The City as Socio-Ontology

Community, Locality and Social Space within a Minor City in Southern Sweden

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Thanks

To the interviewees, whose participation made this study possible. Thank you for letting me into your homes and lives.

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Abstract
In sociology in general, community is often seen as an expression for something seriously threatened or even destroyed by modernity. In urban sociology, this question has traditionally manifested itself in a ‘search exhibition’ of communal bonds within the city landscape. This analytical approach tends to split up ‘community’ and ‘city’ into two different forms of social experience. By adopting a socio-ontological approach, this study argues that experiences of community cannot be ontologically separated from experiences of the city.

The aim of this study is to examine how the interviewees, living in the same neighborhood within a minor city in southern Sweden, create a perception of the city as a whole in relation to their own positioning therein. From this aim, two research questions have been formulated as follows: How is Milltown socio-ontologically constituted as a social space of relations? And: How do the interviewees construct a purified community? In order to examine this, nine in-depth interviews were conducted with residents in a middle class neighborhood (Greenwood), located in a minor city in southern Sweden (Milltown). The material was analyzed using a socio-ontological approach combined with Pierre Bourdieu’s concepts of social space and habitus, and Richard Sennett’s concepts of purified community and collective personality.

The results of this study show how the perceived social complexity of Milltown as a whole is purified into an authentic experience of community. Greenwood is being constituted as a private sphere, which is isolated from the rest of the city. Greenwood represents a simplification of the social environment within the city landscape, where personal feelings and values are projected. It is also shown how interaction between neighbors in Greenwood is almost completely absent, and how the interviewees compensate this absence by constructing a collective personality. This collective personality envisages how they are the same, rather than what they actually do in their relations to each other. The feelings of belonging stem from shared expectations that neighbors have on each other, rather than from interactions. Finally, the results show how this purified community identity is constructed against other neighborhoods in Milltown, which are seen to represent different ways-of-life.

This study contributes to a more complex understanding of how feelings of belonging are constituted in relation to a specific locality, but also how this understanding enables a perception of the city as a whole. Accordingly, insights have been achieved on how recent attempts to ‘redefine’ the community concept in sociology can be used empirically, and to be further built upon theoretically. Further, urban sociology has traditionally been concerned with big cities. This study argues that the urban sociological tradition has exaggerated the differences between minor and larger cities. The argument is that minor cities should be approached as socially complex milieus as well, where people are aware of each other but do not know each other. Gesellschaft relations should therefore not be understood as something exclusive to the metropolis, but rather as a condition of life in modernity in general. Finally, this study also gives an insight about the mechanisms behind voluntary segregation. This is a matter that is often neglected in urban sociological research, which traditionally has worked in paradigm of poverty, thus focusing on stigmatized neighborhoods.

Key words
Socio-Ontology, Urban Sociology, Community, Social Space, Martin Heidegger, Pierre Bourdieu, Richard Sennett
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1. Introduction

A city is a highly complicated and complex agglomeration. Its social composition, with its diversity of human beings and institutions, is unmanageable to holistically overview. The interest of this study lies in how people manage and deals with this abundance when they are constructing a perception of the city as a whole. But also how they position themselves and others in this complex milieu.

This thesis thus concerns itself with social relationships in the city, and how the city is experienced by certain individuals within a specific neighborhood. In urban sociology, social relationships within the city have traditionally been analyzed in relation to the concept of community (Gans 2009). In sociology in general, community is often seen as an expression for something seriously threatened or even destroyed by modernity (Delanty 2010: 151). Zygmunt Bauman (2001: 144), for example, claims that in the abundance of social life, it becomes hard to form a secure foundation for one’s identity and feelings of belonging. This - in turn - makes it harder to achieve happiness in life. We miss community because we miss security (Ibid.). In urban sociology, this question has traditionally manifested itself in an empirical and theoretical approach similar to that of a ‘search exhibition’: Is community to be found in the city landscape? And if community does exist, how to categorize and conceptualize it? Is it ‘lost’ or ‘saved’? Is it ‘strong’ or ‘weak’? This approach tend to split up ‘the community’ and ‘the city’ into two different forms of social experience. By adopting and building upon a socio-ontological approach, inspired by Aspers & Kohl (2013) and Heidegger (2013), this study argues that experiences of community cannot be ontologically separated from experiences of the city.

1.1 Aim and research questions

The aim of this study is to examine how the interviewees, living in the same neighborhood within a minor city in southern Sweden, create a perception of the city as a whole in relation to their own positioning therein. Their ‘positioning’ refers both to their physical position within a specific neighborhood (i.e. Greenwood), and their positions within a social space of

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1 Community studies, for example, have always been a genre closely related to the field of urban sociology (Gans 2009). Also, notions of ‘neighborhood’ and ‘community’ have traditionally been used interchangeably when examining social life in cities (M.A. Hunter 2014).
relations, in Bourdieu’s (1984) terms. From this aim, two key issues have been delineated which will serve as analytical focus throughout the study:

*How is Milltown socio-ontologically constituted as a social space of relations?*

*How do the interviewees construct a purified community?*

The *purification* of an experience is a strategy for individuals to cope with the abundance and complexity of social life. In order to fend the dissonance of conflicted and tangled events, a purified identity creates a certain immunity of this abundance. Community thus takes on a *mythic* character in this definition; i.e. it highlights its imaginative constitution. Focus will therefore be on how community is talked about internally, and how it is projected externally. This, in turn, will be understood in relation to how the interviewees perceive the city as a whole, and how they position themselves and others in this *social space of relations*.

1.2 Disposition

The following chapter, ‘Background’, aims to position this study within in its scientific context. Emphasis will be on how the concept of community traditionally has been treated within urban sociology, and what limitations such an approach have brought about. More recent contributions will also be discussed. The theoretical framework of the study is presented in chapter 3. Here focal concepts are defined and discussed. Further, in chapter 4 - ‘Methodology’ - the epistemological approach of the study will be outlined and discussed. This includes to make clear what kind of knowledge this study claims to contribute with, as well as how this knowledge was produced. Also, a reflexive examination upon the premises which made this study possible will be undertaken, as well as an account for selection and motivations, implementation, and the process of analysis. Chapter 5, ‘A presentation’, will give a description of Milltown as a city and Greenwood as a neighborhood. The nine interviewees will also be presented. In chapter 6, the results of this study are presented. Finally, in chapter 7, ‘Conclusion’, the results will be summarized and discussed. This also includes an account for this study’s contributions and implications, as well as suggestions and potential inputs for further research.
2. Background

The aim of this chapter is to position this study within its larger, scientific context. This chapter serves the function as both a historical background as well as a critical review of more recent research. The first section emphasizes on how the concept of community traditionally has been treated within urban sociology, and the limitations such an approach have brought about. The second section discusses more recent approaches to the community concept. The chapter ends with a section that discusses questions of social distances between people, and the relation of place and identity in the city landscape.

2.1 The community question

This section will critically examine how the concept of community traditionally has been treated within urban sociology. This means to determine the ontological status that has permeated the concept of community in former sociological research, and what epistemological limitations such an approach have brought about.

2.1.1 Community as lost, saved or liberated?

Three themes are often being outlined as focal when it comes to how the question of community has been treated within traditional urban sociology. That is whether community is lost, saved or liberated (Flanagan 1990: 76-77). The ‘Community lost’ tradition emphasizes the breakdown of social ties in the modern city. The social cohesion of the small town, with its intimate relationships and strong social ties, was seen as seriously threatened or even absent in the city. Strong senses of belonging were replaced by anonymous relationships, and people were endangered to become disorganized and alienated (e.g. Tönnies 2001, Park 1915 and Wirth 1938/1964). This notion of community has a long tradition within sociology. What Ferdinand Tönnies in 1887 (2001) called Gemeinschaft is often translated to ‘community’. Gemeinschaft is “all intimate, private, and exclusive living together” (Ibid: 33). The concept of Gemeinschaft is closely related to what Emile Durkheim (2010) in 1893 described as ‘mechanical solidarity’; i.e. a premodern form of social cohesion where people are connected to each other through likeness in their beliefs, sentiments and norms (Ibid: 79). Both Tönnies and Durkheim saw this form of community to be of a natural and organic origin, and the family was its source (Aldous et al 1972).
When serious empirical studies of city life began among a group of researches that become to be known as the Chicago school of sociology in the early twentieth century, the ‘community lost’ approach was still prevailing. For example, Louis Wirth (1964), a later contributor to the school, highlighted the social disorganization that followed urbanization. Social disorganization is usually understood as the inability for a community to maintain cohesion, i.e. common values and effective social control of its residents, in the city landscape (Ibid: 70). Consequently, the increased social mobilization of the city made relations between different social groups instable. The larger the city, the greater is the potential social differentiation between its individuals (Ibid: 70). Even if the individual could be able to claim a certain degree of freedom from the constraints of personal and emotional ties, the individual – at the same time- loses “the spontaneous self-expression, the morale, and the sense of participation that comes with living in an integrated society” (Ibid 1938: 12-13).

However, beginning in the 1950s, the ‘Community lost’ approach was taken under criticism when empirical studies showed how community ties had ‘survived’ within neighborhoods in cities (e.g. Whyte 1955, Gans 1962, Young & Willmott 1960 and Liebow 2003). The neighborhoods under study were from the outside perspective only ostensibly disorganized. When ethnographers studied these communities they instead found an organization of social life consisting of hierarchies, habits and conducts that seemed to work more or less independently from the city that surrounded them. Eventually, in the 1970s, representatives for network analysis criticized this community concept for being too place-bound, and that it ignored other major spheres of daily action and sociability (e.g. Wellman & Leighton 1979, Fischer 1982). Community was instead seen as ‘liberated’ from the constraints of place in the city. This means that formation of primary-relations are embedded in a larger whole, rather than districted to a specific locality, like the neighborhood.

2.1.2 Globalization, placelessness and declining social capital
In recent years, a shift in focus has occurred in urban studies from industrialization to that of globalization. As far as community is concerned, the question is whether cities have totally lost their connection with local communities, as the cities have become absorbed in to a ‘global flow’ or a ‘network society’ (Delanty 2005: 51). This tradition especially highlights the irrelevance of place in the construction of identities and feelings of belonging (e.g. Castells 2011, Sassen 2011).

Some urban theorists have taken this discussion further, and even claimed the end of community. Community has no “salving powers” that will save us from “crass individualistic
materialism”, according to David Harvey (2011: 235). Instead, community tends to fragment the city even more, with its most extreme expression in the gated community; an ‘urban fortress’ built on an ecology of fear rather than of trust and solidarity (see Davis 1999). Consequently, community leads to increased isolation, which also results in increased polarization between people. These factors have seen to eroded civic engagement (Putnam 1995: 139). This discussion of declining social capital is an updated version of the classical ‘community lost’ argument (Sampson 2012: 38). People are seen to be ‘bowling alone’[3], and the meaningful human contacts that make up a ‘true community’ have faced a serious decline (Putnam 1995: 139).

2.1.3 Functional differentiation and segregation
This conception of a ‘community’ versus ‘the city’ or ‘society’ has had implications not only on a theoretical level, but also practically in that it has guided city planning ideals (e.g. Sennett 1996 and Franzén & Sandstedt 1981). The city planning ideal of the ‘Garden City’[5] was seen to establish a full opportunity for the primary-group, “with all of its habits of frequent direct meeting and face-to-face intercourse” (Mumford 2011: 95). The idea was that city planners should build ‘social nucleuses’ where community relations could grow and foster. This would lead to a reintegration within city life, and to encounter the threats of disorder and incoherence that city life inhabited, described by the Chicago sociologists. In 1961, Jane Jacobs (2004) famously attacked this idea, and that of functionalist planning in general, by unmasking the utopic character of community. City planners have been guided by principles derived from villages and “fantasy towns”, and by “anything except for real cities” (Ibid: 28). This has – paradoxically – led to increased isolation and segregation within the city, and a lack of vital ‘city life’. Jacob’s criticism of the functionalistic planning ideal is a discussion that even today permeates the urban planning discourse. The diversity of ‘city life’,

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2 ‘Social capital’ is a term with many definitions, although typically understood as a resource embodied in human contacts and social ties among persons, like those of norms and trust (Sampson 2012: 38).

3 Americans are bowling today than ever before, but they are bowling alone rather than in organized leagues (Putnam 1995: 138). Therefore the ‘bowling alone’ metaphor works as a manifestation of increased individualism and decreased engagement in social organizations in contemporary America.

4 For example, Franzén & Sandstedt (1981) have written about how the concept of community (‘Grannskapstanken’) has influenced city planning within a Swedish context. Franzén and Sandsedt show how the community idea paradoxically survived the criticism of the functional planning ideal of the 1940’s and was later incorporated unconsciously by the city planners of the 1970’s. This shows how deep rooted this concept is within the discourse of city planning.

5 See Ebenezer Howard 2011.
as Jacobs describes it, has become an ideal; the city should be densified rather decentralized.\textsuperscript{6} ‘City life’ - implicitly defined as a diversity of people, cultures and facilities that make the city a vivid place - has become something desirable, and has been put in relation to the functional differentiated city with its segregated suburbs. The city works as a dissociated morphology; an “empire of separation and scission between elements” that isolate parts instead of integrating them (Lefebvre 2010: 80-81). Densification is seen to ‘loosen up’ these boundaries. However, the implications of this from a sociological perspective have not yet been examined.

