

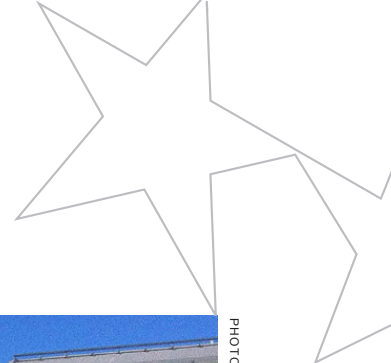


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Getting a Grip on the Social Exclusion-Inclusion Conundrum

Social inclusion has been identified as one of the major objectives to strive for in the European Union as a whole. In the Europe 2020 Strategy, the EU has set a priority to induce more inclusive growth by fostering job creation and reducing poverty, a challenge made greater in the face of a prolonged economic crisis. Finding durable solutions to poverty and social exclusion arguably requires multi-sectoral and multi-level governance approaches to foster territorial cohesion and address socio-economic disparities in the continent's metropolitan regions. In this issue of Nordregio News, we explore the issues of poverty and social exclusion in an urban European context, consider how these issues are dealt with in a suburban municipality in the Stockholm Region and learn about a distinct approach to raise awareness among policy-makers.

Social exclusion is a phenomenon that is both highly localized geographically and that affects all types of urban regions, from the wealthier to the less developed ones. In that sense, it is a truly European concern, even if the extent of this problem in different metropolitan regions may widely differ in terms of spatial extent and societal acuteness.

In the first contribution of this issue, **Poverty and Social Exclusion in Europe**, Isabel Ramos Lobato and Sabine Weck introduce the conceptual and policy contexts framing these two notions and highlight their intrinsic differences: while poverty is basically linked to low income levels, social exclusion is depicted as a complex series of

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processes relating to different spheres of integration. Limited access to public services acts as a key factor fostering social exclusion. Furthermore, a key dimension of social exclusion is the issue of urban segregation, and thus demanding innovative urban planning initiatives, while poverty relates to the reform of the national welfare regimes. The authors finally discuss the impact the recent economic and financial crises has accelerated of the social exclusion processes.

The second article, **Towards Inclusion: Botkyrka's Approach to Urban Social Issues** by Mitchell Reardon and Christian Dymén, presents empirical findings of a study about social exclusion in the municipality of Botkyrka in Sweden. The material provides interesting insights on the nature of the socio-economic mechanisms contributing to the formation of pockets of social exclusion, as well as efforts to resolve these issues, in one of the fastest growing and wealthiest metropolitan regions of Europe.

In the final contribution, **Urbanization and its Socioeconomic Challenges**, Evert Kroes introduces a novel approach undertaken by the Stockholm County Council to raise the awareness for developing truly integrated approaches for fostering social inclusion. The coordination of public interventions undertaken at the municipal level have traditionally been fragmented in the Stockholm Region, and the Urban Game enables participants to find innovative approaches for improving the coordination between sectors and across different administrative units.

We sincerely hope that this selection of articles will provide new ideas and food for thought in understanding the complex interplay between poverty, social exclusion and social inclusion and how innovative governance approaches may improve the capacity of actors to tackle these issues in the long run.



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Poverty and Social Exclusion in Europe: Place-Specific Patterns and Common Challenges

By Isabel Ramos Lobato & Sabine Weck

Almost one-quarter of the European Union's (EU) population lives at risk of poverty or social exclusion according to **official EU statistics**. Children, the unemployed, women and ethnic minorities such as Roma are among the groups who are particularly affected. The dramatic increase in the number of affected individuals since 2009, and the growing disparities between and within EU Member States (exacerbated by the fiscal and economic crisis), have placed the fight against poverty and social exclusion high on political agendas across Europe. To raise public awareness and strengthen political commitment to combat poverty and social exclusion, the EU proclaimed 2010 as the 'European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion'. A headline target in the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth is to lift 20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion.

Influenced by French debates, the concept of social exclusion became popular in the 1990s, and it changed European policy debates from solely focusing on material exclusion and income inequality to integrating social and cultural disadvantages. Though poverty and social exclusion are often coexistent or concurrent, reflecting the same underlying processes, they should be seen as different concepts. Although there is no universally agreed upon definition of social exclusion, there is widespread agreement that whereas poverty is defined based on income and distributional issues, the concept of social exclusion calls for a process-related, relational and multidimensional understanding. Social exclusion is about non-participation versus participation and thus relates to different spheres of integration, such as employment, housing, education, political voice and social participation, besides income. Poverty is frequently defined at the individual level, whereas social exclusion often relates to population groups. Income-related poverty and social exclusion are strongly linked, and they may be (geographically) co-located but not necessarily, because other contexts such as socio-cultural ones can compensate for, and mitigate, experiences of poverty and social exclusion.



