

*Paper for Scandinavica***A new formula for Sustainability Planning? The Vision Program for Norra Sorgenfri, Malmö****Hoai Anh Tran and Yvonne Rydin*****Introduction***

In the past decades, urban developments have been an arena where cities showcase new ideas and ideals about how urban areas can be shaped to serve social, economic and sustainability goals. Malmö, the third largest city of Sweden, has been notable for how it has changed in recent decades and how new patterns of urban development have emerged which have been lauded as sustainable. Attention has particularly focused on the regeneration efforts at the Western Harbour, starting with Bo01, the exhibition area of new housing and continuing with the location of the new university campus and an extensive programme of new development in the vicinity. There has also been the construction of a new nodal point for urban development at Hyllie, with a major transport interchange and new commercial centre alongside residential development. This paper looks at a rather different example of urban development in the city. This concerns an area between the city centre and the new development at Hyllie, known as Norra Sorgenfri. A former industrial site, its future is being presented as a new form of sustainable urban development that moves away from the spectacular and focuses on everyday life.

The creation of a planning vision has been described as “a conscious and purposive action to represent values and meanings for the future to which a particular place is committed” (Albrechts, 2006: 1160; see also Listerborn, 2017) and is thus a highly significant representation of the city regarding the built environment, future urban life and sustainable planning ideas. Healey’s discussion of spatial imaginations (Healey 2007) follows a similar line. She argues that strategical planning, which include the creation of a planning vision, involve a set of concepts that are themselves the products of particular values that involves different constructions of knowledge about a place and different imaginaries and ideas about spatial qualities (Healey 2007: 208). How a place is defined in terms of boundaries and scale, how it is positioned in relation to other spaces and places, for example, and what spatial and social qualities are brought to the fore and what is left in the shadow, manifest this understanding of a place and the prevailing ideals and ideas of the spatial qualities that are considered as desirable, and not.

Here we analyse the representations of the city and urban living that are constituted by the planning vision for Norra Sorgenfri and particularly consider the implications for sustainability. The vision document is interesting material for studying urban representation as it is both a formal presentation of the city’s future and desired lifestyles, as well as the account of the planning perspectives and values that will put this into practice. We, therefore, consider both text and images – examining the discourses of representation constituted in the document and the assumptions behind them, and placing these against contextual knowledge of the area, and the way the development is progressing on-site. Our analysis highlights the ideas and representations of sustainable urban development with a focus on creating inclusive urban spaces and bridging spatial divides and situates them

within the existing literature on the representations of urban development and urban sustainability within Malmö.

We suggest that due to the strategy of achieving win-win outcomes by combining social integration and economic development, the Vision for Norra Sorgenfri includes several inherent points of ambivalence and tension. There is the tension between the ambition to highlight the importance of respecting the place's history and its ordinary everyday life versus the desire to create the type of urban forms that attract visitors and people of the so-called creative class. There is the ambivalence between the ambition to create connectivity between the wealthy west and the poorer east of the city versus the focus on connections towards the city centre. And, finally, there is the problematic nature of the reliance on architectural determinism set against the potential for achieving social sustainability. We will explore whether and how these urban ideas and ideas are represented in the vision document for Norra Sorgenfri. First, we set describe the area and its context in a little more detail.

### ***Malmö and the Norra Sorgenfri area***

There is a considerable body of literature dealing with sustainable urban development and change in Malmö. One of the most clearly established narratives of urban development in Malmö concerns the repositioning the city as a 'knowledge city' rather than a locus of industrial production (Mukhtar-Landgren, 2016). This is situated within broader patterns of change for the city, including the construction of the Öresund bridge and tunnel from Copenhagen linking Sweden and Denmark and the final decline of the ship-building industry in the city. It has been a clearly stated aim of most planning documentation for the last two decades, fitting with the Vision for the city articulated by the Mayor, and, by now, it has become a statement of fact, as employment patterns and land uses in the city have changed. Some see this as a facet of broader neo-liberal trends in the urban governance of Malmö that emphasise greater entrepreneurialism on the part of local government, with a focus on public-private partnerships and innovation or experimentation (Madureira, 2014). This is unpacked a little more by Nylund (2014) who sees three storylines emerging in Malmö: the narrative of the transformed city captured by the industry-to-knowledge shift; the storyline of Malmö as a regional growth engine; and, residually, the view of local government as provider of both growth and welfare. Listerborn (2017) also sees Malmö's focus on developing the knowledge-based city as part of a planning approach which emphasises discourses of workfare (as opposed welfare), trickle-down economics and the role of the locality in driving change.

