Narratives of belonging in a suburb of change

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to explore how middle class residents construct narratives of belonging. The study was conducted in a suburban area in the southern part of Stockholm. This is a neighborhood that undergoes a renewal and status increase. I used a method consisting of auto-photography and subsequent interviews to explore resident’s narratives of belonging. The sampled group was residents with academic exams. Participants were instructed to take five photos of their everyday life in the area and reflect upon these in the interviews. The result was analyzed within a constructive grounded theory frame. The theoretical concepts used take inspiration from Bourdieu’s cultural capital, field and social class. The results are divided into three main cores. The results suggest that a core narrative of constructive affiliation was a useful tool to understand how residents construct a sense of belonging. Residents in this study affiliated with other groups and social classes in the area, through a heightened sense of reflection on their own social position. Residents subscribed to an inclusive version of elective belonging. Second the construction of a sense of locally based authenticity was a narrative process were they deployed a sense of belonging to the “local” and the small scale community. Third, a sense of rootless territorialism was reflected on in their sense of belonging. This was a process were residents narrative mediated between a stable and a fluid place attachment.

Keywords

Social class, cultural capital, academic exam, middle class, belonging, elective belonging, narratives of belonging, constructive grounded theory, suburb
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1. INTRODUCTION

This is an explorative study about how middle-class residents construct a sense of belonging in a suburban area that undergoes renewal. These changes include increased housing prices and a cultural/status increase of the area. The study took place in Bagarmossen a southern suburban area in Stockholm that during the last ten year have become popular. The discourse of the area as popular has marked a change noticeable in media and local cultural initiatives. These changes had become explicit in the increased housing prices (Stockholmdirekt, 2015).

Studies on changing urban landscapes and belonging have increasingly come to focus on boundary making, social class and the meaning of place (e.g. Jorgensen, 2010; Savage, 2008). I focus in this study on resident’s everyday activities and reflections on how they construct a sense of belonging. One reason for the increased interest in place-making is that the locus of contestation over social and spatial rights to a large degree takes place in the city (Gieryn, 2000). These contestations have been coined as the right to the city, referring to the freedom to change the urban life, it’s social organizations and the power hierarchies that become explicit in an increased urban segregation (Harvey, 2008). The purpose in this study is to explore how middle-class residents construct narratives of belonging in relation to these changes described and their social class. Narratives of belonging have suggested forming crucial links between space and place and forming contemporary attachment patterns. Narratives are in that sense linked to spatial practices since these could transform spaces into places (Certeau, 1984).

Previous research has tended to focus on middle-class residents (Oldrup, 2014; Watt 2009, Pinkster 2014), working class residents (Watt, 2006), or on residents from mixed neighborhoods and their belonging patterns (Butler and Robson, 2001). There has been less coverage on how changing communities affect residents’ constructs of belonging and reflections on social class. Increased attention has been given to the symbolic and cultural distinction among social classes in urban setting and it has been argued that social-class matter in constructing ones narrative of belonging to places (Oldrup, 2014; Blokland, 2009; Savage, Bagnall, & Longhurst, 2005). In this paper I draw from a Bourdieuan typology of social class were residents with academic exam form the sampled middle class group. The questions that are examined in the study are;
• How do middle class residents construct their sense of belonging?
• How are their representations and activities informed by their cultural capital?
• How does community upgrading affect their sense of belonging?

It has been argued that residential locations increasingly have come to define social-class (Parker, Burrows & Uprichard, 2007). To that there has been a research interest in the effects of spatialization of class and elective belonging (Savage. et.al, 2005; Savage, 2010), the effects of social differentiation among residents (Oldrup, 2014) and cultural displacement effects of urban development and gentrification (Blokland, 2009). I argue in line with Loic Waquant that there is a resurrection of class patterns after the de-industrialized shift and that these relations need exploration (Waquant, 2008). The need to explore how middle-class belonging is constructed is two-folded. First off, a broad middle class “gentrifiers” group has sometimes arbitrarily been accounted for gentrification trajectories. Researching the narratives of this group due to social class could enhance our understanding of their sense of belonging and underlying tensions in contemporary attachment patterns. Second the focus in previous studies has tended to be on more extreme sites, as hyper gentrified areas (Franzén, 2005) or deprived areas (Cole, 2013). This gives the suburban context in this study a value.

The concept of gentrification has broadly been used to sketch a special process of urban transitions, characterized by a change in population-land use, socio-economic, demographic and cultural changes. Displacement and the creation of “otherness” through this process have been a deep concern in the gentrification research (Redfern, 2003; Smith, 1996). The need to theorize on and understand these socio-spatial changes following community upgrading and how residents construct their sense of belonging is crucial as a compliment in the political policy-processes on social-mixing, and need to be incorporated in the debate on potential gentrification trajectories. The research design in the study draws from a fieldwork consisting of participant’s photos and subsequent semi-guided interviews. The photos had the function of enhancing participant’s self-reflection in relation to their everyday performativity (Oldrup & Carstensen, 2012).The analytical framework used in this study is inspired by Kathy Charmaz, (2008; 2006; 2014) works on Constructive Grounded Theory (CGT), a framework that allows for iteration between empirical findings and theoretical coding in a process of contextualize and theorize upon the material.

1.1 Disposition
Section one has given an introduction to the research and the purpose of the study. In the next section I will conceptualize gentrification and community development processes. Here I point toward the need of a more nuanced understanding of urban renewal processes than the often used stage model of gentrification. Section two describes recent findings in studies on cultural displacement effects and studies on social class in relation to belonging. I outline the concept of belonging and the theoretical underpinnings that draws from a spatial reworking on the work of Bourdieu. Section three outlines the fieldwork, participant’s photographs and interviews, and the analytical framework that draws from CGT. Section four describes the results and analysis. In section five I discuss the findings and place these within a broader context of contemporary urban development and belonging.

1.2 Conceptualizations and Background

Ever since gentrification has come into the focus for sociologists and urban planners the concept has referred to a diversified process with many trajectories. The concept was initially coined by Ruth Glass in the 60’s, referring to the middle-class colonialization of inner London working class spaces were real estate speculation led to the competition over space (Glass, 1964). Since then the focus on gentrification has shifted alongside political ideologies, planning practices, the evolvement of methods and followed the societal development. By referring to the creative class in urban renewal (Florida, 2002) politicians and city planners have emphasized this focus in planning practice to signal cultural growth and capital concentration in some areas through social-mixing policies and other interventions as a new kind of localism and entrepreneurialism (Clark, 2009). This discourse has been referred to as the emancipatory-city discourse, a discourse immensely criticized for its top down policies and displacement effects (Lees, 2008; Smith, 1996; Bashir & Flint, 2010). On the other side the revanchist-city discourse, argues that the critical approach toward gentrification need to be revitalized in order to understand the background forces underlying displacements of working-class populations and the liberal planning logics supporting that (Slater, 2006; Smith, 1996). There has been an intense debate about the merits and disadvantages of urban changes and especially gentrification, and the potential clash between economic interests and equality. Results from previous studies however show mixed results; incumbent upgrading could have positive effects if local residential opinions are involved in the process (Mendes, 2013), conversely top-down policies and housing renovations with increased housing prices have been under harsh critique (Lees, 2008). Further it is argued that colonization of earlier
financial and personal insecure areas are inherent features of modern urban development (Atkinson, 2006).

A well-used stage model of gentrification involves the following steps of change; the initiation of creative/cultural progressive neighborhood by the in-move of residents with a large stock of cultural capital, this is followed by the in-move by a wealthier middle class which in turn makes capital investment through renovation of apartments and leads to the search for profit on rental-gaps by capital investors (Kerstein, 1990). This general stage model could somewhat be delimited to better be able to grasp differences among neighborhoods and communities that undergoes renewal processes. Mathieu and Decroly (2003) dissect the process by outline four ideal-types of community transition I) gentrification, II) marginal gentrification, III) upgrading and IV) incumbent upgrading. Marginal gentrification and full gentrification differ in outcome, in the former the population mobility continues and the neighborhoods general wealth didn’t exceed to the degree that a displacement of the population take place to any larger extent, the latter contains displacement processes (2003:5). Further the debate has been over the driving forces fostering gentrification and has traditionally been divided in a supply versus demand side. The supply side draws from structural explanations and the investment in deprived areas by companies and the search for profit on rent gaps (Smith, 1996). Proponents from the demand side draws from cultural theories of an increased professionalization and a new urban middle class that produces consumption oriented life styles (Lees, Slater & Wyly, 2008). Ley (1996) supports the latter perspective and argues that countercultural and avantgardistic lifestyles in the early stages of gentrification are important steps in the process. There is however more recently supports for converges of these perspectives (Lees et.al, 2008), and in this context the view of the “middle-class gentrifiers” as a homogenous group have been criticized (Bridge 2003; Bridge, 2006).

