Social Capital in Kungsmarken

An overview of influencing factors in Karlskrona, Sweden

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June 4, 2010

Abstract:
This thesis is a quest to identify the factors that influence social capital in one spatially isolated, multi-ethnic neighborhood, Kungsmarken. The commonly held view that many Modernist-style housing estates have evolved into dead-end areas that breed social ills and require endless outside assistance (Jane Jacobs), does not contain the whole truth. A fraction of this complex problem will be tackled in this thesis. The study case of Kungsmarken in Karlskrona, Sweden, is studied to better understand the links between an area's physical structure, demographics, socio-cultural trends, economy, and social capital. By analyzing these various potential factors, interviewing the residents and other key persons, and examining public statistics, the author draws several conclusions. One main conclusion is that the social capital developments in Kungsmarken can be directly linked to the broad economic trends in the municipality. Other conclusions include that while the physical structure is a hindrance, trust and close relationships still exist between the residents, which indicates that social capital exists there. The ultimate objective of this study is to identify and explain the factors that either help or hinder the development of social in Kungsmarken.
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CHAPTER ONE:
INTRODUCTION

1.1: Acknowledgements
This thesis would have been impossible to write without the help from many people. Thanks, first of all to my supervisor, Agneta Sundberg, and tutor, Mafalda Madureira, who very helpful with recommending relevant literature and editing. Thanks to Johannes Roubert for the translation assistance, late night Photoshop tutorials, and general support. Daniel André and Matthew Rouser are also very deserving of my gratitude for their shrewd proofreading. Thanks to Karlskrona Kommun, and to the housing companies PBA and Karlskronahem for help gathering statistics and general information. A special thanks also goes to Bengt Eriksson, Ingemar Jönsson, Thomas Petersson, and Annelie Robertsson for their insightful interviews. Finally, thanks to the residents of Kungsmarken, who were always eager and happy to help.

1.2: Introduction
The demographics of many European countries are changing due to increased rates of migration. Sweden is no exception. Nearly one out of every fifth person in Sweden has a foreign background, meaning that they were either born in another country, or both of their parents were (Statistics Sweden, 2010). Sweden is a country that has traditionally been perceived as being both socio-economically as well as ethnically homogeneous. However, as the population diversifies, concerns grow about the social and economic consequences of the concentration of disadvantaged minority groups in certain urban neighborhoods. The study of these neighborhoods and their residents is important for Sweden today, both politically and academically.

Many authors, including Swedish researchers Eva Öresjö and Roger Andersson, have observed some common reasons for the concentration of minority ethnic groups into particular neighborhoods. These include governmental placement programs for new immigrants and asylum seekers, personal preference, and conversely, the lack of options that often accompanies discrimination or poverty (Andersson et al., 2003). However, internationally, there is a need for more empirical research to be done to understand the social behaviors of residents in multi-cultural neighborhoods (Kearns & Parkinson, 2001; Allen & Cars, 2001). This knowledge is important as it reveals levels of attachment to neighborhoods, and the relationship between residential stability, turnover, and levels of social engagement, which in turn can help explain the differences between successful and problematic neighborhoods.

By answering the following research questions, this thesis is a small attempt to fill this gap in research:

• What is social capital and what observable affects does it have on society?
• What main factors influence the development of social capital in a particular local context?
• To what extent does social capital exist in Kungsmarken, a multi-cultural, disadvantaged neighborhood in Karlskrona, Sweden?

By analyzing the demographic, social-cultural, economic and spatial factors of Kungsmarken in the context of its' municipal location (in Karlskrona, Sweden), this thesis produces new findings for the field of social capital research.

Both the chosen neighborhood and the city where it is located are considerably smaller than the majority of other previously studied areas. For example, the RESTATE research project (Restructuring Large-scale Housing Estates in European Cities), focuses exclusively on areas with more than 2,000 housing units. This also implies that
only middle to large cities were included in the study. The focus of this thesis is a neighborhood with only around 1,200 apartments and is located in a small city context. Despite the size difference, the study cases in RESTATE and this thesis are often similar in several aspects, including physical environments and demographics.

In the case of Kungsmarken, 73 percent of residents have a foreign-background (Befpak, 2008). Many housing areas that have large groups of minorities also have the negative reputation of being dead-end areas that breed social ills and require endless outside assistance. This thesis questions that assumption by creating original data from observations, interviews and surveys. Additionally, an American perspective is given: not only is the author American, but also the theories employed have largely been developed in the United States (Jane Jacobs’ work in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* and Robert Putnam’s influential take on social capital in *Bowling Alone*).

Although this fact could be seen as a limitation, it might also reveal the international nature of certain social trends and planning problems. Jacobs’ and Putnam’s work has been widely used in studies applied to different contexts, namely within the Swedish context, which leads this author to not hesitate in using their insights on social capital and urban life as referential to this thesis.

By employing the theory of social capital, this thesis operates on the assumption that social interactions and networks have measurable value. This theory has become increasingly used and appreciated in the past few decades because of its ability to link broad social trends. However, it should be observed that this theory often falls short of providing actual solutions to combat the often-negative trends it observes. Instead, by analyzing empirical data, implementation of this theory draws attention to problems and successes, and can be used as a starting point for further discussion.

### 1.3: Outline

The body of this thesis contains of four main sections (Chapters Three thru Six). The first is an overview of Robert Putnam’s theory of social capital and the factors that influence it. The second is an examination of Modernist planning ideals and their connection with the development of Million Homes Project areas, which includes the study case, Kungsmarken in Karlskrona, Sweden. The physical qualities of Kungsmarken are briefly analyzed using Jane Jacobs concepts for what qualities a vibrant neighborhood should have. The third section focuses on analyzing the demographic, economic, and socio-cultural context of Kungsmarken. This is done using interviews with residents and key people and available public statistics. Finally, the last section includes the conclusions based on a residential survey conducted by the author in June 2009, and lessons learned from the previous sections about the factors that influence the development of social capital. Some of the main findings include that the social capital developments in Kungsmarken can be directly linked to the broad economic trends in the municipality. Other conclusions include that while the physical structure is a hindrance, trust and close relationships still exist between the residents, which indicates that social capital exists there. The shortcomings of the research and findings will be discussed and provide the foundation for the final recommendations for further research.

### 1.4: Methodology

The first step of this project was to survey the existing and available material on the subject of troubled housing areas in Sweden. It was then realized that the residents’ perspective was of invaluable importance as they give an insiders’ perceptive of daily life and local concerns. Conversely, they might also reveal that the concerns voiced by outsiders’ on behalf of an area might be unwarranted. The
thesis was thus refocused on studies that analyzed behaviors and consequences of a particular part of society in relation to its spatial environment. Works by Ebenezer Howard, Le Corbusier, Jane Jacobs, and Robert Putnam were reviewed. Because of the author’s background in social sciences, Putnam and Jacobs’ work were chosen to serve as the main guidelines to this thesis as together they form a link between the study of social capital and the study of modernist style housing areas.

In order to discover the social capital of the residents in the study case, a survey was conducted of seventy-eight people over a one-week period. This survey consists of twenty-four questions based on the Roper Social and Political Trends survey, which is also analyzed and referred to in Putnam’s work. The results of the author’s survey will be discussed as a part of the conclusions in Chapter Six.

Several professionals, who work in related government or housing sectors, were also interviewed, as they also have an invested interest in improving such areas. This was done in order to collect their observations of the area’s problems and how they are working to solve them.

Study trips were made to Kungsmarken primarily in May, June and August 2009. During these trips, the author was able to observe what public spaces exist, how they are being used, and what the conditions of these are. It is difficult to state exactly how many study trips were made due to the fact that these trips occasionally overlapped with personal social visits to friends in the area. Although these personal contacts were informally involved in discussions considering this thesis, their data was not included in an attempt to remain objective and to avoid personally influencing the results gained.
This thesis heavily draws from the contributions of three main sources: Robert Putnam, for his influential work on social capital, Jane Jacobs, for her well-known critique of Modernist planning, and the RESTATE research project, for its important research on large-scale housing estates in Europe. This chapter introduces each of the sources, and states their limitations. The sources are then further employed in following chapters, in the same order as they are presented here.

2.1: Introduction to Robert Putnam

Robert Putman’s book *Bowling Alone* is a critique based on his observation of negative social trends. He argues that a declining reserve of social capital is the root cause of various problems in modern society (the majority of his research is from 1974-1999). These problems include everything from low voter turnout, to poor health, to declining academic performance in grade schools. Throughout the book, his arguments are supported with an impressive amount of quantitative evidence. Three primary data sets were used extensively: the DDB Life Style survey data, the 14 state-level measures of social capital, and the Roper Social and Political Trends archive. All together, this data encompasses nearly 500,000 interviews. Additionally, Putnam and his team of Harvard researchers analyzed minor surveys and studies, some dating back to the turn of the Twentieth Century, which measure American participation rates in both formal and informal activities.