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Common trends and place-specific patterns

Both poverty and social exclusion have spatial dimensions that are reflected by locally distinct patterns of urban advantage and disadvantage. To explain the patterns and trends of poverty and social exclusion, the relationship between processes at different scales and the interaction between dissimilar mechanisms that influence individual prospects must be considered. There are broader mechanisms connected to poverty and social exclusion processes in Europe, although these lines of interaction can have very different manifestations at the local level. One mechanism is economic restructuring across European countries, which is characterized by a selective process of casualization that may be associated with reduced entitlements to social protection. Because of uneven economic development paths, however, some cities have managed industrial transformations more successfully than others. Thus, distinct patterns of social inequality and exclusion can be identified across European cities. The European welfare regimes are another mechanism that influences poverty and social exclusion patterns. The different regimes are characterized by dissimilar levels of decommodification and state redistribution. Although social protection is widely decoupled from employment in the Nordic countries, protection schemes in some central or southern European countries are highly polarized between a core group of well-protected workers and the more insecurely protected outsiders. Thus, the risk of poverty and social exclusion varies significantly between social groups and welfare regimes. However, substantial differences between countries that are part of the same regime can be identified. Education and housing policies (which are not considered in the classification), as well as the varying influence of local policy arrangements and locally specific resources, may reinforce or weaken processes at higher policy levels. Thus, depending upon the relationship between national and local policies, cities within the same welfare regime or even within the same nation-state may diverge significantly with respect to the main groups affected by poverty and social exclusion or spatial patterns of disadvantage.

Beyond the influence of broader trends, different risk factors at the individual level can be identified that impact poverty and social exclusion processes, such as employment status, educational qualifications, citizenship, age, ethnicity, disabilities, being a single parent, etc. Access to relevant institutions and services (defined in terms of geographic or symbolic distance) or stigmatization of the area where one lives may also reinforce or reduce societal inclusion. There is a long-standing academic debate about the extent to which the places where socially excluded people live influence social exclusion processes over and above individual risk factors, especially in areas of concentrated disadvantage. Most researchers will agree that space may be important but that it does not necessarily influence individual socio-economic prospects, because such influence depends upon individual characteristics,

Acknowledgement

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More information about the project

local policies and wider political and economic processes. National and local welfare regimes and public services and social network resources, for example, can be intervening factors. Moreover, research could show that material and social well-being are not necessarily related given that subjective well-being and quality of life depend upon a range of dimensions and that those who are statistically defined as 'poor' or 'socially excluded' may not necessarily define themselves as such. Thus, individuals may be excluded in one sphere and included in others, because it is always the overlapping of different risk factors in a given local context that causes social exclusion processes.

The impact of the fiscal and economic crisis

The financial and economic crisis has led to changing patterns of poverty and social exclusion in many European countries, but its impacts on cities and regions with less favourable economic and population structures and/or weak public welfare systems are far greater. Growing unemployment rates and precarious employment affect especially the most vulnerable population groups, such as the less qualified, immigrants or young people. However, although young people with lower qualification levels are still more likely to be unemployed, even those with a university education are not necessarily protected from unemployment or precarious employment. In cities and regions with weak economic development and shrinking employment markets, even well-qualified young people can have limited access to the labour market and be forced to migrate for better job prospects, which in turn increases interregional, national or European disparities.

In many European countries, there have been severe cut-backs in public spending in public sectors such as social protection schemes or educational programmes. Especially in countries hit hardest by the crisis, the forced adoption of austerity measures has a negative social impact that exacerbates the situation for vulnerable population groups. In many cities and metropolitan areas, local programmes are being cut to the most basic services. Thus, local experts report that austerity measures not only endanger the traditionally most vulnerable population groups but also increasingly impact people who used to have at least a minimum level of protection, such as young people or the lower middle classes. In particular, in Mediterranean countries, even middle-class families with medium and high education levels may face poverty and social exclusion given the increasing costs for housing, heating, food and education on the one hand and the concurrent reduction of state support and public services on the other hand. This crisis leads to shrinking family incomes that threaten families' capacities to support needy family members—such as young people—while at the same time, widespread austerity measures limit access to social protection outside the family and social network resources.

