interpreted the material in such a way to go beyond what was being said, to work out structures and relations of meaning not immediately apparent in the texts. I am aware that the same interviews can be interpreted in different ways and I endorse the hermeneutical and postmodern thought acknowledging the legitimate plurality of interpretations (Kvale 2009 p.211, 212). The quotations from the interviews which I have implemented in the text are translated from either Danish or Swedish by myself.

4.5 Empirical material

1. The Danish policy strategy Ét Danmark uden parallelsamfund - Ingen ghettoer i 2030 was published in March 2018 by the Danish government, which consist of the Liberal Alliance, the Conservative People’s Party and the Liberal Party of Denmark, whose president is the Danish Prime Minister today, Lars Løkke Rasmussen. The strategy’s overall goal is to get rid of existing ‘ghettos’ in Denmark by 2030. The policy introduces a range of initiatives to develop the appointed areas. I have focused on the initiatives which has to do with housing policy and which affect the vulnerable group on the housing market regarding accessing housing.

1.1 The commission of inquiry, Analyse Af Boligsalg Og -Priser i Hårde Ghettoområder (2019) (Analysis of the selling of dwellings and prices in hard ghetto areas in English) was made by the economic consultancy firm, Copenhagen Economics, as part of the plan, Initiativer på boligområdet, der modvirker parallelsamfund (2018) (Initiatives related to housing, which counteracts parallel societies in English), which is a supplement to the strategy, Ét Danmark uden parallelsamfund - Ingen ghettoer i 2030. Copenhagen Economics was assigned by the Danish Transport, Construction and Housing Authority which has published the analysis. The commission of inquiry is planned to be used to evaluate the future development plans for 15 ‘hard ghettos’. It is the Danish municipalities and the public housing organisations which are required to make the plans by law. I have included this supplement in the analysis. When refering to the ‘the Danish policy’ I therefore mean the two texts: Ét Danmark uden parallelsamfund - Ingen ghettoer i 2030 and Analyse Af Boligsalg Og -Priser I Hårde Ghettoområder.

2. The Swedish policy proposal, Ett gemensamt bostadsförörjningsansvar, was accepted in May 2018 by the former housing minister, Peter Eriksson, who assigned the executive director, Wiik, to lead project focusing on how the Swedish
municipalities work with housing distribution for the vulnerable group on the housing market. The text was classified in this thesis as a ‘policy proposal’ because of its suggestion of establishing a new law for housing distribution in Sweden.

The Swedish policy proposal and the Danish policy are fundamentally very different. The former suggests a solution which focus on supporting the vulnerable group on the housing market while the Danish policy focus on counteracting ‘parallel societies’ and ending the existence of ‘ghettos’ in Denmark before 2030. I chose the Danish policy and the Swedish policy proposal, because the texts in their own way characterises two solutions to two different problems, which have implications for the vulnerable group on the housing market in different ways. They were interesting to compare, because Denmark and Sweden are similar in many ways, culturally, historically and politically, but these policies exemplify how the countries deal with housing politics and the vulnerable group on the housing market very differently. Both policies were published in 2018 whereby representing two contemporary initiatives. I included the Danish commission of inquiry, Analyse Af Boligsalg Og -Priser I Hårde Ghettoområder, as part of the Danish policy, because it investigates the possibility to sell social housing units and focus on the attractiveness of the areas and how they affect the surrounding regions. It was also relevant because it described in more detail how the ‘ghettos’ were to be physically developed.

4.6 Guiding the analysis

I based the guiding of the analysis on De Cillia, Reisigl and Wodak’s (1999) three discourse-analytical tools: (1) content/topics, (2) strategies (referring to plans of actions with varying degree of elaborateness of discursive constructions) and (3) linguistic means and forms of realisation (argumentations which can express unity, sameness and difference) while keeping the purpose of my research in mind.

5 The Danish housing system today

The historical background chapter ended by explaining how Danish housing politics was marked by distrust, market-oriented logic and decreasing subsidies for social housing. In this chapter I will introduce a simplified overview of how the vulnerable group on the housing market is characterised today and how the Danish housing system affects the possibility for the vulnerable group on the housing market to access affordable housing.

5.1 The vulnerable group on the housing market

The concept ‘vulnerable group on the housing market’ is a multifaceted concept in Denmark. Different people are identified as vulnerable connected to aspects such as health, income, housing situation and age. But generally, the vulnerable group on the housing market is often associated with homelessness. This may not come as a surprise, because the number of homeless people is rising in Denmark at the same time as the number of affordable housing is decreasing. The Danish Center For Social Science Research and Rigsrevisionen state that the shortage of housing contributes to the negative development of the statistics of homelessness (Rådet for socialt udsatte
2015, p.7, 11). But housing politics for the vulnerable group on the housing market is not ‘just’ housing politics for homeless people in Denmark. Jann Sjursen, chairman for the Danish council for socially vulnerable, argues that there are many other larger groups of people in the Danish societies with low-incomes who are in need of affordable housing for example people on cash-benefits (Jensen 2019) and many projects which are initiated focus on other groups such as young people, single men, single mothers or renters with another ethnical backgrounds than Danish, which are also distinguished as vulnerable on the housing market (Christensen & Nielsen 2008, p.12). The concept is therefore neither fixed nor transparent, which reflects how Danish municipalities, ministries and other essential actors apply and understand the concept differently and thereby operate with different mindsets as to support the vulnerable group on the housing market.

5.2 The unbalanced housing market in Copenhagen

The minister of Transport, Construction and Housing, Ole Birk Olesen, characterises the Danish housing market in Copenhagen as out of balance. The ministry launched an analysis in 2018, which investigated the housing market in Copenhagen. The results indicated that there is a need to produce 160.000 new dwellings in the Danish capital before 2045 if Denmark is to avoid that the price level on dwellings in Copenhagen differentiates too much compared to the rest of the country (Regeringen, 2018a). Moreover, the analysis showed that there is a special need to focus on Copenhagen in terms of housing shortage, especially regarding smaller apartments demanded by students, singles and couples (Transport, Bygnings- og Boligministeriet, 2018aa). The lord mayor of Copenhagen, Frank Jensen, agrees with the minister regarding the seriousness of the problem and states that

“There is a political first priority for me, that the housing market in Copenhagen shall be accessible for everyone – also for people with normal salaries. We can only secure that by holding up the construction activity and at the same time make sure, that every fourth new dwelling is social housing and thereby have fair access and prices, which are affordable.” (Transport, Bygnings- og Boligministeriet 2018aa).

The Danish Public Accounts Committee supports the lord mayor’s concern and states that an essential barrier for the number of homeless people to decline is the lack of affordable housing and the reduction of public benefits which especially affects young people on cash-benefits (Rigsrevisionen 2014, p.31). Shortage of affordable housing for low-income groups is thereby an increasing problem in especially Copenhagen and an important aspect of the political agenda in Denmark today.

5.3 Social housing in Denmark today

Social housing is non-profit in Denmark and when living in this type of dwelling you become part of a housing department, which are assembled in housing companies, which can be part of a housing organisation. How much you pay in rent depends on how much the housing department needs financially to manage the dwellings, as well as to pay off the debt, renovate and in general maintain the standard of the dwellings
(Weiss 2007). As a resident you are able to participate in a ‘resident-democracy’ where you can influence how the housing department is managed and the future development of the area in which you live (Domea n.d.). In 2019 around 600,000 social housing units were registered in Denmark (Trafik-, Bygge- og Boligstyrelsen 2019a).

Social housing is today distinguished by three different types of housing: family housing, students housing and senior homes (ibid.). It is family housing which the Danish government has required to be minimized in the ‘ghettos’ and it is this type of social housing that the Danish policy is focused on. Social housing is financed by the following distribution: 2% by the residents, 7% of the municipal’s basic capital and 91% by mortgages (Bygge- og Boligstyrelsen 2019, p.6).

The regulation of the social housing sector is very strict. The financing, the size of the individual flats, the construction and the individual activities which the housing organisations engage in are regulated. The municipalities functions as supervisors of the sector and are responsible for evaluating the need for new construction, which makes social housing part of local urban development (BL 2018b). The Ministry of Transport, Building and Housing is responsible for regulating, developing and maintaining an effective social housing sector, aiming for creating well-functioning, modern, attractive, safe and additional social housing units as well as continuing cooperating with the social housing sector (Transport, Bygnings- og Boligministeriet 2017, p.5, 9-11).

5.4 Social housing for everyone?

Social housing is in Denmark described as an offer for everyone and as part of the Danish welfare system. The social housing sectors’ aim is legally defined as affordable and decent housing for all in need, as well as given tenants a legal and decisive right to influence their own living conditions via a democratic residential system (BL 2018b). The universal mindset is also manifested in the social housing law § 5 b. describing the purpose as “…to supply appropriate housing for everyone with a need with a reasonable rent as well as given the residents influence on their own living standard.” (Retsinformation 2019) and Liv Jørgensen explains in the interview how the universal approach is incorporated in Danish Social Housing as part of their history (interview with Liv Jørgensen). But the functioning of the universal model is rather inconsistent as the law § 6 d. illustrates by requiring the housing organisations to “… favour groups, which find it difficult to access a suitable dwelling on normal market terms.” (Retsinformation 2019). This shows how the Danish housing system is favouring certain groups and their needs of housing, which reflects why I chose to define it as ‘social housing’. The social housing distribution system managed by the Danish municipalities illustrates this as well. The system consists of waiting lists including special renting rules for family homes, which gives specific people the right to access social housing dwellings before others. The favoured group consist of elderly, disabled, families with children and people accepted on municipalities’ so-called ‘flexible lists’ (Trafik-, Bygge- og Boligstyrelsen, 2019b).

5.5 The Danish ‘ghettos’
The latest plan for counteracting the development of the so-called ‘parallel societies’ and Danish ‘ghettos’ is part of a longer journey which started back in 2010 when the first list of areas designated as ‘ghettos’ was introduced (Ministeriet for By, bolig og landdistrikter 2012). In 2018, the Danish policy was introduced, which included a new type of ‘ghetto’: the ‘hard ghetto’, which is defined as an area “…which has been on the ghettolist for the past four years…” (Regeringen 2018b, p.13). The strategy was adopted by the majority in the Danish parliament. The Danish parties The Alternative, The Red-Green Alliance and The Danish Social-Liberal Party voted against the policy (Svolgaard 2018). The Danish policy has received many critical comments. Words such as “unacceptable”, “stigmatising”, “desperate” and “undocumented” are among the comments which is used by Danish Social Housing, the Council of Socially Vulnerable, the director of KAB, Jens Elmelund, and professor, Hans Skifter Andersen to describe the strategy (BL 2018a, p.5; Elmelund 2018; Rådet for socialt udsatte, n.d.; Andersen 2018). The strategy has thereby not been accepted without critic, especially not from the residents themselves which have demonstrated and emphasised their concern towards losing their homes (Kraul 2019a), but the Danish government argue that “There is only one way. The ‘ghettos’ must be gone. The parallel societies must be destroyed. And we must secure that new ones do not occur.” (Regeringen 2018c).

5.6 Right to housing

There does not exist a Danish law which gives citizens in Denmark the right to access housing. The public authorities are therefore not required to apply housing for citizens, but the municipalities have the responsibility to estimate whether the supply of housing is sufficient enough to cover the need of the citizens, including housing for the vulnerable group on the housing market. The only group which is legally protected is seniors who have the right to be provided a room at a retirement home if needed by the municipality (Rigsrevisionen 2014, p.30, 31). Many factors affect the possibility for people to acquire housing such as people’s social network and the social housing sector, which is regulated to secure a price-level which low and middle income-groups can pay. But the Danish Institute for Human Rights determines economic recourses as to be the most essential aspect to focus on if wanting to support peoples’ ability to access housing (Institut for Menneskerettigheder 2015, p.21).

5.7 Influential actors

This chapter will identify some of the most important actors, who affect the vulnerable group on the housing market’s ability to access housing.

The current Danish minority government consist of the political parties Venstre, the Liberal Alliance and the Conservative People’s Party. The latest most prominent decision which will affect the vulnerable group on the housing market and the distribution of social housing is the Danish policy, which is analysed in this study.