2.1.1: Limitations of *Bowling Alone*

Putnam's work also has limitations. First, his data is focused on social capital trends in the United States. The study case in this thesis is in Sweden. However, in light of Putnam’s tremendous international academic acclaim, and the fact that Sweden and the United States are similar in that they are both Western, industrialized, democratic countries with high standards of living, this thesis considers Putnam’s work to be worthy of use.

A second limitation is that Putnam’s work is an overview of macro social capital trends across the United States. The relationship between the places where people live their everyday lives and that particular community’s stock of social capital is missing. Economic, demographic, and social-cultural developments, as well as the physical structure of an area could also be considered to understand the social dynamics of an area. This thesis is a study of this missing link.

Finally, an often cited limitation of Putnam must be briefly discussed: many critics (including Richard Florida in his 2002 book, *The Creative Class*) claim that Putnam overlooks modern forms of social participation, such as those that have been developed with the Internet. Research on this subject has only recently begun addressing the crossovers and intersections between the online and offline worlds. According to Haythornthwaite, C., & Kendall, L. (2010), when widespread Internet use first began, the question was whether communities could still exist online. Now, however, the question may be whether it can exist without being online. Even though this research field is relatively new, some researchers have been able to prove that participation, be it online or offline, begets participation (For example, see Mesch & Talmud, 2010). Additionally, it has shown that the Internet is able to support and extend communal social capital by bridging distance around a common cause and solidifying local action and identity through a distributed means of communication (Kang, 2009). This is especially
true for younger generations, who are the largest users of the Internet.

Although this thesis acknowledges the potential of online communities to build social capital and reinforce offline communities, this factor is not extensively investigated here. This is largely due to the difficulty of getting empirical evidence of how participation on the Internet influences the real world. Further research might be done to connect this variable to community building in areas such as Kungsmarken.

2.2: Introduction to Jane Jacobs

Jane Jacobs, a well-known figure in urban studies, was one of the first to touch on the subject of social capital in the early 1960s. In her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), Jacobs notes that street life (or, observable social capital) is one of the key differences between cities that are safe and organized and those that are unsafe and disorganized. Although Jacobs did not use the term 'social capital', she refers to networks that provide a basis for trust, respect, cooperation and public identity in a city context. The reason that this source was chosen for this thesis was precisely because Jacobs combines a practical city planning perspective with the social science theories of trust and participation.

Jacobs' book is an attack of the popular city planning methods of the time, such as development plans that attempted to create urban renewal by getting rid of old slum areas and building new multi-family housing estates in the suburbs. As a way to offer alternatives, she introduces new principles about what works to promote social and economic vitality in cities, and what threatens to kill these attributes (Jacobs, 1961, 13). Her book observes that when an old neighborhood was demolished and rebuilt in a modernist style, the street life greatly diminished. People’s basic needs of safety, community and vitality were sacrificed in favor of standardization and efficiency. The basic argument here is that there is a “need of cities for a most intricate and close-grained diversity of uses that give each other constant mutual support, both economically and socially” (Jacobs, 1961, 23). After defining the problems, the book then outlines how diversity (in terms of building style, space function and population) benefits cities and societies.

2.2.1: Limitations of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*

There are several limitations of using Jacobs’ work. First, the basis of observation for both problems and solution are prominent cities in the United States, in oppose to smaller urban areas or European cities. The study case in this thesis is certainly not a part of a major city in the United States, but is a suburb of a minor city in Sweden.

Another weak point is that although Jacobs’ work is hugely influential to urban planning, it is also outdated in some respects. For example, a key component in Jacobs’ description of a virtuous neighborhood is that it should have mixed primary uses, notably the mixture of housing and industry was important during the 1960s. Few Twenty-First century neighborhoods in either the United States or Sweden have this feature, as many industrial jobs are now foreign based. However, if we interpret industries to simply mean a source for jobs, then it is easier to understand Jacobs’ deeper point: that the movement created when people go to and from work, or to and from their homes, produces safe and interesting streets (Jacobs, 1961, 164). In this way, Jacobs’ work has become the new orthodox way of thinking about city planning and thus possesses many valuable insights that are useful for this thesis.

Jacobs’ theories will be furthered applied to help analyze the physical layout of the study case in Chapter Four.
2.3: Introduction to RESTATE

The last major reference that this thesis draws upon is the RESTATE research project. RESTATE is an acronym for “Regenerating Large Housing Estates in Europe: Good Practices and New Visions for Sustainable Neighborhoods and Cities”, and has been funded by the EU as a part of the Key Action 4: ‘City of Tomorrow and Heritage’ in the ‘Energy, Environment and Sustainable Development’ program within the Fifth Framework Program. Between 2002 and 2005, this project studied 29 estates in ten EU countries in order to better understand problematic housing estates and strategies to make them more attractive places to live.

Because a considerable part of the urban population lives in large housing estates, these areas are important parts of cities all over Europe. Many of these areas provide housing for people who do not have much choice in the urban housing market, as other parts of the market can be too expensive or are unattractive for certain groups of society. This might include, for example, families, students, or pensioners. (Van Kempen et al., 2006, 11).

In order for RESTATE to identity the specific problems of each estate, a detailed description of the development of the estate, the city and country was first needed. This project’s research therefore focused on making evidence based analyzes of the following variables:
- Physical structure (quality, tenure, price and type of the dwellings, quality and character of the environment)
- Demographic developments (age structure, income distribution, household and ethnic composition)
- Economic developments (employment and unemployment, number, type and size of firms)
- Socio-cultural developments (changing values and norms within the estate, changing cultural identity) (Andersson et al., 2003, 13).

According to RESTATE, developments can never be seen as separated from the local (urban, regional and national) context. This thesis also aims to make the context of the study case as clear as possible, in order to link these factors with the development of social capital.

2.3.1: Limitations of RESTATE

RESTATE identifies large-scale housing estates as a group of buildings that is recognized as a distinct and discrete geographical area, with at least 2,000 housing units planned by the State or with State support (Andersson et al., 2003, 12). Implicate in this is that only middle to large cities were included in the study, as most large housing areas are built near large cities. In this thesis, both chosen the studied neighborhood and the city where it is located are considerably smaller than the housing estates researched in the RESTATE project.

Despite the differences in population size and physical scale of estates, the study cases in RESTATE and this thesis are often similar in several aspects, including the physical layout and demographics. Another limitation might be that it is difficult to compare the RESTATE estates to this thesis’ study case because of the different contexts. Take the economy of an area, as an example: in general, the larger regions have stronger economic development compared to more periphery areas. Often, this results in a shortage of housing in the larger metropolitan regions; while at the same time there is an excess supply of housing in several of the smaller municipalities in Sweden (Andersson et al., 2003, 28).

Instead of seeing this as a handicap, it is the author’s opinion that the study case of Kungsmarken in Karlskrona, Sweden makes for an interesting addition to the RESTATE research on the middle and large cities of Jönköping and Stockholm. Many smaller cities have problem housing areas similar to Kungsmarken. These areas were
generally built during the same era, with the same design concepts, and have high percentages of residents with foreign backgrounds. By viewing the study case in the context of its small city location and by analyzing its potential for social capital, this thesis produces important new information for this field of research.

The RESTATE report 2i, which is an overview of developments and problems in large housing estates in Sweden, greatly influenced the layout and analysis of information in Chapter Five.

2.4: Summary

Now that the sources have been introduced, and their limitations identified, this thesis will now discuss their assets. Chapter Three outlines Putnam’s contributions to the theoretical development of this work. Jacobs’ ideas contribute heavily towards the physical analysis of Kungsmarken, which takes place in Chapter Four. And, finally, Chapter Five is influenced by RESTATE’s approach to describing and analyzing the demographic, economic, and socio-cultural developments for housing estates in Sweden. This analysis makes use of several interviews, public statistics, and a survey given by the author to the residents of Kungsmarken. The aim of all of these chapters is to examine the potential factors that might either add or hinder the development of social capital in Kungsmarken.
CHAPTER THREE: 
WHAT IS SOCIAL CAPITAL?

To define “social capital”, Putnam, 2000, uses the analogy of tools and training to explain this concept. “Just as a screwdriver (physical capital) or a college education (human capital) can increase productivity (both individual and collective), so too social contacts affect the productivity of individuals and groups” (Putnam, 2000, 18-19).