2.1.4 The search for community
This understanding of community, which has led to a ‘search expedition’ within the city landscape, is not only found in the history of sociological theory. For example, Henriksen and Tjora (2013) recently suggested an interactional analysis of communities, where the neighborhood should be studied as containing different ‘forms of activity’ that provide contact zones. They argue that it is within these interactions that a community continuously is created, maintained or changed (Ibid: 2112). What determines a community type is the degree of interaction pretext and the level of activity which can be discovered between neighbors in the community. A community with low level of interaction pretext and low activity is therefore seen as a ‘weak community’, but communities can also be ‘tight’ or ‘split’, or work as ‘passing by’ communities. Their conclusion is that it can coexist communities that are ‘lost’, ‘saved’ and ‘liberated’ within the same city.

2.1.5 Conclusion
To understand the discussion of whether a community is lost, saved or liberated – or if it has seen its ‘end’, or lost its relevance as a locality - the theoretical underpinnings of such an approach need to be explicit. The classical community concept has been closely related to that of primary relations (Sampson 2012: 56). Primary relations are seen as crucial for our socialization, since they represent our bonds with significant others; e.g. family and friends; i.e. groups to which we seek comfort and intimacy. This certain approach to community have ignored some questions which could enable a more complex understanding of the urban experience. The ambition of this thesis is not to examine whether a community is lost, saved or liberated, weak, tight or split. Such a perspective presupposes the actual existence of a

\textsuperscript{6} See, for example, Boverket’s (2016) publication Rätt tätt – en idéskrift om förtätning av städer och orter.
primordial social entity that is being “searched for” in the contemporary city landscape. The examination of a ‘community’ tends in this way to be reduced to observable social encounters between neighbors. What this approach neglects is that these activities already presume a sense of belonging, an idea of ‘community’, whereby individuals act and orient themselves in their surroundings. Interactions between neighbors, and common activities within the neighborhood, can doubtlessly contribute to a stronger cohesion between members of a community. However, this study argues that these activities cannot be analytically separated from the perceptions and interpretations that give them meaning (see also Sampson 2012: 59). Thus, interaction pretexts and activities within a neighborhood, as recently were examined by Henrikson and Tjora (2013), are merely a manifestation of an already presumed social order; a ‘community’.

While community has been representative of our primary relationships, the city has been contrasted as its counterpart; as the anonymous, the impersonal, and the unknown. For instance, Tönnies’s notion of Gesellschaft is the direct opposite of the intimate life of the Gemeinschaft. Gesellschaft is public life, the city life; where people are “essentially separated in spite of all uniting factors” (Tönnies 2001: 65). Just like Durkheim’s (2010) notion of ‘organic solidarity’, people are here connected to each other not through likeness, but through difference. This is due the increased division of labor, which has differentiated society into specialized spheres that serve different functions for the society as a whole. Increased differentiation tends to make people more isolated to each other in contrast to the intimacy of Gemeinschaft. This, in turn, has led to a dualistic approach where the analysis of social life within the city becomes separated into two different forms of social experience; ‘the community’ and ‘the city’. A socio-ontological approach can transcend this dualism towards an understanding of how the city is experienced and interpreted as a whole.7

Finally, since community relations have been seen to represent small town life, an exaggerated difference between the city and the small town has been established. This study is conducted in a minor city, with a population around 14 000. But even though its population is small, the inhabitants are living in a social milieu together with strangers they do not now. Tönnies’ description of Gesellschaft should not be understood as something exclusive to big cities. Rather, it should be understood as a condition of life in modernity in general. This means that a minor city should also be approached as a socially complex milieu, consisting of different social formations, where people are aware of each other but do not know each other.

7 This is further elaborated on in chapter 3: Theory.
However, this has not been the case traditionally in urban sociology, which primarily has concerned big cities (M.A. Hunter 2014).

2.2 Towards a new understanding of community and the city

In contemporary sociology, some theorists have highlighted the problem of the community concept. For example, Gans (2009) sees the concept as so infected and unambiguous that he wants to dismiss it and replace it with another word. However, Mulligan (2015) and Delanty (2005) have recently encouraged a re-articulation of the concept, which changes its theoretical underpinnings and therefore also the analytical focus. Mulligan (2015) claims that most sociologists seem to agree that these premodern forms of communities (as described in the section above) no longer exist in a world of increased global flows. Instead he advocates another understanding of community, namely as consciously constructed. Drawing of the theory of communicative action by Jürgen Habermas, where a certain ‘truth’ can be established through communicative acts aiming to achieve consensus, Delanty (2002: 115) advocates a communicative approach to communities. This means that communities are constructed in communicative processes rather than in institutional structures and spaces alone (Ibid: 187). It does not simply reproduce meaning, it has to be imagined as productive of meaning (Ibid.). The search for belonging as a cognitive process holds the capacity of the self to re-create itself (Ibid: 190).

Even though both Mulligan (2015) and Delanty (2005: 71) highlight the relevance of place, they do not accomplish an understanding of how communicative forms of communities could be seen to be related to a locality. This is partly due to the obvious reason that their arguments are theoretical rather than empirical, and both Delanty (2005: 195) and Mulligan (2015) encourage urban sociologists to adopt it empirically in their works. This study agrees that a community cannot be reduced to an entity which is being produced in isolation in a social institution. The focus should rather be to examine how community is talked about internally, and how it is projected externally - but also how this process is based on place; i.e. a specific

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8 Gans (2009: 214) means that ‘community’ “has given rise to so many definitions—and sentimental associations—that another term is needed” Instead, he suggests a ‘sociology of settlements’.

9 However, this approach should not be understood as the same to solely approach communities as socially constructed. Delanty (2002: 49) criticizes the social constructivist approach to communities, meaning that “culture contains more than symbols, including cognitive forms and possibilities for self-transformation”.

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locality. Also, in this way ‘the place’ is not seen as simply expressing an underlying cultural identity (Delanty 2005: 71).

2.3 Place, identity and social distances
Since this study aims to discuss the community concept in relation to how the city as a whole is perceived, a review about what has been said about this concern is being undertaken below.

2.3.1 A brief history of social distances
That the functional differentiation and segregation of the city gave rise not only to physical distance, but social distances between people, was showed in 1929 by the Chicago sociologist Harvey W. Zorbaugh (1950) in his work *The Gold Coast and the Slum*. Social distances empowered stereotypes and differences between social groups, since no physical proximity needed to be shared (Ibid: 242). Elias & Scotson (2010: 28) showed in 1965 how some areas in the city are associated with different kinds of persons, which in turn are associated with certain symbolical characteristics and attributes. Therefore one’s own position within the city has importance upon how one can interpret and categorize its areas and inhabitants. In the 1970s, a social constructivist approach of community was presented, highlighting that community exists ultimately as a symbolic order rather than observable reality (Cohen 1985). Also symbolic boundary making enabled community members to segment their neighborhoods from others by employing landmarks and symbols as their own (e.g. Suttles 1972, Hunter 1974).

2.3.2 Place and identity
More recent studies have also highlighted the crucial importance of spatiality in the construction of one’s identity within the city landscape (le Grand 2010), but also how this self-perception enables identification of other people in the city (Gustafsson 2006). These studies provide a thick empirical understanding of that *place matters*, hence challenging the popular argument that globalization and increased mobility have made locality irrelevant in identity construction. This is also an important argument of this study.

2.3.3 To perceive the city
One of most ambitious studies in urban sociology was recently undertaken by Robert J. Sampson (2012), in his work *Great American City: Chicago and the Enduring Neighborhood*
Effect. Sampson showed how Chicago as a city, with its spatial inequality, in itself constituted a fundamental organizing dimension of everyday life, “with neighborhoods and local communities as durable and contemporary manifestation of difference” (Ibid: 358). Spatially inscribed social differences “constitute a family of ‘neighborhood effects’ that are pervasive, strong, cross-cutting, and paradoxically stable even as they are changing in manifest form” (Ibid: 6). He thus ‘disconnects’ isolated entities like ‘neighborhood’, ‘community’, and ‘city’, in order to understand how they constitute a whole. Sampson’s contributions are important. First, he dismisses the argument that physical place is irrelevant; “physical distance and spatial processes matter a lot, especially when they interact with social distance” (Ibid: 372). He also challenge the theory which sees disorder as rooted in visible cues. Disorder, Sampson (Ibid: 366) argues, is a relational perception which is intersubjectively shared. ‘Disorder’ is therefore projective, rather than something we see directly. Thus, Sampson’s contributions give an understanding on how people interpret and perceive the city as a whole based on their positions therein.

Although his results are important, his methods – like every method – have limitations. His approach is quantitative and holistic, and therefore general and broad. This means - for example - that neighborhoods are reduced to hypotheses which can predict outcomes of perceptions of disorder and other ‘attitudes’ about Chicago and its areas. But what are the social underpinnings that constitute these perceptions? How are they made possible within a city landscape? Sampson’s work can be seen as an attempt to capture something new: i.e. a new way to sociologically perceive the city. His contributions described above have been an important influence for this study.
3. Theory

3.1 Ontological foundation: socio-ontology

Traditionally, when a phenomenological approach has been adopted to sociological research it has been founded upon the theoretical frameworks of Alfred Schütz and of his students, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann. This approach stems from the philosophy of Edmund Husserl, which in turn rests upon the ontological foundation that the phenomenological analysis takes it points of departure from the researcher’s ‘detachment’ from the common-sense lifeworld (Aspers & Kohl 2013). This premise rests upon a Cartesian division between an isolated subject (i.e. ‘the ego’) which tries to reach out and understand an object (i.e. ‘the world’) (Ibid.). There is therefore a risk to start an analysis with the implicit assumption that essentially nonsocial egos somehow generate a social world. Instead, Aspers & Kohl advocate a ‘socio-ontology’, which makes the ontological premises of the analysis explicit.

The socio-ontological approach, which stems from philosopher Martin Heidegger, highlights that the ‘world’ begins with what we perceive and how we experience the world; i.e. Dasein (Ibid.). The world is not made up of isolated things and objects, they are instead a part of the whole experience of the world as a complex (Strukturanze) (Heidegger 2013: 108). This world consists of a ‘relational’ system of tools, equipment, sign and activities that can be practically utilized. However, they only make sense through the Strukturanze, from where they gain their meaning in relation to the whole.

Therefore, every single attempt of interpretation must take its point of departure from an ‘understanding-of-being’ (Seinsverständnis). We cannot detach ourselves from the ‘horizon of meaning’ from which this understanding stems, as Schütz and Husserl claimed to be able to. The understanding of ‘being’ is, like understanding in general, not the result from former experiences of accumulated knowledge acts, but rather an original existential ‘form-of-being’ (Seinsart), which enables knowledge and awareness in the first place (Heidegger 2013: 145). Instead of seeing individuals as isolated subjects being socialized (through acts of knowledge)

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11 Edmund Husserl’s (2010: 257) method of epoché aims to put the ‘natural approach’ (i.e. common-sense understanding and preconceptions) within ‘brackets’. The phenomena could then be studied independently from the ‘the natural approach’, and thus be seen in its prominence ‘as it is’; i.e. in its essence as a phenomena.
into a society, we are already born into a context consisting of meaning, which in its essence is social (Aspers & Kohl 2013). Thus, we are essentially social beings.

To adopt a Heideggarian approach has two major analytical advantages which are of especially importance to this study. First: its holistic approach aims to transcend the distinction between subject and object. As a result, this method has the advantage of going beyond distinctions which traditionally have been adopted within community studies; that of reducing feelings of belonging to observable social interactions. This stance tends to depict the subject as an isolated and searching agent, who is trying to ‘reach out’ to other human beings (e.g. their neighbors). With Heidegger’s approach, we can gain a more complex understanding of the mechanisms constituting a self which transcends observable interaction. Since we are essentially social, we already have an understanding of others even though we are alone; to be-in-the-world is to exist with others (Mitdasein). Therefore, Mitdasein determines the existence (Dasein) even though others are not directly perceived (Heidegger 2013: 142). This opens up for a more complex understanding for ‘community’ as a cognitive construction.

Secondly, this approach enables to analyze the individual experience of the city as a unity, rather than separating these experiences into ‘closed’ analytical categories, like ‘the community’ and ‘the city’. The argument is that these experiences must be understood as stemming from the same interpretive ground which gives them their ontological status. This interpretive ground is Dasein; a certain understanding of being-in-the-world, which enables both interpretation and practical orientation within the perceived world.

The ambition is to theoretically build upon and develop the socio-ontological approach as presented by Aspers & Kohl (2013), and to combine this with the ‘genetic structuralism’ of Pierre Bourdieu. This is an attempt to transcend the reduction of the sociological analysis to either “an objectivist physics of material structures or a constructivist phenomenology of cognitive forms”, as Wacquant (2007: 5) understands Bourdieu’s approach. Instead, a framework is advocated that is able to subsume both.