Policy challenges for combating poverty and social exclusion

It is very clear that no one policy or intervention can combat social exclusion, at either the national or the local level. At the national level, it is the welfare policy mix of prevention, support and activation that shapes and influences trends and patterns of social exclusion and inclusion. At the local level, there is a need for coherent action plans and a combination of civil society and public or private sector resources for effective action. Across all levels, there is a need to consider the place-specific interplay between different policies and their interaction with wider structural socio-economic processes, as well as a need for attention to the perpetuation of spatial disparities.

Effective policies depend upon reliable data to analyse and monitor social exclusion and poverty and the processes that are linked to both of these problems. However, for different reasons, it remains difficult to capture these processes statistically. On the one hand, given their small-scale nature, available regional or city-wide data can illustrate disparities within regions or cities, but they fail to provide policy-makers with a clear picture of poverty and social exclusion processes. Thus, data on less aggregated levels are needed to identify the small-scale processes at work. On the other hand, based on the availability of data, sampling is often reduced to indicators of income or employment without capturing other important domains of social exclusion, such as political participation. However, because of the cumulative and multidimensional nature of social exclusion processes, it is always the combination of the various dimensions of exclusion that increases vulnerability and, thus, needs to be captured.

The EU's target-setting process in the Europe 2020 strategy has had a positive impact on the attention given to poverty and social exclusion issues across the Member States and has raised social awareness and commitment. Nevertheless, although some European countries have been able to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion, others seem to be further removed from the goal of social inclusion relative to the pre-crisis situation. In some countries, the economic and financial crisis has had dramatic repercussions on labour markets and available jobs. Reductions in public expenditures for social policies have likewise limited the capacity and the scope of local actors to promote social inclusion actively in many places. This is the experience of many European countries. Six million more people were at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2012 relative to 2010 ([Eurostat](#)). Thus, there is a greater need than ever for more ambitious target setting to combat poverty and social exclusion at all levels of policy-making.

Towards Inclusion: Botkyrka's Approach to Urban Social Issues

By Mitchell Reardon & Christian Dymén

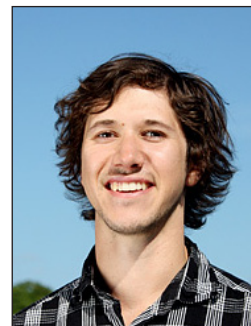
As one of the fastest growing regions in Europe, Stockholm is in the midst of a dynamic era of development, prosperity and optimism. Not everyone shares the same degree of success, however. Although income and employment opportunities are increasing for many who live and work in the region, continued disparity among groups and individuals is also evident. This is well illustrated by the rise in child poverty rates in many municipalities across Sweden, including some in Stockholm, and the fact that people with foreign backgrounds (particularly from outside of Europe) consistently face significant challenges across a range of socio-economic issues.¹ Long-standing geographic residential patterns along ethnic and socioeconomic lines are becoming more pronounced, suggesting that these challenges are spatially manifest.²

These tensions came to the fore in May 2013, when riots broke out in a number of suburbs in Stockholm. Numerous elements have been identified as contributing to the 10 days of unrest, which involved several hundred (predominantly) young people. There is little doubt that factors associated with poverty and social exclusion, including labour market access, urban development patterns and segregation, played a role.

As part of the **ESPON TIPSE project**, we explored the multidimensional and cross-sector issues of poverty and social exclusion, with a particular focus on urban segregation, in the Municipality of Botkyrka. Although Botkyrka continues to face problems associated with poverty and social exclusion, it became apparent during the course of the study that innovative policies and initiatives appear to be paying dividends. Coordinated approaches from all levels of government are necessary to resolve these challenges, but this article focuses on steps undertaken in Botkyrka Municipality. In the following article in this issue, Evert Kroes from TMR elaborates on regional and national approaches. These efforts, which are mainly characterized as people-first and/or integrated across sectors, have relevance for other Nordic regions dealing with similar situations.

Botkyrka

Of the 26 municipalities in Stockholm County, Botkyrka had the lowest median income in 2010 and among the highest municipal concentrations of persons with a foreign background, in a county with one of the highest concentrations of persons with a foreign background in the country. Despite solid economic growth in the county, unemployment in Botkyrka remains higher than the county average.