Throughout his book, Putnam claims that having an adequate stock of social capital is beneficial for the economy, democracy, schools, neighborhoods, and even our health and happiness. One often cited example used in the book is if a person who is not socially active joins a club, they can cut their risk of dying in the next year in half. Thus, in addition to benefits to the individual, social activity has obvious wider benefits to society. People who are involved in formal or informal organizations are also more likely to be civically involved, which, in turn, benefits both democracy and the economy.

3.1: Trust and Generalized Reciprocity

An integral part of any social relations is trust. Trust can be defined as having faith or confidence in, or to rely or depend upon something or someone (Oxford English Dictionary, 1989). To trust something or someone, involves taking a risk, either it be economically or emotionally. Taking the risk to trust indicates a willingness to be vulnerable, to a greater or less degree. For example, you might trust in your neighbors to borrow a shovel. By doing this, you take a risk of not getting your shovel back and thereby taking an economic loss when you need to replace it.

Connected to this idea is the concept of generalized reciprocity. In Putnam’s words, “I’ll do this for you now, without expecting anything immediately in return and perhaps without even knowing you, confident that down the road you or someone else will return the favor” (Putnam, 2000, 134). As an example, imagine that you see someone drop their credit card. You might help them out by calling this to their attention, even though you do not expect anything in return. However, perhaps in the future, when you drop something important, someone else will help you out.

When the residents of a particular area are trusting, daily transactions become less stressful. Trust facilitates social interactions and transactions (Coleman, 1990). Putnam argues that “a society that relies on generalized reciprocity is more efficient than a distrustful society, for the same reason that money is more efficient than barter. Honesty and trust lubricate the inevitable frictions of social life” (Putnam, 2000, 135).

Take, as another example, the experience of shopping for a wristwatch in a marketplace. A person who generally trusts others would not hesitate to buy a watch from one of the kiosks. However, if you do not trust the kiosk salesmen, buying a watch would be a more complicated operation. Being trustful might make your task easier, but it will not ensure that you buy a watch that works. Thus, the existence of trust towards something or someone often indicates the feeling of trustworthiness. From Putnam’s point of view, a society that is rich with social capital also has an embedded level of trust and is, in return, more trustworthy. Those societies are more efficient.

People who have active trusting relationships with others are more likely to be tolerant of minority views, more empathetic to the misfortunes of others, and generally less cynical. Areas that have high reserves of social capital are thus able to discuss and resolve their collective problems more easily, to create safer neighborhoods.
and better school systems, and have a more democratic society (Putnam, 2000).

3.2: Different Types of Social Capital: Bridging and Bonding

The main objective of this thesis is to determine the type of social capital in a certain housing area, Kungsmarken, where the majority of the residents have a foreign background. Because these residents are members of minority groups in Sweden, it is important to take into account their level of integration into the wider society. The goal of integration is for all inhabitants of an area to have equal access to all opportunities, rights and services commonly available. In order to achieve integration, there must be some interaction and acceptance in between the minority groups and the majority, mainstream population.

Thus far, social capital has only been defined as the extent to which people interact and trust one another. However, it is necessary to differentiate between relationships with people that are similar to you and people that are different from you in relation to social class, ethnicity, profession, or age. Robert Putnam refers to these different forms of social capital as “bridging”, or inclusive, and “bonding”, or exclusive.

According to Putnam, “Some forms of social capital are, by choice or necessity, inward looking and tend to reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneous groups. Examples of bonding social capital include ethnic fraternal organizations, church-based women’s reading groups, and fashionable country clubs. Other networks are outward looking and encompass people across diverse social cleavages. Examples of bridging social capital include the civil rights movement, many youth service groups, and ecumenical religious organizations” (Putnam, 2000, 23).

The point of differentiating between these two types of relationships is not to imply that one is better than the other. They are both good for different things. Putnam argues, “strong ties with intimate friends may ensure chicken soup when you’re sick, but weak ties with distant acquaintances are more likely to produce leads for a new job” (Putnam, 2000, 363). In both of these cases, social capital can provide an important cushion during hard times.

3.3: Factors that influence Social Capital

Much of Robert Putnam’s book, Bowling Alone is divided by factors that either affect or are affected by social capital. The seven most important predictors of social capital, according to the author, are summarized below. These include:

- Education
- Generation
- Religion
- Employment/Joblessness
- Residential stability
- Health
- Crime

When reading this section it is important to remember that many of these factors are interrelated and together can create various trends that might affect the increase or decrease of gross social capital. These topics will later be reexamined in the context of Kungsmarken.

3.3.1: Education

According to Putnam, education is the most important predictor of formal social participation. An educated person can be defined as
someone who has some years of additional education past high school, such as a bachelor’s degree from a university. According to Putnam’s research, such people are more interested in politics, more likely to be an active member of a club and much more likely to serve as an officer of an organization. This pattern is the same despite one’s race or age. Putnam suggests the reason for this higher rate of engagement might be due to “the skills, resources, and inclinations that were imparted to them at home and in school” (Putnam, 2000, 186).

Education is not the only important factor to consider if one wants to determine an area’s social capital. Evidence of this is that in the past few generations, the percentage of people with more than twelve years of education has increased dramatically. However, this has not created equal growth in public engagement. This can be commonly seen in today’s society: the general education level continues to rise, but volunteerism does not. More factors must also be considered to see the full picture of social capital.

3.3.2: Generation

The generation a person belongs to is also a good predictor of participation rates. In the United States, the older, so called ‘Great Generation’ that were born and raised before World War II are significantly more active in organizations than are their children’s or grandchildren’s generations. This is because the habits you learn when you are young follows you through life. Therefore, your age reveals less about your social capital, as does the year you were born or the generation that you belong to.

Putnam ties this trend to evidence by analyzing the results from three primary data sets, which together encompass nearly 500,000 interviews. Examples of some of the interview questions include: if you voted in the previous election, how often you attend church or club meetings, and if you trust most people. The data produced showed that community and civic involvement in the United States peaked in the 1950s-60s. Since the 1970s, however, the amount of social activity and therefore social capital has dramatically declined. This indicates that people are not as socially engaged now as have been in the past.

Different age groups have different social habits. Controlling for educational disparities, members of the Great Generation are twice as likely to participate in a civic engagement as people born in the 1960s (Putnam, 2000, 254). As this active generation ages and its share of the electorate decreases, a major social change is occurring. Younger people are not filling the vacancies left by the older generation, resulting in lower club membership, church attendance, and voting rates in the United States. This especially indicates a loss in bridging social capital, as the avenues to meet people that are different than you are narrowing.

3.3.3: Religion

Religion is another important piece of the social capital puzzle. Places of worship, such as a church, mosque or synagogue, are often active places for social activity. According to Putnam, “religiously involved people seem simply to know more people” (Putnam, 2000, 67). Religious institutions can also act as an incubator for community interests and civic skills such as how to run meetings and manage disagreements. Therefore, a person who is involved in religious organizations is also more likely to be involved in secular organizations in the wider community.

In recent decades, the percentage of the American population that attends worship or religiously related social activities has fallen by nearly one-half (Putnam, 2000, 72). This decline can be largely attributed to generational shifts, as the young generation is less religiously active than the previous generations. Although Putnam records this trend in the United States, it is the author’s opinion that
this occurrence can also be observed across Europe, and more importantly for this thesis, in Sweden.

3.3.4: Employment and Joblessness

The employment rate is an important indicator of an area’s potential for social capital. Generally, employed people are more active civically and socially than those outside the paid labor force (Putnam, 2000, 191). Work can give a sense of purpose, be an identity, give financial stability, and can act as a forum for meeting new people. It is also an essential element for integration of ethnic minorities and immigrants.

Unemployment, on the other hand, has a profoundly depressing effect on social involvement and is one of the greatest hindrances for integration. Putnam states that people who are without work become passive and withdraw as their economic situation becomes more stressful. Contrary to expectations, “even social activities with little or no financial cost are inhibited by financial distress. In fact, the only leisure activity positively correlated with financial anxiety is watching TV” (Putnam, 2000, 193).

As unemployed people withdraw from both formal and informal social activities, their family and friends suffer along with the greater community. Social capital is much lower in areas with high unemployment.

Unfortunately for this thesis, both employment and unemployment rates are difficult to count, as they have many variables and definitions. For example, some researchers count the employable population as beginning at age 16, while others begin at 20. Similarly, definitions for retirement age, students, and status as working legally, illegally, or part-time can all vary. The author’s attempts to find employment statistics for the area of Kungsmarken were, unfortunately unfruitful. This is partly due to language limitations, as the author is an English speaker, and partly due to the complexity of the term and the small population of the area. As a result, this thesis will not include a statistical overview of employment rates for the area of Kungsmarken.