3.2 The city as social space

Bourdieu (2007: 73) agrees with the phenomenologists insofar that individuals have a primary experience of the social - the ‘lifeworld’\textsuperscript{12} - which rests upon an immediate belief in the

\textsuperscript{12}The ‘lifeworld’ (Lebenswelt) is a commonly used concept in phenomenological philosophy, usually defined as the shared meanings and taken-for-granted nature of our daily activities (Baert & da Silva 2010: 220).
facticity that make us take it for granted. However, Bourdieu states that we must go beyond this description of the lifeworld - i.e. the doxic experience of the world - and establish an analysis that raises the issue of its conditions (Ibid 1999: 21):

We need thoroughly to sociologize the phenomenological analysis of doxa as an uncontested acceptance of the daily lifeworld, not simply to establish that is not universally valid for all perceiving and acting subjects, but also to discover that, when it realizes itself in certain social positions, among the dominated in particular, it represents the most radical form of acceptance of the world […]. This relation of prereflexive acceptance of the world grounded in a fundamental belief in the immediacy of the structures of the Lebenswelt represents the ultimate form of conformism (Ibid 2007: 73-74).

The limitation of a Heideggarian approach thus lies in that Dasein is not seen in relation to how different contexts can contribute to how a socio-ontology is constructed. As Bourdieu points out; the lifeworld is not simply “universally valid for all perceiving and acting subjects” (Ibid.). By incorporating the concept of habitus, this gap can be solved, and an understanding can be achieved on how the city as socio-ontology is constituted in relation to a specific position in the city (i.e. Greenwood).

A social space is, for Bourdieu (1995: 16), to have a notion of difference and distance. A social space consists of positions of relations that are defined in relation to each other through their mutual exteriority, and whether they are perceived as proximate or distant to each other (Ibid.). This classificatory system is “the product of the internalization of the structure of social space, in the form in which impinges through the experience of a particular position in that space” (Ibid 1984: 175). These relations constitute a universe of “objective properties […] which exist as such for and through ordinary experience” (Ibid.). This internalization, in turn, expresses itself in a certain habitus.

Habitus is in this study understood in a structural manner; it is an acquisition of a system of preferences; i.e. principles to perceive and to make distinctions – but also stable cognitive structures and a practical sense of navigating in the social world (Ibid 1995: 37-38). Dasein should be seen as constitutive of habitus. Dasein is born into a social context, where it acquires a certain way of perceiving the world, a certain habitus (i.e. to make distinctions, judgements) which in turn enables a perception of the city as a social space.

This approach does not only contributes to a theoretical development of the socio-ontological approach by incorporating a ‘contextual sensitivity’ to how Dasein perceives the world. It also makes the phenomenological elements of Bourdieu’s theories more explicit, and at the same time gives a more complex understanding to how a habitus is formed.
3.3 The private and the public

To gain a more complex understanding on how Milltown as a social space is constructed, Richard Sennett’s (1996, 2002) theoretical contributions will be used. Sennett talks, first of all, about an ‘ideology of intimacy’ which is prevailing in contemporary society. It is a reigning myth today, Sennett (2002: 259) argues, that the ‘evils of society’ (e.g. alienation, social disorganization, impersonality) could be avoided by developing individual personality through experiences of closeness and warmth with others. For example, the impersonality of a ‘crowd’ is seen as bad, because people are unknown to one another (Ibid: 295). In order to overcome the unknown and to erase this strangerhood, “you try to make intimate and local the scale of human experience – that is, you make local territory morally sacred” (Ibid: 295).

Consequently, the private realm has become an appropriate locus for self-disclosure, intimacy, and the sharing of feelings. These activities are not appropriate in public realm, since it is seen as an impersonal sphere. Instead, the public realm has become a sphere of isolation from where the public is defined. Two other focal conceptions are ‘purified identity’ and ‘collective personalities’. They will be described more in detail below.

3.3.1 Community as a purified experience

For Sennett, community is a cognitive construction, derived from individuals’ attempt to construct a purified identity; i.e. a fixed self-definition which gives them “a strong weapon against the outside world” (Sennett 1996: 5). In this way individuals are able to cope with the complexity of social life. In order to fend the dissonance of conflicted and tangled events, a purified identity constitutes a certain immunity of this abundance. This abundance, in turn, creates an opportunity to create isolation in communal contacts wherein people can conceive their social relatedness in terms of similarities, rather than need for each other (Ibid: 49). This prioritization of ‘similarity’ over ‘need’ means that social interaction no longer is a driving force to sustain a community. Instead, “men can withdraw into their self-contained, self-sustaining homes” (Ibid: 48). Community thus takes on a mythic character, created through a ‘purification ritual’. As Sennett (Ibid: 36) puts it: “Involved here is a collapsing of the experiential frame, a condensing of all the messy experiences in social life, in order to create a vision of unified community identity.”
3.3.2 Collective personalities

Further, Sennett points out that a society with a low level of interaction between its members gives birth to collective personalities; i.e. fantasy constructions of other people which become more prominent the less people know each other (Sennett 2002: 238). Collective personalities help people to categorize both themselves and other human beings out of a diffuse set of symbolic attributes (e.g. clothes, skin color etc.). Also, the collective personality to which they recognize themselves constitute a ‘state of being’ rather than actions shared (Ibid: 239). In this way, these emotional relations with other people do not require social interactions. They are rather an attempt “to avoid new experiences that might force them to endure the pain of perceiving the unexpected, the new, the ‘otherness’ around them” (Sennett 1996: 39). For Sennett (2002: 301), community has become both an emotional withdrawal from society as well as a territorial barricade within the city.
4. Methodology

4.1 A reflexive approach

A research object is not simply ‘chosen’ by the researcher. The researcher is *creating* the research object. To make this process explicit is one of the principles of a reflexive approach (Bourdieu 2007: 224). To adopt ‘epistemic reflexivity’ is to conduct a reflexive and critical examination of the researcher’s own role in relation to his or her own work (Wacquant 2007: 36). The aim of this approach is to make explicit how my own dispositions and positions within society have influenced the motivations of this study and construction of the research object. This is also an attempt to transcend the typical division between theory and methodology. The ‘technical choices’ of the empirical kind cannot be disentangled from the most ‘theoretical choices’ when the object is constructed by the researcher (Bourdieu 2007: 225).

4.1.1 Epistemological validity

A majority of qualitative researchers today would reject the realist position which says that there is a ‘world out there’ that can be neutrally and objectively ‘captured’ by the researcher, and that the methods probe and reveal lived experience (Denzin 1997: 5). There is simply no value-free, objective and neutral standpoint from which research can be conducted. A postmodern critique has highlighted that from this follows an inability to legitimize the truth of one’s research findings (see Denzin 1997: 7). Since no voice has a legitimate authority, all epistemological validity claims are attempts to exercise an authority and to “assert its own power over the reader” (Ibid.). This study rejects both the classic realist standpoint and the quite extreme relativism presented by Denzin. Instead, this study takes its point of departure from the argument that epistemological validity claims *can* be made. This is done by adopting the reflexive approach as described above, where the aim is to make the subjective features of the researcher explicit. A friend of naïve realism would claim to conduct a neutral research, where biases and subjective values are seen to distort the objective examination of reality. In a reflexive approach, these biases and preunderstandings are understood as a *necessity*, and are thus reflected upon rather than ‘avoided’. To make the researcher’s role as transparent as possible, and reflect upon how the biases of the researcher have influenced to study, opens of for scrutiny. This in itself constitutes an epistemological validity claim.
4.2 Selection and motivations

4.2.1 The choice of research object: participant objectivation

‘Participant objectivation’ (which should not be confused with participant observation), is an attempt to break with “the deepest and most unconscious adherences and adhesions, those that quite often give the object its very ‘interest’ for those who study it” (Bourdieu 2007: 253). Below, my own subjective features (emotions and experiences) that guided this research are reflected upon.

I myself grew up in Milltown and in the neighborhood of Greenwood. My family moved to Greenwood when I was two years old, and I lived there until I was nineteen. Thus, I have taken as object of research something that is well-known to me, something that I myself have reacted upon in my own perception of the social world. It could be said that I grew up in a middle class family (a nuclear constitution consisting of a mother, a father and two kids). My parents are both educated, working as civil servants; my father as a head official in the social services, my mother as a primary school teacher. Both of them are born and raised in Milltown. I am a white, 26 year old male. In Greenwood lived families that were much like mine; i.e. white families consisting of a husband and a wife - with similar occupations as mine had. Either that or elderly couples whose children had moved out (just like my grandparents, whose house was in the east area of Greenwood).

Growing up as a child in Greenwood made me feel like coming from a safe neighborhood. As kids, me and my friends could bicycle and play around in the neighborhood without once being afraid. Greenwood was “calm”. No heavy traffic, no grocery stores; only detached villas, small streets and playgrounds, surrounded by a green forest. But at the same time, some areas of the city were considered as dangerous and unsafe; it was made clear that Milltown consisted of neighborhoods that were not like mine. I have a distinct memory when me and my mom payed a visit to a friend of hers. I was maybe six years old. This was is in a neighborhood in Milltown consisting of rental apartments, built in the seventies. When we walked through the access balcony in the apartment complex, looking inside the apartments from the windows fronting this public balcony, I remembered feeling discomfort. The grey concrete buildings, with the apartments closely placed to each other – and the lack of sunlight which the access balcony effectively obscured to get inside the entryway of my mom’s friend’s apartment – all of this made me fell unease; a feeling of not being ‘home’. Its
physical appearance - this alternative way of framing one’s life - was an unknown milieu to me. These feelings - this certain perception of myself in relation to other places and individuals in the city - are what made me interested in how we perceive and interpret the city and its spaces from where we live.

My own feelings as a six year old, described above, could be seen as an expression of a certain habitus formed partly of the fact that I grew up in a certain neighborhood. In this sense, I share a certain part of the habitus of the interviewees. This is not only because Greenwood is the physical place where I grew up, but because our positions within social space are close to each other. As Bourdieu (2014: 21) points out, this closeness makes it more likely to be similar in characteristics and dispositions, i.e. in ‘taste’. Therefore, it is also likely that these people will approach each other. This, in turn, could have contributed to that a sense of ‘familiarity’ was produced, since me and interviewees had something fundamental in common. By knowing that I once lived in their neighborhood, they had a perception of what kind of person I was, even though they did not know me.13

The closeness to the object

One possible objection could be that the relation to the object is too close, and that this could have implications on the results of the study. It is of importance to remember that to have a preconception of an object is, in a socio-ontological approach, unavoidable. To be aware of a phenomena is a prerequisite in order to be able to conduct a phenomenological analysis in the first place. An interest of an object does not occur in a vacuum. It should rather be understood as stemming from the same ontological understanding of the world as the research itself takes place (Aspers & Kohl 2013) - which the participant objectivation analysis in this section has tried to show.

However, this should not be understood like that there are no differences in how to approach an object of study. You can know the object more or less; and if you know it more, it is easier to make the mistake of letting preconstructed concepts guide the research (Bourdieu 2007: 253). To avoid these mistakes, Bourdieu means that the object should not be treated as a closed entity, but that one most think relationally; i.e. that the object exists in a space of relations (Bourdieu 2007: 228). This is a method that aims to go beyond the actual context being studied (i.e. the residents of Greenwood in this case), and to understand how this

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13 In the presentation document (see Appendix B) which was distributed to households of Greenwood, I presented myself as a student which had returned to my hometown and to the neighborhood I once grew up in order to conduct a sociological study.
context exists within the objectified relations that constitute the social reality of the interviewees as a whole. This, in turn, is what enables the interviewees to position themselves and others within this social space of relations. As Bourdieu (2007: 232) puts it: “If it is indeed true that the real is relational, then is quite possible that I know nothing of an institution about which I think I know everything, since it is nothing outside its relation to the whole”.

4.2.2 Methodological considerations
Since the aim of study is to examine how individuals create a perception of the city as a whole in relation to their own position therein, it was considered to be most empirically fruitful to conduct qualitative in-depth interviews with residents of Greenwood. In this way individuals are given room to explain and elaborate on their thoughts, and an understanding of their perceptions and experiences can be outlined and examined (Kvale & Brinkman 2009: 42).

The decision was made to not engage in an ethnographical approach. This because the object of research is to examine the perceptions and experiences that constitute meaning for people, rather than observing interaction and conducts between neighbors. Also, since the milieu is already familiar to me, I already possess an ‘ethnographic sense’ of the area under study. For example; when the interviewees are talking about a certain neighborhood in Milltown, or a specific area in Greenwood, I already have an understanding of what they are referring to. However, it is of important to highlight what kind of data in-depth interviews provide, as well as the limitations of this data: it gives us information about what the interviewees thought happened (not what actually happened) and how they feel about things and interpret their environment (not how things actually ‘are’ or ‘were’) (Becker & Geer 1957: 31).

4.2.3 The choice of location: a middleclass neighborhood
‘The middleclass’ is an ambiguous and multifarious concept. The determination of its meaning must be seen in relation to how it is located in counter position to other classes within social space (Elm Larsen 2001: 200). Thus, ‘the middle class’ in this case – as will be showed – is an empirical concern, since the interviewees identity themselves as ‘middleclass’, hence positioning themselves in-between two other sections (i.e. the underclass/working class and an upper class). It should be understood as a category where people share similar
conditions and standards of living (e.g. work situation, income etc.), but also in relation to the symbolic meanings associated with these resources in a space of relations.