In this context of economic change and apparent social problems, there is an overwhelming focus on the powerful role of urban planning or, at least, on the strong role of urban development in organising society and facilitating change. Urban visioning and urban branding through the creation of 'stories of identity' are central in this approach (Listerborn, 2017: 2) as are the creation of flagship developments, such as the Western Harbour as an iconic sustainable development, Hyllie as the business hub of the Öresund region and, recently, Malmö Live, a mixed use complex of concert hall, congress center and hotel near the train station. This emphasis on spectacular development has been much discussed. It has been seen as a strategy to attract global attention, a form of place marketing (Mukhtar-

Landgren, 2016; Jönsson and Holgersen, 2017). Madureira (2014) also points to the emphasis on the city as a brand and how visible forms of 'good' urban form can be important in establishing this brand. Some analysts also see the development of spectacular large-scale urban projects as a further manifestation of the neoliberalisation of urban planning in Malmö, in which Swedish modernist planning practices have been reworked to serve the elites rather than to counter social inequality (Baeten, 2012; Holgersen, 2014).

Sustainability has been key trope within this marketing of the city as 'new' and 'special' (Lenhart et al., 2014). The development of Western Harbour, with its emphasis on innovative storm water management, waste management and energy generation/distribution has become a celebrated example of sustainability planning, especially of environmental sustainability planning (Jönsson and Holgersen, 2017). While the sustainability claims for Malmö have not gone unchallenged (Anderberg and Clark, 2013; Holgersen and Malm, 2015), nevertheless the name of Malmö is repeatedly presented as synonymous with sustainability. However, the Norra Sorgenfri Vision seeks to present a different vision of sustainability, reflecting recent planning discourses in Malmö which have highlighted the need to integrate all three aspects of sustainability: social, economical and ecological (Kärholm, 2011).

Norra Sorgenfri is an old industrial area located to the south-east of Malmö city center (Figure 1). Covering an area of 45 hectares, Norra Sorgenfri is as large as the whole inner city of Malmö and is one of the city's biggest redevelopment areas. The area is quite centrally located. It borders the historic and largely residential area of St. Pauli, and the green space of St. Pauli cemetery to the south and the established residential area of Rösjöstaden with its traditional city block form to the west. North of the area is an area of popular student housing blocks (Rönnen) and urban allotments. The continental railway at its eastern border had been abandoned for 10 years but has recently started to run again in December 2018. Beyond the railway to the east is Rosengård, a predominantly public housing area with a high concentration of non-ethnic Swedes and home to some of the biggest riots that have occurred in Swedish suburbs.

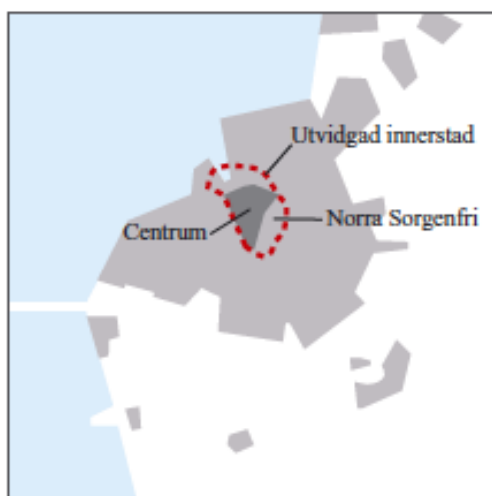


Figure 1: The area location in Malmö as presented in the vision document (Source: Malmö Stad, 2006: 4)

While physically close to the city center, Norra Sorgenfri is not a well-frequented part of the city, since most of the industry has moved or closed down and many buildings stand empty.

The area is currently constituted of large urban blocks surrounded by heavy traffic routes, which limit access to the area. One of Malmö's main traffic routes, Nobelvägen, a four-lane road, runs across the area, forming a major internal physical barrier. In many respects, Norra Sorgenfri is a typical zone of transition, where the industrial character is diminishing with the changing economic structure. There is empty land and many disused old industrial buildings; but it is by no means an abandoned area. Several workshops and small industries are still functioning (Figure 2a, b & c)



Figure 2 (a, b & c) Currently functioning industries in the area

Some design ateliers, cultural organisations and welfare offices are still located in the old industrial building complex at the crossing between Industrigatan and Zenithgatan (Figure 3). During the years waiting for a plan to be implemented, the empty lots and buildings of Norra Sorgenfri became a haven for several artist ateliers, and grassroots cultural groups. A privately-owned lot of more than 9000 sq m – now empty – has been a popular site for all kinds of uses and activities (Figure 4). In 2014 and 2015, this lot became the topic of heated debates in the media, when around 200 EU migrants turned it into a campsite, until the city decided that the camp should be torn down and the migrants evacuated in 2015 (Landelius, 2015).