There is nowadays some evidence of revitalization discourses and practices in southern suburban areas in Stockholm. One example is the project Hållbara Hökarängen in a southern suburban area in Stockholm initiated by the housing company Stockholmshem that aims to increase the status of the area by implementing sustainable strategies for the community (Hållbarahokarangen, 2015). In Bagarmossen where this study took place there are several projects aiming at increasing the status and the living conditions for the residents in the area. The project Smartup Bagarmossen aims at carrying on a positive cultural development in the area with cooperation with local initiatives. The project started to improve the lives of the
residents in the area according to Stockholmshem (Stockholmshem, 2015). There have been debates about the project and alternative organizations and networks as SIFAV\(^1\), have questioned the project and the potential gentrification effects, and the “place branding” strategies they see within this process (Bagisbloggen, 2015). From a Swedish perspective there is less research on gentrification and its effects, especially when it comes to suburban areas and the spreading effects and how that affects identity, belonging and mobility patterns. In a broad perspective gentrification patterns have been analyzed in the three metropolitan areas in Sweden from 1986-2001, revealing evidence for gentrification and filtering processes through neo-liberalization of the housing market in Sweden (Hedin, Clark, Malmberg & Lundborg, 2012). This study aims at contributing to the field by giving an insight in how renewal processes in a suburban area affects people’s sense of belonging and the potential underlying tension between social class, belonging and urban renewal, from the perspective of academic middle class.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section introduces the theoretical concepts used in the study, *Narratives of Belonging*, *Social class* and *cultural capital*. Further I introduce previous research elaborating these concepts in urban studies. Focus lies on how cultural capital is deployed by residents in the construction of narratives of belonging and how residents reflect on social class in relation to the suburban context. Further I introduce a framework that draws from a reflexive socio-spatial reworking of Bourdieu’s theoretical work. I outline a framework of a performative oriented research, were resident’s everyday practice and their discursive reflexivity on their position are analyzed. Finally there is a discussion of alternative theoretical models and limitations of the chosen perspective.

Research on belonging and social class has taken different trajectories and foremost applied the work of Pierre Bourdieu, using the concept of capital and habitus, in relation to the social/spatial field in the exploration of social relations in the urban sphere. Belonging is a critical concept in urban studies reflecting boundary making, identity and social class patterns. Belonging is fundamental in the identity construction and people’s presentation of who they are through their residency (Savage et. al, 2005). The relational perspective is central, since it

\(^1\) Söderorts Institut För Andra Visioner
marks the dynamic process of establishing a sense of belonging. It have been stressed that the close neighborhood could be seen as a social entity that provides and informs identity pattern constructing social status and self-representations (Hauge & Kolstad, 2007). This is crucial when it comes to the relation between habitual disposition and the place and it has been suggested that residents adapt and construct their perception of the residency to fit their habitual dispositions, i.e. there previous experience inscribed in their habits (Benson, 2014). Residential perception of places has been argued as crucial in understanding subjective positions of experience of neighborhood changes and the symbolic construction of the community. Bashir & Flint (2010) suggest that there is an imagined construction of the community by residents that relates to their subjective perceptions and an idea of the status and social setting in the area. The symbolic construction of community of an imaged social cohesion forms a perspective that links historical and nostalgic versions of places into contemporary belonging patterns.

2.1 Bourdieu and the space

The distribution of capital and the differentiation between classes lay at the heart of Bourdieu’s impact on social research. Alongside social and economic capital, cultural capital draws up the foundations of the social world’s practices and relations (Bourdieu, 2001). Cultural capital is less visible but forms many times the most important power resource. Bourdieu outlines three forms of cultural capital; the embodied state is the embodied dispositions that form the symbolic concentration of legitimate practices and competences. In the objectified state cultural capital is seen as material goods of housing, art, consumptions habits etc. The institutionalized state of capital is closely linked to academic qualification; in contrast to the embodied cultural capital it has some autonomy (Bourdieu, 1986: 99-102). The forms of cultural capital discussed here have their power when used as legitimate practices in different fields. The transformations between capital and the status of possessing capital are given value when recognized in a social field. Cultural, social and economic capital could take the form of symbolic capital when cognitively recognized becoming a capacity (Bourdieu, 2001:105). Symbolic capital is thus a critical resource since it legitimates certain practices within a field.

Further social capital is the resources accumulated from relationships and networks an agent is involved in and the potential to mobilize these (Bourdieu, 1988:88). Network resources have been suggested to form an important system of social cohesion and belonging
(Soytemel, 2015). The seminal work *Distinction* (Bourdieu, 1984) forms a theoretical framework exploring the reproduction of habitus via the consumption of cultural goods, the class-differentiation as formed by the usage and distinctions between certain cultural habits. A field is a structured set of relations within a sphere of sociality where the practices take place (Bourdieu, 1984). The spatial field could be seen as an overlap between different fields as it forms the certain context where the struggles of legitimate social practices take place. Agents practice depend on habitus within certain fields; this means that that one needs to specify how the habitual disposition are practiced within different class fractions (Bourdieu, 1984:170-175). This however does not mean that everyone from the same class has similar experience, only that they are more likely to share similar sets of dispositions and thus constructing a class habitus. The social space and the relation between agents are in a process of symbolic differentiation containing different lifestyles (Bourdieu, 1985:730). Critique mean that Bourdieu’s attempt to overcome the structure-agency debate is merely a replacement into the objective-subjective dualism. The inter-subjective relations that shape social trajectories are thus not taken into account, and critique means that there is always a possibility for indeterminate social action (King, 2000).

The symbolic differences in social space could be understood as a struggle over symbolic capital within different field among agents. The view on social class from this perspective breaks with the Marxian notion of class by introducing sub-class fractions and the struggles within these (Bourdieu, 1985). Bourdieu’s notion of the relation between social and physical space means that relations between agents in the social space are transformed into locations in the spatial space through habitual dispositions and marked by differentiation of practices (Bourdieu, 1996). The transformation of social relations into physical relations has later on been reworked to deepen the spatial analysis (Savage, 2011).

Turning toward a spatial understanding of Bourdieu’s work, a more recent perspective in urban studies allows for a closer examination on contemporary belonging patterns. The exploration of the spatialization of class and belonging elaborates with narratives of attachment to places to explore contemporary social relations and inequality patterns (Savage et. al, 2005; Savage, 2010). Mike Savage work builds on a Bourideuan framework that addresses social inequality and territorial relations.

“Rather than treating class, gender, and other social inequalities as variables, we can instead see them as processes in flux. Through examining
The clustering, sifting, and sorting of people, objects, and identities in physical and social space, through investigating the mechanisms which allow some to move more freely than others, and also through examining the clustering and patterning of actions, we have the potential for enriching contemporary urban theory and recharging our understanding of social inequality.” (Savage, 2011, p.518)

The quotation above illustrates the view on class as something dynamic and non-static and the linkage between social class, mobility and the spatiality of place. It has been asserted that agents do always have to fight over social positions in the social and physical space and thereby construct hierarchized topologies of space and place (Fougle, 2011:50-52), the spatial field is in that sense already hierarchized and socially structured. In the same line it is argued by Savage that the reconceptualization of Bourdieu’s work further need to incorporate an analysis of the spatial field as not given and stable. The spatiality is seen as something dynamic and non-static, the spatiality itself is hierarchized and it’s argued that an analysis of power relations from a “re-territorialized and de-territorialized” perspective could enhance our understanding of inequality in spatial relations (Savage, 2011:518). The relation between sites within the same neighborhood is thus an inevitable premise in conducting field analysis since it’s a tool of seeing how symbolic values are attached to and fought over in the urban landscape.