These class conditions open up for some possibilities of action which are of interest for this study. The middle class often possesses sufficient economic capital to buy (and to renovate) their own houses, and to decorate it with furnishings after personal taste. The norms of the middle class could therefore be seen as somewhat prominent for the society as a whole, since they consist of such a large group of potential consumers. Often, the middle class possesses the symbolic attributes which society encourages, like education, a steady work and cultural preferences coded as ‘decent’ (Bourdieu 1984: 1-2). Thus, as participants in the classification struggle, their classificatory schemes and systems could be said to have precedence over classes positioned ‘under them’, due to the total volume of their accumulated capital.\footnote{\textquote{The volume of total capital} is the sum of the resources and the power that can be utilized (i.e. economic, symbolic, cultural) from a certain position (Bourdieu 1986: 265).} This could help to get an understanding of not just the social structure of a certain middle class neighborhood in a smaller town in southern Sweden, but also to see this in relation to the objective structures that make up social reality for the interviewees as well.\footnote{\textquote{Social reality} should here be understood in relation to how the interviewees perceive and interpret society as a whole in its social composition, i.e. as a social space of relations. As Bourdieu (2007: 231) points out on the construction of social spaces; even “though they reveal themselves only in the form of highly abstract, objective relations, and although one can neither touch them or ‘point at them’, [they] are what makes the whole reality of the social world”\footnote{Although it should be highlighted that the resources of the middle class are not unlimited. They cannot choose exactly where to live; their choices are also restricted due to their economic resources.}}

Further, the people who live in these neighborhoods often have the economic capital to choose where to live.\footnote{Although it should be highlighted that the resources of the middle class are not unlimited. They cannot choose exactly where to live; their choices are also restricted due to their economic resources.} This is not the truth for many of the inhabitants within a city. For some people, the best case scenario is to get a first-hand contract in a part of the city that they have not chosen to live in by themselves. Consequently, this study also contributes to knowledge about how voluntary segregation mechanisms work. This is a matter that is often neglected in urban sociological research, which traditionally has worked in a ‘paradigm of poverty’ (see Sampson 2012: 57), focusing on involuntary segregation within stigmatized neighborhoods.

4.2.4 The selection of interviewees

Selection criteria are in itself a delineation of possible voices; i.e. whose voices will be heard, and whose voices will not be heard? (Holstein & Gubrium 1995: 27). In this way, the
researcher activates a subject which is allowed to speak; in this case the ‘resident of Greenwood’. A conceptualization of a ‘resident of Greenwood’ was constructed using some criteria, which in turn worked as a guideline for selection. Besides living in a detached villa in Greenwood, the selection was made through these two focal criteria: (i) The interviewees must own the house they live in. Hence it was not of interest to interview tenants, adolescents or a partner who do not own the house. In this way an understanding of why people choose to live in Greenwood can be gained. (ii) The interviewees must have lived in Greenwood for a while. A minimum number of years were not determined. Rather, this question was left open so a decision could be made in relation to the relevance of the individual case. The main interest here was to make sure that the interviewee had spent a considerable amount of time in the neighborhood, and not that he or she recently had moved in.

Further, this conceptualization of a ‘resident of Greenwood’ can be defined as a collective term of reference for all potentially appropriate respondents that fit into the above criteria, and this despite individual differences (e.g. sex, age, occupation). Variables like age, sex, gender and occupation were therefore not considered to be of primary relevance to the study, and it was not taken under consideration when selection was made. For example, the somewhat equal spread of sex is a coincidence (i.e. five men and four women).

4.3 Implementation

4.3.1 Making contacts: entering the field

First, a group on Facebook was visited were people are posting old images from Milltown. The group had over 3500 members, all somehow connected to Milltown; either as a former or current inhabitant. A post was made in the Facebook group were the study was briefly presented and where interviewees were sought to participate. People who were members in a villa compound were sought primarily, since it would facilitate making contacts with people living within the same area. Interested persons were asked to contact me either by phone or email. The location of the study to a specific neighborhood was at that point not yet

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17 This approach is inspired by Holstein & Gubrium’s (1995: 26) discussion of selecting ‘people’ (despite individual criteria) rather than representatives of populations.

18 If the spread would have ended up remarkably uneven, however, the possible implications of this would of course be discussed.
determined. I was at the time still open to other possibilities, and if the scope of possibilities were broadened, it would be easier to find a field to enter.

A person, residing in Greenwood, eventually wrote me an email and said he was interested to participate. After this initial contact, the decision was made to locate the study in Greenwood. The person was not a member of a villa compound – neither did he knew of any compound in Greenwood - so another way of making contacts with people living in the area had to be accomplished. Internet was used to search for villa compounds in the area, with no results. Eventually, seventy presentation documents were printed out (see Appendix B). Starting from the houses nearest the initial contact’s residence, the documents were distributed to mailboxes of households in the area. All seventy documents were distributed to different households. The addresses of the households were written down using a note application on a smartphone. This was done in order to facilitate the search for the phone numbers of the residents later on. After distributing the presentation documents, four people (two individual persons and one couple) reported themselves as interested by mail respectively by phone. Time and place for interview were then determined. After a few days without any more answers, phone calls were conducted to the households who had not yet responded, and the residents were asked if they would like to participate. The phone calls were made in the order the addresses had earlier been written down on the smartphone. This process ended after four positive responses. By then, nine persons had said yes to be interviewed, which was considered to be enough for the moment. Eventually, when all interviews were conducted, the empirical material was considered to be of desirable quality enough to end the sampling process and to start analyzing.

4.3.2 The interviews
The empirical material of this study consists of interviews conducted with nine persons divided into seven interview occasions. Two of the interviews were conducted with two persons, in both cases with a couple living together (for a further presentation of the interviewees, see chapter 5, ‘A presentation’). The interviews took place in the households of the interviewees, except for two occasions. One interview was conducted at an interviewee’s work place, and another was conducted in a café in Milltown’s central parts. This was after the requests of the interviewees themselves. The average time of an interview was one hour and four minutes; the longest reached sixty-eight minutes and the shortest forty-three minutes. The interviews were recorded on a smartphone.
The interview guide was semi-structured (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009 :146), i.e. focal questions and themes were written down beforehand in order to keep focus on what should be discussed. During the interviews, I had a flexible stand towards these questions. I could therefore stay sensitive to what the interviewees were saying. This opened up for follow-up questions and interesting themes which were not in the interview guide from the beginning.

Producing meaning within the interviews

Interviewing - as a practice - is an interpretive process, both for the interviewer and the respondent (Holstein & Gubrium 1995: 16). The respondent is not simply a passive ‘vessel-of-answers’ which needs to be ‘opened up’ by the interviewer in order to ‘find the facts’. Rather, the interviewer and the respondent interact dynamically in order to produce meaning within the interview situation. Thus, meaning is not predetermined, neither is it constantly formulated anew. Rather, it reflects “relatively enduring local conditions, such as the research topics of the interviewer, biographical particulars, and local ways of orienting to those topics” (Ibid.). As a result, meaning has to be constructed and negotiated in an improvised act of speech. My aim during the interviews was to activate and stimulate the interpretive capabilities of the interviewee, in order to let them articulate the experiences they brought to the interview situation (Ibid: 17). For example; while interviewing, I stayed sensitive to the use of preconstructed concepts that are used unreflectively by the interviewees when they describe something. In the example below, Thomas was asked to describe a typical resident of Greenwood. He chose the term ‘decent people’. I asked him to describe what he meant by this concept, and how ‘decency’ manifests itself in Greenwood. This in order to let Thomas articulate what kind of meaning he attached to it.

Well... they take care of their properties in a good way... they... spend time with their families, and they have kids who have moved from home which come to visit them... yeah... stability, in a way, I think.

This, in turn, lets the interviewee reflect upon the use of preconstructed concepts, which meanings are not self-evident - not even for the person who uses it.

The interviewees were also encouraged to shift positions, since the different roles a respondent take (e.g. as a wife, as a mother, as a neighbor etc.) can activate a certain perception - a certain stock of knowledge - and therefore also an alternative construction of meaning (Holstein & Gubrium 1995: 37). For example, to ask the question: “How do you
think other people see you?” opens up the possibility to take the position of another, hence making oneself an object.

**Reflections**
I experienced the interviews as relaxed. Some of the interviewees had no problems at all to talk, while some were a little more reserved and cautious. As Hermanowicz (2002) has pointed out; people are inclined to be general rather than detailed, which I noticed being the case with the more reserved interviewees. Further details and elaborations were then asked for, which sometimes annoyed some of the interviewees. This was showed in sighs and laughter, or facial expressions which said something like ‘are you stupid?’ However, I consider all interviews as being rewarding and successful.

The two occasions when I interviewed two persons at the same time differ considerably from the interviews conducted with a single person. Rather than individual experiences, *their* experiences were being expressed. The interaction thus contributed to a development of a *shared* stock of knowledge. The two couples reasoned, argued and discussed with each other, which was interesting to observe. My experience is that it was a good balance between who was talking throughout these two interviews, however I noticed that the interviewee who replied first to the question somewhat framed the topic of discussion, to which the other interviewee adopted to and built upon. If one of them had not answered a question, I always asked what he or she thought about the specific concern being discussed. To interview two persons at the same time was not planned from the beginning, it was instead suggested from the interviewees themselves.

**Transcription**
To transcribe is to translate an oral discourse to a written discourse, which means that certain nuances from the interview situation, like body language and intonation, cannot be captured in the written text (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009: 194). In my case, I also had to translate the interviews from Swedish to English. This means that some nuances contained in the Swedish language may have gone lost. Some expressions were particularly difficult, since they do not have an obvious counterpart in English, nor are included in dictionaries. When such an expression occurs in a citation, it will be highlighted with a footnote. In the footnote the original expression can be seen; e.g. “Golden mile: Gräddhylla”. In order to find an appropriate translation in these cases, Internet was used in order to search for slang words in English with similar meanings.
4.4 Analysis

4.4.1 Coding

With coding, concepts are extracted from raw data that are put into categories, which stands for ideas contained in the data. These concepts are the researcher’s interpretation of what the interviewees are saying (Corbin and Strauss 2008: 159). The initial coding was undertaken both deductively and inductively by a close reading of the material after the transcribing was done. Deductively by trying to highlight certain themes in the material in relation to my theoretical framework (e.g. ‘habitus’, ‘collective personality’ etc.). Inductively by also be responsive to the data by deriving concepts and themes from the data itself. The example below (figure 1) shows how the concept of ‘golden mile’ was derived from an interview were the interviewee himself came up with the concept:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coding</th>
<th>I: Which areas in Milltown do you think are ’best off’, considering income and standard of living?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Categorizing Coastville</td>
<td>W: Coastville.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘golden mile’</td>
<td>M: Yeah, out there... That’s the golden mile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W: Yeah, that’s the golden mile.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. An example of coding from an excerpt of an interview.

‘Golden mile’ could then be used as an analytical concept to understand how this particular interviewee categorizes himself in relation to what he perceives as a neighborhood more exclusive than his own. As a result, the more inductively derived concept of ‘Golden mile’ could be understood in relation to the more deductively concept of ‘categorizing Coastville’. This inductively approach to coding also aims to ‘give voice’ to the interviewees. The use of highly technical terms and obscure phrases can obscure the understanding of how people converse and how they make sense of things; i.e. what language they use (Adler & Adler 2003). It is of importance to remember that the descriptions by the interviewees are what constitute the empirical material, and to use their own concepts in the analysis make the material feel more ‘alive’.
4.4.2 To construct a social space

To work with concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions, i.e. to focus on similarities and differences - prevent the researcher to be overwhelmed with descriptive data (Corbin and Strauss 2008: 33). After this device, two major themes were distinguished in order to organize the concepts derived from the coding process. These were ‘locating the self’ respectively ‘locating others’. These themes were then divided into subcategories like ‘categorizing Greenwood’, ‘categorizing Coastville’, ‘expression of habitus’ etc. The coded citations were sorted into these different subcategories after their considered relevance. It was in this way easier to overview and gain an understanding of how these two themes - with their subcategories - were intertwined and related to each other. From this process the concepts derived from the coding were used to construct a social space of relations; i.e. they were formed in to an analytical unity – consisting of abstract and objective relations - whereby the interviewees’ positions were seen to be expressed (see Bourdieu 2007: 230-231).

4.5 Ethical considerations

‘The principles of research ethics’ as proposed by the Swedish Research Council (Forskningsrådet 2009) have been used as an ethical guideline when conducting this study. The emphasis is to protect the integrity of interviewees according to four focal requirements; (i) that of information, (ii) that of consent, (iii) that of confidentiality, and (iv) that of utilization.