Figure 3 (left) Design ateliers and cultural schools are still housed in this old industrial building  
 Figure 4 (right) The empty lot that has been home to the refugee camp in 2014-2015

The planning of Norra Sorgenfri started in 2005 with the aim of developing this old industrial area into a socially and physically integrated part of the city center (Malmö Stad, 2006). The vision program was developed in 2006 to outline the main ambitions. It has been used as the basis for public consultation and the preparation of an in-depth development plan, *lanprogram Norra Sorgenfri*, completed in 2008. A special program for public spaces and squares was developed in 2010 and in 2015, and a sustainable development strategy has been completed for some of the priority areas as specified in the *planprogram* from 2008. However, the first construction work only started in late 2015. The fact that Malmö city only owns a small portion of the land designated for development (6 %) was a significant factor in the slow implementation of the plan. The first block that comprises a dozen residential buildings, the majority of which is rental housing, is under construction. The whole block is expected to be completed in 2021, providing about 600 housing units for Malmö. In January 2019, about one fourth of the buildings have been occupied.

The vision program (Malmö Stad, 2006) is our chosen focus of our analysis, complemented with observations of the actual developments that are ongoing (in late 2018) in the first block of the new Norra Sorgenfri and understanding of the planning context developed over long-term engagement with the city. This vision document projects a vibrant urban area, where mixed-use traditional urban blocks provide both housing and work places. The central urban qualities highlighted by the Vision include:

- An inner city character with an active street life generated by commercial activities on the ground floor of the buildings;
- Small scale and diversity of urban forms and functions;
- The importance of creating 'attraction' for the area;
- Accessible public spaces that provide meeting places for residents and visitors.
- The creation of linkages to other parts of the city; and at the same time,
- Looking towards the city center.

The Vision presents a very different picture of the area, both to the existing physical situation, and to the social character of the area as can be observed. It is, indeed, an attempt to create a new representation of the area, of Malmö and of urban sustainability. Below, we will present a close examination of this representation and the tensions and ambivalences inherent in planning for urban development in Malmö.

***Analysis of the Vision for Norra Sorgenfri***

We analyse the vision document in terms of the envisaged socio-economics of the area, its relationship to other parts of the city and the central role that the traditional urban form plays, which we consider a strong example of architectural determinism.

**a. An 'ordinary' city for the creative class?**

Compared to earlier urban development projects such as Western Harbour and Hyllie, which focus on the spectacular (Jönsson and Holgersen, 2017), the Vision for Norra Sorgenfri highlights small scale development and the 'ordinary': "This is an unique area but not spectacular (...) it is an area designed with the people at the focus" (Malmö Stad, 2006: 8). At the same time, though, the Vision also emphasizes change: the existing 'ordinary' – that which can be found in the old transition zone Norra Sorgenfri – is to be reshaped in order to be more attractive for visitors: "It should be worthwhile (for visitors) to visit the area" (Malmö Stad, 2006: 10). The importance of the mix of visitors alongside residents and workers is repeatedly emphasised in the document; Norra Sorgenfri should somehow cater for all three groups. The Vision insists it has no intention to be elitist, that it means to include everyone. Attractions in Norra Sorgenfri are not meant to be 'high culture attractions' but something that is appreciated by a wider population: "with attractions for Sorgenfri we mean that they should be popular rather than high culture, and have a wide acceptance. Attractions should not be too spectacular, or to aims at only few visitors. We would like to have a Turkish bathhouse rather than an opera house" (Malmö Stad, 2006: 10).