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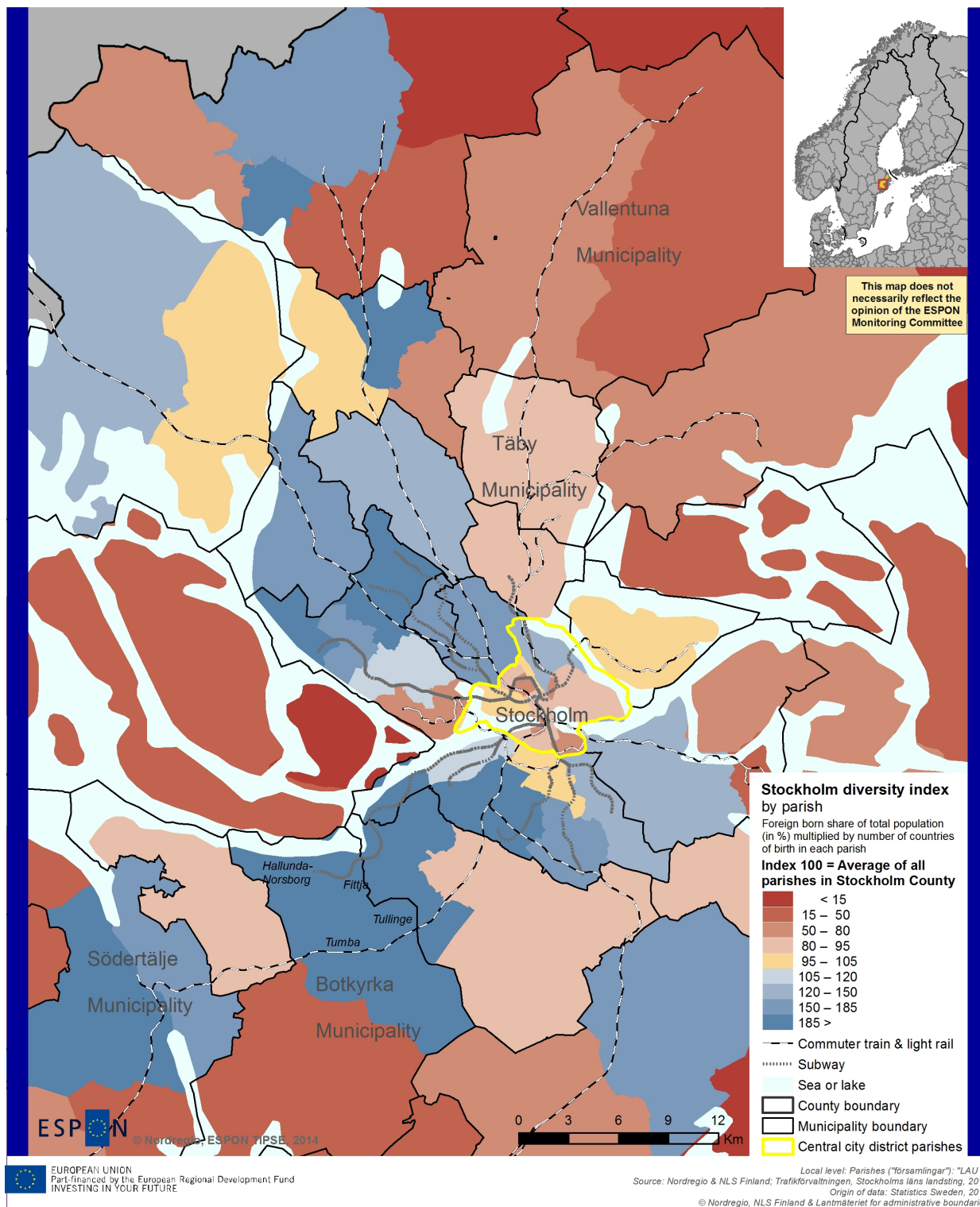


View of Hallunda-Norsborg in Botkyrka. Photo: Mitchell Reardon

At the submunicipal level, there is a strong north–south distinction in Botkyrka with respect to socio-economic status, demographics, transportation and built form. South Botkyrka is characterized by higher income and employment levels, as well as by a larger percentage of people with an ethnic Swedish background. The built environment predominantly consists of villas and smaller multifamily buildings, and with the overland train, the area has a more rapid connection to the city centre. North Botkyrka has a low median income and a very high percentage of persons with a foreign background. Most of the residential built forms are modernist high-rise buildings that were constructed during the Swedish Million Homes programme in the 1960s and 1970s. North Botkyrka is connected to the city centre via subway, which takes more time than the overland train. It is also important to note that there are only limited pedestrian, cyclist and public transit connections between North and South Botkyrka and even between districts within these respective areas. These mobility challenges, influenced by Stockholm’s ‘string of pearls’ development strategy, limit the accessibility of centralized services in the municipality, leading to greater district competition for the municipality’s scarce resources.