The requirement of information means that the researcher must inform the interviewees about the aim and conditions of the study. This was done in the presentation document that was distributed to the households of Greenwood (see appendix B), and at the personal meeting with interviewees before the interview started. The interviewees were informed about how the material later would be used and that no one other than myself was going to listen to the recorded interview, and that the audio file eventually would be deleted after transcribing. Further, they were informed that they were anonymous and that their participation was voluntary. If they changed their mind about participating, they were free to contact me at any time. Further, the requirement of consent means that the interviewees must be aware and agree upon these conditions. This was made sure before the interview began. The third requirement refers to that the material derived from the interviews should be given utmost confidentiality, and that personal data should be stored in such a way that unauthorized persons cannot access them. The decision was made to anonymize not only the interviewees
and the neighborhood, but the whole city. They were all given fictional names. The recorded interviews were stored in my smartphone, then transferred to my computer for transcription. When transcribing, no real names were written down. The transcribed interviews were stored on my computer, which only I have access to. Finally, the requirement of *utilization* makes sure that the empirical material is used only for research purposes. Therefore; the material has not - and will not - be used for commercial or for other non-scientific purposes.
5. A presentation

5.1 Milltown

Milltown is a minor city located in southern Sweden. Due to its anonymity, a detailed account of Milltown will not be undertaken; it will rather be described in general terms. Its population reaches to approximately 14,000 people. Milltown has an industrial history, and finds itself nowadays in a post-industrial condition.\textsuperscript{19} Like is the case with many other cities in Sweden with an industrial history, this has partly resulted in a decrease of population growth, an exodus of youths, as well as in a weakened city identity (which was formerly created, in large part, through the big industries and their products). By the interviewees Milltown is described as “peaceful” and being of “just enough size\textsuperscript{20}”, but at the same time as a city where not much happens. The centre of the city is depicted as “lifeless” and “empty”; e.g. many stores have closed, market trade has disappeared, and public life in general has “died out”.

5.2 Greenwood

Greenwood is a neighborhood located approximately 1.7 kilometers from Milltown’s city centre. It is an area solely consisting of private houses. The houses are built at different epochs, where the oldest are stemming from the beginning of twentieth century (around 1912), and where many detached villas were built between 1940 and 1950. However, a major part of Greenwood expanded in the 1970s, with houses linked by garages and more detached villas. In the outskirts of Greenwood - at a border that could be said to separate Greenwood from the more central parts of Milltown - a nine-year compulsory school is located. Inside Greenwood, you can also found a minor day nursery. Greenwood is mostly surrounded by a forest. The total population of Greenwood is approximately 1000.

5.3 The interviewees

Below follows a presentation of the nine interviewees. Due to their anonymity, the presentation is general, and their ages – as well as how long they have lived in Greenwood - are presented in a time span of five years.

\textsuperscript{19} A post-industrial society is usually described as the condition when the industrial manual labor’s share of the total workforce decreases, while the service labor’s share increases (Ringdal 2001: 242).

\textsuperscript{20} Just enough size: lagom.
Their background stories are mixed, some of them have grown up in Milltown, some of them have moved in from elsewhere. Education is also mixed; some have university education, some nine year’s compulsory school. Occupations, or former occupations, differ; one is an industrial worker, one is a psychologist, one is a cleaner. Common to all is that they have families with kids, although some are couples currently living alone.

Thomas: 65-70 years old. He has lived in Greenwood for 10-15 years.

Emma: 50-55 years old. She has lived in the neighborhood for 20-25 years.

Leo: 60-65 years old. He has lived in Greenwood for 25-30 years.

Axel: 70-75 years old. He has lived in Greenwood for 60 years. He lives together with Edith.

Edith: 70-75 years old. She has lived in Greenwood for 50-55 years. Edith and Axel were interviewed at the same time.

David: 40-45 years old. He has lived in Greenwood with his wife Therese, for 10-15 years.

Therese: 50-55 years old. She has lived in Greenwood for 10-15 years. David and Therese live together, but were interviewed separately.

Elsa: 70-75 years. She has lived in Greenwood for 40-45 years. She lives together with Valter.

Valter: 75-80 years old. He has lived in Greenwood for 40-45 years. Elsa and Valter were interviewed at the same time.
6. Results

In this chapter, the results of the study will be presented. The chapter starts with an examination of the socio-ontological constitution of Greenwood as a neighborhood. The analysis further proceeds into an examination of how a purified community becomes constructed. Finally, an examination will be undertaken of the socio-ontological status of Milltown’s public spaces, as well as how the interviewees position themselves in relation to how they perceive others within the social space of Milltown.

6.1 The simplification of the social environment

David: There’s no services, there’s nothing except for residences and playgrounds and green areas. […] It’s purely a residential area.

Emma: Well, this is simply a housing area… There is a day nursery, but it goes well with the rest. A day nursery and a school, and that’s good for those who have children, close and convenient.

The citations above are the answers of David and Emma when they were asked to describe Greenwood. It is an area primarily to live in. No one works in Greenwood, since there are no workplaces there (except for a day nursery and a compulsory school which is situated in the fringe of Greenwood). You do not shop for groceries because there are simply no supermarkets and no shops. “You have to leave Greenwood in order to do things”, as Thomas says.

To erase diversity and multiplicity of functions and activities, is to create a simplification of the social environment (Sennett 1996: 70). This simplification is expressed in the interviewees’ descriptions about what kind of area Greenwood is; i.e. what purpose it serves:

Edith: Yeah, it’s calm and nice here […] Close to schools… close to the centre… yes… it’s like… that was essential when the children were young and were growing up… they had close to… leisure […] yeah, stuff like that…

David: It’s close to the centre at same time as it’s… it’s not in the centre […] It’s not much traffic, it’s a calm place. A good place for children to grow up.
Leo: From here it’s like 1.7 kilometers down to the city square… it’s no distances… and it’s good for the children to grow up here…

Greenwood is a place for the family. As David puts it: “my impression is that it’s an area built for families”. Also, this is reflected in the fact that all interviewees have a family with children (even though some of their children have moved out).\(^2^1\) At the same time, facilities and societal institutions are kept at a distance from life in Greenwood, thus making it a place where children can grow up undisturbedly from the surrounding city. The interviewees have to leave Greentown if they wish to run errands like grocery shopping or going to the bank:

Thomas: You have to leave Greenwood to do things. […] A lot of stores are pretty far away and stuff like that, but not for us who have car.

Emma: I don’t want a lot of stuff here. […] It feels like those things you want, you can find closeby. And the train station is important, that is so close. So... no. I think that here, where we live, the closeness to everything is very convenient.

As can be seen in the citations above, the zones that provide contact with an impersonal ‘crowd’ are located outside Greenwood. This is, however, not seen as a problem. Rather the opposite. All interviewees highlight the benefits of Greenwood’s closeness to facilities, services, and transportation lines. Everyone mentions Greenwood’s “good location”.

However, if you turn the argument around, it becomes more interesting; the distance between Greenwood and these facilities is something desirable. “I don’t want a lot stuff here”, as Emma says, could be seen to express a desire to keep Greenwood as a place for shelter and undisturbed family activity, and not as an area which provides contact zones with an impersonal crowd.\(^2^2\) What constitutes a “good location” is to be able to keep things at a distance. I asked David why he and his wife chose to move to Greenwood:

David: [I]t’s separated from the rest of the city, so to speak. That you are left alone up here. […] For me to enjoy living in a neighborhood, I must be able to choose in what extent I am being exposed to people… I feel comfort in being alone, I feel comfort with… being with my own stuff, so to speak. I find it disturbing to have people up close to me, I mean; with a lot of people walking by, people who scream, playing music during the evenings and… making noises, cars driving around – I feel comfort

\(^2^1\) Worth mentioning here is that it was not a selection criteria that the interviewees should have a family. This is a coincidence.

\(^2^2\) One part of constructing a residential image is “the convenience aspects of a residential area in terms of its facilities, nearness to transportation lines, and sufficiency as a place of shelter and familial activities” (Suttles 1972: 253)
when it’s considerably more calmer than that, and when there’s no such stuff. So I think, maybe, that it’s more about what’s not there than what actually is there.

David and his wife searched for a place to be “left alone”, a place that is “separated from the rest of the city”. These mechanisms, which contribute to a simplification of the social environment reduced to ‘private’ concerns, constitute Greenwood as a belief that close family life will be more possible there than in the confusion of the city (Sennett 1996: 70). David wants to be able to choose to what extent he and his family are being exposed to people, and this is done by simply ‘cutting off’ these disturbing elements from the social environment.

David: It suits me well like this... but… it becomes less vivid like this, but for me it’s better like that. Do I want to… do some other activities or go shopping and stuff like that, then I search myself towards those places.

In the words of David himself; “it’s more about what’s not there than what actually is there”. I asked Therese if she would like Greenwood to have more facilities and other services: “I want it closeby. Not as a neighbor. I want it closeby…”

Greenwood is a simplification of the social environment in so far as it is interpreted with personal values of what an ideal family life should be like, which in turn are distinguished from an impersonal and chaotic “outside”. It is seen as a setting where one can frame one’s personal life. Emma claims that “if you have a family, then it’s pleasantly to live outside [the city]”.

Sennett (2002: 259) declares that in a society where closeness between people is seen as a moral good, public life becomes interpreted and judged from this private sphere; i.e. it becomes mystified. This dislocation means that people try to find meaning in impersonal situations, which they simply cannot, because of the anonymity and social complexity of the ‘crowd’. Consequently, a purified experience cannot be developed in a public milieu. People therefore sought to flee, and find in the private realms of life (especially the family) some “principle of order in the perception of personality” (Ibid: 2002: 259). Greenwood as an area has become a private realm for the interviewees, in attempt to make a local territory “morally sacred” (Ibid: 295). It thus holds promises of a certain way of life. What are these promises?
6.1.1 The promises of Greenwood

People do not move about in social space randomly (Bourdieu 1984: 109). A position in social space cannot be completely defined by the properties related to a certain position at a given time; e.g. ‘a resident in Greenwood, spring 2016’ (Ibid.). There is a strong correlation between social positions and the dispositions of the agents who occupy them; but also to the trajectory which have led them to occupy these positions (Ibid: 110). Seen in this way, there is no coincidence that people chose to live in Greenwood. What are the mechanisms that make people move there?

Leo: It wasn’t like that that we must move to Greenwood or like that, it was not... it could have been any neighborhood, where there are villas… that’s what I think. [...] And I don’t think that the neighborhood matters so much for me in that sense. Probably I would feel equally at home in another part of town, if we had found a property that suited us, that is… and which was good for us at the time when we chose to… yeah...

Leo claims that he and his wife could have ended up in any other neighborhood in Milltown, based on the premise that this neighborhood also had villas. It was not Greenwood as a neighborhood per se that made him to live there. Rather, it was the values that Greenwood represented. Here, the physical appearance of a neighborhood becomes important and persuasive. Detached villas, shady trees, large lawns, aged homes, sheer facades and cozy backyards. All of this isolated from the rest of Milltown. But, at the same time, it has a convenient proximity to all the services and facilities which Milltown - as a city - offers. These physical elements symbolize a distinctive way of life where people are able to express an authentic version of themselves (Suttles 1972: 253-254).

David: I would believe that this is a coveted neighborhood, that it’s a place that people seek themselves towards. [...] The grass is a little greener here, so to speak. [...]It isn’t like storming here, so it’s still what we sought for… that it’s calm and safe.

Leo: We have done very well here in the neighborhood as such. Otherwise we would have moved, because we have had that opportunity to do that, if we would like to.

Leo consider himself as achieved a certain way of life that he finds desirable. If that would not be the case, he would probably seek for this authenticity in a neighborhood that would
better suit his expectations and values. David also states that he has found what he and his wife were searching for. That is, “a place to be alone”.

Further, Edith says that Greenwood has an atmosphere of “familiarity” and “calmness”, Axel agrees and interposes: “but it would probably been different if rental apartments would have been built in the area. Then… I guess it would have been different than just villas…” Here we can see how the private house, the villa, symbolizes these values. For Axel, it requires only the visual perception of one complex of rental apartments to distort the image of Greenwood as calm and familiar. This shows what a strong and pejorative symbolic meaning a single physical building, with a certain kind of appearance, can express.

Also, another important feature when searching for an authentic way of life in a certain area is the local schools (Suttles 1972: 254). The beliefs in their effectiveness and safety express the same values sought for in the private, isolated sphere of the neighborhood. This can be seen when Emma claims that the day nursery and the school located in Greenwood ‘go well with the rest’ of the neighborhood (see citation below), and when Therese reflects upon why her and her husband moved to Greenwood:

   Therese: It’s located in a little, calm cul-de-sac, so it’s mainly that… that it’s calm and tranquil, not much traffic. And besides that we had heard that the school was very good there.

   Emma: There’s a day nursery here, and a school, but it go well with the rest. It’s very good, for those who have kids, it’s nearby and convenient.

Valter also highlights the calmness and safety of a cul-de-sac: “that’s pretty great when you have children”. It is the simplification of Greenwood’s social environment (i.e. a place for the family and the private) that gives rise to an expectation that a certain way-of-life can be achieved there (although, as we will see in the next section, these expectations and promises are not always fulfilled). Greenwood is - as a result - being defined as something desirable, something “attractive”, “coveted” and something that “people seek”. A place where, as David puts it, “the grass is a little greener”. This idealization of Greenwood could be seen to be express a taken-for-granted assumption which constitutes Greenwood as ‘attractive’. Valter says that “Greenwood has always had a good reputation in Milltown”. This reputation, constituted as an objective phenomena in their interpretation of Milltown as a social space, is in turn internalized within the habitus of the interviewees and reproduced in the way they talk about and perceive their own position within Greenwood. As Suttles (Ibid: 252) has shown, this idealization can be seen in the home buyers’ market as well. There, a ‘residential image’
portraits an idealization of what people are looking for in the way of family, neighbors and community, hence establishing an “attractiveness”. As Thomas says: “It’s attractive, that’s the way it is. At least that is what the realtors say when a house is going to be sold: the attractive Greenwood”. Axel says: “I think Greenwood is valued high on the map.23” Edith agrees and adds: “Yeah, it’s not a long period of time a house here is out on sale. It gets sold pretty fast.” Therese tells how she, as a newcomer to Milltown, first heard of Greenwood: “Actually, it was a colleague at work who showed me the housing ad in a local paper, and she recommended Greenwood, she said it was a nice area.”