Yet, at the same time, the kind of worker to be found here is to change. In the Vision there is no mention of the current version of the 'ordinary': a semi-industrial transition zone that is not the most vibrant, but still fulfils some functions (see Figure 2 a, b & c). The remaining design ateliers and cultural organisations in the area, as exemplified by those that occupy the refurbished building in Industrigatan (Figure 5) is also part of this current 'ordinariness' that may grow and expand under favourable policy. These omission of the existing 'ordinary' qualities in the vision document leaves the reader to wonder whether the 'ordinary' as used in the Vision does not mean 'more of the same' of what can be found in Norra Sorgenfri today but a more trendy and chic kind of 'ordinary', that can be found and is still being created in the city centre of Malmö (or indeed, more akin to those that used to populate Spitalfields). The highlight on the 'ordinary' may simply be a rhetoric that is more about positioning Norra Sorgenfri against Western Harbour and Hyllie, rather than about paying attention to the existing 'ordinary' qualities that can be found in this area or, indeed, any ordinary urban area.





Figure 5: Current occupants of buildings

Rather there is a focus on creating urban space for the creative class. Despite the lack of empirical support for his thesis, Florida's (2003) dogma of the creative city for the creative class – professionals, cultural workers, academics, students – is influential in Malmö (Listerborn, 2017). The development of the so-called '4<sup>th</sup> urban environment' in which a mix of workspace and public space is created for flexible 'encounters', is considered vital for this purpose (Listerborn, 2017) and the influence of the discourse of the creative city in creating a new form of local economy and spinoff activities formed is indeed apparent in the Vision. To shape the city to suit the creative class is presented as one of the inspirational perspectives in the formulation of the vision document (Malmö Stad, 2006: 3). What is projected as the ordinary here is not the ordinary of the old Norra Sorgenfri, but an imaginary of the ordinary as befits the creative class.

This aspiration is clearly revealed through the reference to Spitalfields, a redeveloped market building, now a major shopping facility and a tourist hot-spot in London, which has also been notable for the artists and other creative industries that have located nearby (although many are now relocating). This is cited in the Vision as an inspiring example of how old buildings can be adapted for new uses in a way that is attractive for the creative class. In this spirit, old Tram Station is proposed to be turned into a lively market place, a kind of 'bazaar' with many other functions (Malmö Stad, 2006: 10), aspiring to provide the kind of creative class aesthetics and functions of the kinds that are found in Spitalfields. The link to Spitalfields is rather over-stretched considering Spitalfields is located right on the edge of the Square Mile of London, in one of the most populated and wealthy capital cities in Europe. Resemblances between the two places is hard to find. By all appearances, the 'creative city' aspiration seems to be a 'larger than life' vision. Even in a future scenario when the area will be more populated and there will be a mix of residential and working places, it is unlikely that Norra Sorgenfri will have a dense concentration of work-life spaces, not least considering Malmö's modest population size; the world city creative class may also elude Malmö.

**b. *Fetishization of the downtown and the limits to connectivity***

The Vision sets out a clear intention to make Norra Sorgenfri a new inner city (*ny innerstaden*), a more 'urban' area in current terms with a clearer link to the city centre. The glorification of the urban quality of the inner city as an extended city centre is unmistakable. The word *innerstaden* (inner city), is repeatedly used. There is a special emphasis on the capacity of the inner city's urban form – traditional urban blocks – to function as a social agent through the provision of "meeting places for all residents of Malmö" (Malmö Stad, 2006: 9). The inner city is presented as a place of diversity, with the capacity to act as agent of social integration.

"(t)he inner city, if properly planned, can have something to offer to people of all age, gender and ethnicity. It is in the inner city that we all can move around in a most natural way and where we meet different kinds of people. The inner city can be said to be the most equal place in the city whereas our dedicated living areas often are segregating. In term of integration, the creation of more and better city centre can contribute to a long-term sustainable development" (Malmö Stad, 2006: 5).

While the traditional inner city can be said to be more mixed than modernist housing areas built in the suburbs, to consider the inner city the "most equal place in the city" where everybody can "move around in a most natural way" is to neglect the existing class structure in many inner cities. The so called 'natural' pattern of interactions in the inner city is only 'natural' in the sense that it has been formed gradually through out history.

The qualities of the inner city that are emphasised by the vision document clearly point to a kind of urban downtown, with open ground floors with businesses that are publicly accessible, a mix of urban forms and functions, and public spaces. This is reinforced by the reference to Lucca as an exemplar with its traditional Italian medieval town square. But it is difficult to imagine the equivalent here. The proposed traditional urban blocks tend to have closed internal squares; and even if they are to be interconnected, they will not have the open character of, say, a town square. As of now, the outdoor spaces provided in the newly built buildings are small and have a clearly private character, often used for resident-only facilities such as cycle-parking. There is very little reminiscent of the traditional urban block in the new buildings that have been built; the majority are single building apartment blocks.