3.3.5: Residential Stability

Because social capital is dependent on the relationships between individuals, residential stability is a necessary precondition for high rates of social activity. When a person moves, it takes time for them to get socially reestablished. As a consequence, communities with higher rates of residential turnover are less well integrated as their residents often have little interaction. For the community, this can result in higher crime rates, and lower school performance. The individual might also suffer because of their social isolation. Even longtime residents in such areas have fewer ties with their neighbors, as they frequently change. Thus, mobility undermines civic engagement and local social capital.

3.3.6: Health

Instead of health being a predictor for participation, it is instead a byproduct of trustful, active communities. As previously discussed, bonding social capital is especially good for health because your family and close friends are most likely to take care of you when you are ill. Public health research also links good health to your network of personal contacts, as they “provide social support, self-esteem, identity and perceptions of control” (Cattell, 2001, 1502). Furthermore, many researchers show that social isolation precedes illness.

The conclusion of these studies can be that social capital is not only important to keep our communities functioning properly, but also for our own personal wellbeing. On other hand, good health might
be seen as an indicator of high social capital, since it is reinforced by strong relationships and social activity.

3.3.7: Crime

Crime is a common indicator of troubled neighbors, however, it does not necessarily denote low social capital. High crime rates might reflect the youthfulness of the population, the growth of illegal drug use, and the rate of incarceration of criminals (Putnam, 2000, 22). It might be expected to find lower amounts of honesty or trust in such areas. However, trust and participation in a group might not always equate to public good. This builds social capital that might be beneficial for those inside the group, but can have negative external effects. An example of this is in urban gangs and the mafia. In problem areas that have high crime rates, an alternative to community trust might be institutional trust in the way of reliance on law, or the police, to settle disputes.

3.4: Summary

One problem with the social capital theory is that it is not clear how to build social capital in disadvantaged areas. Putnam gives the example of “neighborhood crime watch” programs:

“[These programs] are most likely to succeed in areas where they are least needed—middle-class, stable neighborhoods that already benefit from social trust and networks of associations. Instead of a ‘virtuous circle,’ in which existing social capital facilitates the creation of more social capita, inner cities are too often marked by a ‘vicious circle,’ in which low levels of trust and cohesion lead to higher levels of crime, which lead to even lower levels of trust and cohesion” (Putnam, 2000, 317).

The role of social capital should be emphasized in poor communities precisely because they have little economic capital and have difficulty acquiring human capital (or education). Therefore, social capital is disproportionately important to the welfare of these needy neighborhoods.

It is clear that social capital is important. When times are hard, social capital provides a cushion. When a community faces problems, social capital provides forum for willing and tolerant people to come together and make solutions. However, it is not clear how social capital is created. Furthermore, Robert Putnam argues that what social capital exists is rapidly diminishing due to decreased participation rates. Although Putnam’s findings are based in the United States, it should be seen as a warning for all other Western countries including Sweden.

The social capital factors reviewed in this section will be further employed in Chapter Six where they will be used to analyze the author’s interviews with residents and available public statistics. This is done in order to discover what type of social capital exists in Kungsmarken.

Chapter Four will now introduce the study case and review its physical characteristics.
CHAPTER FOUR:
PHYSICAL ANALYSIS OF KUNGSMARKEN

Thus far, this thesis has outlined what social capital is, why it is important, and the factors that influence it. However, Putnam wholly ignores one major influencing factor: the factor of location. This thesis argues that in order to study social capital in a particular area, in this case Kungsmarken in Karlskrona, Sweden, it is necessary to also consider the physical context where people spend their time. A person's neighborhood is a part of their identity, for better or worse. It can affect how others perceive them and how they perceive others. A person's life chances and opportunities can also vary depending on their neighborhood.

This chapter uses Jacobs' observations of successful areas and declining areas to analyze the physical features of Kungsmarken, which play a role in the development of social capital. To Jane Jacobs, the ideal city street is one that has the following characteristics: both places to work and places to live, people with different schedules, short blocks composed of buildings of different ages and conditions, and a dense concentration of people (Jacobs, 1961, 164). When compared with these qualities, Kungsmarken falls short of most of these requirements, largely because the fact that it was built on an empty plot using the popular Modernist theories of the time that valued efficiency, standardization, and therefore, monotony. The physical aspects of monotony, along with borders in Kungsmarken will be discussed in this chapter.

In order to the full picture of Kungsmarken, its context on the local, regional and national levels must also be examined. Furthermore, the planning theories and trends that influenced the design of Kungsmarken and many other housing areas built during the same period will also be discussed.

4.1: Karlskrona: General Overview

Karlskrona is the provincial capital and center for public administration in the Blekinge region, located in the Southeastern corner of Sweden. Figure 4.1 shows the location of Karlskrona in regard to Northern Europe. Karlskrona is marked by a red dot and arrow.

The total population of Karlskrona is 62,000 residents, around 3,000 of which live in Kungsmarken. Karlskrona was established as a naval base for Sweden, and was thus built on several islands just off the mainland. However, as the population expands, more and more housing has been built inland, including the study case, Kungsmarken. Karlskrona’s sea-side location has made the city into a transportation hub in between Nordic countries and Eastern Europe.
Europe via Poland. The city has also been developing a reputation as a telecommunication center. Many telecommunication firms have offices in Karlskrona, including Ericsson and Telenor. Karlskrona is also home to a technical university with study programs in the telecommunication field.

The most attractive rental housing is found in the center of Karlskrona, especially on the island of Trossö. Nevertheless, a substantial provision of services is located in the mainland part of the city, including the hospital, university, industries, and business parks. Some public services are also directly situated in the low status areas, including retail shops, sports facilities, and health centers.

Kungsmarken has an estimated population of about 2,300 residents in 1,200 apartments. It consists of three large buildings, each six to seven floors high, and has a wavy design that curves around the top of a hill like a crown. In this way, Kungsmarken holds an excellent view over the surrounding areas. Kungsmarken is an example of one of the housing movements that has greatly influenced housing standards, construction and the history of urban planning in Sweden: the Million Homes Program.

Figure 4.2 shows a map of the urban area of Karlskrona, including the islands where the Centrum is located as well as the mainland city. Kungsmarken has highlighted in red. This map shows how Kungsmarken might be considered to be in the middle of Karlskrona’s urban area.

4.2: The Million Homes Program

One of the major aspirations of the 1940s welfare program was to build environments that promoted democracy. All across Europe and North America, architects and planners believed that public planning could be a stimulus for good citizenship. Ideally, these areas would have a diverse mix of residents, from different economic and social strata. These areas were also envisioned to house the basic facilities necessary for daily activities, such as schools, meeting places, and a few shops. However, work places were not included in the plans for the area. It was assumed that people would leave and travel to a designated business area during normal working hours.
In the weekends, they could enjoy the park areas around their homes.

Beginning in the 1950s, extensive construction began in order to accommodate the fast economic and population growth in Sweden. This period after the end of the Second World War was marked by rising prosperity, growing consumer demands, and a budget surplus for the government in Sweden. There was also enormous public pressure on politicians to use taxpayer resources to improve the Swedish welfare state. Low housing standards especially proved to be a major liability to the ruling party, Social Democrats. Another pertinent problem in some cities was housing queues, which could stretch for ten years or more (Hall et al., 2005, 303). Sweden was rapidly becoming urbanized, and modern housing was needed.

The solution was to get rid of the worse quality housing by demolishing inner-city slums, and build new housing areas in the periphery of cities. In between 1965 and 1974, the Swedish government supported a plan to build one million new homes, now referred to as the Million Homes Program. In their review of this project, Hall and Vidén comment that this was “an impressive goal, considering that the total Swedish housing stock at that time was barely three million dwellings” (Hall et al., 2005, 303).

Kungsmarken, in Karlskrona, is one of these many developments constructed.

4.3: Influential Planning Theories

Kungsmarken and other Million Homes areas were designed using the popular planning methods and theories of the time, which seemingly all Swedish architects, planners, and government officials agreed to be best.

According to Jane Jacobs, the most important thread of influence for city planners in 1950s and 1960s began with the publication of Ebenezer Howard’s *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* in the late-nineteenth-century. Howard’s aim was to direct resources away from dense, dirty city living by establishing self-sufficient small towns. One aspect of Howard’s solutions to city problems was to “sort and sift out of the whole certain simple uses, and to arrange each of these in relative self-containment” (Jacobs, 1961, 28). In other words, Howard was one of the first to intentionally separate housing from industries and businesses.

In the 1920s, Le Corbusier used many of the Garden City ideals to devise his Radiant City concept. One main difference was that he replaced the low-rise, low-density residential areas with skyscrapers in a park. When Jacobs published *The Death and Life of Great America Cities* in the early 1960s, these concepts were accepted as orthodox planning.