2.2 Narratives of belonging

Belonging constitutes a relational aspect of identity and place (Savage et.al, 2005; Savage, 2010; Leach, 2010). The more narrowed concept of elective belonging is a concept stating that there is an ongoing tension between instrumental and emotional attachment to places. Instrumental relations refer to functions of places as the infrastructure, and the emotional relation to social aspects as identification and sense of association with social groups, symbolic constructions communities and the aesthetic of residency (Savage et.al, 2005:103).

There have been mainly two theoretical versions of narratives of belonging dealt with in the construction of peoples belonging to places; nostalgic sense of belonging and elective sense of belonging. Elective belonging has been connected to the construction of a middle class habitus marked by a spatial and social differentiation in gentrified areas (Savage, 2010), and the deployment of cultural capital related to symbolic status and identity (Bridge, 2003). The narrative of nostalgia is a concept referring to the process of creating contemporary social
boundaries by attaching to the history of the symbolic neighborhood and its residents (Savage, 2010:116). The effect could be a process of constructing a “we” and a “them. The concept may refer to peoples’ sense of loss of community and;

“It comprises a sense that one’s destiny is located in one place (dwelling), but with a developed cultural geography and reflective awareness that things could be different and that one’s own residence is not necessarily as you would like it to be.” (Savage, 2010, p.133)

Classical sociological studies as the Established and Outsiders highlights the deployment of a nostalgic version of belonging, and the process whereby social networks form the critical resource to displace newcomers (Elias & Scotson, 1994). The institutional perspective has been underscored in the construction of neighborhood attachment. Empirical findings in six deprived neighborhoods suggest that longer-term residents felt a nostalgic loss of community solidarity and work opportunities connected to a historical past, and were the context and collectively shared experience of a neighborhood shaped different renewal pathways (Cole, 2013). It has been argued that nostalgia serves to sustain a moral ownership of the community by constructing a symbolic ownership (Savage et.al, 2005). The moral ownership is a process of claiming emotional, nostalgic ownership to create a sort of symbolic violence over a place. Previous studies have suggested that a normative residency of neighborhood practices is constructed by the middle class population (Benson, 2014). In research on belonging and contemporary urban changes, belonging is seen as something dynamic that develops over time in relation to particular sites. Elective belonging stresses the tension between neighborhood fit and habitual dispositions (Savage et al, 2005:9; Benson, 2014). The spatiality of the field thus becomes an important factor affecting choices of places to live in and it has been suggested that the development could be understood as a spatial reworking of habitus and field (Watt, 2006). Selective belonging have been understood as “a spatially selective narrative of belonging that is limited to a given space within a wider area” (Watt, 2010:154). This means that residents construct their close neighborhood as symbolically different from the surrounding area.

Further it has been argued for a resurrection of a new kind of “localism” in elective belonging patterns, where residents attach to an ideal of the “local” by deploying nostalgic references in their sense of belonging, and at the same time constructing a distance from their present residency (Savage, 2008). One could interpret this as a social imagination of an authentic and
locally based coherent community. This is something that resembles the symbolic construction of community (Cohen, 1985), a construction of an imaged social stability and community.

Moreover it has been argued that one could see representations and relations to the neighborhood as performative (Bell, 1999; Benson & Jackson, 2013). From this point of view one could see the act of moving into a neighborhood as an act of constructing ones identity in relation to the place. But further there is an ongoing construction of a sense of belonging to the neighborhood when living in the area that relates to the knowledge of others in the surrounding and one’s social position in the community (Benson, 2014:11). This dynamics of place is a foundation in this study when it comes to residents’ ongoing practice and reflection over their attachment and social class.

2.3 The middle class, contestations and practices

Identification and dis-identification with places as an inherent part in belonging have been explored to understand residential attachment. The increased focus on the relation between space and place has marked a shift toward a more dynamic research agenda among urban sociologists (Gieryn, 2000). Bridge (2006) found a conflict between institutionalized and objectified cultural capital in his research on life-course trajectories of the middle-class in a gentrified area in Bristol. The exchange and conflict between social fields stress the dynamics and complexity of the middle class choice and sense of belonging. In the negotiation between aesthetic housing aspirations (objectified capital) and school choice for children (institutionalized capital), it was shown that the institutionalized capital was of greater importance. It was suggested that gentrification could be infused by the deployment of both types of cultural capital by concentrating resources in some areas, this insight expands previous research where the deployment of objectified capital has been highlighted as the primarily source of gentrification (Bridge, 2006:13). Further have social stability, safety and continuity been suggested to be important aspects of middle-class belonging. Social networks to continue a social reproduction through residential location has suggested to produces strategies of middle-class isolation and exclusion of less affluent residents´ in inner city areas (Atkinson, 2006:12).

Displacement has foremost been examined using quantitative methods, pointing to how increased rental prices force working class residents to withdraw from gentrified areas, even though the results are not unambiguous. Butler, Hamnett & Ramsden (2013) found how a
wealthier middle class in east London displaced less affluent residents through their educational choices for their children and by that how less affluent residents were forced to put their children in other schools. Talja Blokland (2009) used the local urban narratives from in-depth interviews to explore inclusionary/exclusionary mechanisms in a community that had undergone gentrification. By linking different groups´ narratives to a performative framework she showed that there was a process of socio-spatial exclusion of black people in the neighborhood and their narratives of belonging in the community’s development. The area where they lived was stigmatized and seen as deprived and their voices were not taken into account in the community development (Blokland, 2009:13). Results from work on middle-class disaffiliation in a London suburb, suggest that estate residents subscribed to a spatially selective version of the elective belonging discourse, which implied a withdrawal of attachment from the area where they lived (Atkinson, 2006).

A perspective focusing on relations and performances in urban research could nuance how internal social relations in communities develop over time. Benson and Jackson (2013) apply a performativity framework to explore the process of place-making, drawing from a comparative study of two areas in London, showing how the selective- belonging were an active part of the residents´ everyday lives, where the middle class actively chose certain ways of living and interacting with places. In a similar manner a research on mobility patterns and classes explored changes in a town after a de- industrialized shift and how class patterns were shaped within in the new setting. Results suggest that the student population researched in the town marked a sharp difference from the working class long-term inhabitant forming a cultural-spatial hierarchy, where some places were treated as deprived and actively avoided (Wattis, 2013).

Exploring residential narratives of belonging from a time-frame is another perspective revealing differences in residential attachment. The middle-class “gentrifiers” that many times have come to represent the initial face of gentrification is shown to be a dynamic and heterogeneous group (Bridge, 2003; 2006). Butler & Robsons study on three gentrified areas show the differences among areas when it comes to how residents deploy their capital. Social cohesion and the deployment of social capital were important in some areas and economic capital and instrumental belonging were seen in other gentrified areas. In Brixton, a multi-ethnic and mixed community the middle class deployed a view of an authentic neighborhood;
this in turn gave rise to a clash between the ideal of a socially mixed community and real social integration (Butler & Robson, 2013:13).

2.4 The present research

I have now described the foundations of a reworking of a spatial theory on social class and narratives of belonging. In drawing from Savage’s work residents hold a reflexive capacity to negotiate their belonging and attachment to places. Further, tying together theories of belonging (Savage et. al, 2005) and the ongoing transformation between identity and place through practice (Massey, 1992; Bell, 1999) allows for a more nuanced understanding of contemporary residential belonging. I argue that Bourdieu’s work offers a way to think about spatial relations and place attachment in how agents reflect upon and use different sites in their everyday life. I argue that there is potential in Bourdieu’s framework to link a mid-level theoretical framework that invokes the everyday spatial practices in relation to the suburb context in this study.