Botkyrka is a highly diverse municipality as can be seen in Map 1, where unlike many other cities, people with different foreign backgrounds tend to mix rather than to isolate themselves in clusters. To illustrate this mix we have developed a ‘diversity index’. To create the index, the share of foreign born population by parish^x was multiplied by the number of nationalities present in each parish in Stockholm County.^{xx} Results were tabulated for all parishes within the County and the subsequent parish average was set to an index of 100.

As the map shows, North Botkyrka is one of the most diverse parishes in the Stockholm Region. Here, the populations of people with backgrounds from Iran, Iraq, Turkey, the ‘Rest of Asia’, Latin America and Africa all increased significantly between 1991 and 2001 in North Botkyrka.³ There has also been notable growth from the ‘Rest of Europe’ (Non-Nordic, Polish or German). Botkyrka is also a global media hub for the Middle-Eastern Christian diaspora. In contrast to



Map 1. Stockholm diversity index by parish. Source: Map developed by Linus Rispling, Nordregio, based on data from Statistics Sweden, 2014.

this diversity, there is a striking difference with respect to the presence of Swedes, which Hårsman described succinctly: “*The ethnic variety increases when the fraction of the comparatively large Swedish group decreases.*”⁴ With this in mind, it appears that more ‘excluded’ areas, such as North Botkyrka, are, in fact, quite diverse and inclusive, but the missing piece in this diversity puzzle is Swedes. However, areas with few ethnic Swedes also are often characterized by lower levels of education, employment, income and access to Swedish media at a regional scale.

An Integrated Response that Puts People First

Recognizing the poverty and social exclusion challenges that it faced, Botkyrka Municipality has embarked on a wide-reaching and cross-sector strategy that centres on the well-being of the people who live in Botkyrka and celebrates their differences. Botkyrka is the first municipality in Sweden to promote interculturalism, an approach that respects different cultures and seeks to harness the strengths that these many different backgrounds offer. Botkyrka’s approach to interculturalism focuses on the exchanges and interactions between people with different origins. It can be distinguished from the more familiar term ‘multiculturalism’, which implies a more passive strategy.⁵ These cross-sector, people-first strategies are reflected in the work of the municipality’s societal and spatial development unit, which integrates socio-economics, culture, physical planning, the environment, youth and community outreach, segregation and education. This also means that when a development project is proposed, its impact on the community is evaluated, as well as its impact on the environment. Through these approaches, the wide range of prospects for, and needs of, Botkyrka’s residents is considered to a greater extent than is legally mandated.

Improving individual well-being is a complex issue, particularly in a diverse community. To enhance its capacity to reach a wide range of individuals, Botkyrka Municipality co-operates broadly with community groups. The Botkyrka Public Library in Hallunda is heavily involved in outreach efforts and continues to extend these efforts into the community. Notably, they recognize that learning takes place in many ways, and by recognizing the local residents’ range of backgrounds, they place an equal emphasis on the spoken and written word. A degree of cultural understanding is also evident in the school system, where learning and outreach approaches, as well as language training opportunities for teachers, are intended to engage the community. The library also works closely with the Women’s Resource Centre, a non-political organization that helps to integrate women (both newcomers and long-term residents) in Botkyrka into the work-force, with a particular focus on those who have been out of the labour market for extended periods of time. They offer training in desirable employment skills, guidance on how to start a small busi-

ness, and Swedish language training that is more accessible for women in northern Botkyrka. There have also been strong efforts to engage young people through accessible sports, exchange programs and summer employment opportunities.

Positive Results

By simultaneously considering various elements that influence poverty and social exclusion, including social issues, the environment, labour market access, built form and mobility, Botkyrka Municipality is using its financial resources to respond to the challenges at hand. By focusing on the well-being of individuals, Botkyrka is trying to meet better the needs of its diverse population, which is underlined by its interculturalism strategy and wide range of community outreach initiatives. Botkyrka's focus on the well-being of its residents is further demonstrated by its strong co-operation with grass-roots and community groups, which facilitates targeted responses to specific challenges in financially effective ways.

