



# THE SUSTAINABLE CITY

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*How can civil dialogue be utilized as a tool for promoting human rights-based social sustainability in an urban development context?*

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# Abstract

Investigating the matter of urban sustainability, previous research within the field argues that the social dimension of sustainability has been deprioritized, one potential reason being that it is less tangible than the economic and ecological dimension. Furthermore, citizen participation and inclusiveness is identified as central to the social dimension on an international as well as Swedish national level. As participation and non-discrimination are central aspects of a human rights perspective as well, the aim of this thesis is to investigate how civil dialogue can be utilized as a tool for promoting human rights-based social sustainability in an urban development context. The theoretical approach of the thesis consists of a human rights perspective on urban development, which was created by combining the theories of *The Right to the City* by David Harvey and *The Just City* by Susan Fainstein. Using a SWOT analysis, the human rights perspective is applied to a case study on civil dialogue in the City of Lund. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are identified and analyzed in relation to the human rights perspective, where after the result from the analysis is discussed with key themes identified in previous research. The thesis concludes that civil dialogue, if underpinned by human rights values, can be used as an indicator of human rights-based social sustainability, thereby promoting the social dimension of sustainability and furthering the sustainable city.

*Keywords:* The right to the city, urban justice, social sustainability, sustainable cities, civil dialogue, the just city, Fainstein, Harvey, human rights, citizen participation.

# Abstract in Swedish

Uppsatsen undersöker ämnet hållbara städer och tidigare forskning inom området indikerar att den sociala dimensionen av hållbarhet har varit mindre prioriterad än den ekonomiska och ekologiska dimensionen. På både svensk, nationell som internationell nivå har medborgardeltagande och delaktighet identifierats som centralt för den sociala dimensionen. Då deltagande och icke-diskriminering är centralt även inom rättighetsperspektivet är syftet med denna uppsats att undersöka hur medborgardialog kan användas som ett verktyg för att främja människorättsbaserad social hållbarhet i en stadsutvecklingskontext. Uppsatsens teori består av ett människorättsperspektiv på stadsutveckling, vilket skapades genom att kombinera teorin om The Right to the City av David Harvey och The Just City av Susan Fainstein. Med hjälp av en SWOT-analys tillämpas sedan människorättsperspektivet på en fallstudie om medborgardialog i Lunds kommun. Styrkor, svagheter, möjligheter och hot identifieras och analyseras i förhållande till människorättsperspektivet, varefter resultatet från analysen diskuteras med huvudteman som identifierats inom tidigare forskning. Uppsatsen drar till sist slutsatsen att medborgardialog, om denna är förankrad i värderingar hämtade från människorättsperspektivet, kan användas som en indikator på människorättsbaserad social hållbarhet och därigenom främja den sociala dimensionen av hållbarhet och sträva mot den hållbara staden.

*Nyckelord:* Rätten till staden, urban rättvisa, social hållbarhet, hållbara städer, medborgardialog, mänskliga rättigheter, rättvisa städer, hållbar utveckling.

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“The freedom to make and remake ourselves and our cities is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights.”

- *David Harvey, 2008.*

# 1 Introduction

In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) published *Our Common Future*, a report presenting the now well-known three dimensions of sustainability to the world – the ecological, economic, and social dimension. It came to be known as The Brundtland report, and presented urban spaces and cities as much significant areas in regards of reaching sustainability. The report mentioned the urbanization process as a key reason to why urban areas are important players in tackling sustainability challenges.<sup>1</sup> Since 1987, the increasing urbanization trend has continued and a majority of the world's population have been living in urban areas since 2008,<sup>2</sup> a number that is predicted to be more than two thirds before 2030.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, urban areas and cities are made natural hubs where challenges of the three sustainability dimensions can be found, but it also poses cities as hubs for potential solutions.

Making cities and urban areas sustainable is more relevant now than ever before. In September 2015, the United Nations adopted the new Sustainable Development Goals, seventeen global goals that need to be met if we are to achieve a healthy environment, population, and ultimately – a sustainable world. Goal number eleven not only highlights and confirms cities and urban areas as being significant battle ground for sustainability challenges, but explicitly mentions the importance of making cities and human settlements *inclusive* and sustainable. In doing so, the United Nations emphasizes the importance of the social dimension of sustainability as well as claims that inclusion, which involves participation and influence of urban inhabitants, is central to achieving this goal.

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<sup>1</sup> Brundtland et al, *World Commission on Environment and Development*, 1987, chapter 9.

<sup>2</sup> Dempsey, Nicola, et al. "The social dimension of sustainable development: Defining urban social sustainability." *Sustainable development* 19.5: 289-300, 2011, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Population Fund. "UNFPA state of world population 2007: unleashing the potential of urban growth." United Nations Population Fund, 2007, p. 1.

## 1.1 Definition of Problem, Aim and Research Questions

During the past 30 years, the ecological and economic dimensions of sustainability have been thoroughly researched, for different reasons letting the social dimension fall behind. It is not until relatively recently that the social dimension has gained ground. In the Swedish context, the social dimension is often equated with the public health area, wherein eleven Swedish national targets for public health are presented. One of these targets is “participation and influence in society” – adding to the understanding that *inclusiveness* and *participation* is central to social sustainability not only on a United Nations level, but also in a Swedish national context.

As social sustainability has been argued to revolve around justice and democracy, applying a human rights perspective to urban development appears highly relevant. As will be discussed further on in this thesis, a crucial part of a human rights perspective is to have the opportunity and capability, the right, to make one’s opinion heard and to influence and participate in the society one lives – individuals who traditionally might lack the ability to do so, above all. Previous research argues that *inclusiveness* and *participation* is central to the social dimension of sustainability, thereby confirming that there is a clear link to the human rights perspective which thereby provides incentive to argue that social sustainability should be underpinned by human rights values. In the Swedish context, there is no distinguishable incorporation of a human rights perspective in the social dimension of sustainable urban development, a research gap that this thesis will investigate.

In this thesis, I will argue that *inclusive* is a term that indicates the direction of future urban development. However, although participation and inclusion, the ability to influence the society in which one lives, is highlighted as central to social sustainability, that specific target is commonly only measured by participation in general elections, which is likely to be insufficient in order for city inhabitants to actually influence and participate in urban development.

In order to investigate possibilities for inhabitants to be able to influence and participate in shaping the society in which they live – incorporating a human rights-perspective on social sustainability – this thesis will conduct a case study on civil dialogue. Civil dialogue is presented as a way for local municipalities or cities to include citizens and inhabitants in local decision making and shaping of the local urban environment and development. Therefore, civil

dialogue poses as an interesting case study – most of all, it appears relevant to investigate how civil dialogue could be utilized as a tool for promoting human rights-based social sustainability.

Against the above background, the aim of this thesis is to investigate how civil dialogue can be utilized as a tool for promoting human rights-based social sustainability in an urban development context. Therefore, this thesis will answer the following research questions:

- i. How can a human rights perspective in an urban development context be formed?
- ii. In an urban development context, what meaning can civil dialogue have for human rights-based social sustainability?
- iii. How can civil dialogue be used as an indicator for human rights-based social sustainability in a context of urban development?



## 1.2 Materials and Delimitations

The following section will provide a description of subject delimitations, present and critically evaluate the primary- and secondary materials utilised for the thesis study, as well as account for its delimitations. Initially, subject delimitations will be accounted for, whereupon primary- and secondary materials will be presented in separate sections.

As this thesis will argue that, in a Swedish urban development context, civil dialogue is central to the realization of socially sustainable urban development, the study will naturally be delimited to social sustainability in Swedish urban areas. Further narrowing the thesis focus, a case study of civil dialogue in the City of Lund will be made, providing another delimitation. The usefulness, relevance and potential issues in regards of using the City of Lund as a case study will be discussed in section 1.2.3.

### 1.2.1 Primary Material

In June 2015, the City of Lund decided that they would develop their work with civil dialogue.<sup>4</sup> They then designated an official that would investigate the matter, which in turn led to the adoption of a new strategy for civil dialogue in May 2016.<sup>5</sup>

The primary material of the thesis consists of three documents which make up part of the groundwork that led to the adoption of the new strategy for civil dialogue in the City of Lund. These documents consist of a *Mapping of civil dialogue activities in the City of Lund between the years 2013-2015*, a *Compilation of current civil dialogue activities in the City of Lund*, as well as an *Official Letter*. Below, the documents will be presented in slightly more detail, following the order in which they are presented above. There will be a more thorough description of relevant parts of the documents in chapter 4 – the thesis investigation and analysis.

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<sup>4</sup> The City of Lund, *Official letter*, KS 2016/0173, 2016-03-16, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> The City of Lund, Municipal Executive Committee, *Protocol*, KS 2016/0326, 2016-04-28, p. 30.

The first document shaping the thesis' primary material is a *Mapping of civil dialogue activities in the City of Lund between the years 2013-2015*. The *Mapping* is 68 pages long and was conducted by a City of Lund official. It had a two-part purpose – partly, it was conducted in order to provide a compilation of current civil dialogue activities within the City, and partly to provide a basis for developing an overall strategy for how civil dialogue should be conducted in the future.<sup>6</sup> The *Mapping* offers an extensive overview of recent civil dialogue activities which has been accomplished by the study of end reports from different projects as well as completed with interviews with relevant officials from within the City of Lund.

Secondly, a *Compilation of current civil dialogue activities in the City of Lund* has been included. The *Compilation* is thirteen pages long, and is a direct outcome of the *Mapping*. Compared to the *Mapping*, the *Compilation* has not been rewritten to any significant extent, but is more of a summary or compression of the *Mapping*. It was put together with the purpose of providing a basis for decision regarding the City of Lund's future strategy for civil dialogue.

The third and final document that has been included in the primary material is an *Official Letter*. In the *Letter*, which is seven pages long, a suggestion for an overall strategy for civil dialogue is presented. The strategy for civil dialogue as presented in the *Letter* is identical to that presented in the *Compilation* and in combination, the *Compilation* and the *Letter* make up the basis for the decision on approving the new strategy for civil dialogue in the City of Lund, a decision that was made by the Municipal Executive Committee on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April 2016.

## 1.2.2 Secondary Materials

Within the secondary material of the thesis, a *Protocol from the Municipal Executive Committee* has been included. In the *Protocol*, there are parts that describe the new strategy for civil dialogue in the City of Lund, but those parts are not changed from those in the *Official Letter*. Therefore, the document will not be investigated and analyzed in this thesis, but simply describes and symbolizes the decision of approval made in the Municipal Executive Committee when they adopted the new strategy for civil dialogue in the City of Lund. As the document (in

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<sup>6</sup> The City of Lund, *Mapping of civil dialogue activities in the City of Lund between the years 2013-2015*, 2016-01-26, p. 6.

combination with the *Mapping*, the *Compilation* and the *Official Letter*) is part of the political process of the City of Lund as the organisation adopts the new strategy for civil dialogue, it provides contextual relevance and has therefore been added to the secondary material of the thesis.

Other sources of the secondary material are those constituting the theoretical approach of this thesis, which is David Harvey's article *The Right to the City* and Susan Fainstein's book *The Just City*. These will be thoroughly discussed in chapter 3, wherefore they will not be presented in more detail here. Further adding to the secondary material are the literature sources presented in chapter three, which provides a literary overview and previous research on the thesis subject. The chapter contains a significant amount of sources which advantageously will be presented in that chapter.

### 1.2.3 Source Criticism

Regarding the primary material, the four documents are official documents from the City of Lund, and are therefore deemed to be reliable. The documents are relevant for the thesis as they provide a contextual background as well as a description of the future strategy for how the City of Lund will work with civil dialogue, whereby an analysis of the documents can potentially provide a basis for answering the research questions.