It is hard to imagine how Norra Sorgenfri can become a busy inner-city even after the area has been fully developed with about 5000 residents (as prescribed in the plan program, Malmö Stad 2008). Either this suggests the extraordinary growth of the existing Malmö downtown to encompass Norra Sorgenfri or it rather reflects the vurm for traditional urban form and the belief in the central city as a motor for developing a lively and diverse urban areas, as discussed by Tunström (2007, 2009). This can also be seen to link to the fetishization of the city centre noted by Kärrholm (2011). Indirectly this seems to reflect the desire to 'build away' the current character of this area, as discussed above.

There is a further issue in relation to the strategic location of Norra Sorgenfri between the old city centre in the west and the eastern suburbs; the development of Norra Sorgenfri is considered by the municipality to have a key role in linking the city with the disadvantaged neighbourhood of Rosengård (Malmö Stad 2006). It is one of Malmö's focal areas for social sustainability interventions by Malmö City and part of another large redevelopment



program that relates to the reopening of the railway line connecting the eastern suburbs, specifically Rosengård, to the city centre. The railway line has just started to run again with the opening of the new station in Rosengård. As such, the redevelopment of Norra Sorgenfri is presented as significant not only for the area itself but as a strategic development that contributes to a better connected and more socially integrated Malmö (Malmö Stad, 2006).

Within the broader planning narratives of Malmö, there is a strong emphasis on overcoming fragmentation in the city by creating connections. This is not just a story about public and other means of transportation – although the economic, physical and symbolic role of the Öresund connections is always present – but also a vision of the city itself: ‘spaghetti city’ (Listerborn, 2017). While this is predominantly a physical view of spatial fragmentation and physical connection, it is also proposed as a solution to the social problems of Malmö and as an economic strategy. This is taken through to the Vision for Norra Sorgenfri. The vision document declares that the development here will serve to connect the wealthy west to the poorer east of the city.

“Norra Sorgenfri will connect the centre with Eastern Malmö and constructed with an urban environment that attract people from the whole city.” (Malmö Stad, 2006: 6)

“Norra Sorgenfri and the area on the eastern side of the existing city centre has good potential to be an attractive part of the city center and a meeting place between East and West Malmö.” (Malmö Stad, 2006: 8)

The creation of networks of connectivity, networks of streets and of green areas, is seen as providing integration across space and accessibility to spaces. Norra Sorgenfri will comprise a network of paths and meeting places. Industrigatan, one of the main streets in Norra Sorgenfri will be developed into ‘a main path that connects Norra Sorgenfri to the city centre, as well as serving as the link between Malmö East and West’ (Malmö Stad, 2006: 12). However, in the proposed plan, the link to the east is not clear, as the connectivity across the railway line in this direction is largely ignored. In the vision document, the maps and diagrams stop well before the railway line, which also forms the eastern-most edge of the development area (Figure 6).

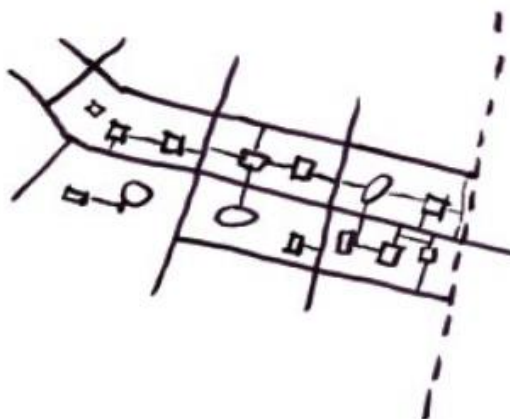


Figure 6: Representation of connectivity that links West to East but stops at the railway line. vision document (Malmö stad: 2006: 12)

The proposed activity park, spanning across the railway line is only briefly mentioned and there is no promised funding for it (given that the area is largely to be built by private sector

developers). The Norra Sorgenfri area is seriously bounded and indeed divided up by busy roads and the railway line (despite the existing railway underpass) and dedicated solutions are needed if an effective connection to the eastern suburbs beyond the railway line is to be created. By comparison, the emphasis on connectivity with the city is much more unproblematically represented in the plans and diagrams in the vision document. Beyond the (more obvious) commuting connectivity that is provided by pedestrian and bicycle paths, there is no clear proposal as to how other more innovative spatial connections – such as to form a clear linkage between various kinds of green areas and public spaces, as envisaged in the vision document – are to be created towards the city centre. For example, what kind of spatial connectivity will be created across current boundaries such as St. Pauli cemetery and Rösjöstaden? The promise of connectivity through a variety of physical spaces remains abstract as they are not accompanied by any innovative ideas that illustrate how social connections can concretely be made across space.