There are a number of prominent indications that these efforts are having positive impacts on residents and fostering greater attachment to the area. Of the 30 municipalities with the highest rates of child poverty in Sweden, Botkyrka was one of only two where the trend was reversed and the rate declined between 2005 and 2010.⁶ Furthermore, for the first time since the Million Homes Program, new dwellings are being built in North Botkyrka, and as illustrated by Fittja's Sjöterrassen development (which sold out in record time), they are in high demand. Finally, during the second night of disturbances during May 2013, the subway station in Fittja was heavily vandalized. In a poignant example of commitment to their community, and in an effort to dispel the myth that many local youth were involved in the unrest, 60 14- and 15-year-old students from Fittja (and their teachers) cleaned up the area. As one student, Dilnaza, said, *"I felt angry and sad that people had destroyed and trashed things where I live. But it felt great that everyone was helping out to clean up all the glass, erase the ugly things they had written and make it look nice here again."*⁷ Although challenges persist, the Municipality's approach appears to be paying dividends.

Notes and references

^x Parishes are sub districts to municipalities and are based on traditional settlements, where a church was at the centre, rather than being built on today's administrative borders or demarcated around today's developing nuclei. The reason why parishes are still used for demographic data is mainly because the state church until the 1990's was responsible for keeping track on births, marriages, etc. This implies that the geographic boundaries of parishes are still used. In this case, data availability was the central reason that the parish scale was used, as opposed to sub-district boundaries.

^{xx} The data was captured on December 31st, 2013. For reasons of personal privacy Statistics Sweden has excluded data that fulfils one of the following two criteria. (1) The number of persons with a specific country of birth that is less than 20 in the whole county (2) The number of foreign born are less than 20 in the parish.

¹ OECD (2006) *Territorial Reviews: Stockholm* (OECD Observer). Paris: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

² Stahre, U. (2004) City in Change: Globalization, Local Politics and Urban Movements in Contemporary Stockholm. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*: 28(1), pp. 68–85.

³ Botkyrka municipality (2010b) [Strategy for an intercultural Botkyrka](#). Accessed August 8th 2013.

⁴ Sveriges Radio (2012, June 26) [Barnfattigdomen ökar i utsatta kommuner](#). Accessed May 26, 2014.

⁵ Chaaban, S. (2013, May 22) [Students clean up Fittja](#). Metro. Accessed: May 22, 2013.

⁶ Statistics Sweden (2013) [Folkmängd efter region och tid](#). Accessed May 28th, 2013.

⁷ Hårsman, B. (2006) Ethnic diversity and spatial segregation in the Stockholm region. *Urban Studies*, 43 (1341).

Urbanization and its Socioeconomic Challenges

By Evert Kroes

The Stockholm region has long stood out as a dynamic growth region in northern Europe, with a notable steady increase in population. The high urbanization rate, however, has put a lot of pressure on a region in which some areas have not benefited from the increasing welfare as much as other areas.

National interventions to combat segregation

During the last two decades, several intervention policies have been implemented to combat socio-economic residential segregation. The Swedish government has supported specific actions targeting deprived city districts and their residents. These actions were formulated as part of Metropolitan (1998–2006) and Urban Development (2006–2011) Policies. The general objective was positive development in deprived areas. Local development agreements were used to organize collaboration between the state and municipalities for area-based development that focused on the residents. These kinds of national intervention policies have also been common in other European countries, such as France, the UK and the Netherlands.

What about the regional level?