However, the documents are produced by an official from the City of Lund, an official working in a specific political context. There might be a risk of the documents having a political angle reflecting the current political situation, a fact that could be useful to at least bear in mind during the thesis analysis in order to arrive at a result as relevant as possible. Although the City of Lund is the subject of the case study, the political context of the organisation is made less relevant because of the fact that the aim of this thesis is to investigate the potential usefulness of civil dialogue as a tool for promoting social sustainability anchored in human rights values in general. The aim, thereby, is not to investigate the potential of utilizing civil dialogue as a tool for promoting human right-based social sustainability in the City of Lund specifically, in which case the political context would have been much more significant to consider.

## 1.2.4 Case Study: the City of Lund

Social sustainability is often discussed in relation to developing countries where the government is struggling to meet the basic needs of their inhabitants. In cities and urban areas where challenges of that character exists, there is likely to be less capacity to work with matters such as inclusion and participation in processes other than general elections, as with civil dialogue for example. Working with civil dialogue can certainly be seen as something resembling a “privilege” enjoyed by relatively prosperous and healthy cities. Although initiatives similar to that in the City of Lund might be conducted in developing countries, the challenge of establishing a functioning and inclusive strategy for civil dialogue will most likely be more challenging in a developing country than in a developed one.

As the theoretical approach in this thesis will be made up by an ideal type city where all inhabitants are included in decision making in urban development matters the City of Lund, which is not only a city with a good economy but which is also on the forefront in regards of the ecological dimension of sustainability<sup>7</sup>, appears to be a city with great potential to meet the targets presented by the theoretical approach, and where developing and implementing a strategy for civil dialogue would be relatively easy. As the economic and ecological dimension of sustainability are areas where the City of Lund are frontrunners, the City of Lund has potential of being a sustainable city if the social dimension is prioritized, which is what has inspired the thesis title – The Sustainable City.

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<sup>7</sup> World Wild Fund for Nature, Earth Hour City Challenge, 2016-04-28. Accessed 2016-05-27; Svahn, Görel, *Lund kan bli årets svenska klimatstad [Lund can become climate city of the year]*, Sydsvenskan, 2016-04-26. Accessed 2016-05-27.

## 1.3 Ethical Evaluation of Research

During the writing of the thesis, contact has continuously been made and sustained with professionals working for the City of Lund. Said contact has only been made and sustained in order to provide information and insights into the activities of the City of Lund, or access to material of relevance to the research conducted in the thesis.

The basic idea for the thesis existed before contact was made and is not a project ordered by the City of Lund. However, the City of Lund was asked if there was an interest in taking part of the proposed research idea and when there was, the City of Lund was made the case study of the thesis. The contact made and sustained with professionals from the City of Lund has not affected the result of the investigation conducted in the thesis in any way.

## 2 The Right to the City

This chapter will present the theoretical approach and processing method utilised in the conducting of the thesis investigation and analysis. The theoretical approach and the processing method will be closely linked in this thesis, the processing method being an extension of the theoretical approach, a tool with which to connect it to the primary material. The theoretical approach will be presented and discussed in section 2.1 and the processing method in section 2.2 where the interrelation between the two parts will also be more thoroughly outlined.

The Right to the City is what this chapter has been named, the reason for which being that the theoretical approach will be influenced by the concept of The Right to the City, a theory and social movement originating from philosopher Henri Lefebvre, and which has been further developed by David Harvey. Parts of The Right to the City will be utilized as an overarching umbrella in this thesis – symbolizing an ideal type city, a version of a city or urban area where all inhabitants have equal access and opportunity to participate in urban development and the shaping of the city in which they live. Underneath the overarching umbrella the content of the theoretical approach will be made up of two parts that will be more extensive and thereby function as the part of the theoretical approach doing “the ground work” if one may call it that. The more extensive parts will be made up by the theory of “The Just City” by Susan S Fainstein.

### 2.1 Creating a Human Rights Perspective

Making the creation of a human rights perspective to social sustainability in urban development its aim, this section will outline the theoretical approach which, as was described above, will be created for this thesis specifically. It will be created by mixing influences from two sources which will be presented below. First, the inspiration for the theoretical approach, The Right to the City, will be presented and briefly discussed, where after relevant parts of the theory of “The Just City” by Susan S Fainstein will be presented in detail. In combination, the two parts will form a human rights perspective on urban development created for this thesis specifically.

### 2.1.1 The Overarching Umbrella – The Right to the City

Henri Lefebvre was a neo-Marxist philosopher who, by observing industrialization and urbanization in French cities during the 1960s, came to be interested in urban theory. The concept of The Right to the City originates from his book with the same name, *Le Droit à la Ville* (1968). Lefebvre further had an impact on civil society, and inspired a social movement which called itself “Right to the City”. The “Right to the City social movement strive towards making democracy deeper and wider, and to increase inhabitants’ opportunity to influence city development. Furthermore, the movement and theory has been incorporated into UN Habitat, and the fifth World Urban Forum conference in 2005, “Right to the City – Bridging the urban divide” was clearly influenced by the theory.<sup>8</sup>

Lefebvre has influenced many, not least David Harvey. As the theoretical approach of this thesis is only *inspired* by The Right to the City, in large parts as it has been developed by David Harvey, Henri Lefebvre has been accredited for the original idea, but will not be featured further in this thesis.

David Harvey, on the other hand, will be referenced somewhat more extensively. Harvey is one of the most cited urban theorists of all time, with over 20 written books published. As has been stated several times, The Right to the City as described by Harvey will be used for inspirational purposes and not as a functioning theory. Parts of Harvey’s article, *The Right to the City*, is what has inspired the theoretical approach in this thesis. This section of the thesis will therefore not describe the theory, but rather mediate said inspiration. Relevant parts of the article will be presented by quotes which will then be explained as to how they have been interpreted and how they are relevant for the theoretical approach of the thesis.

In his article, Harvey discusses his theory. He provides a description of the background of his own reasoning in regards of the theory, and explains what meaning it inhabits according to him. Harvey starts his article by describing the context of his theory – today’s society – by

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<sup>8</sup> Abrahamsson, Hans, "Makt och Dialog i rättvisa och socialt hållbara svenska städer", *Mistra Urban Futures*, Göteborg, 2013, p. 20.

stating that human rights are permeating all aspects of it. Harvey goes on to discuss urbanization and the making of cities by quoting an urban sociologist by the name of Robert Park. Park argues that urban areas is where man (as in *mankind*) has successfully managed to remake the world according to “our heart’s desires”.<sup>9</sup> By that, Park means that we, as mankind, has managed to make urban areas an environment which we ourselves are able to shape and change as to how we want it. Thereby, Park argues, we can change the areas where we live according to our wishes. Building on Park’s ideas, Harvey then expresses the very essence of his theory:

The right to the city is, therefore, far more than a right of individual access to the resources that the city embodies: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city more after our heart’s desire. It is, moreover, a collective rather than an individual right since changing the city inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power over the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake ourselves and our cities is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights.<sup>10</sup>

In the above quote, Harvey clearly states that the opportunity to shape the urban area or city in which one lives should be regarded as a human right. He also frames The Right to the City as more of a collective right – a human right that the inhabitants of a city should possess collectively, a human right that they, as a group, can claim. By framing The Right to the City as a collective right, Harvey shifts the focus of the theory from revolving around individuals’ access to resources of the city to incorporating more of a form of protection against having policies or decisions regarding the shaping of the city imposed on them.

Harvey then continues by further describing an important aspect of his theory, as well as show his neo-Marxist colors, when he expresses his willingness and ambition to strike a blow for those opposing the societal “elite”:

The right to the city, as it is now constituted, is far too narrowly confined, in most cases in the hands of a small political and economic elite who are in the position to shape the city more and more after their own particular heart’s desire.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Harvey, David, “The Right to the City”, *New Left Review* 53: 23-40, 2008, p. 23.

<sup>10</sup> Harvey, 2008, p. 23.

<sup>11</sup> Harvey, 2008, p. 38.



The above statement is interpreted as Harvey expressing a call for a higher degree of involvement of all city inhabitants, shifting the power balance within the urban development context from being centered on the societal “elite” to redistributing power and involving all city inhabitants. Specifically describing what The Right to the City is, and what it would mean to claim that right, Harvey’s position can be summarized in the quotes below:

To claim the right to the city in the sense I mean it here is to claim some kind of shaping power over the processes of urbanization, over the ways in which our cities are made and re-made [...] <sup>12</sup>

[...] greater democratic control [...] establishing democratic management [...] constitutes the right to the city. <sup>13</sup>

What has inspired the theoretical approach of this thesis emerges in the statements above. By arguing for a human right to the city, Harvey explicitly calls for a collective right which implicates greater democratic control and management of urban development. As the aim of this thesis is to investigate the possibility of utilizing civil dialogue as a tool for promoting human rights-based social sustainability in the context of urban development, the relevance of the concept of The Right to the City is obvious. This thesis will specifically investigate if civil dialogue can contribute to achieving all of the aspects sought after by Harvey. Therefore, the idea of The Right to the City as inspired by Harvey, and described in this section of the thesis, will be incorporated in its two-part theoretical approach, the created human rights perspective.

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<sup>12</sup> Harvey, 2008, p. 23-24.

<sup>13</sup> Harvey, 2008, p. 37.

### 2.1.2 The Just City

“The Just City” is a theory developed by Susan S. Fainstein, a senior research fellow at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. Her research interests include planning theory, urban theory, urban redevelopment, and comparative urban policy focusing on the Western world (United States, Europe) and East Asia.<sup>14</sup> “The Just City” is also the title of her book that was released in 2010 in which she develops the theory of The Just City.

Before diving into the theory itself, it appears relevant to briefly discuss critique directed at Fainstein’s theory. A significant aspect is the fact that her theory is developed in a Western context, and therefore is not a universal theory that can be applied anywhere in the world (in developing countries, for example). She responds to this critique herself, and argues that she agrees with the fact that this is the case, but then states that she has consciously chosen to do so, as she has never aimed at developing a universal theory of urban justice.<sup>15</sup> Although some may agree that the above argument should be regarded as critique, it will be regarded as a strength in this thesis. First of all, dividing the world into developed and developing countries does not reflect reality as there are many so called developing countries with aspects similar or equal to those in developed. Therefore, one could instead argue that her theory only can be applied in societies that possess certain characteristics, such as being a functioning democracy, or not being “poor”. Furthermore, the fact that Fainstein argues for a need to adapt her theory, and that it cannot simply be reproduced, is not regarded as a weakness in this thesis, but is considered to mirror a complex reality, and supports the arguments that will be presented in chapter three, the literary overview, which states that the concept of social sustainability also needs to be adapted depending on specific context.

Relevant sections of Fainstein’s theory will now be discussed, and will form the basis of the second part of the human rights perspective that will make up the theoretical approach of this thesis. The theory will not be included in its entirety but will rather incorporate relevant aspects that deal with participation and inclusion of urban inhabitants in decision making and public

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<sup>14</sup> Harvard University Graduate School of Design, People: Susan Fainstein, 2016. Accessed 05-05-2016.

<sup>15</sup> Fainstein, Susan S., *The just city*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, N.Y., 2010, p. 17.

policy. Furthermore, all of the theoretical background concerning the different parts of the theory will not be included or described. The different parts will rather be explained to the extent that it enables the reader to understand Fainstein's arguments.

As described by Fainstein herself, the aim of her book and theory is "[...] to develop an urban theory of justice and to use it to evaluate existing and potential institutions and programs."<sup>16</sup> Naturally, as justice is a central part of her theory, defining her own interpretation of justice constitutes a significant section of the book. Fainstein argues for an interpretative meaning of justice and "The Just City" which aims at providing certain values on which justice in urban development should be based.<sup>17</sup> She argues that the three concepts *equity*, *democracy*, and *diversity* should make up those values, values that thereby permeate her theory on public policy and decision making in modern, just cities.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, Fainstein addresses current trends in the urban justice debate by discussing the matters of *justice in relation to efficiency*, *justice as process and outcome*, and *justice in relation to specificity and universality*.<sup>19</sup> The final part of Fainstein's theory that will be included is The Capabilities Approach, which will be explained at the end of this chapter.