There has been a body of research focusing on belonging patterns among social classes and the conflict among narratives. The main focus has been to explore choice and motifs to move to certain areas by the middle class (Bensons, 2014). Less focus has been on how middle-class residents actually construct and develop narratives of belonging in relation to particular places and how they reflect on transitory processes. The relation between social class, place and urban renewal processes forms a matrix of relations that qualitative data could shed light on. The other aspect making this research valuable is the fact that similar studies on middle-class and their construction of a sense of belonging, have so far primarily been carried out in an Anglosaxian context (e. g Benson & Jackson 2013; Wattis, 2013), the exceptions are studies from Denmark (e.g. Oldrup, 2010; Oldrup 2014), Norway (e. g Hauge & Kolstad, 2007) and Holland (Van Eijk, 2012). Sweden forms a special case with rapid neo- liberalization of the housing politics (Hedin et.al, 2012) and increased socio-spatial segregation (Scarpa, 2015). Research in Sweden has primarily focused on gentrification and renewal processes in inner city districts (Franzén, 2005). This research is instead oriented towards contemporary suburban renewal processes. The third aspect making this is that this research focuses on belonging within a context of neighborhood renewal.

Some limitations with this approach should be discussed. A comparative approach could enrich data since it would give perspectives on how belonging patterns are constructed within different neighborhoods due to contextual factors (Butler & Robson, 2003). Inter-group
comparisons could further give insight on differentiation processes among middle-class and working class spatial practices, and their perceptions of neighborhood change. Alternative theoretical models may shed lights on different processes in how residents form social ties among each other. Network models as deployed by Soytemel (2015) show how social consistency, an important source of belonging, declined after gentrification processes. Studies exploring suburban networks could enrich data in showing how residents interact and construct peer groups of belonging.

3. METHODOLOGY

Within the realm of urban sociology this study uses a research design consisting of participant’s auto-photography with subsequent interviews. The purpose of this framework is to explore middle-class residents and how they construct a sense of belonging in a suburban area that undergoes change. The rationale for using this procedure is the perspective of place attachment and belonging as something socially dynamic, thus providing important information on how residents construct their narrative of belonging. Since everyday practices many times flow without reflection, the usage of auto-photograph have the potential to reveal meaningful and significant processes in the construction of places (Lombard, 2013:26). Using this perspective has the potential to enrich the data, and similar studies are so far not conducted in a Swedish context², with the aim of exploring narratives of belonging in the process of community change. Auto-photography in visual sociology has foremost been used to explore the visual culture of marginalized groups. Liebenberg et.al (2012:61) research on youth’s resilience to communal changes used visual materials, as videos and photographs to give voice to youths that historically have been set aside or neglected. The usage of auto-photography in this research aims for an understanding of how residents construct their sense of belonging in relation to the physical environment. In capturing everyday practice and neighborhood images, visualization and photo-elicitation are argued to enhance communication and reflection of neighborhood images (Schoepfer, 2014: 8). In this research I asked participants in the study to take photos (around five photos were recommended) in advance with a disposable camera on the local environment and places they used in their everyday life, places they attached to, detached from, or places that they felt had undergone

² However see Helene Oldrup (2010) for a similar methodological procedure in her research on middle class residents in a suburban area in Copenhagen
changes that affected their sense of belonging. This open instruction given to the respondents on their aspects of belonging is a way of opening up different analytical trajectories. I wanted to start with a range of possibilities to be able to narrow the inquiry in relation to relevant theories on belonging. The photos had the function to enhance reflection on their relation to the spatiality of the area. The photos were discussed in the second part of the interviews and the respondents got opportunities to reflect on these. In the analysis the photos was used as a way of illustrating how residents reflected on and use places in the area and how their narratives related to these. The visual culture displayed in photos could be interpreted as a form of social action where agents perform and construct a social representation in relation to norms and social codes (Oldrup & Carstens, 2012:229).

3.1 Sampling

The purposive sample deployed in the study was used with the aim to research a middle class group. The analytical category of social class is here defined as when agents share similar positions in the social space (Bourdieu, 1987) and share similar positions in the spatial space (Savage et.al, 2005; Simon et.al, 2007). In this study I used educational level to distinguish a middle class group. All residents had academic exams, except one resident who was in the last year at the university. In total ten residents were interviewed, six women and four men. They had all stayed in the area at least 1, 5 years. The sampled group represented a broad range of occupations as journalist, engineers, and cultural workers. Bourdieu means that educational qualification form one of the most important forms of cultural capital since it has a great potential to transform other capital by its symbolic value (1987:86).

The interviewed respondents’ had lived in the area between 1, 5 to 15 years. Eight of the ten respondents had children, and a majority of them had children at home. In total, four of the respondents lived in co-operative apartments and six in rented apartments. They lived in different parts of Bagarmossen, with a majority in the southern part of Bagarmossen in houses built in the 50’s, two lived in the northern part of Bagarmossen in the million dollar program houses and one in the central part of the area. The respondents were between 28 to 53 years old at the time for the interviews, with a majority of respondents between 35 to 45 years old.

The interviews were conducted from March to July in 2015. Two interviews were done through phone- calls due to time-constraints. These were recorded in my phone with a recording application and transcribed in the same way as the physical interviews, in these two cases photos were not discussed. I contacted respondents through social media by posting a
general inquiry and information about the study in public groups for people living in Bagarmossen and let those interested to participate contact me privately.

It is important to note the limitations with this sampling. There are other traits as economic and social capital that are relevant factors in how residents construct their sense of belonging. However I argue in line with Oldrup (2014) and the sampling division deployed in her comparative study on residents with and without academic qualification, that educational level form an important social class-division. Haugue & Kolstads (2007) comparative study on two housing areas used a survey study in two neighborhoods with different economic levels and later on interviewed residents about their perceptions of the area. My initial plan was to sample groups in a similar way by comparing two neighborhoods, but due to practicalities, as newly installed port locks, this was a too complicated approach. A larger sampling group would further increase the possibility to theorize upon the material.

3.2 Material

There are primarily two kinds of data that was collected, participant’s photographs and interviews. The secondary material functioned to sketch the overall progression of the area due to socio-economic development, population land use (foremost from the statistical service in Stockholm) but also contemporary and historical discourses of the area displayed in media and public documents, these are presented in the empirical context of the study (section 3.4). All names used in the result and analysis are changed from participants real name to avoid possibilities for outside identification.

3.3 Analytical framework

An analytical framework inspired by Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) was applied in the study. The iterative research design used in this study is a mode of working through the data in building up meaningful concepts in a dialogue with previous theories and concepts. The core in CGT is the emergent feature of the research, were the inquiry is narrowed in correspondence with new findings, the context and the researcher as “embedded in the process” (Charmaz, 2008: 160). In the analytical process I started by the raw data from interviews and photos and in correspondence with critical concept and theories to build up a contextual knowledge. I used what has been coined as “sensitizing” concepts as starting points to reflect upon the empirical findings, these are concepts that are open for development and not frames were findings should be inserted (Charmaz, 2014; 41). The sensitizing
concepts that initially will be elaborated as to evaluate residents’ sense of belonging were social class and elective belonging. The concepts were used to structure the semi-structured interview guide (see appendix).

CGT lies between a positivist approach applied by the grounded theory proponents Glaser and Strauss, and a more postmodern account on the social reality with a constructivist focus (Charmaz, 2014). CGT puts efforts in understanding how the social reality is constructed within a certain context or place, a “situated reality” (Charmaz, 2008). The interviews took place in different places suggested by the respondents where they felt comfortable, in local cafés and in other public places and occasionally in their homes. I tried not to force the interview but to pick up supplementary questions on themes the respondents talked about. One recurring theme was the reflections and contradictions on the middle-class position. I asked several respondents to develop that stance. As for example their position and actions in relation to the social-mix in the area was a category developed further in the analysis and in the refined interview guide. The interview guide presented in the appendix is the original interview guide used in the first four interviews. The refined and developed questions, were pointed to develop how the respondents perceived the social mix of people in the area. Further, questions on how they perceived authenticity was added. These themes showed to be important in the first interviews. I added questions as; is it important to you that your residency feels authentic? Would you say that you perceive Bagarmossen as an authentic area? How do you perceive the image of Bagarmossen as socially mixed? How would you position yourself in relation to that mix?