These planning ideals were broadly implemented in both the United States and in Europe. In Sweden, which is a large country with a small population, it might seem strange that so many high-rise buildings were built. One reason for this is because of Sweden’s relatively late urbanization—80 percent of Sweden’s population lived in the countryside only one hundred years ago, and even now, only three Swedish cities have a population of more than 200,000 inhabitants (Andersson et al., 2003, 27). This period was also characterized by increased purchasing power, general popular growth, and an increase in the number of one and two-person households (Borgegård et al., 2004, 32). Housing was clearly needed.
for the rapid influx of people, but why did so many Swedish cities decide to invest in building high-rises in their periphery in oppose to other forms of housing?

According to Jacobs, the reason for the widespread development of high-rise estates is that fashions exist in the building sector, and behind the fashions lay economic and technological reasons (Jacobs, 1961, 229). For example, unadorned reinforced concrete became popular as it allowed large structures to be built in a fraction of the time and money. Green areas around the buildings were often necessary in order to use cranes in the construction progress.

At the time, this vast amount of new construction resulted in Sweden having the highest housing standard in the world as measured by space and equipment (Misgeld, 1992, 260). Even in recent international comparisons between similar Modernist influenced housing areas, the Swedish Million Homes estates are still considered to be high quality (Andersson et al., 2003, 25). The Social Democrat successfully fulfilled their goal of building one million new residences. However, their parallel aim to create democratic environments was less successful.

When Kungsmarken and other Million Homes areas were built, they were considered to be fashionable and impressive: hallmarks of a new rich, modern, democratic Sweden. The euphoria for these areas, however, was not long lived.

4.4: Physical Description of Kungsmarken

In some ways, Kungsmarken is a typical example of a Million Homes area and of modernist planning. It was built from 1967-1973 on a Greenfield site on the outskirts of a small Swedish city, Karlskrona. It consists of three buildings, each six or seven stories tall and made out of reinforced concrete. The buildings’ façade is monotonous but its unique wavy shape is attractive. Nonetheless, the sheer size of each building makes them unappealing to walk around. The sides of the buildings facing the parking areas and street are plain, as the popular idea of the time was to turn houses away from the street, towards sheltered green space. Appropriately, there is a large car-free green area in the interior of the complex with trees, play areas, sports facilities, and sitting areas. Pictures 4.1 and 4.2 show the exterior and interior views of Kungsmarken.

The three buildings (House A, B, and C) are situated on the top of a hill like a crown. Even the name ‘Kungsmarken’ reflects this, as its translation means ‘the King's ground’. The combination of this hilltop location and the abundant green space around the buildings
gives the residents at least the illusion of isolation and suburban privacy while keeping the population density high.

Figure 4.3 is a map showing the terrain of Kungsmarken, which is composed of large, concrete buildings in the midst of a park setting.

Other physical amenities to Kungsmarken include: a daycare, a preschool, a ground-level school, a church and a mosque, around ten small shops, and, within walking distance, garden plots, a public beach and new large grocery store. Picture 4.3 is a view of Skönstavik beach, while 4.4 shows people playing basketball outside of the Sunnadal ground-level school.

In the next sections, Jane Jacobs’ observations of what makes a vibrant neighborhood versus a dead one are used to analyze the most remarkable characteristics of Kungsmarken: its monotonous structures and strong borders.

4.4.1: Monotony

The Million Homes areas were built to be densely populated areas that also enjoy a lot of open, green space. This combination, plus the Social Democrats’ fast-paced agenda, necessarily resulted in monotonous, standardized high-rise structures. Jane Jacobs explains the allure and problem of such a plan by saying, “this monotony might be thought of as a sort of order, however dull. But aesthetically, it unfortunately also carries with it a deep disorder: the disorder of conveying no direction” (Jacobs, 1961, 236). By this she meant that differences are needed in order for people to orientate themselves, otherwise a sort of chaos exists where one moves forward but does not seem to go anywhere. This problem exists in many Million Homes areas, where it has been necessary to put up frequent maps for visitors.
In Kungsmarken, House A, B, and C are each the size of a super-block and all are built using concrete in a similar monotonous, waving style. A visual example of this is shown in Picture 2.5. Additionally, since the area was designed for multi-family housing, the majority of the apartments are the same size with two or three rooms. This lack of variety is also reflected in a lack of diversity in tenure. All apartments are rented out either by the largest local municipal housing company, Karlskronahem, which owns House A and B, or by a private landlord, PBA, which owns House C.

Although stores and boutiques can sometimes alleviate monotony by bringing variety to a dull area, Million Homes areas were only planned to have limited amounts of retail space. In Kungsmarken, these are found on the first floor in some areas of the Houses, for example, a grocery store in House C is shown in Picture 4.6. However, many of these shop-spaces have stood empty. Similarly, Kungsmarken’s retail center, at the bottom of the hill, near the school, often stands vacant. At the moment, occupants of these buildings include a health-care center and a large second-hand store.

Having commercial enterprises might increase the diversity of the streetscape and make Kungsmarken more interesting to walk around, but, unfortunately, this is not the current situation. One reason for this might be due to the strong borders that work as barriers, separating Kungsmarken from the other urban areas around it.

4.4.2: Borders

Because the center of Karlskrona is situated on coastal islands, all the main road and rail entrances to the city must pass through one narrow area from the north. Figure 4.4 shows how Kungsmarken is located in the midst of this transportation bottleneck. The Kungsmarken area, including the school and shopping and health center, is indicated with a lighter coloring. The railroad and roads are shown in bright orange.
For Jane Jacobs, railroads and highways are classic examples of borders. She defines a border as the perimeter of a single massive or stretched-out use of territory that forms the edge of an area (Jacobs, 1961, 271). According to Jacobs, “the root trouble with borders, as city neighbors, is that they are apt to form ends for most users of city streets. They represent, for most people, most of the time, barriers” (Jacobs, 1961, 272). Many outsiders who do not live in Kungsmarken might describe the area as just this: a dead-end, an area that one does not travel to without purpose.

From all sides, highways and railroads surround Kungsmarken. These borders also work as barriers as they hinder movement into and out of Kungsmarken. This physical isolation is against what many city planners consider as necessary for successful neighborhoods: to be highly permeable with a rich interaction with other residential areas and with the greater city. Another way of thinking about borders is to compare them to medieval town walls, which can concentrate, and thereby intensify, areas (Jacobs, 1961, 276). However, when the area within the borders has only one primary function, in this case being residential, it is doubtful that the borders will have a positive contribution.

Strict borders around any residential area might hinder the development of social capital. Some Million Homes estates have an additional challenge as they are also composed of large monotonous buildings. Although these characteristics are the most distinctive aspects of Kungsmarken, it should not be assumed that Kungsmarken is void of other remarkable features.

Despite this gloomy analysis of Jacobs’ theories in relation to Kungsmarken, it should not be assumed that Kungsmarken lacks any positive attributes. According to Jacobs, there is no direct, simple relationship between good housing and good social conditions (Jacobs, 1961, 122). Neighborhoods that appear physically ideal might have major social challenges, while monotonous complexes might create a strong community.

4.4.3: Assets

An analysis of the physical qualities of Kungsmarken would not be complete without a discussion of the area’s assets. Although the structure of the buildings is monotonous and imposing, the space inside the apartments can be pleasant. This is a characteristic often found in Modernist buildings, which are more concerned with private spaces such as the home, than with public spaces such as the street or squares. In general, Kungsmarken’s apartments are sunny and spacious and have large balconies that command an impressive view over the surrounding area.

From Kungsmarken’s vantage point, its residents can see for long distance in several directions. The flip side of this is that Kungsmarken can also be seen from far away. Additionally, the traffic bottleneck which creates the borders for the area also ensures that all visitors entering the city by road or railroad must pass Kungsmarken. Although the area might be physically isolated, its prominent position guarantees that it is not easily ignored or forgotten. Indeed, the architects and planners might have given the area its unique design precisely because of its special location. Construction costs for plain, three or four story brick blocks, which are the most common Million Homes structures, would have been much lower.

Another advantage of Kungsmarken’s location is that it is in the geographical center of the municipality. Consequently, Kungsmarken has very good public transportation facilities. At least six buses leave (and return) every hour from Kungsmarken during the business hours of the day. Five buses typically go to and from Kungsmarken during evenings and weekends. The traveling time between the center of Karlskrona and Kungsmarken is 17 minutes by bus.
4.5: Summary

This Chapter has analyzed and discussed the physical qualities of Kungsmarken, including the popular planning ideals which influenced it, its amenities, its problems of monotony and borders, and its assets of sunny, spacious apartments and easily recognizable position as a gateway into the city.