This section of the thesis will now begin by discussing each of Fainstein's three concepts of justice – *equity*, *democracy* and *diversity* in regards of their meaning and relevance for the thesis investigation, analysis and aim as well as how they have been interpreted and utilized in this thesis. Thereafter, the current matters within the urban justice debate addressed by Fainstein will be discussed.

### ***Equity, Democracy and Diversity – Values constituting urban justice***

Fainstein defines justice by using three concepts – *equity*, *democracy* and *diversity*. Below, the three concepts will be presented and discussed in that order. From each concept, parts that are relevant for the thesis investigation, analysis and aim have been included, and in the discussion of each concept, a motivation of the relevance of each concept will be provided.

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<sup>16</sup> Fainstein, 2010, p. 5.

<sup>17</sup> Fainstein, 2010, p. 5.

<sup>18</sup> Fainstein, 2010, p. 5.

<sup>19</sup> Fainstein, 2010, p. 9, 10-11, 15-17.

When discussing *equity* as a central part of urban justice, Fainstein argues that equity issues most often appear when cities plan for housing or urban regeneration. She highlights questions of the income of inhabitants and ethnic diversity as significant aspects to consider, but ultimately centers her discussion of *equity* around the matter of to what extent housing is considered a right.<sup>20</sup> She concludes by stating that equity would indeed confirm housing as a right, and that it would entail “providing everyone with a home”.<sup>21</sup> However, when discussing marginalized groups such as problem tenants, criminals or psychologically disturbed neighbors she realizes that equity can be positioned against the concept of *democracy* as neighbors would be likely to oppose having problem tenants as neighbors.<sup>22</sup>

Even though housing is an important issue, it is not the issue itself that is interesting in the above paragraph. What is interesting is the fact that the values of *equity* and *democracy* are not always compatible, but can in fact be opposed of each other. Fainstein addresses this issue and argues that in order to find the most just solution planners should always prioritize and strive for *equity*, but also leaves room for exceptions where the specific context may require *democracy*, or even *diversity*, to triumph.<sup>23</sup> As Fainstein argues that *equity* always should be prioritized (except for in extraordinary cases or contexts), she clearly favors the protection of marginalized people over a democratic majority, showing that her theory is supportive of, and relevant for a human rights perspective.

Fainstein then continues by specifically discussing democratic citizen participation in relation to *equity*, but only does so very briefly. Basically, her argument is that although citizens may participate in a democratic manner, politicians and officials tend to favor “hard” investments over “soft” investments in human capital. Thereby, she states that democratic citizen participation not necessarily has an effect on policies as politicians are driven by short-term, competitive thinking.<sup>24</sup>

Fainstein does not elaborate on this statement further, which leaves room for interpretation. In this thesis, her argument is not interpreted as meaning that democratic citizen participation is

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<sup>20</sup> Fainstein, 2010, p. 77.

<sup>21</sup> Fainstein, 2010, p. 79.

<sup>22</sup> Fainstein, 2010, p. 79.

<sup>23</sup> Fainstein, 2010, p. 82.

<sup>24</sup> Fainstein, 2010, p. 81.

not useful, but rather as meaning that democratic citizen participation in itself is not enough and does not guarantee a more equitable policy outcome. Conclusively, Fainstein's argument is interpreted as to urge for greater anchoring of democratic citizen participation with politicians and officials, and that there is a need for greater prioritizing of "soft" investments in human capital.

The concept of *democracy* has already been touched upon, but will now be thoroughly discussed. Fairly unsurprisingly, out of Fainstein's three concepts, *democracy* is the one with greatest relevance to the thesis investigation, analysis and aim. Highly relevant is the fact that Fainstein's concept of *democracy* in large part revolves around citizen participation. Fainstein provides a brief historical lookback as to how citizen participation has functioned in the Western world and states that it was intended to reduce injustice as well as further democracy.<sup>25</sup> Fainstein refers to a theorist named Sherry Arnstein when arguing that participation of minority- or disadvantaged groups can enable them to gain some control over policy, thereby "ensuring that government action benefits them".<sup>26</sup>

Furthermore, Fainstein brings up an example to showcase potential strengths and weaknesses of community- and citizen participation. Her example is a twenty-year program in Minneapolis where community organizations were given access to funds in order to become more inclusive and develop a neighborhood plan.<sup>27</sup> Without going into further detail of the program itself, the two lessons that Fainstein concludes can be learned from the program are important:

First, the equity outcomes of citizen deliberations are unpredictable and are likely to vary according to the particular values of the active participants. Second, planners can affect the character of deliberation and move participants toward a greater commitment to just outcomes.<sup>28</sup>

In her conclusions, Fainstein provides much insight into important aspects of her theory. First, as she states that equity outcomes can vary depending on who participates in deliberations, she emphasizes the importance of including minority groups as the societal majority, the middle-

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<sup>25</sup> Fainstein, 2010, p. 64.

<sup>26</sup> Fainstein, 2010, p. 64.

<sup>27</sup> Fainstein, 2010, p. 65-66.

<sup>28</sup> Fainstein, 2010, p. 66.

class, are likely to lobby for their own concerns without considering impacts on low income communities, for example.<sup>29</sup> Secondly, she argues for greater engagement in equity matters on behalf of officials and urban planners in order to encourage participants to consider perspectives of, for example, minority groups. In addition to the above arguments, Fainstein states that compared to traditional governance, it is unlikely to have a negative impact. When concluding on citizen participation, she also argues that it holds great potential to make decision making more open and democratic, as well as increase the amount of local knowledge available to officials and urban planners.<sup>30</sup>

Fainstein's third and final concept is *diversity*. As will be shown in the following paragraph, the concept of *diversity* will not be as central as the two other concepts in regards of its relevance of the thesis investigation, analysis and aim, the reason being that *diversity* to a lesser extent refers to citizen participation. Defining the term, however, Fainstein states that:

Diversity...encompasses reference to the physical environment as well as social relations, and refers to policy ambitions that go beyond encouraging acceptance of others to include the social composition of places.<sup>31</sup>

Her definition, Fainstein herself explains, is inspired by diversity as described by Henri Lefebvre in the theory of the right to the city, namely that diversity "refers to the inclusion of all city users within the space of the city, regardless of their cultural differences".<sup>32</sup> When it comes to the theoretical approach in this thesis, the focus must be on creating a human rights perspective on urban development, but also on citizen participation and civil dialogue. *Diversity* will therefore be interpreted as including all inhabitants in decision making and policy development, regardless of for example cultural differences.

Furthermore, Fainstein successfully displays how *diversity* can be problematic by using an example from Chicago where the Chicago Housing Authority decided to execute a desegregation policy on public housing, thereby starting to relocate residents with the aim of reducing social

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<sup>29</sup> Fainstein, 2010, p. 66.

<sup>30</sup> Fainstein, 2010, p. 67.

<sup>31</sup> Fainstein, 2010, p. 67.

<sup>32</sup> Fainstein, 2010, p. 70.

isolation of distressed communities by using a mixed-income model to urban planning.<sup>33</sup> However, as Fainstein argues, the results from the project was, at best, mixed. Indeed, it does not appear very democratic to relocate residents against their will, neither does it necessarily provide an equitable outcome. Concluding on lessons from projects like that of the Chicago Housing Authority, where *diversity* is sought for, Fainstein argues that what is important is to be aware of is that *diversity* can come at the expense of other concepts (that is, *equity* and *democracy*) and that *diversity* therefore may not be desirable in all cases – it can have positive or negative impacts and effects.<sup>34</sup>

What is important to bring into the theory is that when the concept of *diversity* is opposed that of *equity* or *democracy*, *diversity* holds a lesser value.<sup>35</sup> As Fainstein also expressed when discussing the concept of *equity*, *equity* is the concept holding the highest value, and should therefore trump *democracy* and *diversity* if the specific context does not require another prioritization. Conclusion wise, then, even though the implementation of the three concepts appears somewhat problematic, Fainstein appears to argue that when opposed to the other concepts, priority should be given in the following order: *equity*, *democracy*, *diversity*.

### **Justice – on what terms?**

As mentioned earlier, Fainstein addresses current trends in the urban justice debate by discussing the matters of *justice in relation to efficiency*, *justice as process and outcome*, and *justice in relation to specificity and universality* in addition to her three concepts. According to Fainstein herself, she has been criticized for solely focusing on the three concepts presented when defining justice, criticism arguing that she is forgetting about the efficiency criterion that is existing within the public policy and decision making context.<sup>36</sup>

Although acknowledging the relevance of efficiency, Fainstein responds to the critique by stating that her interpretation of justice does not eliminate the efficiency criterion entirely, but rather prohibits efficiency on any terms. She argues that her interpretation of justice enables

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<sup>33</sup> Fainstein, 2010, p. 73.

<sup>34</sup> Fainstein, 2010, p. 73-77.

<sup>35</sup> Fainstein, 2010, p. 68.

<sup>36</sup> Fainstein, 2010, p. 9.

the usage of efficiency as a means to choose among alternatives, but needs the policy maker to raise questions in likeness to “efficiency or effectiveness to what end?”<sup>37</sup> When one has to choose between justice and efficiency, Fainstein argues that justice should triumph.<sup>38</sup>

Regarding the debate on *justice in relation to specificity and universalism*, Fainstein agrees with theorist David Harvey who argues that the exact definition of justice can be dependent on historical, social and geographical context, which is why she has intended for her theory to be applied in modern, Western cities.<sup>39</sup> She does, however, also acknowledge that there is a general consensus on some basic values of justice which can be argued to be universal, influences she draws from John Rawls’ discussion on equal distribution of resources, as well as Martha Nussbaum’s discussion on capabilities.<sup>40</sup> As was stated in section 2.1.1 when the overarching umbrella, The Right to the City, was discussed, equal access to resources of the city is not what is being addressed, but rather equal opportunities to shape the city in which one lives. Rawls will therefore not be discussed any further in this thesis. The contribution of Martha Nussbaum, however will be discussed in the next section as The Capabilities Approach is highly relevant to the theoretical approach of this thesis.

Moving on to discuss *justice as process and outcome*, Fainstein argues that although there should be a democratic, inclusive process, a just process including participation does not guarantee a just outcome, wherefore she emphasizes securing a just outcome slightly more.<sup>41</sup> In doing so, she does not argue that just processes where all citizens and inhabitants are included and participate is unimportant, but rather that policy makers and planners despite a seemingly just process must apply the concept of *equity* in order to assure a just outcome.

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<sup>37</sup> Fainstein, 2010, p. 9.

<sup>38</sup> Fainstein, 2010, p. 12.

<sup>39</sup> Fainstein, 2010, p. 23.

<sup>40</sup> Fainstein, 2010, p. 23, 39, 54-55.

<sup>41</sup> Fainstein, 2010, p. 19-20, 24, 49.



## The Capabilities Approach

The concept of capabilities was originally outlined by Amartya Sen, but it was Martha Nussbaum who developed it into an extensive list of basic capabilities needed by every human individual in order to function.<sup>42</sup> This section of the chapter will briefly explain The Capabilities Approach, not by reference to Martha Nussbaum, but rather as Fainstein argues that it is relevant to the theory of The Just City.