The coding process in grounded theory is rigorous, but more flexible and reflexive in the developments of concepts from raw data in CGT. The constant comparative approach was deployed in comparing codes with data and data with codes (Hallberg, 2006). The initial coding was done through segment coding were statements were coded as activities and processes and I tried to stay as close to the data as possible, the reason is to avoid pre-conceptualization and delimit theoretical possibilities in the initial coding phase. One example is the following quotation from an early interview with a man who had lived in the area for three years when we talked about his sense of belonging to the area;

“If someone tells you who you are, you become uncomfortable. I don’t like to fit in a specific style, everyone want to be unique. It’s the same in all sub cultures you want to be unique and then you realize you’re not, but that is a luxury problem”
I coded this segment as a process whereby the resident constructed his sense of belonging as a tension between being constructed in a category with specific characteristics and the process of constructing a uniqueness. Then I wrote a memo in relation to the theme above, on constructing a distinction through residency and the alternative. In the analytical process I started to focus on the alternative and the middle-class culture as a sub-culture. Later on an in comparison with other interviews and in correspondence with theoretical concepts I started to build up the category of authenticity in relation to a sense of belonging.

In vivo codes have been suggested to have the potential to revealing significant meaning and experiences by using participants own language and focusing on the lived experience (Charmaz, 2014:14). The next step in the process to open up the analytical space was to concentrate and focus on codes with more analytical and theoretical reach. In practice I compared codes with other codes to see whether a common underlying social process was at work in their narratives, the early memos and concepts were then compared to the sensitizing concepts. Theoretical coding is the next step described by Charmaz to further continue the analytical process, the process lies between emergence and application (Charmaz, 2014: 150).

I constructed memos from early interviews to be able to narrow the questions in subsequent interviews. The iteration between empirical findings and the sensitizing concepts used in the study focused on the process and the deduction of empirical material in constructing explaining categories (Charmaz 2014; 243). One example of the theoretical working process with the material was when participants in the study constructed a narrative of an ideal of a social mixed environment that led me to construct the category of constructive affiliation, distinct from previous studies on disaffiliation processes (Watt, 2006; Blokland, 2009; Wattis 2013).

The step of collecting data from participants in a good way means to establish a trusting research relationship to the participants. I used an informed consent form, to secure the informants rights and integrity that were handed out before the interviews and explained the purpose of the study. Furthermore I secured that the records and transcriptions were secure and none accessible for outsiders. I used the recommendations from the Swedish research council (Vetenskapsrådet, 2002) when it came to secure the interviewees integrity and anonymity. Further since there is an asymmetrical relationship between the researcher and the residents I have tried to reflect on my position during the research. Further it also meant that I tried to stay close to the data while displaying the result. I have tried to give nuanced views of
what the respondents said through the quotations and showing the context where these were expressed.

### 3.4 Empirical context of the study

The study took place in Bagarmossen a suburban area in the southern part of Stockholm and around 20 minutes from central Stockholm. Here I discuss some contextual variables that support the need of exploring the ongoing changes and give some brief information about the community. In 2014 the population in Bagarmossen was 11.417, were 34% had foreign background. Since 2000 people earning more than 320.000 Swedish crones have five doubled, but the general income is still less than the average in Stockholm (Statistikomstockholm, 2014). There are 3600 rented apartments and 1533 co-operative apartments in the area. Co-operative apartments have increased with 35% and rented apartment have decreased with 6% (ETC, 2015). The modernistic 50’s architecture has given Bagarmossen its characteristics as a preserved suburban area. The exception is the million program apartments built in the 70’s at Byälsvägen. The place is built on the principles of work, accommodations and city center (ABC in Swedish) that gives structure to the area. The area is separated from traffic, which means that there are no main roads crossing the center. The closeness to large green areas gives the neighborhood its character. About some ten years ago Bagarmossen had a reputation of being messy, with local gangs and violence (Dn, 2014). Nowadays the discursive image has changed, and people actively enter the area with motives that the area has good communication, a progressive cultural life and is close to nature (Stockholmdirekt, 2015). It is expected that the popularity will increase and the area is sometime seen as an alternative to more expensive areas (SvD, 2014).

The political voting pattern in the area is meaningful to note. Votes on progressive parties as Feministic Initiative (Fi) and the left wing party (V) were more than three times higher than the average in Sweden. However one should note that the local differences are high, in the million program area in the north part of the district, the Social Democrats (with a more traditional working-class agenda) dominated with almost half of the votes and Feministic initiative (Fi) and the left wing party (V) got substantially less votes (Val, 2014). This is an important contextual factor, since it displays potential cultural differences within the area. Bagarmossen is a compelling area to conduct a field analysis in due to the discursive and structural changes in the area.
4. RESULTS & ANALYSIS

In this section I analyze the constructed categories. The analysis concentrates on how residents generate a sense of belonging and how their narratives are constructed. There are three core categories, or modes of narratives being presented, Authenticity and belonging, Constructive affiliation and Rootless territorialism. The results presented are constructed as a chronological story, from establishment in the area to different modes of elective belonging and in the end to how recent changes in the area are perceived by the residents. Photos taken by residents are used to illustrate how they reflected on the spatial environment in their everyday life. I conclude with some comments and limitations of the presented results.

4.1 The process of establishment

Dealing with preconceptions and images of the area is a logical and chronological first step in establishing a relation to the area. Answers from interviewees on their general thoughts of moving to the area did follow a general pattern. They were dealing with two images of the area, as being messy or with a history of being messy and an image of an area that has become popular. Some respondents described how they confronted negative images of the area from friends and others in their surroundings.

“It feels nice now, but it’s true when I told some friend that we should move here, they told me it was special there, but we don’t know the history of the place. But nowadays we like it here” (Marc)

“I met a guy he scared me, told me that I should move that there is a lot of trouble, drugs, rumbles, and then you start to see those things. But I have started to feel at home here now” (Erika)

At the same time they dealt with an image of a socially and culturally engaged area that had become more popular during recent years. The comparatively low housing prices (previously) and the area as positioned closely to nature and 20 minutes from central Stockholm was major motifs for moving to the area. Nature was portrayed in photos taken by residents. It constructed a sense of belonging between the urban rush and a point of recreation and calmness.
Clearly the area is seen as family friendly and has historically been a place for families with children that is reflected in the architecture with a lot of playgrounds. Words that residents used to describe the area was open, tolerating, social-mixed, popularized and even gentrified. Several residents talked in positive terms about the openness and tolerance in the area. Anna, a woman with three children who had lived in the area for five years exemplifies that feeling;

“One thing that attracted us was the openness in the area, because we are a rainbow family, one family in the same neighborhood, we noticed that it’s a nice mix of people in the area. It’s an open community”

It have been described that establishing social bonds in relation to the socio-spatial environment is a functional and emotional process, and have been used to differentiate how residency is informed (Savage et al., 2005; Savage 2010; Oldrup 2014). Interestingly the aesthetic aspects of the area as aesthetic houses and other cultural symbols, the objectified cultural capital, was not as strong reasons for moving to the area as the aspect of social cohesion and engagement in the area. Rather a place with a locally based cultural capital where ones identity could fit was mentioned as important, the following quote from a resident exemplifies the negotiation between the aesthetic and the social qualities of the neighborhood;

“First when we moved here from Gubbängen, that is more aesthetically cute, I thought that the area was grey, we had some troublesome neighbors, it was very noisy compared to the silent Gubbängen, at first I was like “what have I done”...but It compensate that we knew a lot of people and
learned to know more people in the neighborhood, we hang out in the
courtyard, this neighborhood here is almost famous in Bagarmossen”
(Jessica)

Further there seem to be a tension between resident’s appreciation of a heterogeneous and
socially mixed area and a social homogenous area. This was a theme were respondents placed
themselves in between these expressing an ideal of a perfectly mixed neighborhood. Not to
rough, but not too much of a middle-class reservation. Karl, an engineer in his 40’s with two
children, who had lived in the area for three years talked about his pre-reflected images of the
area and the first time spent in the area;

“ I was hostile to the area first, from what I have heard and experienced
from the rough 80’s, first I thought it was like a hipster-nest in the southern
part of Bagarmossen, I was reluctance at first but now I love to live here”

He describe how he came to like the area first as a functional matter as the quietness of the
area and the infrastructure then he described how the area is distinct from his previous
residency that was not as socially mixed as Bagarmossen, but more of a reserve for the middle
class. He referred to his own grown up and the social-mixed area of previous residence and
how that fitted his ideas of a social-mixed area and his dispositions better. The cultural value
of living in a mixed-neighborhood could be transformed into a symbolic capital by searching
for diversity in urban communities when it is recognized by others from the group (Butler &
Robson, 2003: 103). Living in a mixed neighborhood could enhance residents’ cultural capital
by signaling an open and inclusive habitus and by that giving the social composition in the
area a symbolic value.