The Danish municipalities’ responsibility for the physical planning in Denmark includes the development of housing and housing areas and securing a supply of different tenure forms. The so-called Municipal Plan must consist of guidelines for the location of among other social housing, but it is up the district councils to decide how the distribution of tenure forms in the municipality shall be (Erhvervsstyrelsen 2018).
municipalities are able to demand that 25% of the total housing mass in a new housing development plan must be social housing if the area is at least 8000 square meters, but before the decision to build social housing can be implemented into a local development plan, certain decisions considering the location and guidelines for social housing must be present in the municipal plan (Kraul 2019b). The municipalities are thereby essential when it comes to developing new social housing units.

The Danish Transport, Construction and Housing Authority is responsible for securing that the process of the implementation of the development plans for the Danish ‘hard ghettos’ and the decisions regarding application for demolition and sale of social housing units will proceed effectively and be correct (Trafik-, Bygge- og Boligstyrelsen 2019d, p.6).

Realdania is an important actor when it comes to funding and development of ‘vulnerable areas’. The union apply a ‘city-strategic’ approach to reach the goal of connecting vulnerable areas with the surrounding neighbourhoods (Realdania, n.d. b). Realdania has been part of several projects in vulnerable areas over the years and is now contributing with funding to municipalities and housing organisations regarding developing plans for the ‘hard ghettos’ (Realdania, n.d. a).

Danish Social Housing organisations run on a non-profit basis and construct social housing units except for housing for the elderly, which is managed and constructed by the Danish municipalities, regions and independent organisations. The organisations are subject to municipal supervision and a number of regulations. Their main objective is to construct, rent out, manage, maintain and modernise social housing units (Landsbyggefonden n.d. a). 750 organisations are estimated by the Danish Transport, Construction and Housing Authority to be functioning today (Trafik- Bygge- og Boligstyrelsen 2019a).

Danish Social Housing is a non-profit and non-political cooperative social housing association covering almost 100% of all Social Housing Organisations in Denmark (BL 2018b; NBO Housing Nordic n.d.). Their goal is “...to provide good housing for families and individuals belonging to the poorer classes in return for an affordable rent.” (BL 2018b). Danish Social Housing is managed by tenant democracy consisting of 11 districts distributed throughout Denmark (BL 2018b). The organisation has made a thorough introduction to the ‘Ghetto-plan’ on their homepage and published articles and made an analysis called De 16 “hårdeste ghettoområder” (2018), documenting how the Danish government’s strategy against ‘parallel societies’ will affect the 16 targeted areas (BL 2018b).

The purpose of housing companies are to construct and manage social housing. They can be organised as privately-owned companies or as a social housing union. The companies consist of housing departments and the residents have the power to influence the agenda on this level as well. The financial revenue is based on administration, fees from building projects and interest income. The municipalities are required to supervise and approve the initiation of new construction and establishment of new companies (Den Store Danske 2017).
The centre for housing social development is a nation-wide information-centre for ministries, municipalities and others who develop housing social initiatives. Their aim is to strengthen the usage of social initiatives in vulnerable areas by informing stakeholders of the result of earlier initiatives and effective strategies (Center for boligsocial udvikling n.d.). The information-centre is an important actor, because of the knowledge they produce, which can, among other, affect the decisions of the Danish ministries and municipalities.

International investment firms such as the American investment firm, Blackstone, can legally in Denmark through the so-called Boligreguleringslov § 5, stk. 2 increase the rent after renovating dwellings they have bought (Retsinformation 2015). It is thereby the combination of the Danish legal system and the tendency for investment firms to take advantage of this opportunity which affects the vulnerable group on the housing market and general renters’ ability to keep and access housing in Denmark.

5.8 Current initiatives

Denmark has initiated a variety of programs targeting the vulnerable group on the housing market to more easily getting access affordable housing. What most of the programs have in common is the involvement of the municipality either running the initiatives or financially supporting them. Some of the initiatives are listed here.

Homelessness is a central and increasing issue in Denmark and has been given a lot of attention over the years. Different strategies have been implemented to counteract the increasing number of people without a home. The current initiative Housing First is an example of one strategy advocating for housing as a basic human right and the importance of people acquiring a permanent home (Socialstyrelsen 2018).

The Copenhagen City Council has decided to lower the limit for when the municipality of Copenhagen can demand that 25% of the total housing stock in new development to be social housing from 8000 square meters to 3.200 square meters (Kraul 2019b). Karina Vestergård Madsen from the Danish party, The Red-Green Alliance, argues that “It is the only way, that we can secure, that the rent will be reasonable, by building social housing. That is how we secure that Copenhagen will not become a ghetto for rich people, but a city, where normal people can live.” (Kraul 2019b).

Different types of housing exist for young people who are facing difficulties accessing housing which they can afford in especially larger Danish cities such as Copenhagen and Århus (Hansen 2018). Among them are Skæve boliger (Crooked housing in English) which are permanent housing for homeless who are addicts and/or have mental health issues (Rådet for socialt udsatte 2015, p.38), Startboliger (Starting housing in English) and udslusningsboliger (transition housing) which are two permanent housing forms established to integrate people with special social needs on the housing market and to support young people to participate in social communities, get an education or/and establish themselves as living in their own home (Rådet for socialt udsatte 2015, p.38) as well as Venligbolig Plus (Friendly housing Plus in English) which are mobile homes for young refugees (KAB n.d.).
6 The Swedish housing system today

6.1 The Swedish shortage of affordable housing

The conditions for the Swedish housing market have changed in significant ways since the beginning of the 21st century. Economic inequality in terms of distributed income has increased and multiple households are not able to get access to rental housing, because the stock has decreased. This has led to a much more intensive competition for housing, minimising people’s ability to adapt to their current living situation and trade for a smaller or bigger home (SOU 2018:35, p.14). The parliament has moreover dismantled the investment aid for rental and student housing in connection with the establishment of the state’s budget for 2019 and the government has decided to abolish rent controls on newly produced properties as part of a deal made by the ruling Social Democrats, the Green Party, the Center and Liberal parties (SABO n.d. a). The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has responded to this initiative by advocating for more fundamental reforms to be established in order for Sweden to deal with the national housing shortage and emphasises the need for Sweden to build affordable housing (The Local 2019).

The contemporary housing situation is largely characterised by inequality and access to housing and the characteristics of housing are increasingly dependent on economic resources (Grander 2018a, p.viii). 240 of the 290 Swedish municipalities reported this year that they are lacking housing (Hyresgästföreningen, 2018a) and media reports show how certain groups are increasingly shut out from the housing market, especially in larger cities. Leading politicians have over the last years referred to ‘a national housing crisis’, accentuated in 2015 by possibly the highest number of immigrants coming to Sweden since the Second World War (Grander 2018a, p.3). Moreover, the Swedish Association of Public Housing Companies estimates that Sweden has among the highest price on construction of housing in Europe and that it is increasing. In the time period from 2015 to 2017 the price increased with almost 69%, making it more difficult for MHCs to live up to their commitment and build affordable housing in both economic upturns and recessions (SABO 2019, p.3). But Public Housing Sweden states that “The Swedish public housing will never give up…We will continue to show what is fantastic about public housing…” (SABO 2019, p.3). Though the will is strong, the municipalities are argued to not have any categorised tools to counteract the shortage of housing (SOU 2018:35, p.135).

6.2 The vulnerable group on the housing market

There does not exist a national definition for what a vulnerable group on the housing market is in Sweden. It is therefore not a fixed term and it is applied and understood differently. While some Swedish municipalities have made their own definition, others have made a conscious choice not to (SOU 2018:35, p.119, 129), such as the municipal of Malmö which wanted to avoid the definition becoming obsolete according to Tyke Tykesson (interview with Tyke Tykesson). The Swedish Union of Tenants claim that it is mainly young people and immigrants which are affected by the housing crisis by being among those who are most challenged when it comes to establishing themselves on the housing market (Hyresgästföreningen 2019). This reflects several municipalities’ estimation that young people and immigrants generally are struggling to
have their needs met on the housing market. Some municipalities point to the problem as being the lack of rental and affordable housing, while others argue that it is factors such as size of apartments which does not correlate with the need or the fact that landlords are demanding too much in terms of income or employment when choosing who can rent their dwellings. Many municipalities are critical in the interviews conducted in connection to preparing the Swedish policy proposal, *Ett gemensamt bostadsförsörjningsansvar*, towards private landlords’ norms for choosing who they will rent their dwellings to. Especially people who are on cash-benefits are often struggling to live up to the demands (SOU 2018:35, p.92, 94, 115). But while many municipalities are critical in terms of how the market positions the vulnerable group on the housing market, the commission of inquiry reports that very few municipalities economically support new construction. The ones who do though, most often do it with the ambition to support groups which have low-income or in other ways are vulnerable on the housing market (SOU 2018:35, p.75).

6.3 Swedish public housing today and its universal model

Grander argues that public housing is more locally diversified than ever today, making it simultaneously contributing to both reduced and increased housing inequality. Instead of state-organized housing provision based on good housing for the benefit of everyone, public housing is determined at a local scale and shifting gradually towards business-like conditions and demands on return on investment (Grander 2018a, p.IX). Public housing has since the Second World War been distinguished by a universal approach, which has been a key signifier for Swedish housing politics ever since. But whether the approach of public housing is and has been truly universal is debatable, because, as Grander explains, a secondary housing market has been established by local authorities to support individuals who are incapable of accessing housing on their own due to for example mental illness, substance abuse or other personal challenges. In that regard, public housing in Sweden is becoming increasingly resided by households with low economy. But Grander argue that one of the most determining factors which would put an end to the seventy-year long era of universal housing politics for the benefit of everyone would be the implementation of the Swedish policy proposal which is in focus in this study, because the MHCs would, if the proposal was implemented, become responsible for low-income households (Grander 2018a, p.2, 14, 44, 164).

6.4 Right to housing

There do exist laws which are implemented to support the distribution of housing for Swedish citizens such as the Swedish law regarding the municipalities’ responsibility for housing distribution 1 § (2000:1383), which states that every municipality should plan for housing distribution to create conditions in which all living in the municipality can live in good housing (SFS 2000:1383) as well as the *Socialtjänstlag* where it is stated in chapter 3 2§ that the Swedish Social Welfare Board is to support the individual’s right to housing and in chapter 5 1 § that the Swedish Social Welfare Board must satisfy the need of support for children and young people regarding housing. The board is also required to give seniors good housing as well (Chapter 5 5 §) and establish housing with particular services which live up to the need of people who are challenged by physical, mental or other factors which affects their way of living.
There does not exist a Swedish law making anyone obligated to offer citizens permanent living though.

There are currently no definitions available for what an acceptable housing situation is today, but there do exist constitutions on the national level explaining what can be rented out as housing and how new constructed housing can be designed. This illustrates that there is a will to maintain a national common housing standard (SOU 2018:35, p.124). Since the report, *En gemensam bild av bostadsbyggnadsbehovet* (*A shared picture of the need for the construction of housing* in English), was published in 2017 the goal of housing politics has changed from aiming to provide good housing for all to organising a market which gives all acceptable housing. This has led to people having more economic benefits if they own their own home. Furthermore, subsidies for housing production has decreased, rules about the size of new housing has changed by law and it is now accepted temporarily to have a lower housing standard for specific groups (SOU 2018:35, p.15, 39, 48, 130).

### 6.5 Influential actors

Down below are listed actors, which all in different ways affect the accessibility of the vulnerable group on the housing market.

A Swedish municipality can act on the housing market as a property owner, constructor, landlord and administrator. One example of how the municipality can support the vulnerable group on the housing market is by hiring regular rental apartments or owning cooperative apartments which are made accessible for households which are in need of support to access housing. The municipality is also able to buy, to grant or sell land for new construction of housing. Moreover, they are according to the Housing Distribution Law required to create conditions in which everyone living in the municipality have access to good housing and conditions to support the management of housing distribution in general (SOU 2018:35, p.51, 103).

The Swedish government states that the central government, municipalities and county councils must fulfil basic needs such as housing (Regeringskansliet 2016). The government has proved to be a game changer when it comes housing politics and time will tell whether the new minister for Financial Markets and Housing, Deputy Minister for Finance, Per Bolund, will carry on that tradition. He argued in an interpellation-debate in April 2019 that Sweden has a universal housing market for everyone, but that many households are struggling to access housing on current market conditions. To counteract this development, he referred to the January Agreement (2019) and the included initiative for a tax reform, which is to better the market’s functioning and in the long run stabilise it. He advocates for plan for mixed tenure forms and more housing in the whole country and to continue using investment support for rental housing to create conditions for new construction of housing, lower rents and appropriate demands for renters’ financial capacity (Bolund 2019).