**c. *Idealisation of historic urban form and social sustainability***

The vision program places a strong emphasis on the above mentioned traditional urban block which is seen as providing both privacy and publicness as well as active street façades. This is an urban planning ideal that has been predominant in planning discourses in the West in the past several decades is what can be called an urban renaissance (Tunström 2007, 2009). Here the traditional urban form – closed urban blocks with multistory stone and brick buildings that emerged in many European cities during the late 19th century – has been lauded as most desirable in the quest to construct a lively city; it has been a reaction to the social and environmental problems caused by urban sprawl, car dependency and the loss of place identity. Traditional urban form is presented in classic architectural determinism as an approach to foster an urban lifestyle that emphasizes diversity, community, and sustainability (Lees, 2003 in Tunström 2009).

This urban planning ideal is particularly prevalent in contemporary Swedish urban planning discourse, in which the traditional urban blocks and the city core, or 'central city' are considered to be key elements for developing lively and diverse urban areas and cities (Tunström 2007: 685). The renaissance of the traditional urban form started as a critique of the modernist city that is described as lacking character and which should be seen only as a parentes in the history of urban development (Tunström 2007, 2009). The traditional city is presented as a good city that is attractive, diverse and sustainable, in contrast with the sprawling function-separated modernist city (Tunström 2009). Traditional form is imbued with social significance, and concepts such as integration, diversity, lively and attractive are given a clear physical connotation. 'Integration' is physical rather than social or ethnic integration and is linked to functional mix, variation, and diversity (Tunström 2007: 688). The good city has an 'attractive' city core' and 'attractive locations' (Tunström 2007: 689). Urban public places is inherently good for social life. The role of the consumption-based city core is highly emphasized: it is where there are lively urban life and where 'everything' is nearby (Tunström 2007: 694). The discourse of the good city is in many ways a 'totalizing' discourse where traditional urban form is offered as the solution to all contemporary urban problems (Tunström 2007: 695).

The key tropes of the traditional urban form discourse can be found in the vision document. Such an urban form has certain descriptive labels: small scale, mixed-use, varied, and having an open ground floor. An often-cited quality of the traditional urban form is the emphasis on active street life, which is supported by commercial areas on the ground floor that are accessible to the general public. Industrigatan is envisioned to be such vibrant street where the groundfloors will house diverse commerce and services (Figure 7). According to the Vision, the creation of lively urban spaces (*levande stadsrum*) is important to make the city attractive and safer for the citizens. The link between activities on the street and safety echoes Jacobs' (1961) and Gehl's (2012) discussion on how dense and mixed-functions urban forms that facilitate interactions and social control.



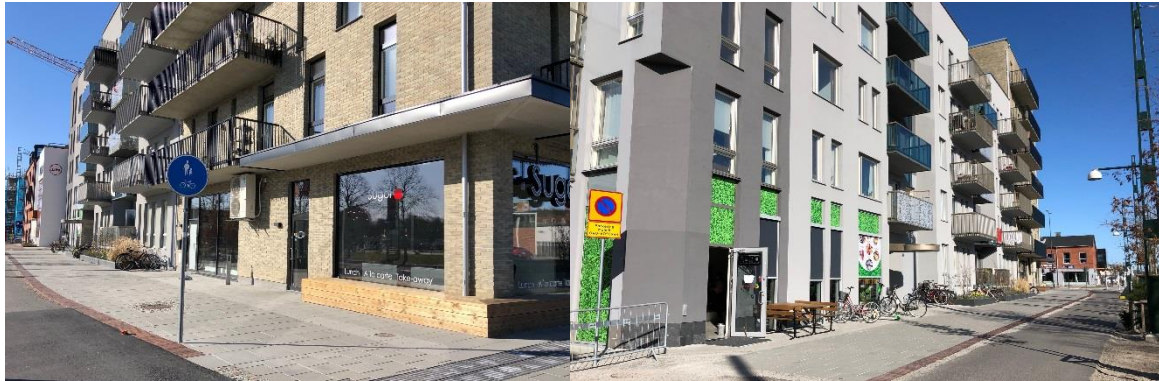
Figure 7 (left): Industrigatan as the main commercial street in the vision program (Malmö Stad, 2006: 7)