Benson (2014) highlights the relation between habitus and fit when it comes to residential
choice, showing how middle class residents draws from previous residential experiences to
adapt to the new multi-ethnic and socially mixed environment. Moving to an area is also a
process of being aware of one’s social class. Respondents in this study did express how they
learned to embrace the area, and that one could adjust habitus to fit in the neighborhood.
Kevin who had stayed in the area for ten years, expressed how his social class became explicit
when entering the area and why he felt like a stranger during his first years, when asking how
he came to notice that;

”They were not middle class academics, when I had parental leave I walked
around in the area, I met many who had stayed in the area for their whole
life, I remember confronting one electrician with a typical working class
name in the kindergarten and how he handled his kid. I felt that I had come
to a real working class area”

Rather than having a clear imagination of the area and its social compositions of the area, he
become aware of his social class when confronting differences. Respondents described how
they started to become aware of their social class in relation to the area due to ethnical and
class compositions in the area. The spatial segregation within the area was described as a
problem since it hindered people to integrate in a real sense. The social inclusive discourse
here is in sharp contrast to what Watt (2006) describes as spatially selective discourses, were
residents actively avoid certain places. Rather respondents described how they interact with
all parts of the suburban area, but that a social and spatial segregation was significant. The
following quotation is an example when Erika a resident who had live in the area for four
years reflected on her social position. It’s marked by an awareness of her privilege in living in
a co-operative apartment.

"I like it where I'm living. People call it the gated community. I just heard
one say that once. Of course it’s a privilege to live in a co-operative
apartment where it is nice and quiet, where everyone look out for each
other. It’s segregated within Bagarmossen as well”

Gated communities have a clear negative connotation referring to social and physical barriers;
even though just said once it’s a process whereby class markers becomes acknowledged.
Residents reflected on the segregation due to how people was dressed and how they moved
within the area. Reflecting on social class was a theme residents talked about in their
descriptions of the area and in their everyday life by confronting differences.

4.2 Authentic belonging

Authentic belonging is a major category constructed from the material. This is a process
whereby residents deployed narratives of a sense of small-scale social cohesion. In the first
analysis of the material I found that residents talked in terms of “the real”, “the alternative”
and “small scale community”. One wants to feel that one’s sense of identity and belonging is
real. The constructive feature of authenticity were talked about in different manners in the
interviews. The authenticity and small-scale familiarity is linked to the spatiality of the place
in their narratives, where the architecture of neighborhood units fuel socialization among
neighbors. The search for stability and continuity is an important aspect of this process. Jessica, a cultural worker in her 40’s, with a small child, who had stayed in the area four years says:

“There is a self-fulfilling community in the residential zones, “we are lucky. It would be fantastic if our daughter could stay here during her whole growth”

Another respondent spoke about authenticity in relation to his everyday life and the activities he saw as alternative, as box-bicycling and consumption of ecological food;

“I don’t think it’s so pretentious either, it feels natural and real, because we have people in our housing association engaged in cultivation project, and they really enjoy these activities, We have a co-house in one of the apartment, it’s really nice” (Karl)

Being nostalgic about the area was contradictory to what I thought before entering the field something expressed mainly by residents that had stayed in the area quite a short time (less than 5 years). The authentic aura and deployment of certain cultural behavior seems to function as an incentive to move to the area. The process of nostalgic constructions was in the material something referred to not to the particular place, but rather a constructive narrative deployed when entering the area as a part of their sense of elective belonging. This was a symbolic construction of an aura of all-scale social cohesion and an “urban village” living in the interviews, as a mode of elective belonging, nostalgic references have been seen as central in constructing place attachments (Savage et. al, 2005). After synthesizing the material with research on the authentic in urban cultures (Zukin, 2011; Jones, 2010) with the empirical findings, the category was developed and narrowed in following interviews. A nostalgic reference expressed in the respondent’s geographic repertoire was a process related to the social apprenticeship and the possibility to act collectively, and was related to a collective reflexivity and thoughts on social inclusiveness. Interviewees talked in terms of the area as “my village” with clear connotations to a small scale community.

“I feel like this is my village now, much more now than before, it’s because you get to know a lot of people in 9 years, and it’s so small that you recognize each other” (Kevin)
Further an important aspect of the authentic feeling many residents described was linked to the engagement in the area;

“There is a sense of community in Bagarmossen that I never have felt elsewhere, I can’t say what it is, I feel that people here are engaged, I can’t really describe what it is” (Jessica)

- Do you feel that this is anchored in the place?

“Yes, because people that have lived here told me that it was like this before. It doesn’t have anything to do with gentrification, but the engagement take other forms now. People interested in culture move in here now. From what I understand people have always loved Bagarmossen” (Jessica)

There seem to be a cultural and social capital that residents referred to when speaking about the community and its history linking toward contemporary engagement in the area. This embracing of inter-generational mix and the long-term residents in the area could be interpreted as a construct of stability to counterbalance a sense of ontological insecurity by constructing a continuity of sociality over time (Bennett, 2015). Deploying a sense of belonging to the authentic place was in the interviews narratives that opened up the space toward the past, in a process of establishing a moral relationship (Savage, 2005; 44). The process here, were residents deploy reflexivity about the neighborhood quality and authentic culture is mixed up with a sense of changing community. Residents talked in term of certain sites that fueled their sense of an authentic neighborhood. Marc a journalist with two children, who has lived in the area for six years, described a sense constructive authenticity as linked to his sense of belonging;

“For me it is much about Lilla Bagis (the café), that is in the suburb center, I think they opened five years ago and I felt something was happening. They are very central, they have French music and a real bakery, I feel like I want to stay in the area and have a coffee. Before that I remember that I wanted to go to the town (central parts of Stockholm)”
Later on he pointed out in relation to the excerpt that he came to notice that people that was similar to him come to visit this place. This form of authenticity is at first glance clearly linked to a popularized and spatial dimension of belonging where a new symbolic place serves as constructing an authentic feeling and fueled his sense of belonging to the place. In contrast, Jones (2010) means that networks of interactions and social relations surrounding the built environment, i.e. a cultural authenticity is of greater importance than the material authenticity. It means that people negotiate the authenticity of places rather than having an essentialist notion of places. Authenticity as rooted in cultural production may also be contrasted to more of a superficial authenticity:

“it’s hard to explain, I feel like it’s not capitalistic that it doesn’t have to be a great plan behind it, that it could go in either direction, I would say that it could be something positive” (Kevin)

A woman who had re-entered the area two years ago, comments the development in the area related to the authenticity in the area;

“It’s sad when it becomes more about consumption of culture rather than production of culture (Sara)

This may be a reaction against what Johansson (2003) sees as consumption of authenticity and the aesthetic of the city in urban spheres as productions of exclusive life-styles.
talked about the real as distinct from the capitalistic cultural production, as small scaled and anchored in the place.

4.3 Constructed affiliation

Constructed affiliation is a major category elaborated with in this study; the identified process surrounds a discourse of social inclusiveness. This could be interpreted as an inclusive version of elective belonging. Residents expressed an ideal of a socially mixed neighborhood where everyone could fit. In the material I found that this was a process was the respondents discursively affiliate with other social classes and ethnical groups in the area. At the same time they constructed a distinction between themselves as belonging to the middle class group and others through an awareness of their social position. A recurrent theme in the interviews was the embracement of the social mix in the area. The construction of a sense of belonging is a process of relating one’s own social position to the social composition of the area. I wondered what the respondent’s meant when they said that it was “nice” to live in a mixed neighborhood. The following statement explicates this;

"I think that, maybe this middle classish, that it's nice when there is a social mix of people, I think that it is not as socially marginalized as in other suburban"(Karl)

Further the respondent mention how he become aware of the subtle class differences, and at the same time embraced these differences.