What makes The Capabilities Approach useful to the theoretical approach of this thesis is partly the fact that it describes what people have the opportunity to do and not how they actually function. In other words, as described by Fainstein, “each person must be treated as an end, and there is a threshold level of each capability beneath which human functioning is not possible.”<sup>43</sup> Nussbaum herself can be said to argue that it is important to provide people with the opportunity to influence the development of their city, as she lists *control over one’s political environment* as a necessary capability. Furthermore, Fainstein argues that the fact that capabilities cannot be traded off against each other, that they are inter-dependent (which is also the case with human rights) is relevant. Fainstein argues that within the urban development context, this would mean that, for example, access to education for vulnerable groups (which is a necessary capability) would not justify inability to control one’s political environment. Additionally, it would also mean that judgements on whether an urban policy is just or not would be based on whether they contributed to enhancing capabilities of the disadvantaged groups.<sup>44</sup> These aspects will be included in the theoretical approach, and when investigating and analyzing the primary material.

Regarding disadvantaged groups, one of those groups that has been addressed by Nussbaum, and which is relevant to discuss specifically in this theoretical approach, are the disabled. Within the discourse on the rights of disabled, some argue that they (the disabled) should not be entitled to the same rights as other human beings. By incorporating The Capabilities Approach, however, Nussbaum’s view that disabled persons are in need of the same capabilities

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<sup>42</sup> Fainstein, 2010, p. 54-55.

<sup>43</sup> Fainstein, 2010, p. 55.

<sup>44</sup> Fainstein, 2010, p. 55.

as other human beings<sup>45</sup> is the position that this thesis takes in the matter of rights and capabilities of the disabled.

The Capabilities Approach is central also to human rights theory, which is partly shown in the way it positions itself on the side of the marginalized, the oppressed and vulnerable in society. Fainstein argues that incorporating The Capabilities Approach in her theory would implicate that when making a decision, planners and policy makers should choose the alternative that benefits “disadvantaged” groups or “minimally does not harm them”.<sup>46</sup>

Further motivating her incorporation of Nussbaum’s approach, and providing significant incentive to argue for its utmost relevance for the aim of this thesis, Fainstein states:

[...] we do know [...] that groups most lacking in political and financial power and most subject to disrespect are least likely to be included in deliberation or to prevail in the outcome. A commitment to justice over technical efficiency in evaluating the content of policy would shift the balance in their favor.<sup>47</sup>

In the above quote, Fainstein clearly argues for a stronger commitment to justice (which consists of the concepts *equity*, *democracy*, and *diversity*), as well as making sure that not only the policy making- and planning process is just, but also its outcome. The fact that Fainstein incorporates The Capabilities Approach in her theory on The Just City further strengthens the relevance of incorporating her theory in the theoretical approach of this thesis.

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<sup>45</sup> Nussbaum, Martha, “Frontiers of justice: disability, nationality, species membership”, *Harvard University Press*, Cambridge, Mass, 2006, p. 190.

<sup>46</sup> Fainstein, 2010, p. 56.

<sup>47</sup> Fainstein, 2010, p. 56.

### 2.1.3 The Right to the City – Conclusion on the Theoretical Approach

When developing the theoretical approach, the aim was to also create a human rights perspective on urban development, an aim that is considered fulfilled. Concluding on the theoretical approach, it consists of two parts. The first part is the inspiration and the overarching umbrella of the theoretical approach which is represented by the theory of The Right to the City as developed by David Harvey. The overarching umbrella argues that the right to shape the city in which one lives is a human right and represents an ideal city where all inhabitants have equal access and opportunity to do so.

Underneath the overarching umbrella, Susan Fainstein's theory of The Just City will conduct what has been referred to as the "ground work". The Just City argues that three concepts constitute urban justice, namely *equity*, *democracy*, and *diversity*. When in opposition of each other, the three concepts should also be prioritized in that order. In addition to that, The Just City offers guiding principles on how to further just cities in regards of *justice in relation to efficiency*, *justice as process and outcome*, and *justice in relation to specificity and universality*. Finally, Fainstein incorporates The Capability Approach in her theory, thereby positioning herself in favor of disadvantaged groups, as well as consolidating her relevance for the human rights perspective.

## 2.2 Qualitative SWOT Analysis

The method that will be used in the thesis will be utilized as a tool for analyzing the primary material, and will in large part be dependent on, and influenced by the theory. It will be in the form of a qualitative SWOT analysis that has been adapted to suit the aim of this thesis.

Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis is a method and tool often used within business and marketing in order to develop new market strategies. Strategy makers can use the SWOT analysis to identify or evaluate factors in the environment (internal or external) that can either support or impede the company from reaching its goals.<sup>48</sup> Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are therefore analyzed and evaluated in relation to aims, goals or ambitions of the company.<sup>49</sup> A SWOT analysis is beneficial in the way that it can provide a starting point for development of a strategy, and help strategy makers gain insight into and study significant areas in relation to aims and goals that the company wants to achieve.<sup>50</sup>

The SWOT analysis is a flexible tool, however<sup>51</sup> and has been successfully applied within the field of spatial planning which supports the use of the SWOT analysis in this thesis. Karppi et al, on behalf of the Nordic Centre for Spatial Development (Nordregio), describes the potential of a SWOT analysis, where they highlight the importance of articulating a mission, “a presupposition of the organization’s fundamental interests”.<sup>52</sup> Thereby, the SWOT-analysis can be used to identify relevant parts of large quantities of information in addition to identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Dyson, Robert G. "Strategic development and SWOT analysis at the University of Warwick." *European journal of operational research* 152.3: 631-640, 2004, p. 632.

<sup>49</sup> Houben, Ghislain, Kwan, Lenie and Vanhoof, Koen, "A knowledge-based SWOT-analysis system as an instrument for strategic planning in small and medium sized enterprises", *Decision support systems* 26.2: 125-135, 1999, p. 125.

<sup>50</sup> Houben et al, 1999, p. 125.

<sup>51</sup> Houben et al, 1999, p. 125-126.

<sup>52</sup> Karppi, Ilari, Merja Kokkonen, and Lähteenmäki-Smith, Kaisa, "SWOT-analysis as a basis for regional strategies", *Nordregio WP 4*: 80, 2001, p. 28.

<sup>53</sup> Karppi et al, 2001, p. 28.

Further relevant is the fact that Karppi et al argues that a SWOT analysis is useful when organizations strive for an ideal type:

A deliberate assumption of this study has been that strategies are made in a perfect world in which absolute criteria for an optimal plan can be set. In such a situation, technical criteria for an optimum SWOT can be defined, and the quality of a given strategy assessed by "deducting" the difference between these criteria and the actual programmes [sic].<sup>54</sup>

The above quote establishes that a SWOT analysis can be applied in order to evaluate a strategy or material in relation to an ideal type, in likeness to the theoretical approach in this thesis – The Right to the City. The Right to the City will therefore be used as an ideal type that the SWOT analysis will use to relate findings from the primary material to. Below, details of the SWOT analysis utilized in this thesis will be outlined.

The first step of the method is to identify relevant aspects and sections on which to apply the SWOT analysis, in other words – delimitations. This has been done in accordance with the thesis topic and aim in mind. In the SWOT analysis, as described above, the ideal type city represented by the theoretical approach, The Right to the City, will then be made the ideal type which the SWOT analysis will use to analyze and evaluate the primary material in relation to.

Bearing in mind the thesis aim, the SWOT analysis will then be further utilized to analyze and evaluate strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that it finds within the aspects and sections of the primary material that has been deemed relevant. Finally, the SWOT analysis will relate those findings to the mission, the ideal type represented by The Right to the City.

*Strengths*, in this SWOT analysis indicates areas within the primary material that “measures up” to the ideal type. *Weaknesses* indicates areas within the primary material where there is need for significant improvement in order to close in on the ideal type. *Opportunities* are aspects or areas that might not be existing or outspoken within the primary material, but which can be identified as potentially improving and strengthening aspects of it. *Threats* represents potential obstacles that might not be present or outspoken in the material but can be identified as potentially weakening aspects.

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<sup>54</sup> Karppi et al, 2001, p. 36.

The SWOT analysis is made further relevant as it offers opportunity to conduct a somewhat more dynamic thesis investigation and analysis. Unlike some analytic tools, which are often utilized to simply investigate whether a material is good enough or not, the SWOT analysis not only does that, but also opens up to opportunities and threats presented in the material. The SWOT analysis thereby suits the aim of this thesis in the way that it provides space to reflect on how civil dialogue could be developed or changed in order to provide a tool for promoting social sustainability in urban development.

### 3 Placing the Thesis in the Research Spectrum

The aim of this chapter is to provide an account of previous research on the social dimension of sustainability as well as civil dialogue in an urban development context on an international as well as Swedish, national level. The literary overview will analyze the literature in three steps, beginning with a brief historical lookback. Thereafter, the issue of defining social sustainability will be discussed – is there a need for a universal definition, or are there other approaches to the social dimension of sustainability? Secondly, the matter of social sustainability in an urban context is discussed, where after the overview will lead the thesis onto the matter of citizen participation through civil dialogue.

#### 3.1 A Historical Lookback

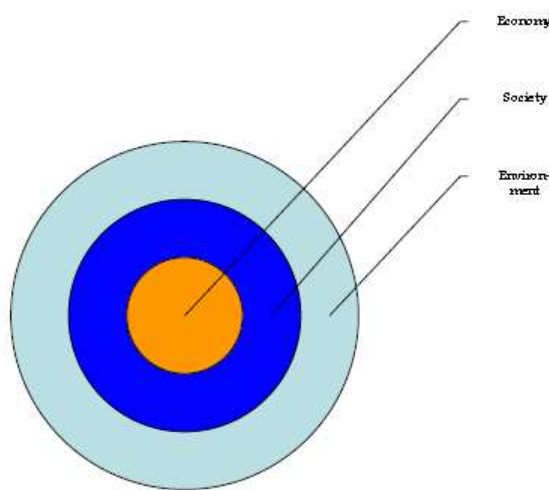
In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) published *Our Common Future*, a report providing the now well-known and popular definition of sustainable development: “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”<sup>55</sup>. As it shifted a debate that had previously been characterized by prophecies about the end of the world and mankind to a more optimistic view of the future, the report became somewhat paradigm shifting. Even more so, the report not only stated that it was possible to save the world and keep global development going at the same time but actually argued for development and change as means with which to achieve sustainability<sup>56</sup>, providing further optimism for developing countries in particular.

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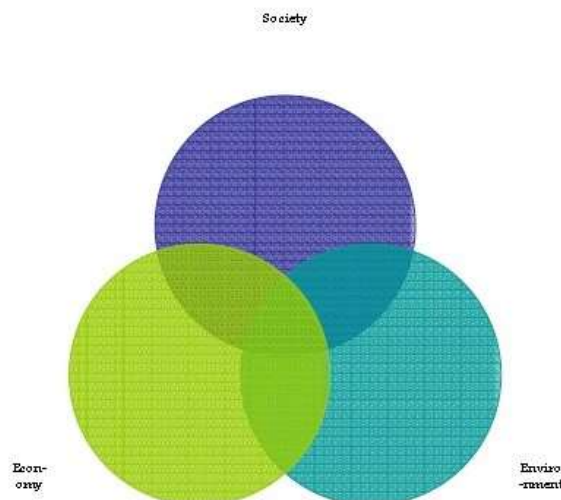
<sup>55</sup> Brundtland et al, 1987, p. 9.

<sup>56</sup> McKenzie, Stephen, "Social sustainability: towards some definitions", Hawke Research Institute Working Paper Series No 27, 2004, p. 2.