Figure 8 (right): Representation of active street facades create lively urban space in the vision document (Malmö Stad, 2006: 13)

The focus on active streets in the Vision is motivated as the need to provide meeting places. The built environment is seen as a kind of urban 'living room' (Malmö Stad, 2006: 12) that facilitates social interactions (Figure 8). The emphasis on creating public spaces as a cultural and democratic arena was highlighted in the Comprehensive Plan of Malmö 2012 (this replaces an earlier emphasis on citizen participation in the planning process; Nylund, 2014). According to Nylund (2014), this is part of a shift in the city's priorities from social justice to that of social cohesion, and an emphasis on the role of planning to promote economic growth and competition. Although the Commission for a Socially Sustainable Malmö (2013) recommended new methods for citizen involvement and broadening the stakeholder base, the focus on the creation of public spaces remains the planning office's main instrument towards achieving social goals, as can be seen in the vision for Norra Sorgenfri. There is a strong belief in the integrating role of meeting places, as an instrument against segregation: it does not matter if different groups live separately providing they can meet in the city through the provision of meeting places/public spaces. This suggests that interactions in a more public setting – even if fleeting and superficial – are as, if not more significant than the character of the community (in terms of diversity) where people live.

It is difficult, though, to see how this vision of the lively and highly urban street life is to be created. Considering the buildings newly built in the first block, there is little evidence of an open street frontage being created; indeed would there be sufficient demand for this? Industrigatan, previously a big street with heavy traffic, has been made smaller with the creation of a bicycle path. However, with several office buildings on a large open space on

the one side, and the newly built residential buildings on the other side having rather closed groundfloor providing only limited commerce and services at the corners (Figure 9 a, b), it is hard to imagine how Industrigatan will turn into a busy pedestrian street. It may well become an attractive street in its way, a rather quiet, with limited footfall and commerce, by no means the vibrant busy commercial street envisaged in the vision document. We can see good examples of these charming streets in the nearby Rösjöstaden and other older parts of Malmö, but there are no references to them in the vision document.



*Figure 9 a&b Industrigatan at present when the first block is under construction.*

*Figure 9a (left): A corner shop at the building located where Industrigatan möter Nobelvägen*

*Figure 9b (right): The groundfloor of buildings along Industrigatan has a clear residential character*

Furthermore, within the city there is an appreciation of growing social problems, which such urban form solutions are unlikely to resolve. The ethnic diversity of the city has been much emphasised, together with associated social and economic inequality (as in the Commission for a Socially Sustainable Malmö; Nylund, 2014) and the fear of a lack of social cohesion. Homogeneity is a repeated trope of concern, from the disruption of such homogeneity in Bo01 by bringing in high-income earners (Kärholm, 2011) to the loss of working-class homogeneity occasioned by industrial decline and on to the spatial stigmatisation of non-ethnic communities within Malmö, which is viewed in the media as problematic, unruly and even dangerous (Stjernborg et al., 2015).

The Vision manifests a strong belief in the capacity of good urban design principles to shape life qualities and contribute to social well-being. This is expressed in the idealization of the traditional urban block form and the romanticization of the social qualities of the city center with open groundfloors and commercial activities that contribute to a vibrant urban life and serve as meeting places between different social groups. In earlier studies of urban planning in Malmö, Kärholm (2011) and Nylund (2014) have discussed the reliance on an ideal type as a short-cut within planning visions. We would like to go further and argue that this romanticization of the traditional urban city block as an ideal type urban form reflects a position of formal determinism or architectural essentialism not unlike the formal determinism of modernist planning and architecture in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Yes, the form is different: small scale city blocks in the city centre are promoted instead of large scale self-sustained neighbourhoods at the periphery; mixed use is embraced instead of segregation of functions; and there is a focus on street life rather than 'houses in the park'. What is similar is the 'totalising' discourse that sees urban form has having the capacity to provide solution for to social problems and, at the same time, provide the necessary conditions for economic growth (Tunström 2007, 2009).

In this respect, the new planning ideal as exercised in Norra Sorgenfri is rather a continuation, rather than the break claimed by its proponents, with the modernist tradition in urban planning and architecture. This observation can be found in Baeten's discussion of neoliberalisation as a second wave of modernist planning in Malmö. Similar to modern social-democratic planning in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, contemporary neoliberal planning in Malmö is driven by the belief in economic growth and in the capacity of physical planning to build away the unwanted city of deprivation, bringing social and economic betterment for all (Baeten 2012: 23).