6.1.2 Conclusion

One essential feature of Dasein is its historicity; which, according to Kohl & Aspers (2013: 498), “is a way to taking Dasein’s sociohistorical situatedness into account when explaining how understanding is established”. This study argues that by incorporating Bourdieu’s concept of habitus, such an understanding can be established.

It is thus of importance to remember that the physical factuality of Greenwood - and the interviewees’ positions therein - not per se enables a certain perception of the city as a social space. In other words; Greenwood does not alone establish an interpretive ground from which the interviewees make themselves an understanding of Milltown as a whole. Rather, the interviewees already have a perception, a ‘sense’ of social space, whereby they navigate and make certain decisions and considerations. This perception could be seen to express a certain habitus; i.e. a system of preferences that determines actions and judgements – a sense of what is desirable and authentic (Bourdieu 1995: 37). The interviewees have already incorporated a sense of what a good life is in general, and what a desirable family life is in particular, in their habitus. Their dispositions (i.e. their schemes of perception, appreciation and action) have determined the practical utility of Greenwood as an object (see Bourdieu 1984: 100). As a result, Greenwood is not simply an isolated entity which socializes its residents; the interviewees rather brought something to Greenwood; a certain habitus looking to express itself.

What is being expressed then? It is a certain understanding of an authentic life being projected to a specific place. That is; an isolated and “calm place” where their family can live, their children can grow up, and where these close relations can grow and foster. This simplification of the social environment helps to constitute a purified unity which - in turn - is

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23 Valued high on the map: slår högt på kartan.
carefully separated from the “outside”; i.e. the impersonal sphere of Milltown as a whole, with its impersonal contact zones and its unmanageable social composition. This constitution of a ‘purified unity’ will be more closely examined in the next section, which will pay attention to how the interviewees perceive the people who lives among them in Greenwood.

6.2 A purified community

In this section an examination will be undertaken that aims to determine how the interviewees are constructing a purified community. Before this can be determined, the analysis must proceed into an examination of two focal constitutive elements of such construction: (i) the social cohesion between neighbors in Greenwood must be determined; i.e. to establish an understanding of how, when and if neighbors interact; and (ii) an examination of the expectations neighbors have on each other in terms of behavior, life-styles and other characteristics. Together, they could be seen to constitute the socio-ontology upon which the interviewees are able to construct a sense of sameness; i.e. a purified community identity.

6.2.1 Social cohesion

The first step is thus to determine to what degree the interviewees are interacting with their neighbors. As can be seen in the citations below, interactions between neighbors in Greenwood are limited, sometimes even absent:

Interviewer: Do you spend a lot of time with your neighbors?
Leo: No, I can’t say that we do... We don’t do that. It’s more like… you maybe talk a little with some people when you are out in the garden and stuff like that […] I mean… there are people here that we have that kind of contact with, but we are not spending time with them, I wouldn’t say…

Interviewer: Would you say that you know the people who live here? Do you know how they are?
Therese: No, I wouldn’t say that…
Interviewer: And your closest neighbors, do you spend some time with them?
Therese: No, not at all.

Interviewer: Do you know who the people are who live around here?
Emma: No, not really, you barely see them. You can see them when you are out in the garden and stuff like that.
Further, the interviewees say that there are no common activities at all between them and their neighbors, like clean up-days, parties or commitments to a villa compound.

Some neighbors do spend time together, mostly due to the fact that their children have become friends. Children are the primary connecting link between neighbors that spend time together in Greenwood. As Emma says: “those you got to know when the kids were young, those are the people that you keep contact with”. Leo says the he and his closest neighbors see each other approximately two times a year, eating dinner together. They got to know each other when their children were growing up:

[A]nd I guess it’s them what we have the most exchange with here, and whose kids also played a lot with ours when they were growing up here. […] So once, maybe twice a year, we spend time with them, sitting down, talking, that’s no problem, but I wouldn’t be able to that more often. We have too little in common.

Hence, there are no formal forms of organizations that provide contact zones for neighbors in Greenwood. When encounters do occur, they are spontaneous; people approach each other when they happen to be outside in the garden at the same time, or when they are out walking with their dogs.

The interviewees that belong to an older generation, especially Axel, Edith, Valter and Elsa, tell me how the social cohesion within Greenwood has eroded. When their children grew up, during the 1950s and 1960s, they remember a vivid social life in Greenwood. Valter and Elsa tell me that is was “much more solidarity” back then. Elsa was a working mother at that time, which was uncommon: “The mothers, the wives, they were home, you know. And the kids were home”. Axel gives a similar description: “Yeah, every mother on the street here were housewives. So there was no need for a day nursery or childminders or stuff like that… the kids were at home during the day.” Edith remembers: “We looked after each other’s kids. When some went downtown you said ‘I’m going to downtown now, do you look after mine?’ and vice versa.” They also tell me how adults had common activities like barbeque parties and big dinners. Nowadays, Greenwood is different:

Axel: If you walk around in Greenwood these days... it’s totally dead during the days, no kids, no parents, nothing… the society has become that way. […] It feels like everyone isolate themselves more now.
Valter: It’s like everyone takes care of themselves nowadays...
Elsa: Yeah, both parents are working, the kids are not home during the days, that’s the way it is.
Careers…

Greenwood is considered to be socially emptier, due to the fact that women started working more, and that children were put into day nursery. Since the children are the prime connecting link between neighbors, this resulted in a declining cohesion between the residents. Since they do not spend time with their neighbors anymore, they do not have a clear picture of the people currently living in the area. Axel says that “we don’t know who the newcomers are”. Elsa says “we hardly know who they are [the people on her street]”. They do not spend time with any of the new people who have moved in. Valter says that “you have a common sense of decent behaving”, you welcome newcomers and introduce yourself, but that’s it. I think that the younger people are, the worse it gets with that… you know, ‘welcome’ and that stuff, and that you introduce yourself”.

The declining social encounters between the members have also resulted in a lack of social control. This could be seen as having a twofold meaning: (i) Social control in the sense of having a clear understanding of who people are (e.g. background history, age), and what they are doing (e.g. occupation, hobbies). This kind of control helps sorting out the closest environment in a manageable order; feelings of uncertainty and ambivalence can hence be erased. (ii) Social control in the sense of having a function of surveillance; i.e. to look after each other’s children, and to make sure that no one trespasses a line of decent and desirable behavior:

Valter: You know, you did not only raise your own children, but also other’s children. You kept track on each other in a different way. And other parents kept track on our kids. That has disappeared today.

Leo: I think that it is a big problem today, in some respects, that we have a lack of social control. That means that adults help to keep after the rising generation in a positive sense. To put one’s foot down. I was used to that when growing up. I think we are doing well when there are some social control.

In order to understand how a purified community is possible, the examination will now proceed to investigate how the interviewees are able to assay the character of each other, even though their common experiences are so scarce.

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24 Common sense of decent behaving: Vanligt folkvett.
6.2.2 Expectations

As we could see earlier in the analysis, Greenwood represents a certain way of life. Further, it could be seen that an assumption was made that other people are seeking the same thing as they selves did when moving to Greenwood. As a result, the ‘way of life’ which Greenwood represents is seen as being restricted to a certain kind of people. They see each other as being ‘the same’ in that manner; they have the same preferences, the same perception of how a life should be. Since they do not need each other, a communal bond is framed to envisage how they are the same rather than what they actually do in their relations to each other (Sennett 1996: 48-49). This sameness is, however, a mutual dependence upon the others as being the same. Otherwise, their perception of an authentic life is threatened. This can best be shown when the interviewees highlight things that ‘stand out’ in Greenwood, hence creating an “otherness”. This can outline a picture of what is being expected from a resident in Greenwood.

Living in Greenwood with a family is a norm. All the interviewees say that it mostly families living there, and that the neighborhood is adopted for family life. I asked Emma how a typical resident of Greenwood is: “It’s a family, with children… A man and a woman, and children”. I then asked if she knew any singles living in Greenwood:

I only know one in entire Greenwood. And he’s kind of weird, so that’s understandable (laughter). He has… bought a house up here, which is lovely, and he was supposed to renovate it. [...] But nothing happens with the house, it just stand there, falling into decay [...] And he has a lot of machines and junk on the yard and in the garden. [...] Yeah, that’s disturbing. It disturbs me.

To be single and to live alone stand out, and is not compatible with the general picture of Greenwood as a place for family life. Also, to not take care of your property is a sign of disorder, which is seen upon with skepticism. Therese reflects upon how her neighbors perceive her and her family: “Well, we recently repainted the facade [of the house], so the house looks neat. We have changed the outer door and the garage door as well.” This is an expression of Therese’s awareness of the expectations the neighbors have on her, and which she – at the same time - has on them. Thomas say that people in Greenwood are “decent”. I asked what he meant by that: “Well, like… They take care of their properties in a good way… they… spend time with their families”.

Close to Axel and Edith, a landlord recently bought a house which he rents out to recently arrived refugees. Axel refers to them as “foreigners” and “women with veils”; “we don’t like
that” he says. “Why?” I asked. “They are stealing” Edith adds. “Yeah, it seems like they have no sense of what’s mine and what’s theirs” Axel says. However, Axel and Edith have not noticed any of this themselves; “we have hardly seen them” as Edith says, “but we have heard from neighbors”. Axel tells me how a neighbor said that one of the “foreigners went into their yard and started to pick apples from the trees, and when they told them to stop they just said ‘we don’t understand’ and then they left… so, it’s weird”.

The refugees as Axel and Edith describe could be seen as strangers in Greenwood, and in Milltown as a whole. As strangers, they are ‘cut off’ from past associations, which make them hard to position within social space. The result is that the strangers are seen as a “motley mass”; there seem to be no social order among them (Sennett 2002: 51).

Axel: There were some Greeks and Yugoslavs which came here during the 60s and the 70s. […] And they have lived here for so long so they are totally swedenized25 by now, their children and everything… so… we don’t count them as foreigners anymore. Instead, the newcomers here are foreigners for us now.

Axel’s citation above shows how this concept of strangers is closely connected to his use of the word ‘foreigners’, but also how this perception can change over time. This shows how community is a process; its meaning is never finally fixed and determined, and boundaries between inclusion and exclusion can be redrawn and redefined.

The focus will now change from what stands out to what is expected from a resident in Greenwood. This can be outlined by asking how people in general are in Greenwood.

David: Those who live here are sensible people. There are people who are steady and industrious and who want something out of life, so to speak… they are working. They have something to lose by being foolish26, so to speak… […] the youths here… when they are driving with their mopeds, they are slowing down when they are driving by here… such little things that show that… they make an effort for people… I mean, they don’t know me. So it’s some kind of decency in that.

The mutual dependence upon residents in Greenwood is here expressed. People control both themselves and others to fulfill certain expectations, because “they have something to lose by being foolish”. What are at stake here then? It is the authenticity of oneself. To be a resident of Greenwood is to display oneself and one’s personal qualities (by a nice facade, a well-managed garden, to be with your family, etc.). And what makes an action authentic is not the

25 Swedenized: Försvenskade.
26 By beeing foolish: Att bära sig dumt åt.
action in itself, it is the character of those who engage in it (Sennett 2002: 11). But it also to be able to identify disturbing elements that do not go well with the rest; i.e. to make a distinction. For example, unemployment and early retirement do not go well with ‘industrious’. Rental apartments do not go well with villas. They symbolizes different ways of life.

6.2.3 The purified community: Conclusions
Where the first section of the analysis showed the localization of personal values, this section has examined how these are lived, embodied – and more importantly – mentally perceived and constitutive of a collective personality made up by expectations. Since interaction between neighbors is almost completely absent, the interviewees create a purified community which envisages how they are the same rather than what they actually do in their relations to each other (Sennett 1996: 48-49). Who “we” are becomes a selective and arbitrary act of imagination, rather than stemming from actual interactions and from experience derived knowledge acts. This selection process, in turn, makes explicit the classificatory scheme of the interviewees. Greenwood has been defined with the possibilities it offer as an object, and the interviewees have utilized this object in practical use, in order to express their habitus (see Bourdieu 1984: 100). The residents thus have an obligation towards themselves and others in the neighborhood to contribute to the fulfillment of these promises and expectations. In this sense, they are mutually dependent on each other. However, this does not mean that all of promises are fulfilled. Thomas, for example, was kind of surprised that it was such a lack of cohesion in the neighborhood when he moved in:

It kind of surprised me that it was so little of that here. I had not expect that being the case… I had the expectation that you would come closer to each other.

Another important conclusion is that feelings of belonging can grow up among people whose lives strike the outsider as highly disparate; between people who seem to have very little in common and matter very little in each other’s life (Sennett 1995: 39). I asked David how he thinks his neighbors perceive him:

Actually, I don’t think they give a damn about us. I don’t think we mean a lot for anyone in Greenwood. We don’t have that relation with anyone that it would mean something if we moved from there. At the same time, I don’t think there’s anyone who’s disturbed by us, or that we annoy people… I think that people enjoy small-talk - for a while - but some deeper level of friendship or contact… we
simply don’t have that with the neighbors. But it’s pleasant. There’s no dissensions at all between us and our neighbors, but… it’s more of a distance, than something else.