Although local social capital can be influenced by an area’s physical make-up, it is impossible to separate one neighborhood from the broad demographic, socio-cultural or economic developments around it. The next chapter will outline the wider context of developments in Karlskrona that also noticeably affect Kungsmarken. This analysis, which is modeled after RESTATE, makes use of several interviews and available public statistics.

Finally, Chapter Six concludes with a review of the factors which influence social capital and a discussion of the most important variable: Kungsmarken’s residential population, and their perspective of the living situation in Kungsmarken. Responses to a residential survey given by the author in June, 2009 will be discussed as it pertains to issues of trust, feelings of safety, and social participation rates.
CHAPTER FIVE: 
DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIO-CULTURAL, AND ECONOMIC 
DEVELOPMENTS

So far, Chapter Three has defined social capital according to Robert Putnam. Chapter Four has explained the physical components of the study area, Kungsmarken, according to Jane Jacobs. This chapter will use the final theoretical contribution, RESTATE, to outline and analyze the demographic, socio-cultural, and economic developments for Kungsmarken in its broader context of Karlskrona and Sweden.

Finally, these concepts will be analyzed to discuss how the broader context in Karlskrona might enable or restrict the development of social capital in Kungsmarken.

5.1: Demographic Developments

An American Planner, studying a multi-ethnic housing area near Stockholm, commented:

“Based on a couple of visits to Rinkeby, if it was really a ghetto, it was the nicest ghetto that I have ever seen. It had relatively new, well-maintained blocks of flats, green space, a small shopping centre, a community centre and connections to nearby parks. However, on closer inspection, you could see that it was very isolated from other neighborhoods... But it seems the only reason it was considered a ghetto was that it had not necessarily poverty but a large percentage of immigrants from former Yugoslavia, North Africa, Iraq and elsewhere” (Bergsrud, 1997, 36).

Kungsmarken, similar to Rinkeby, is an example of a stigmatized, Million Homes program estate in Sweden. This quote shows how the concept of social capital needs to be understood in terms of the local demographics and social dynamics within the area.

Seventy-three percent of the residents living in Kungsmarken are either foreign-born or have foreign-born parents. This number seems especially high when compared to the percentage of foreign residents living in the entire municipality, which is only eleven percent. This means that in total, roughly one fourth, or 1,672 out of 6,778 of Karlskrona’s residents with foreign backgrounds live in Kungsmarken (Befpak, 2008). Furthermore, it is important to make the distinction that these residents do not all belong to one nationality, but several. Annelie Robertsson, the director of the Resident’s Association in Kungsmarken stated that more than 40 nationalities and 60 languages are represented in Kungsmarken (Personal communication, June 29, 2009). The largest groups of immigrants in Karlskrona originate from Yugoslavia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Poland, Iraq and Germany, in that order (Karlskrona Kommun, 2007).

Although immigrants coming to Sweden is not a new phenomenon, their composition and settlement patterns are now radically different from what they were a couple of decades ago. Today, about 40 percent of the country’s one million foreign-born residents have non-European origins and they constitute visible ethnic and religious minorities in almost all of Sweden’s municipalities due to a refugee dispersal policy applied since 1985 (Andersson, 2003, 19). It is forecasted that about 27 percent of the work force will be of foreign background in a decade or so. Thus, Sweden is rapidly becoming a multiethnic country. Along with this rapid change comes some negative developments, including rising levels of inter-ethnic conflicts, discrimination, racism, and segregation in labor and housing markets (Andersson, 2003, 19).
In relation to Kungsmarken, one prime example of this negative development can be seen in the area’s ground level school. The inhabitants of both the single-family and other multi-family housing areas near Kungsmarken share the commercial and public services, and should also share the primary schools. However, more than 90 percent of students at the Sunnadals school have a foreign background. This shows that Swedish parents are choosing to send their children to other schools, even if those schools are located farther away.

Figure 5.1 highlights the areas containing single-family homes near Kungsmarken. The area with small houses is indicated with red, while Sunnadals’ school is yellow. Typically, children are automatically enrolled in the closest school to their home. For the red areas on the map, this would be the Sunnadals’ school. However, parents are free to apply to other schools for their children, as long as there are spaces available.

According to Ingemar Jönsson, who has been working and living in the area for more than three decades, Swedish parents living around the Kungsmarken area choose not to send their children to the Sunnadals school because they fear that there will be a lower quality of education (Personal communication, June 24, 2009). For these young students, voluntary segregation might work to keep them separated, however, these students will be forced to meet again as all teenagers in the Karlskrona municipality go to the same high school, or gynamisum, which is located in the centre of Karlskrona.

The result of this segregation is an unfortunate additional obstacle for both migrant youth and their families to be better integrated into Swedish society. They are deprived of the opportunity to meet Swedes and to observe and learn their behaviors. For most adults, with foreign backgrounds or Swedish, one of the most common forms of contact is between those who have children. Meeting at nursery and ground level schools, recreation areas, and various clubs allows parents to get to know each other on common ground. If all children attended the same school, both children and parents would get to know others with different backgrounds from them. This has the potential to create bridging social capital. However, by sending your children to schools where they only meet other Swedish students or conversely, only other foreign students, bonding social capital is reinforced.

5.2: Socio-cultural Developments

Social problems with the Million Homes housing areas began soon after construction finished. Although the housing was intended for citizens of all social classes, the middle class residents soon quit in masse in favor of the rapidly expanding villa areas being developed outside the cities. This exodus caused problems for the Million Homes areas: as the average level of financial stability and education diminished many of these areas developed into what Jane Jacobs...
refers to as slums: areas that "breed social ills and require endless outside assistance" (Jacobs, 1961, 291).

Kungsmarken also experienced this negative trend. According to long time resident Ingemar Jönsson, Kungsmarken was a rough place in the 1980s (Personal communication, June 24, 2009). During that time, there were many vacant apartments and the mostly Swedish population had problems with drugs and crime. In attempt to ease its financial burden, Kungsmarken, along with many other Million Homes program estates, leased some of its many vacant apartments to the Swedish Immigration board, which filled them with asylum seekers and refugees.

As more migrants moved in, more Swedes moved out and the cycle of slumming continued. When this happens, the area commonly experiences physical decay in addition to the lost of economic and social welfare. When people live in an area simply because they have little choice, they do not take care of the buildings.

Recently, positive physical developments have been made by the municipal housing company. Karlskronahem substantially renovated House A in year 2000 and now keeps it well maintained. House B is also improving: the windows and ventilation system has been updated throughout the building as well as the kitchens and bathrooms of the worse apartments. According to Karlskronahem, More renovations are planned for 2012, such as a new roof and new plaster on the façade (Personal communication with Bengt Ericsson, April 27, 2010). Building C, which is owned by a private company, PBA, since year 2000, has also had the interiors of some of its apartments renovated.

5.3: Economic Developments
For more than three decades in between 1955 and 1989, Karlskrona’s economy went through a severe recession. Previously, the local economy had been largely dependent on the Navel base, which in turn stimulated the local shipping building industry, Kockums. However, when a peacetime downsizing of the Navy happened to coincide with the rationalization of both the large shipbuilding industry as well as of the secondary Eriksson phone industry, many jobs were cut and Karlskrona’s economy began to sink (Personal communication with Karlskrona kommun, May 5, 2010). Additionally, Karlskrona was said to have poor entrepreneurial traditions and a limited supply of professional services (Nilsson, 2006).

Population numbers often reflect the local economy: when the economy is good, and there are lots of jobs, the population generally increases as more people move in and families reproduce. Conversely, a bad economy and loss of jobs often results in a loss of population, as people must move out to find jobs. This development can be seen in Figure 5.2, which shows the negative population trend of the Karlskrona municipality during the period between 1955 and 1989. The municipal population number can be seen on the left side of the graph, while the more consistently rising Swedish population can be found on the right in millions.

Highlighted in this graph is period when Kungsmarken was constructed (1967-1973). This low period in both the local population and economy helps to explain a lot about the troubled beginning for Kungsmarken, with problems of vacancies and segregation. According to RESTATE, the Millions Homes estates are often considered to be less attractive than other areas, which means that they are more sensitive to economic fluctuations. Problems with vacancies most often occur when the local economy is in a recession (Andersson et al., 2003, 37). When put into context, it is easy to see that the entire municipality of Karlskrona was suffering
due to their downturned economy. Karlskrona’s location in the Southeastern corner of Sweden, away from other cities of scale, further exasperated the problem.