The use of this ideal type and the general approach prevents a site-specific and well-grounded planning effort towards social inclusion and integration. For example, there is no mention of community activities and the organisation of activities for social cohesion across residential areas. There are no innovative ideas regarding housing provision that address problems of social segregation; nor proposals that would facilitate small businesses with a special focus on ethnic minorities. As such, the apparent architectural determinism works against the propounded intention to make Norra Sorgenfri an example of socially sustainable urban development.

### ***Conclusion: Bridging social divides?***

According to the vision document, Norra Sorgenfri could be a new model for socially, and economically sustainable development (like the Harbour redevelopment was for ecological sustainability). Inclusion is an aspect of social sustainability that the development of Norra Sorgenfri aspires to address. Norra Sorgenfri expects to be the place for 'all' but the different groups are then listed sequentially: the creative class of 'artists, musicians, fashion designers, but also researchers, entrepreneurs and skillful consultants' get mentioned first (Malmö Stad, 2006: 3); only then does the Vision also states that it seeks to embrace 'everybody's creativity', including 'people in the service sector and immigrants' (Malmö Stad, 2006: 3). The order of narrative here is probably telling us about priorities.

The variation in functions, services, and housing types is presented as a key measure to develop a socially inclusive area, to ensure that the Norra Sorgenfri development can meet the needs of people of different economic backgrounds for living in and visiting the area (Malmö Stad, 2006). The Vision emphasises the role of the built environment in bridging social divides and assisting social integration. This would be done through the creation of places for meeting and by providing for connectivity across the urban fabric. It is argued that a vibrant neighbourhood with lively urban spaces that facilitate encounters between people of different population groups and thereby provide a safer city, with safety being presented as an important feature of social sustainability (Malmö Stad, 2006: 4&5).

While open public spaces can be an important social arena for people of different social groups (Hajer & Reijndorp, 2001), to rely on the provision of public spaces alone to solve social problems is naïve at least, if not a pretext for the failure to address the more pressing problems of social exclusion and segregation (see also Nylund, 2014). The emphasis on creating public spaces for encounters has, since 2012, replaced the focus on citizen involvement in Malmö's planning discourse; as discussed by Nylund (2014) this reflects

changes in planning policy that downplay issues of social justice and emphasise economic growth and competition. In a similar way, the focus on creating mixed-functions and flexible places for 'encounters' has been discussed by Listerborn (2017) as measures to create urban space that can best accommodate the city's creative class, a specific form of commodification of public spaces and part of Malmö's neoliberal development in planning policy. The emphasis on visitors and the intention to replace the current character of the Norra Sorgenfri area with a more downtown urban vibe echoes this point, despite the claim of a more grounded urban development with a focus on the 'ordinary'.

According to the Vision, housing of different character, sizes, tenure types, are to be offered to attract people with different lifestyles and of different ages. However, since the city only owns – apart from the streets and parks – a small part of the area dedicated for housing development (Malmö Stad, 2006), it is not clear how this ambition for housing affordability will be achieved. It is true that the Vision emphasises small scale and gradual development in which a wide range of actors will be involved, forming a 'patch work development' (*lapptäcksutveckling*) (Malmö Stad, 2006: 9). However, this is presented more as a measure to achieve variety in architecture, a principle successfully used in the Western Harbour, rather than as a measure for affordable housing or the democratisation of the development process. Local engagement is mentioned as part of the work towards social sustainability (Malmö Stad, 2006: 5), but there is no specification as to whom or how. Moreover, the intention to achieve social inclusion and integration is in obvious conflict with the creative city aspiration, to be part of 'the new creative era' (Malmö Stad, 2006: 3), and the focus on creating commodified physical environments that attract people of the creative class.

The idea of social sustainability as presented in the Vision turns out to be no more than a reliance on good urban design principles to create a vibrant and safe urban life. There is little here that would really contribute to de-segregation and promote social inclusion across residential areas in Malmö, particularly given the problems with creating connectivity. As such, despite all the high-flown rhetoric, the vision for Norra Sorgenfri points to a rather conventional form of urban development that focuses on the well-to-do middle class, and expects that their prosperous living environment will bring about a trickle-down effect that will eventually benefit some of the people from more vulnerable social groups.

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