As several authors argue, what is popularly known as the Brundtland commission, or the Brundtland definition, provided a basis on which the current debate on sustainable development is founded.<sup>57</sup> The commission presented three dimensions within which work is needed in order to achieve sustainable development – the *economic*, *ecological*, and the *social* dimension. As described by Stephen McKenzie, there are two existing models of the interrelationship between the three dimensions. The first model (Figure 1) places the ecological dimension as permeating the other two, providing an understanding of the economic and social dimensions as dependent on the condition of the ecological. The second model, which has emerged more recently (Figure 2), provides a different perspective where the three dimensions are weighted equally.<sup>58</sup>



**Figure 1.** Dimensions depending on ecological



**Figure 2.** All dimensions weighted equally

It is argued that the sustainability debate traditionally has revolved around the economic and ecological dimensions which has contributed to the fact that the social dimension is less researched and seldom prioritized in the same way as the other two.<sup>59</sup> Carina Weingaertner and Åsa Moberg, as well as Andrea Colantonio and Tim Dixon, confirms this view by stating that social sustainability merely has been added-on in order to promote the other dimensions, but then go on to state that the social dimension is becoming increasingly important,<sup>60</sup> a fact that

<sup>57</sup> McKenzie, 2004, p. 2; Murphy, Kevin. "The social pillar of sustainable development: a literature review and framework for policy analysis", *Sustainability: Science, Practice, & Policy* 8.1, 2012, p. 15; Weingaertner, Carina, and Moberg, Åsa, "Exploring social sustainability: learning from perspectives on urban development and companies and products." *Sustainable Development* 22.2: 122-133, 2014, p. 1-2.

<sup>58</sup> McKenzie, 2004, p. 3-5.

<sup>59</sup> Colantonio, Andrea and Dixon, Tim, "Urban Regeneration & Social Sustainability: Best Practice from European Cities", Wiley-Blackwell, London, 2010, p.4.

<sup>60</sup> Weingaertner & Moberg, 2014, p. 4; Colantonio & Dixon, 2010, p.4.



can also be seen in the evolution of the models pictured in Figure 1 and Figure 2. An apparent move from an eco-centric view to a more equal weighting implies that greater significance and emphasis has been given to the social dimension with time.

However, even though the second model shows that all dimensions need to be weighted equally in order to achieve sustainable development, or sustainability, the model has not successfully been translated and applied in reality. Several authors discuss the constant down-prioritizing of the social dimension and argue that one reason could be that finding indicators for the social dimension is more challenging, meaning that the two more tangible dimensions simply has been easier to understand and work with, or have consisted of more convincing arguments.<sup>61</sup> Another possible reason is argued to be the fact that the definition of social sustainability has been too vague,<sup>62</sup> which brings us to the next section of this chapter.

### 3.2 Social Sustainability – Towards a Universal Definition?

In order to reach a three-part model where all dimensions are weighted equally, McKenzie as well as Beate Littig and Erich Grießler, argues that it is necessary to separately define social sustainability before attempting to work with all three dimensions collectively.<sup>63</sup> However, arriving at a viable definition of social sustainability is a challenge, a challenge that is made even harder as several authors argue that a key issue is the need to adapt a potential definition to the relevant local context.<sup>64</sup> The stated context dependency potentially influences the relevance and interpretation of the social dimension of sustainability.<sup>65</sup> While economic and ecological definitions or indicators might be relatively similar regardless of context, the social dimension appears to require a certain level of adaptation. Indeed, social sustainability challenges might be of a very different nature depending on country, differ significantly between cities within

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<sup>61</sup> McKenzie, 2004, p. 6-7; Littig, Beate and Grießler, Erich, "Social sustainability: a catchword between political pragmatism and social theory", *International journal of sustainable development* 8.1-2: 65-79, 2005, p. 67.

<sup>62</sup> McKenzie, 2004, p. 7-8; Littig & Grießler, 2005, p.67.

<sup>63</sup> McKenzie, 2004, p. 12; Littig & Grießler, 2005, p. 69.

<sup>64</sup> McKenzie, 2004, p. 16-17; Weingaertner & Moberg, 2014, p. 2; Abrahamsson, Hans, "Städer som nav för en globalt hållbar samhällsutveckling eller slagfält för sociala konflikter" [Cities as hubs for a global sustainable development of society or battlefields of social conflicts], *Kommission för ett socialt hållbart Malmö (diskussionsunderlag)*, 2012, p.39.

<sup>65</sup> Weingaertner & Moberg, 2014, p. 12.

the same country, or even between neighborhoods of the same city.<sup>66</sup> In addition to context, the definition is dependent on the aim, purpose and will of the agent that issues such a definition.<sup>67</sup> McKenzie, for example, argues that the environmental movement often have been in power of interpreting or making decisions regarding the definition of sustainability. Despite there being many issues in which social elements could have been included, this is a fact that has caused definitions to have an environmental touch.<sup>68</sup>

In summary then, a potential definition of social sustainability should be adapted to suit the local context. There should also be an awareness of the fact that depending on which agent is conducting a project where a definition of social sustainability is needed, the definition could be given values representing the aim of that agent. Furthermore, there could be potential risks involved when adapting a definition of social sustainability, the most prominent being that universal values that for example secure human rights and social equity are lost. In fact, Rosemary Bromley, Andrew Tallon and Colin Thomas argues that it appears beneficial to not even strive towards a definition of the social dimension of sustainability, but to instead have key themes or values underpin the dimension.<sup>69</sup> Therefore, the conclusion regarding a potential definition of social sustainability is that a universal definition, or a definition at all, is not what should be the target. Instead, the social dimension should incorporate certain universal values, but then be adapted to meet the needs in the specific context where development of the dimension is needed.

In order to investigate the matter of social sustainability further, defining the context of where the dimension is needed appears to be central. Therefore, this literary overview will now go on to discuss social sustainability in an urban context.

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<sup>66</sup> Colantonio & Dixon, 2010, p. 4.

<sup>67</sup> Littig & Grießler, 2005, p. 67; McKenzie, 2004, p. 8.

<sup>68</sup> McKenzie, 2004, p. 8.

<sup>69</sup> Bromley, Rosemary DF, Andrew R. Tallon, and Colin J. Thomas. "City centre regeneration through residential development: Contributing to sustainability." *Urban Studies* 42.13: 2407-2429, 2005, p. 11.

### 3.3 Why Social Sustainability in an Urban Context?

Even as early as when the Brundtland report was published, urban spaces and cities were highlighted as much significant areas in regards of reaching sustainability. The report mentioned the urbanization process as a key reason to why urban areas are important players in tackling sustainability challenges.<sup>70</sup> Since 1987, the increasing urbanization trend has continued and a majority of the world's population have been living in urban areas since 2008,<sup>71</sup> a number that is predicted to be more than two thirds before 2030.<sup>72</sup> These are statistical facts and predictions that make urban areas natural hubs where a majority of sustainability issues and challenges will be found in the future, in turn meaning that they can also harbor their potential solutions.<sup>73</sup> Moreover, the topic of sustainable cities is more relevant now than ever before. In September 2015, the United Nations reached an agreement on the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs are part of the United Nations 2030 agenda for achieving sustainable development, and consists of seventeen global goals that will be crucial to reach if we want to achieve a healthy population, environment, and a sustainable world.

The importance of making cities sustainable is recognized in the 11<sup>th</sup> of the SDGs: "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable"<sup>74</sup> and mirrors the fact that achieving sustainable cities is of global relevance. As has been stated previously, though, defining social sustainability should not be attempted on a global level, but preferably underpinned by certain universal values and then developed further on a local level. Surely, this is what has been done by the UN when adopting the SDGs – providing certain universal values of relevance to the concept of sustainable cities, highlighting inclusiveness, safety, resilience, and sustainability, which leads us onto the topic treated in this thesis – citizen participation.

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<sup>70</sup> Brundtland et al, 1987, chapter 9.

<sup>71</sup> Dempsey, Nicola, et al. "The social dimension of sustainable development: Defining urban social sustainability." *Sustainable development* 19.5: 289-300, 2011, p. 6.

<sup>72</sup> United Nations Population Fund. "UNFPA state of world population 2007: unleashing the potential of urban growth." United Nations Population Fund, 2007, p. 1.

<sup>73</sup> Fragkias, Michail, and Christopher G. Boone. "Towards a New Framework for Urbanization and Sustainability", *Urbanization and Sustainability*, Springer Netherlands, 2013, p. 2; Weingaertner & Moberg, 2014, p. 4.

<sup>74</sup> United Nations Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, Goal 11. Accessed 2016-04-03.

The eleventh of the SDGs is, namely, further supported by ten targets, one of which highlights the importance of citizen participation (emphasis added):

By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for [*participatory*], integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries.<sup>75</sup>

Target 11.3 is a clear statement arguing for more inclusive urban development planning, which has also been pointed out by McKenzie and Nicola Dempsey et al who particularly highlights the importance of inclusion of citizens in local level politics.<sup>76</sup> Maria-Lluïsa Marsal-Lacuna as well as Martine Buser and Christian Koch also argues for more participatory decision making, but states that participation has been inadequate as the citizen has not been viewed as the end user of the urban area, and when community consultation or participation is implemented, it is only done so in order to answer queries of a specific institution regarding certain topics,<sup>77</sup> making participation selective and very limited. Buser and Koch further argues that in a Swedish context, community involvement has been reduced to a statistical category and limited to controlled participation.<sup>78</sup>

Continuing to place the thesis topic in a Swedish context, the social dimension of sustainability is seen as closely related to public health, and The Public Health Agency of Sweden has provided eleven national targets for public health, the first being participation and influence in society.<sup>79</sup> That target has then been divided into five sub-targets, one of which is democratic participation, argued by The Public Health Agency to be closely linked to an individual's enjoyment of other health aspects (translated):

To feel connected to society, people need to have the right and ability to influence their own lives and the society they live in. Lack of power and ability to influence is related to health.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> United Nations Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, Goal 11. Accessed 2016-04-06.

<sup>76</sup> McKenzie, 2004, p. 12; Dempsey et al, 2011, p.7.

<sup>77</sup> Marsal-Llacuna, Maria-Lluïsa, "City Indicators on Social Sustainability as Standardization Technologies for Smarter (Citizen-Centered) Governance of Cities", *Social Indicators Research*: 1-24, 2015, p. 4; Buser, Martine, and Christian Koch. "Tales of the suburbs?—The social sustainability agenda in Sweden through literary accounts." *Sustainability* 6.2: 913-934, 2014, p. 914.

<sup>78</sup> Buser & Koch, 2014, p. 914.

<sup>79</sup> The Public Health Agency of Sweden, About Folkhälsomyndigheten – The Public Health Agency of Sweden, 2015-11-16. Accessed 2016-04-05.

<sup>80</sup> The Public Health Agency of Sweden, Demokratisk delaktighet [Democratic participation], 2015-03-13. Accessed 2016-04-07.

Abrahamsson confirms the reasoning around public health, as well as participation and inclusion, by stating that those are aspects on which the social dimension of sustainability rests.<sup>81</sup>

The sub-target of democratic participation is then followed up by a three-part indicator system, mainly by participation in political electoral turnout. As Dempsey et al argues, though, there is a need for involvement of citizens in low level, local politics<sup>82</sup> – not only when there is a national or local election. As is argued by Hans Abrahamsson, citizen participation in urban planning and local decision making is crucial in many respects, for example in order for a decision or plan to be accepted by the majority of the population and for the plan to have a sufficient basis for a potential decision.<sup>83</sup> In addition to that, Weingaertner & Moberg argues that all stakeholders need to be involved at an early stage of development initiatives in order to define local priorities.<sup>84</sup> As Murphy argues that more influential groups, such as companies or political parties, are more likely to have their concerns included<sup>85</sup> there is a confirmed need to specifically engage with and include citizens in general, as they are a vulnerable group in that specific context. Concluding on the importance of citizen participation, then, having a continuous dialogue with the citizens of a city or urban area appears central in order to achieve a sustainable social dimension in an urban development context.

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<sup>81</sup> Abrahamsson, Hans, "Makt och Dialog i rättvisa och socialt hållbara svenska städer" [Power and Dialogue in just and socially sustainable cities], *Mistra Urban Futures*, Göteborg, 2013, p. 12, 21.