The Swedish parliament is an essential actor regarding housing law, decisions about budgets of the state and controlling the accuracy of the Swedish government’s work (Sveriges Riksdag 2018).
A new law on public housing was established in 2011 which changed the operation of MHCs from non-profit-making purposes to business principles (Grander 2018a, p.3; SOU 2018:35, p.43). This had led to the MHCs to act as private housing companies do, demanding market return on investment. The companies are therefore today less eager to take financial risks, which has led to exclusionary mechanisms of shutting people out from the housing market. Although, the interpretation of business-like principles formulated in the legislation on MHCs has been interpreted differently. While the Swedish Association of Public Housing Companies highlights that business-like principles are not equivalent to maximizing profit, the Swedish Fastighetsägarna argues the opposite (Grander 2018a, p.3, 137, 138).

The responsibility for housing distribution in Sweden is at the moment shared by the state and the municipalities. The changing size and mixture of the Swedish population are leading to changing conditions for demand and need of housing, which are the fundamental pre-conditions of how housing distribution is planned out. The state is argued to be the only actor which can affect the market pre-conditions, which means that the future condition of the shortage of housing depends on how the state chooses to react (SOU 2018:35, p.15, 39, 48, 130).

The Swedish County Administrative Board is responsible for analysing and reporting how the current housing market is functioning and they even support the municipalities in implementing guidelines for the local housing distribution (Länstyrelsen Skåne n.d.). I would argue, that the characterisation established of the market by the county can affect the vulnerable group on the housing market in terms of the perceived housing condition in which the group is actively trying to access housing. If their struggles are not recognised, the ability to access housing can turn out to become more difficult, because initiatives are not implemented to counteract the development.

The national board of housing, building and planning is by paragraph 4 § (2011:1159) required to keep track of the MHCs’ development and role on the housing market including changed conditions affecting the companies regarding competition, freedom of choice, segregation and restoration (SFS 2011:1159).

Public Housing Sweden (SABO in Swedish) is an organisation consisting of more than 300 member-companies, which manages approximately 802,000 dwellings. The public housing sector represents almost 20% of the total housing stock in Sweden and half of the rental sector, making every 7th Swede resident in public housing. The organisation works to support and offer services to its members, through information, competence and the exchange of experiences, making the organisation an important actor when it comes to providing good conditions for the MHCs and development of rental property (SABO n.d. b).

The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR in Swedish) is required to support the municipalities’ conditions for planning how to construct housing which lives up to the demand of housing and secures housing for everyone. The association focus on strengthening the development of municipalities by identifying different solutions of general character to counteract shortage of housing (Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting 2018).
The Swedish Union of Tenants’ commission advocates for developing a tenancy which is attractive for all groups in the society by implementing 23 different initiatives that leads to a clearer framework with goals for how to negotiate rent (Hyreskommisionen 2017a). At the same time, the commission calls for the condition of the tenancy to be strengthened if it is not to become housing for only the vulnerable group on the housing market (Hyresgästföreningen 2018c). The commission consists of influential voices in the Swedish housing political debate: the former housing minister Stefan Attefall, member of the Swedish parliament Nia Lundström, Postgraduate from Malmö University, Martin Grander, chief executive for Botrygg, Adam Cocozza, chief executive for Olov Lindgren, Sven Renström, associate professor, Erika P. Björkdahl and chief executive for Botkyrkabyggen, Chris Österlund (Hyreskommissionen 2017b).

The cooperative organisation (HSB in Swedish) provides services for the tenant-owned cooperative housing associations (HSB Stockholm n.d.). The organisation is becoming increasingly noticeable in the debate concerning housing politics and is attempting to strengthen the voice of the consumer on the housing market (HSB Stockholm 2018, p.4).

6.6 Current initiatives

There exist several initiatives in Sweden on the local, regional and national level, which are implemented to support the vulnerable group on the housing market or which affects the group’s position indirectly. A few of them are listed below.

Most of the Swedish municipalities offer special housing solutions for people who are not accepted as renters on the regular housing market. It is often the municipalities’ social service which is responsible for this. These special housing solutions are often referred to as ‘the secondary housing market’ and leases, which can be distinguished as ‘social contracts’, are an example of such an initiative (Boverket 2018b). The municipality can also offer rent-guarantees, which supports renters who are struggling to access housing. These renters are often characterised as people who have records of non-payments or people who are not accepted as renters by the landlord, because of low-income. To make them able to acquire their own home, the municipalities stand surety for those who are estimated by the municipality to have a stable economy (Boverket 2018a).

Not every municipality in Sweden have the ability to use the same tools to strengthen the position of the vulnerable group on the housing market. The municipalities can as landowners or planning authorities demand housing construction to develop housing for the vulnerable group on the housing market, but this opportunity is only available for municipalities where markets actors wish to build (SOU 2018:35, p.125).

The government decided in January 2019 to implement unregulated rents for new production housing to make rents more depended on the apartments’ quality and the location (Regeringskansliet 2019). This is argued by several researchers to have severe implications for the ability of the vulnerable group on the housing market to access new housing (Israelsson 2019).

‘Stockholmshusen’ (Housing of Stockholm in English) is among the initiated projects which reflects the recognition of the necessity to construct affordable housing. While
the project has intended to be accessible for even low-income groups, the project has been claimed to be failing this goal because of the estimated rent level around 10.964-11.769 Swedish crones for a two-bedroom apartment (Fastighetsvården 2018).

Malmö became the first municipality in Sweden to join the association, The Shift, established by Farha, who works as a special rapporteur on the right to housing. The project is calling for cities to demand housing to be recognised as a social right instead of a so-called product on the market (TT 2019).

7 A critical discourse analysis of the Danish policy

The Danish policy, Ét Danmark uden parallelsamfund – Ingen ghettoer I 2030, was introduced in one of the appointed ‘hard ghettos’, Mjølnerparken, in Copenhagen in March 2018 (Regeringen 2018b). Two months later it was decided to make an analysis as part of the ‘Ghetto strategy’ investigating the possibilities for selling social housing units in the so-called ‘hard ghettos’ and the possible price-levels in future sails of this tenure form in the areas. The result was the commission of inquiry, Analyse af boligsalg og -priser i hårde ghettoområder, which was published in January 2019 (Transport-, Bygge og Boligstyrelsen 2019). It is these two documents and the two interviews with Wiik and Malling which will be the focus of this critical discourse analysis.

7.1 The Danish ‘ghetto’

7.1.1 The ‘ghetto-criteria’ and the ‘ghetto-effect’

The Danish Government defines a ‘ghetto’ as a social housing area, with at least 1,000 residents, where the number of immigrants and descendants from non-western countries is above 50% and where at least two of the following four criteria apply:

1. The number of residents in the age 18-64, which are unaffiliated to the labour market or the education sector, is above 40% in the average over the last two years.

2. The number of residents declared guilty of violating the Criminal Code, the Gun Law or the law concerning euphoriant substances, is three times as frequent than in the whole country in average over the last two years.

3. The number of residents in the age 30-59, which have only completed primary school, is above 60%.

4. The average gross salary for people who is required to pay tax in the age 15-64 in the area, excluding people who are planning to study, is less than 55% of the average gross salary for the same group in the region.” (Regeringen 2019).

The fundamental criteria for defining a specific area as a ‘ghetto’ is thereby connected to how many immigrants and descendants from non-western countries are living in the areas and the number of social housing units there exist. The fundamental condition for an area to be considered a ‘ghetto’ is thereby connected to specific individuals with a specific background, living together in a certain area consisting of social housing.
The term ‘ghetto’ is used throughout the policy without explaining why the concept has been chosen. It is what the ‘ghettos’ are causing and the meaning of them which are emphasized instead. The ‘ghettos’ are described as problematic areas in general, not only affecting the specific area, but also as damaging to the surrounding regions. The term ‘ghetto-effect’ is used in the policy to characterise how the ‘ghettos’ affect the selling prices of housing located in the areas and near the problematized areas, which means that the closer a dwelling is to a ‘ghetto’, the cheaper it is estimated to be. Furthermore, the ‘ghetto-effect’ is argued to make the estimated selling prices of dwellings in the areas very uncertain, because it is hard to tell how much the ‘ghetto-effect’ will affect the price. The Danish Transport, Construction and Housing Authority has analysed the ‘hard ghettos’ and their so-called ‘mark-down’, which indicates the potential ‘ghetto-effect’ and the price reduction which reflects an increased supply of housing (Trafik-, Bygge- og Boligstyrelsen 2019c, p.10, 36). The effect of the ‘ghettos’ are thereby constructed as a concept itself, which becomes active in the way that it can ‘harm’ other areas with ‘its unattractiveness’.

Jørgensen characterises the Danish policy as a mixture of housing politics and concealed integration politics dictated by the Danish People’s Party (interview with Jørgensen), which is known for its focus on “Tough integration politics” (Dansk Folkeparti n.d.). Integration is clearly determined in the policy as part of the solution to “destroy” the ‘parallel societies’, which is distinguished by the government as “…a big strain for the cohesion of the society and for the individual. It is a threat to our modern society, when freedom, democracy, equality and tolerance is not accepted as basic values.” (Regeringen 2018b, p.5).

The ‘parallel societies’ are thereby distinguished as the opposite to ‘Denmark’, as a threat to the Danish society and as areas where ‘Danish values’ are not accepted as “basic values”. The government writes that they must begin the “…very large task of integration, where a group of immigrants and descendants have not embraced Danish values and isolates in parallel societies.” (Regeringen 2018b, p.6), implying that these specific people have chosen to not accept ‘Danishness’ and a large task of integration is necessary to conform these people to Danish customs. Integration is thereby determined as what can change this behaviour. It is important to emphasise that it is behaviour and not for example institutional or societal development which is referred to be the problem. This illustrates the general focus of the policy. I will come back to this point later on.

7.1.2 The physical appeal of the ‘ghetto’
Even though the ‘ghettolist’ was first established in Denmark in 2010 (Transport-, Bygnings- og Boligministeriet 2017), Danish Social Housing is still not using the term. Instead they have always referred to these areas as “vulnerable housing areas” (interview with Jørgensen), because the word ‘ghetto’ is misleading Jørgensen argued. People visiting the Danish Social Housing organization, coming from all over the world, laughs when they see which areas are characterised as ‘ghettos’ in Denmark, because of their “pretty” appeal she explained while implying that she felted the same way when asking me “It does not look like a ghetto right?” (interview with Jørgensen). Jørgensen thereby connects the physical appeal with the idea of what a ‘ghetto’ is. While the physical appeal is not part of the criteria for defining a
'ghetto', it is relevant when it comes to how to solve the problem of the 'ghettos'. Profound physical changes are stated as needed to “battle” (Regeringen 2018b, p.11) the ‘ghettos’ and create permanent change. Words such as “start over” and “dismantle” are used in connection to changing the appeal of the areas and making them more “attractive” and “integrated with the rest of the society” (Regeringen 2018b, p.11, 14). The ‘ghettos’ are thereby distinguished as less attractive, as unrelated to the rest of Denmark and as a condition which you are able to start over.

Malling explains that the municipality of Copenhagen would not have implemented a plan with such harsh demands as the government has implemented to counteract the existence of the ‘ghettos’, but she does characterise the areas as less attractive and explained how a new master plan was to be adopted to give the areas

“...another physical appeal which will make it more included in the city, it will make it appear as a normal Copenhagen block as everyone else and not stand as this social housing area as it is now where you can see, okay here it is a little different and it is located a little isolated.” (interview with Malling).

Malling echoes the government’s characterisation by using the words “isolated” and “different” while referring the areas to being abnormal. The master plan is set to make a more inclusive city by concealing the area so that it “appears” to be normal whereby implying that it will not become a “normal” part of the city, but only look as one. The area is seen as different and this difference is determined as negative, instead a more homogenic city is aimed for.

7.2 The Danish nation

7.2.1 An imagined community

The Danish policy identifies a problem: Denmark is no longer a united country. ‘Parallel societies’ characterised by isolation and insecurity concentrates people with non-western backgrounds and descendants in ‘hard ghettos’ all over Denmark. People with a specific ethnic background are thereby claimed to be socially isolated from the rest of Denmark, causing these so-called ‘parallel societies’ to develop (Regeringen 2018b). This sums up the fundamental problem identified by the Danish government and the reason why the strategy was made in the first place.