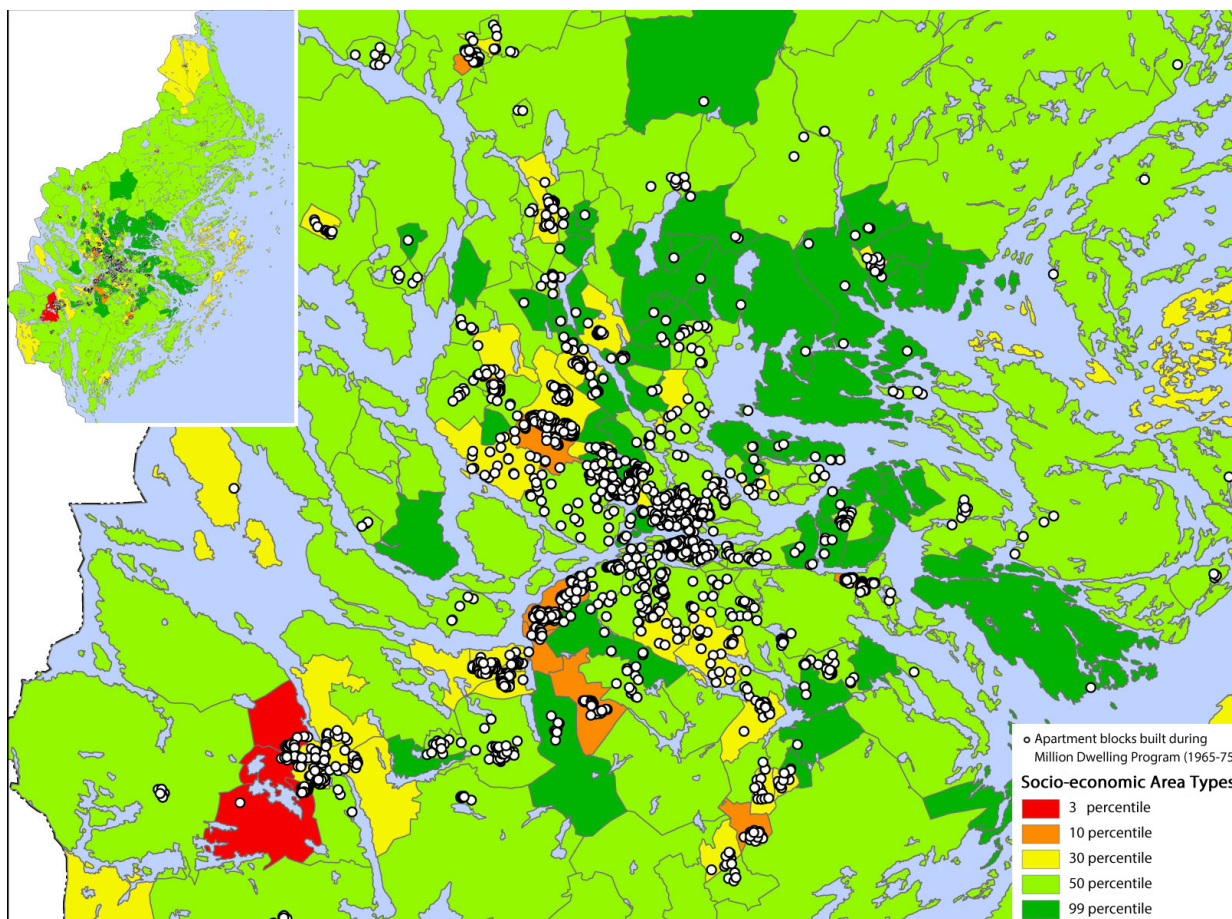
In 2005, a national inquiry into the Metropolitan Policy concluded that the national intervention policy was paradoxical. It was successful for the target groups but not in the target areas. What lies behind this paradox? Evidence demonstrates that the targeted areas suffered from the emigration of relatively resourceful households both before and after the interventions, whereas more marginal households moved into the areas (Roger Andersson, 2006).

From 1965 to 1975, one million dwellings were built in Sweden as a part of the Million Dwelling Programme. Some of the city districts dominated by residential dwellings built during this period are now often perceived as deprived areas. However, as illustrated in the map below, there is no overlap between the residential dwellings built in this period and deprived areas, despite public opinion (TMR, 2013). The County Council (TMR, 2013) concluded that it is not the areas that are segregated; it is the broader region that is segregated.



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Map 1. The colours in the map represent socio-economic area types based on three statistical variables: activity rate, percentage of contribution-dependent and percentage of low education. The socio-economic area type is assessed in relation to the county average. The red areas represent the lowest 3rd percentile whereas the dark green areas are in the highest 99th percentile. Each dot in the map represents one residential dwelling from the 1965–1975 period.

The OECD warned that the socio-economic imbalance in the labour and housing markets in the Stockholm region presented a threat to sustainable regional growth (OECD, 2006). In a report on national urban development policy, the Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning (Boverket) concluded that the regional level should have a more clear-cut mandate for more sustainable development (Boverket, 2013). Mechanisms that spur the development in deprived areas are often found at the regional level—the labour and housing markets are regional. The County Administration Board has since 2012 been assigned to co-ordinate the exchange of knowledge between municipalities currently covered by the national urban development policy.

Sustainable urban development

The Stockholm County Council (TMR), in collaboration with the County Administration Board, initiated a preliminary study on sustainable urban development (2012). The purpose of the study was to develop a concept for sustainable urban development that would more

successfully address the negative consequences of socio-economic residential segregation. The National Board of Housing, Building and Planning concluded that there is a lack of knowledge about how to implement a social impact analysis of physical planning. Despite the lack of knowledge about implementing, it is clear that empirical experience is used to make the planning of new residential areas more effective and sustainable. However, empirical experience was not used to develop the existing deprived residential areas (Boverket, 2010). This was the starting point for the preliminary study.

What is the problem?