<sup>82</sup> Dempsey et al, 2011, p. 7.

<sup>83</sup> Abrahamsson, 2012, p. 39.

<sup>84</sup> Weingaertner & Moberg, 2014, p. 13.

<sup>85</sup> Murphy, Kevin, "The social pillar of sustainable development: a literature review and framework for policy analysis." *Sustainability: Science, Practice, & Policy* 8.1, 2012, p. 15.

### 3.4 Citizen Participation through Civil Dialogue

On a global as well as a Swedish national level, citizen participation in urban development has been highlighted as an important aspect in terms of achieving a sustainable social dimension. Citizen participation is made further relevant when arguing for a human rights-perspective on social sustainability, as the right of people to be able to decide or affect their own circumstances, and influence and participate in society without discrimination, is one of the most fundamental aspects of a human rights-perspective.<sup>86</sup> Discussing justice in urban areas, Abrahamsson further confirms the links binding together the triangle of human rights, social sustainability and citizen participation. He argues that, in the urban context, justice has become equated with human rights – rights to influence political decision making. Thereby, he claims that justice in urban areas has become closely linked with a human right to participate in political decision making.<sup>87</sup>

A method that is used to involve citizens and increase participation is civil dialogue, which is described as a way of cities or municipalities to involve citizens in a continuous and consistent way in order to strengthen the social dimension of sustainability, as well as democracy. Abrahamsson argues that there is a common understanding that by utilizing civil dialogue to involve citizens in matters other than general elections, cities can counteract segregation and social division of the city.<sup>88</sup> Furthermore, he states, the general population's declining political interest in combination with increased political influence from powerful actors within the private sector poses a significant threat to the ability of citizens to make their claims heard.<sup>89</sup>

Strengthening Abrahamsson's argument, a recent study published by the Swedish government indicates that citizens have a significant interest in influencing local politics in between general elections, but that existing channels are insufficient as all citizens does not have the same influential power. Depending on ethnicity or social capital such as education or income, citizens are represented to a greater or lesser extent. The Swedish government thereby highlight civil dialogue as a means with which to reach and include vulnerable or marginalized groups.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Sida, Rättighetsperspektivet i Sidas arbete [The human rights perspective in Sida's work], 2015-09-09. Accessed 2016-05-26.

<sup>87</sup> Abrahamsson, 2013, p. 8.

<sup>88</sup> Abrahamsson, 2013, p. 21.

<sup>89</sup> Abrahamsson, 2013, p. 23.

<sup>90</sup> Regeringens skrivelse 2013/14:61, En politik för en levande demokrati [Politics for a thriving democracy], 2013-12-12, p. 28-29.

Is civil dialogue the solution to increased citizen participation and a sustainable social dimension, then? Chantal Mouffe criticizes the idea of civil dialogue by arguing that it has no viability in the center of power that is the political arena, but instead argues for a more accepting political landscape where divergent views and perspectives are included. That, she continues, would reduce the establishment of radical parties and increase inhabitants' interest in politics, but she nevertheless relegates all political participation to general elections.<sup>91</sup>

Abrahamsson discards Mouffe's critique, however, and argues that she underestimates the potential of civil dialogue. More specifically, he states that civil dialogue is showing great potential in regards of reaching and involving vulnerable or marginalized groups as these groups, in general, are less interested in participating in regular politics. Therefore, they lack channels to raise issues that are important to them, and are thereby unable to affect their own situation through the political arena.<sup>92</sup> Along with globalization and urbanization, cities are also becoming more culturally diverse which further demonstrates the importance of civil dialogue as it is needed in order to include all citizens and their perspectives, which would reduce discrimination in regards of political access.<sup>93</sup>

In summary, this literary overview has provided a background of relevant research within the field of social sustainability in urban development on an international as well as Swedish national level, arriving at the conclusion that social sustainability has been deprioritized and that application of the term is context dependent. Therefore, the concept should preferably be underpinned by certain universal values which could allow for the term to be adapted to a local context. Key themes or values therefore appear to be more significant than reaching a single definition. On a Swedish as well as United Nations level, social sustainability is closely linked to public health, increased citizen participation and more inclusive urban planning. The overview therefore identified citizen participation and inclusive urban development as a key feature within the socially sustainable cities debate. Civil dialogue was then highlighted as a method that could potentially increase citizen participation and decrease political exclusion. The next chapter of the thesis will present the investigation and analysis as a case study on civil dialogue in the City of Lund will be conducted and put in relation to the theoretical approach, *The Right to the City*.

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<sup>91</sup> Abrahamsson, 2013, p. 19-20.

<sup>92</sup> Abrahamsson, 2013, p. 20.

<sup>93</sup> Abrahamsson, 2013, p. 21.

## 4 Civil Dialogue in the City of Lund

This section will form the thesis investigation and analysis. The investigation and analysis will be conducted separately but also together, and presented in that same manner. As the theoretical approach, The Right to the City, and the method, the qualitative SWOT analysis, are so closely linked it appears to be the most logical way. This procedure will now be explained.

To begin with, the parts of the primary material that are relevant in relation to the thesis aim will be identified and presented – these are delimitations within the primary material. Thereafter, the relevant parts will be investigated and analyzed using the qualitative SWOT analysis. The relevant parts from the primary material will be deemed as either a strength, weakness, opportunity and/or threat and will be identified and then analyzed in relation to the ideal type, the theoretical approach – this is the reason for why it makes most logical sense to conduct and present the thesis investigation and analysis separately, but also together. They are closely linked through the theoretical approach and method, wherefore conducting and presenting them in different chapters or sections would only complicate things.

The three documents constituting the primary material – the *Mapping*, the *Compilation*, and the *Official Letter* – will be presented more thoroughly under the section in which they are investigated and analyzed. Below, the investigation and analysis will be conducted and presented in the above order.



## 4.1 The Mapping of Civil Dialogue Activities

The *Mapping* offers a contextual background and detailed description of civil dialogue activities conducted by different departments within the City of Lund organisation. However, the *Mapping* includes aspects of civil dialogue activities concerning other areas than urban development which, due to the aim of the thesis, are deemed irrelevant. Out of twelve sections, three deal with civil dialogue activities in relation to urban development and are therefore included in the primary material.

The three sections that have been included concern civil dialogue activities undertaken by three different departments of the City of Lund organization, the first one being “Kommunkontoret” which work with overarching strategic matters of the City as a whole. These matters can be of differing character ranging from, for example, long term sustainability goals or international collaboration to coordination of cross-organisation activities. Of utmost relevance, though, is the fact that the department is responsible for strategic urban development and coordinating of civil dialogue efforts.<sup>94</sup> The second section that has been included is that of “Stadsbyggnadskontoret”, a department that deal with issues related to physical planning of the city. The third section that has been included is the department “Tekniska förvaltningen” which are responsible for matters such as development of streets, squares, traffic and natural environments as well as land issues.<sup>95</sup>

The civil dialogue activities undertaken by the different departments will now be investigated, analyzed and put in relation to the theoretical perspective, The Right to the City, by using the SWOT analysis. As the three departments are often involved in the same civil dialogue projects or activities, the identified aspects of the civil dialogue activities will not be categorized by department. Instead, aspects of the dialogue activities that have been identified under the different departments will be paired with similar aspects, and simply presented as the aspects that they are. Thereafter they will be discussed as either strengths, weaknesses, opportunities or threats in relation to the theoretical approach. The aspects that have been found in the *Mapping*

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<sup>94</sup> The City of Lund, *Mapping of civil dialogue activities between the years 2013-2015*, 2016-01-26, p. 17.

<sup>95</sup> *Mapping of civil dialogue*, 2016-01-26, p. 45-49.

are the purpose of the dialogues, target groups, participation and participants, dialogue focus, topic and questions, and civil dialogue methods. They will be presented in more detail below.

The first aspect that has been identified is *the purpose of the dialogues*. As the purpose for why the City of Lund conducts civil dialogue projects and activities reveals the underlying aim and motivation for the civil dialogue, it can certainly be argued to be relevant and important. In the *Mapping*, the majority of the purposes for conducting civil dialogue projects claims to be that the City of Lund wants to find out what citizens think and want, as well as what their priorities are and how they want the city to develop.<sup>96</sup> This has been deemed a strength as it is a wide purpose with what appears to be a serious interest in wanting to know what city inhabitants think and wish for. If these kinds of purposes permeates all of the City of Lund's work with civil dialogue, it would be a great basis for truly involving inhabitants in decision making and wanting them to participate in city development, much in line with The Right to the City.

However, in regards of one civil dialogue project, its purpose somewhat stands out. The City of Lund states that the purpose for that project was to inform citizens and discuss future development plans, show their presence in that part of the city, make inhabitants trust the City of Lund organization, and make inhabitants feel like they are part of city development.<sup>97</sup> In that project, the purpose implies that the City of Lund does not actually want to work towards including inhabitants so that they are able to influence city development, but rather to make them *feel* like they are involved. Having a purpose like that above has been deemed a weakness, and a potential threat. It is a weakness as it implies that the City of Lund organization does not really care if the inhabitants are actually able to influence city development, as long as inhabitants *feel* like they can, as long as it appears like the organization is present in the area, and as long as the inhabitants trust the organization. If that kind of purpose would permeate the City of Lund organization, it is not only an obvious weakness but also a potential threat. Having a purpose like that permeate the organization would likely pose as an obstacle to the City of Lund in regards of working towards the Right to the City, as the actual influence and ability of inhabitants to participate in city development appears unimportant.

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<sup>96</sup> Mapping of civil dialogue, 2016-01-26, p. 17-18, 21, 23, 28.

<sup>97</sup> Mapping of civil dialogue, 2016-01-26, p. 47.

The second and third aspect that have been identified are *target groups* and *participation and participants*. These two aspects will be presented together as they are closely related. In a majority of the civil dialogue projects, the target groups of the civil dialogue activities are everyone living in the area of the city which the activity concerns.<sup>98</sup> In itself, this is not an issue and could be considered a strength as it, in theory, would include all inhabitants in urban development. However, if one investigates those same activities in regards of *participation and participants*, it appears a whole lot more insufficient. In one project where all inhabitants were the target group, for example, not even two percent of the inhabitants participated in the civil dialogue activity.<sup>99</sup> In another, not even seven percent participated.<sup>100</sup> The fact that all inhabitants constitutes the target group is not itself the issue in this case, but rather the inability of the City of Lund to include even something resembling a majority of the inhabitants. If all inhabitants are made the target group, there should at least be a significant percentage of the inhabitants participating. The target group is undoubtedly a weakness in the present form, but is deemed an opportunity as it provides potential to improve the percentage of participating inhabitants, thereby transforming it into a strength.

What is somewhat more troubling, however, is the fact that there are no statistics on *who* is participating. All information that is provided about *participation and participants* is a (very low) percentage number. That information offers no insight into who those participants were or to which societal group they “belong”. In this thesis this is deemed a threat, as there is no way of knowing if inhabitants “belonging” to a marginalized group such as children, disabled people or newly arrived immigrants, for example, have even been represented in the civil dialogue activity. In relation to The Right to the City, this is definitely a threat as the theoretical approach highlights the importance of ensuring that minority- or marginalized groups are included in deliberations. Of course, one could argue that it would be complicated, or even discriminating, to divide inhabitants into groups based on certain characteristics, but the aim here is not to distinguish certain groups from others, but to ensure that the claims and opinions are heard and included. Furthermore, investigating *who* participates is relevant as The Right to the City highlights both the concepts of *diversity* and *democracy*. Information regarding who participates could ensure greater diversity among participants, as well as a democratic process.

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<sup>98</sup> Mapping of civil dialogue, 2016-01-26, p. 21, 24.

<sup>99</sup> Mapping of civil dialogue, 2016-01-26, p. 21.