The ‘ghettos’ are distinguished as a threat to the Danish nation. De Cillia et al. (1999) uses Anderson’s (1988) understanding of the nation as mental constructs and imagined political communities, while they understand national identities as the product of discourse and “....specific forms of social identities – [which] are discursively, by means of language and other semiotic systems, produced, reproduced, transformed and destructed.” (De Cillia et al. 1999, p.153). The Danish policy is constructing its own understanding of the Danish nation and does not conceal their forcible act of homogenisation through the advocacy for better integration.

The government introduces the fundamental considerations, which have influenced the strategy against ‘parallel societies’ on their official webpage:
“The government wishes to have a coherent Denmark. A Denmark, which is built upon democratic values such as freedom and legal certainty, equality and liberalism. Tolerance and equality. A Denmark, where all actively participate. In the last almost 40 years Denmark's ethnical constellation has changes dramatically.” (Regeringen 2018c).

The earlier considerations reflect the constellation and the focus of the policy, issuing how democratic values are under attack due to increasing immigration of non-western individuals (Regeringen 2018b, p.7). The Danish policy thereby constructs the Danish nation as challenged and use an ideological oriented argumentation in their focus on how ‘Denmark as we once knew it’ has become something that the government does not recognise as Denmark: “There are holes in the map of Denmark” (ibid. p.5). This relate to how Wodak et al. (2009) connects the understanding of a nation to a complex imaginary of ideas containing defining elements of collective unity and equality, of boundaries and autonomy and as the product of discourse (ibid. p.22), by which the Danish policy sets up boundaries for what is recognisable as ‘Denmark’ and portrays the nation as a specific collective which is challenges by ‘the other’.

The ‘parallel societies’ are distinguished as a burden which creates insecurity, an encroachment to the individual’s freedom and an economic strain. The government therefore wants the ‘parallel societies’ “destroyed” (Regeringen 2018b, p.6) for “Denmark to become Denmark again” (Regeringen 2018b, p.6). The solution is tough rules and demands for citizens living in these ‘parallel societies’. They are to become fellow-citizens, they shall contribute to the Danish society both economically and “humanly” (Regeringen 2018b, p.7) as every other Dane and the government wants to recreate the faith in a society without crimes, oppression of women and lack of contribution (Regeringen 2018b, p.5, 7). The ‘parallel societies’ are thereby portrayed as disordered areas with uncommitted residents who are not contributing socially or economically. A hierarchical system is created with the Danish society on top and the ‘parallel societies’ in the bottom. The goal is to make these isolated areas ‘Danish again’, portraying ‘Danishness’ as a goal, something to strive for, and the ‘parallel societies’ as a burden as well as the people living in them.

The characterization of Denmark having ‘parallel societies’ is in itself illustrative of how Denmark is distinguished as a certain type of society, where peoples’ actions must correlate with what is so-called ‘Danish behaviour’ contrary to the points mentioned previously: oppressing women, being criminal and not contributing to the society. The language is very exclusive and used to legitimise certain sets of actions. “We will stop the development, where they, who live in the parallel societies, does not meet the normal Denmark” (Regeringen 2018b, p.7). The policy clearly normalise specific ideas and understandings of what Denmark is and what it certainly is not, relating to De Cillia et al.’s idea of national identity as also being able to regard a sort of habitus, that is to say a complex of common ideas, concepts or perceptions of related emotional attitudes shared within a specific group of people with similar behavioural dispositions (De Cillia et al. 1999, p.153).
7.2.2 Ethnicity
The Danish policy introduces three points which have “gone wrong” (Regeringen 2018b, p.5):

1. Too few immigrants have taken advantage of the possibilities which Denmark provide. This includes learning the Danish language, getting a job or beginning to study.
2. The society has had too low expectations and required too little from the immigrants and refugees coming to Denmark. This is why many immigrants have ended up in long-term passivity.
3. Too many refugees have come to Denmark without being integrated into the Danish society (Regeringen 2018b, p.5).

The three problems illustrate how immigrants are characterised as being responsible for not being part of the Danish society and that their unwillingness has led to isolation and passivity. Immigrants are distinguished as one coherent group and classified throughout the policy as the root to the problem. While Jørgensen did mention the homogenic constellation of residents as a problem, she does not refer to this group as responsible for the ‘ghettos’ being developed. Instead, she referred to the municipalities and the housing organisations for being too passive and that the reason for making a strategy against the ‘ghettos’ is a reflection of that. The government also identifies the municipalities and the housing organisations as actors which are supposed to be part of the elimination of ‘ghettos’ by demanding them to participate and make development plans which gives no room for complacency. If they do not live up to the demand and are not able to abolish the ‘ghettos’ before the deadline, the state will take over instead (Regeringen 2018b, p.7) illustrating how the state has been given a central role in the Danish policy, characterised as an powerful actor which will take over if the job is not done.

Ethnicity is a baring theme in the Danish policy and connected to the reason why ‘parallel societies’ exist in Denmark today. “…strong increase in population of citizens with non-western origins have created a breeding ground for parallel societies, where Danish values and norms are not the primary.” (Regeringen 2018b, p.7). Individuals with non-western backgrounds are thereby not only part of the definition of the term ‘ghetto’, but also connected to the establishment of communities where Danish norms and values are being depressed by other ‘non-Danish’ customs and ideas (Regeringen 2018b, p.14). While the residents in the ‘ghettos’ are portrayed as one homogenous group in the policy, the households living in the ‘ghettos’ are by others characterised as Denmark’s most diverse areas (Jensen, 2018). The biggest Danish ‘hard ghetto’ is Vollsmose, located in Odense and consists of 80 different nationalities (Borgmesterforvaltningen 2018). The term ‘non-western background’ is therefore only homogenous in the sense that people are non-western, but in aspect of their nationality it is the very opposite and can instead be regarded as multi-ethnic.

Andersen (2017) explains that previous literature has shown that immigrants are typically confined to the least desirable housing in European Western cities and that there has been a general tendency among immigrant families to settle, either voluntarily or due to constraints, in certain segments of the housing market and in particular parts of the city. Moreover, he argues that ethnic segregation is not only a
result of the behaviour of ethnic minorities, but also of the behaviour of the native-born population (Andersen 2017, p.296). Andersen contradicts the government’s resolution that the people living in the ‘ghettos’ choose to isolate themselves in the so-called ‘parallel societies’, instead he argues that the tendency for native-born Danes to avoid multi-ethnic neighbourhoods is very strong in Denmark. This phenomenon is also known as ‘white avoidance’ (Andersen 2017, p.314).

The government argues that they have stopped the root to the problem, referring to graphs and figures illustrating how immigration in Denmark has decreased (Regeringen 2018b, p.6). Other included graphs illustrate how often young men with non-western backgrounds are convicted for criminality, how women with non-western backgrounds are more likely to be controlled by their family, husband or boyfriend and how often people with non-western backgrounds are ‘long-term passive’, defined as people who have not been working or studying for the last four years. The Danish policy thereby paints a very extreme picture of the residents living in the ‘ghettos’ by characterising their behaviour as criminal, passive and in general not correlating with what the Danish government constructs as ‘Danish culture’. De Cillia understands ‘culture’ as “…a system of rules and principles for ‘proper’ behaviour, analogous to the grammar of a language, which sets the standards for ‘proper’ speaking.” (De Cillia et al. 1999, p.20). This understanding correlates with how the government sets up certain rules for what is ‘Danish’ and what it is not, forming an image of an ideal homogenous, uniform culture.

7.3 Social housing

7.3.1 Decreasing the number of social housing units

Jørgensen distinguishes the social housing sector as to be part of the Danish welfare state and characterises it as a “security net” just as people have access to schools, hospitals and cash benefits. She explained that the social housing sector makes sure that people can live as “dignified” as possible and have the ability to influence their living conditions no matter how few recourses an individual has (interview with Jørgensen). It is therefore not surprising that the issue which Jørgensen was most concerned about in the interview was the government’s decision to demolish social housing units. She points to the challenge of demolishing affordable dwellings while the number of homeless people rise in Denmark and argued that it was “nonsense” and a waste of recourses if newly produced dwellings were to be demolished (interview with Jørgensen). The Danish government on the other hand sees the act of “phasing out” (Regeringen 2018b, p.14) specific ‘ghettos’ as part of the solution if the area is very challenged by criminality, unemployment, social problems, ‘parallel societies’, insecurity and large numbers of social housing units. It is argued that in such cases “…it can be practically and economically most appropriate to demolish the ghettoarea entirely…” (Regeringen 2018b, p.14). Demolishing people’s homes are thereby associated with practical and economic benefits which is usable in cases where there are many societal problems. In case of what this will mean to the people being forced to move, the government explains in the policy that they “…will get the opportunity to be provided a new dwelling, where the conditions are the individual’s social integration is better.” (Regeringen 2018b, p.14). The government thereby
constructs the dislocation of people as something positive and sees it as a ‘opportunity’ for people to become more easily integrated into the Danish society.

The Danish parliament has decided, as part of the strategy against ‘parallel societies’, that the amount of social housing is not allowed to be more than 40% in total in a ‘hard ghetto’. This means that the areas consisting of 100% social housing should decrease the amount by 60%. The Danish Transport, Construction and Housing Authority suggest that changing the mixture of tenures are possible through four different tools: selling social housing, converting social housing into offices or student housing, demolishing housing or selling land to private companies. The three tools which I mentioned first are referred to be the most “effective” (Trafik-, Bygge- og Boligstyrelsen 2019a, p.14) in aspect of decreasing the amount of social housing. It is argued in the Danish commission of inquiry that the quality and the attractiveness of the areas will increase by changing the constellation of tenure forms as well as residents, and that inclusion of private renters can strengthen the enthusiasm and commitment to renovate the areas, creating social and economic value (Trafik-, Bygge- og Boligstyrelsen 2019c, p.8, 14, 16). The Danish government states that it will demand a lot of work to “…remake the vulnerable housing areas to normal cities.” (Regeringen 2018b, p.7) whereby saying that these areas are not normal Danish housing areas at the moment and that initiatives are needed to ‘undue the areas’ (Regeringen 2018b, p.7). The suggestion to decrease the amount of social housing units illustrates how problematised social housing is in the Danish politics and how far the government are willing to go.

Social housing is associated with the reason why ‘ghettos’ have become isolated ‘parallel societies’, less attractive and the residents too homogenic (Regeringen 2018b, p.14). Jørgensen supports this identification by referring the strategy as an attack against the Danish Social Housing. But she also explained that the organisation is used to that kind of pressure and that they have been able to survive through the years, because there is a need for social housing, a need that the private market cannot solve itself and she also argued that the demand for affordable housing is never ending (interview with Jørgensen). Jørgensen said that it is not social housing that is the challenge. Rather, she argued that the mix of residents is the problem and related her reasoning to the government’s argument for wanting to spread “these people out” as she said. When asking who ‘these people’ are, she referred to the government’s criteria which defines what a ‘ghetto’ is. She later explained more clearly that she thought the problem was:

“…that you over a long period of time have clumped together specific social groups in some housing areas…[people] which are unemployed...those who receive social transfers whose children are not performing well in school…” (interview with Jørgensen).

Jørgensen thereby associates the problem with the constellation of unemployed residents whose children perform badly in school and who receive economic support from the society, reflecting the government’s characterisation. Additionally, she adds an identification of the residents as being “clumped together”, whereby describing them as living closely together in an area which they have been ‘put in’ by someone.
One of the reasons why the government wishes to demolish social housing units is to make attractive new housing for residents with more secure economies. This is part of how these areas are supposed to change (Regeringen 2018b, p.12). But there are also areas defined as ‘ghettos’, which are argued to be ‘attractive’ already, distinguished as ‘big city areas’ in the commission of inquiry. They are estimated to have good chances of being sold relatively easy, while it will be more challenging to sell dwellings in smaller housing areas where the prices are already low and decreasing and where dwellings could be empty (Trafik-, Bygge- og Boligstyrelsen 2019c, p.8, 9). Malling identifies the ‘hard ghetto’ in Copenhagen, Mjølnerparken, as an “attractive” area and claims that they will not have a problem selling social housing units in those areas (interview with Malling).