"I like the center, it’s nice, I use to meet some old working colleagues there and hang out in the local pub, Sherlock Holmes, I tried to order a dry martini, you shouldn’t, it’s better to order a gin and tonic” (Karl)

To construct a middle class narrative in relation to the area, residents expressed a cultural difference and at the same time embraced the areas character as mixed. This process share some similarities with Butler and Robson´s research on gentrified areas in London where the middle class residential embracement on social-mixing served as an ideological motivated statement, rather than actual social integrations and networks expanding social groups (Butler & Robson, 2001:12). The authors described this as a tectonic social process where groups lives parallel but with respect. This discursive reflexivity expressed partially as a class awareness, could be interpreted as a practice of legitimating one’s deployment of cultural capital.
"It is double, at the same time it’s much of what I like, the hipster life-style, Lilla Bagis and sourdough bread, and the co-cultivation projects. But it’s constructed for those with resources. For those who are unemployed or those who have no education, or have a disability are not really a part of it. I love this eco and collective lifestyle. But not everyone has access to these activities, one should remember that” (Erika)

Erika displays an awareness of her privileged position. She likes to be a part of the alternative cultures and engage in those activities. At the same time she’s aware that this is activities constructed for those with resources. Erika’s narrative expresses a heightening sense of reflections of her own position in relation to other groups and her reflexivity about her deployment of cultural capital. Further she mentioned spatialization of activities, bicycling around in box-bicycles and art-exhibitions linked to certain places. One interpretation of the quotation is that the awareness of one’s cultural and social capital community may serve as legitimation of certain practices. That not everyone has the cultural resources to engage in this activities were mentioned throughout the interview. The ability and legitimacy to interact with certain places are linked to the capital possessed by the agent. Residents in the study did drawn up lines between different social groups and their access to different places and the lack of interaction between groups, primarily on ethnical basis. They described how they would like and enhanced interaction and communications among groups. It is argued that the struggle of legitimacy within a field is a symbolic struggle of an agent’s habitual disposition (Bourdieu, 1985:734).

Rather than claiming moral ownership they legitimate some behaviors through a discursive awareness. This process accounts for many interviews, having a privileged position (in a cultural sense) in the urban landscape when it comes to awareness and a cultural engagement. Previous findings in studies on housing aspiration and the middle class suggest that this group legitimate a moral ownership over places (Savage, 2005), and further that this morality is mixed-up with a reflexivity over ones social position (Oldrup, 2014). Findings here illustrate the complex moral aspects of possessing an advantage cultural capital. Results in this study suggest that a deeper process of reflexivity about the middle class position is at work in relation to other social groups. The process of establishing a middle class narrative and identity is nonetheless unproblematic;
“It feels like, sometimes I think a little, just that you have succeeded in settling down in an area where so many in a superficial way look like myself, I don’t have to challenge my preconceptions that much, or my own way of living, but it’s good for my own well-being” (Jessica)

One striking finding was the distinctive feature, between the ideal of a socially mixed and heterogeneous neighborhood expressed in the material.

“Surely I see myself as middle-class, I think that have contributed to my sense of belonging, even if it’s clear, not always, there is a majority of young stable middle class parents, I think they are well off, not only of course but it has become a clear middle-class base here” (Kevin)

This reflexivity is linked to the spatial activities in the area, Adam a student who has lived in the area for three years reflected on his use of public sites in the area;

“I feel a sense of belonging in the center where kids are playing. I use to sit down on a bench there, even if there is some alcoholic person there, which usually is, and in the whole country, I think it’s nice, in a sense it’s including”

Previous findings on elective belonging suggest the link between habitus and the neighborhood as central (Savage et.al 2005), however result from Dutch studies challenge somewhat this notion since a large middle class population still lives in deprived and stigmatized neighborhood (Pinkster, 2012). Results here could be interpreted as residents construct a sense of inclusive sense of belonging, contrary to the disaffiliation processes described by (Watt, 2009) and (Blokland, 2001),

4.4 Rootless territorialism

Seemingly contradictory being rootless and territorial, was a process described by respondents as mutually reinforcing, it highlights the aspects of adjusting and coping with new environments and ultimately to put down roots. As part of the elective belonging it marks a capacity to choose living where it fit one’s habitual disposition. The search for stability was a process described by residents was they wanted a social continuity of the place, and at the same time a community of social identification. One respondent described this as an act of constructing a contextualized sense of belonging;
“I’m quite rootless, I have grown up in many places, I have never felt a strong sense of belonging to a particular place, and I have noticed that a sense of belonging could grow in different setting” (Karl)

Later on he describes the importance of settling down;

“When you get kids it nice to stay at the same place for a while, I think we are quite territorial in that sense” (Karl)

The process of fit between habitus and field are related to social position. Hasting and Matthew (2014) outlines a process whereby middle-class capacity to negotiate and deploy capital gives them an advantage in the local service sector, by using their cultural capital in school choices etc. The agency of the middle class and to “put down roots” is linked to a capacity to mobilize resources and choices. This distinction between movers and those who are born and breed in the area are described as a capacity to cope with the new area (Savage et.al, 2005). This capacity to move and transcend social boundaries was a theme recurrent throughout the interviews and residents described how they learned to handle new circumstances and embrace the difference. Several residents described the process to put down roots as linked to their personal biographies. The context of a family friendly area was an important aspect when it comes to the choice of settle down in the area. Jessica describes that she wants to give her daughter a stable growth in the same area contradictory to the contemporary fluid place attachment.

“We are lucky to have this social coherence were we live now and it’s nice, when you have children, our daughter has no siblings, but she got the social here from kids in her age. In Stockholm, it’s not the case that you stay in an area for your whole growth, but I would it be fantastic if we could. For the social coherence”

Constructing a territorial sense of belonging is marked as a tension between stable and fluid attachment. Sennett (1998) describes the insecurity and how it affects us when it comes to place attachment and identity construction in contemporary society. The response to this development could be interpreted as an ideal of an emotive narration of a place. Elective belonging among middle class groups displays both a local attachment and a cosmopolitan mobility (Savage, 2008).

4.5 Neighborhood change and belonging
The ongoing change in the area, an increased popularity and housing transformations are developments that were a great part of the discussion in the interviews. Residents described how the talk of the area had changed during their stay in the area. This discourse was both a fear of the structural changes and at the same time a transformation that have had positive effects on the neighborhood. A recurrent theme in the interviews was transformation from rented apartments to co-operative apartments and how that had led to a fear of displacement and a threat to the areas social composition off residents. This theme was also reflected on in the photos taken by respondents as a general theme. These were related to the visual transformation of the area. One respondent shows a picture she had taken of Mäklarhuset, a new established brokerage firm in the area, when I asked what she thought about that;

"I feel uncomfortable, but at the same time I live in a co-operative apartment as-well. It's kind of double, I’m moving out from the inner town and I feel that I like everything that resemble Södermalm as Lilla Bagis, but I don’t want the other thing. I don’t want that brokerage firm here. I came to Bagarmossen with my salary and my resources, and then the sourdough bread come here that I can afford with my middle-class background and I want that, but then I don’t want the other representing that privilege and possibility” (Erika)
Many interviewees expressed a fear that it would make the area segregated between those who could afford it and those that wouldn’t be able and the potential displacement, even though of them stayed in a co-operative apartment. That was reflected in the sense that the respondents expressed a fear that the development would continue. The process is connected to their sense of belonging, since it threatens an ideal social mixed area and an authenticity of the area;

“It’s the feeling that something comes beyond your own possibilities, this brokerage firm symbolize this, I saw it like a threat, oh my god what is going on here, how long could we stay here” (Jessica)

Relating one’s position in the broader structure of change, interviewees displayed a sense of distinction between what’s good for me and what’s good for the area. Speaking about the increased middle class group in the area was problematic in a structural way, but in a personal way it enhanced a sense of belonging since people that could enhance their identification with other residents in the area. When speaking about these cultural changes, Linda who had lived in the area for 15 years described how the pubs in the area had changed