<sup>100</sup> Mapping of civil dialogue, 2016-01-26, p. 23.

The two final aspects identified within the *Mapping* are *dialogue focus* and *topics and questions*. The two aspects will be discussed together as they are closely related and intertwined. In regards of *dialogue focus* and *topics and questions*, the civil dialogue activities tend to have a short term focus, much in line with Fainstein's argument that politicians and officials are driven by short term, competitive thinking.<sup>101</sup> The City of Lund argues that it is preferable to ask specific questions so that the opinions and suggestions of inhabitants can be implemented through concrete measures as soon as possible.<sup>102</sup> They also argue that more specific questions inhabitants are asked, the *easier* it is to conduct the civil dialogue activity, and that the focus of the civil dialogue activity for that reason should be shifted from collecting opinions and suggestions to implementing short term, concrete measures.<sup>103</sup> When the City of Lund argues that it is *easier*, it appears as they are implying that it is less resource consuming, resources meaning time, personnel or energy, for example.

It is quite remarkable that they suggest that focusing on specific topics and questions is preferable to having broader themes, more specifically since their own mapping clearly shows that the opportunity of inhabitants to bring up matters and questions that are important to them is crucial as it increases their interest and engagement in participating in civil dialogue activities.<sup>104</sup> Providing broad discussion topics should therefore be preferable as it would encourage inhabitants to participate (which, when discussing *participation and participants*, was clearly shown to be needed) as well as enable them to discuss matters that are important to them.

In relation to The Right to the City, the choice of short term measures and specific topics on behalf of the City of Lund appears to be a case where they choose efficiency over justice. As discussed in the theoretical approach, justice and all that it entails, should never be compromised to the advantage of efficiency.

Despite the fact that the City of Lund chooses to promote short term, concrete measures because it is *easier* (which undoubtedly could be considered a weakness), *dialogue focus* as well as *topics and questions* are deemed to be an opportunity. Modifying the aspects so that it allows for inhabitants to bring up their own matters and provide broader themes where all inhabitants

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<sup>101</sup> Fainstein, 2010, p. 81.

<sup>102</sup> Mapping of civil dialogue, 2016-01-26, p. 22, 24.

<sup>103</sup> Mapping of civil dialogue, 2016-01-26, p. 19, 22.

<sup>104</sup> Mapping of civil dialogue, 2016-01-26, p. 30.

are encouraged to participate and raise their concerns definitely offers potential to develop the civil dialogue so that it facilitates an environment which could allow for the City of Lund to close in on the ideal type that is The Right to the City. It is deemed an opportunity as the present state of the aspects already meet the requirements of The Right to the City to some extent, but would need some alteration.

## 4.2 The Compilation of Civil Dialogue Activities

As has been described before, the *Compilation of Civil Dialogue Activities in the City of Lund* is thirteen pages long, and is a direct outcome of the *Mapping*. The *Compilation* is a summary and overall analysis of the results from the *Mapping*, and was put together by a City of Lund official with the purpose of providing a basis for decision regarding the City of Lund's future strategy for civil dialogue.<sup>105</sup> The document is important and adds to the thesis investigation and analysis as it provides information regarding the direction the official from the City of Lund has chosen to develop the results found in the *Mapping*. The *Compilation* will thereby also tell if, and how, the City of Lund official has drawn other conclusions from the results from the *Mapping* compared to the investigation and analysis conducted in this thesis.

The *Compilation* offers nine aspects or categories highlighted and discussed by the City of Lund official – out of those nine, seven have been found relevant and will be addressed in this investigation and analysis. The included aspects and categories are *e-democracy/e-dialogue*, *connection to budget and organizational development*, *target groups*, *purpose and goals*, *concepts and approaches of civil dialogue*, *focus on process*, and *feedback and evaluation*. The aspects *responsibility and questions for dialogue* and *roles of officials and politicians* have been excluded as they have been found irrelevant. The *Compilation* will now be investigated, analyzed and presented in the same manner as was the *Mapping*.

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<sup>105</sup> The City of Lund, *Compilation of civil dialogue activities in the City of Lund*, KS 2016/0173, 2016-01-26, p. 3.

The first aspect that will be analyzed is that of *e-democracy/e-dialogue*. According to the City of Lund, *e-democracy/e-dialogue* is a modern tool which can be utilized to improve communication between the City organization and its inhabitants. Furthermore, the City of Lund argues that *e-democracy/e-dialogue* is the solution to reaching groups that usually are not able to, or does not participate in civil dialogue activities.<sup>106</sup>

First of all, there is no basis for the City of Lund to argue that e-democracy would function in a way that would enable them to reach more inhabitants, and certainly no result from the *Mapping* indicating that *e-democracy/e-dialogue* would enhance the participation of marginalized or minority groups specifically. In fact, the *Mapping* shows that the dialogue method that has worked best (with over 50 percent of inhabitants participating) is direct contact, when City of Lund representatives have knocked on doors to chat with inhabitants regarding a project.<sup>107</sup> One needs to be aware, of course, that knocking on doors would require an enormous amount of effort on the behalf of the City of Lund, and that it is not a sustainable method when larger projects are to be conducted. If *e-democracy/e-dialogue* would prove equally successful in regards of generating participants, it could potentially work in the way the City of Lund argues that it can, thereby being a strength.

Building on the above argument and in relation to The Right to the City, though, the City of Lund appears to prioritize efficiency over justice once again. Although all kinds of methods, such as knocking on doors, cannot be scaled up and conducted in large projects, simply proposing *e-democracy/e-dialogue* as a solution to the *participant and participation* issue when there is no basis showing that it would provide the benefits that are argued, must be deemed a weakness. The City of Lund should rather propose the use of a range of different methods in order to strive towards a just, democratic process that includes all inhabitants.

Secondly, *target groups* has been identified as a relevant aspect. In the *Compilation*, the City of Lund raises three points as significant. First, they argue that there is a need for an analysis of who the participants in the civil dialogue activities are in order to investigate if there is a

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<sup>106</sup> Compilation of civil dialogue, 2016-01-26, p. 9.

<sup>107</sup> Mapping of civil dialogue, 2016-01-26, p. 48.

need for specific measures to reach societal groups that normally does not participate. Secondly, they address the fact that there might be a need for different methods depending on what method suit different groups of inhabitants best. Third, the City of Lund specifically mentions children and newly arrived immigrants as vulnerable groups that might need to be focused on specifically in order to make sure they are given the opportunity to participate.<sup>108</sup>

Apart from the fact that the reasoning of the City of Lund appears contradictory when they go from discussing *e-democracy/e-dialogue* as the solution to reaching different groups of society to concluding that there is a need for an analysis of who participates and that there might be a need for specific methods to reach vulnerable groups, the aspect *target groups* as a whole is deemed a strength. In relation to The Right to the City, the aspect measures up well as there is a focus on the participation and representation of vulnerable and marginalized/minority groups specifically. The aspect further offers potential to increase diversity and broaden democracy. One reservation against the aspect being deemed a strength, however, is the fact that when vulnerable or minority groups that might need specific focus are mentioned, disabled inhabitants are left out. As The Right to the City incorporates Martha Nussbaum's capability approach, where disabled people are highlighted as a group that should be included in deliberations,<sup>109</sup> disabled inhabitants should be included in that addressing. It merely needs a minor adjustment, though, and therefore it is deemed a strength as a whole.

Continuing the investigation and analysis, the aspects *Connection to budget and organizational development* and *purpose and goals* have been identified. As they are interrelated, they will be discussed in the same section. In regards of *connection to budget and organizational development*, that aspect simply establishes that civil dialogue projects should be anchored in other main organizational goings-on, which would prevent the civil dialogue activities becoming a side project.<sup>110</sup> Making sure that civil dialogue activities are really anchored within the organization is definitely a positive thing, and a strength, but it is hard to relate that aspect to The Right to the City as anchoring the civil dialogue activities within the organization probably is regarded as something an organization obviously should do, and a fact that justifies even conducting civil dialogue activities at all.

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<sup>108</sup> Compilation of civil dialogue, 2016-01-26, p. 10.

<sup>109</sup> Nussbaum, 2006, p. 190.

<sup>110</sup> Compilation of civil dialogue, 2016-01-26, p. 10.

Regarding *purpose and goals*, the City of Lund yet again argues for more specific topics and questions in the dialogue activities. They do mention that it could be possible to use broader themes but then claim that doing so would be harder and require more resources.<sup>111</sup> Furthermore, the City of Lund states that there is a need for measurable goals, for example the amount of people participating in civil dialogue activities or how many of those participating that were satisfied with the way the civil dialogue activity was conducted.<sup>112</sup>

In relation to The Right to the City, the issue of specific topics have been discussed earlier, and was, in themselves, deemed a weakness as that would mean going against the principle of never compromising justice to the advantage of efficiency. In the worst case scenario, narrow topics could mean that civil dialogue activities are strictly limited, and that inhabitants are unable to raise questions about matters that are important to them, thereby excluding certain groups of citizens which would undermine diversity. In that case, in relation to The Right to the City, narrow topics transform into a threat. The fact that the City of Lund proposes measurable goals, however, is deemed an opportunity. It is not considered a strength yet, as the measurable goals proposed in the *Compilation* are simply insufficient, but could be useful if the City of Lund wants to make sure that, for example, minority groups are represented to a sufficient extent.

Proceeding with the investigation and analysis, *focus on process* and *feedback and evaluation* have been identified as aspects relevant to the thesis aim. The City of Lund argues that they are in need of an established process for civil dialogue. The reason for doing so, they state, is that an established process would make the conducting of the civil dialogue easier.<sup>113</sup> Furthermore, they argue that having an established process for civil dialogue would assure the quality of the civil dialogue, as important or relevant parts of what should constitute the process, then would not be lost.<sup>114</sup> In regards of *feedback and evaluation*, the City of Lund organization once again highlights that what is most important is conducting short term, concrete measures that can be reported back to the inhabitants. That way, they claim that they can send a message to inhabitants saying that they listen to them and that there is possibility to influence.<sup>115</sup> The aspect *feedback and evaluation* has been deemed a weakness, the reason being that it consolidates the in

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<sup>111</sup> Compilation of civil dialogue, 2016-01-26, p. 11.

<sup>112</sup> Compilation of civil dialogue, 2016-01-26, p. 11.

<sup>113</sup> Compilation of civil dialogue, 2016-01-26, p. 11.

<sup>114</sup> Compilation of civil dialogue, 2016-01-26, p. 11.

<sup>115</sup> Compilation of civil dialogue, 2016-01-26, p. 11-12.



this thesis already established view that the City of Lund consistently favors efficiency before justice, as they emphasize the importance of short term, concrete measures instead of focusing on long term urban planning or development matters.

In relation to The Right to the City, *focus on process* has been deemed a threat. The City of Lund should not argue for a process in order to make the civil dialogue easier, which shows how they (once again) choose efficiency over justice. Furthermore, they claim that establishing a process would assure the quality of the civil dialogue, and that might be true to a certain extent. The Right to the City, however (although acknowledging the importance of having a just process), puts greater emphasis on making sure that the outcome of the civil dialogue activity is just. A seemingly just process, it is argued, does not necessarily imply that the outcome of the process is just. In addition to that, having an established process does not, as we have seen, necessarily mean that important values constituting justice or ensuring that vulnerable groups are not harmed by its outcome is guaranteed. This investigation and analysis have found several weaknesses and threats that would be likely to be included in that established process. Therefore, the process itself would entail weaknesses and threats that could limit the quality of the process significantly.

### 4.3 The Official Letter

The *Official Letter* has been included in the primary material, and thereby the investigation and analysis, as if offers a proposed strategy for how the City of Lund will work with civil dialogue activities in the future. The strategy consists of six points which are to be considered by the City of Lund every time they are planning on conducting a civil dialogue project,<sup>116</sup> all of which will be included in the investigation and analysis. The *Official letter* will now be investigated, analyzed and presented in the same manner as was the *Mapping* and the *Compilation*.