Fortunately for Karlskrona and Kungsmarken, the economy began to recover in the late 1980s, largely due to a few coinciding happenings. These include the growth of the telecommunications industry, and the establishment of Blekinge Institute of Technology, which has developed several study programs in the fields of telecom, engineering, and applied IT that also work as feeder programs into the local industries. In total, there are about 50 IT and telecom companies in Karlskrona with about 5,000 employees (Karlskrona Kommun, 2007). Additionally, the national Swedish Housing Authority (Boverket) also moved its head quarters to Karlskrona in 1989. This in turn, stimulated the development of a planning study program at the university. All of this development meant more jobs, and thus brought more workers and families to live in Karlskrona.

As Karlskrona’s IT industries and university grow, many young migrants are attracted both from other parts of Sweden and internationally. This situation is likely to increase as in the coming years as the university will soon absorb additional study programs and their students, which were previously based in another city. Additionally, the naval base also attracts young people to Karlskrona.

The current stream of young people is a boost to the otherwise aging municipal population. A document containing public statistics for the municipality states that the largest percent of Karlskrona’s population in between the age of 25 and 44, as it has 26.2% of the population. However, the age group of 45 to 64 is a close second, as it makes up 25.3% of the local population. These age group percentages are quite similar to the national Swedish population averages of 26.5% and 25.9%, respectively (Karlskrona Kommun, 2009). The large older segment of the population might be attributed to the general tendency across Europe towards low fertility rates and longer life for both men and women. These factors can also contribute to a potentially weaker economy as less of the population is of a working age, and costs for elder care increase. Therefore, attracting, integrating, and retaining younger persons into a local society is important for the long term development of the area.

As the population increases, Karlskrona finally has enough demand to fill Kungsmarken’s apartments. According to Bengt Ericsson at Karlskrnonahem, vacancies are no longer a big problem for Kungsmarken (Personal communication, April 27, 2010).

However, this does not necessary implied that Kungsmarken will transform overnight into a regular housing area. RESTATE warns
that people moving into Million Homes estates continue to differ compared to people moving into other neighborhoods, as they have clearer limitations in their set of available choices (Andersson et al, 2003, 37). Thus, Kungsmarken will most likely continue to be unattractive to certain groups, including, for example, people with experience from the local housing market, and people moving from non-rental housing.

5.4: Summary

Since it was built, Kungsmarken has gone through different phases of development. This development has been triggered by changes in the local demographics, societal attitudes, and economy. Throughout these periods, local and national governments have attempted to revitalize Million Homes estates through physical and social policies. However, in the case of Kungsmarken, the best rehabilitation so far has actually been the revival of the local economy along with the establishment of the university.

Chapter Six concludes with a review of the factors which influence social capital and a discussion of the most important variable: Kungsmarken’s residential population, and their perspective of the social life in Kungsmarken. Responses to a residential survey given by the author in June, 2009 will be discussed as it pertains to issues of trust, feelings of safety, and social participation rates. Finally, recommendations for further research will be made.
CHAPTER SIX:
SURVEY RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has set out to answer three research questions. The first question, what is social capital and what affects does it have on society, is answered in Chapter Three by reviewing Putnam’s work on social capital in the United States, and the factors which he found important to its development. These often overlapping factors include education, generation, religion, employment, residential stability, health, and crime rates. This overview reveals that there is no easy way to measure social capital. It comes in many different sizes and uses, and is highly dependent on the local context.

The second research question, which asks what factors influence the development of social capital, narrows the influencing factors to the ones considered to be most important by the author to analyze Kungsmarken in its local context. As a result, four main factors are examined in Chapters Four and Five: spatial environment, demographics, socio-cultural developments, and economics.

Lastly, the third research question of this thesis, which asks to what extent does social capital exist in Kungsmarken, will be answered in this final chapter.

As a result of working with this complex issue, any result must necessarily be built on imperfect evidence. Nonetheless, it is not enough to merely lament deficiencies, but to make the most of the material at hand.

In an attempt to measure social capital in Kungsmarken, a residential survey was given to 77 adults between the ages of 18 and 80. The majority of the respondents (47) indicated that they were in their 20s and 30s. 20 respondents were in between the ages of 40 and 69, and 10 were older than 70. Of the respondents, 51 indicated that they were male, and 26 that they were female. 50 of the respondents answered that they were foreign born, while 27 said that they were born in Sweden. Of the foreign born residents, the vast majority were in the 20s, 30s, and 40s age range (49 out of 50 responses). Conversely, the majority of Swedish born respondents were above the age of 50 (21 out of 27 responses). The survey was available in both English and Swedish, however, it is interesting to note that the Swedish version was used more frequently. The English version can be found in Appendix A.

In the author’s opinion, the primary statistics gathered in this survey offer a small window into the actual demographic situation in Kungsmarken. The majority of the population is relatively young, foreign-born, and male. This can be explained by the fact that often male asylum seekers come first, and later bring their family to the new country. Another explanation might be the local university’s focus on IT and engineering, which attract predominately male students. Finally, Kungsmarken houses a house of youth doing their military service. Again, this group is predominately young, possibility male, and probably born in Sweden.

The highlights of this survey’s results will now be reviewed in the sections below and broad conclusions will be made about the amount and type of social capital in Kungsmarken.

6.1: Trust in Kungsmarken

To administer this residential survey, it was necessary for the author to get in contact with as many residents of diverse backgrounds as possible. In order to accomplish this, the author set out several times during one warm, sunny week in June, 2009. The weather conditions were important to the author, as it was necessary to find people willing to sit outside and talk. Despite some language problems, the author’s experience in Kungsmarken was remarkably positive. When approached, the vast majority of the residents were
open and willing to complete the survey. Additionally, the author was invited to several barbeques and pushed several children on swing-sets. Even before the results of the survey where reviewed, these experiences indicated a trustful environment.

As discussed in Chapter Three, trust is an important indicator of social capital. People who are more trusting are also more likely to be tolerant of minority views, and are thus able to discuss and resolve problems with others more easily. This is an indicator of social capital and, thereby, has the effect of creating safer neighborhoods, better school systems, and a more democratic society (Putnam, 2000).

In the survey results, more Kungsmarken residents responded that they were generally more careful than trusting (29 to 25, respectively). However, when they were asked more specifically about the level to which they trusted certain groups, the results appeared to be more trusting than not. This is true for all three groups identified in the survey, including: neighbors, which might be representative of a person’s known social sphere, general people in the city, which can be representative of the unknown, and the Police, which can be seen as a representative of the State. Figure 6.1 displays the results for the survey question number 10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Trust a lot</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Only a little</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your Neighbors</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in Karlskrona</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Police</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.1: How much do you trust?

One conclusion that can be drawn from the results in Figure 6.1, is that a reasonable amount of trust exists between the residents of Kungsmarken. This, in turn, might indicate a presence of bonding social capital, as the residents share a common identity as a Kungsmarken resident.

The answers about the level of trust for people in Karlskrona were more ambivalent than the previous indicator. This might reflect a lack of knowledge about the general population in the Centrum, as Kungsmarken residents are physically isolated. This, in turn, might indicate a lower level of bridging social capital.

The survey results about trust towards Police were the most positive of the three trust indicators. Thirty nine Kungsmarken residents responded that they trust the Police a lot, in oppose to only 11 answering the same for People in Karlskrona, and 28 answering so for their neighbors. This indicates a trust for the Swedish governance system. Although seems positive, it might actually indicate a hindrance toward social capital if it means that the residents rely heavily on the police to solve neighborhood problems. In this case, the social capital of the area would seem to be less.

To better understand this indicator, the answers to survey question number 23 must be discussed: How likely do you think it is that you may be the victim of a crime in the next 12 months?

6.2: Crime in Kungsmarken

Figure 6.2 shows, by percentage, the age of the respondents in correlation with their belief that crime is either likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely or unlikely to happen to them in the next year.
Figure 6.2: How likely do you think it is that you may be the victim of a crime in the next 12 months? The X-Axis indicates the age of the respondent.

In general, the majority of the respondents do not fear crime, which is indicated by their either partial or full denial of crime happening to them in the coming months. Interesting to note is that the younger respondents seem to think crime is less likely, while the oldest respondents are comparatively more convinced of its likeliness. This might reflect the demographics and experiences (or lack of) for the age groups. The older residents, were more often Swedish and more likely to have frail health. These residents might be afraid of the many young immigrants in the area due to a lack of bridging social capital. In the author’s opinion, the lack of fear among the youngest respondents suggests that they are more comfortable with the international environment in Kungsmarken and that they feel less vulnerable to crime. This might also be related to the overwhelming number of male respondents in this young age group (90 percent of respondents in between 20 and 30 years old were male).

The author, being aware of the bad reputation that many Million Homes estates carry, interviewed a local police officer who works in Kungsmarken to get his perspective on the crime rate.