7.3.2 Dislocation of residents

Issues concerning social housing is also presented in the commission of inquiry. Interviews conducted with three different pension funds, Pension Danmark, PFA and Danica, which focus on their willingness to invest in the ‘ghettos’ illustrates how some pension funds find the percentage of social housing crucial, while others pointed to the danger of demolishing social housing units because “…we are not interested in being part of throwing people out of their homes. We are absolutely not interested in negative publicity.” (Trafik-, Bygge- og Boligstyrelsen 2019c, Bilag C), implying that it may not be the act of “throwing people out of their homes” which is the problem, but rather the bad reputation which the act can lead to. The dislocation of people is not mentioned by either of the interviewees as being something dramatic, but Jørgensen did argue that it will become more difficult to be vulnerable on the housing market regarding accessing housing when the number of affordable housing will decrease as well as it can causes confusion and challenges for people who are suddenly homeless (interview with Jørgensen). Malling argues that the people who will be most affected by the demolishment of social housing units is the “middle-group” which are not as ‘weak’ as to fit in the description of being able to access housing with the help from the municipalities, but who’s economy is not strong enough to buy or rent housing on the regular housing market either. They are therefore required to wait as others on the long waiting lists (interview with Malling). The ‘middle-group’ which is challenged by their economic recourses to access housing correlates with what is in the thesis defined as ‘the vulnerable group on the housing market’ and Malling and Jørgensen thereby both determine the Danish policy as making it more difficult for this group to access affordable housing.

Today it is not allowed to force people to move from their residence if the purpose is to sell the dwelling. The government suggests changing this rule in vulnerable areas though, because they see it as a barrier for securing a versatile residential area (Regeringen 2018b, p.14). The rights of the owner are thereby prioritised before the renter who could no longer have the right to demand to stay if the dwelling is to be sold in these designated areas. But the policy does not only affect the residents' ability to keep their homes, but also people’s ability to access housing in the ‘ghettos’. New rules considering who can move into the ‘ghettos’ have been set up by the government, leading to people who receive cash benefits will get less money if they choose to move into a ‘hard ghetto’ whereby using financial punishment to control who is living in the ‘ghettos’. Moreover, people receiving ‘integration benefits’ are not
allowed to move into a ‘ghetto’ at all and families are not able to apply for
reunification and live in a vulnerable housing area at the same time. The government
refers these new rules as an effective initiative to secure a mixture of residents
(Regeringen 2018b, p.7). Every initiative set up to secure this goal is affecting
residents’ ability to keep housing and people’s ability to access housing. The
vulnerable group on the housing market, which often seek to these areas where the
rent is lower than average, are thereby restricted by this decision and excluded from
the areas, whereby implying that it is people with less recourses that are maintaining
the existence of the ‘ghettos’.

7.4 Summary
The Danish policy has set up a clear goal not to have any ‘ghettos’ by 2030 in
Denmark. The term ‘ghetto’ is defined as people with a non-western background and
descendants, and connected to a large number of social housing units. The
government wishes to get rid of the ‘ghettos’ by decreasing the number of social
housing units and by relocating residents to reach the goal of more diverse areas and
to integrate the people who are determined as unwilling to actively participate in the
Danish society. The root to the problem is set to be the residents who have chosen
not to integrate into the Danish societies, who have chosen to live in ‘parallel
societies’ and who have chosen not to conform to the ‘Danish culture’, which is
determined as opposite to the Danish culture the government characterises as
superior. The goal is to make the areas ‘Danish again’, to make them ‘normal and
attractive areas’, while welcoming newcomers with more stable economies and
thereby change the residential constellation. The Danish policy can therefore be
characterised as a plan for gentrification, assimilation and integration.

8 A critical discourse analysis of the Swedish policy proposal
The 7th of May 2018, the former housing minister, Peter Eriksson, accepted the policy
proposal, Ett gemensamt bostadsförsörjningsansvar (SOU 2018:35), which was based
on the primary assignment to investigate how the Swedish municipalities work with
housing distribution for the vulnerable group on the housing market. But the proposal
did not only answer the questions required, it did also suggest a new housing
distribution law. This critical discourse analysis will focus on this policy proposal and
the interviews with the research officer Hanna Wiik and the architect Tyke Tykesson
from the municipality of Malmö.

8.1 The unequal Swedish housing market
The first chapter of the critical discourse analysis will focus on the characterisation of
the Swedish housing market and how it is portrayed as a dysfunctional foundation for
an unequal distribution of housing.

8.1.1 A problematisation of the Swedish housing market
The policy proposal begins by painting a rather dystopic picture of the Swedish
housing market:

*Income inequality has increased at the same time as the price on owned
housing has increasing much faster than the salaries. More households
lack the opportunity to buy a dwelling because of economic reasons. The share of rental housing has at the same time decreased in the housing stock. The competition for the housing that becomes available to rent increases, which exacerbates both the access to the housing market and the opportunities to adjust the dwelling after changed living conditions.” (ibid. p.14).

The introduction sets the stage for the context which the policy proposal is situated in, characterising the Swedish housing market as unbalanced and increasingly exclusive. These market conditions are portrayed as creating a foundation for a vulnerable group on the housing market to emerge and keep existing because the market is unbalanced (ibid. p.32). The idea of the group is thereby flexible in the sense that individuals are not statically bound to the characterisation and in the way that the existence of the group is determined by the state of the market.

To counteract the challenging development of the market, Wiik argued in the interview that there exists a need to acquire much more knowledge about what the actual need for housing is. But the proposal does itself try to give a deeper understanding of what the housing situation looks like at the moment. It is for example stated that the number of households for which it is unrealistic to save up money to own a home is rising and that the share of people ‘forced to’ live in rental apartments therefore have increased at the same time as the number of rental apartments have decreased (ibid. p.42). This problematisation of the market is used to legitimise the policy proposal’s own strategy, which is to establish a new housing distribution law to secure that the ‘actual’ need of housing is provided (ibid. p.125, 151).

8.1.2 ‘Market logic’

“…we [the municipality of Malmö] do not build affordable housing, the market does not allow it…The market builds housing in Sweden…and the market is built upon market conditions which means that they are not so interested in building for people which has a weak solvency.” (interview with Tykesson).

Tykesson was very explicit in his characterisation of the Swedish housing market, characterising it as a persona often in the form of “they” do not “want” to build affordable housing. The market is thereby distinguished as not ‘wanting’ to include people which are part of the vulnerable group on the housing market, instead “The market builds housing with prices they distinguish as appropriate…the market says we cannot build cheaper housing.” (ibid.). The market is for Tykesson very exclusionary and controlling and described as triggering a form of ‘market-logic’ connected to housing allowances being cut. He contrasted this form of ‘logic’ with a national social housing policy and explained that such mindset is absent at the moment but very much needed (ibid.). Wiik identified this kind of ‘logic’ as well and distinguished ‘it’ to be the fundament on which all housing is built in Sweden today. Moreover, she characterised the change of the Swedish housing political goal from 2006 as a reflection of how housing politics is determined by a ‘market mindset’ illustrated by how the goal went from focusing on supplying everyone with good housing to being focused on establishing housing markets which supplies consumers with a variety of housing that correlates with the need. She commented on this change by saying that “…the level has been dropped…”
But besides distinguishing the current goal as lowering a certain standard, the policy proposal still determines the suggested housing distribution law as to be built upon this current goal (SOU 2018:35, p.152). The market situation in Sweden is thereby both distinguished by Tykesson and Wiik as not functioning properly and which has to be regulated.

The policy proposal exemplifies Wodak's interpretation of policies as able to portray how differing ideologies are struggling to dominate, by the functioning and the condition of the market being criticised in the policy proposal while at the same time being unable or unwilling to detach the new suggested housing distribution law from the current housing political goal which is based upon the 'market mindset'.

8.1.3 Housing ‘consumers’
As mentioned, the goal of housing politics changed in 2008 and established a new idea of citizens as ‘consumers’. This understanding leads to a construction of housing as products and citizens as consumers part of an industry. The consumeristic approach reflects the current state of the Swedish housing market by the fact that access to housing is increasingly dependent on people’s economic resources (Grander 2018a, p.viii) as well as Tykesson’s description of the market as building housing for the price which ‘it’ finds suitable (interview with Tykesson). According to Tykesson affordable housing is not to be found among the existing supply or among new production of housing and will neither be in the future if a national social housing politics is not implemented or an increasing mobility in the existing and new housing stock (known as ‘flyttkedjor’ in Swedish) is established. But the most important and effective solution for the vulnerable group on the housing market to access housing is according to Tykesson, to find a job if the individual is unemployed, because “…do you have a job then you have a bigger opportunity to demand a dwelling on the existing housing market.” (interview with Tykesson). While the suggestions of establishing a national social housing politics or increasing the mobility in the existing and new housing stock is connected to an idea of changing something within the system of housing politics, the last and the most essential solution is connected to changing the foundation for the consumers’ ability to consume, whereby implying that it is the people who should conform to the system and not the other way around.

The universal system
The Swedish housing system has since the post-war period aimed for supplying every citizen with ‘good housing’, establishing the universal system as a guideline for distributing housing. It is suggested in the proposal that four different fundamental base-points are needed to be established in connection to housing distribution: (1) the need of the citizens regarding housing should be applied on the market, (2) there exist an obligation for public authorities to satisfy the citizens’ needs regarding housing, (3) this obligation should be the focus of public initiatives. These initiatives for housing distribution shall lead to more people fulfilling their housing needs and lastly, (4) the obligation for the citizens are shared by the state and the municipalities. But to establish these four fundamental conditions, it is argued to be necessary to define what an acceptable housing situation is (SOU 2018:35, p.136). But defining what is and what is not an acceptable housing situation challenges the idea of the universal system, because it motivates implementing specific initiatives to support a vulnerable group on the housing market, which would be defined as being situated in a non-acceptable housing situation. Social housing is in the proposal distinguished as being a possible
initiative, but this is not associated with something positive, but instead argued to be a “concern” (ibid. p.124).

Social housing is by Wiik explained to be a concept which is not used in Sweden because it is “very sensitive” and the usage of it can lead to stigmatizing people as “poor” (interview with Wiik). But even though Wiik identifies imbedded meanings in the word, which does not correlate with the politicians’ conviction that institutional initiatives in housing policy should be universal, she does see the potential in initiatives targeting the vulnerable group on the housing market for municipalities to easier establish diverse cities. Social housing is in itself therefore not what concerns Wiik, but instead the connotations connected with it (ibid.). The stigmatisation is also what Tykesson explained is holding Sweden back from using the concept, but he argued that social housing has been part of how Swedish institutions earlier have supported the vulnerable group on the housing market. He exemplified this by referring to the housing initiative set up in the 1930s for families with many children and low-income, the so-called, Barnrikehus, which was one of the first measures used in connection to the Bostadssociala utredningen (Government commission of inquiry on the housing situation in English) (Wrangnert 2015). But today “…there is something recoiling from the politics to speak about social housing.” (interview with Tykesson).

The characteristic and functioning of the universal system were taken up and problematized in the proposal and by Wiik in the interview. It was written in the proposal that “The municipalities’ possibility to act is restricted by public principles such as equal treatment.” (SOU 2018, p.49), whereby reflecting ‘equal treatment’ as something negative. This correlates with Wiik’s motivation for changing the Housing Distribution Law: “…our suggestion is to do it differently …the need of the universal law therefore changes to include those who have special needs.” (interview with Wiik). She believed that it was necessary to change the universal system, because the need of housing has not been taken into account or planned for earlier

“…otherwise we would not have had this housing situation. Had there from the beginning existed a law about these groups should get special support and then maybe we would not have been here today.” (ibid.).

The universal system was thereby connected by Wiik to the reason why the housing situation is at the stage it is today, which legitimises her aim to change it.

While Wiik described the Swedish housing system as currently universal she did point out that implementing specific measures to support the vulnerable group on the housing market in Sweden “is nothing new.” (ibid.). She claimed that initiatives for the vulnerable group on the housing market already exist and has for a long time in the form of laws and the current housing distribution law, which requires the municipalities to base assignments on analyses focusing on “the need of housing for special groups and market preconditions” (SFS 2013:866). But the earlier initiatives targeting the group “…has not been enough and that is why we are making the law.” Wiik explained (interview with Wiik). The making of a new housing distribution law was thereby based on the portray of the Swedish universal system as a restriction for strengthening the position of the vulnerable group on the housing market and therefore also part of what was identified as necessary to counteract shortage of housing.
8.2 The vulnerable group on the housing market

The proposal’s assignment was to investigate how Swedish municipalities worked with housing distribution for the vulnerable group on the housing market. The vulnerable group was therefore to begin with a very central theme of the investigation. This chapter will analyse how the group is characterised and what entitlements are legitimised for the group to have.