David also says “I feel comfort in being alone”. Leo expresses the same desire to be alone. For Leo, Greenwood works as a pronounced zone of isolation; a place to withdraw after a week with much work-related encounters:

Leo: I have been doing a lot of stuff where I’m not at home a lot during evenings, and I meet a lot of people during daytime. I’ve been travelling around Sweden in my work. And when you reach Friday and Saturday, I feel comfort in not spending time with others. My wife, in contrast, has another job, where she works with children a lot, and she can say that she miss spending time with people, but I have had enough of that during the week. So, it’s a lot about what kind of needs you have as a human being. And I have a need to sometimes be alone. To go out in the garden, listen to music, read, and stuff like that.

‘To be alone’ seems at first to be a very non-social activity, since Leo and David consciously avoid interaction with others. This, however, is a pitfall an interactionalist approach easily falls into. As Heidegger (2013: 140) has learned us; to be alone is to have an understanding of others. This understanding – in David’s and Leo’s case – is the collective personality of Greenwood. The essence of a purification process is the fear of losing control (Sennett 1995: 98). A purified community makes the immediate circumstances paramount, defined against societal complexity. ‘To be alone’ is consequently to be part of a fundamentally social constitution, a socio-ontological establishment of a purified community of Greenwood. As Aspers and Kohl (2013: 498) have pointed out (by using a metaphor very appropriate for this study, ironically): “social philosophy harbors many approaches which depart from a very abstract, isolated individual, looking out from the window of his or her perceptual house, without reaching other individuals in their houses”. The other individuals are always there. Mitdasein determines the existence even if someone else is not perceived. Hence, the facticity of Mitdasein does not has its ground in a co-occurrence with other subjects (Heidegger 2013: 142). Therefore, you can feel safe with being alone when your immediate surroundings rest upon a socio-ontology of purification.

6.3 To perceive Milltown

In this final section, two examinations will be undertaken. The first aims to examine how the socio-ontological constitution of public space is being undertaken by the interviewees. This is
of importance to determine in order to understand how Milltown as a whole is perceived in relation to the interviewees’ own position therein. The second examination will focus upon how the interviewees position themselves in relation to other people in Milltown. With that being done, we can achieve an understanding how Milltown as a social space of relations is constructed by the interviewees. It will be shown how the purified community identity, as described in the former section, is used by the interviewees to distinguish themselves from other neighborhoods and people in Milltown.

6.3.1 Empty public life

As could be seen in the first section of the analysis, the interviewees are dependent upon other areas in Milltown in order to work, shop groceries, and to run other errands. This dependence upon mobility is primarily solved by a car:

Axel: We take the car once a week, every time we’re about to shop groceries, and we shop… fill the basket… we go right down to [the supermarket], then we drive home…

David: If I’m going to shop groceries, I go to shop groceries; if I’m going to work, I’m going to work; if I’m going to leave kids at school, I drive to school…

To drive in Milltown is usually to make a journey from place A to place B. The private automobile, which enables a freedom of movement, intensifies the isolation of the private sphere. With a car, you can actively avoid contact zones with a crowd, hence isolate yourself even more (Sennett 2002: 15). This also produces a certain relation to space of motion; when public space becomes a function of motion, this space loses any independent experiential meaning of its own (Ibid: 14). The functional differentiation of the city, and the locations of hypermarkets outside the city center, have contributed to that the interviewees spend almost no time in Milltowns central parts:

Edith: I’m never in the centre of the city

David: It’s very little… to spend time downtown, or to just ‘go down to town’, I don’t do that. And if I do, then I have some errand that needs to be done.

Emma: I don’t do any shopping in Milltown […] and we never eat on restaurants. We eat at home.
At the same time, they depict the central parts of Milltown as ‘empty’, ‘dead’ and a place where ‘nothing happens’.

David: It’s empty, in a way. It’s not a vivid place. Large parts are very desert.

Emma: If you walk down in Milltown’s centre today… it’s stone dead. During the evenings, there’s totally empty, no one’s there. And during the daytime, there are one swede and nine refugees… And I have nothing against refugees, but they have a different culture that we’re used to, so when you are walking… it’s like… fruit trays on the pavement and some people are sitting smoking pipe…

Axel: If you walk down to the town today and see a swede, you think; ‘oh, there’s a swede!’

As we can see, the central parts of Milltown are perceived as empty. The people who are there, who spend time there, are seen as being “refugees”. They are, as we could see in the former section, perceived as strangers; i.e. they are hard to position within social space. There is simply no perceivable social order among them.

One important mechanism behind the ideology of intimacy is, as we have seen, to keep the impersonal life at a distance. To express yourself in public domains is not compatible with this notion. As Sennett (2002: 299) has argued; people who are expressing themselves in public sphere are usually looked upon as the under-class, or as “social misfits”. They seem to symbolize an idleness which is not compatible with the interviewees’ own personal values; you should not spend time downtown if you do not have errands. Further, when the interviewees are driving their cars in Milltown, they see refugees walking back and forth from the city center, carrying bags of groceries. To use public space in this sense is simply not thinkable for residents of Greenwood. That would be to repress their freedom of movement; i.e. their freedom to isolate themselves in a private automobile. Paradoxically, every interviewee agree upon that the emptiness of Milltown’s central parts is a major disadvantage for Milltown as a city. “Something has gone lost” Axel says. Edith agrees: “there were market trade down at the square twice a week before, now it’s nothing…”

6.3.2 To position oneself in relation to others

Another important mechanism behind the construction of a purified identity, is what the identity is defined against. As philosopher Paul Ricoeur (1992: 3) has pointed out, identity is always exclusive. To define oneself it to define an otherness. In Heideggerian terms, the
understanding of *Mitdasein* cannot simply be escaped. This co-existence is essential when *Dasein* tries to establish understanding of what he or she is (or is not).

Greenwood’s values are thus defined against other neighborhoods’ values. They are seen to represent different ways-of-life. Three focal categories can be discerned on how the interviewees position themselves in relation to other neighborhoods in Milltown.

First, Greenwood is defined against ‘the Golden mile’ of Milltown; i.e. a neighborhood that represents a more affluent way-of-living, especially to a neighborhood called Coastville. As the name suggests, this neighborhood is localized at the coast, consisting of big detached villas. Leo says that “it’s obvious that they have a higher standing of living there”, and Therese claims: “there are very affluent people living there”. In relation to Coastville, Greenwood is described as “regular” and “ordinary”, hence defined against a societal “elite” of more affluent people.

Second, Greenwood is defined against areas seen as under-class or working class neighborhoods. They represent unemployment, lower income, social problems, violence and disorder. Especially two neighborhoods are here mentioned; Westhill and Easthill. They are neighborhoods solely consisting of rental apartments, built during the 1960s and the 1970s. All the interviewees associate these neighborhoods with foreigners *with* families, swedes living alone *without* families, and people with social problems. People are seen to be “placed” there, since they have nowhere else to live.

Axel: If you take the example with drug addicts and stuff like that, they don’t have the money to buy a house here, they cannot get loans. They are being placed in apartments…ending up in Westhill or Easthill…

This, in turn, means that to perceive a person with “foreign appearance” in public space, is to associate this person with these pejorative meanings. Just as Elias and Scotson (1999: 31) have described, characteristics perceived as ‘bad’ are highlighted in order to represent the outsider group as a unity. In turn, the construction of an ‘us’ tends to highlight the most desirable characteristics, and hence to erase characteristics that potentially distort that picture.

Thirdly - and finally - the interviewees identify themselves with neighborhoods in Milltown that represent the same values ascribed to Greenwood. These are neighborhoods with a similar physical appearance, and which are perceived as equally homogenous in their social composition.

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27 *Golden mile: Gräddhyllan*
Valter: Well, the residential neighborhood up there at Westwood, there seems quite calm also... We have a friend up there.

Thomas: I can imagine that Westwood is quite similar... similar houses, prices and people...

These categorizations represent a public geography of Milltown; i.e. a social space of relations where the interviewees position themselves in relation to others. The creation of a public geography has “a great deal to do with imagination as a social phenomenon” (Sennett 2002: 41). As Thomas says: “I can imagine that Westwood is quite similar”. The imaginative construction of a social geography - and consequently also of social space - is reinforced by the fact that the interviewees spend almost no time in other neighborhoods, or in any other parts of Milltown in general. I asked Edith what made her think that Easthill has the most social problems in Milltown: “well, it’s by hearsay”. I asked Therese the same question: “Think? You know it’s like that”.

Perceptions of urban disorder, for example, are thus fundamentally tied to how racial and economic inequalities of a society are perceived as a whole. This was also showed recently in the work of Sampson (2012). These “facts” belong to the doxa of the interviewees, hence helping them constituting the reality of the social world as a whole (Bourdieu 2007: 231). Dasein is ontologically constitutive of this doxa, and objects - and our understanding of them - become available through this doxa (Heidegger 2013: 208).28 This means, as Sennett (2009: 57) points out, that “visual evidence of disorder is projective rather than deductive (in psychoanalytical terms). This means that we are processing something other than what we see directly”. This section has showed how this ‘processing’ is enabled by Dasein, through the internalization of a certain disposition, a habitus, that categorizes and makes sense of social reality, thus creating a purified whole. Community is therefore a phenomenon of collective being rather than collective action. And this being is not being in an isolated context (e.g. in a community, in a society, in an institution). It is being in general; the fact of existing; to be-in-the-world. The understanding of one’s world starts and ends with Dasein.

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28 ‘Doxa’ and life-world are here used interchangeably.
7. Conclusion

The aim of this study has been to examine how the interviewees, living in the same neighborhood within a minor city in southern Sweden, create a perception of the city as a whole in relation to their own positioning therein. From this aim, two key issues were delineated: How is Milltown socio-ontologically constituted as a social space of relations? Which was followed by: How do the interviewees construct a purified community? In order to examine this, nine in-depth interviews were conducted with residents of Greenwood.

The analysis has showed how a private sphere has been constituted from where Milltown as a whole is defined and judged, thus constituting a socio-ontology of Milltown. Greenwood represents a simplification of the social environment within the city landscape, where personal feelings and values are projected. This, in turn, is defined against the societal complexity of an impersonal city life with its ‘anonymous crowds’. Greenwood is seen to serve a special function in this abundance; i.e. to be an isolated place for family life, where societal complexity can be obscured and purified into an authentic experience; i.e. by constituting a purified community identity. This form of belonging, this form of community, is however abstract; a social psychological foundation that takes into account other people as the ‘same’. There were no obvious feelings of belonging that were expressed by the interviewees. Rather, it was an orientation towards a meaningful context that was being expressed. This context, however, rests upon a socio-ontological establishment of the perceived world that includes an understanding of other people (Mitdasein). This form of belonging, this form of community, is however abstract; a social psychological foundation that takes into account other people as the ‘same’. This results in an ontological security\(^{29}\) for the individuals, from where the closest environment becomes trustworthy and predictable. This resulted in an imaginative construction of a collective personality, representing a ‘resident of Greenwood’. Community is a communal being, rather than communal action. These feelings of belonging, in turn, stem from the shared expectations neighbors have on each other in order to achieve this authentic way-of-life. At the same time, these feelings were not obvious when investigating the social cohesion within Greenwood alone. Interaction between neighbors where almost completely absent, and no obvious feelings of ‘us’ could be found. Rather, the purified community identity became articulated more explicitly when the interviewees interpreted Milltown as a

\(^{29}\) Anthony Giddens (2008: 48) depicts ontological security as “the quiet character of the practical consciousness”, referring to small details in our everyday lives that we take for granted. It keeps social anxiety at bay, thus making social life and its objects predictable and understandable.
whole, and its composition of different neighborhoods. The interviewees compensated the absence of interaction through a purification process that envisaged how they were the same, rather than what they actually do in their relations to each other. This, in turn, was defined against other neighborhoods in Milltown, which were seen to represent different ways-of-life.

Finally, it was showed that Greenwood not per se enables a socio-ontology of the city as a social space. Greenwood is not an isolated entity that socializes its residents. Rather, it was shown how the interviewees brought something to Greenwood; i.e. a certain habitus looking to express itself. This presumes an already established understanding of social space in general, which the interviewees have internalized into their habitus.

7.1 Contributions and implications

The importance of place, and how it matter for social practices, has traditionally been of a limited concern in sociology in general (Gieryn 2000), and in urban sociology in particular (Wu 2015). Empirical studies have often reduced cities to a place where social problems are located, rather than experienced, lived, and – consequently - how they are related to a specific locality (Wu 2015). This is partly due to the fact that urban studies traditionally have payed attention to factors of urbanization (i.e. the growth and development of cities) rather than to factors of urbanism (i.e. the lives and culture of cities) (Borer 2013).

This study has taken as point of departure the everyday experiences of perceiving the city, and how these experiences are related to individuals’ own positioning therein. In this way, a more complex understanding of how feelings of belonging are constituted in relation to a specific locality could be achieved, but also how this understanding enables of a perception of the city as a whole. As a result, this contributes to insights on how recent attempts to ‘redefine’ the community concept (e.g. Delanty 2005, Mulligan 2015) could be used empirically, and be further built upon theoretically.