The main motto of the preliminary study was inspired by one of Einstein's famous quotes: *"We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them"*. The preliminary study was conducted by Sweco Strategy AB, and it was innovative for not defining the end product of the study. The study was based on existing knowledge from national inquiries and evaluation reports from two decades of national intervention policies. The thesis was: *"we have the knowledge, but we have to find out why the knowledge isn't used"*.

The Urban Game: a tool for solutions

An interdisciplinary group of experts contributed to the preliminary study to ensure the sustainability perspective. At the first meeting, it appeared as if the experts were talking *to* each other rather than *with* each other when discussing the mapped knowledge, tending to retreat into their individual comfort zones of expertise. Thus, there was a need to create a more permissive environment in which criticism is allowed, even with persons coming from different fields of expertise. This need for interdisciplinary discussion prompted the Urban Game concept.

The challenges addressed in the game

The Urban Game is a tool as well as a method to enable and encourage discussion of sustainable urban development. More specifically, the Urban Game aims high to visualize how actions implemented at different governance levels and sectors relate to each other. The outline of the Urban Game plan is a simplified reproduction of how (Swedish) society is governed. The 99 cards used in the game are based on knowledge from two decades of national intervention. Every game card represents an action that can contribute to sustainable urban development. The players face three main challenges.

1. Place the game card in the sector and at the governance level that has a mandate to implement the action on the card.
2. Each card will be assessed by the other players to see whether the action must be co-ordinated with other actions on the game plan to be successful.
3. Replace the card if the players determine that the mandate for the action should be elsewhere.

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(What happened, what is being done and what should be done in the Urban Game? – Evaluation of the Urban Game)



Game plan.

The impact of the Urban Game

From November 2012 to May 2014, the game was played on approximately 30 occasions and generated empirical experiences based on the participants' reflections and discussions. Here are some of the main conclusions.

- Few actions were placed at individual or city district levels. This indicates that the problems that need to be addressed are not to be found at these levels.
- Many of the actions were placed at a regional level, even though the game cards were based on knowledge from national interventions at the city district level, which indicates that the regional level matters.
- Whichever actions were placed on the game plan, they triggered discussions about collaboration across sectors and governance levels.
- The participants in the game lost their "expert prestige", and as a consequence, the game creates a permissive environment for interdisciplinary discussions.
- The game proved to be an eye-opener for the participants about the complexity of horizontal and vertical co-ordination levels.

Although it is still in its initial phase, some effects of the Urban Game have already become apparent.

- The game contributed to the main structure of the Regional Structural Funds Programme 2014–2020 for the Stockholm region, with sustainable urban development becoming the overall theme of the programme.

- The game was used in a conjunction analysis for a package of interventions as part of a new programme for suburban development in the city of Stockholm.

- The game is one of the four case studies funded by DG-Region, which aims to generate knowledge on how multilevel governance effects the implementation of EU2020.

- The game is used as a tool in the Executive Programme in Sustainable Urban Systems, organized by KTH Executive School AB.

- METREX has launched an initiative for a joint venture to use the game as a part of the METREX exhibition during the Expo Milano 2015.

The future of the Urban Game

The main lesson learned is that the Urban Game is an innovative tool that provides an efficient approach to discussions that elicit new perspectives on urban planning and sustainable urban development. Another lesson learned is that every time the game is played, it generates some new perspectives and insights, depending upon the type of stakeholders who participate. The more diverse the group, the more that insights are generated because of the different perspectives contributing to the game plan. Observations from the different occasions when the game was played show that it is possible to distinguish different types of reasoning linked to specific groups of stakeholders. To draw conclusions, however, we would need to conduct interactive research with the Urban Game process. What can be concluded at this point is that each group discussion ends in a common awareness and understanding of the complexity of the vertical and horizontal co-ordination that is required for sustainable urban development.

The Urban Game has been played twice by stakeholders from other European cities and regions, once in an URBACT network and once during the multilateral meeting of the European Case Study mentioned earlier. In an international context, the Urban Game provides an opportunity to discuss differences in governance structures between the countries, regions and cities of the participants, which adds an extra dimension to the discussions. The different types of governance represented in the group make it easier for stakeholders to discuss the differences and similarities, and the pros and cons of each governance structure, but it also allows them to question their own types of governance. Overall, the game exemplifies an approach that can be widely adopted by other city-districts, municipalities and regions in Europe.

The game is not limited to a specific field of interest; it can be used by different actors or as a dialogue tool for educational purposes.

The Urban Game will now be reviewed based on the experiences of those who have played the game and also on ideas from Swedish and European stakeholders who have shown an interest in being involved in its revision and development as a tool for sustainable urban development. The Urban Game is up and running!



The Urban Game in action.