According to Officer Thomas Petersson, the crime rate in Kungsmarken is now the same as for other areas in the municipality, such as the suburbs of Rödeby or Lyckeby. However, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, crime was more of a problem. Kungsmarken was home to a small gang of seven or eight youths who were responsible for vandalism and robberies. However, with cooperation between the police, social/family services, and the local residents, the situation improved (Personal communication, May 6, 2010).

While a decreased crime rate indicates that the neighborhood is less troubled now than it once was, it does not indicate much about social capital. As mentioned in Chapter Three, this might show that the population of Kungsmarken has substituted a reliance on an institution for genuine social capital.

6.3: Residential Stability in Kungsmarken

As mentioned in Chapter Three, social capital is composed of relationships between individuals. In a neighborhood context, relationships cannot be built without some degree of residential stability. According to Putnam, communities that have higher rates of residential turnover, often have higher crime rates, lower school performance, and worse general health.

According to Jane Jacobs, a slum will always be a slum as long as the residents continue to move in and out rapidly, or else dream of moving out. However, when residents chose to stay, Jacobs states that they "often profess an intense attachment to their street..."
neighborhood... they seem to think that their neighborhood is unique and irreplaceable in all the world, and remarkably valuable in spite of its shortcomings” (Jacobs, 1961, 293).

Andersson, 2006, additionally states that “increased stability will probably enable a greater sense of community and place attachment among the residents, and maybe a chance to break the spiral of decline... once you have remained in the same neighborhood for about 4-6 years, the probability of moving is reduced considerably” (Andersson, 2006, 796).

Question number 16 of the Kungsmaxken residential survey asked, overall, how would you rate your community as a place to live? Figure 6.3 is a simple table revealing the responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent / Very Good</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair / Poor</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.3: Overall, how would you rate your community as a place to live?

The responses to Question 16 reveal that the average resident of Kungsmaxken is satisfied with the community. This might indicate that the residents have social connections in the area and that social trust on the community level might be developing. As more people in the community know and trust each other, this might contribute to community awareness, social controls, and ultimately, a decrease in crime, as discussed in 6.2.

In addition to simply being content and perhaps having friends in the area, an acceptance of the physical aspects of the area, in so far as they do not necessarily restrict community development, is also implied. Together, these factors might ultimately indicate that Kungsmaxken should not be referred to as a slum or a ghetto, but as a stable, low-rent area.

To confirm these thoughts, the author interviewed Bengt Eriksson, who works at Karlskronahem. According to him, Kungsmaxken residents do not move in and out as quickly as they did a decade ago. Additionally, now when they move, it is often to upgrade from House B to House A (Personal communication, April 27, 2010).

As mentioned earlier in the section on local trust between neighbors in Kungsmaxken: this might produce bonding social capital, but bridging social capital is still needed to fully empower the community. In this way, the strict physical borders seem to have a definite barrier to the development of connections and trust between the population inside of Kungsmaxken, and the population outside. Those outside of Kungsmaxken have a stigmatized, outdated perception of the area. Because Kungsmaxken is often considered to be a dead-end area, outsiders do not remedy their perception with experience. This was seen in the example of the Sunnadal school.

On the other hand, Kungsmaxken residents might not have many connections with the people living in other parts of the city. Because Kungsmaxken is largely composed of foreign residents, this might imply that they have little experience interacting with Swedish people. This is a definite hindrance to the well-being of these residents, as they might lack cultural knowledge and miss many opportunities for career advancement, for example.

6.4: Final Thoughts and Recommendation for Further Research

This thesis has identified several factors which are responsible to varying degrees for the development or hindrance of social capital in Kungsmaxken, Karlskrona. One hindrance to the development of social capital in Kungsmaxken is the physical large scale that
characterizes the neighborhood, the monotony, and the strong borders which make the area unattractive and difficult to visit.

Another hindrance is the former municipal economic stagnation. Although Karlskrona’s economic outlook has improved since 1989, it takes longer to establish a stable residential community in an area that previously had extensive vacancy problems. Only very recently has the high-turnover rate begun to reverse so that more residents choose to stay for longer periods. When residents are satisfied with the quality of life in an area and make the decision to stay, social capital benefits. Although Kungsmarken is overcoming its’ previous problems, the outside population of Karlskrona still has a negative, outdated perception. This culminates with the Sunnadal school situation, where Swedish parents choose not to educate their children in the same school as the Kungsmarken residents with foreign-backgrounds.

Positive factors for the development of social capital in Kungsmarken include the establishment of the local IT and Telecom sectors, and the establishment of the university, which brought young people, jobs, and a vibrant future to an otherwise declining area. The university has especially high impact on Kungsmarken, as many students seek apartments there. In the author’s opinion, an additional result of having a university in both Kungsmarken and Karlskrona is that the average education level of the population is increasing. According to Putnam, this is a strong predictor for social capital.

Social capital is certainly present in Kungsmarken, as the existence of trust and relationships in between the residents was observed. However, in the author’s opinion, bonding social capital is most likely to be the most prevalent type, especially between residents that have similar foreign backgrounds, between students, or another group. Bridging social capital is less likely to be less strong, which is evidenced by the survey respondents who indicated that they do not trust people in Karlskrona as much as their fellow residents.

Additionally, the school in Kungsmarken, which has the potential to be a forum for foreign-born Kungsmarken residents to make connections with Swedish parents and children, currently fails to increase the bridging social capital for Kungsmarken residents.

To make more definite conclusions about social capital in a Million Homes estate, more research would be required. That research should make an attempt to succeed where this thesis fell short, and gather information on factors of employment and online social networking, especially in areas that have a significant younger population.

A final recommendation for further research is to find or produce an annual survey which gathers information on social trends and changing behaviors in multi-ethnic, Million Homes area neighborhoods. If statistics were available comparing yearly changes in social behavior, a lot would be learned about these areas and their strengths and weaknesses. This increased knowledge of how to better develop social capital in disadvantaged areas would be beneficial for the residents themselves, their neighborhoods, cities, country, and perhaps even for international bodies such as the EU.


Befpak, SCB. Invanare I Karlskrona kommun efter medborgarskap, fodelseland och bakgrund 2008-12-31.


APPENDIX A: SURVEY GIVEN TO KUNGSMARKEN RESIDENTS (ENGLISH VERSION)

1. What year were you born? __________
2. Gender?  Male  Female
3. What is the highest grade of school or year of college you have completed? _____________________
4. How long have you lived where you live now? _____________________
5. If you are foreign born, how long have you lived in Sweden? _____________________
6. How many children (17 and younger) live with you? __________
7. What do you do? (Circle one)   Work     Study     Unemployed    Other: _____________________
8. How would you describe your overall state of health these days?  
   A. Excellent  B. Very Good  C. Good       D. Fair     E. Poor
9. In general, do you think that most people can be trusted or that you can’t be too careful in dealing with people?  
   (Circle one)  A. I trust most people  B. You can’t be too careful
10. How much do you trust:  (Circle one)  
    Your Neighbors:  A. Trust a lot  B. Some       C. Only a little    D. Not at all  
    People in Karlskrona:  A. Trust a lot  B. Some       C. Only a little    D. Not at all  
    The police:  A. Trust a lot  B. Some       C. Only a little    D. Not at all
11. How often do you attend religious services or other activities at your place of worship? (Circle one)  
    A. Every week (or more)  B. Almost every week    C. A few times a year     D. Less
12. How many hours per day do you spend watching TV on an average weekday? __________ hours
13. Do you expect to be living in your community in the next two years?   Yes    No    Maybe
14. Overall, how would you rate your community as a place to live?  
   A. Excellent  B. Very Good  C. Good       D. Fair     E. Poor
15. Are you involved in a tenant association?  Yes    No
16. Are you involved in a political group?  Yes    No
17. Are you involved in a sports club?  Yes    No
18. Are you involved in any other type of group?  Yes    No
20. Do you agree with this statement: Sometimes I feel overwhelmed by everything that is going on.
   A. Strongly Agree  B. Somewhat Agree  C. Somewhat Disagree  D. Disagree

21. How often do you talk to or visit with your neighbors? (the 10 or 20 households that live closest to you)
   A. Just about everyday  B. Several times a week  C. Several times a month  D. Rarely  E. Never

22. How much impact do people like you have in making your community a better place to live?
   A. No impact at all  B. A small impact  C. A moderate impact  D. A big impact

23. How likely do you think it is that you may be the victim of a crime in the next 12 months?
   A. Very Likely  B. Somewhat Likely  C. Somewhat Unlikely  D. Unlikely

24. How interested are you in politics?
   A. Very interested  B. Somewhat interested  C. Only slightly interested  D. Not at all interested