Further, this study has tried to theoretically and heuristically develop the socio-ontological approach, as being presented by Aspers & Kohl (2013), by combining it with the genetic structuralism of Pierre Bourdieu. This made it possible to gain a more ‘contextual’ approach to the analysis of Dasein in order to examine its sociohistorical situatedness. This also made the phenomenological elements of Bourdieu’s theories more explicit, and contributes to a more complex understanding of the formation of a habitus. Also, by adopting a socio-ontological analysis, it was shown how experiences of community cannot be ontologically separated from experiences of the city. Instead of treating ‘community’ as a primordial social
entity that is being “searched for” in the contemporary city landscape, the social underpinnings (i.e. the socio-ontology) of such feelings have been examined. As has been showed, the examination of a ‘community’ tends traditionally to be reduced to observable social encounters between neighbors.

It could also be showed that from the same dualistic approach it has also followed an exaggerated difference between minor cities and larger cities. The anonymous and impersonal city life have been seen as a counterpart to community, typically related to the small town, where social life has been depicted as more habitual and personal (e.g. Simmel 1995: 196). However, this study argues that minor cities – like Milltown - should be approached as socially complex milieus as well; i.e. a Gesellschaft where people are aware of each other but do not know each other. This approach to minor cities has often been neglected in urban sociology, which traditionally has been concerned with big cities (M.A. Hunter 2014).

Further, voluntary segregation is a matter that is often neglected in urban sociological research, which traditionally has worked in a ‘paradigm of poverty’ (see Sampson 2012: 57), focusing primarily on involuntary segregation within stigmatized neighborhoods. The results of this study give insights to how mechanisms of voluntary segregation work; i.e. why people choose to live somewhere where they can isolate themselves, and where they can fulfill and express their habitus; i.e. an authentic way of life which in turn is distinguished from alternative ways of living.

Finally, this study – hopefully - will contribute to a more complex understanding on how relations of ‘us’ and ‘them’, as well as prejudices and other pejorative symbols, are constructed, reproduced and sustained within the city landscape. It also contributes to the understanding of how public places are judged and perceived, which can be used to further examine topics like – for instance - trust and fear within the city landscape. Hopefully, this gives a more complex understanding of social life within the city that can be used as input for city planners, architects and other professions that concern itself with development of city milieus.

7.2 Further research

An interesting follow up to this study would be to investigate the city planning ideal of densification, whose purpose is to plan for diversity rather than to functionally separate and isolate entities. How does densification affect the socio-ontological constitution of the city? It
would be interesting to put this in relation to the isolation tendencies showed in this study. Do densification ‘loosen up’ boundaries? What happens with social distances in the city? This study especially encourage two potential examinations under this theme: (i) A field study, preferably with an ethnographic approach, that investigates places in the city that is (or has been) subject to a densification project. What are the sociological implications of this planning ideal? Can you actually plan social life? Has it, for instance, become a ‘pavement culture’ that Jane Jacobs (1964) talked about? (ii) The second potential examination is closely connected to the first, but should analytically emphasize ideals. Densification holds some promises; i.e. an understanding of what an ideal city-life should be like. But – and more important for sociologists - it also holds an understanding of social life. What are the ideals that permeate the discourse of densification? How is social life in the city conceptualized in the planning discourse? Such an investigation would be of a twofold importance. First, the debate is of current interest, and the knowledge about the implications of densification are therefore limited. Second, the planning of cities have an immediate implication in so far that it affect our lives in the city (e.g. how we live, where we can (or cannot) live, where we can go). Also - and which could be shown in this study - the planning of neighborhoods is also a factor that partly determines how the city as a whole is perceived, since their appearances and physical limitations do matter.

Further, a comparative analysis between different neighborhoods within the same city would deepen the knowledge about how the city is perceived from different localities. However, here it also of importance to remember that to live in a city does not always mean to live in a physically delineated area, like Greenwood. The city is lived in different ways. As has been shown, studies of social life within cities have usually been reduced to entities like ‘the neighborhood’ and ‘the community’ (M.A. Hunter 2014). Even if this study has tried to transcend the dichotomy ‘community’ and ‘city’, it has nevertheless been limited to how Milltown is perceived in relation to Greenwood as neighborhood. As Holstein and Gubrium (1995: 16) have pointed out, meaning is not predetermined, neither is it constantly formulated anew. This means that different situations can enable a certain perception and understanding of an object. It is thus of importance to open up for alternative positions from which people interpret the city, not only in relation to their homes and neighborhoods. Such an examination is encouraged. For example; this study has conducted a socio-ontological investigation of the city that has been limited to involving imaginative constructions and visual cues. However, as Borer (2013) recently pointed out, the conditions of these factors could be more thoroughly examined by taking account sensory stimulations like sounds, smells and relations between
physical bodies and their surroundings. To recognize the connections between urban experiences and sensory stimulations can give a more complex understanding how the city is perceived, lived and experienced. A socio-ontological approach which takes these factors into account is thus encouraged.

Another important limitation of this study - and which further research could examine more thoroughly - is that all interviewees have families, and that this has - in fact - strongly contributed to the results. Although having a family is undoubtedly established as a strong norm in Greenwood, it would have been interesting to interview people that did not fit into the expectations of a ‘resident in Greenwood’ (e.g. people who live alone). Such alternative perspectives are obscured in these results.

Finally, this study was partly an attempt to theoretically and heuristically develop the socio-ontological approach. Further developments are more than welcome, and alternative combinations with other theoretical approaches would be especially interesting. This study argues that a socio-ontological foundation could contribute to a more complex and alternative understanding of various topics, not only in the field of urban sociology.

7.3 Final reflections

Since I have taken as object for my research something that is close to me, a potential objection that actualizes itself may be; what, in my results, did actually surprise me?

As Bourdieu (2007: 232) has pointed out, to think relationally is to transcend the immediate object under study in order to understand its position within a larger context; i.e. in a social space of relations. This analytical procedure enabled me to see Greenwood in a new way. For example, one thing that struck me was how isolated Greenwood and its residents actually were in the city, both physically and mentally. When segregation is discussed, it is usually understood as a physical isolation within suburbs that are planned in a functionalistic manner, thus separating them from the rest of the city. For example, one central idea of the Garden city ideal, which has inspired Swedish suburbs like Vällingby and Ärsta, was the concept of a ‘community centre’ (e.g. Franzén & Sandstedt 1981: 62). A community centre would answer to all those needs residents were imagined to have (in form of different services like schools, medical health centers, supermarkets, cinemas etc.). This, in turn, would make it unnecessary to go in the center of the city; therefore the concept of ‘urban decentralization’ (e.g. Howard 2011). Greenwood has no ‘community centre’. Rather, it is even more isolated that many functionalistic planned suburbs are - and this, in turn, is something desirable for the residents.
of Greenwood. Further, this isolation results in a freedom of movement in the form the personal vehicle, were the residents can extend their isolation even more, thus avoiding impersonal encounters of a crowd and keep the social disorder of the city effectively at bay. This, in turn has partly led to a decrease of city life, where public spaces are considered as being “dead” and where strangers seem to hang out aimlessly.

Another thing that surprised me was that the cohesion between neighbors was so absent. Even though the interviewees differed considerably in relation to education, professions and backgrounds, and they knew little or nothing about each other - their sense of ‘us’ became most clear when they were asked to define Greenwood in relation to the city as a whole and its different neighborhoods. This made it clear that Greenwood is more than what meets the eye. It is a place that represent values and promises of a certain way of life; an authentic way of being, from where one’s personal sphere can be delineated and defined into a secure foundation. This sphere is defined against the abundance and overwhelming social life of the city – and society in general – which is the impersonal; i.e. a disorder that cannot be translated into private values.
References


Appendix A

Intervjuguide för semistrukturerad intervju
Magisteruppsats i sociologi, VT 2016
Hampus Petersson

- **Bakgrund**
  o Hur länge har du/ni bott i Greenwood?
  o Var är du uppväxt? I vilket typ av bostadsområde?
  o Vad gjorde/gör dina föräldrar?
  o Vad var det som fick dig att välja just det arbetet? (Utbildning)

- **Hur kommer det sig att ni valde att flytta hit?**
  o Kollade ni på andra hus i andra områden innan ni köpte detta huset?
  o Var bodde du/ni innan du/ni flyttade hit?

- **Känner du dig hemma i Greenwood?**
  o Kom du ihåg vad du hade för syn på Greenwood som bostadsområde innan ni flyttade hit?
  o Har du något specifikt minne av när ni flyttade hit?
  o Hur uppfattade du det att vara att flytta hit? Hur blev ni bemötta av grannar? Vad var dina iakttagelser och tankar? Anser du att ni ”smälte in” snabbt?

  o Vad är din uppfattning om vilka människor som bor på Greenwood?
  o Hur ser den typiska Greenwood-bon ut? Hur är den typiska Greenwood-bon?
  o Upplever du Greenwood som ett tryggt område?

- **Umgås du mycket med dina grannar?**
  o Vad gör ni då? Hur ofta? När sågs ni senast?
  o Har ni några gemensamma aktiviteter? (städdagar, fester etc.)
  o Saknar du en gemenskap med grannarna? Skulle du vilja att det var mer gemensamma aktiviteter?
  o Tar ni hjälp av era grannar? När då? Konkret exempel? Extranykel?

- **Hur upplever du i allmänhet folket som bor på din gata eller runt omkring din gata?**
  o Känner ni de flesta som bor här i närheten?
o Upplever du att det finns störande grannar? Vad/vilket är störande?
o Finns det något som sticker ut här på Greenwood?

- Hur tror du att folk här runt omkring i Greenwood upplever er?

- Finns det något som skulle kunna bli bättre i Greenwood?
  o Tycker du Greenwood är ett idealiskt bostadsområde?
  o Saknas det något?
  o Ska det vara väl integrerat i staden i övrigt, eller ska det vara mer isolerat från övriga staden? Varför?
  o Mångfald av aktiviteter och faciliteter i området? (Ska det enbart vara bostäder, eller ska det även finnas tillgång till diverse faciliteter (skola, vårdcentral, butiker)

- Har det hänt något uppseendeväckande på Greenwood under den tiden du bott här?
  o Något som ”stuckit ut”? Störande element?
  o Protesterat/överklagat något byggprojekt?

- Hur tror du att du skulle reagera om det planerades ett flyktingboende på Greenwood? Gruppboende för folk med missbruksproblem?
  o Hur tror du att andra skulle reagera här i Greenwood? Varför?

- Hur tror du att andra, som bor i andra delar av staden, ser på er i Greenwood?

Staden som helhet

- Hur skulle du beskriva Milltown som stad?
  o Hur skulle du beskriva Milltowns centrum?
  o Hur har Milltown förändrats sedan du växte upp?
  o Upplever du Milltown som en segregerad stad?

- Finns det några bostadsområden som utmärker sig på något sätt?
  - Vilket/vilka områden skulle du säga har mest sociala problem? (arbetslöshet, våldsbrott, missbruk)
  - Vad får dig att tro att det är just det/de områdena som har mest sociala problem?
  - Finns det några områden som har dåligt rykte?

  - Vilket/vilka områden tror du har det bäst ställt?
  - Vad får dig att tro att just detta/dessa områden har det bäst ställt?
  - Hur skulle du beskriva hur en typiskt boende i dessa områden är?
  - Vad finns det för skiljelinjer mellan olika bostadsområden i Milltown?
  - Vad skiljer dessa bostadsområden från Greenwood?
- Känner du dig otrygg i några delar av staden?

- Vad är det som gör att du känner dig hemma, respektive inte känner dig som hemma, i andra delar av staden?

- Vilka områden skulle du säga att du rör dig i? Hur ofta? Vad gör du då?

- Vad gör du på fritiden?
  
  o Är du medlem i någon förening? Var träffas ni?
  o Om du försöker överblicka ditt vardagliga liv; hur mycket görs och vad görs i Greenwood?
Appendix B

**Sociologisk studie i _**

Hej!

Jag skulle vilja prata med dig om hur du upplever det att vara där du bor!

Mitt namn är Hampus Petersson och jag är själv uppväxt i _. Jag skriver just nu på min magisteruppsats i sociologi vid Uppsala universitet. En magisteruppsats är ett mindre vetenskapligt arbete där jag själv ska formulera och besvara en sociologisk forskningsfråga. Nu har jag återvänt till min hemstad _ för att göra en sociologisk studie i _, ett område som själv växte upp i en gång i tiden.


**Hur kommer intervjun gå till?**


Du som intervjuperson är anonym i studien. Ditt namn kommer att bytas ut mot ett påhittat, och _ kommer också att få ett fiktivt namn. Det kommer inte heller framgå att det är i _ som studien ägt rum, utan kort och gott i ”en mindre stad i södra Sverige”.

Observera också att din medverkan är helt frivillig och att du når som helst kan dra dig ur studien!
Vem söker jag?

Hur ska jag göra om jag vill vara med i studien?
Om du är intresserad av att vara med i studien så kontakta gärna mig på _. Du kan också ringa eller sms:a mig när som helst på nummer _. Om du har några övriga funderingar över studien så är du givetvis välkommen att ställa dem också!

Med vänliga hälsningar,
Hampus Petersson

(Kontaktuppgifter till handledare fanns också med i presentationsbrevet.)