8.2.1 Strengthening the recognition of the vulnerable group on the housing market

The group is distinguished in the proposal as consisting of households whose economy in general or temporarily are not solid enough for them to be able to demand housing which correlates with their need (SOU 2018, p.32). Wiik explained in the interview that it was important for them to define the group to secure that the group is taken into account and because there existed a need to define who the investigation was focusing on (interview with Wiik). It is written in the policy proposal though that to answer which specific households can be defined as vulnerable on the housing market, more knowledge is needed concerning how people are living today, what supply of tenures are available for them and what an acceptable living situation really is (SOU 2018:35, p.32). The definition was thereby used as a tool for the group to be recognised, but to recognise a group’s existence does not necessarily infer concurrence or approval rather it can lead to mere acquiescence (Gaffikin & Morrissey 2011). Identity is understood in CDA as mentioned earlier as a construction of meaning. The policy proposal can in that way be said to attempt to construct an identity of the vulnerable group on the housing market through the production of meaning and an understanding of who they are, but as Gaffikin and Morrissey imply, someone must ‘approve’ the social reality being created for the group to be accepted in a larger context. Defining the group can thereby be seen as only one step ahead in Wiik’s aim for the group to be taken into account and be recognised as in the need of specific support to access housing in the future.

The Swedish municipalities which were approached by the proposal’s team varied in terms of defining a specific group as ‘vulnerable on the housing market’. Some had no problem explaining exactly what they meant by the concept, while others expressed an unwillingness or an inability to define such a group in the first place (SOU 2018:35, p.119). Tykesson explained that the municipality of Malmö did not have a specific definition of a group which is challenged on the housing market, but that they do have a common idea of who would be included in such a definition such as immigrants, young people and low-income groups who cannot get their needs fulfilled on the market. He explained the unwillingness had to do with the challenge of definitions becoming obsolete over time (interview with Tykesson). This reflects Wodak et al.’s understanding of ‘identity’ as a relational term. The idea of an individual or even a lifeless object staying the same would therefore be untenable. In this way, Wodak classifies the concept of identity as never signifying something static, unchanging or substantial, but rather as an element “Situated in the flow of time, ever changing, something involved in a process.” (Wodak et al. 2009, p.11). The act of defining specific households as vulnerable on the housing market can thereby be seen as an assumption of homogeneity and constancy, whereby not doing justice to the complexity of identity.
8.2.2 Right to housing

The new housing distribution law focuses on “strengthening the right of the citizens to housing.” and making clear who is responsible for distributing housing in Sweden, while creating good conditions for collaboration between the local, the regional and the national level as well as targeting the households whose needs of housing are not met on the housing market (SOU 2018:35, p.152, 153). The word ‘right’ is associated with understandings of justice, entitlement or correctness whereby making the statement powerful in itself and creating a certain standard of ‘rightfulness’. The policy proposal is therefore not only wishing to strengthen the recognition of the group’s existence but also its entitlement to housing. Today it is the municipalities which are in charge of helping households find a suitable home while the state and the municipalities share the responsibility for counteracting the shortage of housing which is evident in many cities all over Sweden. The state’s responsibility in terms of housing distribution is connected to reinforcement of laws and financial instruments such as taxes and subsidies. The state is thereby not only part of ‘the team’, but also a powerful actor who can change the rules of the game (ibid. p.48, 130, 132). But it is claimed in the proposal that no one is able to answer how severe the issue of the lack of housing is or how it is to be solved (ibid. p.139). The aim of the proposal is therefore to create “…a solution where everyone will and must work to clarify the degree of the problem and bring out effective solutions.” (ibid. p.139).

Wiik characterises housing as a “basic need” and as a “basic right” (interview with Wiik) whereby codifying a specific social reality of ‘basicness’ and ‘basic’ standards. Wiik argued that it is the municipalities which have the overall “responsibility” of assuring this right, but that they cannot do this alone. That is why, Wiik explained, the policy proposal points to the fact that all levels of government should have a responsibility for assuring the right of housing (interview with Wiik). Using words such as ‘basic’ and ‘responsibility’ supports Wiik’s justification of the strategy suggested by the policy proposal, advocating for the establishment of a multileveled system of housing distribution.

The advocacy for the right to housing echoes the requirement set up in the International Human Rights Law which recognises everyone’s right to an adequate standard of living, including adequate housing (The United Nations n.d., p.1) and The Instrument of Government which requires the Swedish public institutions to secure the right of housing (Riksdagen 2015). The right to housing leads to a construction of housing as an entitlement instead of the current understanding of housing as a form of commodity. Professor in Urban Planning at the University of Malmö, Carina Listerborn, argue that to live in uncertainty when it comes to housing affects people’s possibilities to get a job and an education as well establishing a family. She claims that it is the housing industry which decides whether there is a need for building more housing (Listerborn 2019) and states that:

“The housing market in Sweden can be described in two totally different ways. It offers on the one side attractive housing where you freely can access housing according to your wishes and on the other side a reality where you every or every second months must find somewhere to live. It
is thereby not a general shortage of housing but a housing inequality.” (Listerborn 2019).

Listerborn illustrates how the conditions of the housing market can be portrayed differently according to who you ask, while contradicting the policy proposal’s emphasis on the issue of the shortage of housing while underlining that it is instead the problem of housing inequality which is the most essential issue to act upon (Listerborn 2019). There are thereby many different understandings as to what the problem actually is, and the policy proposal is ‘just’ one of many.

8.3 Legitimising a certain ‘reality’

Throughout the policy proposal different initiatives are justified by emphasising their importance and obviousness. The last chapter of this critical discourse analysis will focus on these justifications.

8.3.1 The region – an ‘obvious’ contributor to housing distribution

The regions are distinguished both by Wiik in the interview and in the policy proposal as a key actor when it comes to housing distribution. They are set to help counteract the issue of lacking affordable housing, create a foundation for the state and municipalities to collaborate and enable dialog and coordination on a multi-levelled scale (SOU, 2018, p.139). Wiik summarises the point clearly in the interview: “The regions have a role to play here” (interview with Wiik). The regional level is as an “obvious” player when it comes to housing distribution Wiik stated in the interview. She based her assuredness on her own professional background as chief administrative officer, “I work with regional planning, so it is obvious.”, marking how Wiik’s own work experience has affected her enthusiasm for empowering the regions position when it comes to housing distribution. Moreover, the word ‘obvious’ implies that something is clearly apparent for her and that arguments which contradicts this statement would be ‘obviously’ wrong. Wiik constructs through this argumentation a certain kind of ‘truth’, which challenges other understandings such as how the current structure of power in the Swedish planning system functions by dividing the responsibility for solving the problem of lacking housing between the local and national level (interview with Wiik; SOU, 2018, p.130, 140). The suggestion to strengthen the position of the region is thereby not ‘just’ a question of given the level extra resources, but also a suggestion of changing the housing distribution system as a whole.

The region is given the role in the proposal as a “translator” and a “source for knowledge” while portrayed as a “natural” contributor when it comes to shortage of housing (SOU 2018, p.140, 148). This correlates with Wiik’s idea about the inclusion of the region as something ‘obvious’ and illustrates how the region is not only distinguished as a contributor to solving the challenge related to the decreasing housing stock, but also how its role is related to factual knowledge and translation. While ‘knowledge’ is associated with information, facts and common or individual experiences (Merriam-Webster 2019), ‘translation’ can be defined as an act, process or instance of translating a rendering from one language into another or from one form to another (Cambridge dictionary). The way the proposal and Wiik construct the needed inclusion of the regional level is thereby not only as a contributor to
counteract the issue of lacking housing and creating a foundation for the state and municipalities to collaborate, but also as a something undeniable, truthful and natural (SOU 2018, p.140, 149).

8.3.2 Language neutrality
Wiik explained that before she and her team began writing the proposal, they were met by several individuals who approached them and presented various solutions to the current market situation. This led her to conclude that it was very important that the proposal was to become “as neutral as possible” (interview with Wiik). The aim of neutralisation does not correlate with the idea of language in CDA. Instead, language is entwined in social power and is in different ways normalising specific ideas and understandings. The idea of making something as natural as possible would thereby in CDA be regarded as naturalising a certain understanding of language. This aim also reflects Wiik’s ambition to base the proposal on “facts” and “what we actually know” (ibid.), which creates an understanding of the foundation of the policy proposal as ‘truthful’. This is a very powerful, yet one-sided way of portraying the policy proposal.

The making of the policy proposal was initiated by the Swedish government in 2017 (SOU 2018, p.3) and the investigation is thereby based on a political agreement implying that this subject is important on a political scale. But while this affected the point of departure of the proposal, Wiik explained in the interview that she was very cautious about making the policy proposal as “non-political” as possible (interview with Wiik). Wiik’s language use is thereby generally connected with an aspiration for language neutrality and the policy proposal illustrates how political texts can function as means of codifying particular constructions of social reality and legitimise specific sets of actions as ‘obvious’.

8.3.3 The gap of knowledge
Knowledge and language are two very central themes in the policy proposal. Language usage is mainly connected in the proposal to the suggestion of establishing a common language for the Swedish institutions. This is distinguished as “necessary” to counteract the shortage of housing and to strengthen the work of distributing housing for the vulnerable group on the housing market. Establishing a common language is characterised in the proposal as a powerful tool to trigger a more coherent collaboration between the national, regional and local level though it is stated in the proposal that the policy proposal has no ambition to set up certain types of norms for this language usage. Instead, it is the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning which is to create the common language use regarding housing distribution (SOU 2018:35, p.164). The proposal is thereby made with the intention of being both non-political, as neutral as possible and not intending to set up certain norms of language use. As mentioned earlier, Wodak does not see language as powerful in itself, only through the use of powerful people. I would argue that Wiik and her team was put in a powerful position to investigate how Swedish municipalities work with housing distribution for the vulnerable group on the housing market and that the suggestion of a new housing distribution law is a political action in itself. The policy proposal is thereby not only political, but also through its language use determining specific norms relating to housing politics, which is to change the
current power-relation between the municipality, the regions and the state by giving the regions a more influential role as well as changing the power relation between citizens by characterising a specific group as vulnerable on the housing market in need of extra support.

Throughout the proposal Swedish municipalities are distinguished as not knowing enough about the current housing situation, how the housing market function and which tool that are available to support the vulnerable group on the housing market (ibid.). Tykesson responded to this by stating that:

“We [the municipal of Malmö] do not understand where they got that impression from. We have very good knowledge and we believe that the municipal’s autonomy is very important and that we can handle the construction of housing very well…” (interview with Tykesson).

While Tykesson clearly disagrees with the policy proposal’s problematisation, the policy proposal makes clear that it is “necessary” to encroach on the municipalities autonomy if they do not follow the requirements of the suggested housing distribution law (SOU 2018:35, p.194) whereby using the law to justify potentially taking away power from the municipalities while underlining it as a necessity. The municipalities would thereby be very much affected if the suggestions of the policy proposal were to be implemented.

8.4 Summary

The critical discourse analysis of the policy proposal, Ett gemensamt bostadsförsörjningsansvar, has led to a deeper understanding of how the Swedish initiative through different measures are aiming to strengthen the position of the vulnerable group on the housing market.