The first point of the strategy deals with the matter of when and why civil dialogue should be conducted. In that first point, the strategy states (translated):

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<sup>116</sup> The City of Lund, *Official Letter*, KS 2016/0173, 2016-03-16, p. 5.

Civil dialogue should be conducted when politicians and officials have a need to find out what the inhabitants' opinions and priorities are. When there is a proposal that directly affect the inhabitants, and when politicians have not yet taken a position, civil dialogue should always be considered.<sup>117</sup>

Clearly, some of the initial strengths that have been found within the primary material, for example that of having a purpose that incorporates genuinely caring what the opinions and wishes of the inhabitants are, have been lost when translated into an actual strategy. The first point of the strategy clearly does not incorporate the perspective of inhabitants as it, when it states that civil dialogue should be conducted when officials and politicians have a need to know what inhabitants think, and not when inhabitants have a need to raise issues that are important to them, strictly limits the ability of inhabitants to influence decision making and policy development. Therefore, the first point of the strategy has been deemed a weakness, and a threat, in relation to The Right to the City as the whole point of the theoretical approach is to enable inhabitants to influence the shaping and making of their city. The reason for why it is deemed a weakness is quite obvious, and further deeming it as a threat is because it poses a risk of actually excluding inhabitants from the processes that the theoretical approach aims at including them in. Furthermore, the point appears permeated with the view that what is important is not that inhabitants are enabled to have their say, but rather that politicians and officials have the opportunity to find out what the inhabitants think, when they have a need for it. There is an imminent risk that when civil dialogue activities are actually conducted, they will be limited and selective.

Presenting the second point of the strategy, purpose for and results of the civil dialogue is discussed (translated):

The civil dialogue should have a clear purpose and the result should be fed back to the inhabitants that have participated in dialogue activities. The opportunity of citizens to influence should be clearly stated at the start of every civil dialogue.<sup>118</sup>

As the second point highlights having a clear purpose with every civil dialogue activity, and that the result should be fed back to inhabitants, it appears to be a result of the City of Lund's

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<sup>117</sup> Official Letter, 2016-03-16, p. 5.

<sup>118</sup> Official Letter, 2016-03-16, p. 5.

continuous prioritization of efficiency over securing justice. A clear purpose might not be an issue in itself, but is so because of the fact that the City of Lund has consistently argued for more narrow dialogue topics which likely implicates that “clear purpose” will be interpreted as more specific questions. Furthermore, the fact that the second point highlights the importance of feedback to the inhabitants is an issue, not because feedback is a bad thing, but because the City of Lund has argued for feedback through short term, concrete measures all through the primary material. Feedback is therefore likely to amount to short term, concrete measures which, as has been discussed earlier, is deemed a weakness. The second point of the strategy is, against the above argument and in relation to The Right to the City, deemed a threat as it limits citizen participation to revolving around certain (narrow) topics and matters, and focuses on short term, concrete measures rather than allowing inhabitants to influence long term development and policies.

Continuing the investigation and analysis of the *Official Letter*, the third point of the strategy is about listening to inhabitants and letting them raise issues and matters that are important to them (translated):

It is important to let inhabitants raise issues that are important to them through different channels. Digital channels should be used primarily.<sup>119</sup>

The fact that the City of Lund specifically highlights that it is important to allow for inhabitants to raise issues that are important to them is, in general, a positive thing. However, what is remarkable is that they argue that digital channels should be used primarily. It is remarkable as there is no basis for claiming that digital channels would be preferable to other channels when it comes to engaging with inhabitants. As has been stated earlier in this investigation and analysis, the *Mapping* conducted by the city of Lund actually provides incentive to argue that digital channels are not preferable to, for example, direct contact.<sup>120</sup> That they nevertheless choose to promote digital channels provides reason to believe that they, again, prioritize efficiency over securing a just process and outcome, which goes against The Right to the City. It is further remarkable as inhabitants should be encouraged to raise issues that are important to them through all kinds of channels, and in particular as there is a civil dialogue being conducted.

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<sup>119</sup> Official Letter, 2016-03-16, p. 5.

<sup>120</sup> Mapping of civil dialogue, 2016-01-26, p. 48.

Creating a separate channel for inhabitants that wish to raise issues that are important to them appears to be a way of the City of Lund to guard themselves against the fact that they aim to narrow topics and questions when conducting a civil dialogue. Having a separate channel for inhabitants to raise other issues would then work as justifying narrow topics in civil dialogues. Despite its flaws, however, the third point of the strategy is deemed an opportunity in relation to the Right to the City as it does mention that there should be a way for inhabitants to raise issues that are important to them.

Point number four discusses responsibility for the result of the civil dialogue (translated):

The civil dialogue does not need to end in agreement. The final responsibility and decision making always lies with politicians who have the overall responsibility for political considerations.<sup>121</sup>

The fourth point will not be discussed to any significant extent, as that would require further investigation. What can be deducted, and related to The Right to the City, though is that there could be two reasons for why the City of Lund would guard themselves against having to go with claims made by inhabitants. It could either be in order for them to be able to ensure that the outcome of the civil dialogue is just, which would be deemed as a strength in relation to the theoretical approach, or it could be because they want to ensure that they are not forced to listen to claims made by inhabitants – which could be a potential threat. The fourth point does not establish which way it will be implemented by the City of Lund, wherefore a decision on whether it is a strength or a threat cannot be made.

The fifth point mentions tools for civil dialogue in order to reach groups that normally does not participate (translated):

Different methods and tools for civil dialogue should be used for reaching inhabitants that usually do not participate in civil dialogues or contact the City of Lund organization through other channels.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Official Letter, 2016-03-16, p. 5.

<sup>122</sup> Official Letter, 2016-03-16, p. 5.

In relation to The Right to the City, the fifth point of the strategy is definitely positive as it aims at including more inhabitants in civil dialogue activities. Furthermore, it would increase diversity in participation as well as promote a more democratic and just process where previously unrepresented, vulnerable groups could participate. In addition to that, it is positive as it chooses justice over efficiency, as using several different methods, tools and channels is likely to be harder than using just one or a few. The fifth point is thereby deemed a strength. One aspect that is notable, though, is the fact that the City of Lund appears to contradict themselves when they in the first instance argue for a clear purpose and focus on digital channels, and in the next argue for the use of different methods, tools and channels to reach vulnerable groups.

The sixth and final point of the strategy that will be included in the thesis investigation and analysis is about focus on the participation of children and young people (translated):

When civil dialogue is utilized there should be a focus on children and young people's ability to participate.<sup>123</sup>

In relation to The Right to the City, what is positive about the sixth point is that it specifically addresses a societal group that normally does not participate in civil dialogue activities. The strategic point would contribute to a more democratic and just process with more diverse participation. However, the point should specifically mention and include other potentially vulnerable groups, such as newly arrived immigrants and disabled people. The sixth point is therefore not deemed a strength, but an opportunity.

The result from the thesis investigation and analysis has now been presented, and will be discussed in relation to previous research in the next and final chapter of this thesis.

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<sup>123</sup> Official Letter, 2016-03-16, p. 6.

## 5 The Sustainable City?

As was pointed out in the account of previous research, citizen participation and inclusive urban development have been identified as key features of the social dimension of sustainability, and civil dialogue was highlighted as a potential way towards reducing discrimination in regards of political access. The case study of the City of Lund's process towards adopting a new strategy for civil dialogue was conducted in order to investigate the matter further and has shown that, from a human rights perspective, there can be both strengths and weaknesses, as well as threats and opportunities when utilizing civil dialogue.

As argued by Abrahamsson, civil dialogue has proved to offer potential of involving vulnerable groups that lack channels to participate in political processes, or raise issues that are important to them.<sup>124</sup> The thesis investigation and analysis showed that civil dialogue projects can have the potential to involve everyone, but that there should be a specific, outspoken focus on making sure that different channels are used in order to reach vulnerable groups so that they are represented in the civil dialogue activity. Furthermore, civil dialogue not only offers potential to include vulnerable groups *within* the "inhabitants" category, but also inhabitants *in general* which is significant as they have been argued by Murphy to possess lesser power when put in competition with companies or political parties.<sup>125</sup>

There are significant threats involved, however, the most prominent being the purpose of the agent conducting the civil dialogue. As the case study on the City of Lund has showed, the agent can have either an outspoken or underlying purpose that does not actually value the participation of all inhabitants, but instead limits their ability to influence political processes, or potentially exclude inhabitants, by arguing for narrow dialogue topics. The threat identified in

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<sup>124</sup> Abrahamsson, 2013, p. 20.

<sup>125</sup> Murphy, 2012, p. 15.

the case study confirms Marsal-Lacuna and Buser & Koch's statement that citizen participation can be selective and limited to controlled participation.<sup>126</sup>

Furthermore, the above argument confirms the risk of the values of the agent conducting the activity is likely to permeate the aim of the activity, as was presented by Littig & Grießler as well as McKenzie.<sup>127</sup> If civil dialogue should be able to be utilized as a tool to promote human rights-based social sustainability, this thesis therefore confirms and agrees with the conclusion of Bromley et al as they state that the social dimension should be underpinned by certain values,<sup>128</sup> in this case argued to be the values incorporated in the human rights perspective presented in this thesis.

By applying The Right to the City to the City of Lund's process towards adopting a new strategy for civil dialogue, the thesis has investigated and shown how a human rights perspective on social sustainability in an urban development context could be described. If underpinned by The Right to the City, the weaknesses and risks of conducting civil dialogue activities can be mitigated, strengths enhanced and opportunities exploited.

Having established that civil dialogue, if underpinned by human rights values, can be utilized as a tool to promote social sustainability, it can also be used as a direct indicator of human rights-based social sustainability in an urban development context. As was shown in the thesis investigation and analysis, having measurable goals for important participation aspects offers an opportunity to make sure that, for example, minority groups are represented to a sufficient extent or that an adequate percentage of the prospective target group participates. Furthermore, as civil dialogue has been concluded to function as an indicator, it certainly does not appear farfetched to further claim that civil dialogue could be utilized to make the social dimension more tangible. Thereby, civil dialogue could potentially contribute to overcoming what has been argued by McKenzie and Littig & Grießler to be a challenge in order to promote a more equal weighting of the three sustainability dimensions.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Marsal-Lacuna, 2015, p. 4; Buser & Koch, p. 914.

<sup>127</sup> Littig & Grießler, 2005, p. 67; McKenzie, 2004, p. 8.

<sup>128</sup> Bromley et al, 2005, p. 11.

<sup>129</sup> Littig & Grießler, 2005, p. 67; McKenzie, 2004, p.6-7.

Moreover, social sustainability has been argued to revolve around participation and ability to influence one's own environment on both a Swedish and international, United Nations level. Therefore, anchoring civil dialogue in human rights could function as a strengthening foundation of the social dimension not only in the City of Lund, but potentially in cities all over the world – developing and developed countries alike. It is that which appears to be the strength of anchoring the civil dialogue, and social dimension, in human rights values. The values inherent in the human rights perspective on urban development presented in this thesis, The Right to the City, are universal and apply to everyone, everywhere, simply because they are human. Therefore, The Right to the City offers potential to be an ideal type that cities, regardless of history, culture, or geographical location, could strive towards – towards The Sustainable City.



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### **Primary Material** (including the Protocol)

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## **Figures**

Figure 1: McKenzie, Stephen, "Social sustainability: towards some definitions", Hawke Research Institute Working Paper Series No 27, 2004, p. 4.

Figure 2: McKenzie, Stephen, "Social sustainability: towards some definitions", Hawke Research Institute Working Paper Series No 27, 2004, p. 5.