“Nowadays it’s more of mix of people in those places. People who goes there for a beer. Not only the regulars. And it’s nice. I always recognize some when I pass there. It could be a negative thing as well”
Many respondents express how the habitual fit increased in a sense with a growing middle class group in the area. This could be interpreted as critical since it’s gives rise to a clash between the structural changes and a sense of belonging to the growing middle class group. Narratives following neighborhood changes have sometimes been linked to a sense of powerlessness and increased division among groups (Bashir & Flint, 2010). The complexity displayed by residents on their perception and sense of belonging could be related to symbolic value of the community. The changes in the area could be interpreted as a threat of the way “of doing local social relations” (Savage, 2008:161). The residency in the community are characterized by an openness and inclusiveness. This was an important aspect in the resident’s narratives of the place and their sense of elective belonging. It was something referred to as a stability of the place and the social cohesion in the area. The structural changes the transformations of houses from rented to co-operative apartments could be interpreted as a threat to these relations. This tendency was clear when it came to the newly installed port locks in some parts of the suburb. Amanda who had lived in Bagarmossen a relatively short time (1, 5 years) expressed how she had noticed this change in the area;

“I feel like I have to start to look out for myself in another way, like I have something to protect”

4.6 Summary and limitations

Exploring the process of constructing a sense of belonging may enhance our understanding of contemporary social boundary making. The categories constructed from the data are related to different processes in the construction of a sense of belonging to the area. In the establishment phase I have shown how residents confronted the areas bad reputation, but also confronted the popularized discourse of the area. Further they downplayed the aesthetic values of the neighborhood in favor of the social cohesion in the community and the functional aspects as closeness to nature and the infrastructure. Residents hold a capacity to negotiate about their elective belonging and adjust their narrative to fit to the residency. The authentic aspect of belonging was a process whereby local social relation and the social cohesion in the community were upheld, the real, contrasted to a capitalistic construction of authentic cultural production was emphasized. Further residents incorporated a reflexive agency in their narrative on their social position the tension to legitimate certain spatial practices. A constructed affiliation with less affluent groups and an embracement of the social mix was founded contrary to disaffiliation process described in previous research. A narrative version
of rootless territorialism was deployed; a negotiation between the continuity of the local and mobility of place, this narrative was incorporated in their sense of elective belonging. Photos taken by interviewees are used to illustrate how they reflected on the spatial environment in their everyday life. Three general themes were displayed in the photos taken by residents. The nature was depicted as an important source of emotions, as the lines between nature and city was blurred. Nature had a strong emotional value for them and was an important site to construct sense of belonging. Second many respondents took photos on their closest neighborhood as an important source of belonging and identification. At last respondents illustrated changes in the area, the spatial changes and impressions were reflected in the visual material. Newly built environment and transformed houses had strong symbolic values since it marked changed relation in the suburb and drew up new social boundaries, foremost in the relation between economic investment and the value of an inclusive suburban area.

First, a comparative neighborhood study may enhance our understanding on how the relation between neighborhood context and residential belonging are mediated. Second, since the interpretative theoretical standpoint focus on practices and abstraction, rather than explanations of social phenomenon (Charmaz, 2014: 230-234), the result presented here should therefore be understood as partial and contextual. The ambition here has been to open up some analytical categories in the process whereby residents construct a sense of belonging.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study has been to research the relation between narratives of belonging and social class. The research was conducted in Bagarmossen, a southern suburban area in Stockholm a neighborhood that is the process of renewal and upgrading. The categories constructed in the research should be understood as processual, residents construct middle class identity markers and performances within the neighborhood context over time. I have shown that the concept of elective belonging is a valuable tool to explore social boundary making within an urban context and how people sort and cluster around similar others. At the same time the concept showed not to be able to explain the inclusive narratives of an open and socially mixed neighborhood expressed by residents in the study. Slightly different from previous research that mainly focus on the process of disaffiliation (e.g. Atkinson, 2006; Wattis, 2013), this paper identifies the process were the performance of a middle class narrative is both a positive view of the social mixed area and a process of distinction. As the results show the embracement of social mixing, holding the capacity to transcend class
boundaries on the surface, may serve as a class-fraction process. A spatial reworking of the Bourideuan concepts has shown how the usage and interaction with places in the suburban context is marked by resident’s cultural capital. The class fraction process in the study, reflect the usage of capital in the spatial field, how residents move and construct the other.

I suggest that this relational process and the reflection about one’s social class is tensional, that there is an everyday class practice that sometimes comes in conflict with an ideal of a mixed and open society. Studies on the interactions between middle class groups and other social groups in problem areas have suggested that the link between interacting and displayed meaning of neighborhood, and the relation between narrative and practice are complex (Van Eijk, 2012). The concept “to belong”, is a multidimensional concept, deploying nostalgic version of a small neighborhood an “urban village”, is not necessarily a process of relation to the past, rather a capacity to negotiate about one sense of belonging toward the future, but mixed up with the ideas of the community’s longevity and continuity. The renewal of the area was both seen as a threat to the heterogeneous character of the area, at the same time it constructed a source of belonging to similar others with an in-move of middle-class residents.

This tension is important to note since socially mixed policies per sé, have not given any straight evidence to enhance integration, people could share space without interacting with each other to any larger extent (Mugnano & Palvarini, 2013).

I’m aware of the limits of the theoretical concepts elaborated with and the theoretical reach produced in this study, but the insight given in the process of constructing a sense of belonging may enhance our understanding on contemporary social boundary making in suburbs that undergoes renewal. The three main core categories constructed in this research, constructed authenticity, rootless territorialism and constructive affiliation are cornerstones in the belonging process identified. Importantly this has shown to be a dynamic process developing over time and in relation to the neighborhood and belonging become infused by class markers. I contend that the act of belonging are actively constructed and negotiated within a cultural, social and economic field within in the community. Further studies may attend focus on comparative neighborhood research (Butler & Robson, 2001); to shed light on differences in belonging patterns between gentrified/upgraded communities. How differential belonging patterns among social classes within the same area are constructed could shed lights on different social classes perceive neighborhood changes. Further concept development on inclusive narratives of belonging may also enhance our understanding of the complexity between practice and discourse and the conflict between ideal and social practice.
From a policy perspective it is valuable to see renewal and gentrification processes from a perspective of belonging and the cultural aspects of these trajectories. How residents deploy their cultural capital in the neighborhood is an important aspect of how meaning and social identification is attached to the site, here I have tried to show how symbolic boundaries between groups are infused in the built environment and reflected on in residents everyday life. Belonging ties together the psychosocial environment and are affected by structural changes. Since narratives are an important part of a neighborhoods history, the inclusion or exclusion of certain narratives are important parts of the process of enhancing or impair the socio-spatial democracy.

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APPENDIX

Interview guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A) General question for interview template</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Background</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. When did you move to the area? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Was it something special that made you move here?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What had you heard of the area before moving here?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Belonging</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How do you think the residential composition works in the area?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Have you noticed any conflicts in the area? How?</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Do you feel welcomed in the area? In what way? Are there any parts of the area you feel more or less welcomed to?</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Do you feel any belonging to other people in the area? In what way and to whom? Any specific groups?</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Would you say that you belong to a certain social class? In what way?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Do you feel that you could distinguish between certain social groups in the area?</td>
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<td>10. Do you feel that you belong more in certain areas?</td>
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<td>11. Is there any behavior in the area that you like or dislike? How is that affecting you?</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Do you feel safe in the area?</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. What do you think about the area in general?</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Do you think the neighborhood design fits you?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Changes in the area</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Would you say that there has been a change of the area since you moved here? In what way?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Would you say that the residential composition had changed since you moved here? In what way/how do you feel about that? Has it affected you in any sense?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Has it affected you that the rental prices have increased? In what way?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Have you noticed that the area has become more popular? How?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
19. Do you still like or dislike the area? What is good, what is bad? Do you miss something in the area?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions on the photos taken by respondents</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Could you describe the picture?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is your experience of the place?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What do you usually do there?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has the place changed while you have stayed in the area-have you been affected by that?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have you changed your behavior or your opinion about the area, or the area in general?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there anything you like to add? Thoughts after what we have talked about?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>