The housing market is characterised as both problematic and as a condition which consumers and the Swedish housing system are challenged by and part of, while the Swedish universal system is seen as a restriction for strengthening the position of the vulnerable group on the housing market and therefore also part of what is necessary to change to counteract the shortage of housing. It is the shortage of housing which is characterised throughout the proposal as the most essential problem. The problematisation of the market and the system is used as a base to justify strategies which challenges the status quo of the ‘market logic’ dominating housing development, while illustrating the power of this ‘logic’ at the same time. One of these strategies are related to identification and the use of different words such as ‘necessary’ and ‘obvious’ as well as explaining to base the proposal on a foundation of neutrality, facts and knowledge which legitimises the strategy. The policy proposal suggests defining the vulnerable group on the housing market, the extent of shortage of housing and what an acceptable housing situation is. But defining certain people as something specific and setting up standards of what is acceptable can lead to initiatives such as social housing, which both Tykesson and Wiik associate with stigmatising processes and argue that this is what is holding Sweden back from using these tenures to support a specific group. I have in this analysis attempted to illustrate the complexity of definition and identity both regarding the recognition of the
group’s proposed entitlements and in connection to defining a so-called non-fixed group. Though the most essential entitlement advocated for in the policy proposal is the right to housing, which is characterised in the policy as a tool to strengthen the ability for the vulnerable group on the housing market to access housing and by Wiik in the interview as something ‘basic’. It is the right to housing which the new housing distribution law is aiming to strengthen.

9 Discussion

This discussion will take its point of departure from the urban theory of justice by Fainstein and the findings from the critical discourse analyses of the Danish policy and the Swedish policy proposal as well as the analysis of each country’s housing system. It will be based on a comparison of the two national initiatives focusing on how they relate to Fainstein’s definition and understanding of ‘justice’ and a continuous evaluation of whether they contribute to the development of more just cities.

9.1 The unbalanced Swedish and Danish housing markets

This first chapter of the discussion will focus on how the Swedish and Danish housing markets relate to Fainstein’s interpretation of justice.

9.1.1 A just market?

Fainstein characterises equity as a call for providing every citizen with a home. As the analysis has illustrated, this call is challenged on the housing markets in Sweden and Denmark today. Both markets are characterised as unbalanced and all interviewees agrees that something needs to be done, but not what. Tykesson makes that very clear by claiming that the Swedish policy proposal “…is not an answer to anything” (interview with Tykesson). But while the Swedish policy proposal is attempting to move towards greater equity by advocating for everyone’s right to housing, the Danish policy is planning to demolish affordable housing and restrict certain people from moving into the ‘ghettos’, whereby decreasing the vulnerable group on the housing market’s ability to access affordable housing. The limitation of affordable housing is according to Fainstein challenging the aim of equity and leads to a more unfair society. Meanwhile, this does not necessarily mean that the Swedish policy proposal on the contrary would create a more just society, for all at least. It is claimed in the proposal itself that the new housing distribution law can make it even harder for groups not defined as ‘vulnerable on the housing market’ to access housing, because of the advantages the identified group would be given (SOU 2018:35, p.129). Nonetheless, the policy proposal still aims for implementing selective measures to support the group, which could imply that the group’s rights are understood as more valuable than others.

A certain kind of ‘market logic’ is imbedded within the Swedish and Danish housing systems reflecting Fainstein’s characterisation of the capitalistic society dominated by discourses of economic growth, profitability and competitiveness meanwhile Swedish media and Danish research report how certain groups are increasingly excluded from the housing market, especially in larger cities (Center For Boligforskning n.d.; Grander 2018a, p.3). Swedish municipalities state a concern in the Swedish policy
proposal that landlords tend to turn down potential renters because of low economic recourses, making it difficult for people on cash-benefits to access housing (SOU 2018:35, p.70). Meanwhile, the ‘market logic’ is also traceable in the Danish policy which aims for making the ‘ghettos’ attractive areas for people with more stable economies. So, while the vulnerable group on the housing market is struggling to find affordable housing which correlates with their needs they are also subject to exclusion and discrimination on the market not only by how access to housing and the characteristics of housing are increasingly becoming dependent on economic resources, but also by people who have the power to decide who should acquire a home.

The Danish policy and the Swedish policy proposal focus on different societal problems related to housing accessibility, but they both legitimise certain initiatives, entitlements and goals as necessary to implement. The next part of the discussion will focus on how specific definitions in each strategy leads to normalisation of certain ideas and legitimization of certain behaviour and the question of what that means in relation to developing more just cities.

9.2 The power of definition

9.2.1 Belief systems
One of Fainstein’s key points of the book, The Just City, is that making justice the first principle by which to evaluate policies and urban planning is essential, but that it is not met without ascribing to it a substantive content (Fainstein 2010, p.13). Fainstein exemplifies this through Berry’s (2005) claims that in every society, a prevailing belief system has been largely created by those most powerful (Berry 2005, p.27). The Danish policy and the Swedish policy proposal can thereby be said to exist within certain belief systems which they both reflect and challenge by portraying certain understandings and ideas as ‘truths’. The usage of the term ‘ghetto’ exemplifies a certain understanding of an area. The word might seem inappropriate to use by many, but the term is nothing new within Danish housing discourse. While the first strategy against the ‘ghettos’ and the ‘parallel societies’ was published in 2010 by the Danish government at that time (Regeringen 2010), the term can be tracked all the way back to 1692 when a police officer suggested to establish a Jewish ‘ghetto’ in Copenhagen (Von Freiesleben 2016, p.110). ‘The vulnerable group on the housing market’ is neither an uncommon concept within debates concerning housing politics in Denmark nor in Sweden, but it has not had as much of an impact on housing politics as the term ‘ghetto’ has in Denmark (Institut for Menneskerettigheder 2015, p.25). This is what the Swedish policy proposal is wishing to change by advocating for the identification of the group and determine by law that housing is a right for every citizen.

9.2.2 Diversity
Fainstein distinguishes diversity as difficult to achieve among other because national cultures in Europe are deeply rooted and defined, making it easier for tension between different cultures to arise. The Danish policy is a good example of how the ‘ghettos’ care seen as a clash between cultures, by making up a distinction between ‘them’ and ‘us’ and identifying the root to the problem of the ‘ghettos’ as immigrants and their lack of willingness to integrate into the Danish society. ‘Danishness’ is
throughout the policy projected to be what the areas are missing and what is ought to be corrected through better integration whereby transforming ‘culture’ into a question of ‘identity’. Fainstein’s appeal for officials to identify and strive for diversity as a step towards appreciating difference is therefore not apparent in the Danish policy, instead the policy is exemplifying a strive for cultural assimilation by absorption of the minority, the immigrants, into the dominant culture (Cotter 2011, p.14). But diversity has various meanings and the Danish policy do strive for diversity in terms of mixing tenures and residents in the areas. Diversity is in fact used to justify the displacement of residents and the demolishment of social housing units to counteract an identified homogenic constellation of tenures and people. This illustrates how diversity, which is often used as a buzzword in urban planning, can be reinforced at the expense of others for the sake of diversity. The question is therefore on what expense diversity is worth planning for?

Understanding certain areas as ‘ghettos’ and the residents as part of that concept creates a hierarchical system of people and enforce an understanding of the process of the ‘ghettos’ as a clash of cultures, which is now planned to be counteracted. Forcing diversity into the areas are justified by this understanding. But does this ‘ghetto-marking’ transfer to the rest of the Danish society affecting the understanding of people outside of the policy?

9.3 ‘Ghettonisation’

A headline was published in the ‘breaking news’ section by the Danish Broadcasting Corporation, DR, in 2018. It informed that “One-year old ghettochildren are forced to go to nursery.” (Maier 2018), whereby characterising the children living in the so-called ‘ghettos’ as not only children, but as belonging or being part of the ‘ghettos’. Carolina Magdelene Maier from the Danish party, The Alternative, wrote in an article that this language-use maid her “furious” and that the term ‘ghettochildren’ is “…poison for the society, for integration – and the children, who we speak about” (Maier 2018). The politician, Lars Dohn, from the left-wing part, The Red-Green Alliance, was also very critical when it came to the usage of the term ‘ghetto’, addressing it as a

“…sick mindset to stigmatise housing areas as ghettos. If you want strong people to move in, then you should definitely not call them ghettos and put them on a list. Because who wants to live in a ghetto?” (Grås, Rohde & Boserup 2013).

These examples illustrate the capacity of the ‘ghettonisation’ to affect the understanding of people living in the ‘ghettos’ and the areas’ attractiveness, at the same time as it shows that the term is not accepted by everyone, but that it instead challenges parts of the belief system which it consists within. It is this type of stigmatisation of people that Tykesson and Wiik claimed in the interviews is what holds back Sweden from using terms such as ‘social housing’.

But the usage of the term ‘ghetto’ in Denmark is also getting international attention. UN Human Rights wrote on their twitter page in July 2018 that

“#Denmark’s new “ghetto package” is hugely troubling & risks heightening racial discrimination against people of migrant origin – further “ghettoising” them. Coercive assimilation measures run risk of
fuelling racial prejudice, xenophobia & intolerance... #FightRacism" (UN Human Rights 2018).

Fight racism it says. Is the Danish strategy racist? Andersen (2019) claims that the plan is based on prejudice and ignorance and contradicts with what research is connecting the establishment of these areas with. He finds it unfortunate that the plan is spreading incorrect information especially now when “negative prejudice about immigrants is widespread” (Andersen 2019). This claim reflects the current political debate in Denmark which harsh exclusive rhetoric shapes understandings of immigrants in Denmark (Nødgaard-Nielsen & Burhøi 2017; Burhøi 2017) while the earlier mentioned images, facts and arguments introduced in the national strategy connecting non-western and descendants with the problematised ‘ghettos’ strengthens an understanding of the Danish policy as to be constituting a masked racism wrapped up in allegations of the ‘parallel societies’ and the defence of the ‘Danish community’.

The power of definition is exemplified quite well in the two national strategies. The term ‘ghetto’ is clearly affecting how the people living in the areas are identified and understood, as well as the identification of the vulnerable group on the housing market in the Swedish case is predicted to lead the group to being recognised as in need of support and attention. Although the two strategies are defining these terms for different reasons, but they both will or could have substantial implications for the vulnerable group on the housing market’s ability to access housing in the future. While the Swedish policy proposal is aiming to strengthen the position of the group on the housing market to access affordable housing more easily (SOU 2018:35), the Danish policy strategy against ‘ghettos’ will on the other hand lead to the vulnerable group on the housing market having a much harder time accessing affordable housing in the ‘ghettos’, because of the established restrictions mentioned earlier (Elmelund 2018) and maybe as well in general because of the troubling preconceived opinions and ideas spreading about immigrants. The implications of the two initiatives for the vulnerable group on the housing market are therefore the complete opposite.

9.4 Justice for whom?

This chapter will question the aim of the Danish policy and illustrate how the concept of justice can be expressed and understood differently depending on the context and the eye of the beholder.

9.4.1 An unjust strategy for gentrification?

People living in ‘ghettos’ are in the Danish policy characterised as living in isolation distinguished as ‘parallel societies’ far away from “the normal Denmark”. The goal set up by the Danish government is marked by the desirability of assimilation, portraying ‘Danishness’ as superior and as something which the vulnerable group on the housing market, living in these areas, should conform to. Fainstein describes a project initiated by the Chicago Housing Authority which has a very similar approach as the Danish strategy: destruction of social housing and displacement of residents to reduce social isolation of “distressed communities” (Fainstein 2010, p.72, 73). Fainstein questions the motive behind the project, as to whether the real aim is gentrification and underlines that moving people against their will lead to democracy and equity not being served. The same question could be directed towards the Danish policy: is the Danish policy against ‘ghettos’ actually a strategy for gentrification?
The Danish policy and Jørgensen characterise the biggest problem with the Danish ‘ghettos’ as something to do with the homogenous constellation of residents living in the areas. Part of the solution set up by the Danish government is to make the areas more attractive for private owners and investors and to relocate residents living in social housing units, whereby beginning a process which could be identified as gentrification. Fainstein argue that if a neighbourhood becomes gentrified, the remaining low-income residents may lose their sense of ownership of the area even if they receive improved services (Fainstein 2010, p.73). But it is not only Fainstein who identifies a problem with the process. Many people living in the so-called ‘ghettos’ have protested against the decision to sell or demolish their homes (Brandt 2019) and officials such as the director from the Danish Cooperative Social Housing Association, KAB, Jens Elmelund, wonder why the politicians have not listened to the people who either works in the industry or study it,

“…scientists, specialists, think tanks, mayors and internal experts – have come forward and said, that it is the wrong medicine, you prescribe. It is too expensive and does not work when it comes to solving the problems.” (Sadolin 2018).

There is thereby no consensus on what the solution should be and what the problem is in the first place, but they do agree that there exists a problem. While the government identifies that the problem has to do with the residents, others, such as Haarder, who works as an associate professor at The University of Southern Denmark, address the problem as to be connected to the Danish housing politics and the dwellings themselves (Haarder 2018) while Larsen and Rønsbo, who works for the Danish institute against torture, argue that the state should decrease its control over the areas and that the attention should be on supporting the families (Larsen & Rønsbo 2018). The different viewpoints can be related to Fainstein’s claim that it fundamentally matters a great deal as to whether the problem is viewed as self-inflicted, as a consequence of social inequality or as public politics failing (Fainstein 2010, p.66).

9.4.2 Interpretation of justice
The Swedish policy has been argued to contribute developing a more just city earlier in the discussion by supporting the vulnerable group on the housing market’s ability to access housing. The Danish policy, on the contrary, has been distinguished as leading to a process of gentrification. Does this mean that the Danish strategy leads to injustice instead? The utilitarian tradition would argue that the answer is no. Instead, equity becomes connected to benefitting the majority in the utilitarian understanding of justice, which means that a redevelopment program which leads to renters losing their home does not necessarily lead to a less just outcome. The utilitarian tradition would justify this view by arguing that

“If displacement arises from the creation of a physical environment that provides others with a benefit commensurate with the cost to the displaced and offers aesthetic pleasure to the broader public, the sum of satisfaction will exceed that of the status quo.” (Fainstein 2010, p.38).

According to the interpretation of justice, different kinds of solutions can thereby be identified as appropriate. The Danish government legitimises their strategy against ‘ghettos’ as “for the sake of the children” and sees their strategy as to help create a
solid foundation for “A good start in life for all children and young adults” (Regeringen 2018a, p.24). Justice is thereby in the Danish policy identified as justice for the children, while the development of the ‘ghettos’, including demolishment of social housing units, can be seen as a measure to reach that goal. Justice for Fainstein is therefore not necessarily justice for others.

But how does the Swedish policy proposal’s and the Danish policy’s different understandings of what is ‘just’ and how it should be reached affect their idea of accessibility for housing for the vulnerable group on the housing market?

9.5 The right to housing and the meaning of a home

9.5.1 Is ‘housing’ no longer ‘homes’?

Farha, the UN’s special rapporteur on the right to housing, argue that housing is being treated primarily as a commodity today projecting a means to accumulate wealth for the few (United Nations Human Rights – Office of the High Commissioner 2017).

“Housing has become increasingly unaffordable for those in low and even middle-income brackets, and is no longer viewed as home, a place in which to raise families and from which to contribute to community.” (United Nations Human Rights – Office of the High Commissioner 2017).

This marks that the vulnerable group on the housing market may not only be characterised as people with the lowest incomes but also people in the middle-class, which indicates how severe the competition for housing has become. But it also shows how the value of a ‘home’ may be losing its impact. Security and stability are often words associated with a home, while being homeless is one of the most worrying thoughts people can imagine (Olsson n.d.). In spite of this, it is as the analysis has shown, the ‘market logic’ which dominates housing politics, which can be exemplified by how Swedish and Danish housing have become a good business, not only for individuals who have the money to buy dwellings, but also for large investment firms. One of the world’s leading investment firms, Blackstone, have bought several properties in Denmark and Sweden. Six years ago, the Swedish municipality of Bokyrka sold 1274 dwellings to a Swedish investment firm, which sold the apartments again last year in 2018 for double the price to the property company Hembla which is owned by the American investment firm Blackstone. The dwellings which were purchased are commonly known as part of the Swedish Million Homes Programme, which illustrates a new tactic in Sweden by investment firms aiming to renovate cheaper housing and sell dwellings afterwards for a much higher price (Konflikt 2018). Michael Nilsson, who works for the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning authority, commented on the sale of the 1274 dwellings in a Swedish radio program, calling the incidence an example of a process of gentrification and issued that the thought of the Swedish housing market being in balance again could almost be distinguished as a utopian idea today (Konflikt 2018).

In Denmark, affordable housing is also sold to large foreign investment firms such as Blackstone, which in Denmark has become known for the approach “buy it, fix it, sell it”, implying how the firm is known for buying properties, increasing the rent and in the end sell the dwelling for a much higher price whereby illustrating the idea of homes as a commodity. The American investment firm became part of a heated debate concerning the sale of around 300 dwellings in the municipality of Frederiksberg in
2018 (Filt 2019). Pelle Dragsted, from the Danish party The Red-Green Alliance, argued that “It is very worrying, because it will change the opportunities for, that normal people can live as renters in Copenhagen.” (Filt 2019). Farha has also been active in the debate concerning the sale and stated that the Danish government “…has not yet understood, that this new form of housing financing occurs within an area which is protected by the human rights law, and that they therefore have obligations.” (Pagh-Schlegel 2019).

But as the analysis have attempted to show, the understanding of having an obligation for providing housing to citizens is not as dominating as Farha’s concern that housing has become a product on a market sold for the highest price.

9.6 Summary

The Danish policy and the Swedish policy proposal each affect the accessibility of the vulnerable group on the housing market. While the Swedish policy characterise the group as entitled to the right of housing and focus on strengthening this right, the Danish policy constructs this group living in the ‘ghettos’ as part of a bigger societal problem connected to segregated and problematised areas. Both national initiatives consist within a context with different opinions as to what the problem really is in the different countries and how to solve the issues. The Danish policy and the Swedish policy proposal have identified their versions of a problem as well as solutions the break each identified development. What is obvious in both cases is that the vulnerable group on the housing market is increasingly excluded on the market which might relate to the idea that the meaning of a home seems to be gradually disappearing or less prioritised for instead to foster ideas of economic growth and the attractiveness of areas.

Fainstein’s interpretation of justice has led to a deeper understanding of how the Swedish policy proposal and the Danish policy relate to the development of more just cities. I have attempted to illustrate that the idea of justice is not a fixed concept, but that it can be understood differently according to the eye of the beholder. So, while the Danish policy can be argued to lead to gentrification, it can also demonstrate a goal of making a more just city for the children living in the areas and as a way to reinforce diversity. The Swedish policy proposal is on the other hand clearly trying to make a more just city for the vulnerable group on the housing market through the strengthening of the right to housing but is as mentioned before not necessarily prioritising a more just city for everyone. Whether the national initiatives are leading to more just cities therefore depends on which parts of the strategies you focus on.

Fainstein’s theory has provided me with an interesting way of evaluating the Danish policy and the Swedish policy proposal but it did have its limitations. It is based on the rejection of the neo-liberal ideology that has framed many urban policies and a normative principle of justice. It would have been interesting if Fainstein would have discussed whether the current market-oriented system of planning does bring something positive to urban development and what that would be. Moreover, the theory was made focusing on USA and Holland, besides that I found it relevant in the contexts of Denmark and Sweden. A theory which was more closely connected to Sweden and Denmark’s political systems could have been interesting in the way that it would be more closely connected to the national initiatives and maybe lead to other answers.
10 Conclusion

I began this study by claiming that the Swedish and the Danish housing markets are characterised as being increasingly unequal. The thesis has attempted to illustrate how this development is affecting the position of the vulnerable group on the housing market and question whether the Danish policy and the Swedish policy proposal contribute to the group’s vulnerability. It is clear that both national initiatives are affected by and imbedded within the context of the housing market, illustrated by how the Danish policy focus on making the ‘ghettos’ attractive for investors and people with higher income and how the Swedish policy proposal emphasis that the new housing distribution law is supposed to function on market terms. But the two countries are not only marked by similar market discourses affiliated with economic growth, competitiveness and profitability, they also share a common history of developing universal systems of housing distribution. But while Sweden has continued to advocate for ‘Good housing for all’ and have public housing, Denmark chose to use more selective measures and established social housing. This approach is according to the Swedish policy proposal not working though and it is therefore argued that selective solutions are needed to secure that the vulnerable group on the housing market is able to access housing in the future.

The vulnerable group on the housing market is characterised very differently in the Swedish policy proposal and the Danish policy. The former is portraying a group which is in the need of support and which should be entitled to demand housing on the market. The Danish policy on the other hand portrays an understand of the vulnerable group living in the ‘ghettos’ as problematic and as part of the concept ‘ghetto’. The people in focus here are non-western people and descendants who are portrayed to actively choosing to isolate themselves in the so-called ‘parallel societies’. These ‘parallel societies’ are portrayed as opposite to ‘Danishness’ and not part of the ‘normal’ Denmark. The Danish policy can therefore not ‘only’ be seen as a strategy for integration, but also as plan for gentrification and assimilation. The Swedish policy proposal does not problematise certain individuals. Instead, it is the system of housing distribution which is distinguished as in need of being reorganised. The solution is in the proposal explained to be a multileveled system where the national, regional and local level work together to create a foundation for a better housing distribution system. But the overall goal is through the suggested housing distribution law to strengthen the vulnerable group on the housing market’s right to housing and define who can be distinguished as part of the group.

Justice is a multifaceted concept illustrated by how the Swedish policy proposal and the Danish policy legitimise their strategies in different ways. While the Danish policy makes it more difficult for the group to access and keep housing in the ‘ghettos’ they legitimise their strategy as for the sake of the people living there explaining that it creates a possibility for children to get a good start in life and for grownups to be integrated into the Danish society. The Swedish policy proposal aims for making the housing market more just for the vulnerable group on the housing illustrated by how they wish to strengthen the right to housing. But strengthening one groups right will along the way properly make it harder for other people to access housing. The proposal would therefore not secure a more just city for everyone. But in general
terms it is evident that the process of gentrification happening in the Danish case does not lead to a more just city as well as the stigmatisation of people does not correlate with Fainstein’ aim of supporting vulnerable groups, while the Swedish policy proposal’s advocacy for strengthening the right to housing and supporting vulnerable groups are more in line with what Fainstein describes as greater justice.

It is important to recognise that these results are not generalisable, instead the thesis contributes with an example of how the vulnerable group on the housing market in Sweden and Denmark are positioned within a pressured housing market. The study has aimed to provide the reader with a sense of how the two countries deals with the group’s vulnerability differently and similarly and how the specific initiatives in focus affect the group’s accessibility as well as the understanding of the group itself. This thesis has not provided any recommendations as to what could make the strategies more just or less of an effect to the worsening of the vulnerable group’s position of the housing market. Further research exploring this question could lead to urban planners, politicians and other officials being better prepared when deciding on future policy implementation. It would have been interesting as well to include more countries in the investigation to acquire a more nuanced picture of how a vulnerable group on the housing market access housing and explore what other countries do to counteract the development of exclusionary housing markets.
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**Interviews**

The interview with Hanna Wiik was conducted the 5th of April 2019 in a café in Stockholm. The interview lasted 39 minutes, it was recorded and transcribed the same day and I was allowed to use her full name and work title.

The interview with Liv Jørgensen was conducted the 16th of April 2019. It lasted 38 minutes, it was recorded and transcribed the same day and I was allowed to use her full name and work title. The interviewee requested for me to send some of the questions on beforehand, which I did. This can have influenced her responses, because she was prepared.

The interview with Tyke Tykesson was conducted the 29th of April 2010 and lasted 29. It was recorded and transcribed the same day and I was allowed to use his full name and work title in the study.

The interview with Charlotte Amalie Malling was conducted the 20th of May 2019. It lasted 43 minutes. It was recorded and transcribed the same day and I was allowed to use her full name and work title.
# Appendix

## Interview guide for the semi-structured interviews

### Briefing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informing the interviewee about the person’s rights (anonymity, ability to stop the interview whenever, ability to see the chosen material before handing in the thesis and decide whether I am allowed to use the quotes or if I have understood the interviewee correctly).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presenting the purpose of the interview and the thesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting the permission to record the interview, use the interviewee’s work-title and name in the thesis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presentation of the interviewee and their role regarding the chosen subject.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The questions asked depended on who were interviewed but these topics were consistent in all of the interviews:</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The definition of a vulnerable group on the housing market.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The vulnerable group’s ability to access housing today.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The specific national strategy (depending on which country the interviewee was from) and its consequence, if any, for the vulnerable group on the housing market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The national strategy consequences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The state of the housing market today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Challenges and goals identified in the national strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The selective and the universal system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The translation of ‘almene boliger’ or ‘allmännyttan’ to English.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Debriefing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thanking the informant.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informing that a document will be send my mail to them with my own and my supervisor’s contact information, information about their rights and what we any agreements we have to come regarding the usage of the material.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>